

Review

R W Johnson and Lawrence Schlemmer (eds) *Launching Democracy in South Africa: the first open election, April 1994*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996.

Charles Crothers

The 1994 South African election, the first 'democratic' election in this troubled nation's history, was a major dramatic show attended closely by a wide-ranging audience. It is appropriate that a major review of the experience of this election has been developed by a group of political analysts and very handsomely (if expensively) published by Yale University Press.

The study was commissioned by the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy, co-sponsored by that Institute and a slew of overseas governmental and local capitalist financial supporters and carried out through a network of locally-based scholars. The book is a further stage of this project. It is organised in 13 chapters which provide scene-setting, historical, contemporaneous and prospective chapters together with regional treatments (Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal - three chapters - and Gauteng - two chapters). Although a range of perspectives is deployed through the network of scholars, the two editors ensure some considerable consistency by contributing to eight out of 13 chapters and by writing all the national-level contributions themselves (apart from Chris de Kock's useful retrospective on trends in opinion and party support).

The book portrays itself as an objective, social science-based record of the election and the fairly immediate electoral context within which it was set. It is difficult to detect any clear orientating question around which the book is organised, except for the broad interest in how this 'founding election' was carried out and the extent to which it was shaped by pre-existing social structures, and had in turn a subsequent impact on them. The tome carries no particularly discernible theoretical or ideological freight, despite a vigorous condemnation of the book for anti-ANC bias by Shula Marks in her review for *Higher Education Review* (which in turn drew an even more vigorous defensive and counter-punching response from the editors in the following week's edition). Since Shula Marks failed to indicate examples of passages which drew her wrath, it is difficult to sustain her attack since the text carries few obvious markers of the ideological assumptions of its writers.

The study is based on multiple sources, including electoral results, media accounts, observer reports and in particular a most impressive battery of surveys. The main weight of data is based on a couple of nation-wide political surveys, backed up by several region-specific studies and then a couple of post-election surveys which allow some tracing of post-election effects.

The results suggest that despite considerable difficulties, it was possible for there to be reasonably fair and free elections in South Africa: several areas where marked improvement is called for are in terms of institutional development and also the building up of an electoral culture amongst the newly-enfranchised citizenry of South Africa. It is argued that a new political sociology in South Africa has emerged which is little more than a straight 'racial census'. Indeed, of the major parties only the NP draws any praise for having secured a reasonably broad base across different race groups. It is noted that there is a 'class inversion' in the South African political landscape (at least amongst Black voters) with the ANC drawing more middle-class support for a more radical and socialist programme, whereas IFP supporters voted for that party supposedly in support of a 'robust capitalism' (oddly) coupled with highly traditional values.

The book is well-written and carefully edited. There are some superb passages, in particular Johnson's vivid set of vignettes on the election scene in KwaZulu-Natal (chapter ten). Chris de Kock's time-series lay out a useful time-pattern in the development of socio-political attitudes in South Africa from the late-1980s through the early-1990s, and this over-time pattern is examined in relation to changing party support in the next chapter of the book. The difficulty of the volume is that with the enormity of the task it seeks to tackle, and without a clearcut theoretical framework to secure coherence, it sprawls and splutters. While a feast of the material needed to understand the election is laid out throughout the book, there is little guidance as to how the smorgasbord is best imbibed.

Let us begin a critique with the sources of finance for the study, and how these are presented. The acknowledgments are remarkably coy about the role of the HSRC. In most nations, government social research institutions stay well clear of overtly political issues, or at best treat them gingerly. A common distinction is between electoral and political issues: governments feel free to encourage voting and research to enhance turn-out and voter education, but stay clear of partisan politics. This book is based on a very solid base of HSRC survey research work into the arena of partisan politics, as well as covering more broadly electoral matters. Clearly, some of the outside funding received paid for aspects of these surveys, but there is no doubt that the (potentially) public cupboard of survey data has been thoroughly rifled by chapter authors to substantiate their analyses.

