

IMAGES OF NATURE IN RECENT SOUTH AFRICAN PRINTMAKING AND CERAMICS

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is the unaided work of the candidate. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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PREFATORY NOTE

Research for this dissertation included personal communication with artists between April 1997 and December 1998. This took the form of either written or verbal responses to a questionnaire, and sometimes additional telephonic communication. These are noted in the text as (pc) (personal communication).

The following procedures have been adopted:

- (i) The Harvard system of referencing and bibliography has been used. In referencing the name of the author appears only if it is not used in the same sentence in which it appears.
- (ii) The bibliography appears after the glossary. This includes both texts which are cited and those not referred to directly, but have been important in informing opinions in the text. The bibliography has been separated into books, journals, theses and conference papers. Titles of books appear in italics.
- (iii) Footnotes have been used where necessary to amplify points raised in the text.
- (iv) A glossary of technical printmaking and ceramic terms that are not explained in the text appears at the end of the text. References accompany the meanings of the terms..
- (v) Foreign names appear in italics.
- (vi) Illustrations are indicated in the text in bold type. A list of illustrations appears after the bibliography.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers nature imagery in selected South African ceramics and printmaking. The main focus is on ecological issues in recent art productions.

The text consists of five chapters. The first examines the ideologies of Fritjof Capra in relation to issues about deep ecology and ecofeminism; this chapter seeks to clarify the scope of the words 'land' and 'landscape' as used in a late 20th century context. The second chapter examines some historical works and ideas that have influenced perceptions of nature imagery in South Africa.

Chapters three, four and five constitute the main body of the thesis, and examine nature imagery in selected examples of contemporary printmaking and ceramics.

Chapter three investigates selected landscape images of ceramist Esias Bosch and printmakers Gerda Scholtemeijer and Kim Berman.

In chapter four the focus is on the flora as the point of reference. Prints of Gerhard Marx, Douglas Goode, Elsa Pooley and Karel Nel, who were all participants in the *Art meets Science: Flowers as Images* exhibition, will be examined. Important issues such as the separation of botanical and fine art, and art and science will be discussed with reference to their work. This will be followed by discussion of works of Susan Sellschop (a ceramic mural) and Bronwen Jane Heath (a wood engraving) in order to demonstrate the different intentions and outcomes of these to artists. Three dimensional works of the three ceramists, Lesley-Anne Hoets, Samantha Read and Katherine Glenday are discussed in the final section of chapter four.

Chapter five examines the interrelationship of landscape and land. This chapter comprises two main sections. The first deals with aspects of landownership in South Africa reflected in recent ceramics and printmaking. Examples of the work of Marion Arnold and Ellalou O'Meara reinterpret images of early explorers and colonists situating them in a contemporary arena, demonstrating connections between past and present. Landownership is the overt subject in the Fée Halsted Berning, whose ceramic relief panel reflects a different perspective of landownership from the prints of the Schmidtsdrift artists. The second section surveys work of four artists whose images draw attention to ecological matters. Wendy Ross, Diana Carmichael, Marion Arnold and Carol Hofmeyr create images that highlight different aspects of the fragile balance of nature.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation considers nature imagery in selected South African artworks in relation to ecological issues.

The focus is on contemporary South African printmaking and ceramics. The impetus for this arose from my own interests and productions in these studio disciplines which formed the basis of the practical component of the MAFA degree. Arising from my studio work were issues to do with the history (and marginalisation) of printmaking and ceramics as media, as well as the use of nature imagery, amongst the visual arts in South Africa. It was thought necessary firstly to investigate and understand the historical roots and hierarchical boundaries and discourses that relegated printmaking, ceramics and nature imagery to a secondary place in artmaking before proceeding to a contextual analysis of recent South African printmaking and ceramics.

The text consists of five chapters. The first raises issues about the philosophy of Fritjof Capra in relation to discussions of deep ecology and ecofeminism; the second part of this chapter seeks to understand the scope of the words 'land' and 'landscape' as they have been applied in the latter part of the 20th century.

In following Capra, this dissertation proposes that nature imagery manifested in artworks under discussion deals -directly or indirectly- with ecological issues. Capra argues that all the major current problems facing the world cannot be understood in isolation since they are systemic problems: interconnected and interdependent. Hence Capra's thesis - which maintains that a major shift in thinking is required because the fragmented methodology that is characteristic of many academic institutions and government agencies is inadequate for dealing with these problems- is preferred as a new paradigm in order to recognise the fundamental interdependence of individuals, societies and the cyclical processes of nature.

Art works discussed in this dissertation will be related to debates proposed by this ecological philosophy. An ecological debate offers a starting point for a dialogue that can enrich the interpretation of nature imagery. Both Greta Gaard (1993: 10) and Capra (1992; 165) emphasize the importance of a dialogue in which all who are interested in creating a sustainable way of life for all inhabitants on earth can participate and to which they can contribute. One arena where dialogue can take place is in the study of landscape. Similarly, Postmodern interpretation of landscape as a text and the opinions of contemporary writers to be examined in the second part of chapter one support this view.

The second chapter examines the historical roots - inherited European traditions - of nature imagery in South Africa in order to find the underpinnings of contemporary expressions. This chapter attempts to show how paradigm shifts occurred in response to more specific qualities of the African environment perceived by artists in the late 20th century.

This chapter focuses on historical works previously categorised (and marginalised in relation to mainstream modernism) as 'Africana', 'botanical art'; it will be noted that the discussion includes reference to female artists such as Lady Anne Barnard and Annie Galpin. Ecological philosophy - challenging patriarchal and hierarchical structures which have often restricted the interpretation of nature imagery- will form the basis of an appreciation of a new paradigm for the reassessment of historical traditions in the representation of South African nature imagery. By using a more holistic evaluation (as suggested by Capra) the intention is to demonstrate a range of dialogues, until recently denied interpretation, in nature imagery. It is acknowledged that Postmodern thinking has broadened debates, encouraging the interpretation of work (such as the ceramics and printmaking discussed in this dissertation) that has previously been marginalised.

Chapters three, four and five constitute the main body of the dissertation. Here the focus is on nature imagery in contemporary ceramics and printmaking.

Before outlining material to be covered in the last three chapters, it is important to note here the reasons for a focus on ceramics and printmaking in this dissertation (these points fall outside the scope of the central thesis) :

- Although both are widely practised in South Africa, it is observed that ceramics and printmaking have had very little attention in the literature; for example, prior to 1997 the only authoritative work on South African printmaking (by F.L. Alexander) was published in 1962.¹
- It is noted that historically, painting and sculpture were the media offered as majors in South African academic institutions -printmaking was first offered as a major in the 1970's² - which probably contributed to public perceptions that they are the main forms of fine art.

¹ *Art in South Africa since 1900*. (Cape Town: A.A.Balkema). Even this publication was not devoted entirely to printmaking and did not examine in any depth how the medium affected the artmaking process and aesthetic outcomes. With regard to ceramics, *National Ceramics Quarterly* (ed Michael Guassardo) is a South African publication with subscribers who are largely members of the Association of Potters and the magazine is geared mainly towards catering for their needs. Consequently the work featured does not reach the broader art audience.

² It was only in 1970 that the Department of National Education acceded to the Port Elizabeth School of Art's request that printmaking should be accorded full major status. Other colleges and universities followed (Universities of Natal, 1974 and Orange Free State around 1976, Witwatersrand, Pretoria, Rhodes and South Africa in early 1980's, Michaelis School of Fine Art in 1977). It probably came to the fore in the 1970's because of the growing status of the discipline internationally, particularly the screenprinting of the pop artists. Some institutions still do not offer a major in printmaking, while others only offer it as part of graphic design (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 9-12).

- Major South African art collections and exhibitions tend to focus on painting and sculpture as the 'dominant' art forms. As a result, Elizabeth Rankin (1987: 148) contends, 'in many minds art is synonymous with painting.' It is interesting to note that Rankin argues (1987: 148) that sculpture receives far less attention than painting. Ceramics appears to be even further marginalised. Some reasons for this are the popular association of ceramics with craft, hindering its acceptance into the 'fine art' arena. Clay has also been associated as a transitory medium of sculpture. However, when clay is accepted as a legitimate medium for sculpture this tends to polarise 'art' and 'craft' even more as this reinforces the notion that sculpture is 'high art' and pottery and utilitarian ware is 'low art' and 'craft'.
- The art/craft issue has been debated in the ceramic circles of APSA (the Association of Potters of Southern Africa) for several decades³. Debates have involved issues of material and utility and whether a work of an artist has more merit than the work of a craftsperson. Most important, however, is the popular perception that art is inherently 'more important' than craft; in the South African context this has been further exacerbated by issues of race, gender and access to facilities and institutions. In short, it is noted that this historical division goes back to the Renaissance where the 'artist' was named, but the craftsperson remained anonymous. 'Fine art' was intellectual, while 'craft' utilitarian (Arnold 1993: 3-4). Regarding the art/craft debate Arnold states (1996: 15, 16) that feminist criticism does not categorise 'art' on the basis of medium, materials or genre but rather looks at creative expression. Feminist criticism also does not differentiate between professional 'fine' artists and craftspeople arbitrarily on the basis of training and exhibitions. However, the language of art criticism has reinforced attitudes about the merits of 'art' and 'craft' as the term 'decorative' is often used with derogatory connotations. Decoration is often an integral part of craft and it can be used symbolically and/or to beautify utilitarian forms, but it is also used in art where it can both reveal content and fulfil an aesthetic function (Arnold 1996: 15). In attempting to clarify the terms Kenton (1989: 11) cites Brettell's (1977) distinction that the artist devoted himself to 'seeing', while the craftsperson devoted himself to 'making'. Arnold, however notes (1993: 3-4) that good 'art' will take note of technical processes and good 'craft' will take note of aesthetics. Technical skill and understanding of the processes are as essential in the making of a print as imagination and intellect in conceiving the work (Hobbs and Rankin 1997:30).
- Often the public only associate printmaking with reproduction and consider it to have little value. Like ceramics, the complexities of the processes of printmaking have possibly contributed to its marginalisation and these and 'craft secrets' have also helped to set up barriers between them and their audience (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: vii).

³ See for example Rosemary Lapping-Sellars comments on Richard Slee's work as art or craft in *National Ceramics Quarterly* 13: 1990: 15.

- Attempts have been made to redress these problems with the publication of books by Wilma Cruise, and Phillippa Hobbs and Elizabeth Rankin⁴ as well as the CraftArt Project at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in 1993⁵.

Chapters three, four and five critically assess selected examples of recent printmaking and ceramics in the hopes that this dissertation will further contribute to a growing awareness of the richness of printmaking and ceramics as expressive media. The text emphasises that artists working in both the printmaking and ceramic disciplines employ unique processes, each with its own potential and different expressive character. Examination of these processes can sometimes assist and enrich the viewer's understanding of the work and the last chapters of this dissertation attempt to show how these processes are integral to the appearance and meaning of the work.

It will be seen that many of the issues raised in chapter two respect of the marginalisation of nature imagery also apply to printmaking and ceramics.

Divisions are for organisational and thematic reasons as follows:

- Chapter three deals with a pictorial convention of landscapes in which nature imagery is represented in the foreground, middle and far distant zones of a picture
- Chapter four discusses floral imagery that features specifically as a detail in the foreground of a landscape, or as a special topic (as in conventional botanical illustration) on the basis of discourses generated by the watershed exhibition, '*Art meets Science*.'
- Chapter five examines nature imagery which reflects on land ownership and/or dispossession. Consideration is given also to conservation in this chapter.

Chapter three (**Landscape**) focusses on the work of three artists who depict the South African landscape. Their different intentions and backgrounds are highlighted. Esias Bosch subscribes largely to European picturesque principles in his ceramics; it will be seen that his commissioned works are intended to appeal to a sense of peace and beauty perceived in the African environment. It is argued that printmakers Gerda Scholtemeijer and Kim Berman are aware that the image of the landscape cannot be separated from environmental, social and political issues pertaining to the

⁴ Cruise wrote *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa* (Cape Town: Struik Winchester) in 1991 in order to demonstrate the development that had taken place in ceramics in South Africa and that there was much work that was worthy of discussion. It was also intended to show the diversity of the work and an attempt to challenge the 'art/craft' debate by including utilitarian and non-utilitarian ware. Cruise acknowledged that the choice was to some extent a personal one. (Cruise 1991: 8) Rankin and Hobbs responded to the situation in printmaking by publishing the book, *Printmaking in a transforming South Africa* in 1997. It also served as a catalogue for an exhibition which was mounted at the Standard Bank Arts Festival in Grahamstown. It sought to assist in the understanding of processes of printmaking as well as the artworks themselves, recognising their status as unique works of art.

⁵ Arnold (1993: 3-4) coined the term 'craftart' in an attempt to find a term that would embrace two terms that she felt should never have become separate and hostile to one another. She felt that this would allow the creative work of the traditional visual artists to be recognised. It would also acknowledge that in terms of Postmodern thinking the boundaries between the creative arts disciplines were dissolving.

land. Berman is particularly aware that the African beauty is not necessarily a beauty that can be described in terms of the European picturesque as she seems to be seeking an African idiom instead.

Chapter four is titled **Flora** and comprises three sections about South African floral (and plant) imagery. Issues of 'botanical' art versus 'fine' art, and questions about the links between art and science are seminal matters here. Crucial to the material presented in this chapter is the 'Art meets Science' exhibition; works for inclusion were based initially on prints selected from the show by Gerhard Marx, Douglas Goode, Elsa Pooley and Karel Nel.

Works by Susan Sellschop and Bronwen Jane Heath examine another dimension of flora (plants), in expressing an awareness that their urban lives are often far removed from nature. Their different nature images are compared and contrasted in order to draw attention to the dissimilar functions of their work and the appropriateness of their choice of media (a large ceramic tile panel and a small wood engraving respectively) for these images.

Flora is the primary source of inspiration in the three-dimensional works of ceramists Lesley-Anne Hoets, Samantha Read and Katherine Glenday to be reviewed in the final section of chapter four. Their ceramics demonstrate a range of different clays, methods of working and firing: subject and medium forming a cohesive whole.

Ecological matters raised in chapter one are pertinent to chapter five, titled **Land** examines environmental, economic, social and political factors as pivotal aspects that influence perceptions of the land (and hence landscape). The material is presented in two sections for organisational reasons.

The first section of chapter five explores possession and dispossession of land. Marion Arnold and Ellalou O'Meara have used some of the earliest images of the South African environment as their source material; their work reflects on historical perceptions of the early explorers and colonists and reinterprets them to make contemporary comments on the land.

The topic of landownership as a contemporary issue is reflected in the ceramics of Fée Halsted-Berning. Her overt subject matter is explored in terms of the issue of ownership of agricultural land. In this section, the prints of the Schmidtsdrift artists are discussed in relation to the dispossession of their ancestral land that has recently affected them; their images reflect on both their old and their new adopted environments.

The second section of chapter five is concerned with the environment and conservation; works by four artists here draw attention to pertinent issues about the fragile balance of nature. Images by Wendy Ross, Diana Carmichael, Marion Arnold, and Carol Hofmeyr are examined in this section in order to present a range of diverse imagery representing a variety of aspects of this complex issue.

A conclusion summarises the findings of the text of individual chapters, and calls for an increased appreciation and appraisal of South African ceramics and printmaking which depict images of nature.

Chapter One

SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Nature imagery, either directly or indirectly, deals with ecological issues. It is not to suggest that all the artists discussed in this thesis consciously or purposely set out to debate, convey or question these issues; rather that an ecological discourse will enrich the reading of the imagery. In many instances, ideas that the artists seem to convey are consistent with some of the ideologies to be discussed below. This dissertation will also attempt to show that depictions of nature imagery examined in chapter two (**Historical roots**) have been subjected to a limited interpretation as a result of the Western intellectual tradition. A more holistic interpretation will reveal that many of the artists demonstrated (in varying degrees) an ecological view.

This chapter comprises two components. The first is a survey of the ideologies of Fritjof Capra who believes that a greater ecological understanding and insight is imperative to counter an impending global crisis. It will examine deep ecology upon which his theories are based as well as ecofeminism which Capra feels also addresses important aspects of the ecological debate. The second component will examine the debate that has surrounded the interpretation of landscape since the 1980's.

Photographs taken by astronauts in 1972, which showed pollution around the planet, created an awareness of the ecological crisis facing the world (Heller in Gaard 1993: 219). There is a consensus amongst a number of writers (Capra 1996, 1992, 1983, 1982, Berry 1988, Birkeland in Gaard 1993, Gaard 1993, Devall and Sessions 1985, Mies and Shiva 1993, and others) that the human species is developing the capacity to annihilate all life on earth. They contend that it is becoming increasingly imperative to address these issues and to challenge both ideological assumptions and hierarchical structures of power and domination.

Fritjof Capra is a high-energy physicist who has written and lectured comprehensively on philosophical aspects of modern science, on parallels between modern physics and religion (particularly Eastern spiritualism), and what he believes to be a current transformation in the west towards a culture of greater ecological understanding and insight (Edmunds 1998:1).

Capra (in Sessions 1995: 21-23) contends that, since the 17th century, scientific knowledge has been used to control, manipulate and exploit nature.¹ He feels that today both science and technology are used predominantly for purposes that are dangerous, harmful and above all, anti-

¹ During the 17th century (which was also the time of the voyages of discovery and the beginning of global expansion) a scientific revolution occurred as a result of the discoveries and theories of Galileo, Descartes, Bacon and Newton.

ecological, whereas prior to this the goals of science were wisdom, understanding of the natural order and living in harmony with that order.

Capra (1996: 6) maintains that these scientific discoveries resulted in a paradigm consisting of a number of entrenched ideas that have dominated our culture for several hundred years, shaped modern Western society and significantly influenced the rest of the world.² In this regard, chapter two demonstrates how discoveries and theories of the 17th and 18th centuries influenced art in South Africa.

Capra (1982: 1) maintains that we are in the midst of a complex world-wide crisis which affects every aspect of our lives; health and livelihood, the quality of the environment and social relationships, economy, technology and politics: it is an intellectual, social and moral crisis.

Capra (1996: 3-4; 1982: 5-7) further contends that the major current problems associated with this crisis (for example, environmental destruction, population growth, hunger and poverty, the threat of nuclear war) cannot be understood in isolation since they are all systemic problems: interconnected and interdependent. A major shift in thinking is required to solve them and he sees inter-connectedness as the most crucial aspect of the new paradigm thinking (Capra 1992: 166).

In the 1920's Thomas Kuhn led the idea of a 'paradigm shift' in physics - the result of quantum physics - and Capra states (1996:5-6) that the intellectual crisis that occurred then is mirrored today by a much broader cultural crisis. This new paradigm may be called a holistic worldview or seeing the world as an integrated whole rather than as a dissociated collection of parts. It may also be called an ecological view, if the term 'ecological' is used in the much broader or deeper sense encompassed by deep ecology. Deep ecological awareness recognises the fundamental interdependence of all phenomena and that, as individuals and societies, we are all imbedded and dependent on the cyclical processes of nature. For Capra 'ecological' incorporates 'holistic', but goes beyond to include the perception of how everything is embedded in its natural and social environment because in living systems connections with the environment are vital.

The sense in which Capra uses the term 'ecological' is associated with a specific philosophical school known as 'deep ecology' founded by the Norwegian Arne Naess in the early 1970's. Naess made the distinction between 'shallow' and 'deep' ecology (Capra 1996: 7). Shallow ecology is anthropocentric, or human centred: it views humans as above or outside of nature, as the source of all value and ascribes 'use' value to nature. Deep ecology, on the other hand, is ecocentric, that is,

² Among these ideas and values is the theory that the universe is a mechanical system composed of elementary building blocks, the view of the human body as a machine, the view of life in society as a competitive struggle for existence, the belief that unlimited material progress is to be achieved through economical and technological growth, as well as the belief that a society in which the female is subsumed under the male is one which follows a basic law of nature.

grounded in earth centred values and does not separate humans (or anything else) from the natural environment. Hence the world is not viewed as a collection of isolated objects, but as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent; humans are just one strand in the web of life (Capra 1996:7-8, 11; Capra 1982: 8-9).

Naess recognised that in the process of living all species use each other as food and shelter and that natural predation is a part of life. A central principle of deep ecology is the realisation that all life and non-living phenomena have an equal right to a harmonious existence and self-realisation: all forms of life have an inherent and intrinsic value, irrespective of any value they may have to human beings. There is no hierarchy of organisms with humans at the top and harm to one is harm to all (Devall and Sessions 1985: 67-68).

Capra (1996: 9) maintains that the paradigm shift he envisages not only requires a shift of perceptions and thinking, but also of values. This will include a shift in social organisation from hierarchies to networks. The problem he perceives with Western thinking is the tendency to allow self-assertive values to dominate integrative tendencies. Capra regards power, in the sense of domination over others, as excessive self-assertion. A balance should be obtained between rational and intuitive, analysis and synthesis, reductionist and holistic, linear and nonlinear, expansion and conservation, competition and co-operation, quantity and quality, and domination and partnership (Capra 1996: 10).

Naess sought two ultimate norms or intuitions which he identified as self-realisation and biocentric equality. He rejected dominant social paradigms, especially the dominance of culture over nature, masculine over feminine, wealthy over poor and western over non-western cultures. He recommended that premises and values be examined in order to discard outdated modes and to reassess those previously discarded. Naess sought a deeper more spiritual approach to nature, encouraging awareness of basic intuition and an experiential relationship with nature and non-human life (Devall and Sessions 1985: 66-77).

Similarly, for Capra, deep ecological awareness is ultimately a deep spiritual or religious awareness; when the individual feels a sense of belonging to, or interconnectedness with the cosmos as a whole. This is consistent with the so-called 'perennial philosophy' of spiritual traditions, and can be the spirituality of Christian mystics, that of Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism or the philosophy and cosmology underlying the Native American traditions and other spiritual traditions (Capra 1996: 7-8; Capra 1982: 8-9, 113). Taoism, for example, recognises the dynamic relationship between opposing qualities that are called the yin and the yang. Capra points out that the dominance of either of the following pairs cause the imbalance which has become a part of

western culture; feminine/masculine, co-operative/competitive, conservative/demanding, intuitive/rational, mystic/scientific, synthesising/analytic, holistic/fragmented (Capra 1981: 18).

In addition to deep ecology there are two other important philosophical schools of ecology, namely social ecology³ and feminist ecology or ecofeminism. Capra (1996: 8) contends that both of these schools address important aspects of the ecological paradigm, and rather than competing with each other, their proponents should try to integrate their approaches into a coherent ecological vision. Deep ecological awareness appears to him to provide the ideal philosophical basis for both an ecological lifestyle and environmental activism. Capra (1982: 5) noted that the feminist movement is gaining power and merging with and assimilating what he calls peace and ecology movements.

The term ecofeminism was first used by Francois D'Eaubonne and grew out of feminist, peace and ecology movements of the late 1970's and early 1980's. At the first ecofeminist conference in March 1980, interconnectedness and wholeness of theory and practice were endorsed as principles of ecofeminism (Miess and Shiva 1993: 13-14).

Gaard (1993: 5) states that ecofeminism should not be viewed as a single-issue movement and rests on the notion that the liberation of all oppressed groups must be addressed simultaneously. Furthermore, coalition building strategies which must include the efforts of men, together with women are essential to save the earth (Gaard 1993: 5).

While eco-feminism is similar to deep ecology in many respects, it must be examined here in some detail as it addresses the basic dynamics of social domination within the context of patriarchy, and goes beyond social ecology. Ecofeminists see the patriarchal domination by men as the prototype of all domination and exploitation in the various hierarchical, militaristic, capitalist and industrialist forms. In their view the exploitation of nature in particular, has gone hand in hand with that of women, who have been identified with nature throughout the ages (Capra 1996: 8-9).

Capra (1982: 11) notes that the feminist movement is one of the strongest cultural movements since the 1960's and for the first time in recorded history, patriarchy is openly being challenged. Because patriarchy is all-pervasive it is difficult to fully comprehend: female or feminine values have been subsumed under the male or masculine values in terms of religion, ritual, tradition, law, language, customs, etiquette, education and division of labour.

³ Social ecology focusses on the cultural characteristics and patterns of social organisation that have brought about the current ecological crisis. The common ground of many of these schools is the recognition that many of our social and economic structures are of a fundamentally anti-ecological nature. They have identified what they term the 'domination system' as the root of the problem. Patriarchy, imperialism, capitalism and racism are regarded as examples of social domination that are exploitative and anti-ecological (Capra 1996: 8).

Like Capra, ecofeminists also regard spirituality as an integral part of an ecological view. The opposition between spirit and matter, transcendence and immanence was abolished. The ecological relevance of this emphasis on spirituality lies in the rediscovery of the sacredness of life; life on earth can only be preserved if people again perceive all life forms as sacred and respect them as such. Quality is located in everyday life, in work, the things in the environment and in the immanence of humankind (Miess and Shiva 1993: 16-17).

Fundamental issues of survival and preservation of life does not only affect humanity, but also the diversity of flora and fauna. While this is a global issue, ecofeminists discovered numerous examples of local struggles against ecological destruction (Mies and Shiva 1993: 2-3).

Birkeland (in Gaard 1993: 19-20) outlines some of the basic precepts of ecofeminism and while the fundamental principles are those advocated by deep ecology, a greater emphasis is placed on challenging hierarchies. Ecofeminists contend that everything in nature has intrinsic value and a reverence for and empathy with nature and all life (or spirituality) is essential. An anthropocentric viewpoint should be rejected and a more biocentric view adopted in order to comprehend the interconnectedness of all life processes. Humans should not attempt to 'manage' or control nonhuman nature, but should work with the land. Use of agricultural land should be guided by an ethic of reciprocity and humans should only intrude on remaining natural ecosystems where it is necessary to preserve natural diversity. There must be a change from power based relationships and hierarchy towards an ethic based on mutual respect. False dualisms that are based on the male/female polarity must be integrated in our perception of reality. Examples of these would be thought versus action, spiritual versus the natural, art versus science and experience versus knowledge. Process is as important as goals because the manner in which things are done determines the outcome. In other words rebalance of the masculine and feminine in ourselves and in society must be sought.

Feminist movements have long criticised the structural division of man and nature which is analogous to the division between man and woman. They oppose the dichotomy which subordinates nature to man, woman to man, consumption to production, and local to global. The essence of ecofeminism is a challenge to the presumed necessity of power relationships; it is about changing from a morality based on 'power over' to one which is based on reciprocity and responsibility, and 'power to'. It is important to note that ecofeminism is not simply about a reversal of an antagonistic relationship between two hierarchically ordered parts, as this would ignore the symbioses and interconnections that nurture and sustain life, and hinder the enriching potential of the diversity of life and cultures. Furthermore, it is also a holistic value system which demands social transformation to promote equality, non-violence, cultural diversity, and

participatory, non-competitive and non-hierarchical forms of organisation and decision making (Birkeland in Gaard 1993: 19-20; Miess and Shiva 1993: 5-6).

Gaard (1993: 5) states that ecofeminists have described a number of connections between the oppressions of women and those of nature that are significant to understanding why the environment is a feminist issue, and conversely why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of environmental concerns. The way in which women and nature have been conceptualized historically in the Western intellectual tradition, for example, has resulted in devaluing whatever is associated with women, emotion, animals, nature and the body, while simultaneously elevating value in those things associated with men, reason, humankind, culture and the mind. Ecofeminists regard one of their tasks as to expose these dualisms and the ways in which feminising nature and naturalising or animalising women, has served as justification for the domination of women, animals and the earth by men (Gaard (ed) 1993: 5).

Kheel (in Gaard 1993: 244) states that the emphasis on developing new ways of perceiving the world is in keeping with a great deal of feminist moral theory. Ethics are seen as a natural outgrowth of how one views the self, including one's relationship with the rest of the world. Nature has been imaged as female, and depicted as the 'other'. This is the raw material out of which culture (often identified as the masculine) is formed.

Kheel (245-246) identifies two predominant images responsible for the separation of humankind from nature. One is the Beast which is often used as a symbol for all that is not human, that which is evil, irrational and wild. Civilisation -conquest of the wilderness- is achieved by driving out the Beast. The other is the depiction of nature as mindless matter which exists to serve the needs of the superior 'Man' and relegates nature to an inferior realm. While these images may seem unrelated, Kheel (in Gaard 1993: 247) contends that they both contribute to the notion of 'nature as the other'. In one, nature is conquered and subdued, and violence is the means by which it is achieved. In the other, reason is used to establish a hierarchical ordering which places 'man' above nature.

In terms of art history, an important ideology of ecofeminism it addresses are the dualisms that are based on male and female polarity and manifest themselves in, for example, art versus science, the intellectual versus the experiential, art versus craft, culture versus nature and man versus nature. These have contributed to the marginalisation of images of the natural world; artworks of this kind are discussed in the main body of this dissertation.

Both Gaard (1993: 10) and Capra (1992; 165) emphasize the importance of a dialogue in which all who are interested in creating a sustainable way of life for all inhabitants on earth can participate

and to which they can contribute. Nature imagery in art is one platform from which this dialogue could be launched. This dissertation will investigate how postmodern discourse appears to have shifted interpretation closer to the paradigm realised by a holistic worldview.

In recent years the study of landscape has become an arena where a more holistic dialogue has taken place; in view of the shift in thinking that has taken place, views expressed by writers which are relevant to the pictorial representation of land and landscape are examined in the dissertation. This will contextualise the scope of the word landscape. Certain terminology is associated with the discussion of landscape and this needs to be defined at the outset in order to clarify its use in this dissertation.

Mitchell (in Bermingham and Brewer 1995: 105) points out that Ernst Gombrich's *The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape* (1953), influenced at least three generations of landscape study. He points out (in Bermingham and Brewer 1995: 103) that writers [such as John Barrell (*The Dark Side of the Landscape* 1980) and Ann Bermingham (*Landscape and Ideology* 1986)] have taken the idealising and aestheticising account of British landscape -largely the result of Kenneth Clark's writing and the picturesque tradition- and moved the critique to a more detailed, historically nuanced political and ideological critique.

In art, the term 'landscape' was first used in late 16th century Holland to describe a genre in which natural scenery was accorded autonomy and was not used as the backdrop to narrative (Arnold 1996:164). However, in the 20th century the 'landscape' has come to have a wider usage. It is not only a technical term used by artists, but also by earth scientists, architects and planners, geographers and historians. Landscape represents the ordinary features that reflect the history and character of society (Meinig (ed.) 1979: 1-2). In this text the use of 'landscape' will include, but not be restricted to the genre use of the word in relation to nature imagery in South Africa.

Arnold (1996: 39-40) distinguishes between 'land' and 'landscape'. She defines 'land' as 'natural terrain with physical resources', and landscape as a 'pictorial term signifying a way of looking at and rendering natural scenery'. Landscape is the result of a combination of cultural attitudes and the study of nature. On the other hand, Mitchell (1994: 5) argues that landscape is not a genre of art, but a medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and other. He sees landscape as a natural scene mediated by culture which is both a represented and presented space. In other words the land does not have to be represented in order to become landscape.

Mitchell (1994: 14) acknowledges there is a genre of painting known as landscape where the subject matter is based on natural objects. He argues that this 'subject matter' is already a symbolic

form in its own right. He supports this statement with the argument that the subgenres of landscape painting, such as the Ideal, the Pastoral, the Sublime and the Picturesque, are not based on distinctions of ways of putting paint on canvas, but on the kinds of objects and the visual spaces represented. He argues further that landscape may be represented by any medium, but that even before it is represented, it is itself a physical and multi-sensory medium (consisting of elements such as earth, stone, vegetation, sky, sound and silence and light and darkness) (Mitchell 1994: 14).

Marx (1989: xix in Gidley and Lawson-Peebles) submits that certain cultural stances and aesthetic processes form perceptions of nature, particularly regarding what constitutes a landscape. When an image of nature is perceived as, or represented in a work of art, it acquires the status of landscape; human shaping changes 'land' to 'landscape'. The act of representation is sufficient to create and impose order.

In the 18th century a means of shaping 'chaotic' nature was to look at the terrain through a 'Claude glass', a small, portable picture frame. Schama (1995: 11-12) states that it was recommended to both artists and tourists of 'picturesque' scenery to enable them to see if the view approximated the Claudian ideal of 'picturesque'. Later variations tinted the glass with the light of a radiant dawn or roseate sunset. Schama (1995: 12) claims the notion of the 'picturesque' (discussed more fully in chapter two) as an idealised view of nature that goes back to the myths of Arcadia, where artists were creating 'landscape' out of geology and vegetation. All land can be landscape; the response of the viewer determines the perceived appearance which may or may not be depicted.

The evolution of landscape as an aesthetic subject in European art occurred at the same time as the first European settlement at the Cape. This was not the first time that landscapes had been depicted in Western art,⁴ but towards the end of the 16th century there was a fundamental change in attitudes to landscape. People in Europe took a much greater interest in the meaning and value of nature, and developed a new feeling for the beauty of natural scenery. Connected with this attitude to representations of the landscape was the emergence of a merchant middle class who were the chief patrons of landscape painting; a particularly important social factor in the shaping of the history of South African rural and urban spaces. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Preceding the emergence of middle classes in the European social order was a shift in scientific thinking caused by the scientific rationalists such as Galileo, Kepler and Newton and those associated with the new empirical theory of knowledge such as Bacon, Locke and Descartes. The

⁴ Landscape imagery that occurred in paintings prior to the Dutch landscape genre, was not the autonomous subject matter. It played a supportive role where the main focus was on the people in the picture.

thinking moved away from abstract universals to observable, concrete particulars: it became generally accepted that individuals could discover the truth by means of their own immediate observations. The discovery of the principles of light and perspective meant that it became possible to convey the illusion of objects existing in a defined, real space. Consequently an interest in topography developed. The ability to depict more realistic, descriptive landscapes did not result in the notion of ideal nature being abandoned; rather it became possible to create a more credible illusion (Marx 1989: xvii in Gidley and Lawson-Peebles).

Mitchell (1994: 8-9) points out that the 17th century was not the first period that landscape art flourished at a time when an imperial power was at its height. He noted that at the height of Chinese imperial power, for example, Chinese landscape art demonstrated a richness and complexity. He takes issue with authors such as Kenneth Clark who give landscape painting, as distinct from perception, a uniquely Western and modern identity.