In particular, de Kock's chapter mobilising an extraordinary pantry-full of politically-relevant HSRC studies. In itself, this central role of the HSRC is not problematic, especially as the data-sets involved are being gradually released for secondary analysis through SADA. However, this level of governmental social research involvement in political matters is quite remarkable in a comparative context, as is the apparent unconcern of HSRC at this large-scale scouring of its data-bases for partially private, albeit scholarly, purposes. (The book's co-editor, Lawrence Schlemmer was Vice-President of HSRC through the period during which most data was being collected, and this establishes a very clear link.)

Despite the amazing data-base of survey material collected for the study, methodological standards retain the apparently standard South African social science methodological unconcern for quality-standards in relation to data. There is (almost) no reporting of survey designs, response-rates, response-biases, sampling errors or significance-testing (despite often quite small sample sizes), let alone the useful insights which can often be garnered from the debriefing of field staff. Moreover, the standard of data-analysis is very basic: cross-tabulations, although regression analyses are occasionally hinted at. Again, in itself, low methodological standards may not be a major problem (and publishers can be loath to have tomes gummed up with reams of methodological detail) but the failure of authors to mobilise data to support crucial arguments is a definite failing (as I will show with several examples).

The political sociology of developed countries has developed an impressive array of models to trace the often weak social links between social background variables, policy interests, electorate and party institutional characteristics, party loyalties, leadership pulls and pushes and party vote choice. The theoretical model deployed by the authors to handle the South African situation is a most truncated and blunt portion of this apparatus. On the social background side, the work is driven only by race, and provincial location; no other social background characteristic is more than briefly mentioned (this is a striking example of an approach castigated by Taylor and Orkin, 1995). Only whether or not someone voted, and their party choice, was of interest to the authors, since policy choices are not generally considered (except perhaps as bundles indicated by party stances - although see pages 357-60 for a description of citizens' views). In general, the authors are uniformly unconcerned with tracing weak social effects on electoral involvement and voting choices, and strongly concerned with establishing to what extent 'strong' social effects could be sufficiently decoupled from politics to allow reasonable individual political choices to be achieved. This is the abiding and trenchant interest of the book. There is one exception to my strictures: the chapter on the Western Cape explores the interrelationships

between social structure and politics in an interesting way. It is a pity that the approach of this chapter was not taken up more broadly in other parts of this study.

Examining the 1994 election as a 'founding election' provides something of a broader and comparative framework within which some points made in the book can be set. As the editors point out, other instances of 'founding elections' have often been attended by subsequent civil war, and often they succeed in installing strong elites effectively detached from their bases of political support, offset only by a weak political culture. In contrast, several features of the South African situation seem to auger well, or at least better. On the other hand, however muffled in language of respect for minorities, the authors unfailingly see the overwhelming electoral support for one major party as a result redolent with political vulnerabilities. There is a strong moralistic sentiment throughout many passages that South Africa is now too vulnerable to the power which a one-party state is able to wield, unbalanced by countervailing political forces.

The lack of theoretical and methodological sophistication undermines some of the book's concluding arguments. The key results reported above do not even receive the benefit of direct empirical testing from the volume of survey data readily available! The 'racial census' and 'inverted class support' arguments are drawn after a somewhat cursory review of electoral results (which at best allow only an indirect test).

Most of the book works steadily through the long time-sequence of the run-up to the election, followed by the lead-in, the election period itself and its aftermath. Provincial peculiarities and interesting points are tracked down. One example of one of these side-shows are the several pages of the book which are, correctly, spent on probing into one of the more embarrassing issues in the election: the contrast between survey data (which showed a strong majority for ANC) and the KwaZulu-Natal political settlement (in which IFP was accorded a narrow majority). Johnson takes the latter as 'correct' (although there are no strong grounds for so doing) and suggests, through some highly speculative 'detective' work into some of his survey data, that the very large discrepancy (incidentally, surprisingly confirmed also by post-election surveys) is due not just to IFP-supporting respondents not declaring their support, but actually concealing their support by falsely claiming to support the ANC.

The stimulus for this difficulty experienced by crypto-IFP supporters is seen as arising from the characteristics of the interviewers used in the study (interviewers clearly had much the same socio-demographic characteristics as ANC cadres). This argument rests on the empirically unsupported claim that IFP supporters were more scared of potential ANC harassment were their preference

to be known than the reverse. Again, there is the curious reluctance to actually display the data on which these speculations are based. We have to be content with inferences and simulations. There may well be some (or even much) truth in Johnson's speculations, although given the very large gap between the election results and the survey data to be explained away they fail to be sufficiently convincing. Oddly, though, Johnson overlooks a useful point (subsequently confirmed by Durban metropolitan social research) that he makes only a few pages earlier: that the urban (and therefore differentially ANC-supporting) component of the KwaZulu-Natal population had been considerably overestimated. Appropriate re-weighting of the results might be a more easily acceptable explanation of the difference. With the benefit of hindsight afforded by the subsequent May 1996 KwaZulu-Natal local elections, it can also be suggested that the reality of political support between IFP and ANC fell somewhere between the survey results and the official settlement.

This volume is able to put a massively detailed survey-data flesh onto the bare-bone outlines of earlier-published treatments of the South Africa's founding election (eg the Reynold's collection: 1994). It is extremely useful to have such a compendium of factual material. But the limited deployment of theoretical and methodological expertise and sophistication renders the volume inadequate to the task it set itself. Some crucial questions are not posed, and the answers to others remain problematic. Although the range of information employed has been artificially foreshortened by keeping a limited focus, an understanding of the election has been smothered by information rather than illuminated by it. Extensive and more deeply analytical reworking of this material is urgently needed to ensure that understanding of its role in South African society is extended.

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Review

Review of Leon de Kock's *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996.

David Johnson

1996 has been a productive year for Leon de Kock. His publications for this year include: a collection of recent South African poetry edited by him and Martin Trump entitled *Heart in Exile: South African Poetry in English, 1990-1995*; the first issue of *Scrutiny 2*, a new journal of English Studies he edits from UNISA; and his first book, *Civilising Barbarians*. More recently, he has written a report on the Shakespeare-Postcoloniality conference at Witwatersrand University for the *Southern African Review of Books* (July/August 1996). More manifesto than report, de Kock in this short piece provides a frame for reading his more substantial work: he pleads for an eclectic research method, which might produce - like the work of visiting academics Ania Loomba and Dipesh Chakrabarty - 'extremely subtle, negotiable and inclusive deployments of both class and the politics of identity', and then goes on to define himself against Nic Visser's uncompromising defence of Marxism. These two aspects of *Civilising Barbarians*, viz. the pursuit of a more subtle and negotiable methodology, and the uneasy relationship with Marxism, form the focus of this review.

In *Civilising Barbarians*, de Kock takes his lead from US-based academics like Clifton Crais and Jean and John Comaroff in promising a theoretically-sophisticated product, which offers 'more than the materialist version of history in which relations and forces of production and their articulation in social classes are explained' (p8), providing instead a view of the 'South African colonial order as a discursive event . . . [and] not as an adjunct to material history' (p21-22). His first chapter genuflects to a range of postcolonial and new historicist authorities in order to establish his own theoretical credentials, and each subsequent chapter juxtaposes theoretical analysis and historical discussion of the colonial encounter between Christian missionaries and the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus, in chapter two, Foucault's essay 'The Subject and Power' is used to introduce how a range of discursive procedures undertaken by the missionaries promoted an 'English subject position' among the Xhosa; in chapter three,

Hayden White's insistence on the literary forms (romance, comedy, tragedy, satire) of historical narrative is invoked to explain the letters and policy declarations of Lovedale principal, James Stewart; in chapter four, Homi Bhabha's well-known argument about the colonial subject's capacity to resist colonial authority through acts of subversive mimicry provides the basis for a sympathetic analysis of John Tengo Jabavu, editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu*; and in chapter five, Bhabha's vocabulary of colonial hybridity and ambivalence percolates discussion of the influential missionary convert, Tiyo Soga.