In terms of South African art, his comments on Chinese landscape painting are important to note for two reasons. Firstly, the English became fascinated by China and its material culture and this played a crucial role in the development of 18th century English landscape aesthetics. This occurred at the time when England was experiencing its rise as an imperial power, and consequently, these ideas were disseminated in its colonies, one of which was South Africa. Ideas such as the notion of paradise would, therefore, have influenced landscape aesthetics in South Africa. Even today this cross-fertilisation of cultures continues to influence the artmaking of many contemporary South African artists.

Secondly, landscape imagery on Chinese porcelain came to the Cape via the trade route. The Nanking Willow Pattern with its willows lining the banks of flowing rivers, was extremely popular ceramic ware in many middle-class households in the 19th century. These landscape images were appropriated by potters in Staffordshire and elsewhere and exported to the colonies (Copeland 1990: 3). Much of this imagery was adopted in ignorance of the conventions of Chinese landscape representation which is encoded with meanings that correspond to human features and emotions. Water, for example, is regarded as the blood of the mountains, and grass and trees, the hair. British interpretations would thus sometimes be misrepresentations (Copeland 1990: 10). These conventions support Mitchell's claim that landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture.

Schama (1995: 9) points out that even when a landscape appears free of culture it may turn out to be a product of it. Dutch painting, which is inextricably linked with the landscape genre, is one such example. This landscape was largely constructed by humans as approximately 600sq.km. of Dutch land was reclaimed from sea and inland lakes between 1590-1664 (Jensen Adams in Mitchell

1994:40). South Africa also has examples where the intervention of humankind has changed the physical appearance of the landscape. Hall (1986: 33) states that in South Africa one cannot presume that present vegetation patterns are the same as they were 2 000 years ago, as the intervention of humankind (including Stone Age pastoralism and Iron Age farming) might have altered them.

Several other writers also support the view that landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. Pierce Lewis (in Meinig 1979:11-32) argues that by examining our landscapes we would come to a better understanding of ourselves. Meinig (1979:6) contends that all landscapes are regarded as symbolic, as expressions of cultural values, social behaviour and cumulative actions of individuals upon particular places over a period of time. Similarly Turner (in Paulson 1982: xi) states that landscape, as a backdrop for human activity, is a commentary on the human condition.

Arnold (1996: 39) states that landscape is a way of looking at and depicting natural scenery. This depiction is the product of artifice and is the result of a study of nature upon which the artist imposes cultural views. She argues that as with other pictorial genres, landscape depiction is influenced by prevailing conventions and changes in aesthetic approaches. This dissertation will demonstrate how conventions such as the picturesque influenced the development of the landscape aesthetic, and how these conventions changed in the 20th century in South Africa to accommodate changes in aesthetic taste.

Arnold states (1996:40) that the viewer decides, on looking at the picture whether the image is a representation of appearances (life) or if it has been transformed (art). Paulson (1982:21) states that every painted landscape is about culture or art as well as nature. Postmodernist interpretations view the landscape as not just a phenomenon, but also as a 'text'. Here, the image is an intellectual space or place of discussion where the artist has left a series of signs that carry ideological and psychological meaning (Arnold 1996: 40). Mitchell (1994: 1-2) argues that Modernist and Postmodernist interpretations of landscape, as an object to be seen and a text to be read, or what landscape 'is' and 'means', should be extended to find out what it 'does'. This would enable us to see how it works as a cultural practice; what we have done and are doing to our environment, what the environment in turn does to us.

The artist mediates information in representing natural form and space. When depicting landscape, certain choices must be made in order to present a two-dimensional image of an extremely complex three-dimensional environment. The land becomes a cultural and physical space where artists make choices about the selection and arrangement of the imagery. Visual factors include the viewpoint/s, the forms that will be included and those that will be omitted, different light qualities, or even

certain sites within the larger landscape. These choices will all be determined by the aesthetic and pictorial attitudes of the artist. The artist's attitude to the land itself affects the way that the landscape is depicted. At the same time it must be noted that in the depiction of landscapes, while the artist may create the image with certain intentions, the attitudes of the viewer also affects the interpretation of the image.

In the following chapter, particular attention is given to the development of landscape painting, the 'picturesque' landscape of the late 18th century being of particular importance as a pictorial device that was very influential in rendering the South African landscape. The use of this convention of representation by colonial artists is examined. Problems in rendering the South African landscape in terms of the 'picturesque' and the need to develop a unique African picturesque are discussed. This and other factors that have enabled paradigm shifts to take place in the representation of landscape in the 20th century are outlined. Historical sources are traced in order to demonstrate how the rendering of the metaphorical landscape developed.

Chapter Two

HISTORICAL ROOTS

‘Upon the top of this promontory, Nature hath as it were found herself a delightful bower, here to sit and contemplate the great seas which from the south, east, and west beat upon this shore, and therefore hath here formed a great plaine, pleasant in situation, which with the fragrant herbes, variety of flowers and flourishing verdure of all things seems a terrestrial Paradise. It is called the table of the Cape.’ (Samuel Purchas 1611 in Fehr 1969: 25)

Ever since the trans-Atlantic voyages of discovery, Europeans have drawn upon topographical scenes and natural objects to depict the New World. In the passage quoted above, Samuel Purchas describes Table Mountain as a landmark of an earthly paradise from which vantage point the wonders of nature may be admired. Since 1611, many artists have attempted to portray Table Bay. The earliest of them worked from written and possibly verbal descriptions, and others from sketches that were taken back to Europe. From this early date, the natural environment of Africa became associated with a pristine unspoilt Eden that was remote from the cultured vistas of Europe.

As the travellers explored the interior of Africa they experienced the environment as a place different from home and were fascinated by it. Africa was ‘exotic’¹ and the wild, untamed continent contrasted with the built environment as well as the landscapes of Europe. They attempted to depict the ‘exotic’ in both their written as well as visual descriptions in the written and/or visual language familiar to them.

This chapter will examine some of the works and ideas that have influenced perceptions of nature imagery in South African art. It must be pointed out that the intention is not to cover all aspects of artmaking over the last 400 years. The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, to draw attention to historical works and artists that have until recently been categorised and marginalised. This will include ‘Africana’, botanical art and the work of some women artists. Secondly, as paradigms of nature imagery in South African art have their roots in European traditions, it is helpful to examine them and to see which shifts have allowed artists to respond to the specific qualities of the African environment. Aspects of ecological philosophy that were discussed in the previous chapter will be applied in order to broaden the debate and interpretation of the work discussed.

¹ Exotic can mean both ‘introduced from abroad, not native’ and ‘remarkably strange or unusual’ and indigenous means ‘native or belonging naturally (to place)’ (*Oxford Dictionary of Current English*). It can thus be seen that although what the early explorers saw was in fact indigenous because it was native and not introduced from abroad it was remarkably strange and unusual to them. In order to make the environment less alien they introduced species that were indigenous to their countries and these looked less exotic to them. While certain species might look strange to contemporary artists the responses of the artists dealt with in this thesis indicate that those who depict them have chosen to do so because they are indigenous.

This chapter begins with a brief historical survey of early representations of floral images in order to demonstrate the interest in botanical specimens that was consistent with the quest for scientific knowledge by the early explorers. The 18th century is viewed as seminal; at this time there was intense interest in Europe in botany, horticulture and gardening as a result of exploration and scientific discoveries.

The emphasis of 17th and 18th century discoveries in the natural sciences (and the nascence of, for example, geology, meteorology and optics) on the importance of empirical observation also influenced the descriptive nature of landscape painting (Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 93, 94). As with floral images, early landscape depictions were also important in terms of document. The examination of landscape highlights developments from the earliest images executed in the 17th century through the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, noting the major stylistic trends.

From the late 18th century onwards artists in South Africa have drawn from the Western tradition of art-making and from the wide range of styles of this tradition. It will be seen that the organising of pictorial elements of landscape in terms of the picturesque and sublime, which was popular in England in the late 18th century, influenced artists in South Africa such as Thomas Baines, Lady Anne Barnard, Thomas Bowler and his pupils, as well as the traveller William Burchell. Particular attention will be given to artists such as Baines (whose work has, until recently, been categorised as ‘Africana’ and hence subjected to a limited interpretation), as well as some of the women artists of the time.

A very important development in South African landscape painting that occurred at the beginning of the 20th century was a strong movement towards a ‘national’ art. Some of the ideas of Cathcart William Methven will be examined. He is generally regarded as the Natal founder of the landscape school and promoter of the idea of a ‘national’ art (Hillebrand 1986: 25). In terms of deep ecology it will be seen that this is an anthropocentric attitude to nature.

The works discussed here will demonstrate how the artists employed the styles of representation with which they were familiar. However, pictorial problems with depicting the African environment in terms of the European picturesque (because of the peculiarities of the African environment) were encountered by artists and necessitated paradigm shifts. It is interesting that some of these problems were raised by Burchell in his *Travels into the Interiors of Southern Africa* in 1822. These will be examined as they are problems addressed by a number of contemporary artists, some of whom appear to be striving to achieve what Burchell called an ‘African picturesque’.

A further important development was the shift in representation of nature imagery that took place after the 1920's. The final section of this chapter will discuss some of the artists who challenged paradigms and hierarchies. This discussion will lead to a consideration of how the advent of Modernism and Postmodernism paved the way for the inclusion of socio-political and environmental content in much contemporary work.

The Floral foreground

When artists travel across South Africa they encounter the floral foreground: the rich bio-diversity of South African flora. However, it is interesting to note that the first plant of South African origin known to have been illustrated was the seaweed *Ecklonia maxima* - observed from a ship. Cornelis de Houtman's account of their expedition to the East Indies was published in 1598 and contains a rather crude attempt at illustrating the 'trombas', which are shown floating off the Cape coast (Gunn and Codd 1981; 7).

The Dutch colonies, one of which was in the Cape, were an important stimulus for the botanical illustrators. The early explorers saw the variety of flora and fauna that the South African landscape had to offer, and travellers on their way from the West Indies to Europe between 1607-1644 collected specimens which were subsequently illustrated (Blunt and Stearn 1994: 309). Artists worked from flowers grown from cultivated seed, specimens that were collected, and sketches that travellers had done (Arnold 1992: 11-12).

After 1651, the interest in collecting and illustrating increased to such an extent that in 1894 Gregor Kraus named the period from 1687-1771 'die Capzeit' or the time of the Cape (Blunt and Stearn 1994: 308, 309). Jacob Breyne of Danzig published *Exoticarum ... plantarum centuria prima*, in 1678 which included the illustrations of 48 Cape species. Willem Ten Rhyne corresponded with Breyne and his words illustrate his astonishment at the variety of flora he encountered, '...for this soil, barren though it may be, abounds in plants of every sort...' (Gunn and Codd 1989: 28) The explorers were fascinated by the indigenous flora because it was spectacularly different from anything with which they were familiar.

A need arose for nursery catalogues when nurseries were established in order to cater for the increasing interest of the landed gentry in ornamental plants. Thus, a new use for botanical illustrations was the result of socio-economic factors. One of the earliest catalogues was produced by the Dutch nurseryman Emanuel Sweert, whose *Florigium*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1612 illustrated plants available on his stand at the Frankfurt Fair of 1612. Five plants said to be from the Cape were illustrated (Gunn and Codd 1989: 15).

Early in the 18th century studies were made (probably by Jan Hartog) of *Proteacea*, some of which were engraved for use in publications. Illustrations of indigenous plants were made by various other artists, including Francis Masson (*Stapelia novae*, 1796-1797)(Blunt and Stearn 1994: 131-132) Masson and Carl Thunberg were the two collectors who introduced the most new species to Europe from the Cape area. Francis Masson realized the importance of drawing plants ‘in their native climate ... they possibly exhibit the natural appearance of the plants better than figures from subjects growing in exotic houses do’. His were almost the only early botanical illustrations that were made from the living plants in South Africa (Rix 1981: 153). It will be seen in subsequent chapters that the aspect of experiencing the environment is an important one for many contemporary artists.

Arabella Roupell (*Specimen of the Flora of South Africa by a Lady*, 1849) and Harry Bolus (*Icones Orchidearum austro-africanum*, 1893-1913) were two other useful contributors (Blunt and Stearn 1994: 131-132) to a growing field in what was to become more clearly defined as scientific studies in the 19th century.

It can be seen that there was considerable interest in South African plants, both for cultivation and for illustration. The economic value of these plants had already been recognised. Blunt maintains that ‘among the most noteworthy 20th century achievements is the flowering of botanical art in South Africa’. This is because ‘the artist is offered a diversity and colourful range of plants such as proteas, heaths, stapelias, mesembryanthemums, aloes, red-hot pokers, wand-flowers, orchids and bulbous plants, that few, if any floristic regions would be able to rival’ (Blunt and Stearn 1994: 308).

The division of floral representation into ‘botanical’ art and ‘fine’ art has resulted in botanical art being ignored by the fine art world. An example of this is the work of Marianne North. She was a traveller who produced more than 100 paintings in the nine months she spent in South Africa in 1882-1883. She did not restrict herself to the conventions of botanical art and adopted an artistic rather than scientific approach in her vibrant depictions of nature. She depicted individual species which are integrated with their habitat. North often extended the picture plane to include elements of landscape, however, the detailed foregrounds are more important than the panoramas. Sometimes a number of different species are integrated into one composition and there is no background at all. They are about interconnectedness and reflect her focus as that of the ecologist. Since she decided to exhibit at Kew, this placed her work within the context of botanical art and outside the art world. Arnold maintains that her images should be given ‘serious consideration as art that interprets South Africa as a place that is uniquely defined by its plant wealth’ (Arnold 1996:69-71). Chapter four will examine some recent floral images that will support this statement.

Marianne North and other women artists such as Arabella Roupell and Mary Barber were not given the same recognition as their male contemporaries because of the social conventions of the time. In the context of South African art, this has historical roots; Victorian women were encouraged to become accomplished painters, but not taken seriously as professionals. Arnold (1996: 7) notes that the Cape landscape suited the ideas of the time; it was scenic and women were encouraged to work within the parameters of the current ideas of composition. Furthermore, flower painting was regarded as a genteel activity in which Victorian ladies should become accomplished in order to fill their leisure time. They were encouraged to work from nature. When they drew and painted plants they could work within the home. An aspect of their work that is often overlooked is that in depicting the rich floral kingdom of firstly the Cape, and then Natal as it became a crown colony they left an important heritage of document and paved the way for important botanical research.

However, by the early 20th century women could work professionally as botanical artists, and as botanical research increased, they began to make major contributions to important botanical publications. Unfortunately this work has not been given its due recognition in South African art literature because botanical art has been classified as scientific illustration that serves botany, rather than as a genre of art (Arnold 1996: 71).

Early landscape images

Cartography was the ancient discipline of representing the Earth's physical features geographically on a map or chart. With the discovery of the New World, new techniques were needed and new scientific methods were employed which resulted in maps being printed which were increasingly accurate and sophisticated (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1980: Vol. II 600).²

When 17th century explorers started their voyages of discovery, drawn images were an important documentary way of showing the Europeans what the New World looked like. A great deal of the pictorial art that was produced during the first 150 years of Dutch occupation in South Africa was for overseas consumption, and executed by visiting artists (Fransen 1982: 133). On the whole, idiosyncratic aspects of the land featured centrally in these representations; the 'otherworld' features were exaggerated to maximise their exotic appeal to a European audience.

Table Bay and Table Mountain became one of the best known views of South Africa and the first known illustrations are in the account of Cornelis Houtman, who sailed to India in 1598. The early illustrations are topographically inaccurate as they were usually done by artists in Holland, based

² A topographic map is the cartographic representation of the various features of the Earth's surface and shows as accurately as possible, the location and shape of both natural and man-made features. The natural features are shown in relief (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1980: Vol. X 48).

on descriptions and rough sketches. When artists started to spend longer periods at the Cape and work *in situ*, their representations were based on observation and the proportions were more topographically correct (Fransen 1982: 133-134).

As the interior of the country remained largely unexplored during the Dutch occupation, it was only during the British occupation that migration to the north occurred, resulting in depictions of that landscape. At the same time, there was an emergence of fine arts as an occupation which was practised by professionals and non-professionals at the Cape. During the 1820's and 1830's the first graphic artists started to work there. The most important of these were the lithographers, the first of whom was Richard Middleton who reproduced the watercolours of J.F. Comfield. These reproductions help to popularise the works of art (Fransen 1982: 145,191, 195-196).

While scientific advances influenced the development of the depiction of nature imagery, Klonk (1996: 6) agrees with the contemporary writers (such as Bermingham) who point out that socio-economic factors must also be taken into account. Klonk states that the process of agrarian enclosure (the consolidation of farm plots and the division of communal lands that occurred in Western Europe) and the emergence of a landowning bourgeois society influenced changes that took place in British landscape painting. One of these was the tradition of topography which developed out of the mapping of estates. Following their enclosure in the 18th century, English landowners commissioned Dutch and Flemish landscapists to produce accurate renditions of their country houses and the extent of their land (Klonk 1996: 6,71).

Scott Bredin (1997: 20) states that the distinction in 18th and 19th century British art between 'topography' and 'art' was that 'topography' was associated with the accurate representation of the landscape, whereas 'art' was associated with a concern for 'effect'. This distinction is also often made with regard to 'Africana' and 'art'.

Bredin (1979: 13) cites the watercolours of Captain Robert Garden (1821-1859) who was stationed in Natal from 1848-1853, as an example of images classified as Africana. Robert Garden is an important precursor to the British officers who did illustrations on campaign during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. Most officers in the British army are likely to have received a degree of tuition in topographical art, and as a result topographical drawing, cartography, and along with them the panorama, were given impetus in South Africa as a result of the British military presence (Bredin 1979: 13).

The panorama (the hybrid of topographical drawing and the map), became a popular form of representation of Western culture. They included views over cities and the vast panoramas of the

early 19th century. The panorama provides information in a visual medium while it dispenses with the symbols, directions and names of a map. In pictorial representations of the landscape, the position of the horizon, which is the boundary where the sky seems to meet the ground or sea, is determined by the viewpoint that the artist chooses; the higher the vantage point of the observer, the lower and more distant the visible horizon. Elevated vantage points assist in clarifying the complex spatial relationships which lie below in a similar manner to a map and encourage panoramic representations of the landscape (Bredin 1997: 13-14).

The 'Picturesque' landscape

The 17th century Italianate landscapes of Claude (1600-1682) and Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) established a taste in England for the atmospheric depiction of space. With regard to 18th century academic landscape painting in England, the works of Claude epitomised the ideal of landscape beauty, while the works of Rosa, depicted the wilderness and set the paradigms of the sublime (Klonk 1996: 9).

Rev. William Gilpin (1724-1804) popularised the term 'picturesque beauty' in the late 18th century and defined it as 'that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture' (Bermingham in Mitchell 1994: 86). He derived his system from the study of the work of Claude Lorraine, Gaspar Dughet and Salvatore Rosa, and his goal was to enable any amateur to structure any view into a picturesque format (Bermingham in Mitchell 1994: 86). He taught the British tourist how to look at natural landscape as an ordered, coherent pictorial whole which would involve the imaginative structuring of the landscape into a series of spatially controlled sequences in the picture, namely foreground, middle ground and distance. Gilpin regarded detail 'to be the inferior part of the picture' and he treated the foreground as an afterthought, regarding it as '...commonly but an appendage. The middle distance generally makes the scene and requires the most distinction.' (Bermingham in Mitchell 1994: 88).

Picturesque landscape painting is, therefore, not concerned primarily with the accurate recording of nature. Gilpin felt that changes could be made to the landscape such as increasing the altitude of the mountains, adding trees to the foreground or even changing the course of the rivers if necessary (Bermingham in Mitchell 1994: 89). The contrived nature of art-making was thus acknowledged, but a new set of criteria prioritizing romantic wildness over classical formality determined the selection and structuring of visual elements with a generalizing of nature. He defined the characteristics of the picturesque landscape as roughness, irregularity, variety and chiaroscuro. Scenery came to be viewed in terms of its tone, texture and undisturbed 'naturalness' (Arnold 1996:40; Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 93, 94).

By the end of the 18th century there was growing criticism of some of Gilpin's drawing style, most of it coming from drawing master William Marshall Craig. His chief objection was to Gilpin's sketchy drawing style and his formulaic compositions of the landscape. Craig felt that landscape drawing should start with the foreground and that careful observation of detail should take place. The artist would then work from the foreground into the space of the landscape, and in doing so would emphasize the individual features and draw attention to what might be regarded as the less important details (Bermingham in Mitchell 1994: 86,88).

Attention to detail will be seen in the works of many colonial artists in South Africa. Individual species and features of the landscape were very important aspects of their work, as one of their aims was to document and to convey information about the new country to the people back home. As artists they were stimulated by the new environment that they were experiencing.

The concept of the 'sublime' was articulated by Edmund Burke (1729-1797) and was an alternative category of aesthetic beauty to the picturesque. His work *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* was published in 1757 and proved to be very influential. In this work he is concerned with the sublime and beautiful as forms of aesthetic response, products of human experience which are classified according to forms of pain and pleasure. For Burke, whatever caused a sense of danger, pain or terror was associated with the sublime, while beauty caused pleasure. The sublime, therefore, was an emotion which was entirely the effect of an outside cause (Klonk 1997: 13). While Gilpin advocated roughness, sudden variation and irregularity for the picturesque, for Burke the beautiful was characterised by smoothness, gradual variation and picturesque objects.

It is interesting to note that Lady Anne Barnard was a friend of Burke's, and when she first started to paint at the Cape in 1797, a fascination of the sublime and the picturesque had superseded classical, idealised attitudes to nature and beauty. Consequently, the prevailing concept of the picturesque influenced many of the Cape colonial artists; foremost of them being Thomas Baines and Thomas Bowler, as well as many of Bowler's female pupils.

Lady Anne Barnard produced the first professionally executed pictorial studies of South Africa that were made by a woman. Her work, therefore, marks the beginning of the history of pictorial views (and points of view) that give us a female, white, English vision of South African land and landscape. She was also a writer and sometimes her sketches were to illustrate her writings, but at other times they were a direct response to her environment. She presented the (to her) unfamiliar African landscape through the eyes of an English lady who saw the world from a late 18th century

perspective. The attitudes of the time to nature and society influenced her pictorial style and content. The issue of land is therefore raised when looking at her landscapes (Arnold 1996: 38-39).

Lady Anne Barnard's viewpoint in her depictions of Table Mountain is an interesting one: like many other women artists Barnard was not free to go where she pleased and often her vantage point was restricted to views from her home in the castle. When she accompanied her husband on his expeditions she recorded her observations in her sketch books. Unlike her male contemporaries (Gordon, Le Vaillant and Daniell) who sought curiosities, wilderness and images of exotic Africa, she focussed on images of ordinary scenes that showed human fortitude, adaptability and survival (Arnold 1996: 41-43).

Prior to the arrival of Baines, William Burchell (botanist, ornithologist, anthropologist, natural historian) travelled extensively across the Cape Colony and beyond its borders between 1811 and 1813. He recorded his researches in *Travels in the Interiors of Southern Africa* (1822) (Burchell, William J. London: Batchworth, 1953). He was also an accomplished amateur painter and a keen observer of the South African landscape. When he saw the view over what are now the Botanical Gardens at Kirstenbosch, he recorded his impressions. It is useful to quote him at length here:

'The view from this spot...is the most picturesque of any I have seen in the vicinity of Cape Town. The beauties here displayed to the eye could scarcely be represented by the most skilful pencil; for this landscape possessed a character that would require the combined talents of a Claude and a Both: but at this hour, the harmonious effect of light and shade, with the enchanting appearance of foliage in the foreground, and the tone of the middle distances, were altogether far beyond the painter's art. The objects immediately surrounding us, were purely sylvan; a blue extent of distance terminated the landscape both in front and on the right. To the left, the noble Table Mountain rose in all its grandeur...The last beams of the sun, gleaming over the rich, varied and extensive prospect, laid on the warm finishing lights, in masterly and inimitable touches.' (Travels 1:51-52 quoted in Coetzee 1988:36)

In this description Burchell uses elements of a pictorial language of expression to describe the scene, composed like a painting, with planes of foreground (the foliage), middle ground and far distance with the mountain on the left. He specifies the landscape paradigm as originating in Claude seen through English eyes in the picturesque tradition. His comments on the difficulties of rendering the tone, light and chiaroscuro of Kirstenbosch are primarily pictorial and aesthetic observations.

J.M.Coetzee (1988:37) notes that we use the word 'landscape' today to designate both a specific terrain and the general character of that terrain. However, Burchell would have used the word landscape to refer to both the topographical and aesthetic, and the word 'picturesque' to refer to nature and art at the same time, that is, to physical landscape conceived pictorially. Picturesque

differs in this respect from the beautiful and the sublime, which refer to either art or nature but not to a relation between the two (Coetzee, 1988: 37, 40).

Pictorial Africana

In the 19th century amateurs were people without formal training, but with a certain amount of talent, who painted in their spare time. In the late 19th century, South Africa followed the British trend of a proliferation of amateur artists (Hillebrand 1984: 160-163).

Some of the artists (both professional and amateur) were travellers like Burchell, others were temporary residents and a few were permanent residents (Fransen 1982: 191-202). Their main motivation was to record what they saw. The subject matter consisted mainly of scenery or events, flora and fauna, and people and objects. These drawings and paintings were regarded as documents of authentic experience and have become 'pictorial Africana'. Until recently the aesthetic qualities of Africana, as well as the information that these images supply with regard to Victorian and colonial taste and experience, have been overlooked (Arnold 1996: 5).

During the nineteenth century Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) articulated the belief in the dispassionate value of scientific observations in nature in his distinction between the 'subjective' and 'objective' contemplation of nature. It was argued that 'objective' understanding of nature could be attained through meditation, reason and enlarged horizons resulting from exploration and invention. He felt that aesthetic appreciation and scientific understanding were not mutually exclusive, but served to reinforce one another (Kenton 1989: 24-25). This school of thought influenced the attitude of artists such as Baines, and influenced the categorisation of work as 'Africana'.

The artistic significance of the vast body of work produced by Thomas Baines (1820-1875) has, until recently, often been overlooked as it has been classified as 'illustration' and 'Africana'. Carruthers and Arnold state (1995: 167) that the placement (both physically and perceptually) of his work was partly responsible for its classification. Studies by writers such as Carruthers and Arnold, however, have drawn attention to the multifaceted nature of his imagery. Postmodern thinking, by reassessing paradigms and hierarchies, has also contributed to the reassessment of the work of Baines and other Victorian artists.

Baines was partly responsible for his paradoxical position as a British artist and scientific illustrator. He did not court the art world and as a result was disregarded by the High art establishment who were mostly unaware of his existence. He promoted his work as accurate and objective because he sought the recognition of the scientific establishment; consequently he was

relatively well known in scientific circles. Because of the school of thought at that time that believed that rational enquiry produced objective truth, Baines was reluctant to claim aesthetic merit for his work; he did not want to be accused of a tendency towards subjective expression. He allowed himself to be classified as an artist-traveller by using paintings to illustrate lectures; he used his images to support his words rather than as autonomous works. In addition many of his works have been reproduced in books regarded as 'Africana' (Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 85,87,167).

Carruthers and Arnold (1995: 82-85,87,167) maintain that while his work was regarded as Africana and analysed by historians, viewers failed to recognize that Baines used 'persuasive imaging'³. He did not see things with a scientific detachment, but with all the experiences that made him who he was, as well as the knowledge and passion that made him an artist. His work has both aesthetic and social dimensions that show his versatility, curiosity about the world, as well as the values that were peculiar to him at that particular time and in that particular place. Though he recorded reality in many sketches and in illustrations of plants, birds, animals, objects and people, he also used his imagination and constructed his own pictorial reality. He used expressive tonal marks and depicted the ephemeral quality of nature. As his handling of watercolours became more confident, he showed an awareness of colour and light. His landscapes show his attempt to convey the quality and tonality of colour in the African landscape. His instinctive expressive use of colour show that he was not entirely comfortable with the artistic conventions of the time which would have sought an exact representation (Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 82-85,87,167).

Baines also used the artistic conventions that were popular at the time to convey his intentions. One of these was the notion of the 'picturesque', but he would not have subscribed to Gilpin's neglect of landscape details as documentation was an important aspect of his art. Carruthers and Arnold (1995: 94) note that his response to the Victoria Falls, which he reached in 1862, was not merely that of the picturesque, but rather of the sublime; he represented what he saw as awesome and magnificent. His romantic temperament responded directly to what he saw, but it was tempered by growing Victorian scientific attitudes to the geology, flora and fauna of Africa. While he included much detailed information of the landscape and the flora and fauna and he selected information to convey the authenticity of the scene, his images are mostly not merely topographical representations of the landscape, but his own artistic interpretations. His work shows that he was neither wholly romantic, nor wholly realist.

³ Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 175 Ch.9 note 3 - a useful term to describe how naturalism, as a convention convinces the viewer of the 'reality' of what is in fact 'selected and manipulated' pictorial information.

From a Postmodern perspective, his work is interesting both as art and social document. Baines believed that what he found and saw should be recorded, and if it was new or unusual it should be added to the knowledge of the time. He combined scientific exactitude and emotional pleasure, and in doing so, combined natural history and aesthetic appreciation. Baines worked both from life, where his main objective was to record what he saw, and in the studio where he structured his ideas into ordered compositions (Carruthers and Arnold 1995: 85, 87).

Klonk (1997: 101) notes that in the first decade of the 19th century the practice of sketching outdoors from nature was most influential on British watercolours. The use of watercolour meant that the artists used colour on the spot, and also elevated the status of the sketch done outdoors to a work in its own right, which was worthy of exhibition. The result was that there was a new evaluation of the diversity of natural phenomena and the ephemeral appearances of nature. In this respect it can be seen that Baines should not merely be seen as an Africana painter. In England, Cornelius Varley (1781-1873) had combined a scientific background with his work as an artist, and his sketches pioneered a new attitude to the depiction of nature (Klonk 1997: 102).

Klonk (1997:173) comments that in recent years some historians have submitted the theory that it was this practice of sketching that opened the door to modern art, because by leaving the studio, the artist became free from conventions. This led to a fundamental feature of modern art, namely the choice of everyday or seemingly unimportant subject matter. She states that though credit for this has traditionally been given to the French Impressionists, more recently, art historians have attributed this to the artists of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It is worth noting that Baines was one of a number of artists in South Africa working in this manner.

While the interpretation of the work of male artists like Baines is often restricted, it is well known. That of the women artists who were his contemporaries is hardly known, and, as a result, important and interesting perspectives are overlooked. It is important to note the role that patriarchal attitudes in South Africa played at the time.

Women were merely meant to use their leisure time productively and not expected to take their art seriously, or to be competitive, or to try to generate an income from their work. They were not always regarded as 'professional artists' and as a result, their studies of nature have often been regarded as the work of amateurs and those with less talent (Arnold 1996: 6,65).

Because of the attitude which regarded the activities of the men of the time (such as warfare and hunting) as being more important than the work of the women in the domestic environment, the imagery men depicted tended to be regarded as more important and was reproduced more

frequently than that of the women (Arnold 1996: 6). As a result, the work of many female artists has had very little exposure because of the subject matter, and this in turn has meant that the subject matter (often nature imagery) they depicted has often been regarded as less relevant.

Arnold (1996: 51) says that the need to depict natural beauty is evident in the work of many women artists. It is often denigrated and dismissed as female sentimentality and therefore not important or intellectual enough to be taken seriously. Furthermore, because women often paint their landscapes devoid of people, they are accused of not being able to draw the human form (Arnold 1996: 51). This not only implies that it is easier to depict a landscape than human form, but that every serious artist with ability would choose to do the latter. Furthermore, it demonstrates an anthropocentric attitude. When women were denied access to art institutions and figure-drawing classes they sometimes turned to nature for their imagery. However, the use of nature imagery as subject matter is often one of choice, and for many artists, both male and female, the landscape is their means of expression.

In some respects these Victorian and Africana artists were ahead of their time in their manner of experiencing the South African landscape because students who attended South African art schools at the turn of the century were taught on the basis of European traditions. Hillebrand (1984: 172-177) states, for example, that at the Durban Art School even landscape subjects were based on European canons and content, rather than on an observation of their African locale. W. H. T. Venner, felt that there was nothing out of doors in Durban that was worth drawing. Only when John Adams took over in 1915 was observational drawing encouraged, and the students ceased to copy English landscapes.

It is only recent research that has challenged these attitudes to the work of female artists. Two artists whose studies of the natural environment have (until recently) been marginalised are Mary Elizabeth Barber and Annabella Harkness. Barber was not as prolific or versatile as Baines, but she was also interested in the natural environment and produced studies of birds, plants, animals and insects. She was also an artist-traveller and natural historian, and made an important contribution to natural history (Arnold 1996: 6, 68). Harkness was the wife of a British army officer. She accompanied her husband when he was posted to the Eastern Cape from 1864-1867 and documented her travels. These documents are only now being viewed as an important record of the scenery and events (Arnold 1996: 6).

Another female artist who used landscape as a means of expression, was Annie Galpin. Her grandfather was Frederic I'Ons, whose work was taken seriously because he was regarded as an Africana painter. He depicted the Eastern Cape landscapes in the early part of the 20th century.

Galpin was as talented as her grandfather but has not achieved the recognition accorded him. She interpreted the landscape by describing the form and texture and responded to nature as a place of solitude and peace. Her art was a refuge and an expression of her personal feelings. Her three sons fought overseas during the 1914-1918 World War and her landscapes became dark and sombre and moody, reflecting the stress and pain that she was living through (Arnold 1996: 50-51).

Yet another female artist whose landscapes have been overlooked is Emily Hobhouse. During the Boer War she used the imagery of land to protest against what she saw, namely the scorched-earth policy. Her writings were for the public, but her art was her private outlet for her strong feelings about the destruction of the land and property, and her opposition to male militarism and imperial policy. Her paintings are housed in the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein where they are placed in the context of illustrations of war and are generally regarded as social commentary. They have therefore not been given prominence as art or as landscape painting (Arnold 1996: 54-55). It is important that these works that speak powerfully against the horror of war become acknowledged by art historians as landscapes, and that the social commentary that they make is brought into the fine art arena.

Hobhouse's work draws attention to how the context in which art is viewed can change the meaning and interpretation. If images are made for public consumption, the viewer would tend to have expectations about 'art' and its ability to teach or moralise, whereas images made for private consumption would not necessarily have the same didactic function (Arnold 1992: 40).

The placement of work (both physically and perceptually) can therefore be one of the crucial issues regarding critical assessment. When certain imagery is placed hierarchically above other imagery, or the work of certain artists is regarded as less relevant and less worthy than that of others, simply because of issues such as race or gender, it results in a restricted interpretation. The examples examined thus far show that this has occurred in South African art with regard to nature imagery in general, and more specifically botanical art, *Africana* and the work of women artists.

This demonstrates the need for an inclusive and holistic approach when examining art history, particular when the subject matter is nature imagery, as it adds richness to the 'text'. Similarly it will be seen that the examination of the work of contemporary artists will reveal the richness and diversity of the visual representation of South Africa's environment.

On the other hand, it could be argued that post-colonial discourse offers a restricted interpretation of nature imagery. Bunn (in Mitchell 1994: 140), in discussing the landscapes of the Victorian painters, states that the use of the picturesque in these images was to 'help to locate the colonial

self in its new context'. In other words a system of familiar aesthetic conventions were employed in order to tame the unfamiliar environment and in that way to colonise it. He argues further that the picturesque arrangement of forms assisted the eye to move unimpeded through the landscape and the features of the landscape were generalised to enable the eye to move more swiftly over the picture plane. Furthermore, the objects were organised structurally and were merely landmarks that moved the eye to the horizon, where the viewer could gaze at the colonial space.

At this point it is useful to recall Mitchell's thesis on landscape discussed in the previous chapter. He stated that 'landscape is the medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other' and that landscape 'is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both represented and presented space' (Mitchell 1994: 5). According to Mitchell's thesis, colonial representations order the terrain (nature) according to European conventions (culture) in terms of 'persuasive imaging'. The natural environment was manipulated pictorially by means of artistic conventions, based on the beliefs of the time, in order to convince the viewer of the 'reality' of the picture. The post colonial theorist would argue that the only reason for portraying the environment using the pictorial conventions of the time was to further the imperial conquests of the colonial empire.

In his discussion on the representation of South African landscape Ashraf Jamal (in Geers 1997: 158-159) concludes that 'the land was never an Eden, never a site for pure contemplation, never a sphere which affirmed the perceiver's being in a manner which could be regarded as "pure"'. He argues further that 'the South African plateau was perceived as a space rather than a place, a boundless zone, condemned to exploitation'. Post-colonial discourse is an important aspect of art historical criticism, and has influenced the work of contemporary artists. However, it is argued that when South African landscape images are interpreted purely as exploitation and subjugation of the colonised subject, the discourse fails to acknowledge the richness of these images.

In terms of deep ecology this can be viewed as an anthropocentric perspective; it suggests that no artists who worked in South Africa ever felt a sense of interconnectedness with the environment or felt a spiritual connection with nature.

While colonialism was one of the reasons for the execution and popularity of these landscapes, factors such as romanticism as well as the natural curiosity of the human mind should also be taken into account. The diversity of experience that exploration and imperial expansion offered appealed to 19th century romanticism. The development of lithography in the early 19th century resulted in the mass production of illustrated books and the narratives and the illustrations that accompanied them (by artists such as Baines) allowed the Victorian readers to participate in these adventures (Bredin 1997: 170-18).

Bredin (1997: 34) notes a further example of '... why these drawings were not merely intelligence gaining exercises for colonisation - that their meaning is richer and full of human experience of the world' in his discussion of the topographical drawings of John Shedden Dobie (1819-1903). Dobie recorded his travels through Natal in notebooks that were transcribed into a journal (Bredin 1997: 15). In the case of Dobie's wagon journey Bredin (1997: 34) cites the importance of the information gathering that is recorded in the relief of the landscape as well as the geology, season, flora as well as the inhabitants of the land that they traversed. This was in part a continuation of the systematization of nature that had its origins in the 18th century and was based on Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae* (1785), which required the categorizing and mapping of all the plants of the world. Many of the artists were involved, often as amateurs, in the gathering and recording of information.

Another suggestion for the depiction of that natural history has been that it provided an opportunity to explore interiors when the motive was territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources and administrative control (Bredin 1997: 45). While it has already been pointed out that the Victorian artists were influenced by the colonial attitudes of the time and that this would have influenced the artist's response to the environment, it must be borne in mind that this is one aspect of their art and should not be regarded as the only reason for the depiction of the surroundings. These images are too rich and complex to be merely regarded as images of colonial conquest.

It is however, important to note that much South African art depicting nature imagery is situated in what Capra describes as the 'old paradigm'. An area where an anthropocentric view was particularly evident was in the landscape imagery produced in pursuit of a 'national' art.⁴

Attempts by the landscape artists in Natal at the beginning of the 20th century to achieve a 'national' art contain strong elements of colonial representation. Bunn (in Mitchell 1994: 165) asserts that Natal, like the Eastern Cape, as an emerging colonial state also relied on the manipulation of landscape conventions⁵, though the pictorial tradition that emerged differed from the picturesque landscapes of the 1820's.

Cathcart William Methven who arrived in Natal in 1888 and is generally regarded as the Natal founder of the landscape school wanted to demonstrate his commitment to his new land in his art (Hillebrand 1986: 29). Unlike the generalised treatment that Bunn notes in the Eastern Cape settler

⁴ In her thesis *Art and Architecture in Natal 1910- 1940* Melanie Hillebrand deals with this topic. The reader is referred to this document.

⁵ Hillebrand (1984:A4-A5) states that the use of the picturesque tradition in rendering landscapes was popular with the Victorians and used by a number of artists working in Natal at the beginning of the 20th century. Landscape painting was overtly used in their attempt to find a nationalist expression in their art and this led to the formation of a school of landscape painters.

art, Methven carried a sketch book around with him and recorded his surroundings in great detail in the field; he was critical of the lack of attention to detail of post-impressionism that was the current European trend (Hillebrand 1986: 29). He probably felt that by representing the local landscape with verisimilitude it would authenticate its use as the subject matter as a nationalist expression.

Methven's concern with recording local species can be seen as more than recording the region's botanical idiosyncrasies. In line with colonial attitudes, it can be seen as the documentation of the colonised land and its new species. This could have been to fulfil a dual purpose; firstly, to supply the audience with information about the 'exotic' environment that was part of the imperial conquest, and secondly, by ordering the terrain together with the indigenous African species of flora and fauna in terms of European conventions, it would make the African landscape familiar and give the colonials a sense of belonging.

Hillebrand (1986: 25) feels that a characteristic of Methven's work was his tendency to use conventional compositional devices. This would be manifested in a picture plane consisting of a foreground with a pattern of natural detail, such as a tree or a rock or a group of animals, and the background bathed in atmospheric light with carefully observed cloud effects. Methven was using the picturesque tradition, but included topographical detail and local atmosphere to assist in his attempt to create a 'nationalist' art.

Hillebrand (1984:A4-A5) argues that the school of landscape painters in Natal initially produced work that displayed a very careful observation of the Drakensberg, Midlands and Natal coastline. She feels that it was the search for a national unity which discouraged the imitation of European art and this resulted in landscape paintings that took on a meaningless similarity as artists stopped trying to interpret their environment. Hillebrand (1986: 4-5) contends that the striving for artistic independence and the attempt to find a 'national' style left the artists without their cultural roots and the source of their technical expertise. This was because the cultural support that came from Britain was a strength, rather than a weakness and the styles and techniques that were derived from England and Scotland enabled them to produce work of quality.

Methven selected landscapes such as the Midlands farming area and the Drakensberg which would have most closely fulfilled the requirements of the European picturesque. He expressed regret that Natal had no lakes, as these would have added to the picturesque quality and would have given the paintings a more familiar look to their presumably homesick British expatriate audience (Hillebrand 1986: 27-28). Many early 20th century South African artists felt that the indigenous, hostile landscape lacked the beauties of Europe or 'home', and painted local scenes that reminded them of

Britain. Before World War I the vast expanses of desert were not regarded as picturesque and devoid of the pretty scenery that artists like Methven wanted to paint (Hillebrand 1984: 75-77).

It was noted earlier in this chapter that when Burchell saw the scene at Kirstenbosch, he composed a written picture of the view using the principles of the picturesque tradition advocated by Gilpin. However, when he travelled into the interior, he found a landscape that could not be rendered with ease in this tradition without the incorporation of elements such as wagons, oxen and sheep in order to evoke the picturesque (Coetzee, 1988: 38). Because he felt that this particular landscape was not naturally picturesque, he found it necessary to incorporate elements that were not part of the natural landscape in order to create a picturesque scene.

When at the Gariiep River he once again found a scene which offered a sense of the European picturesque. Burchell wondered if the banks of the Gariiep were an oasis in the African aesthetic wilderness. Alternatively, he wondered if there was an African species of beauty to which the eye, nurtured on European pictorial art, was blind. If this was the case, he was curious to know if it would be possible for a European to acquire an 'African' eye (Coetzee, 1988: 38).

In his writings, Burchell often revealed the types of problems with which artists working in South Africa who depict nature imagery, and in particular landscape, have wrestled. He said, "In the character of [this] landscape and its peculiar tints, a painter would find much to admire, though it differed entirely from the species known by the term 'picturesque'. But it was not less beautiful: nor less deserving of being studied by the artist: it was that kind of harmonious beauty which belongs to the extensive plains of Southern Africa." (2:194) He felt that here there might be a species of beauty with which the European painters were possibly not yet acquainted and which could be called an 'African Picturesque'.

Coetzee (1988: 39,41) argues that Burchell pleads on two grounds for appreciation of the South African landscape. The first is that European standards of beauty are linked too closely to the picturesque, which is only one of several varieties of the beautiful. The second is that the European eye will be disappointed in Africa only as long as it seeks in African landscapes, European tones and shades. Burchell felt that by studying the African landscape a uniquely African aesthetic schema parallel to the Claudian schema of the 'picturesque' might arise.

Coetzee (1988: 43) questions whether anyone schooled in the European art tradition is really equipped to depict the landscape that is peculiar to southern Africa. He contends that the peculiarities of the atmospheric conditions in northern Europe have made for developments in

European art that have no obvious reference to southern Africa. It can, however, be argued that artists will adapt to find solutions for the peculiarities of locale.⁶

It was only after the 1920's that South African artists began to break away from the 19th century British styles of depiction of landscape and began to become aware of and appreciate a sense of place in South African scenery. Te Water comments in an article for *The Studio* (1934) on the necessity for Pierneef to develop a unique style in **Valley of Desolation** in order to capture the quality of the African veld (Hillebrand 1984: 77-79). Others, however, such as du Plessis (1994: 23-30) argue that Pierneef understood the potential of art to further political goals and that his depictions of the landscape in such works as the Johannesburg Station Panels were utilised by Afrikaner Nationalism to entrench the claim to the land because it was empty. In other words, they would claim that his depiction of the 'African space' was not an appreciation of the 'African picturesque', but a manipulation of the landscape in order to show that it was an empty and uninhabited space which would justify its possession.

Hillebrand (1984: 57) feels that many of the students who received overseas training at the beginning of the 20th century did not come back with styles in the mould of the British academic tradition, but rather with new techniques. She asserts that they were the first to shake off the British tradition and responded to local subjects and conditions. Fransen (1982:269) points out that Strat Caldecott (who lived in Europe from 1912-1923) developed a South African adaptation of Impressionism by adjusting his use of colour to reflect the colours in the landscape drained by the harsh African sunshine.

Scenery such as that of the Western Cape, where the physiographic features of the landscape corresponded with traditional models of a more conventional picturesque, was less challenging. Kenton (1989: 85) says that both Coetzee,(1988: 6-62) in referring to literature, and Berman (1974: 4), in referring to painting, state that interpretations of the South African landscape reflect the difficulties of visualising the 'New Land' in terms of Western European cultural models. When the landscape, such as the Karoo, presented monotonous vistas of brown earth, rock and stone, devoid of trees and often grass artists had no ready formula to deal with the representation of these scenes. Differences from the European landscape models in scale, monotony, aridity, harsh fixity of

⁶ If one looks at the development of the tradition of landscape painting in Europe one would find that artists invariably found different pictorial solutions for particular visual situations. For example, in northern Europe Van Eyck created tonal landscape in which the luminous quality of the light lets the distance evaporate naturally into space; here light was used to create pictorial unity. In the south, however, space was dealt with differently; scientific knowledge gained was used in their art to create pictorial perspective. The invention of the *camera obscura* by Alberti allowed the artist to focus on a particular view and this resulted in rational perspective with a vanishing point. (Jeffares 1979: 10,16-17)

atmospheric light and dull immobility of colour, are cited by Coetzee as some examples that would require more than mere technical refinements of comprehension from the European artist.

Subsequent chapters will examine the work of some contemporary artists who choose to depict the landscapes and flora of the arid regions of South Africa which they feel are quintessentially African. It will be seen that contemporary artists are not as restricted by the pictorial conventions that their predecessors were and have often deliberately sought ways of depicting the uniqueness of their environment, however it is necessary to first give a brief survey of some of the artists who paved the way for them.

Early modernist painters schooled in Western landscape traditions needed to address the issues discussed above and make adjustments accordingly. Coetzee (1988: 41,43) suggests that the palette needed to be modified and subdued as deep greens were rare and needed to be replaced by variety of drier-looking fawns, greys and browns. Foliage which is adapted to a dry climate transpires very little and lacks the lustre of the foliage in a country with a high rainfall like England. As Coetzee notes the light tends to be brighter in Africa, with very abrupt transitions from light to shade. Reflective surface water is also rare in South Africa (a fact lamented by Methven) as is the diffusive medium of atmospheric water. Over the Southern African plateau, as Coetzee (1988: 43) observed, the skies are blue and the light and shadow are static.

Not all artists would agree with Coetzee; Esias Bosch, whose work is discussed in chapter three, cited (pc) the 'wonderful summer clouds' as a source of inspiration. He lives in the Lowveld where skies are characterised by dramatic cloud formations before thunderstorms; a phenomenon which also occurs in many other parts of the country. Similarly, the smoke from veldfires (common occurrences in southern Africa) would give artists something other than blue static skies to depict.

Artists who want to address some of the issues that have been discussed above must find new paradigms for their landscapes. In reassessing their use of materials for depicting the South African landscape, they sometimes, as will be seen in the case of artists examined in this dissertation, find solutions to problems that writers have referred to. Because printmakers do not use the traditional oils or watercolours for their landscapes, they often address some of these issues of identity and locality by virtue of the fact that they are using a different medium.

Many artists using printmaking media have found alternative ways of creating mood in their work, either with or without colour. William Kentridge consciously chooses materials which he feels are more appropriate for the rendition of the harsh and arid landscape of South Africa. He finds that there is an immediate relationship between the burnt stalks in a landscape and drawings of the same

thing which are executed in charcoal. The intaglio processes of printmaking create similar rich black hues. The burin on copper or zinc plates makes furry drypoint lines which he feels are better suited to depict the African environment than oils (Sassen 1997: 109).

As an extension of Burchell's standpoint on the picturesque, it will be seen that many of the contemporary printmakers and ceramists are aware of and see other varieties of the 'beautiful' in the landscapes that they depict. These artists represent the wide open spaces, the rock formations, the diversities of the landscape in the harsh arid landscape and the lush upland hills, and the specific details of flora and fauna that are uniquely African and might well be termed an 'African picturesque'.

Subsequent chapters will examine the work of some contemporary artists who choose to depict the landscapes and flora of the arid regions of South Africa which they feel are quintessentially African. It will be seen that contemporary artists are not as restricted by the pictorial conventions that their predecessors were and have often deliberately sought ways of depicting the uniqueness of their environment. Before proceeding further it is necessary to briefly survey some of the developments that paved the way for contemporary artists.

The last section of this chapter examines some of the trends that lead to the advent of Modernism and Postmodernism. Modernism allowed the artists greater freedom of expression, however it is only with Postmodernism that it appears as if real diversity of expression will be allowed to flourish in South Africa. These Modernist artists all challenged paradigms (perhaps in some instances unwittingly) that were entrenched in society. Postmodernism has highlighted these with a more inclusive and deconstructed reading of the work.

The Postmodern reading of pictorial landscape is that it is not just a visual phenomenon, but a 'text', and the image is a place of discussion where the artist has left a series of signs that carry ideological and psychological meanings (Arnold 1996: 40). It follows, therefore, that the landscape image must be examined to see if the artist is intending to do more than merely depict a scene. Nature imagery depicted by colonial artists was once only regarded as *Africana* and purely the documentation of landscape and flora and fauna in South Africa. Under Postmodern scrutiny it has been re-evaluated as a 'text' that reveals, as Mitchell (1994:5) says, '... a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space.' The viewer has to interpret the scene, and his interpretation will be influenced by what is known about the cultural background of the artist. The culture of the viewer will also however, influence the interpretation.

The intentional inclusion of socio-political dimensions and content in South African landscape imagery marks an important shift away from the literalness of modernist depictions of a purely optical beauty in the picturesque. This shift started when local artists did not merely depict the appearance of the land and they were introduced to early modernist ideas about the autonomy of the artwork. Artists saw that they no longer had to work within the established genre of the landscape painting with its primary concern being the European picturesque. The New Group was eventually formed in 1938 and made the public aware of and gradually accept Modernism.

Resistance to these new ideas came from critics as well as teachers who held conservative views that influenced attitudes to art and also endorsed the male establishment (Arnold 1996: 10-11). Bowler, who arrived in Cape Town in 1834, was an authoritative role model and influenced the thinking and work of many of the women artists of the time. In the early part of the 20th century Edward Roworth, established a teaching studio in Cape Town. He became Director of the Michaelis School of Fine Art, a member of the Board of the South African Gallery and then Director of the National Gallery. He was a powerful man who was opposed to 'modern art' and openly patronized women artists (Arnold 1996: 10-11). Despite this, it was initially the work of three women artists that made a considerable contribution to the changes that occurred.

Bertha Everard (1873-1965), Maggie Laubser (1886-1972) and Irma Stern (1894-1966) were all born in South Africa, but as a result of studying overseas were exposed to what were regarded as radical art movements by the generally conservative South African art community and even more conservative public (Fransen 1982: 285-286). These artists played important roles in introducing Modernist philosophies where a perceptual observation was at the basis of painting. Paint density, mark making, colour, tone, linear rhythm and shapes were deployed to resemble, rather than imitate, the visual sources (Arnold 1996: 55-56).

Bertha Everard found that she could express her moody, passionate nature through her landscape painting. She found it an outlet for her need for independence and solitude and reflected her belief that painting could convey 'an inward spirit which connects itself immediately with something felt to be divine'. (Arnold 1996: 56-57) Her work **Trenches and trees of battlefield, Delville Wood** (1926) (Illustration in Fransen 1972: 288) is a work that uses the landscape to express her feelings of outrage at the horror and destruction of World War I.

The desire to convey something spiritual in their landscape was also important for Maud Sumner and Maggie Laubser. Maggie Laubser became a Christian Scientist⁷ when studying art in Europe,

⁷ She believed in a world of creative energy and said, 'When I see the wonderful creation that often speaks to me through the harmony of colour and form, the combination of unity and eternity fills me with a great longing and desire to express what I am experiencing and so to love my creator. That is what painting means to me.' (Arnold 1996: 165) This demonstrates a spirituality that she found in the natural world.

and this together with her exposure to European Modernism, influenced her work profoundly. The most important influence, however was her response to the African landscape, particularly the vast spaces (Arnold 1996: 55, 56, 59).

Laubser's work is more introverted than Stern's and became increasingly introspective. The influence of the Fauves is evident in the way she sometimes distorted her forms and used intense and unrealistic colour planes as well as the absence of shading and modelling. The expressive quality of the German art at the time influenced her work and her identification with nature was probably the reason why she felt an affinity to the work of Frans Marc. Her subject matter remained rooted in her observations while growing up in the Boland (Fransen 1982: 288-289). One such work is **Stellenbosch Orchard** (1924) (illustrated in Berman 1970: 166) In this respect she would have supported the eco-feminist ideology which stressed the importance of everyday life, work and the things that surround us, as well as our immanence.

The third artist whose work can be regarded as particularly influential was Irma Stern who settled in Cape Town in 1920. She brought 'modern art' to the public's attention in 1922 with her Expressionist style. She challenged many of the conventions of the time: she disregarded naturalism and introduced radical shape simplification and strong colour. She had aligned herself with Modernism which emphasized the formal language of shape, colour and mark. The chief concern of Modernism was not merely to present images of the external world; but allowed artists to express emotional as well as perceptual responses to the world around them (Arnold 1996:10).

Stern conveyed mood through her powerful, direct brush strokes and heightened intensified colours, rather than being concerned with accurate draughtsmanship. This resulted in very little of the picturesque view that the public had become accustomed to seeing in the work of earlier South African artists remaining in her work (Fransen 1982: 289). Her private journal which she began in 1919 has an illustration of her departure from Europe to Cape Town. One journal inscription reads as follows, 'and fled from burning Europe into the land of strong colours' (Arnold 1996: 82-83).

Stern was also far from the stereotype of the refined Englishwoman. This had an important liberating effect on many women artists. She legitimized personal feelings and art became a matter of transforming, rather than merely imitating (Arnold 1996:10).

Everard, Laubser and Stern were some of the artists who started the shift in representation in South African art, which up to the 1920's was limited almost entirely to an objective representation of the purely visual aspects of the everyday environment (Fransen 1982: 283). They paved the way

for contemporary artists to interpret the landscape in a new way, and started the process of sensitising the public to these new ideas of representation.

In the same way as the colonial artists discussed were influenced by prevailing thoughts, scientific discoveries and artistic conventions, so are contemporary artists. The social and political climate in South Africa became increasingly tense throughout the 1980's with the government declaring a State of Emergency in 1985 with many people being banned, placed under house arrest or in detention without trial. Political negotiations led to the South Africa holding its first democratic election in 1994. This event was anticipated with mixed feelings by South Africans; there was an optimism for the future, but at the same time a fear of violence that might erupt. Political events in the country are reflected in art, most commonly in figurative art. However, some artists have chosen to depict this period in South Africa without using the human form, but rather the landscape as a metaphor for the human condition.

The explication in this chapter of some of the historical roots of nature imagery in South African art has been in order to facilitate the understanding of the use of nature imagery in the recent work of ceramists and printmakers which will be examined in the following three chapters. This chapter has also attempted to demonstrate that when hierarchical and patriarchal restrictions are broken down, a far more holistic view of the depictions of South African nature imagery will be achieved. This will allow people to see the interconnectedness that is a crucial aspect of the new paradigm thinking that Capra proposes. The following chapters will demonstrate further aspects of the parallels between nature imagery and deep ecology and ecofeminism.

Chapter Three LANDSCAPE

‘There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them to Carisbrooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa. About you there is grass and bracken and you may hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya, one of the birds of the veld. Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu, on its journey from the Drakensberg to the sea; and beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.’ (Alan Paton from *Cry, The Beloved Country*)

In this opening paragraph of his novel *Cry, The Beloved Country*, Paton’s literary picture is of the landscape around the foothills of the Drakensberg. He uses lyrical aural and visual metaphors to enhance his portrayal of the beauty of the African landscape and spaces. A reader is conscious of Paton’s viewpoint in his keenly observed representation of the vista around him in the same way that an artist frames and composes the pictorial elements of a landscape. Paton’s literary format uses words to suggest movement and distance in ways similar to the visual vocabulary of (for example) a painter. Paton’s opening description of the landscape does not reveal underlying dramatic tensions relating to people; these become apparent as the novel unfolds and the reader discovers that the landscape is never separate from social, political and environmental dimensions of human existence.

This chapter will explore selected works of three contemporary South African artists within the broad definitions of landscape given by Arnold (1996: 40), who states that a landscape is ‘a pictorial term signifying a way of looking at and rendering natural scenery,’ and a Postmodern view of landscape as a ‘text’ or a place of discussion. General ecological interpretations outlined in chapter one will offer additional insights into the ceramic panel of Esias Bosch and the prints of Gerda Scholtemeijer and Kim Berman respectively.

In many respects there are similarities between Paton’s manner of describing the landscape and the work of the artists to be discussed in the text below. Bosch’s painted landscapes resemble Paton’s before his story unfolds, in the sense that Bosch’s stated intention (pc) is to present a viewer with a restful picture. Notably, Bosch executes his landscapes on large ceramic tiles with great attention to craft: technological considerations are crucial in his work. Consequently the formal aspects of his work will be examined at some length, as will the suggested European picturesque principles (discussed in chapter two) that underpin it.

Like Paton, printmakers Gerda Scholtemeijer and Kim Berman use metaphor to heighten meaning in their landscapes. As with Bosch’s ceramics, technical processes in printmaking underpin

metaphorical and symbolic content in the works of Scholtemeijer and Berman. In relation to the work of these artists, images will generally be investigated as landscape 'texts.'

In keeping with Paton's awareness of the interconnections of landscape and people, both Scholtemeijer and Berman consciously draw attention in their work to environmental, social and political issues pertaining to the land (these issues are not overt in Bosch's work). Elements of the printmaker's imagery to be discussed are related to particular areas of the South African landscape which do not subscribe to the traditional European picturesque.

Esias Bosch

The work of Esias Bosch appears to have been largely influenced by two factors; firstly of his European art training during the 1950's, and secondly in the African environment in which he presently lives and works.

Apart from the art training that he received in South Africa, Bosch spent time in Britain in the 1950's. He studied ceramics for a year at the Central School of Art in London, and then worked at Winchcombe Studio with Raymond Finch and Michael Cardew¹ in Cornwall (pc). At this time the ideals of Bernard Leach (1887-1979) who founded the craft pottery movement prevailed in Britain. Leach advocated a holistic approach to art and life and emphasized truth to materials where form was controlled by the functional requirements of the object (Cruise 1991: 10).

The modernist pottery tradition that manifested itself in Bosch's early work was a consequence of his traditional training. However, since 1980, Bosch has concentrated on making and painting large ceramic tiles; his first tile productions involved highly decorated lustre-tiles. More recently he has produced laminated vitrified tiles - more technically complex than his earlier works. He uses his ceramic tiles as a 'canvas,' painting landscapes on their flat surfaces with ceramic colours. The appeal of his work is as much an outcome of his technical mastery of ceramic media as his imagery of South African places.

It is important to give the technical aspects of his work due consideration. Bosch regards the challenge of ceramic technical problems of large tiles as important as solving purely pictorial problems. His meticulous approach to craft can be attributed to his early training in studio ceramics. He has developed technical processes -such as laminated tiles- to enable him to work on a very large scale in ceramics. His laminated tiles have reduced shrinkage to a minimum and

¹ Cardew was renowned as one of Bernard Leach's foremost early pupils. Of possibly incidental significance to the subject of this thesis is Cardew's move from Britain to Nigeria where he established a stoneware pottery during the Second World War. His experiences in this African context, and the transplanting of his English craft skills to Abuja, may be seen as mirroring Bosch's move back to South Africa with his modernist European training, and his search for 'identity' as an African artist (see Cardew: 1969).

eliminated the problems of warping and cracking normally associated with ceramic flatwares (pc). To do this, Bosch researched and developed his ceramic medium in a very scientific manner in order to be able to achieve his aesthetic goals; again this can be attributed to his modernist training in 'truth to materials'.

Bosch's use of a 'pointillist' technique is partly the influence of the impressionists and partly the result of technical ceramic considerations. He has developed a vocabulary of personal painterly marks which activate the ceramic surface; his ceramic colours are layered using short brush strokes of lines and dots - as in *Doves* (Undated, after 1988) (Fig. 1) - in order to prevent the chemical constituents of his colours from physically mixing.

Ceramic stains offer Bosch a great variety and depth of colour. Some stains are applied thinly and have the translucency of watercolours, while in other areas of his painting, he builds up layers of pigment to create a rich depth of colour, often necessitating as many as nine firings. He covers his colours with a transparent ceramic glaze which he fires to stoneware temperature.

Bosch's ceramic surfaces are intriguing to inspect at close range. Lines and dots of colour appear to be trapped in the layers of glaze and light. Because the surfaces of his tiles are not completely flat, they do not reflect the light uniformly and this adds to the play of light on their highly reflective surfaces (pc).

Bosch has lived in the Lowveld since 1960 and his studio is situated on a granite outcrop, surrounded by rocks, indigenous trees, flowers and birds. This high vantage point offers views down the valley. He says that the quiet and the colour of the landscape have had a profound influence on his work (Bosch and de Waal 1988); as a result he creates landscapes that reflect a meditative beauty of his surroundings. He strives not to reveal anything unpleasant about the environment or to allow socio-political problems to intrude.

Principles of the European picturesque are present in Bosch's paintings and philosophy. Before proceeding further, it is worthwhile at this point to recall some aspects of the picturesque that were discussed in chapter two in order to assess to what extent they are applicable to Bosch's work.

Gilpin described the picturesque as 'that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture'. The picturesque involved the structuring of a view or the natural landscape into an ordered, coherent pictorial whole, achieved formally by dividing the picture plane into spatially controlled sequences of foreground, middle ground and distance. Scenery came to be viewed in terms of tone, texture and undisturbed 'naturalness'. Although Gilpin neglected foreground detail, this was later

criticised by Craig who felt foreground detail should be the starting point from which the artist moved into the pictorial space. It was noted how this device was used by early South African landscapists like Methven who included details of the local flora to authenticate the scene.

Doves (Fig. 1) is an example of Bosch's work which manifests elements of the European picturesque. This large (160 x 125cm) laminated ceramic tile depicts a view of the flat landscape of Bosch's Lowveld, with typical low hills in the background. Summer clouds gather in the sky that occupies the upper half of the picture.

In this image, Bosch has retained the traditional horizontal landscape format in which he structures the view into an ordered pictorial whole. His groups of low hills are repeated in the middle distant zone of the picture and foliage frames the view of the landscape and clouds. However, the lack of specific focus in the foreground, and the 'pointillist' quality of his surface, results in an image that represents the Lowveld in a generalised way. Hence it is argued that he mediates his landscape image, and produces a stylisation of his natural surroundings. By controlling the visual rhythms in his picture in terms of repeated arcs, the natural scenery is given an understated geometric structure and hence an air of order and permanence.

In the discussion of the picturesque in chapter two it was noted that the 'Claude glass' was a means of shaping 'chaotic' nature. Bosch orders his scenery by repeating similar marks and rhythmical patterns. Bosch's selection (and what he excludes) is also an important feature of the ordering of nature to create a mood of harmony. There does not appear to be any hint of human intervention in the environment that may suggest a threat to the idyllic, ordered eco-system.

The composition in **Doves** is divided almost equally between the landscape and the sky, but branches protrude into the sky on both sides as a formal pictorial device in order to prevent an awkward division of the picture into two equal vertical sections. He defines the foreground with details including the local flora, and perched in the trees, are the doves of his title. The birds are an integral part of his natural environment, but it is worth noting that as doves, they function as symbols of peace and tranquillity as well. In all, these motifs are intended to hold the viewer's attention in the foreground and are rendered with just sufficient detail to enable the viewer to identify them.

It was mentioned in chapter two that the use of colour (traditionally oils) is an important aspect of depicting landscape in terms of the European picturesque. With his profound technical knowledge (and his preparation by means of painted studies on conventional supports), Bosch proceeds to paint his ceramic landscapes in much the same way as a painter using canvas and ready mixed

colours. In *Doves*, the colour of the landscape is rich, a predominantly gold and orange palette with some greens. Warm colours predominate, creating a feeling of a landscape bathed in warm sunshine, hence a mood of peace and tranquillity. Carefully orchestrated colour is a traditional formal device to create a sense of harmony in the landscape; Bosch uses colour repetitions as a formal device to set up a rhythm as a counterpoint to the geometry in his composition and succeeds in constructing a vision of serenity.

In his picture-making, Bosch is conscious of an audience schooled in the traditions of Dutch landscape-genre painting. His use of picturesque conventions, his ordered composition and reference to nature-imagery is calculated to make his work accessible to a buying public who wants decorative images of the landscape for their home or work interiors. In this regard, it must also be noted that Bosch makes his living as a full time artist who works mainly on commissions (pc).

Kenton (1989: 32) states that generally understood 'picturesque principles' have led to an emphasis on formal aspects of pictorial landscape composition and away from considerations of meaning. This appears to be the case with Bosch who seems to satisfy the brief of his clients while still achieving his stated objectives, in that landscapes do not reveal anything that is 'unpleasant' about the environment or the socio-political problems facing South Africa (pc).

The pointillist technique that Bosch uses is reminiscent of the Impressionists, an attractive 'cue' recognized by his audience. Hughes (1980:113) notes that Impressionism has been the most popular of art movements and remains popular with the buying public. He feels that these images represent a pre-modern world which is a lost world. Furthermore, Prince (in Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 114) maintains that in landscape paintings where the landscape is less clearly identified, the images dwell on aspects of continuity. This is evident in Bosch's image which gives a generalised impression of the Lowveld, but does not include features that give specificity to the landscape.

Historically, undemanding scenes of the natural environment have proved popular with the public. In writing about the history of Durban Art Gallery's early collection, Turnbull (1991: 43) notes that Victorian landscape paintings, (important components of collections in both the Durban Art Gallery and the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg), demonstrated a typical style of highly detailed and carefully finished undisturbing scenes of English countryside. She contends that this was all the picture-buying public really wanted to know about public life.

This feature has also been noted in other landscapes at times when social change has been taking place. Prince (in Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 115) states that during the second half of the 18th century, when the most agrarian change was taking place in Britain farming, landscapes were rarely

depicted, except by engravers in topographical prints. Instead, painters found their inspiration in the hills, wild heaths and deserted shores. Artists ignored the technical progress, environmental renewal and social unrest; the picturesque offered them the opportunity to escape from the stresses that these phenomena caused. Prince claims that artists such as Constable and Turner moved on to find new truths in the forms of clouds, the structures of mountains and the details of plant life. The romantic artists promoted the idea that harmony with nature was universal and eternal. Furthermore, in the 18th century, the artistic fashions were dictated to some extent by the landowners, who were the principal patrons of landscape paintings (Prince in Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 115-116).