There is much to be said in favour of de Kock's efforts to read history and theory against each other: social history frequently proceeds with a common sensical vocabulary which leaves its own critical assumptions unacknowledged, while literary theory often inhabits a de-contextualised discursive domain 'above' history and politics. To transgress the disciplinary boundary separating history and theory might, therefore, represent a way of challenging the silences and occlusions of each discipline. But there are of course significant risks in choosing this route, and 'discipline specialists' will certainly view de Kock's efforts suspiciously. For the social historian, the lengthy epistemological soul-searching will seem self-indulgent, the relatively modest amount of new primary material a weakness, and (for the social anthropologist particularly) the lack of any sustained attention to the forms of pre-colonial Xhosa culture will appear as a serious omission. Also, while de Kock is energetic in correcting South African social historians and literary critics, he is remarkably respectful towards the literary theorists of the northern hemisphere: at no stage are the fascinating histories of the Eastern Cape allowed to interrogate the theoretical categories of the contemporary western academy. History is ultimately subordinate to theory.

For the literary theorist, the uncritical reliance on domesticated US versions of European philosophy and theory, rather than any sustained engagement with the original sources, will disappoint. Two (of many) examples: when deconstruction is mentioned (p11), the acknowledgement is not to Jacques Derrida, but to Brenda Marshall's (highly partial) reading of Derrida; and when 'hegemony' is mentioned (p20-1), the reference point is not Antonio Gramsci, but the Comaroff's (again, highly selective) use of Gramsci. Southern African history is thus read through star-spangled theoretical lenses. It is important to register these modifications because every text (including theory) should be read in its context, or as de Kock himself notes with respect to the nineteenth-century missionary writings, '[t]he two realms, the "representational" and the "material", should not be regarded as separate' (p9). If the writings of Stewart, Jabavu, and Soga are to be placed in the context of the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century, why then should the theoretical texts of the western academy in the 1980s and

1990s - Foucault, White, Bhabha - exist in privileged zones outside the particular histories of post-1968 France, Reagan's America, or Thatcher's Britain? Or, to return to the examples of Derrida and Gramsci, we might reasonably ask: does 'deconstruction' mean quite the same thing in Paris in 1967, in New York in 1992, and in Pretoria in 1996; or, does 'hegemony' connote the same range of meanings in Turin in the 1930s, in Chicago in 1991, and Pretoria in 1996? Put more crudely, why should the particular American definitions of these terms - forged in the highly professionalised and fiercely competitive context of the US academy - prevail as master tropes explaining Southern African histories?

As regards de Kock's resistance to Marxism, it should be read in the context of a long history of opposition to Marxism from within English Studies. Writing during the depression in England, FR Leavis, the architect of the original Cambridge *Scrutiny*, concedes in *For Continuity* (1933) that there is a place for the Marxist analysis: 'the economic maladjustments, inequities and oppressions demand direct attention and demand it urgently, and of course there is a sense in which economic problems are prior' (p6). But crucially, for reading English literature, such an emphasis is not enough: 'there *can* be intellectual, aesthetic and moral activity that is not merely an expression of class origin and economic circumstances; there is a 'human culture' to be aimed at that must be achieved by cultivating a certain autonomy of the human spirit' (p9). Leavis's elegant declaration here on the priority of the literary over the economic settled into the ruling orthodoxy of English Studies, both in England and South Africa. Combining neatly with IA Richards's 'practical criticism', the emphasis on 'human culture' underwrote a literary education which focused exclusively on the canonical literary text, and viewed not only the economic with disdain, but also the political and the historical. In South Africa, the invariable correlative of practical criticism was a myopic and complacent white liberal politics. De Kock's project is of course some way from the pious humanism of Leavis, both in terms of subject matter and in terms of his critical method; moreover, his concluding remarks on the intimate connection between 'English' and a 'coercive colonial history' (p192) expose the imperial resonances of Leavis's *Scrutiny* project.