In terms of an ecological view Chaia Heller (in Gaard 1993: 229-230) contends that romanticised images of nature are an indication of an alienation from nature. Heller would be critical of images that do not confront the hierarchical separations within society and between society and nature as they do not face the reality of the ecological crisis. Bosch would probably argue that his images are not romanticised; he has taken time to get to know his landscape which is in fact unspoilt. Furthermore, by living and working in that environment he has time to contemplate the value of all living beings around him. In so doing, he feels the sense of interconnectedness that Capra calls for, and this is what he aims to convey to the viewer.

Bosch is an example of an artist who occupies a valid niche in the representation of South African landscape. However many contemporary artists challenge the popular idea that landscape depicts picturesque scenes. Printmakers Gerda Scholtemeijer and Kim Berman feel that landscape should be used to set up a dialogue with the audience about socio-political matters in the country.

Bermingham (1987: 3) proposes that ideology informs all landscape representation. In the 18th and 19th centuries, for example, the social and economic class values and cultural views were reflected in the painted image. She submits that rustic landscape painting is ideological because it presents the illusion of a real landscape which alludes to the real conditions that exist within.

Scholtemeijer and Berman intentionally use landscape to reflect on political events in South Africa. Berman makes use of landscape imagery to comment on the conditions of the people who live on the land. Scholtemeijer and Berman both stated that their landscapes carry metaphorical meaning (pc). Donald Davidson (in Mitchell 1994: 239) states that 'metaphor makes us see one thing as another by making some literal statement that inspires or prompts the insight.' The literal depiction of landscape can be used to suggest metaphorical meanings which are part of the 'text' that the artist has left for the viewer to read.

Gerda Scholtemeijer

Gerda Scholtemeijer not only responded to an area of landscape that would not fit the traditional view of the picturesque, but she also used it as a metaphor for a country facing an uncertain and potentially explosive political and social future.

Scholtemeijer documents her information in sketch books and photographs, her choice being made intuitively as a result of both her physical experiences of the landscape and the socio-political environment of South Africa. Her response, therefore, is not only to what she herself sees and feels physically whilst in the landscape, but to her awareness of what is happening politically and socially in the country (Scholtemeijer 1994: 28).

She responded to the geological formations of the Karoo region and was inspired to create a series of prints on South African landscape after seeing the Valley of Desolation and the Kompasberg near Graaff-Reinet (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 76). **Uit die Kern van die Aarde** (1991) (fig.2) is an image from this series.

Formally, this picture is constructed in a similar manner to the formal layering that occurs in landscapes of a picturesque genre. In this respect **Uit die Kern van die Aarde** is reminiscent of the way Bosch constructed his landscape, but her image -with its high horizon line- suggests both an abstract landscape and a geological cross-section of the earth. This is alluded to in the title. It is interesting to note that she has departed from the usual horizontal landscape-format: her image is almost square (318 x 316 mm). This reinforces the idea of an imminent vertical eruption.

Abstract images can be difficult for the viewer to interpret, but the views expressed by the artist can facilitate the viewer's understanding of the work, particularly with regard to symbolism, which can have a highly personal meaning. Scholtemeijer states (1994: 30) that she places the landscapes between day and night; symbolically day and night are the visual conventional points of divide between good and bad. For her the dark represents the threat, or that which is out of reach for humanity, while the light and reflections show the hope and the dependence of humankind on the Creator. Psychologically, light is one of the most fundamental and influential aspects of human experience, a phenomenon that has symbolic meaning in most religions. Tonal values are therefore an integral part of the meaning of the print (Scholtemeijer 1994: 30-31).

In order to achieve the tonal qualities that are such an integral part of the meaning of her landscapes, Scholtemeijer utilised unconventional technical processes. She did not use the traditional landscape media of oils or watercolour, but used aquatint and the spit-bite process to create soft, washed effects in **Uit die Kern van die Aarde**.

Spitbite is a process where one mixes acid with gum arabic; acid etches the plate, while the gum resists the etch. By first putting down the gum, then dribbling the acid onto it Scholtemeijer was able to make fluid, spontaneous lines (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 76). The spitbite allows for unique variations of tone; in **Uit die Kern van die Aarde** the very darkest tone represents magma pushing up the throat of the crater (pc).

The initial visual impact of the print may belie its technical complexity. Explaining her technique further, Scholtemeijer (1994: 32-33) says that she etched the crust of the earth solid black and then worked back into it with a scraper and burnisher to obtain the effect of a structured landmass. Aquatints enabled her to create a wide tonal range, from dense blacks to a range of greys and white. The splatters in the bottom section were achieved by spraying uneven and different size dots which remained unetched, resulting in the white dots, whereas acid dripped onto the plate etched the dark dots. The more delicately drawn areas are refined with the addition of drypoint.

Uit die kern van die Aarde is the first of a series representing the social and political state of the country. The geological equivalent that she depicts is a volcano, and although the fragments are still contained within the core, magma pushing up has the power to rip the earth apart in a mighty eruption. Scholtemeijer wanted her landscape to reflect the emotions in South Africa before the 1994 elections; the feeling that something was brewing, the uncertainty of the people and the sense of unease about the future (Scholtemeijer 1994: 29). The volcanic eruption is a symbol of a dual propensity to tension and discharge: a situation that is characteristic of the socio-political circumstances in the period of transition that was being experienced in South Africa. The fragment is a metaphor for a complex, fragmented South African society consisting of different racial and cultural groups, all making claims on the land (pc; Scholtemeijer 1994: 29,31).

The title of this work reinforces her ideas; the core contains the fragments which have the potential to cause the eruptions with devastating consequences. Similarly, the people of South Africa have the potential to cause eruptions of a similar magnitude.

Scholtemeijer would appear to agree with Capra that all the major current problems are interconnected, as in addition to the political and social conflict, the landscape reflects ecological conflict. The earth is a product of centuries of conflict between elements and geological change. The materials and plants on the top of the earth are like a sensitive layer and human intervention in the form of cultivation leads to an ecological revolution. The combination of natural and artificial elements leads to tension and contrasts in nature. This conflict between elements and the ecological revolution are symbolic of the human struggle on earth, the struggle between good and evil and life and death (Scholtemeijer 1994: 29,31).

Her attitude to her landscapes as an area for dialogue are also in sympathy with an ecological view. Scholtemeijer states (1994: 29) that she is using the landscape as a 'text' for the discussion of a number of issues pertinent to the land. It must be noted that this print was executed before the land claims process was set in motion², however Scholtemeijer is clearly aware that landownership has been one of the causes of political and social tension in South Africa for many years. She poses a number of questions that may arise as a result of land claims, in wondering if anyone owns the earth or if it has merely been 'lent to people by God'. She questions whether someone clearing the veld to cultivate it is vested with rights of ownership (Scholtemeijer 1994: 29).

Scholtemeijer wants viewers to wrestle with the issues that she suggests through her imagery of the landscape. They will not all have the same answers, but Scholtemeijer (1994: 29) feels that it might lead to a search for self-knowledge and a knowledge of other people's cultures which will bring an understanding of their traditions. She stresses that when a landscape is portrayed, it is the artist's personalised rendition of a scene and not a real scene. She acknowledges that the viewer's own frame of reference will influence the interpretation of the image (Scholtemeijer 1994: 28).

Landscape representation is influenced by prevailing conventions and changes in aesthetic taste. Methven's paintings belong in their age, operating within the picturesque conventions prevalent at the beginning of the 20th century; Scholtemeijer has added to South African representations of landscape by *intentionally* embedding her image with the socio-political metaphors of this milieu.

Chapter two noted some of the critical analysis that the painting of the colonial artists like Methven has undergone since these landscapes were painted, and how each critic's philosophy or frame of reference has impacted on the interpretation of the image. It is not likely that Methven's audience would have agreed with the concept expressed in post-colonial discourse that the attitude of the viewer influences the interpretation of the work. Scholtemeijer hopes that her image will be used as a text to stimulate debate about the land, while almost a century earlier Methven had hoped that his use of landscape would develop a 'national art'. Whilst not critically engaged with socio-political concerns as in Scholtemeijer's work, Bosch's achievement may be seen as closely allied to Methven's appeal to an 'African picturesque.'

Kim Berman

As with Scholtemeijer, for Berman the social and political aspects of South Africa are inextricably linked with the landscape. Her awareness of the interconnectedness of landscape and socio-political issues was heightened after she returned to South Africa from the United States of

² The date of commencement of the Restitution of Land Rights Act No 22 of 1994 was on 2 Dec.1994. (Butterworths 1998 Vol 4 Part 23: 138)

America in 1990, and travelled around the country facilitating training for women's rural projects (pc).

While Berman responded to the visual beauty of the landscape, the poverty, the drought, the resilience and strength of the women she met impacted on her work and inspired a series of prints: **The Road to Huhudi** (1993) (fig.3a and fig. 3b) and **The Women of Madibogo** (1994)(fig.4) (pc). The images used are metaphors for the human condition generally, but reveal more specific links in their titles and content with people and places in South Africa.

For Berman, the veld became a metaphor for apartheid's devastation, yet in spite of devastation she noted a strength of survival. In the women she saw the same resilience that was evident to her in the landscape. In **The Women of Madibogo** she started using the sunflower as a metaphor for women's survival in rural areas (pc). The sunflowers became anthropomorphic forms: suggesting bowed heads and tall, strong survivors.

It has already been noted that Maggie Laubser was one of the important forerunners who bridged the gap between the straightforward depiction of the landscape and the landscape that carried a socio-political content. It is interesting to compare Laubser's work, **Harvest Scene in Belgium** (no date given)(Fransen 1982: 279), with Berman's work. Here Laubser depicts women working in a wheat field during harvest time. Although the images resemble women, they have taken on the form of the bundles of wheat that they are harvesting and have lost their identity. They are bowed and faceless; merely shapes in the wheat field, shapes that form a circular movement around the field, reflecting the monotony of their labour. While Laubser's women became part of the landscape that they were working in, Berman's sunflowers are the women who toil endlessly and show the resilience that she admires.

Whilst travelling in South Africa, Berman collects images of the landscape by photographing scenes that triggered off an emotional response in her. She takes her imagery directly or indirectly from these photographs; it is important for Berman to retain a relationship with document in all her work (pc). In 1993 Berman compiled some of the prints she made from these images into a small book of 'sketches' entitled **Rediscovering the Ordinary** (fig.5) in which she presented the landscape where significant events that affected the people had taken place.

The use of the book format marks an important shift in the depiction of landscape. Berman's use of this format can be traced back to works made in the United States which were directly politically motivated. She took this step because she felt that the book as a format is more loaded, more potentially subversive, and more dangerous historically than a conventional or singular visual

image. At that time in South Africa the book represented something that was censored, banned and restricted, and was a weapon to be marshalled against apartheid. In sum, she wanted to lose the impotence of the visual picture and introduce a potential power or 'subversiveness' by using the book format (pc).

In both **Rediscovering the Ordinary** and **The Women of Madibogo** (1994), Berman created a codex format where the images could be revealed 'window by window', while at the same time, and very significantly, the effect of spatial continuity was implied. The traditional landscape format is maintained, but by binding the pictures together they are taken out of the arena of landscape pictures that are framed and hung on the wall. This format allowed the artist to explore a narrative with a series of interconnected images. This is a considerable shift from the passive use of the conventional rectangular landscape format used by Bosch.

The way in which she discovered the landscape (and by implication the socio-political conditions) informed the format and expression of her final pictorial images. When she started the landscape series, the continuous horizon line that she saw while driving for many miles across the country made an impression on her (pc). The conventional landscape format does not capture the vast expanse of space. However, the **Road to Huhudi** (1993) is presented in book format where, instead of the pages being turned over, which results in the image being viewed frame by frame, the pages of the book and the cover fold out into a long horizontal format. This accommodates the flat, seemingly endless horizon of the Huhudi landscape which can be read as a book, or seen as a continuous frieze that transforms the scale from one of intimacy to expansiveness. (The size of the individual plates is 321 x 475mm and the extended format is approximately 3460mm (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 177).)

This format also provides a physical equivalent to a sensation of traversing the land. This is a significant consideration in the physical experience of the work as a metaphor or recreation of her emotional response to the landscape. Here, the viewer also experiences the landscape differently from the fixed viewpoint of the picturesque landscape, as s/he travels with the artist across the landscape. (This is also a shift from panoramic representations of landscape discussed in chapter two)

In the **Road to Huhudi**, the continuous unchanging wasteland is the overt subject matter. Her unframed landscape adds to the sense of endless space which lends itself to the depiction of seemingly unending distances of bleak veld. Apart from the occasional scrubby tree, dead crops, broken fences and tree stumps, the landscape seems to be empty. The lack of focal points also adds to the sense of a seemingly endless landscape. Each page is however, a separate plate and the

different frames are individually titled. These, such as **Dry Pan** (no water) and **Bones of the Drought** (skeletons), reinforce the harshness, futility and sense of loss (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 80-81). Elements such as dead crops, mealie fields that do not bear a harvest, sunflowers, fences and sticks depicted in these landscapes are all indicators of human intervention in the landscape.

The format of display and presentation heighten the content of the work; so too do the physical processes of medium and technique that Berman uses. Berman has experimented with printmaking processes and moved away from conventional intaglio methods. A technique of collograph with drypoint was used in the **Road to Huhudi** and **The Women of Madibogo**. In the drypoint collographs she developed the method of combining the technique of scratching line into the metal plate and painting onto the plate with wood glue, *polyfilla* and acrylic mediums mixed with sand or grit (pc). The drypoint images allow her to make expressive marks directly onto the plate and give the print sharper definition, detail and blackness (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 80-82).

In places actual organic matter was added to the paste to create texture in the foreground. Using drypoint and collograph with found available materials has an environmental significance for Berman (pc). Furthermore, it lessens the gap between perception and materials and recontextualizes perception because some of the seen reality (sand, sticks and leaves for example), are re-situated physically onto the plate and then printed with ink to imitate and re-create. This textural quality is further enhanced by the contrast of the white uninked area and the rich lustrous inked areas. The surface becomes a tangible texture, another metaphor for 'rediscovering the ordinary' which is physical and real and not just illusory. Collograph texture is, therefore, another means of experiencing the landscape.

Line and drawing have always been important to Berman, but when she returned home the physicality and colour of the landscape took over and colour was introduced into her work for the first time (pc). In the **Road to Huhudi**, the sky occupies approximately the top third of the picture plane and the range of blues to white add to a sense of space and distance. Her light is the gentle and muted light of dawn or dusk which 'gives it a sort of magic' (pc). To create the mood of twilight or sunset, the times when the light is often the most beautiful and emotional, she uses a surface roll of glaze colour such as a transparent dusty pinkish or gold hue to create a sense of dusk light over a bleached landscape. This is reminiscent of the tinted glass in the 'Claude glass'.

It was noted in chapter two that Burchell felt that by studying the African landscape, a uniquely African aesthetic schema parallel to the Claudian schema of the 'picturesque' might arise. Burchell also felt that European standards of beauty are linked too closely to the picturesque, which is only one of several varieties of the beautiful. Here Berman has modified her palette and replaced the

greens that are common in European landscapes with the colours of the Karoo. The dry soil and limited vegetation of the vast landscape are depicted by the greys and earthy colours. In this respect, perhaps she has achieved what Burchell thought would be possible; namely, that by studying the specifics in the African landscape, a uniquely 'African picturesque' would develop.

As an active participant in the rural aid projects, she saw some of the most desolate landscape and dispossessed rural communities, but despite this, she was particularly aware of a sense of 'beauty' of the wide open spaces of South Africa (pc). It is ironical that it was through her involvement with these communities that she responded to the arid landscape seeing the 'uniquely African aesthetic' that Burchell had sought. Though the veld was desolate she saw a 'beauty' in the dry veld which inspired her to want to depict it in her art (pc).

Berman's use of the word 'beautiful' to describe the landscape needs to be examined. She stated (pc) that her absence from the country had sharpened her awareness of the African space in which she found a sense of beauty. The colonial landscape artists also used this space as part of the picturesque convention which some contemporary writers interpret as their visual colonisation of the land. Ashraf Jamal states (in Geers 1997: 159) 'the South African plateau was perceived as a space rather than a place, a boundless zone condemned to exploitation.' Bearing this in mind, it seems paradoxical that it is the 'space' of Africa that Berman finds beautiful; her work with the people that Jamal would have classified as those exploited by the colonists was a precondition for the sensitising of her aesthetic responses to the land.

Berman highlights the paradox of South Africa embodied in the aesthetic landscape; it is beautiful and inspiring, yet tragic and devastating. Her 'African Beautiful' is not purely a picturesque beautiful, though her prints demonstrate that this landscape can still retain a picturesque quality of scenic beauty. Although it reflects a land that is ravaged and contains misery and suffering, there is a sense of optimism.

Though Berman claims that she is not attempting to create an image in the picturesque tradition, she does seek out the aspects of the landscape that she finds 'beautiful' such as the space and the light of dawn and dusk. Berman saw a beauty in the African landscape that might be regarded as being closer to an African aesthetic schema than a Claudian approach, yet at the same time she retained elements in her picture-making that conform to the European picturesque.

Although she might be seeing an 'African picturesque' and a different 'beautiful' from the one that artists like Methven were looking for, she is still attempting to portray what she perceives as the beauty of the South African landscape. It is interesting to compare her intentions with those of

artists such as Baines, and to note that they are both responding as artists to the landscape. However, their different cultures, and the experiences that make that them the people they are, have resulted in different responses and interpretations of the landscape.

It was noted that Irma Stern, as a modernist painter, expressed mood in her work with colour and brush strokes. When Berman dispensed with colour, in a recent series, **Landscapes of the Truth Commission** (1998)(fig.6), she used the technique of mezzotinting as an alternative way to create mood. The landscape is soft with a dense background creating a sombre, looming sense of disquiet. Berman depicts landscapes that are far from the idea of classic beauty or the 'picturesque'. Rather than green mountains and rivers, she represents a ravaged and sad landscape. These landscapes communicate a kind of pathos, rather than purely one of visual pleasure. The image is scratched or burnished out of the dark ground to reveal light; it is a metaphor for revealing truth and hope.

As is the case with Berman's collographs, physical processes of printmaking are integral to the meaning of this work; her mezzotints are an equivalent of the process of a country in search of itself. By scraping away the dark area, which could represent the evil, she reveals the picture. The use of an electric Dremel to drill or draw lines is a physical substitute for intervening, ravaging and making a mark on the landscape. The destruction of the social fabric, as well as the healing, become translated into the 'making' of the work.

Berman is using landscape as a metaphor for the transformation process and also a textual site of struggle in South Africa. The Truth Commission and land restitution³ are some of the mechanisms which are being used by the nation in an attempt to heal itself from the trauma of apartheid. Berman feels (pc) that the political landscape is littered with discord, bricolage, assemblage, erasure, but its metamorphosis will be found in the search for truth. She is demonstrating the role that artists can have in this by witnessing and interpreting the process, and landscape imagery is the means through which this is achieved.

Emily Hobhouse was noted (in chapter two) as an example of an artist who was sensitized to the suffering of the people, particularly the women and children, through her involvement with them. Berman's landscapes, as was noted with Hobhouse's, reflect the inextricable link between the landscape and events in South Africa. This aspect of landscape representation would conform to the paradigm shift that Capra calls for; however this was not the intention of some of the artists (such as Methven) examined in chapter two, for example, where landscape was used to promote a 'national' art.

³ See preamble to the Restitution of Land Rights Act No 22 of 1994 (Butterworths Statutes of South Africa 1998 Vol 4 Part 23: 138) and the preamble to the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No 34 of 1995. (Butterworths Statutes of South Africa 1998 Vol 6 Part 32 :298-299)

In the **Landscapes of the Truth Commission**, Berman kept to the same scale that she had used in the series **State of Emergency**, ten years earlier. The use of this scale and a similar technique strengthen the connection between the series. In the earlier series the drama of the state versus the people was enacted in the landscape. Now the landscape and the devastation or reality of nature is depicted, and the players have become the elements of the landscape. In **Landscapes of the Truth Commission**, titles such as 'New Growth' and 'Burnt Tree Stumps' assist the viewer to understand the metaphors that she uses.

Berman has chosen to use the print as her medium of expression because it has a history of social realist expression. Furthermore, it is important for her that a print can be repeated for the political reason of dissemination and democracy, and because it is more accessible and less precious (pc). Black and white are also associated with newspaper reportage.

It is interesting to note that Rembrandt, Goya and Kollwitz were the earlier influences on her work, followed by Kiefer (pc). These artists are masters of their technique and use it expressively to depict their subject matter. (Käthe Kollwitz, for example, used etching, lithograph and woodcut to create moving figurative images of human suffering.) Berman's prints demonstrate that an artist's understanding of the expressive potential of technique can be augmented by examining the work of other artists. When combined with an understanding of the artist's own environment, a unique quality will be achieved in their work. This would support Hillebrand's (1984:57) view that artists with overseas training came back and could apply the knowledge that they had gained overseas and create works adapted to their local surroundings.

The landscapes of Scholtemeijer and Berman thus demonstrate a considerable shift from those of Bosch whose landscapes are still largely influenced by the picturesque tradition (informed largely by a Dutch landscape genre); his visual sources however are rooted in the Lowveld that he has lived in for many years. In this respect his work demonstrates an empathetic familiarity and a connectedness with his environment, and he responds to his audience for whom the visual qualities of the image are of primary importance. Scholtemeijer and Berman aim to set up a critical dialogue with their viewers and feel that landscape must address the socio-political issues of the country, many of which are inseparable from the land and environment. The awareness of cultural and social issues, and the use of landscape as an area of discourse that can be used to redress the imbalances in society represent a more ecological approach.

Technical processes are important elements of the work of these three artists; technique and meaning are inextricably bound together in ceramic and printmaking works. The ceramics and prints show that landscape renditions have moved from the traditional use of watercolour or oils,

although to some degree Bosch still emulates them with his use of ceramic colours. He has, however, refined his technique to a point where a viewer would probably admire the work for its virtuosity. Both Scholtemeijer and Berman utilize unique printmaking approaches as a way of representing the 'otherness' of the African context.

In the passage quoted at the beginning of the chapter, Paton used words to suggest movement and distance in the landscape. Berman finds equivalents in her use of an unconventional pictorial format. This, as highlighted earlier, is a break from the traditional static view of the landscape and introduces the idea of both exploring the landscape as a narrative as well as traversing it.

The landscapes of Scholtemeijer and Berman have moved into the realm which was previously thought to be the exclusive domain of artists doing figurative work: their prints do not rely on the depiction of the human form to create narrative meaning⁴. In Berman's work, in particular, a search for an African aesthetic schema (combined with some elements of the European picturesque) is found to exist in the paradigm shift that now includes an African pictorial identity.

⁴ It could be argued that the human presence is implicit in the viewpoint and pictorial composition (as much in an anthropocentric association of human form with land-forms).

Chapter Four

FLORA

‘We marched from said rivulet¹ and camped in a kloof named Aloe Kloof. Direction and distance N. 1 miles, Lat. 29.51. Long.37.11. We found hereabout very many Aloe trees of different heights and thickness, all for the most part crowned with beautiful growth. The leaves are about a foot long and three fingers in width at the base, narrowing to a pointed tip and along each edge set with thorns. About half an hour before the Sand River is reached and to the right of the way, we found among others a like aloe the stem of which was about seven feet high and so thick that it could hardly be encompassed about by three men.’ ... ‘The veld is covered with grass and Rhinosceros-bush, the river banks lined with Redwood and Thorn-trees.’ (Brink in Karsten 1951: 134-135)²

These journal entries by Brink are interesting for several reasons. Firstly, the reader will note how features of the landscape such as the river and kloof are named after the vegetation: here Brink is using elements of the floral foreground to describe ‘differences’ in the landscape. Secondly, even though Brink was a land surveyor and supplied the technical data of the expedition’s exact location during their journey through the Cape in 1761, it was the flora that captured his attention. In accounting for their unusual features, his description of the Aloes is detailed, and expresses his amazement at their large size, and characteristic form and surface features of the botanical specimens encountered.

This chapter will show that when artists encounter the rich bio-diversity of South Africa, they are fascinated by it, and are inspired to describe it using visual images rather than words. In general, the chapter explores two attitudes to the depiction of flora; that of certain contemporary artists who appreciate African indigenous species and execute botanical depictions of them, and those who prefer to use indigenous plants as the starting point for their work and break away from the conventions of accurate depictions demanded by botanical art. It must be noted however, that this is not to suggest that wider inflexions of visual expression do not exist within the subject of flora.

Material in this chapter is presented in three sections, mainly for organisational purposes. In the first section, the work of four of the artists who participated in the ‘*Art meets Science: Flowers as Images*’ exhibition of 1992 will be examined³. This exhibition raised important issues in South African art such as the separation of botanical and fine art, art and science, the context of the work’s display (or distribution) and the role of the collaborative printmaker in facilitating production.

¹ Doornboom River

² Governor Rijk Tulbagh was enthusiastic about natural history and appointed Jan Andries Auge as superintendent of the company garden because of his botanical knowledge. He aimed to cultivate every sort of African plant that he could obtain in order to create a botanic garden. In order to achieve this he sent Auge on journeys to remote parts of the country to collect specimens. On one of these journeys, undertaken in 1761, Carel Federick Brink, a land surveyor, accompanied the expedition. These are excerpts from Brink’s journal (Karsten 1951: 129-131).

³ The candidate was alerted to the artists because of the exhibition; works to be discussed were however not drawn from the exhibition itself but on the basis of prints researched at Caversham Press during 1997- 8.

Of the *Art meets Science* exhibitors, the work of Gerhard Marx and Douglas Goode focuses discussion on two aspects, namely, an awareness of some unique attributes of the African environment and secondly some similarities of approach between the botanical artist and the portrait painter. It is argued that these aspects conform to a biocentric view that sees plants assuming an importance often formerly reserved for figurative work; explored in the text are the artists' response to the plant as *both* subject and content.

Prints by Elsa Pooley and Karel Nel (also *Art meets Science* exhibitors) will be explored as central links between art and science. For both artists, differing approaches to scientific information underpins the content of their work. As a practising botanical artist, Pooley is concerned with aesthetic considerations, while not compromising her primary goal of conveying taxonomical information. Nel, as a practising 'fine' artist, on the other hand, is concerned with the links between art and science and is particularly interested in metaphysics and the ideologies of Capra.

The second section of this chapter shifts attention to two artists who produced works that reflect on nature in their urban environment. Susan Sellschop's ceramic mural uses images of plants to enhance a public urban space, while Bronwen Jane Heath's print reflects her garden retreat in her urban environment. The intention in this section is to show here that nature imagery can be used for cathartic effect in works that, while converging on images of nature, have different intentions and outcomes. Mainly English formal influences on the two artists will be cited: that is, the philosophies of Roger Fry and the Omega group on Sellschop, and the more subliminal influence of an inherited British landscape tradition in the work of Heath. In both instances, their profound working knowledge of their media - ceramics and printmaking - is a crucial consideration.

The final section of this chapter deals with the three-dimensional works of ceramists Lesley-Anne Hoets, Samantha Read and Katherine Glenday. Here, flora is the primary subject, and it is intended to demonstrate how technical knowledge of ceramics informs their aesthetic outcomes. In this section, a statement by Wilma Cruise about 'African identity' in relation to the ceramics of Hoets raises critical questions about the meshing of medium and subject in the representation of identity.

Beyond the *Art meets Science* exhibition

'A careful study of the best botanical drawings will open our eyes to the endless variety of nature and train them to enjoy, not merely the obvious charm of bluebell woods in spring, but the subtler beauties of colour, rhythm and texture, the structural miracle of cell and tissue, which are to be found in each individual flower, however humble.' (Blunt and Stearn 1994: 331)

The '*Art meets Science Flowers as Images*' exhibition broke boundaries in South Africa because it placed the work of 'botanical artists' and 'fine artists' together in art galleries. Artists who work in

the two - usually separate - fields were invited to participate, and so before examining their work, some issues arising from the separation of these disciplines must be addressed.

The bipolarity of art and science can be seen as an hierarchical modernist construct. In discussing the history of botanical illustration, Wilfred Blunt says that the botanical artist faces a dilemma in being either 'the servant of Science or of Art'; he maintains that the artist should always try to serve both (Blunt and Stearn 1994: 26). In the South African context, attention was drawn to this debate by Marion Arnold, both in her critical writing⁴ and her own artmaking. Due largely to her efforts, the paradigm shift in this arena has now encompassed a Postmodernist discourse. This discourse appears to be closely linked to a number of the aspects of deep ecology articulated by Capra and the ecofeminists that were discussed in chapter one.

In her catalogue essay for the *Art meets Science* exhibition, Arnold (1992: 3) found the categorisation to be an artificial construct because the artists are unified in their focus on the visual representation of flowers. She wrote that 'in the image of painted flowers, the art of painting meets the science of botany'. Although producing works to suit the demands of different disciplines, ultimately Arnold feels that the image is the product of a particular vision and creative judgement.

Elsewhere, Arnold has argued that because Western art regards imagination and innovation more highly than perception and description, botanical art is problematic and as a result is regarded as a lesser genre (Arnold 1996: 64). She concluded that flower painters also tend to be marginalised within the fine art world where their work is often dismissed as lightweight, and that natural beauty tends to be a handicap rather than an asset when it is evaluated by the art world.

In a different context, yet nevertheless applicable to the botanical/fine art debate, Arnold cited Johan Degenaar's definition of art 'as material structured in such a way as it moves the imagination' (Arnold 1996: 16). In Degenaar's terms then, it becomes possible to see that botanical art deserves to be regarded with the same seriousness as any good work of art. Blunt would concur in maintaining that 'the greatest flower painters have been those who have found beauty in truth; who have understood plants both scientifically, but who have yet seen and described them with the eye and the hand of the artist'. Hence for Blunt, a great botanical artist must have passion and knowledge in order to give pictures soul; the botanical artist also has to consider the aesthetic aspect of the image and the images should 'move the spirit and not just feed the mind' (Blunt and Stearn 1994: 26).

⁴ Firstly in the *Art meets Science* exhibition catalogue, and subsequently in her numerous papers, books (such as *Women in Art*, 1996) and contributions (for example, as co-author of *Life and Work of Thomas Baines*.)

The roots of the division of these disciplines can be traced back to the Renaissance, although at the time, the desire to record information resulted in artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer serving both art and science. The publication of the first botanical book in 1530 was the start of a partnership between the scientific word and the artistic image, but also marked the separation of botanical artists from fine artists. The botanical artists were to work with scientists dealing with verifiable visual facts, while the fine artists worked for patrons, and flowers could be components of symbolic and metaphorical paintings (Arnold 1992:7).

Dürer was the first artist that set out to draw from nature and turn it into a completed work of art. He said, ‘...study nature diligently. Be guided by nature and do not depart from it, thinking you can do better yourself. You will be misguided, for art is hidden in nature and he who can draw it out possesses it.’ (Rix 1981: 27). Dürer would have opposed the separation of art and science.

Botanical artists explore the effects of time and light in altering images in the same way as fine artists such as Monet did (Arnold 1996: 72-73). Arnold argued (1992: 6) that while both groups of artists may have different goals, botanical artists and fine artists both make their own creative decisions and depict their own visual responses in their images. In turn, these images are interpreted by the viewer who responds to them in terms of both what is seen (for example, forms, colours, shapes and tones), and what is known (for example, their knowledge of art history, science or the artist).

The illustrated botanical works in the Victoria and Albert Museum are interesting examples of the points that both Blunt and Arnold are making: Kaden’s appraisal of V&A plant illustrations between 1500 - 1850 states (1982: vii) that although images were acquired for their aesthetic appeal rather than for their botanical interest, in the best examples it is difficult to separate the two.

The *Art meets Science* exhibition addressed the issue of the placement of the work that was noted in chapter two. In the case of floral imagery it is a major point of divide; ‘fine art’ is usually exhibited in galleries, while botanical art is usually reproduced in books and scientific publications and therefore is regarded as only having a supportive role as illustrations for written texts. Arnold (1996: 64) states that in terms of postmodern thinking, this should not lessen the importance of the image. This, however, does not always seem to be the case and the work of botanical artists is seldom placed in the same arena as that of fine artists.

It is incorrect to assume that the work of botanical artists is ‘mere’ illustration, while the work of fine artists is laden with meaning that the viewer must interpret. Many of the artists depicting botanical images - like Pooley, Goode and Marx to be discussed below - are deeply concerned

about many aspects of conservation, and while this might not be their overt subject matter it is part of the content of their work. The issue of conservation will be discussed further in chapter four, but it is worthwhile to note here that botanical art often raises these important issues.

Increasing demands on the environment is beginning to create an awareness of environmental matters. Arnold (1997:12-13) takes this argument further when she states that the images created by botanical artists are not merely a scientific record, but set up a dialogue with humankind. The problem is, that in order for the images to ‘talk eloquently’, they must be taken seriously by the critics and placed within the field of mainstream art. It is the context in which the image is made, viewed and interpreted that matters (Arnold 1992:3). Because botanical art is seldom placed in art galleries it is seldom discussed by art historians, academics and critics.

A further important aspect addressed by the *Art meets Science* exhibition was that of collaborative printmaking. Goode, Marx, Pooley and Nel all executed their prints at Caversham Press with master-printmaker, Malcolm Christian. The artists’ brief for the exhibition was to execute images in any printmaking medium using flowers as imagery (Christian 1998, pc). Christian’s role was that of a facilitator; he supplied technical skills and information so that in the execution of their own work, technical problems of printmaking would not hamper the artists. This offered ‘fine’ artists an opportunity to work with printmaking media that they did not normally use, and botanical artists⁵ could break from their conventional approach and media of watercolour, pencil, pen and ink.

In retrospect, the *Art meets Science* exhibition created a new paradigm in which floral representation could be viewed. By deconstructing hierarchical divisions (which are heavily criticised in terms of the ecological view discussed in chapter one) and ‘traditional’ representational assumptions, it becomes possible to see not so much the points of division but the confluences in South African art.

Prickly plants: Marx and Goode

In her exhibition catalogue article, Arnold (1992: 4) compared the botanical artist with a portrait painter who must portray likeness as well as to reveal character and individual personality. The work of Marx and Goode to be discussed below, will focus on this. It will also address an aspect of identity connected with the landscape in the African context of the floral foreground.

Both Marx and Goode depict plants that might not generally be associated with conventional flower-pictures. This arises from their use of plant forms, particularly those indigenous to the more

⁵ Although Marx and Goode - whose work is to be discussed in the text below - do not work exclusively in botanical illustration.

arid regions of Africa. In this regard, it is pertinent to assess their contribution to what may be termed the 'African picturesque' that was examined in the previous chapter.

Goode and Marx do not depict flowers such as roses or lilies, but rather those plants which are quintessentially African: succulents and prickly plants such as welwitschias, aloes and cycads. Furthermore, they portray them as an integral part of their natural arid environment; this is in contrast to the lush Eden often represented by the European picturesque.

Gerhard Marx is a versatile artist whose work encompasses many facets of nature imagery.⁶ He grew up near Rustenburg in the Transvaal (now N/W Province) where he developed his deep love of the semi-arid South African veld. His experiences as a child growing up in South African countryside - much of this outdoors - shaped an intimate relationship with the veld resulting in landscape becoming his primary focus in art.

However, he not only depicts his landscapes as panoramic and pastoral views, but Marx's prints also describe the flora of his foregrounds in great detail. He does this partly to contextualise his African vistas, but also because of his fascination with the plant-forms themselves.

Goode's images similarly introduce a wealth of foreground detail into his landscapes; a feature of his work that may be derived from his firsthand experience of the plants in their natural habitat. This keenly felt and observed relationship between plants and their habitat is central to an understanding of the work of both Marx and Goode. Interesting to observe at this point is the view of one of the early plant collectors in South Africa, Robert Plant, who on a collecting expedition for Kew Gardens in 1856, observed how dissimilar a plant looked in its 'native wilderness' from 'a flowerpot in England' (McCracken 1990: 11).

A closely observed habitat, and the necessity for placing plants in their natural setting, fulfills a dual function. Firstly, it allows the artist to explore a given natural relationship (and therefore holistic - in Capran terms) between a plant and the characteristics of its habitat (eg landforms), and secondly to set up a more complex visual dialogue between juxtaposed images⁷. This is demonstrated by works such as '**Halfmens**', '**Richtersveld, After the Rain** (1992) (fig.7) and '**Huernia Zebrina**

⁶ His training is in Fine Arts. He worked as the exhibitions artist and designer at the Albany Museum in Grahamstown before its closing in 1998, where he made life-size dinosaur sculptures and mural background paintings. His weekends and holidays are used to make pictorial images ranging from landscapes, botanical illustrations, stamp design, book illustration and caricatures. Because Marx is involved in many genres, his work has many influences. Apart from being influenced by artists such as Paul Cezanne, Graham Sutherland and Ashile Gorky, he was one of few artists dealt with in this research to acknowledge consciously being influenced by local artists such as Jean Welz (the technical virtuosity of his still-lives), Adolf Jentsch (watercolour landscapes), and Eben van der Merwe (organic abstraction) (pc).

⁷ Arnold (1992:15) discusses this point.

(1992)(fig.8) by Marx, and **Welwitschia** (1993)(fig.9) and **E.F.G.** (1992)(fig.10) by Goode, which all depict the plants in their African habitat. Hence scientific observation (that is, verisimilitude) and an aesthetic schema are present in the same picture.

By convention, the botanical artist must represent the plant with sufficient accuracy and detail so that its taxonomic and other features can be correctly identified. Similarly, a portrait painter ‘captures a likeness’ in observing a subject in order to represent, not only the essential appearances (usually the facial features) of the sitter, but character traits such as personality, temperament and demeanour as well. Marx does not always remove scars and imperfections on plants as he feels that they have a kind of beauty which enriches his botanical renderings (pc).

Marx and Goode take the portraiture analogy even further; they reveal more about their plant subject by providing supporting information about taxonomy and habitat in the same way that a portrait painter includes details such as ‘telling’ personal possessions (indications of social status and rank) or the environment of the sitter.

The environment in the silkscreens, **‘Halfmens’, Richtersveld, After the Rain** (fig 7), and **Near Griekwastad** (1997) (fig.11) that Marx executed at Caversham is the dry arid African landscape for which he feels an affinity. In **‘Halfmens’, Richtersveld...**, the sky shows patches of sunlight in a scene that is still dark with thunderclouds. The primacy of the plant’s name in the title alerts the viewer to its importance, and the tall ‘halfmens’⁸ stands prominent in the picture’s foreground in a rocky outcrop which also sustains some other scrubby plants.

Marx accommodates both scientific accuracy and aesthetic considerations. His print combines individual pictorial elements using a synthesis of observed ‘botanical fact’ and imaginative ‘pictorial fiction’, but where it is easier perhaps to discern his acute observation of the specific character of this desert environment in which the ‘halfmens’ thrives, his expressive latitudes are more difficult to pinpoint. Compositionally, it is the ‘halfmens’ that is the single upright motif in the picture, providing a striking contrast to the generally flat horizontal planes which are a geomorphic feature of the Richtersveld region. The combination of tactile contrasts also fascinates: areas of scrubby vegetation and broken rocks seen against a backdrop of distant clouds.

⁸ The ‘halfmens’ or *Pachypodium namaquanum* in **‘Halfmens’, Richtersveld, After the Rain** is a particularly strange plant which is aptly named as it does resemble a person who is standing surveying the veld. According to local African legend these trees are half man and half plant. A feature of the plant that contributes to this appearance is the fact that it always grows with the tip of the stem inclining towards the north at an angle of between 20 and 30 degrees. These plants are a protected species in South Africa and Namibia. (Coates Palgrave 1983: 795-796)

In **Near Griekwastad**, Marx also emphasizes the floral foreground in his detailed depiction of the plants which lead the viewer's eye into the landscape in the background. Marx commented that he uses landscape textures and organic forms to combine two very different art styles, namely, realism and abstract expressionism (pc). Christian's assistance is evident in the textural⁹ quality of this silkscreen, which differs from the flat colours often associated with this medium. This is an example of how Christian's intervention as a master-printmaker assisted the artist to overcome difficulties with the technical demands of the medium.

Textural quality is an important element in these dry arid landscapes - in many respects it is this aspect that is the antithesis of the European picturesque and appears to be what Burchell would have termed the 'African picturesque'. It could also be argued that these elements of the picturesque already exist in the landscape, as part of a unique African aesthetic that Burchell stated was 'that kind of harmonious beauty which belongs to the extensive plains of Southern Africa'. Marx often makes further aesthetic choices by specifically excluding powerlines and exotic plants (pc), presumably because he finds they intrude on the natural environment.

Marx does however, use certain pictorial devices derived from the European picturesque, particularly in his clearly ordered foreground, middleground and distant view. Regarding colour, in **Near Griekwastad**, he uses a range of pinks and blues which contribute to a picturesque quality that is reminiscent of the **Road to Huhudi** by Berman (examined in the previous chapter). Similarly, in '**Halfmens**', **Richtersveld**, **After the Rain**, his use of clouds as a dramatic foil to the land and the filtered light is reminiscent of these pictorial devices found in the European picturesque, - Constable's well-known English landscapes, for example.

Not all of Marx's landscapes are panoramic. **Huernia Zebrina** (1992), a hand-coloured stone lithograph, depicts a close-up view of a small portion of a landscape and the natural habitat of the specimen focussed on. These are two maroon and white star-shaped flowers with spiky foliage. The pattern on the plant describes its sculptural form and gives taxonomical information which would assist with identification. In this way it becomes both decorative and descriptive.¹⁰

⁹ Christian developed a process by which acetate (a transparent sheet on which the artist's image is drawn or painted) is textured before the image is transferred to the silkscreen. This creates a textured (rather than the usual flat) area of printed colour (Christian 1999, pc). For further use of this technique, see the discussion of Goode's prints below, and also chapter five regarding Arnold's print (triptych), **The View**, **Breaking the View** and **Continuing the View** (1992).

¹⁰ This demonstrates how complex forms may become simplified in art (sometimes unintentionally) in order to make the work more readable; in the process of simplification certain repetitions and striking motifs are accentuated, with the result that decorative shapes develop. This may compromise the taxonomical information of the image.

Goode and Marx seem to be fascinated by strange looking indigenous plants in a similar manner to the early explorers discussed in chapter two. This is not surprising, given the fact that Marx worked in the Albany Museum, and that Goode works in the natural history museum in Durban¹¹. In both their art, an affinity for imagery of and about the African environment is a central theme.

The arid African environment is depicted in Goode's **Welwitschia** (1993), a hand-coloured lithograph, which - like the welwitschias in Baines' paintings¹² - is both a landscape and a study of a plant. In Goode's picture, the welwitschia is the only living thing as far as the eye can see (unlike the overt presence of the artist in Baines' paintings). The curved lines as well as the cascading forms of the leaves (which sprawl over the sand) give rise to an illusion of movement, as if a live creature was moving across the desert. As with Marx's 'halfmens', the welwitschia suggests anthropomorphic form; the plant is not represented as an immobile element, but in appearing to move over the landscape, triumphantly defies the static flatness and aridity of its environment.

Interestingly, in view of Capran concepts, Goode regards beauty (which he tends to idealise) and ecology as the same thing: these elements underpin the theme of his work. His prime interest is in cycads. In this subject he demonstrates dual concerns; firstly with ecology - as cycads are now under threat from man and are close to extinction in the wild¹³ - and also with aesthetic matters of form and surface. Goode says they are 'hard edged botanical subjects' and 'therefore suit my prickly nature' (pc). Hence he is not given to a mechanical reproduction of scientific information, and in personalising his subject, he demonstrates a similar response to that of 'ordinary' artists such as portraitists, for example .

E.F.G. (1992) is a hand-coloured lithograph depicting the *Encephalartos friderici-guilielmi* in the landscape in the rugged countryside, its natural environment. Here Goode also included a zoological subject - a buck, standing still, looking at the viewer as if to suggest that the viewer is an intruder. Interestingly, he uses a portrait orientation here, rather than the horizontal orientation of a landscape format. By doing this the cycad - rather than its landscape setting - becomes the central subject of the picture. Inherent also in this pictorial format is a personification of the plant

¹¹ Goode started in entomology, however landscape and flora are now his chief interests. He works at Durban Natural Science Museum as chief technician and spends both his working days and leisure time doing his art. He feels that he has learnt more from nature than from any indoor activity. The beauty and climate of Natal suit his style and this is reflected in his interest in and depiction of cycads. The very different landscape of Namibia, with its starkness and changing moods has also influenced his work profoundly and been a source of inspiration for many years. (pc)

¹² Illustrations of Baines' works referred to can be seen in the Christie's 1999 exhibition catalogue, *Thomas Baines: an artist in the service of science in Southern Africa*, edited by Michael Stevenson.

¹³ From an ecological point of view cycads are very important plants. They can be traced back to the plants that were dominant in the Mesozoic Era, about 200 million years ago. There are individual specimens of *Encephalartos* in South Africa that are thought to be more than 500 years old with rootstock that is even older. (Pooley 1993: 40)

as a subject; Goode's 'cycad-portrait' suggests a resilient and venerable survivor in the African land - a plant that is an integral part of the ancient land and rocks of its habitat.

In the two works discussed next, Goode used screenprinting - and consequently a very different style - in further studies of cycads. These images bring the viewer much closer to his subjects than **Welwitschia** and **E.F.G. In Visitor** (1992)(fig. 12), the spreading leaves of a central cycad occupy the entire lower portion of his picture, and hovering above the inviting cones of the cycad plant is a small moth. This is the 'visitor' of the title: a leopard magpie moth (*Zerenopsis leopardina*) that is associated with the cycads on which it lays its eggs so that its larvae can strip the young leaves (Pooley 1993: 40). While gardeners might not welcome this voracious visitor, in his subjects Goode emphasises interdependence and balance observed in nature.

Chiemanimani (1992)(fig. 13) shows another cycad, probably the male *Encephalartos ferox*; here the whole picture is occupied with a macro-view of its cones. This work also depicts a visitor, but here it is a mantis stripping the wings off the moth which it is devouring. The natural forms of the plant in this print, as in **Visitor**, are highly patterned and set up bold visual rhythms, but at the same time as delighting in these patterns, Goode supplies accurate taxonomical information about typical leaf configuration and the identifying form of cones.

Although botanical conventions will be discussed further in the next section, it must be noted at this point that, in these particular works, Goode has introduced some deviations from strict botanical conventions, firstly in his titles and secondly in his use of colour. Botanical illustrations are conventionally titled according to scientific names of the subjects referred to; Goode exercised considerable freedom of choice in his own imaginative titles, and his titles emphasise narrative elements present in his iconography. In botanical illustrations, 'accuracy' of colours usually means closely matching the hue, saturation and intensity of local colours; in Goode's silkscreens he has exercised autonomy of interpretation in enhancing or 'falsifying' the saturation of local colours for dramatic visual effect. To what extent this may be attributed to the influence of the working environment established by Christian at the Caversham Press is unknown.

Science and art: Pooley and Nel

Recently art historians have started to question the separation of art and science that characterised modernist theory. Writing in *Science and the Perception of Nature*, Charlotte Klonk (1996: 5) states that revisionist work on art and science is mushrooming; she comments that the theory is sometimes more complex than is acknowledged.

Theorists pose questions such as how culture encompasses what is known, and what is perceived. Debate also revolves around whether science's quest for truth affects art unilaterally and whether art's visualisation of the world shapes or informs scientific understanding in any way. Regarding other interconnections, there is speculation as to whether art and science are both conceptualised in relation to economic structures and political forces. Klonk deliberates whether art and science are two parallel strands in culture, each of which reveals something about underlying social beliefs and governs discourse.

Two local artists for whom art and science are integral components of their work are Elsa Pooley and Karel Nel. Pooley has published several books on the local flora of KwaZulu-Natal and also often illustrates her texts, and Nel lectures in Fine Art at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Scientific knowledge informs both artists' work. Pooley executes illustrations mainly for scientific documentation and records her botanical information from live sources only. This involves the intimate observation of plant habitat¹⁴. As a fine artist, Nel feels free to interpret and use a range of resources. As a result his work is informed by diverse scientific phenomena and cognitive theories. He declares metaphysics to be at the conceptual basis of his work (pc). The discussion to follow explores Pooley's and Nel's work in context.

Pooley's silkscreen of *Clivia Miniata* var. *Citrina* (1992)(fig. 14) is a representation of the more rare yellow - not orange - flowered variety of the clivia. Pooley adheres to the botanical convention of a plain background (which enables the viewer to observe the plant in isolation from its pictorial ground), and juxtaposes several stages of the characteristic life-cycle of the plant species - its basal growth, flowering and seeds. She has shown the growth patterns of leaves at the plant's stem in order to supply vital taxonomical information. Observation of these scientific 'givens' nevertheless offered her visual and aesthetic opportunities to delight the eye in criss-cross rhythms, and a striking contrast of dark, broad strappy leaves and delicate pale lemon blooms. Pooley has introduced an atmospheric, spatial element in rendering faintly in the background another clivia plant. In this she demonstrates her manipulation of the pictorial principles more readily associated with the aesthetic practices of 'mainstream' fine artists.

In terms of colour, Pooley is constrained to find aesthetic solutions within the realist traditions of botanical representation. In this silkscreen she has used a subdued palette - interesting to compare

¹⁴ Her images are selected according to season because she only paints living specimens. For Pooley, a first love of landscape turned into a passion for plants. She has devoted her time to doing botanical paintings of indigenous plants. Whilst making herbarium collections and creating indigenous gardens she has researched the vegetation of the areas where she lived. Initially she responded to her environment ideally, looking for 'beautiful' landscapes but land degradation has interfered with her concept of an idyllic view (pc).

with the saturated colours used by Goode in his **Chiemanimani** (fig 13) discussed earlier. Furthermore, Pooley, as a botanical artist, must weigh aesthetic considerations against the need for botanical accuracy when trying to capture nature at the height of its beauty. This involves a process of selection on the part of the artist, with the possible exclusion of certain 'unaesthetic' parts of the plant, for example dead or damaged leaves.

The *Art Meets Science* exhibition gave Pooley the opportunity to work with media that she is not accustomed to. In **Gloriosa Superba** (1992)(fig.15), a hand-coloured stone lithograph, Pooley again depicts the flower from different viewpoints as well as various botanical states: a conventional device used by botanical illustrators to maximize information about a plant's life-cycle. She has exercised aesthetic choice in the arrangement of her image on the page; again in her juxtaposition of coloured and uncoloured (that is mainly linear) areas of the lithograph she has been mindful of both aesthetic sensibilities and the conventions of botanical illustration.

Whereas Pooley depicts plants for a mainly scientific audience, Nel is more overtly concerned with linking art and science. Nel regards the participation and interpretation of the viewer as an integral part of his work (Doepel no date: 4). Like Pooley, Nel addresses himself to a specific audience, and his imagery is embedded with visual identifiers about the ideas that have shaped his thinking.

Doepel (no date: 3) found that Nel rejects dogmatism in science and religion and insists that his work is not to be read as an interpretation of either scientific or religious concepts. In order to understand recent scientific theory, he has read authors such as Bronowski, Zuchav and Capra who present these theories in a language that is more accessible to a layman (Doepel no date: 3). Of particular relevance to this thesis, is Nel's professed admiration of Capra's thinking.

Thematically, Nel's interest is in metaphysics. He constantly questions humanity's place in society, the quest for identity and attempts to understand the complex world. Nel is interested in neural networks and patterns and processes of perception. These he feels are shared cross-culturally but that interpretations of natural phenomena are cultural. He observes that paradigms and value systems constantly change through the centuries and across regions and cultures. (pc)

This relationship between the physical world and the inner spiritual world are alluded to in Nel's two stone lithographs **Boat of the Oblivious Bloom** (1992)(fig.16) and **Palmer's Flare** (1992) (fig.17). His titles, arrived at during the drawing process, provide clues to the meaning, but are intended to generate questions rather than to provide answers or solutions (Doepel no date: 3,5).

In Nel's **Boat of the Oblivious Bloom**, the shape of the leaf (resembling that of a *strelitzia nicolai*) which dominates the picture, suggests a boat. A large white flower is nestled in the leaves

which are partly realistically drawn, but in areas the veins start to form patterns. Areas in the background hint at landscape with clouds and water. Nel gives only enough information to lead the viewer into his thought processes.

Doepel (no date: 27) states that the strelitzia in Nel's work is associated with the idea of offering. Nel has noted that the leaf is associated with religious traditions such as Palm Sunday. Furthermore Doepel states that Nel associates tropical plants such as the banana, strelitzia and frangipani with a sense of luxury and abundance that he recalls from childhood visits to his grandparents in Natal. The foundation for this imagery may have been created when he set up a collection of botanical specimens in his room while he was still at school.

Not only do representational aspects of nature in his work such as images of leaves, mangoes and flowers give a sense of luxuriance and offering, but for Nel they create a sense of connectedness with the environment. Images of nature are there as keys or triggers to a wider arena. He is interested in the concept of paradise which is often shown as a garden, or nature in a secluded setting. The idea of harmony between humankind, animal and the plant kingdom are allusions that are there constantly for Nel (pc).

The areas of landscape in **Boat of the Oblivious Bloom** are Nel's response to the environment as a result of travel. However, much more of his work is a mapping of his internal world and inner landscapes; external and internal vision inform each other (pc). The viewer must follow Nel's journey and continue to re-examine and evaluate conceptions, preconceptions and prejudices (Doepel no date: 29). Nel is using recognizable images to draw the viewer into the picture in order to trigger off the dialogue that Capra suggests is necessary to facilitate a paradigm shift.

Nel's interest in light is particularly apparent in **Palmer's Flare**. A flower with bright white light behind it leads the viewer's eye into the picture. The entire picture plane is activated with marks which develop into patterns in certain places and recognisable images, such as flowers, in others. Doepel (no date: 4) explains that the small tails on the dots that sometimes occur in his images suggest wave patterns and sperm which in turn suggests generative principles. In this image he has made dramatic use of light and dark tonal areas which highlights his interest.

Nel makes use of many decorative elements in his work, although these are not so much about decoration as about ordered pattern. Doepel (no date: 3) states that scientific sources can be detected in Nel's use of recurrent motifs, for example, the rotating circular form which is based on the principle of rotation. Rotation is the underlying pattern for atomic structure and the solar system. On a molecular level, certain patterns emerge and these patterns are more about structure

than decoration and an understanding of how the external world is constructed. Sound is vibration which sets up patterns, and within the animal kingdom pattern is used both to attract and to camouflage. Pattern therefore has specific functions and the functional aspect of pattern is an important aspect of his work.

The work of these two artists demonstrates that although they both use the floral foreground as their source material, and both of them would stress the importance of the relationship between science and art, their intentions, and consequently the results of their art making are very different. At first glance, this would appear to strengthen the argument for the separation of 'botanical' and 'fine' art as it seems that categories are defined by the primary intention of the artist.

However, the difference between the categories is not one of technical ability. While the botanical artist must accurately depict details of identifying characteristics for scientific purposes, the fine artist is not necessarily concerned with accurate rendition (verisimilitude) of the subject. In other words, the fine artist has the 'licence' to alter, exaggerate and distort for expressive purposes, while the conventions of the botanical artist are bound by taxonomic considerations. However, it must be noted that personal choices are made by artists no matter what genre they address.

Differences of approach aside, it can be seen in the work of both Pooley and Nel that scientific knowledge is essential to both. In writing that '...all observations are subject to the frame of reference from which the individual sets out to make a discovery,' Gombrich (1977: 271) argues that for the scientist and for the artist there is no such thing as an 'objective' observation of nature. The observations of science are not to be regarded as more reliable or more 'objective' than those of art, but complementary to art (Kenton 1989: 24-25). In the case of Marx, Goode, Pooley and Nel's work it can be seen that it is not the one versus the other, but as the title of the exhibition suggests, art meets science.

This is the sort of symbiotic relationship and balance that Capra seeks. All four artists discussed in this section have demonstrated that their work is concerned with interconnectedness and that many of the issues that are crucial to their work are framed by ecological discourse.

FLORA: Urban Spaces

The discussion shifts in this section to the work of two artists - Sellschop and Heath - who are concerned with the interaction of nature imagery of enclosed urban spaces. Before proceeding with an exploration of their work however, it is necessary first to provide some background.

The word 'paradise' comes from the Old Persian *pairidaeza* which meant a walled garden (Ripley in Ayensu, Heywood, Lucas, Defilipps 1984: 12), and usually means a place of exceptional happiness and delight. It is often used as a synonym for heaven and for the Garden of Eden before the expulsion of Adam and Eve (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1980, Vol. VII: 741). Many artists living in urban areas feel themselves alienated from the natural environment in a world that is far from paradise but seek to recreate it in their art.

The work discussed in this section examines two aspects of garden imagery in the urban environment. Sellschop created an imaginary garden on her ceramic mural in a shopping mall, while Heath's meditative reflections on nature selected for discussion here, are concerned with the private urban space of her own garden.

The different intentions of the artists are clearly reflected in the way they have depicted their imagery as well as in the media and the scale that they have chosen for these works. Sellschop's large tiled mural was intended to bring nature into the urban environment in a playful way in order to enhance what was a bleak interior space. In order to function within the public environment of a shopping mall, the scale had to be large and the colour eye-catching. Heath's work, on the other hand, depicts her private garden and is small in scale in keeping with the intimacy of her subject.

When Susan Sellschop was commissioned to design, manufacture and install the ceramic tile mural in the Woolworths arcade in the Tyrwhitt Mall in Johannesburg (figs.18a and 18b), it was an opportunity for her to use decorated ceramic tiles to enhance and to bring nature into the built environment. Her rationale for interior design is based on the ideologies of Roger Fry (1866-1934) and the Omega Group and the Bloomsbury Group (Cruise 1991:159,164).

The public mall was to be restructured, and Sellschop's brief was to design a 'garden' that would be viewed through the windows of an imaginary conservatory; in this she played with levels of illusion and reality.

The total length of the panel is 37500mm and the height 3000mm and matt white commercial tiles were used as the 'canvas' on which a colourful picture of the imaginary garden was painted with underglaze colours. Terracotta tiles were used along the bottom of the frieze in order to give the impression that one was inside, looking out. She further heightened that effect with the sky behind the foliage. Though the tiles were made in panels, she wanted the picture to read as a whole and so she made the trees and plants extend over several panels in order not to have breaks in the decoration. (N.C.Q. Number 20: 8)

Sellschop used strong elements of linear design (with black outlines as a unifying device) in her large composition in which she combined recognizable species, both indigenous - such as arum lilies and clivia - and exotic, and imaginary plants.

In his discussion on designed environments, which includes the urban landscape, Yi-Fu Tuan (in Meinig (ed.) 1979: 99) argues that shopping centres do not only serve a utilitarian function, but they also aspire to reflect communal values and ideals. He states that in order to achieve this, the architect attempts to capture one's attention through the design of idealized communal experiences and designs which should be harmonious and uplifting. In this respect it differs from something like a painting or sculpture which can draw the viewers attention to something sad or offensive. The designed environment has a direct impact on the human senses and feelings and people will respond to signs and symbols that are part of the design. This may occur either on a conscious level or more often, on an unconscious level. Tuan would therefore agree with Sellschop's belief that a mural of this nature would positively influence the people using the mall.

Sellschop's choice of ceramic tiles as the medium for this mural is appropriate; as a ceramist she was aware that tiles offered her the opportunity of working on a large scale, and that the medium forms a harmonious part of the architectural fabric. Also, the ceramic tiles are enduring and reasonably resistant to vandalism.

These factors were not relevant for Bronwen Jane Heath and as printmaking, a medium which is mostly used for small scale works, it was an appropriate medium for her to choose. The development of printmaking is rooted in the history of botanical art itself: pictures that were themselves small scale works. Between the 16th and 19th centuries improvements and development of printing techniques were in tandem with the development of botanical art.¹⁵

In keeping with the historical tradition of wood engravings which were executed on a small scale, Heath has chosen this technically demanding medium to depict her urban garden on an intimate scale.

For Heath, the privacy of her garden represents a retreat, a place of peace and tranquillity which is her piece of paradise. It is in this private space that she finds inspiration to create her art. **Morning and Birdbath** (1987)(fig.19), shows this; the small composition (90x43mm) consists of two images, each cut from individual woodblocks. She juxtaposed two images of birds, each shown

¹⁵ Engravings offered the botanical illustrator finer lines and more detail than woodcuts. Wood engraving, where the endgrain of very fine, hard wood is used, was a refinement of the woodcut. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the skill and accuracy of engraving improved and stipple engraving was an important innovation which allowed for subtle tonal range. Lithography enabled very fine gradations of tone to be achieved and the skilled lithographer could work much faster than the engraver (Rix 1981:174-178).

from a different viewpoint. The top image shows a view of her garden with a bird perched at the top of a centrally placed tree, while the lower image depicts a bird splashing in the birdbath.

The quiet atmosphere of Heath's garden environment was influenced by memories of her family home; she grew up in a spacious house with a big wild garden which was entirely magical to her child eyes. Her garden was a quiet Eden and a place where she could find tranquillity (pc). She stresses also the strong influence of her parents, Jack and Jane Heath (both artists and teachers at the University of Natal) and their British training in fine art. As well, as a child, she recalls being surrounded with the wood 19th century black line engravings of Thomas Bewick and the early 20th century white line engravers such as Eric Ravilious (whose images were printed on Wedgwood ceramics) and John Buckland-White (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 42). Many of the engraving she remembers depicted nature imagery, which she says was 'by and large of a gentle British nature' which she feels subliminally influenced her thinking (pc).

At this point, it is necessary to recall the strong historical connections between British landscape painting and garden design. British landscape art is firmly rooted in the theories of the picturesque (discussed in chapter one). Samuels (in Meinig 1979:75) refers to gardens as designed landscapes and much of the literature emphasises the fact that gardens were a crucial aspect in the development of the landscape aesthetic that manifested itself in Britain. The Brownian garden, for example, was characterised by manicured lawns and controlled spaces which led the eye into the distance (Bermingham in Mitchell 1994: 79-82). Hence it is not surprising to find in Heath's work echoes of the idea that a garden is a constructed landscape, which was part of the landscape tradition. This may explain why she depicts a garden that was allowed to 'grow wild'; however her image shows plants and foliage that are grouped into areas of similar shapes and pattern. This orderly environment is expressed in her approach to what she terms a 'good picture', especially in the immaculate shapes of her compositions (pc).

Heath's expert knowledge of the different qualities that various printmaking media offer informed her choice to use wood engraving for **Morning and Birdbath**. With wood engraving, the hardness and highly compact texture of end grain has enabled her to carve delicate lines; the smallness of scale required extremely economical use of line. This image demonstrates her search for reductive linear elements, shapes and patterns (created in the variety and direction of her cuts) that are based on an acutely observed response to nature. She is clearly aware of historical precedents in using white lines to delineate her shapes; in doing so she achieves a brilliance and drama of black and white contrasts.

This mainly meditative work shows Heath's delight in small commonplace things - partly an attribute of the English tradition that she inherited from her parents. Through the formal elements of composition and design she establishes order, calm, harmony and tranquillity that ecofeminists would argue can be achieved through a quiet contemplation of nature.

The work of both Sellschop and Heath reflect a strong sense of design and reflect different responses to the idea of gardens as constructed spaces. Heath's work is that of a solitary person and reflects her private world. Unlike Sellschop's public mural, Heath's engravings were made for herself and not with any particular audience in mind, and where Sellschop wanted to bring a bit of paradise into the urban environment with her ceramic garden, Heath's paradise was enclosed in her garden landscape.

Ceramic form and surface

The final section of this chapter will examine the work of three artists who use ceramics as their medium; Lesley-Anne Hoets, Samantha Read and Katherine Glenday. All three artists also use flora as a special motif on their three dimensional ceramic forms. In this respect, works in this section may be distinguished from the two-dimensional works discussed earlier.

Each of these ceramists uses very different clays, methods of working and firing techniques, and apart from considering the three-dimensional form, all give careful consideration to the particular formal qualities of their respective ceramic media. Hoets works with Raku (a low fired ceramic), Read with earthenware and Glenday with high-fired porcelain. All three artists are interested in artforms in which an understanding of the process is an integral part of the conception of the piece: this ties in with the precepts of ecofeminism (in which process is as important as product) outlined in chapter one. Representative works of each ceramist are discussed in turn.

The two major factors that influence the work of Hoets are her surroundings and her philosophy which is based on universality. She lives on a smallholding at Sedgefield on the Garden Route and feels that living in beautiful places is inspiring, and allows for the peace and tranquillity which make her receptive to inspiration; she makes 'to celebrate the beauty in all natural things' (pc). Hoets agrees with the Jungian theory that archetypal impulses underly all human experience. She feels that the 'universal rhythm' manifests itself in her work (Cruise 1991: 72).

Her succulent planters (figs.20a and 20b) reflect the fat rounded forms of the plants as well as their well-defined lines, and the decorative motifs are derived from plant, sea and feather forms. Her interest in negative shapes is evident in this series; both in the form and decoration, as well as in the

relationship between the pots. By working in series she creates groups of related pots of different sizes, from miniatures that can be handheld, to big fat ones that can barely be picked up.

Using a clay body that has a high proportion of red local clay, Hoets makes her forms by pinching, coiling and paddling; her adoption of low-fired burnished ware reflects an influence of indigenous pottery (such as South African beer-pottery and North American Pueblo wares). Technically, an advantage of low firing is its minimal shrinkage, but more importantly, Hoets feels it allows the burnishing and the quality of the living wet clay to be retained in the final fired form of the vessel. The pots are coated with a porcelainous slip; oxides of copper, cobalt, iron and chrome provide the colours which contribute to their earthy appearance. Areas of the pots are covered with a wax resist, then glazed with a transparent high-soda glaze, fired in a Raku kiln, and reduced in a sawdust pit which blackens them and provides the necessary contrast together with the unpredictable crackle (pc), which she calls 'a kind of Persian patchwork' (Cruise 1991: 72).

The immediacy of Raku firing is unpredictable: exciting, rapid and volatile. She feels the firings are a reflection of spontaneity in life - part of the magic which she calls 'the gift of the fire' (pc). In terms of ecological ideology, Hoets' choice of a slow method of working would be regarded as parallel to the cyclical slow process of nature. The goal-oriented experience of time in the west is regarded as part of the split between culture and nature, a construct that Capra commented on¹⁶.

Like Hoets, Read also works in series, but rather than handbuilding her vessels, she chooses slip-casting (a process usually associated with industrial ware) as it facilitates the rapid production of basic forms that she can manipulate into individually handcrafted pieces. She emphasises that her materials, processes and use of colour refer to historical sources (pc).

It is important to understand the hybridity at the basis of Read's vessels (fig.21); there are diverse influences and sources. She finds the work and philosophies of the artists and designers of the Art Nouveau movement a particular inspiration, and refers to Jean Auguste Dampt's definition of the role of natural forms in Art Nouveau that 'art is the essence of Nature refined, purified and synthesized, through the medium of the artist's temperament, which should not copy it, but transform and stylize it'.¹⁷

More overt in Read's forms and glazes (fig.21) are influences derived from sources in the historical ceramics of the Chinese Tang (AD 618-906) and Song (AD 960-1279) dynasties. The dynastic wares are generally characterised by full, swelling bodies (reminiscent of gourds or swelling

¹⁶ Edmunds discussed the work of Andries Botha in this regard.

¹⁷ Read gave Garner, Philippe. 1990. *Emile Galle*. New York: Academy Editions as her source.

vegetable shapes); bottles had narrow necks, some of which had five lobes also suggesting plant forms. The earthenware glazes were generally simple and bold with splashed transparent colours which melted and ran.

The common factor in both Art Nouveau and Tang and Song ceramics that Read explores is their botanical influences. Read has applied these to her local context in using the form and colour of African plants as the primary source material for her ceramics.