However, with respect to their relation to Marx and Marxism, there are unsettling similarities between Leavis and de Kock. In the first place, neither of them have read Marx with any attention. Leavis readily concedes in *For Continuity* 'I have not read the Bible' (p5), and de Kock in *Civilising Barbarians* refers to Marxism (twice) and never to Marx. As a result, they engage (and disengage) with particular versions of Marx: Leavis re-acted against the economism of Second International Marxism; de Kock reacts against the Marxisms of Althusser and South African social history. Thirdly, de Kock shares

with Leavis a perception of Marxism as unequal to the subtle demands of textual analysis, and sees as a result the need for some supplementary analytical resource ('human culture' for Leavis; 'discourses of identity' for de Kock). In Leavis's case, the supplement 'culture' entirely displaced Marx's radical historicising and social critique; de Kock's supplement 'discourse' in *Civilising Barbarians* threatens a similar displacement. In turning away too hastily from the resources of Marx and (especially Third World) Marxisms, and favouring instead the academic post-modernisms and post-structuralisms of the US Enterprise, de Kock thus mutes considerably his own efforts to disrupt the conservative imperatives of South African English Studies.

In his report on the Wits Shakespeare Conference, de Kock asserts that you will not 'find many scholars in the 1990s anywhere in the world who will still say ... you can't compromise on Marxism'. I end with the words of one of the few exceptions, the guiding light of post-structuralism, Jacques Derrida: 'Upon re-reading the *Manifesto* and a few other great works of Marx, I said to myself that I knew of few texts in the philosophical tradition, perhaps none, whose lesson seemed more urgent *to-day*, provided one take into account what Marx and Engels say . . . about their own "ageing" and their intrinsically irreducible historicity' ('Spectres of Marx', *New Left Review* 205 [1994:32]).

Review

Shirley Walters and Linzi Manicom (eds), *Gender in Popular Education: Methods for Empowerment*, Belville/London and New Jersey: CACE/Zed, 1996.

Robert Morrell

In the last few years gender equality has become a widely accepted goal. This book makes a contribution to the realisation of that goal: firstly, by identifying how in the realm of adult and popular education it might be achieved, and, secondly, by challenging the notion that the state (or other top-down) initiatives can by themselves achieve gender equality.

The book contains 11 chapters and an introduction by the editors. The chapters cover experiences of adult educators in six different countries. Common feminist assumptions, methodologies or visions hold the chapters together, but the relationship between chapters is often unclear and unstable. For example, there are striking differences between the conditions of work of feminist popular educators in Canada, on the one hand, and the challenges facing adult educators in South Africa, India and Malaysia, on the other. These are not just differences of locale (north versus south/west versus east) but of class, space, resources and objectives. Put side by side, there seemed little that a person organising large numbers of homeless or jobless women against exploitation and powerlessness in India could gain from listening to a feminist talking about the liberating experiences of dance (drawn from a South American experience) applied to a small group of Canadian women. This book then, is not exclusively about popular education in the 'third world', though most of the contributions deal with this. It is a book which looks, in context-specific ways, at methodologies deployed and challenges faced by adult educators.

The message that comes through is that women across the world have problems which often are not addressed by existing programmes and which require special remediation and attention. Having said this, and the editors are particularly well aware of the dangers of gender essentialism, the book also shows how widely different are these problems and what a wide range of strategies can be used to improve the lot of women. These range from the collective impulse of educators working with large groups of women (for example in India and Malaysia) to organise and challenge existing power inequalities, to the more

individualistically oriented initiatives of educators in Australia, Canada, the United States and South Africa.