The vases illustrated in fig.21 are two of a series of four that Read designed. Slip-casting enabled her to make her basic shapes which she altered using information obtained from botanical drawings (seen in published sources)¹⁸ as her inspiration. Her four basic shapes were based on different parts of plants: seedcases, flowers, buds, pods. She loves the lobed divisions of plant forms, using them and altering her basic cast shapes to create new variations by either carving or incising or cutting the edges or adding rims.

Given Goode's and Marx's interests in prickly African plants, it is pertinent to note Read's representation in her ceramics of thorns, leaves and spikes. She also hints at plant markings - patterns of dots which represent rows of sporangia - added to her stylized or simplified variations of subtly shaped ceramic forms. These attributes are not merely decorative, but are significant as embedded markers of 'place'; specific identifiers of an African locality and environment.

Reminiscent of the Chinese ware, Read has used a soft glaze that runs during the firing, and the colourful, shiny glazes are fired to 1100°C in an electric kiln (pc). In order to emphasize the ridges and details of the bursting forms, she adds very intense colours as blushes, stripes and patches. Layers of colour are applied in small areas such as grooves, on the inside of rims and spikes, to create jewel-like details.

Read's work is utilitarian and this is taken into account in her choice of medium and scale; pottery is appropriate for this functionality - and allows for decorative exploration as well. In producing utilitarian pieces intended for everyday use, Read would probably agree with the precept of ecofeminism that places value in everyday life and work, and the prosaic objects in a living space.

As with Read, formal training was an important basis of Glenday's knowledge of ceramic methods and traditions; she completed her fine art studies at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, in 1982. Her orientation towards the vessel was prompted in her final year at university when she was lectured by Marietjie van der Merwe whom she cites as one of the people who had the most

¹⁸ Read did not specify her sources

profound influence on her (pc). On graduating, Glenday was a guest in van der Merwe's studio for about four years where discussions about Jungian philosophy, a Quaker's inner journey, as well as van der Merwe's integration of art and life, facilitated her growth and development as an artist (pc). This is of particular interest in this thesis, as this holistic approach conforms to Capra's thinking, and the ecofeminist position that seeks to overcome imbalances evident in western culture.

Glenday has followed van der Merwe in working with porcelain and as with Hoets and Read, she exploits the inherent formal qualities of her ceramic medium. Porcelain offers her unique combined qualities of whiteness, a very fine surface quality, plasticity, translucency and fragility.

In the set of lidded vessels, 1996 (fig.22) Glenday has used fruit and vegetables to inform the lobed and generally rounded shapes of the vessels; the knobs on her lids are reminiscent of the stalks of the plants. Her use of colour (green, iron-yellow glazes - sometimes speckled) also reinforces the idea of fruit and vegetables. These vessels have a gourd-like quality; a plant which is both associated with food and itself a vessel.

Glenday is also developing an increasing interest in indigenous plants, particularly fynbos (pc). This is particularly relevant to this thesis in view of the discussion of plants as emblematic imagery: indicating socio-cultural identity as much as geographical location. The Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve is situated in an area of the fynbos plant kingdom and the inter-tidal zone is an important area of conservation in this reserve. It is pertinent to note that Glenday derived her source material for **Anemone Vessels** (fig.23) and **Calcium Pieces** (fig.24) (which she made for an exhibition in 1997) from the creatures on rocks in this inter-tidal zone¹⁹.

In the set of **Anemone Vessels**, she has used the upright form of the vessel as a foil for the spiny anemones, both for sculptural additions and two dimensional decoration; an emphasis on classical geometric form that is the legacy of her university education (see Cruise 1991: 26). On the lidded vessels, Glenday offsets sculptural additions - inspired by spiny black anemones - against the classical cylindrical forms. More obvious perhaps, is the formal contrast between the smoothness of porcelain and sharp pointed spikes, and pristine white vessels with jet black additions.

Calcium Pieces also suggest the spiky creatures that grow on the rocks, but here the additions are not restricted to the lids of the vessels. Layering and growth are important aspects in her work

¹⁹ Although, according to scientific classification these belong to the animal kingdom (Branch, Griffiths, Branch and Beckley no date: 4), for the purpose of this study they will be included in the floral foreground and will be regarded as 'the flowers of the sea'. Because they are extremely simple animals, they are anchored to the rocks in much the same way as plants in the ground, hence in appearance seem to resemble plants more than animals.

which the method of building layer by layer reinforces. The delicate layering of the fine, translucent porcelain hints at the fragility of life in the inter-tidal zone. While the unglazed surfaces emphasize their bone-like quality, small areas of glaze introduce some subtle colour contrast, as well as some shiny surfaces which draw attention to small sculptural additions.

African identity

Markers of a constructed African identity are synthesised in ceramics in different ways. In the use of pit-firing, a trend that developed in South African studio ceramics during the late 80's, Cruise (1991:71) felt that an African identity might be emerging. She referred to low-fired ceramics in, for example, the way Hoets interpreted forms of traditional beer pottery and combined this source with imagery based on indigenous plants. Whilst a generalised African influence may be apparent in her round-bellied pots, the exact roots of the influence is impossible to pinpoint, since Hoets' imagery is highly synthesised: she says she is generally attracted to pottery from pre-industrial civilizations in China, India and Africa (pc).

African sources were discerned too, in Read's approach to the form and colour of indigenous plants. Again this is a syncretic approach to botanical source material, and in being more 'felt' than directly observed, does not evidence the mimetic, illustrative qualities seen in the botanical prints of Goode, Marx and Pooley. Glenday, like Read does not represent indigenous source material in a direct manner: her ceramics reflect on, rather than illustrate, her observations of the South African environment/flora.

The relevance of flora

In assessing the relevance of images of flora it is useful to recall some of the aspects of an ecological view that were discussed in chapter one. One of the fundamental principles highlighted by Capra in the new paradigm thinking was that of interconnectedness: in terms of this view all major current problems are seen as systemic. Deep ecological awareness recognizes that individuals and societies are all dependent on the cyclical processes of nature; it is grounded in ecocentric values and does not see humans as separate from the natural environment. In other words, humans are but one strand in the web of life.

Discussion in this chapter has revealed that artists depicting the floral foreground draw attention to various aspects of the interconnectedness and diversity of all life. Different forms of visual expression reveal the richness of South African flora; constructed hierarchical divisions such as 'botanical' and 'fine' art are examples of entrenched paradigms that Capra would suggest should be reassessed.

When images of the natural world are marginalised, this inhibits both creativity and interpretation. This chapter has demonstrated some of the diversity in South African ceramics and printmaking in which flora articulates the specific nature of African locations and experiences. Issues that arise from expanding the interpretation are numerous; Arnold (1996: 66) points out that early flower painters responded to the richness of the floral kingdom in South Africa and perhaps to an ephemerality that was cyclical, but at the end of the 20th century the concept of ephemerality must be seen within the context of threatened environments and habitats.

The aesthetics of plants cannot be separated from their conservation²⁰ and constitute aspects of important environmental matters in South Africa that need to be debated. Some of these issues will be discussed in chapter five.

²⁰ Plants are used for medicines, foods, fibres, building materials and fuels; without them our biosphere will not survive. The genetic diversity of the plant life has not yet been fully understood and many species are already extinct. Nature imagery can talk about food resources, medicinal properties, about historical events and social history, people's occupations and social customs, unique, diverse (and often endangered) floral and animal kingdoms, commerce and consumers, land, landownership and living space for humans, flora and fauna.

Chapter Five

LAND

‘The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. It holds the rain and the mist, and they seep into the ground, feeding the streams in every kloof. It is well tended, and not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires burn it, laying bare the soil. Stand unshod upon it, for the ground is holy, being even as it came from the Creator. Keep it, guard it, care for it, for it keeps men, guards men, cares for men. Destroy it and man is destroyed.

Where you stand the grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. But the rich green hills break down. They fall to the valley below, and falling they change their nature. For they grow red and bare; they cannot hold the rain and mist, and the streams are dry in the kloofs. Too many cattle feed upon the grass, and too many fires have burned it. Stand shod upon it, for it is coarse and sharp, and the stones cut under the feet. It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for, for it no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men. The titihoya does not cry here any more.’

The great red hills stand desolate, and the earth has torn away like flesh. The lightning flashes over them, the clouds pour down upon them, the dead streams come to life, full of the red blood of the earth. Down in the valleys women scratch the soil that is left, and the maize hardly reaches the height of a man. They are valleys of old men and old women, of mothers and children. The young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them any more.’ (Alan Paton, from *Cry, The Beloved Country*.)

In this text, Paton’s description of the landscape and the land become intertwined which raises many of the questions about the interrelationship of landscape and the raw earth of the land itself. He pleads for people to regard the earth as sacred and to treat it as such; this thinking is in line with the views of the deep ecologists and ecofeminists who contend that ecological awareness ultimately is a spiritual awareness which arises from an individual’s sense of interconnectedness with the cosmos.

The text contrasts well-managed land with the overutilization of resources; warning of the imbalance human intervention may cause. Questions such as whether cultivation endows rights of ownership of the earth are raised, and implicit in this is an obligation to care for the ‘holy ground’. The consequences of abusing something that is God-given are forcefully spelt out with vivid descriptive language, not only for the people of that region, but also for the indigenous creatures such as the titihoya - a plover-like bird known locally by its onomatopoeic African name. Like Paton’s descriptive evocation of African landscape and his use of African names, many of the artists discussed in this thesis employ visual emblems which identify their work with the South African environment.

In attempting to show the interconnectedness of environmental, economic, social and political matters implicit in the passage quoted above, this chapter focuses on visual images about and of South African land. The discourses about ecology outlined in chapter one are pertinent here, and should be borne in mind.

There are two major sections in this chapter - occasioned by both thematic and organisational concerns - with some subsections. The first section - subtitled **Possession and Dispossession** - deals with landownership (and by implication human intervention in the land) as manifested in contemporary imagery. The second section, the **Fragile paradise**, examines selected ceramics and prints that draw attention to matters of ecological crisis in the land.

Section one begins with the reiteration of early explorer's images in contemporary prints and ceramics. Here, images of Table Mountain¹ in the works of two contemporary South African artists are explored as emblematic images of the South African environment in order to reflect on colonial exploits involving exploration, occupation, possession and dispossession of the land. These exploits represent seminal matters in the colonial history of the Cape, and hence constitute predisposing factors in the construction of a 'national' identity as regards visual representations of the land.

Selected examples of the work of Marion Arnold and Ellalou O'Meara respectively, demonstrate awareness of the complexities of postcolonial debates about land issues. Their contemporary images reflect on perceptions of early explorers and colonists: early images are reinterpreted to make a contemporary comment on connections between the past and the present in a wider context of ecofeminism, issues of gender, hierarchy and cultural intervention.

The final part of section one deals with the topic of landownership as a contemporary issue; selected for discussion are works of artists that reflect on possession and dispossession. The ceramic relief panel by Fée Halsted-Berning - a portrait of herself and her husband with their farm and the Drakensberg as the backdrop - comments on land ownership and the use of agricultural land. By contrast, the Schmidtsdrift artists are a group of people no longer able to follow their former life style as hunter-gatherers and subsistence farmers -the consequence of having been displaced firstly, by the Angolan border wars and then temporarily resettled on unfamiliar land near Kimberley (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 96-97). Whilst landownership is not the overt subject matter of the Schmidtsdrift artists, their prints reflect the effects of dispossession, whilst giving the viewer insight about both their old familiar environment and their new alien home. Their work offers a pictorial record of their traditionalist ways often juxtaposed with a new living environment; the imagery allows for readings about both culture and nature.

Dillon Ripley (in Ayensu, Heywood, Lucas and Defilipps 1984:13-16) contends that although planet earth could be regarded as a paradise, it is rapidly moving away from what could be called

¹ It was noted in chapter two that they were the first depictions of the South African landscape to be taken back to the colonizing countries of Europe, and this view of Table Mountain probably became one of the best known representations of South Africa .

'Paradise on Earth'. The second part of this chapter - **Fragile paradise** - encapsulates artists' concerns for environmental degradation; the discussion is articulated in terms of an ecofeminist perspective (noted in chapter one), which propounds the need to create a new holistic, all embracing cosmology and anthropology. This development is an acknowledgement that life in nature (which includes humankind) is maintained by means of co-operation, mutual care and love, in the hope of developing a culture of respect for and desire to preserve the diversity of all life forms (Miess and Shiva 1993: 6; Gaard (ed) 1993: 1,4).

Fragile paradise as a section interprets the work of four artists who draw attention to the fragile balance of nature. The work of Wendy Ross is in terms of the cyclical processes of nature; questions about power relations are also alluded to. Diana Carmichael's prints depict symbiotic relations, drawing attention to the interconnectedness of life forms on the planet. The main aspects of Marion Arnold's silkscreen reviewed in this section are the intervention of humankind in the landscape, and the different meanings that an image evokes for different viewers. Finally in this chapter section, Carol Hofmeyr's prints are seen as underpinned by Capra's view that the land cannot be understood in isolation from political, social and economic issues.

Possession and dispossession

Possession is an instrument of colonial power and dispossession is its polar opposite: this section investigates the land as a subject often *re-presented* by contemporary South African artists. Reviewed here are selected works that articulate the complex nature of landownership in a country with a colonial history. Arnold's work initiates this section; the discussion is at some length because her work is seen as seminal to an understanding of the main issues.

Aspects of postcoloniality in Arnold's silkscreen **Events at the Company Garden** (1997)(fig.25), are stated in elements reiterated from two colonial sources. In following a print after Valentijn (1726) (Karsten 1951: Plate XVI)², Arnold borrows a conventional landscape of a view of Cape Town with Devil's Peak, Table Mountain and Lion's Head. Also quoted from Valentijn, at the foot of Table Mountain is a superimposed a map of local urban development that includes the Castle - the colonial seat of political and military power. Flanking this map, Arnold has placed scripts derived from Jan van Riebeeck's Company's diary. To this composition, Arnold added pictorial images of a cabbage, a rose (which van Riebeeck referred to in his Journal³), and two

² Francois Valentijn was a Dutch Minister and the historian for the East India Company. In his *Beschrywing van die Kaap der Goede Hoop* (1726) he gives a detailed account of the Company Garden (Karsten 1951: 117).

³ See footnote 7.

sailing ships in the Bay. This work reveals complex - sometimes ironical - references to the Cape's colonial triumph on the southern tip of Africa.⁴

Arnold's print reiterates Valentijn's use of multiple viewpoints; two conventions represent land forms pictorially. One maps the grid structure of *settled/urban* areas of the colony - as if seen directly from above (figuratively speaking, as if 'culture' - the civilising colonial mission - was sent from above), and the other, more commonly used by landscape painters depicts the *natural landforms*, the topography, as seen more naturalistically by an observer on the ground.

Regarding the landscape, Arnold has again retained the multiple viewpoints used by Valentijn; one of the section of the picture representing the bay and settlement and the other representing the distant view of the mountain range. The vantage point over the bay and the urban area is elevated, so that the ground plane and the picture plane are parallel. This rendering gives the effect of a topographical, 'birds-eye' view that compresses the spatial elements of the landscape, rather like a map, a reading enhanced by the representation of the settlement as literally charted territory. With the distant view of the mountains, the viewer is parallel to the ground plane. Consequently, the characteristic shapes - the elevation - of the mountains⁵ in the distance are sharply delineated.

The juxtaposition of two representational systems and multiple viewpoints reinforces the idea that one of the functions of such images was to supply colonisers with, not only landscape, but rather more comprehensive visual information about the land.

Arnold's retention of the image of mapped territory as an emblem of humankind's dominance over the land articulates her critical awareness of the intervention of culture in nature. An overt sign of colonial territoriality and landownership in **Events at the Company Garden** is manifested in the Dutch flag shown flying at the top of Lion's Head.⁶ Arnold extends this by means of additional metaphors of colonial intervention at the Cape: ships, cabbage and a rose.

Compton (in Karsten 1951: ix-x) states that the history of the Europeans in South Africa begins with a garden.⁷ This is emphasised in Arnold's use of two exotic species, a cabbage and rose, in her

⁴ The reason for the establishment of the settlement at the Cape in 1652 was to set up a garden in order to supply fresh produce to the ships that called at the Cape. This would prevent the sailors contracting scurvy as a result of vitamin deficiencies.

⁵ In the early engravings Table Mountain is depicted from the vantage point of the Bay; this reference was most closely associated with the views of arriving or departing colonists. From this vantage point also the view was 'naturally' picturesque because of its inherent drama.

⁶ Peter Kolben in his *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum* (1719) commented on the fact that the flag was visible from the garden and was hoisted on the arrival of ships in Table Bay (Karsten 1951: 108)

⁷ Van Riebeeck's journal notes that on November 1, 1659 '...the first Dutch rose was plucked at the Cape...' and on December 13 'To-day the first ripe cherry was plucked at the Cape...' (Karsten 1951: 41).

print to suggest that land is colonised also by cultivation. In fact, the title of her print, **Events at the Company Garden**, emphasises the garden as the wellspring of colonial interference in nature at the Cape, since it was by this agency that exotic species were introduced to local flora.

Elsewhere in her critical writing Arnold has connected Jan van Riebeeck's Bitter Almond hedge with territoriality as the hedge demarcated colonial ownership and was designed also as a boundary to exclude Khoi people from the settlement.⁸ While the Bitter Almond is an indigenous plant, the vegetables and flowers that were planted in the Company Gardens were exotic, and the introduction of exotic species, as well as the cultivation of the land alters both the land and the landscape. Her print juxtaposes the cabbage and rose with the image of Table Mountain - an icon of South Africa; by superimposing non-indigenous plant species on this landscape Arnold draws attention an irony: early explorers perceived indigenous species and landscapes as 'exotic'.

Arnold's use of cultivated plant species in her print refers clearly to the role of commercial agriculture and horticulture in colonial history, and thus yields an interesting Capran interpretation. The cabbage may be interpreted as a (banal) symbol of food - sustenance for the body - and the rose as a symbol of 'soul food'; hence in this polarity of mind-body she addresses the idea of holistic balance.⁹

By combining historical imagery with contemporary interpretation, Arnold prompts a biocentric interpretation of history - one in which humans are seen as interconnected components of nature¹⁰ Capra (1992: 166) also stressed the importance of interconnections with the future and emphasized that viable solutions are sustainable solutions.

Arnold's print shows that she is critically aware that landscape is an open 'text' which can be read in terms of postcolonial discourse which views the representation of land as an act of appropriation, and therefore of subjugation and exploitation. However, it is unlikely that Arnold would entirely agree with the narrow interpretation of colonial art expressed by van der Watt (1993: 30) who stated that, '...for Baines every sketch that is finished is a successful appropriation of the land and another border crossed.' As outlined in chapter two, landscape images were both an attempt to portray the 'exotic' as well as to depict the bounties of colonies. Arnold's reiteration and recontextualisation of the historical image generates debate about landownership in her print.

⁸ Arnold pointed out in her paper at the 1997 SAAAH (South African Association of Art Historians) Conference (1997:13-14) that the earliest evidence of enclosure at the Cape was the planting of the Wild or Bitter Almond (*Brabeium stellatifolium*) hedge shortly after the Dutch settled at the Cape in 1652.

⁹ Possibly also a reference to van Riebeeck's delight with the 'first Dutch rose' plucked from the Company's Garden noted in footnote 7.

¹⁰ In *Seeds of Change* Henry Hobhouse (1992: xi-xv) points out the important role that plants have played shaping the world that we know. He argues that history focuses on the exploits of men and women and often ignores the vital role of plants.

It is also significant that Arnold has used a landscape drawn by a male from a different background and era as the basis for her print. She questions (Arnold 1996: 43) whether landscape - a genre based on male vision for and by male-controlled institutions - allows for the inclusivity of feminine discourse or whether women merely take over existing (male) conventions. Capra would probably argue that patriarchal values have pervaded society to such an extent that it is almost inevitable that these conventions would have influenced societies' vision of landscape. It is suggested that Arnold draws attention to Capra and ecofeminist discourses which contend that imbalances in society are caused when feminine values are subsumed by male values.

Reading Arnold's print draws attention to many visual markers of male domination, not only in a reiteration of Valentijn's image which reveals itself to be a complex product of the colonial male gaze, but in van Riebeeck's text about the Colony's Garden, and other emblems of appropriation: the Castle, mapped settlement, flag and ships.

As with Arnold, a variety of historical sources are important in the work of O'Meara. The central image on her platter (fig.26) is a view of Table Mountain and Table Bay based on an etching of du Mal. The decorative pattern around it has its sources in blue and white oriental ware. On the rim she has created her own playful image by printing from etchings and engravings¹¹ that she has created from her eclectic source material which include landscape, flora and fauna.

O'Meara regards the Cape as a 'hot-bed of cross-fertilisation of ideas' (pc) and, like Arnold, she draws from historical sources to reflect this in her imagery. She finds historical references in cultural artefacts at the Cultural History Museum, the Natural History Museum, Koopmans de Wet House and the Castle. The delight of early explorers (such as Lady Anne Barnard's contemporary, Le Vaillant) and the excitement at their discoveries, the Simon van der Stel manuscripts, children's embroidery done at the Cape and an eclectic combination of historical, flora, fauna, and mythological imagery also inform her work (pc).

The heritage institutions O'Meara visits also have collections of blue and white ceramics that came to the Cape from the East. She says she wants to combine her idea of Africa - identified emblematically in the image of Table Mountain - as a paradise, with the Eastern influence of the 'willow pattern' (in which the West envisioned China as a kind of mythical paradise). In the early 19th century the western world took these images from Chinese porcelain, copying and adapting them (Copeland 1980: 35) in accordance with concepts of the Orient as the 'exotic other'. O'Meara reinterprets Orientalist imagery to make them relevant to contemporary South Africa.

¹¹ O'Meara transfers intaglio and lithographic images onto ceramic ware based on the potter's tissue transfer used in the ceramic industry.

O'Meara is fascinated by the way things change, not only over time, but from place to place. Figs.27a and 27b illustrate how elements in the Nanking willow pattern, such as the image of the Ancient Chinese Buffalo Boy, were altered when they were depicted on English ware. O'Meara has given her interpretation of the Orientalist water buffalo a South African flavour by recasting her figure in the image of a buffalo by Le Vaillant (pc).

By drawing eclectically from several colonial sources, O'Meara acknowledges postcolonial hybridity: the many different socio-cultural traditions that inform 'South African' identity. Interesting to note is that she often combines images from source material that seem to represent different worldviews and places them in harmonious juxtaposition on the same vessel. For example, she combines sources from embroidery (an activity associated with women and culture), and images of exploration (associated with men and dominance), but both are given equal importance on her vessels. In this regard she achieves (perhaps unconsciously) an ecofeminist balance between feminine and masculine elements.

The image of a black angel on the rim of the untitled platter (fig.29) reveals a source in early Dutch cartography (pc) - an interesting, if incidental parallel to the occurrence in Arnold's silkscreen image discussed in the text above. Cartography is associated with the charting of the New World; J.B. Harley argues in *Maps, knowledge and power* (in Cosgrove and Daniels (eds.) 1988: 279-283) that cartography is a form of power that actually favours a social elite. He states that cartography was an integral part of empire building; maps were used to prepare the way for a process of colonisation whereby lands were claimed on paper and were used to legitimise the reality of conquest and empire.

The black angel could be construed as both an ironical comment on colonisation, and O'Meara's use of the image to authenticate her South African interpretation, as she did with the 'Buffalo Boy'. The general intention of her work however, is to convey her sense of enjoyment of the Cape Town environment - perceived through a compound of historical lenses and contemporary South Africans. This intention is conveyed in the playful manner in which she juxtaposes the eclectic elements that she uses to activate the two-dimensional elements of her vessels. On her untitled platter (fig 29) she replicates a feature of the original engraving, namely Lion's Head looking like the head of a lion; this indicates her enjoyment of the curious nature of the image to someone so familiar with the scene.

That she sometimes also prints her images back to front - or even upside down - reveals her enjoyment of an 18th century 'trick' of printmakers: they drew the image knowing that it would be

reversed in the printing process and then amused themselves by viewing the image in a mirror. Her inverted images of the well-known range of mountains around Table Bay is derived from this.

Another aspect of O'Meara's work that is particularly relevant in terms of aspects of hybridity discussed in this thesis is the way she challenges modernist hierarchies which regarded works in terms of art or craft, and an artwork as the work of an individual artist. The pair of ceramic lidded vessels (fig.28a and 28b) represents a collaborative venture; the forms are coiled by Makgwasa Lefata¹² and would - in modernist terms - be regarded as craft, while the transferred images are O'Meara's, who trained as a fine artist.

Furthermore, O'Meara's printed imagery is derived from several sources; the baboon in fig.28b is an etching that she has based on a clay baboon modelled by Lefa Lefata, the 13 year old grandson of Makgwasa Lefata, while a chameleon on the other vessel (fig.28a) of the pair is based on a drawing by Le Vaillant. Hybridity is manifest also in O'Meara's use of banded motifs, derived from oriental porcelains observed at Museums she has visited in Cape Town.

As in Arnold's **Events at the Company Garden**, O'Meara's printed ceramics participate in the historical continuum of cultural cross-fertilisation at the Cape.

The Land and Ownership: Possession

In terms of postmodern concepts, landscape is a text that subsumes social and political inflexion; in the South African postcolonial context, the connection between land and ownership is a particularly resonant one. The relationship between artist and environment in such 'texts' is more obviously significant, and reveals a complex relationship between perception and representation.

Before proceeding with landownership as a contemporary issue in the prints and ceramics of some South African artists, some opinions expressed by writers will demonstrate how attitudes to land and landownership are reflected in the contemporary representation of South African landscapes.

Diana Kenton (1989: 84) cites Christopher's opinion that South African landscape is a contentious genre because it is embedded within the economic and political history of South Africa. In the face of critic Joyce Ozyński's statement, voiced at the **Art South Africa Today** conference in 1979, that landscape paintings were a 'celebration' of white conquest of the land, Kenton felt that landscapes could be seen rather as attempts to define a secure place for Whites in the face of an unsettled existence and uncertain future, opinions suggested first by Coetzee (1988: 4) and Christopher (1982: 53). Coetzee draws distinctions between Afrikaner attitudes to the farm - 'die

¹² Lefata was introduced to O'Meara by a domestic employee.

land' - on the one hand and to landscape as 'nature' on the other, and questions whether it might not reflect 'an indifference to nature by comparison with farm (nature parcelled and possessed)' Kenton (1989: 55).

Friedman (1994: 27) argues that the Afrikaners' obsession with landscape grew as they lost touch with the land through the urbanisation that occurred during the depression of the 1930's. Painting landscape can be seen as a form of consolation in the face of the real conditions that forced people into urban slums. This reading makes it possible to see that landscape images (such as Pierneef reproductions) in Afrikaner homes could be a nostalgic emblem of the 'lost' landscape. This is not a uniquely South African phenomenon, and it is noted that Jaffares (1979:6) does not regard the escapism as new; while cultivation of the land and the idea of an enclosed paradise garden can be seen as an attempt to control a savage environment, from early times the more urbanised that people became, the greater the interest in rustic life and wild surroundings, resulting in an escapist obsession.

Arnold (1996:41) comments that Pierneef depicted landscapes of empty bushveld, heroic mountainscapes and dramatic cloud formations which are all close to the colonial tradition of English landscape. Citing the example of the mural in the Transvaal Provincial Administration building, **For Thee South Africa** (1964: illustrated in Berman 1970:71), Kenton (1989: 58-60) points out, on the other hand, that W.H Coetzer depicted the Afrikaner manifestly 'at home' in the landscape; she argued that the explicit human presence differs from the English colonial ideas of landscape as a vast, silent space, empty of inhabitants. Esme Berman (1970: 71) attributes this to his Afrikaner heritage (despite his English education). Coetzer's brief was to produce a design for the mural on a public building, and hence offered an ideal didactic opportunity to cast the image of the Afrikaner as both belonging to and a part of the landscape.

It was pointed out in chapter two that Lady Anne Barnard's vision was shaped by the views of the historical period, and her implicit support of British colonialism. Her pictures were not made for public exhibition and (unlike Coetzer) did not promote a public cause, as did many of her contemporary male artists, involved overtly in the cause of Victorian art and/or science (as in the work of Baines). Barnard's were diarised images; however she often represented the views of the landscape from the Castle, the Governor's official residence (Arnold 1996:41), thus reflecting her position in colonial society.¹³ Her small paintings can be interpreted as social records in providing information from her gendered perspective about the visual appearances of the Cape and its people during the first British occupation.

¹³ Her husband Andrew was colonial secretary under the first British Governor of the Cape, Lord Macartney. In the absence of Macartney's wife she assumed the position of the first lady at the Cape (Arnold 1996: 38). Lord Macartney preferred to live in town, so Lady Anne and her husband occupied the Castle (Arnold 1996: 164).

There are contemporary parallels with Barnard's attitude to the landscape. Nearly two hundred years after Lady Anne Barnard depicted the South African landscape through the eyes of an upper-class white English speaking female, Fée Halsted-Berning settled on a farm in the Natal midlands and has produced artworks that reflect her upbringing. She grew up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and cites her 'colonial upbringing' as having influenced her work (pc). She expresses an awareness of debates around colonialism, land and landownership in her ceramic panel titled **Mr. and Mrs. Berning** (1990) (fig.30). This issue is even more pertinent today than it was when Halsted-Berning created the picture in the current context of land restitution and claims on farmland.

She depicts herself and her husband posing with the view of their farm, and the majestic Drakensberg landscape behind them, on a ceramic relief panel which is framed like a painting. Thomas Gainsborough's painting **Mr. and Mrs. Andrews** (c1748) was used as her point of reference, a critical self-consciousness that reflects the fine arts training that she received at the University of Natal. Writing of her work, Wilma Cruise mentions (1992: 176) that Halsted-Berning would have been aware of Marxist interpretations of landscape paintings; by this is taken to mean an awareness of the values of the land-owning classes and attitudes to the appropriation of land.

Technically an important aspect of Halsted-Berning's work is that she disregarded many pottery conventions with regard to traditional use of clay and glazes, and incorporated non-ceramic elements in her work. In this respect the American ceramist, David Middlebrook¹⁴ had a considerable impact on a formative stage of her post-graduate work. He encouraged her not to be restricted by the technical problems that often occur in ceramics, but rather to focus on her intentions. Halsted-Berning learnt to continually reassess what she was making, and to adapt rather than discard ceramic works that were technically problematic. Halsted-Berning began to incorporate cracked and broken pieces in her work, and used glue and other non-ceramic materials such as paint instead of glazes; this often resulted in criticism from potters whose concerns were with utilitarian vessels (Mentis 1997: 20).

In **Mr. and Mrs. Berning** the elements of her composition were built up with clay in high relief, or carved into the flat clay slab. After firing she painted the panel in acrylics to create the illusion of impasto surfaces - a point of technical departure from conventional glazes and also an affirmation of her own roots as a painter. On the right of the composition, the work shows the Bernings as a family group; James leans against a tree whose branches spread outside the upper limits of the panel. Fée kneels at his side -an image of the sentient artist, ironically aware of gendered hierarchies of dominance. By far the largest element in the whole composition is the enormous

¹⁴ David Middlebrook is an American ceramist who was a visiting lecturer in the Dept. of Fine Arts and History of Art at the University of Natal in 1982 (Mentis 1997:11).

backdrop of the mountains that frames the visual boundaries of the landscape. In this regard, the work conforms to Afrikaner concepts of the peopled landscape (in which the Bernings interact) but more perhaps to a 'colonial Englishness' in which no other people are pictured in the landscape. In effect, this exclusivity in the landscape implies a claim to own the land itself.

With regard to Gainsborough's portraits of the Andrews, Halsted-Berning has reiterated several seminal features. Anne Bermingham (1987: 28) points out that although often cited as an example of the genre of the outdoor conversation piece, there are a number of features that make it atypical. Firstly, the figures are not set in a landscape garden, but at the edge of a cultivated wheat field. They do not conform to the codified gestures of naturalness and they do not dominate the composition, they merely share it with the elements of the landscape. In the same way as Gainsborough's subjects for his portraits posed in an unconventional setting, so Halsted-Berning has placed herself and her husband in a setting in which they share the picture space with the cultivated land of the foreground and the 'untamed' landscape of the mountains in the background.

As with Arnold, and O'Meara, Halsted-Berning has connected past and present in recontextualising borrowed imagery. The landscape vista of Gainsborough has been transplanted into an African context with the rugged Berg used as a backdrop, though there is little else in the scene that is recognizable as indigenous to Africa.

The inclusion of the horses in the distance might serve a similar function to that of the gun and hunting dog in the Gainsborough; namely a certain affluence associated with the landowner's leisure and activities (Bermingham 1986:28-29) The inclusion of the horses thus emphasizes the Berning's status as landowners. Hugh Prince (in Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 115) argues that in having their portraits painted, landowners such as the Andrews' wished to record their role at the top of the social hierarchy.

Gainsborough achieved a 'fashionable informality' which was conveyed in his subjects' clothing as much as in the pose of Mr. Andrews. Similarly, the Bernings are dressed in casual wear and James Berning is leaning against the tree. Bermingham (1987:29) points out that this 'fashionable informality' all represents moneyed privilege as the Andrewses could 'afford to be themselves'.

The juxtaposition of the sitters and their cultivated land highlights their relationship with it; their intervention in nature and their shaping of it to cater for their needs, both economic and leisure. Scholtemeijer (1994: 29) posed the question, 'If someone clears the veld to cultivate it, does it really belong to them?'; Halsted-Berning's landscape leaves no doubt about her attitude to the ownership of the cultivated land.

James Berning's upright posture - emphasized by the strong vertical line of the tree which he leans on - strongly suggests domination. This possibly alludes to patriarchal attitudes which are generally culturally entrenched in South African society; the common practice of primogeniture for example favours sons, not daughters, in the inheritance of farmland. Halsted-Berning places a tiller - a male sexual metaphor - strategically in front of her husband; this also possibly refers to the traditional gendered role of the male farmer as the active principle in the land. In her picture, she consciously reiterates the Gainsborough's depiction of a cultivated field, which Bermingham (1986:28-29) has interpreted as a symbol of the Andrews' prospective fertility.

Ecofeminism calls for a biocentric view and rejects the dichotomy which subordinates nature to man and woman to man. In this regard, the position of Fée, shown at a lower level than husband James, yields two readings about gendered power relations; the more obvious being about male ascendancy. A second reading reverses this; that in creating the landscape the woman subverts the exclusive notion of the male principle. Added to this reading of subversion is the fact that Fée is, by virtue of her spatial position, literally and metaphorically closer to the earth.

In general, ecofeminists regard patriarchal farming practices as harmful as they encourage unequal power relations, and argue that environmental concerns will only be addressed if participatory and non-hierarchical practices are adopted in farming. Edmunds (1996: 5) quotes Eisler's claim (1987: xvi-xvii) that archaeological evidence reveals older cultures with matriarchal practices believed to have been peaceful and prosperous for a long period of time. These practices were not based on the dominance of one group or gender over another, but on partnership, where diversity and difference were not based on inferiority and superiority.

Halsted-Berning is aware of current debates that arise in the depiction of landscapes and has made conscious choices in her subject matter to invite vigorous debate, particularly about landownership. She would be in accord with Harrison's observation (in Mitchell 1994: 215) that 'landscape achieves autonomy as an artistic genre [in England] only when the countryside can be viewed as other than property of the landed gentry'. In other words, representation of South African landscape must be distinguishable from a reinforcement of entitlement, and the countryside should be viewed as something other than property.

Dispossession: 'Paradise' Lost

The situation of the !Xu and the Khwe, indigenous Khoisan people of rural areas of the northern Cape and adjacent Namibia, is in strong contrast to the tenured ownership of the Bernings' farmlands.

These Khoisan people were displaced by the wars on the borders of Namibia and Angola and temporarily resettled at a military camp near Kimberley (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 96-97). Their dispossession of, and displacement from, their ancestral lands brought a group of them to Schmidtsdrift¹⁵ during the early 1990's. There they became involved with a community arts project to produce artworks and their success in this venture has more recently come to the notice of the public, both local and overseas. Their imagery articulates aspects of their new lives influenced by their experience of relocation, as much as memories of their old lifestyle and traditional roots.

It is significant that their art is marketed, both locally and overseas, in ways that intentionally emphasize perceptions of 'naïve' qualities in their work; promotional pamphlets suggest links with an ethnographic past of the Khoisan and their rock paintings. Elizabeth Rankin has noted (1997: 103) that prospective buyers from Germany like to think that the art produced by the !Xu and Khwe artists is naïve and 'primitive' and has not been taught. She concludes that this notion stems from the popular view that still perceives the Khoisan peoples as hunter-gatherers who live in an Edenic world that is unaffected by the modern world. It will be seen however that this perception is contradicted in some of the art works as well as by the artist themselves.¹⁶

The Schmidtsdrift artists were taken to see some rock paintings on a farm near Kimberley in order to give the artists a sense of the value of their own culture, as well as to show them that there had been Khoisan people in the area in the past. This appeared to influence their work to some extent (Rankin 1997: 103). The !Xu and Khwe do not belong to the same group of Khoisan people who made the historical paintings (rock art of this kind has not been produced for more than a century) and Rankin (1997: 104) feels that the juxtaposition of ancient rock art with work from Schmidtsdrift in recent exhibitions has fostered the idea that the artists are all part of 'a continuous, seamless culture'.¹⁷

Rankin (1997: 103) further notes that the artists themselves seem to support these ideas, as well as the idea that until recently the people lived in clans, made decisions by consensus, worshipped nature, shared their few possessions and lived off the land. She is not sure if this is in order to

¹⁵ In 1993 Catharina Scheepers-Meyer persuaded the military authorities at Schmidtsdrift to support the establishment of an art project. The SADF funded the supply of art materials and provided working space in a few mobile homes and a trust was established to administer the !Xu and Khwe Cultural Project. The intention of each of the coordinators of the Schmidtsdrift project has been to avoid imposing a Western aesthetic and they have not played the role of art teachers. They have provided them with materials and knowledge of how to use them. (Rankin 1997: 103)

¹⁶ Elizabeth Rankin visited the !Xu and Khwe Cultural Project at Schmidtsdrift in 1996 and 1997 where she met and spoke to the artists. She wrote a paper based on her interviews with them (where she was assisted by an interpreter), and with the coordinators of the project, as well as on her own close examination of the works. This paper was used for a catalogue of the works produced at Schmidtsdrift (*Contemporary Art !Xu and Khwe*) and was also the basis of the paper delivered at the Thirteenth Conference of Art Historians held at Stellenbosch in 1998.

¹⁷ The exhibition of Schmidtsdrift work at the Africus Johannesburg Biennale, 1995 was titled *Cavewall to Canvas* although the curators acknowledged that rock art has been extinct for more than a century (Rankin 1997: 103).

promote their art or if it is part of their search for their own identity which is related to land claims. She concludes that both scenarios are probable.

The environment surrounding Schmidtsdrift is bleak and hostile. The relocated people have had to make considerable changes to their lifestyle; from being self-sufficient nomadic hunter-gatherers and subsistence farmers, they are now dependant on employment or handouts. Whereas the land supplied their food and medicinal needs, they are now in an alien environment that they do not know or understand. While the older generation grew up with an intimate knowledge of a known environment, the younger generation are growing up with 'cokes, liquor, Hi-fi's, television, videos and family violence' (Vorster in Rabbethge-Schiller 1997:22-23).

Despite the bleak surroundings, their work gives a sense of optimism about the opportunities in their new environment. The print **Man amongst the Fleas Looking at a Rainbow** (1994)¹⁸ (fig.31) by Joao Dikuanga, was chosen as the logo for the project as it symbolised hope, suggesting that man could transcend his misery and earthly discomforts by focussing on beauty. (Rankin in Rabbethge- Schiller 1997: 7)

Some of the work showing the combination of past and present life indicates a similar sense of optimism, as well as the cultural dichotomies in their new lives. In the linocut **House with TV and Pretty Garden** (1994)(fig.32), Stefaans Samcuia places two figures outside a house with a television aerial and a cultivated garden with fruit trees and pot plants, as well as wildlife - in the form of an elephant, two buck and a jackal (Rankin in Rabbethge- Schiller 1997).

Their world view is changing as a result of the project and their new life-style, resulting in their depicting not only the indigenous species or alien species that are found in the area where they live, but other exotic species are being introduced. They have visited new places as a result of exhibitions of their work and after Fulai Shipipa visited the aquarium in Durban in 1993, fish started to feature prominently in his work. A visit to the Johannesburg zoo also introduced new species to the artists' vocabularies. Other sources are pictures from books and magazines and designs from fabric (Rankin in Rabbethge- Schiller 1997: 9).

The women told Rankin that though they do depict the flowers from the fabrics that they wear, they also depict those from their memories, and they talk of the flowers from the areas where they were born. She feels that there seems to be a sense of nostalgia for their earlier lives, which though it was not always easy, had a sense of social purpose. The art-making replaces the occupation of

¹⁸ The titles of the work are a literal translation into English, arrived at during discussion between the artists and the coordinator (Rankin 1997: 9).

gathering food in the veld: but also is possibly a form of escape through their imaginations, performing a cathartic function (Rankin in Rabbethge- Schiller 1997:17-18).

The relocation has had considerable impact on the psyche of the !Xu and Khwe. Devall and Sessions (1985: 68) point out that there is a recognition that humans, both as individuals and communities, have needs which go beyond the basics of food, water and shelter and include love, play creative expression, intimate relationships with a particular landscape (or Nature in its entirety) as well as relationships with other humans. These all contribute to becoming a mature human being and the vital need for spiritual growth. There is a general recognition of the need for a healthy, high quality environment for humans, if not for all life, which would include minimum pollution and enough wilderness areas. While there seems to be some contention about how Edenic the world of the !Xu and the Khwe was, since they relied on the environment for their survival, they would have had an intimate relationship with it. In their relocated world many of them must feel as if they have lost their paradise.

Despite the new influences, the Schmidtsdrift artists incorporate much indigenous wildlife and myth in their work. A great deal of their imagery comes from their imaginations and memories. One such image is a double-headed snake which artists have told Rankin is a mythical creature called Shimboamba that lives in the water. She attributes this to a combination of the belief in mythical creatures as well as trance dance (Rankin in Rabbethge- Schiller 1997:10).

In the same text, Rankin noted that there was no tradition of 'drawing from life' in the Schmidtsdrift community and it is sometimes difficult to determine the precise origin of the imagery. Hunting scenes could be reminiscences of their immediate past, but might also be the influence of the rock painting. Rankin found that the depiction of animals and hunting scenes was more common in the work of the men than the women. The effect of imagery such as the flowers, fruit, eggs, animals and insects is often decorative, but could also be an indicator of the artists' reliance on the veld for survival in their former lives. Shipipa shows his ability to combine a sense of design and the decorative possibilities of his subject matter in **Food Trees** (1994)(fig.33). It also demonstrates how they have learnt to make use of the contrast and design potential of the black and white that is characteristic of linocut. The picture plane of this linocut is divided horizontally, and Shipipa alternates images of trees loaded with pod shapes with trees laden with rounded fruit. The trees and gaps between them form vertical patterns; horizontal layers of branches are shown weighed down with leaves and fruit.

The linocut **Design** (1995)(fig.34), further evidences Shipipa's knowledge of the dynamic relationships between the veld and its fauna. The diagonal bands of the print might be read only as

an abstract design by uninformed viewers, but Shipipa stated that it represented the skin of the puff-adder which has distinctive markings that act as a camouflage in the seasons of summer and winter. Rankin found that Shipipa emphasized that the art is drawn from their cultural knowledge and experience, even though it is transformed into new and non-traditional media. She also feels that the imagery is often more complex than it appears to be, as these images often seem to carry more than one memory or meaning (Rankin in Rabbethge-Schiller 1997: 19-20).

The artists feel a sense of loss of tradition as a result of the loss of land and the environment that they once lived in. This was already starting to happen before they were relocated. Madena Kasanga told Rankin (in Rabbethge-Schiller 1997: 18) about the beehive-shaped huts that they had made from trees when she was a girl in Angola, but this tradition was dying out because they were not permitted to cut down the trees anymore. Similarly, containers which were carved from trees and then had designs burnt on to the surfaces, were something that the artists remembered.

Ecofeminism warns against merely accepting all cultural traditions; they need to be critically examined because they are the creations of people (Miess and Shiva 1993: 11). The universalism of ecofeminism deals with common human needs which can only be satisfied if life-sustaining networks and processes are kept intact and alive. These 'symbioses' or 'living interconnectedness', both in nature and in human society, are the only guarantee that life in its fullest sense can continue. The fundamental needs for food, shelter, clothing, affection, care, love, dignity, identity, knowledge, freedom, leisure and joy are common to all people regardless of culture, ideology, race, political and economic system and class. Ecofeminists identify freedom with their loving interaction and productive work in co-operation with Mother Earth¹⁹ (Miess and Shiva 1993: 13).

One of the important functions of this project, is that the Schmidtsdrift images will be interpreted as both 'ethnographic records' and pictures. The Khoisan depended for survival on their knowledge of what the land supplied them with in the way of useful flora and fauna. This understanding of the environment is something that should be nurtured and preserved; the art produced here might be one of the only records of this knowledge in this particular community. The art also serves to draw attention to the complicated issues of land dispossession and landownership that in many instances in South Africa remained unresolved.

¹⁹ The image of the earth as 'Mother Earth' is a controversial one. On the one hand it contributes to the male/female polarity. Some might claim that the image of the earth as a nurturing mother might serve as a cultural constraint; if the earth is alive, it might be considered unethical to carry out destructive behaviour against it (Kheel in Gaard 1993: 250-251). The Gaia or 'Mother Earth' hypothesis which was proposed by scientist James Lovelock (in Carolyn Merchant (ed) 1994: 351-359), was originally praised as it revived the notion of the earth as being a living organism. The problem that ecofeminists have is that Lovelock claims that Gaia can withstand whatever humanity does to her and that he does not challenge attitudes that promote aggression.

Fragile Paradise

In his essay *The geography of Mother Nature*, Peter Fuller (in Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 11) comments that many art critics do not see a connection between the study and practice of art and the disciplines that relate to the knowledge of the natural world. He feels that it is the exception rather than the rule for people to think that aesthetic values bear any relationship to people's response to nature. He maintains that this has not always been the case, as early aesthetic philosophers such as Alexander Baumgarten, Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke recognised that the aesthetic response was aroused by natural forms and phenomena as much as by the objects that the artists create. People would also not have thought it strange if an artist took a professional interest in disciplines such as zoology, botany or meteorology as it was generally assumed that knowledge of these disciplines were necessary for aesthetic effects to be created in the visual arts.

Fuller places the blame for the rift that occurred between art and the study of nature on Modernism, and he feels that this rift has continued into the era of Postmodernism (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 11). He argues that our response to nature is depleted and distorted when it is separated from aesthetic considerations. For him the implications of this extend beyond art, and will impact on the destiny of our culture and possibly even the survival of the planet (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 13).

Although many artists working in South Africa in the 1980's were interested in nature as source material, not many were concerned chiefly with the aesthetics of nature and the creative interpretation of the natural environment (Arnold 1996: 75). A perception existed that the depiction of nature imagery was self-indulgent, particularly in deflecting attention from the pressing social issues that were regarded as more relevant at that time in South Africa. In writing about this period, Arnold (1997: 11; 1996: 75-76) has commented on the emerging role of art as social document.

Fuller is hopeful that there are signs of the emergence of a new aesthetic response to nature and ecology, as well as a developing widespread concern that people are organisms whose well-being is dependant on the natural world (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 13). The artists who are discussed in this section are all concerned with the survival of planet earth, are aware of the fine balance of ecosystems and want to heighten perceptions of 'the fragile paradise'.

The interconnectedness of the natural world is something that artists dealing with ecological matters are aware of. A series of process-based pieces that Wendy Ross made in the 1980's focussed on change and transformation in nature and human interference with nature. Ross observed the earth closely in order to see the effects of natural elements on each other and on

fabricated materials. In a series of beach pieces, she photographed the effect of tidal action on sand structures that she dug, or moulded (perspex boxes were placed in some structures) (Arnold 1996: 76).

More recently, in **Veldfire** (1992) (fig.35) she combined her interest in land art with her ceramics by using clay as her primary medium in this large mixed-media piece designed to be placed on a floor. A large square format was subdivided into a 4 x 4 grid; within each section, earth and various clay bodies were coloured with metals. The textured areas of earth are separated by green 'grass' and stylised 'rivers'; the pattern of individual segments and position of the whole piece on the floor encourages a reading of landscape, as if seen from the sky.

By choosing the title **Veldfire**, Ross emphasizes that this piece deals with a specifically South African context where these fires often cause a great deal of environmental damage. Ross' piece is a reminder that nature cannot always be controlled and that sometimes fires are a necessary part of the cycle of life - in the regeneration of the fynbos, for example.

In discussing **Veldfire** in her book, *Women and Art in South Africa*, Arnold (1996: 76) states that the cyclical nature of the environment is depicted; the earth is the subject and fire is the process that transforms it. This demonstrates that destruction and regeneration are reflexive; Capra stated that deep ecological awareness recognises the fact that we are all dependent on the cyclical processes of nature and questioned the manner in which science is used to control nature. The structure of Ross' piece alludes to the scientific grid that is used to systemise nature and to the cultural overlay of interference with nature.

Ross' floor piece must be seen from above, and the elevated viewpoint predetermines meaning in her landscape. Power relations are implicit in the dominating viewpoint; this suggests an anthropocentric miniaturisation of the landscape and the control of nature. Ross's piece may be read in terms of an ecofeminist' rejection of dominant anthropocentric social paradigms (in which humans attempt to control non-human nature by non-ecological means), and their replacement with biocentric views which encourage an understanding of the interconnectness of all life processes. Ross' landscape integrates both linear structure (the grid) and organic elements (by implication the living surface of the land). Her combination of these polarities is intriguing in view of Kenton's (in McClelland and Alexander 1985: 12) comments that in some Feminist art, women's time is described as 'rhythmic, cyclical, eternal, monumental' in comparison with masculine concepts of time which tend to be 'linear, civilizational, obsessional'. Ross appears to draw these issues together in her work.

Interconnections in nature also fascinate Diana Carmichael. Her work exhibits the value of the relationship between art and a knowledge of the natural world that Fuller hopes will return to the art world; she draws both from her direct observations of nature and from scientific reference books. As with Goode and Marx (whose works were discussed in chapter four) the environment of Carmichael's birthplace in Britain²⁰ has influenced her artmaking. This may account for the more global concerns expressed in her print **Sooty Shearwater and Tuatara Lizard**, 1997 (fig 36).

Carmichael trained as a painter, but is becoming increasingly fascinated with printmaking, which she learnt from Philippa Hobbs in Johannesburg. The prints discussed below demonstrate the manner in which she handles the challenging medium of drypoint. Carmichael's finely drawn and modelled images entice the viewer to closely examine the textures of her landscapes and creatures. **Sooty Shearwater and Tuatara Lizard** (1997)(fig.36), **Warthog with Oxpecker** (1998)(fig.37) and **Marine Iguana and Crab** (1997)(fig 38) are three in a series of works in which she depicted animals that have symbiotic relationships (pc).

Warthog with Oxpecker illustrates a symbiotic relationship that occurs in the South African bushveld; the oxpecker catches the ticks that live on the warthog. This is a close-up 'portrait' of an animal that is synonymous with the natural African environment - the warthog waits patiently while it is groomed by the oxpeckers perched on his head.

A similar symbiosis is depicted in **Marine Iguana and Crab**, but in this instance the creatures inhabit the Galapagos Islands. Here the crab assists the reptile by catching its ticks. The landscape setting is a mystical one, drawn from her imagination. Prominent in the foreground are the iguana with a crab straddling his back; the background is inhabited by other prehistoric-looking creatures, suggesting connections with bygone eras before humans interfered with natural cycles of life.

Her interest in environmental connections and prehistoric animals is also reflected in **Sooty Shearwater and Tuatara Lizard**²¹. The tuatara used to be found on both the North and South islands in New Zealand, but now it is only found on islets of New Zealand; the creature's displacement (by human intervention) from its ancestral breeding grounds is one of the reasons for Carmichael's interest in the subjects of this image. This print demonstrates another aspect of global interconnectedness; although the Sooty Shearwater is a non-breeding visitor to the South African shores (Ginn, McIlleron and Milstein 1989: 52), its regenerative capacities are likely to be affected

²⁰ Carmichael grew up on the Welsh borders. Her keen observation and love of nature, encouraged by her father, developed in her youth. She is naturally curious with a constant desire to learn more and is absorbed and fascinated by the way nature adapts itself (pc).

²¹ The Tuatara is the sole living member of the reptilian order Rhynchocephalia which differs little from related forms of a reptile that lived 200,000,000 years ago. They use bird burrows as ready-made homes (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1980 Vol X: 165).

as much by environmental degradation in South Africa as its home range in New Zealand. Carmichael's Sooty Shearwater (being a seabird) is a reminder that environmental disasters at sea, such as those caused by oil pollution, can have repercussions for countries thousands of kilometres away from the occurrence.²²

While Carmichael draws attention to symbiotic animal relationships in the land, Marion Arnold's triptych silkscreens, **The View, Breaking the View, Continuing the View** (1993)(fig.39a, 39b, 39c) draw attention to the implications of alien plant species introduced to an African environment.

Arnold finds it increasingly important to refer directly to ecology in all her work (pc). Her work is heightened by both her sense of beauty and the ephemerality of the natural environment, and her horror at the ignorant and intentional destruction of nature (pc). In these matters her response also acknowledges the need to heighten public awareness of ecological concerns.

Arnold is essentially a painter and learnt her printmaking skills at Caversham where Malcolm Christian has been pivotal in the development and production of her prints (pc). She executed the large triptych **The View, Breaking the View, Continuing the View** (1993) at Caversham. Screenprinting allowed Arnold to work on a large scale (a relative term in printmaking where most works tend to be small in scale) and to make use of elements such as colour and texture²³ which are familiar to her as a painter. She has capitalised on scale in these prints in representing a panoramic view of the landscape; her images in the left and right panels extend the usual limitations of the horizontal landscape picture format.

Arnold's central panel, **Breaking the View**, has a vertical format in which a large prickly pear assumes a dominant position in front of the landscape. In all three panels, Arnold's rock formations could be reminiscent of remembered formations from Zimbabwe. Skawran (1985) has drawn attention to Arnold's affinity for the Zimbabwean landscape. This was an enduring influence on her art making; when Arnold left Zimbabwe to settle in South Africa she struggled to adjust and she had to search for forms and spaces to which she could relate (Skawran, 1985). In the strong rounded forms of her background hills in the triptych, Arnold set up rhythms in the landscape which resemble the boulders of the Matopos.

Arnold's formal language incorporates representational and decorative elements that draw attention to the artifice of art. Arnold's repetition of geometric shapes at the top and the bottom of

²² An idea that echoes the deep ecological view that environmental management must be addressed holistically.

²³ Malcolm Christian says that his job as the master printmaker is to find technical methods to satisfy the requirements. He disagrees with the view that screenprinting is a process whereby the artist can only achieve areas of flat colour. He has developed a means of enabling the artists to obtain texture on their screens by graining the acetate that they draw on in much the same way as a lithographic plate is grained (pc).

each picture is a linking device across the three landscape panels. This decorative border frames the landscape, and hence poses a question about visual and physical boundaries - particularly resonant in a milieu of land redistribution and the redress of environmental degradation caused by inappropriate land enclosure (that is, artificial boundaries).

Breaking the View highlights Arnold's expressed concern that human intervention is increasingly disrupting cyclical forces (pc). The Prickly Pear (*Optunia Stricta*) depicted iconically in the centre of the composition is a plant that is familiar in the Karoo landscape or other dry regions of South Africa. It was originally introduced for its edible fruits, animal fodder and as security fencing, but has now become an invasive plant. In view of these many different functions it is, therefore, a plant that has diverse meanings.²⁴ **Breaking the View** manifests Arnold's awareness of complex environmental issues. This spiky succulent plant is presented as a beautiful specimen (depicted with its dark green spiny foliage and crowns of yellow flowers), but Arnold's plant also dominates the foreground of the picture in a threatening way. The papery, fragile flowers make the landscape seem harsh and barren in contrast; Arnold is aware that these exotic invaders have become so common in the Karoo landscape that they may be mistaken as indigenous. Arnold emphasizes their exotic nature in the way the plant is shown to exist outside landscape. Inherent in the print's title, the plant may be read more literally as displacing ('breaking') the bands of landscape. The predominantly red colour of this central landscape also highlights the threat posed by these exotic plants.

Arnold's image raises the question of farming practices in South Africa in which economic considerations often outweigh environmental ones: stress is often placed on marginal farming areas in order to feed a growing population (or simply for financial gain). Again Arnold's sense of public responsibility raises consciousness of this ecological discourse in the art-making arena.

Like Arnold, Carol Hofmeyr regards her artwork as an important vehicle to generate debate about topics that are pertinent to ecological problems facing South Africa.

Hofmeyr stated (pc) that her first images of nature were the result of encountering the thoughtless actions of a fisherman. When she found a dead cormorant which had a fishing line around its wing and a hook down its throat at Hartebeespoort dam, she made repeated images of this bird until it became a symbolic, Christ-like figure for her. Hence she found in nature a symbolic idea of immanence; from this, she extrapolated the idea of the environment being crucified - and possibly

²⁴ Arnold believes that in all art there are different levels of interpretation and that the viewer and the artist will seldom respond in the same way. She acknowledges that the meaning of an artwork is not vested in the artist and that '...the responses to nature are the result of experiences and of culturally derived attitudes to the relative value of humankind on the one hand, and the environment/animal and plant kingdom on the other' (pc).

resurrected (pc). Hence the idea of nature as a spiritual entity is a key element in her work; this suggests that she is sympathetic also to the systemic nature of problems articulated by Capra.

Environmental, political, social and economic aspects of South Africa are interrelated in Hofmeyr's work. She sees the real issues facing South Africa as hunger, homelessness and preservation of the environment, and feels that these cannot be understood in isolation. As a qualified doctor, both her medical training and time she has spent living and working in the Transkei, have made her see the problems of this country as almost insoluble because of a combination of factors: the poverty of rural people and their overutilization and consequent damage of the environment that is supposed to support them. Hofmeyr often sees this damaged environment as female: she perceived the body of the earth as synonymous with the body of the mother (pc). Without extending this metaphor further, its resonance with the Gaia concept²⁵ is striking.

When working with Kim Berman in 1996, Hofmeyr found a way to express her deep feelings about the environment and its degradation. This was largely because Hofmeyr came into contact with many visiting international artists and learnt many new printmaking techniques at the Artist's Proof Studio in Johannesburg. Collograph, for example enabled her to build up the textural surface of her plate using direct imprints of (and embedding) natural objects in the collograph matrix to create the elements of her prints: what Hofmeyr has referred to as 'environmental imprints' (pc).

It was noted in chapter three that technique was integral to the meaning of Berman's prints, and it is interesting to note that this also features in Hofmeyr's work, **Naught for your Comfort** (1996-1997) (fig.40). This work is a shield-shaped book, in which she tells the story of Nongqwase who prophesied that the British would be driven into the sea if the people sacrificed their crops and herds. This led to the cattle killing in the Kei area in 1857, which resulted in the decimation of the Xhosa (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 117).

Hofmeyr uses her own hand-made paper to create the pages of her book. On each page she makes a complex image consisting of a high-relief collograph overlaid with new prints created by other means (such as intaglio). The physical layering of her images and their multi-layered content are interdependent issues in her work.

It is not accidental perhaps, given the historical narratives at the basis of her image, that the pages of her book look like brown cattle hide. This together with the shield-shape (derived from the characteristic shields of Nguni people) reflect the indigenous content of the story she represents. She has also intentionally not exhibited the pages of her work in pristine condition - they were

²⁵ See note 18 above.

battered and damaged to represent the sacrificial actions of Nongqwase's followers in the environment.

The shield-shaped pages are interleaved with smaller folded pages; these have landscape scenes which Hofmeyr has alternated with old pinhole photographs of Eastern Cape people and homesteads. Her images were reproduced as sepia coloured prints. She interweaves her historical narrative with contemporary images such as a picture of President Mandela. Her intention was to reflect on the manner in which both the past and present, and political and social activity, are interwoven.

As if in affirmation of the authenticity of **Naught for your Comfort**, Hofmeyr includes actual found objects or plants from the Kei area in her paper. Sticks also gathered in the Kei area function as binders for the pages and to support the book for open display. In addition Hofmeyr included small paper casts of mealie cobs (a reference to a staple food) and bulls' heads (Hobbs and Rankin 1997: 117). Her bulls' heads refer to the content of the Nguni narrative, but also refer to the Nguni cattle which play an important role in Xhosa cattle-culture and ancestor veneration.

Hence whilst explicitly honouring the historical significance of the Nguni narrative, Hofmeyr's work implicitly recognises the dangers of ignoring imbalances in the duality of culture/nature relations.

The ceramists and printmakers discussed in this final section have drawn attention in diverse ways to the ecological interface of a range of environmental issues in South Africa. Arnold (1996: 75-76) argues that political debate in post-apartheid South Africa should be broadened to accommodate environmental issues, and that it is essential for people to realise that land and other finite natural resources must be properly managed. The issues are extremely complex, and because of the diverse needs and beliefs of people, particularly local communities, much of the debate around conservation involves what is often perceived as a clash between the people and the environment.²⁶ In essence, it is conjectured that Capra would agree with Arnold that the debate about sustainable solutions should become an ecological one: in mediating perceptions of nature South African artists contribute considerably to this dialogue.

²⁶ Articles in *Endangered Wildlife Trust 5th Annual 1997*: 36-45. Articles by Derwent, Sue and Mander, Myles: *Traditional Medicines: Whither our Biodiversity*; Williams, Vivienne: *Traditional Medicines in Africa's Biggest Urban Sprawl - The Witwatersrand* and Holt-Biddle, David: *Reach out, or Keep Out?*

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to demonstrate paradigmatic shifts in the interpretation of nature imagery in contemporary South African ceramics and printmaking on the basis of what Capra termed a 'holistic worldview'.

The theoretical considerations discussed in chapter one outlined aspects of Capra and ecofeminist theories in order to establish a working basis for the interpretation of nature imagery in South African ceramics and printmaking. The main points established were that

- the Western intellectual tradition has resulted in a limited interpretation of nature imagery
- an ecological interpretation of art will enrich the reading of the imagery
- ecofeminism is particularly concerned with addressing the dualisms that are based on a male and female polarity and that have contributed to the marginalisation of images of the natural world.

Chapter two outlined the historical roots of representations of South African botanical subjects and landscape. Critical examination of selected historical works, such as those of Lady Anne Barnard, and Thomas Baines showed that hierarchical and patriarchal constructs restricted a more holistic understanding of nature images in South African art, and contributed to the marginalisation of botanical subject matter particularly.

Chapter three demonstrated examples of the diversity of expression manifest in recent depictions of landscape in ceramics and printmaking. In the work of Esias Bosch visual qualities of his image are of primary importance, whereas both Gerda Scholtemeijer and Kim Berman, whilst also concerned with visual qualities, regard their landscapes as an arena in which the socio-political issues of South Africa can be addressed. It was also demonstrated that technique and meaning are inextricably bound together in the ceramics and prints of these artists and it was found that new and varied approaches have been adopted by these artists in order to represent the African aesthetic.

Chapter four showed that in both ceramics and printmaking, artists reflect the rich diversity of South African flora for a variety of expressive purposes, and revealed that an understanding of the media manipulated by the artists discussed is crucial to an accurate interpretation of the work. Firstly, by examining the work of Gerhard Marx, Douglas Goode, Elsa Pooley and Karel Nel it was confirmed that a deconstruction of the hierarchical divisions of botanical illustration and fine

art (and art and science) regarding floral imagery allow a more holistic interpretation. In general, the prints surveyed in this section reveal shared interests in the specific characteristics of indigenous plant form and colour and landscape. In the work of Nel, however, it was found that added references exist as a result of his thematic interest in metaphysics.

In discussing works by Susan Sellschop and Bronwen Jane Heath it was found that the representation of nature in urban spaces showed two manifestations of a similar nostalgic wish, that is for a more harmonious balance of nature and culture in the urban environment. Finally in this chapter, an examination of ceramics by Lesley-Anne Hoets, Samantha Read and Katherine Glenday established that plant imagery offered these ceramists significant points of departure in comparison with the two-dimensional works discussed earlier. A common interest in the textural details of plant imagery was found; for the ceramists this was translated into tactile sculptural surfaces and forms through a sympathetic use of clay and glazes in a variety of ceramic media. Interestingly, the ceramists surveyed here all used the vessel as a basic format.

This chapter demonstrated the miscellany of images that result when a biocentric approach to subject matter is adopted and plants are allowed to assume the importance formerly reserved for figurative work. Also, the interpretation of the image is enriched when the artist's response to the plant as both subject and content is explored. This ecological reading offers a view of the interconnectedness of the natural environment.

Chapter five's examination of matters pertaining to land confirmed that interconnected environmental, economic, social and political matters are reflected in the ceramics and printmaking of contemporary South African artists. It was argued that land and landscape are intertwined. The historical imagery used as the point of reference in the images of Marion Arnold and Ellalou O'Meara examined in this chapter added the dimension of historical interconnections and demonstrated a range of pertinent issues relating to colonial intervention such as male domination and the intervention of culture in nature. Further aspects of landownership were explored in the ceramic relief panel of Fée Halsted-Berning and the prints of the Schmidtsdrift artists. Halsted-Berning's perception of landownership, contrasted markedly with the manner in which the Schmidtsdrift artists articulated aspects of their experiences of relocation. Again, in this chapter,

the Postmodern reading of the ceramics and prints in this chapter reinforced the interconnectedness between land and landscape.

Arnold's (1997: 11) view that the world is threatened with ecological disaster and that nature imagery *is* a political, and not a neutral issue was pertinent to the work of all the artists discussed, but particularly to those who represented different aspects of environmental matters that were reviewed in the final section. Works by Wendy Ross, Diana Carmichael, Marion Arnold and Carol Hofmeyr all demonstrated the wide range of environmental matters that contemporary South African printmaking and ceramics present.

It was ascertained that, in general, a significant outcome of the candidate's understanding of nature imagery in the works examined is that South African imagery shows a wider range of responses to the ecological uniqueness of the African environment than was previously thought to exist. Peter Fuller (in Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 27-28) concluded after studying the Australian landscape that the Australian desert provides a better metaphor for all people today than the idyll of the English country garden; this has been shown to apply to the South African context. An important aspect of the work of many of the artists discussed is an awareness that the image of landscape cannot be separated from environmental, economic, social and political issues pertaining to land.

Finally, Arnold's (1997: 11) contention that although postmodern thinking has resulted in a reassessment of attitudes to marginalised art productions, art historians have not looked at representations that have been situated from within mainly scientific disciplines is upheld in this dissertation. Although Arnold has contributed significantly to revisions in this field of South African studies, there is insufficient additional literature in this field, despite a wide range of both historical and contemporary manifestations of nature imagery in South African art - and particularly in ceramics and printmaking.

An answer is offered to Arnold's challenge to South African artists to draw more attention to environmental issues (1997: 12). On the basis of the selected works discussed here it is apparent that there are a several artists who address these issues in diverse and interesting ways. It remains for critics, art historians and academics generally to give such work more serious consideration than has been the case in the past.