Whether to adopt an approach which helps individuals or helps the group takes one deep into hoary feminist debates. Not surprisingly, in contexts where resources are generously provided and the audiences are middle class, the approach tends to be towards individual liberation. In situations where living standards are depressed and women are battling to keep their heads above water, the approach tends to be collective. In between these two approaches are cases where a balance has to be struck between both approaches. In the case of an Australian project around the birthing rights of aboriginal women documented by Helen Myles and Isobel Tarrago, the focus is on individual (pregnant) women, but the implications go much further, involving minority and identity politics and claims for racial autonomy. Similar tensions are clear in two of the chapters which deal directly with particular popular education projects in South Africa.

The chapter by Michelle Friedman and Colleen Crawford Cousins is an impressive discussion of a week-long training workshop on participatory methods for community development held in Durban in 1993 (in the interregnum before the Government of National Unity was elected). Many feminist accounts of such exercises suffer from a tone of triumphalism, an assertion of universal sisterhood and a confidence that women shall overcome. Here, however, the authors relate, sanguinely, the difficulties of the workshop. Their own identities (white, female, English-speaking and middle-class) are made a central part of the story. The conflicts which emerge between black, mostly male, Zulu-speaking activists and the facilitators is brought into the open and analysed. There are no pat answers provided. Instead a candid assessment of what was achieved and the limitations which dog such workshops is given. And yet the chapter retains a sense of hope - something which readers struggling with grim images of crime and violence in South Africa today may appreciate.

The same optimism is present in Astrid von Kotze's piece on a writers' workshop, also held in Durban. Curiously, her chapter fails to say when exactly the workshop was held, though it seems to have been in the early-1990s. Von Kotze explores the tension between being a cultural activist and a popular feminist educator. She shows how gender differences function to misrepresent situations (when African, Zulu-speaking men write idealistically and uncritically about domestic comforts in the countryside which are created by the sweat of their wives) and to silence women. She shows how such misrepresentations can be debunked and corrected by citing women's views of the same situation: the countryside is 'a drunkard's paradise, where men come home to drink and lord it over women, only to leave them again, penniless and pregnant with another

child' (p157). Despite these gender antagonisms, von Kotze notes how racial solidarity and shared political allegiances can mute gender conflict - a point made long ago by Hazel Carby in the context of black communities in the UK, but well worth remembering now.

There is an uneasy tension through the book on how to discuss and present men. The prominence of gender in the title may give the prospective reader the idea that an inclusive approach is adopted, allowing for a range of viewpoints to be articulated which cover the positions, concerns and predicaments of men. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Men and issues of masculinity are seldom discussed. Homophobia, for example, rates only one mention. What is more serious than this omission, however, is the failure to use gender as a relational concept. The result is that the book is caught, on the one hand, between treating men as 'the problem' and, on the other, of treating gender inequalities as an issue which can only be tackled by an engagement with and between men and women. Some of the chapters consciously identify men as enemy - to be challenged, subverted, overthrown. The harrowing accounts of gender relations presented by these writers often seem to vindicate a politics of confrontation. Chang Lean Heng argues that anger was an important resource for organising Malaysian women factory workers to confront their passivity and domination (p205). Approaches that equate patriarchy with men see the overthrow of patriarchy as the climax of women's liberation. This is a politics of armageddon associated with radical 1970s feminists like Shulamith Firestone. It seems somewhat out of place in a world with more than its fair share of violent conflict.

Other approaches which do not proceed from a position of antagonism towards men are available. Rieky Stuart sets it out in her sensitive treatment of gender work in Canada. Refusing to position men as 'the problem', she argues that 'there are two ways to have a discussion about gender issues in development. One way generates heat, the other generates light' (p134). It may not always be easy in the context of a sexually-mixed workshop and working from a feminist position, to keep men on board. Friedman and Crawford Cousins working in South Africa found this out. They admit to being 'rudely shocked' by the hostility of African, Zulu first-language men to their attempts to pursue a policy of women empowerment (p71).

Empowerment is a major theme running through the book. One of the intentions of the book is to give this concept new meaning since it has been appropriated by 'a very broad range of political positions (and) has (been) drained of any clear referent and ... of its more politically transformative meaning' (p16). Not all contributors share the same understanding of empowerment as the nuanced and well-written introduction by Shirley Walters and Linzi Manicom

makes amply clear. Empowerment is sometimes theorised as bringing to light or giving status to subordinated (frequently experiential) knowledges (p15-16). On other occasions, it is treated as a process by which actors are brought to a new (and more powerful) condition. In this latter understanding, it would seem as though there are two basic kinds of empowerment. One involves a revolution of the self, an internal revolution such as that advocated by French psychoanalytic feminists like Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray. The other empowerment, drawing heavily on socialist feminism, calls for women collectively to pursue liberation. These are not mutually exclusive and many of the contributions are sensitive to the complexities of empowerment, yet not one contributor seemed to question the concept of empowerment itself.

It is possible to suggest that a third kind of empowerment exists. This is an empowerment to excess. I read this book at a time when the University of Natal in Durban was experiencing a turbulent period. Dissatisfied students were taking their frustrations out by smashing cars, breaking windows, intimidating those who disagreed with them. Those involved were mostly young, African male students. Still suffering the legacy of apartheid education, frustrated by the limits it placed on them personally and imbued with an expectation that transformation should be quick and radical, they chose to achieve their goals by violence. Of course, this type of empowerment is not the exclusive domain of frustrated revolutionaries. The same kind of empowerment was at play when young white male conscripts in the SADF went on cross-border raids. In its extreme form, it is the empowerment of men like Colonel Eugene de Kock of Vlakplaas, that enables people to act with impunity, to disregard moral considerations and to be a law unto themselves. This kind of Rambo empowerment is a highly gendered phenomenon. It frequently involves men with weapons, men organised into aggressive and self-confident groupings, men with a certainty about their physicality and its effect. How should education, popular/adult, formal and informal, deal with this kind of empowerment?

All forms of education, now in the process of being integrated into one system through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), must take account of masculinity, how it is formed and enacted. The project for gender equality must consider how violence can be contained and how the forms of gender identity which underpin it can be moulded, engaged with and made knowable as gender identities (as opposed to aspects of culture, race and ethnicity).

Secondly, the approach of empowerment should be framed within an overall sense of what is possible. Empowerment is often held to be the key to giving women back control of their lives (Carolyn Model-Anonuevo, p125). But nobody ever has 'control of his/her life' because there are always pressures

bearing down upon it, so many forces beyond the control of the individual. To give somebody the belief that s/he can control life beyond these social limits is to give a lesson in frustration or hopelessness. So, to return to the University of Natal example, when students are led to understand transformation as the complete removal of inequalities or obstacles to achievement, empowerment becomes a violent exercise in masculine display.

In thinking about ways to tackle gender injustice, gender theorist Bob Connell has recently pointed out that the efforts of movements like the pro-feminist men's movement have lost steam in the recent past. He points out that a range of new problems (HIV/AIDS, global environmental challenges) and old problems which are being reconfigured in the new politics of identity, require a new approach, a new politics. '[I]n some sense it must be a politics beyond interests, a politics of pure possibility. Though that is, perhaps, another way of expressing the interest all people on this planet share in social justice, peace and balance with the natural world' (1995:243). A politics beyond interest involves an education beyond the constraint of gender determinations. Educators, women and men, must become aware of the way in which their actions are gendered and infuse their teaching/facilitations with this awareness.

This book will be appreciated by adult (popular) educators working in South Africa where there is a dearth of local literature on the subject. Its comparative approach and its theoretical sophistication will be welcomed as well. In recommending this book to readers with an interest in gender, education and political transformation, I will conclude with the hope that the next book which claims to tackle gender issues will not fix its gaze solely on women.

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