GLOSSARY of PRINTMAKING AND CERAMIC TERMS

Printmaking

- Aquatint:** A process of intaglio printing on metal. The plate is covered with a special ground through which the surface is bitten. The result is of gradated tone, rather than an etched line (Melot et al 1981: 243).
- Biting:** The process of allowing the acid to corrode a design onto a metal plate (Melot et al 1981: 244).
- Burin:** The burin is a steel rod used for line engraving (Melot et al 1981: 244).
- Drypoint:** A method of intaglio engraving on metal. Marks are engraved into the plate with a drypoint needle. Deep incisions create a burr which is a characteristic of the medium (Melot et al 1981: 247).
- Engraving:** In the general sense it means using incision as the means of making the design, but in printmaking there are more specific meanings. Manual engravings, for example, those made with a burin, must be distinguished from other forms, such as mechanical or electronic engravings. Distinctions are also applied to relief and intaglio engravings, with relief generally referred to as 'cuts', except in the case of wood engraving. If the incisions are made chemically, the term used would be 'etching' (Melot et al 1981: 247).
- Etching:** One of the most important methods of intaglio engraving, whereby an acid-resistant ground is laid over a metal plate. A design is drawn on in order to expose the metal and the plate is bitten with a mordant which incises the lines. The plate is then inked and printed (Melot et al 1981: 247).
- Hand-colouring:** Hand-coloured prints must be distinguished from those printed in colour. The colouring is done in water-colour or gouache (Melot et al 1981: 249).
- Intaglio:** Any impression whereby the line has been created by the incised part of the plate, for example, burin engraving, etching and aquatint. The other three major printmaking methods are; relief (woodcut, wood engraving, linocut, typography); planography (lithography, offset lithography); and stencil method (screenprinting) (Melot et al 1981: 250).
- Linocut:** An abbreviation of linoleum cut. It is a derivation of woodcut, but it has different characteristics because of the smooth and relatively soft property of the material. A characteristic of linocut is the contrasting light and dark flat areas of colour. The material is cut with small pen-like tools which have a variety of cutting points. The relief parts of the block are inked up (Melot et al 1981: 250).
- Lithography:** It dates from the 18th century and is based on the principle that grease and water repel each other. The image is drawn with greasy materials on the stone. When the stone is dampened the water only remains on the ungreased areas. When the printing ink is applied with a roller it only adheres to the greasy parts. Lightly dampened paper is placed over the stone which is passed through a press (Melot et al 1981: 251)

- Mezzotint:** An intaglio printing process which involves two stages. Firstly, the metal plate is grained by working systematically over it with a spiked tool known as a rocker in order to create a surface covered with very fine dots. During the second stage the roughened parts are smoothed away with a scraper and burnisher in order to create the white and highlighted parts of the print. Delicate tonal transitions can be obtained, but mezzotint plates wear down very quickly (Melot et al 1981: 252).
- Planography:** In this process there is no difference in the level between the inked and non-inked surface. It differs in this respect from relief and intaglio processes (Melot et al 1981: 253).
- Plate:** This is any metal printing element and can be for intaglio, relief or planographic processes (Melot et al 1981: 253).
- Print:** The image obtained from any printing element (Melot et al 1981: 254).
- Screen:** The printing element in screenprinting which is made by stretching material such as silk, nylon or metal mesh over a frame (Melot et al 1981: 255).
- Screenprinting:** An ancient oriental method of printing which has been altered and adapted and become a popular method used by contemporary artists. Stencils are applied to the screen in order to prevent the ink from passing through parts of the screen. Where it passes through, it will print an image on the paper (Melot et al 1981: 255).
- Silkscreen:** Another term for screenprinting (Melot et al 1981: 256).
- Soft-ground etching:** An etching process which achieves a similar line to one drawn with pencil, chalk or crayon. The drawing is made on paper which has been placed over the plate which has been covered with a soft ground. The ground adheres to the paper and the plate is then bitten (Melot et al 1981: 256).
- Stipple:** A method of intaglio printing whereby tone is created by means of dots or small strokes which are made by a special type of curved burin, known as a stipple engraver. A roulette, various etching needles and the drypoint may also be used (Melot et al 1981: 256).
- Wood engraving:** A technique which appeared towards the end of the 18th century which is similar to a woodcut. In this process the wood is cut across the grain and it is a hard surface on which much finer lines can be made than on a woodcut. A burin is used to cut into the surface (Melot et al 1981: 257).
- Woodcut:** One of the oldest and most important methods of printmaking. A design is cut in relief along the grain on a block of wood. Various tools, such as the woodcutter's knife, gouges, scrapers and chisels are used. The relief areas are inked and the block is printed in reverse (Melot et al 1981: 257).

Ceramics

- Bisc, Bisque:** Hard biscuit (see below). Unglazed fired pottery. The term is usually used for industrial ware, when the bisque is fired to a higher temperature than the glaze firing that will follow (Hamer 1975: 24).
- Biscuit:** unglazed fired ware, usually a to lower temperature than the glazed ware will be fired to. The lower the temperature, the higher the porosity, which facilitates the glazing process. The usual firing range for biscuit is between 850° and 1000° C (Hamer 1975: 24).
- Burnishing:** Polishing leatherhard clay by rubbing with an object like a smooth pebble (Hamer 1975:41).
- Delft:** Faience. Maiolica. Tin-enamelled ware. Tin-glazed earthenware produced at Delft in the Netherlands. It was first made by Italian potters working in Delft in the mid-16th century. It is often thought of as blue decoration on white glaze although red-brown, yellow and green were also used. It also developed in England, but the exact date is disputed; it cannot be proven before 1630 (Hamer 1975: 95).
- Earthenware:** If the fired body has a porosity of more than 5%, then it is earthenware. It can be waterproofed with a covering glaze. The softer temperatures of below 1100°C are associated with earthenware glaze, and they allow for a wider range of colour as well as a particular quality of visual shine and texture. Raku, slipware, Maiolica, Faience and creamware are all earthenware (Hamer 1975: 111).
- Enamel:** A soft-melting glass used to decorate ceramic ware, metal and glass. Potters use mainly the on-glaze enamels. Soda, potash, boric oxide and lead oxide are the main fluxes, with metal oxides used for colouring (See onglaze)(Hamer 1975:112).
- Glaze:** A layer of glass which is fused onto the ceramic body during the firing (Hamer 1975: 144).
- Lustres:** Metallic surfaces on glazes. The process involves the reduction from an oxide or a resinate to the pure metal (Hamer 1975: 187).
- Onglaze:** Onglaze colour, overglaze colour, onglaze enamel. Soft-firing glazes, both opaque and transparent, which have been powerfully stained. The lower firing temperatures allow for a wider range of colours. They are applied on top of the fired surface and given an extra firing. The firing is at a lower temperature than the glaze firing and the onglaze colour fuses onto the original glazed surface which remains undisturbed during the firing. The usual temperature for commercial colours is around 750°C (Hamer 1975:205).
- Maiolica:** Tin-glazed earthenware. Maiolica originated in the Mediterranean and is traditionally refers to a lead glaze made opaque with the addition of tin oxide (Hamer 1975:190).
- Porcelain:** A vitrified, white and translucent ware. To achieve translucency the body contains a high proportion of glassy frit. An essential ingredient is a plastic white-burning clay known as kaolin or china clay. Chinese clays are more plastic than the European ones and to increase the plasticity bentonite is often added (Hamer 1975: 229).
- Slip:** A homogenous mixture of clay and water. Slips are used for coating clays and oxides may be added to give colour (Hamer 1975: 274).

Slip-casting: A pottery-forming process which uses moulds to give the forms and uses liquid clay (slip). The slip is poured into porous moulds which absorbs some of the water from the slip (Hamer 1975: 275).

Stoneware: A strong, hard and vitrified ware, usually fired above 1200°C, in which the body and the glaze mature at the same time and form an integrated body-glaze layer (Hamer 1975: 285).

Terracotta: The word comes from Italian and means fired earth, although it is often used to describe the orange-brown of red-burning clay (Hamer 1975: 293).

Throwing: The action of making pots on a quickly rotating wheel using hands to shape it and water for lubrication. It is a faster method of making pots than any hand method and the potter is in direct contact with the material (unlike some of the industrial methods of production) (Hamer 1975: 297).

Transfer decoration: An indirect method of applying repeat on-glaze and underglaze decorations. The motif is printed in ceramic colours onto paper or flexible plastic material and transferred from this onto the pottery surface (Hamer 1975: 301).

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Edmunds, Paul. 1996. Inherent Ecology An Examination of Sculpture by Walter Oltman, Andries Botha and Paul Edmunds. MAFA Dissertation. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.

Hillebrand, Melanie. 1986. Art and Architecture in Natal 1910-1940. Phd. Dissertation. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.

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Mentis, G.A. 1997. A Critical Survey of Ardmore Ceramics: 1985-1996. MAFA Dissertation. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.

Scholtemeijer, Gerda. 1994. Toonwaardes in die Laagdrukproses soos toegepas in eie Landskapbeelding. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys.

Schneiderman, Richard. 1983. The Genesis of English Landscape Etching. Phd. Dissertation. New York: State University of New York.

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Personal Communications

(Between April 1997 and January 1999)

Responses to a questionnaire from the following artists;

Marion Arnold
 Kim Berman
 Esias Bosch
 Katherine Glenday
 Douglas Goode
 Fée Halsted-Berning
 Carol Hofmeyr
 Lesley-Anne Hoets
 Gerhard Marx
 Karel Nel
 Elsa Pooley
 Samantha Read
 Susan Sellschop

Interviews with the following artists;

Kim Berman
 Bronwen Jane Heath
 Samantha Read
 Ellalou O'Meara

Telephonic communication with the following artists;

Gerda Scholtemeijer
 Katherine Glenday
 Diana Carmichael
 Ellalou O'Meara

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations cite the name of the artist, title of the work, date, medium, dimensions (height, and where available width/ depth), collection (if applicable), and the source of image.

- Fig. 1. Esias Bosch: **Doves** (undated, after 1988) Glazed ceramic tile; 125 x 160cm; Italtile collection. (Source: Artist)
- Fig. 2. Gerda Scholtemeijer: **Uit die Kern van die Aarde** (1991) Aquatint, spitbite; 318 x 316mm; Artist's collection. (Source: Artist)
- Fig. 3a. Kim Berman: **The Road to Huhudi** (1993) Concertina book with select-wiped intaglio collographs; extended length approx. 3 460mm; Artist's collection. (Source: Hobbs and Rankin 1997:177)
- Fig. 3b. Kim Berman: **The Road to Huhudi** (1993) Detail of above; Plate size 321 x 475mm.
- Fig. 4. Kim Berman: **The Women of Madibogo**. (1994) Intaglio collographs; 150 x 200mm Artist's collection. (Source: Artist)
- Fig. 5. Kim Berman: **Rediscovering the Ordinary** (1993) Intaglio collographs; 150 x 200mm Artist's collection. (Source: Artist)
- Fig. 6. Kim Berman: **Landscapes of the Truth Commission** (1998) Mezzotint; Approx. 700 x 1000mm; Artist's collection. (Source: Artist)
- Fig. 7. Gerhard Marx: **Halfmens, Richtersveld, After the Rain** (1992) Screenprint; Approx. 600 x 770; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 8. Gerhard Marx: **Huernia Zebrina** (1992) Hand-coloured stone lithograph; 190 x 270mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 9. Douglas Goode: **Welwitschia** (1993) Hand-coloured lithograph; 500 x 250mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 10. Douglas Goode: **E.F.G.** (1992) Hand-coloured stone lithograph; 230 x 170mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 11. Gerhard Marx: **Near Griekwastad** (1997) Screenprint; Approx. 600 x 770 Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 12. Douglas Goode: **Visitor** (1992) Screenprint; 350 x 450mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 13. Douglas Goode: **Chiemanimani** (1992) Screenprint; 450 x 350mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 14. Elsa Pooley: **Clivia Miniata (Var. Citrina)** (1992) Screenprint; 590 x 770mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig. 15. Elsa Pooley: **Gloriosa Superba** (1992) Hand-coloured stone lithograph; 255 x 200; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)

- Fig.16. Karel Nel: **Boat of the Oblivious Bloom** (1992) Stone lithograph; 250 x 200mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig.17. Karel Nel: **Palmer's Flare** (1992) Stone lithograph; 345 x 185mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig.18a. Susan Sellschop: **Mural in Tyrwhitt Mall** (1992) Glazed ceramic tile panels; 3 000 x 37 500mm; Woolworths Arcade, Tyrwhitt Mall, Johannesburg. (Source: National Ceramics Quarterly No.20 1992: 9)
- Fig.18b. Susan Sellschop: **Mural in Tyrwhitt Mall** Detail of above; each tile 200 x200mm.
- Fig.19. Bronwen Jane Heath: **Morning and Birdbath** (1987) Wood engraving: 90 x 43mm; Artist's collection. (Source: Artist.)
- Fig.20a. Lesley-Anne Hoets: **Planter** (no date, after 1985) Raku; 190mm. (Source: Cruise 1991: 73)
- Fig.20b. Lesley-Anne Hoets: **Vessels** (no date, after 1985) Raku; Largest 220mm. (Source: Cruise 1991: 72)
- Fig.21. Samantha Read: **Vases** (1993) Slip cast, Earthenware; Approx. 270mm. (Source: Artist)
- Fig.22. Katherine Glenday: **Set of Lidded Vessels** (1996) Porcelain; Tallest approx. 150mm (Source: Artist)
- Fig.23. Katherine Glenday: **Anemone Vessels** (1997) Porcelain; Tallest approx. 350mm.(Source: Artist)
- Fig.24. Katherine Glenday: **Calcium Pieces** (1997) Porcelain; Tallest approx.- 250mm (Source: Artist)
- Fig.25. Marion Arnold: **Events at the Company Garden** (1997) Screenprint; Approx. 830 x 700mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig.26. Ellalou O'Meara: **Platter** (1997) Transfer-printed onto commercial platter; Approx. 350mm; Private collection. (Source: Artist)
- Figs.27a and 27b. Ellalou O'Meara: **Buffalo Boys** Intaglio. (Source: Artist)
- Fig.28a. Ellalou O'Meara: **Vessel with Chameleon** (1998) Earthenware with Maiolica glaze and transfer print; Approx.250mm; Private collection. (Source: Artist)
- Fig.28b. Ellalou O'Meara: **Vessel with Baboon** (1998) Earthenware with Maiolica glaze and transfer print; Approx.250mm; Private collection. (Source: Artist)
- Fig.29. Ellalou O'Meara: **Black Angel** (1997) Intaglio. (Source: Artist)
- Fig.30. Fée Halsted Berning: **Mr. and Mrs. Berning** (1990) Painted earthenware; 740 x 1 050mm Artist's collection.(Source: Cruise 1991: 177)
- Fig.31. Joao Dikuanga: **Man Among Fleas Looking at a Rainbow** (1994) Lithograph; size unknown. (Source: Rabbethge-Schiller 1997: 14)
- Fig.32. Stefaans Samcuia: **House with T.V. and Pretty Garden** (1994) Linocut; size unknown. (Source: Rabbethge-Schiller 1997: 6)

- Fig.33. Fulai Shipipa: **Food Trees** (1994) Linocut; size unknown. (Source: Rabbethge-Schiller 1997: 9)
- Fig.34. Fulai Shipipa: **Design** (1994) Linocut; size unknown. (Source: Rabbethge-Schiller 1997: 8)
- Fig.35. Wendy Ross: **Veldfire** (1992) Mixed media floor piece (primarily clay); size unknown (Source: Arnold 1996: plate 38)
- Fig.36. Diana Carmichael: **Sooty Shearwater and Tuatara Lizard** (1997) Drypoint; Approx. 200 x 300mm. (Source: Philippa Hobbs)
- Fig.37. Diana Carmichael: **Warthog and Oxpecker** (1997) Drypoint; Approx. 300 x 200mm. (Source: Philippa Hobbs)
- Fig.38. Diana Carmichael: **Marine Iguana and Crab** (1997) Drypoint; Approx.200 x 300mm. (Source: Philippa Hobbs)
- Fig.39a. Marion Arnold: **The View** (1993) Screenprint; 400 x 830mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig.39b. Marion Arnold: **Breaking the View** (1993) Screenprint; 830 x 700mm; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig.39c. Marion Arnold: **Continuing the View** (1993) Screenprint; 400 x 530; Caversham Press. (Source: Malcolm Christian.)
- Fig.40. Carol Hofmeyr: **Naught for your Comfort** (1996-7) Concertina book with Van Dyck prints, colour monotypes, relief collographs and found objects; approx. extended measurement 665 x 770 x 400mm; Artist's collection.(Source: Hobbs and Rankin 1997:195)

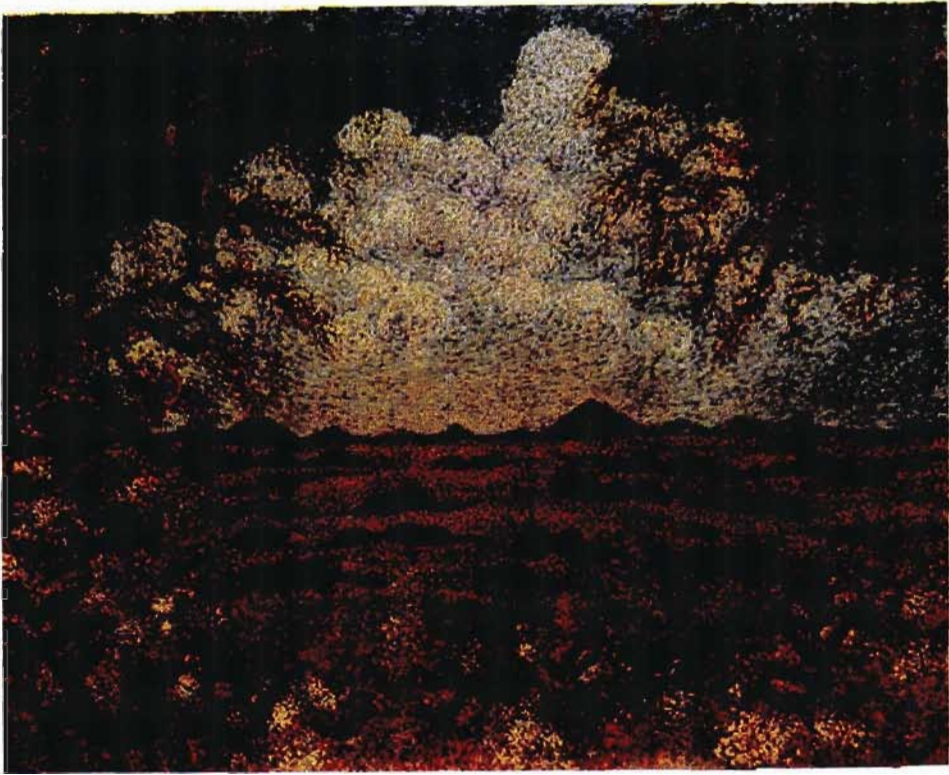


Figure 1

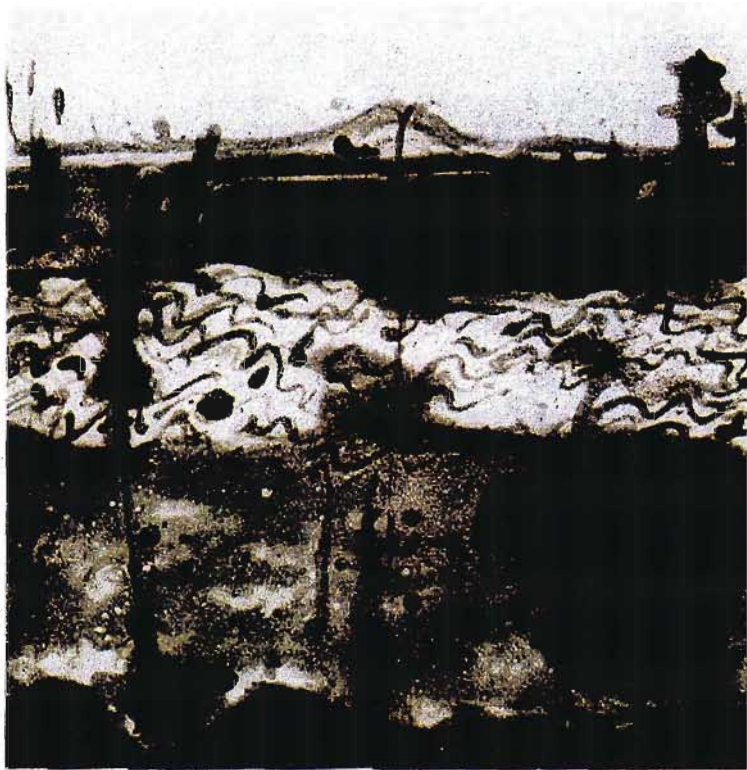


Figure 2



Figure 3a



Figure 3b



Figure 4

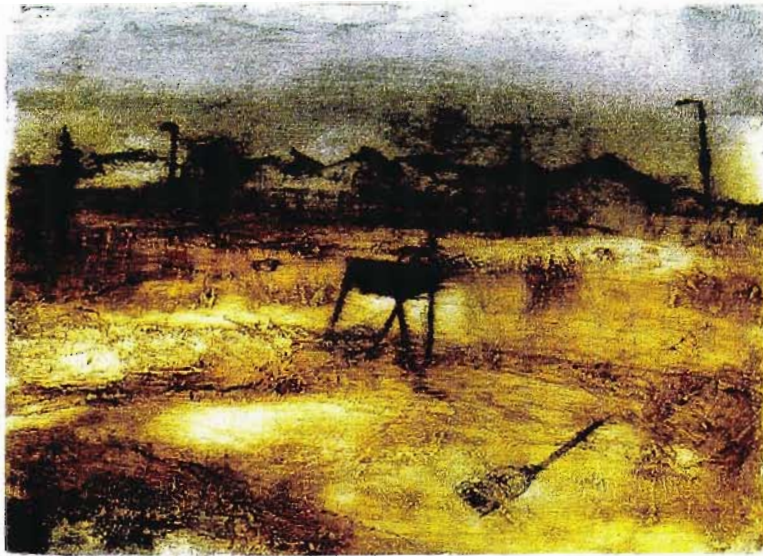


Figure 5

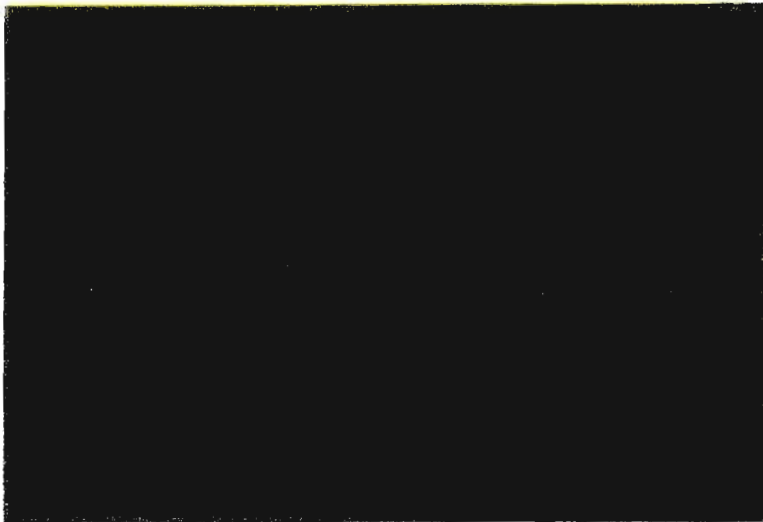


Figure 6



Figure 7

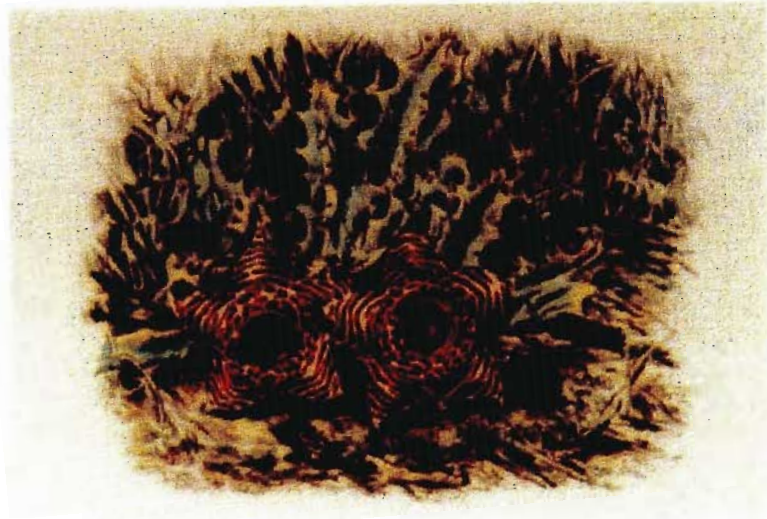


Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

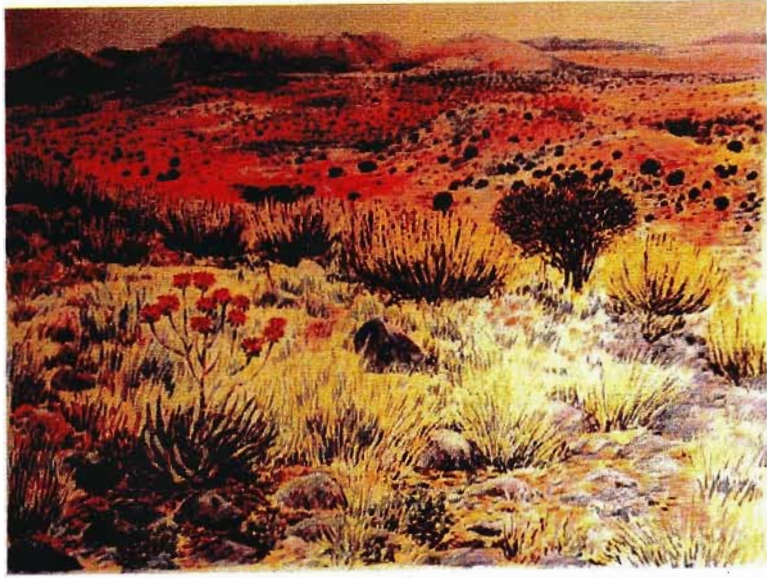


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18a



Figure 18b

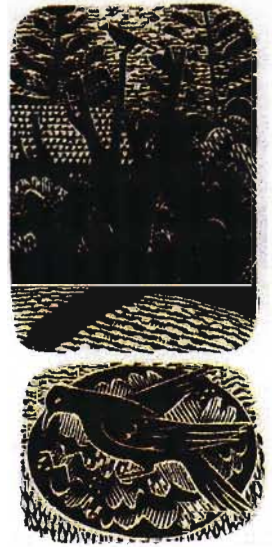


Figure 19



Figure 20a

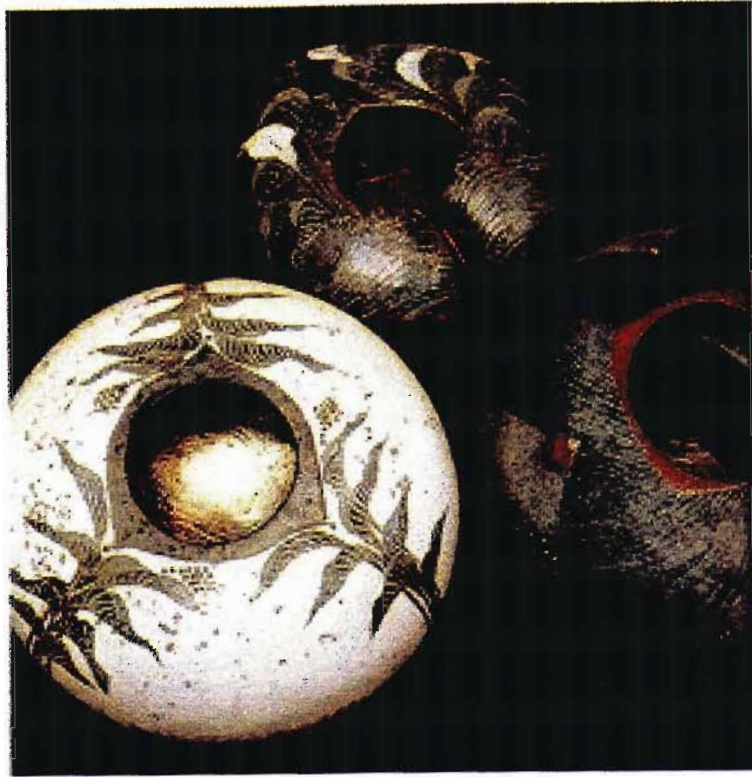


Figure 20b



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24

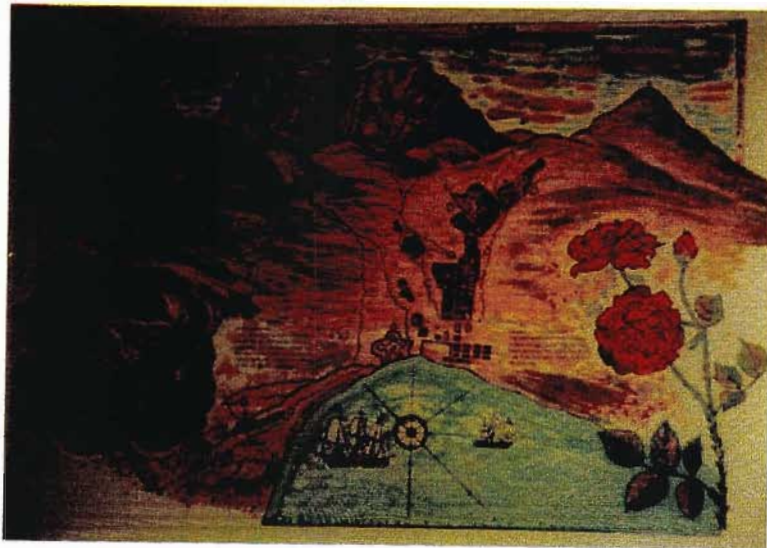


Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27a&b



Figure 28a&b

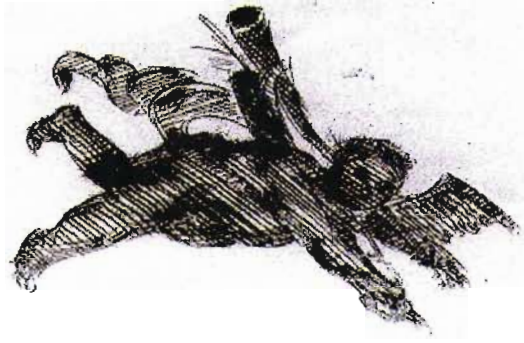


Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

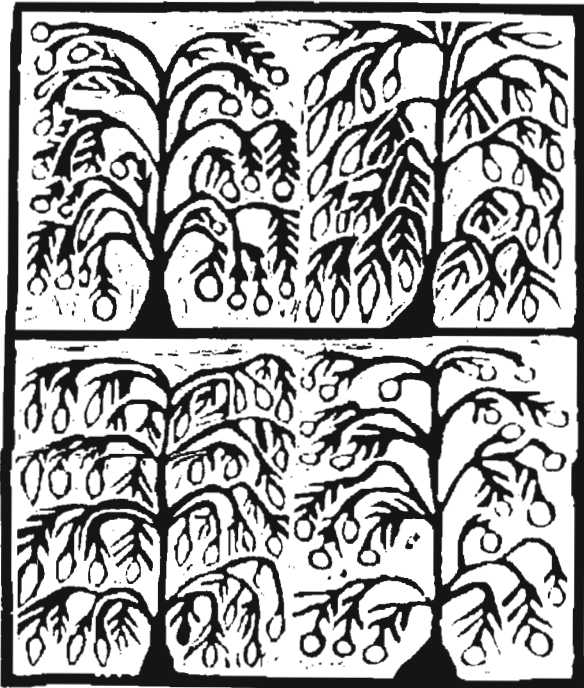


Figure 33

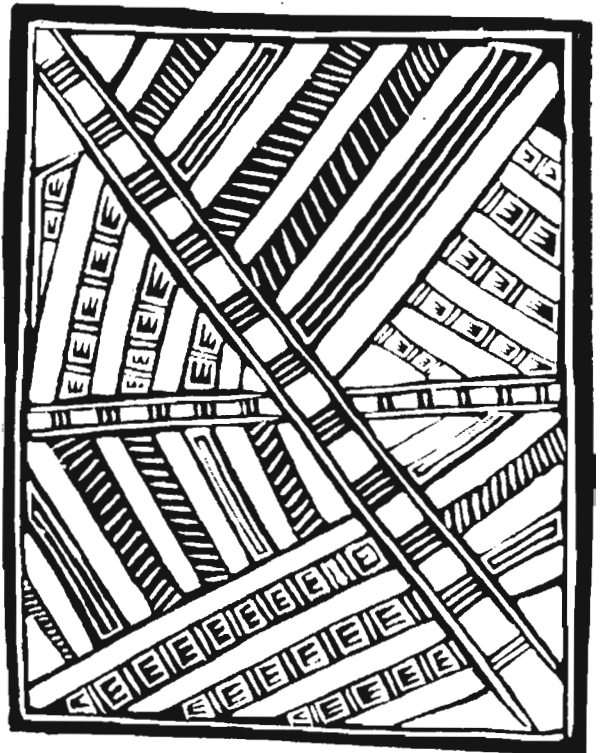


Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39a



Figure 39b



Figure 39c

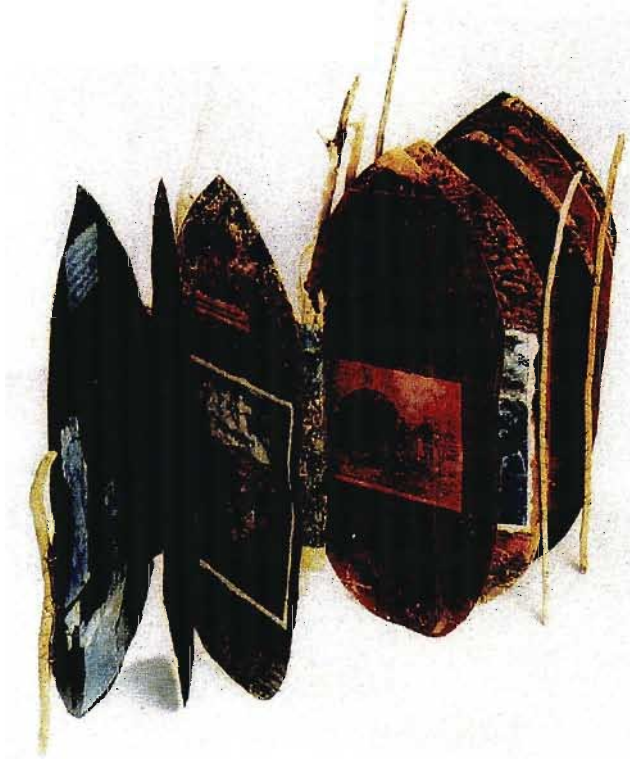


Figure 40