

## Africa, old and new: Guy Butler and “The African renaissance – a long view”

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### I Ancient, but utterly naked

In one of his early essays, *Poetry, Drama and Public Taste* (1956), Guy Butler explored the dilemma of the English-speaking South African artist at a time when European objects and vocabulary seemed to carry a broader symbolic value – to be of greater poetic merit – than their African counterparts. He stressed the need to focus on African subjects and to employ African names for those subjects. (The use of the past tense here is deliberate; the context in which Butler was writing requires emphasis.) Over time and with use, the essay suggests, these words will acquire symbolic resonance; but currently they are “semantic savages”:

Some people find it odd that Europeans in Africa should feel a tension between these continents, or that a six-thousand-mile dislocation in space, to an utterly different world of the senses, should raise artistic problems ... roses, oaks, ivy, cypress and poplar *will* grow in your garden. Take over the European symbols, transplant the old iconography, and don't, please don't disturb the hieratic decorum by introducing semantic savages, utterly naked African objects ... Quite frankly, I want to introduce semantic savages, the isipingo, the marula, the baobab, when and if I need them. I believe that it is part of our job to turn Africa into art. Culture is surely that which tries to name and give significance and value to the objects among which we move and have our being.<sup>1</sup>

While thus satirising the myopic “decorum” of Eurocentric white suburbia and challenging its occupants to ‘plant themselves’ in South Africa, Butler admitted to being “a mistaken, though honest, barbarian struggling to say what moves him.”<sup>2</sup> A university professor characterising himself as a noble savage may seem to be projecting false humility, but (read in light of other intentionally oxymoronic associations that may be identified in Butler’s often ironic use of the noble savage motif) the provocative intimation is clear.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of the above extract that are problematic to the present-day reader. Despite the sibilant felicity of “semantic savages”, the phrase – like Butler’s desire to turn “Africa into art” – ignores the pre-existing artistic traditions of cultures that have been developing in Africa over centuries and millennia. The isipingo, the marula and the baobab might have had little figurative or iconic weight to Europeans or white South Africans, but it would be inaccurate to label them as “utterly naked” (the implication of this term is that they have not collected “symbolical charge” through “friction in countless contexts” for either Europeans or Africans – Butler’s argument may have once held true for the former, but he does not make reference to the latter).<sup>3</sup>

This ambiguity is at the heart of his claim to be “frankly more concerned with the new thing that might come out of Africa than with the old masterpieces of Europe.”<sup>4</sup> *Ex Africa semper aliquid*

*novi* is, after all, a European dictum, and as he came to regard himself less as a European-in-Africa and more as an African-in-Africa, Butler developed a paradoxical position. Africa, primal and primeval, is also figured as ‘new’; Europe is ‘old’ although, on an archaeological timescale, humans only settled there relatively recently. It is a conflict that Butler only resolved, if he resolved it at all, towards the end of his life.

The Karoo, so central to Butler’s world view, bears witness to the truly ancient. Mountains and fossils are evidence of the palaeontological past, a natural history outside the realm of our conceptions of time and history. Cave paintings and crude tools are manifestations of occupation by the earliest humans. This formed Butler’s early understanding of Africa as being ‘outside time’, or timeless. Later, he was undoubtedly influenced by the van der Postian portrait of that supposedly timeless race, the “golden San”; the mythical “Bushman” is seen to maintain an eternal connection to an eternal landscape.<sup>5</sup> We may note that elsewhere in Butler’s work time, like language, imposes a rational framework on experience – a limitation from which Butler often yearned to escape. In *On Seeing a Rock Drawing in 1941*, the speaker studies “the surface of the stone” and, discerning the patterns carved out by natural processes long before the drawing itself was made, he begins to feel burdened by the heavy weight of time:

It bears the sensuous ripple marks  
left by a falling wave, the wind’s caress  
on some indelible, undated day  
in a definite, numberless year,  
in staggering cataracts of years.

This is the geological extreme of what, misquoting Stephen Dedalus from Joyce’s *Ulysses*, we might call the “ineluctable modality of time.”<sup>6</sup> Crucially, however, though “Wind and wave with an unalterable die / stamp Time and Physics into every rock”, the longevity of the primitive artist’s creation “places our being a little beyond / the neat co-ordinates of Time and Space.”

## II The Mediterranean – another Africa, another Europe

Butler was brought up in a vehemently pacifist Quaker-Methodist household. Nevertheless, in 1941 he overcame his qualms and volunteered to join the Allied cause, eventually rising to the rank of Captain in the South African “Sapper” (Engineering) Corps; he served in a non-combative capacity as Information Officer in the North African and Italian campaigns. Butler’s experiences in the Second World War exacerbated his awareness of being in the bondage of time. In *Giotto’s Campanile*, the bell of the clock tower rings “to rivet us all to a pointless point in time” – forcing the soldiers to be complicit in the horrible historical moment of the war, and dashing the poet’s wish to escape time and history.<sup>7</sup>

Yet despite expressing resentment at the subjugating imposition of history, Butler also acknowledged that the war had enriched him immeasurably. It allowed him to experience ‘another Africa’ during the Egyptian campaign. He first encountered the ancient Mediterranean world in northern Africa (“Among great ghosts”, as one of the chapter titles in *Bursting World* has it): “Jacob and Moses ... Alexander the Great, Caesar and Pompey, Anthony and Cleopatra,

Joseph and Mary, Saladin, St Louis of France, Napoleon and Lawrence of Arabia.”<sup>8</sup> The incorporeal presence of personalities from antiquity and the abundance of well-preserved ruins made this a timeless land of a different sort, steeped in the pathos of passing glory. As Information Officer, he gave lectures to soldiers from various companies and regiments on topics ranging from South African politics to local sightseeing spots, but it was “the *sic transit gloria mundi* theme” that made him most “fluent ... even eloquent and dramatic”:

I had not yet reached sufficient insight to ask myself whether this pre-occupation with the manifest evidence of human non-success did not disqualify me from being a successful propagandist for the gospel of progress and social hope. I acted in good faith, trusting my intuitions. I had seen a crusader castle, with its dungeons and treble-plated doors inhabited by wild goats and lizards, and nettles rustling in its courts.<sup>9</sup>

*Bursting World* and the poems Butler wrote during this period give voice as much to disillusionment as to inspiration in response to the ancient towns and landscapes of Egypt, Syria and Palestine: it is “god-haunted terrain” but, heavy with history, terrain that seems tired of human traffic.

In Italy, however, it was precisely the complexity of recorded and tangible history that so excited Butler. Here were Caesar’s Rome, Dante’s Florence, the Medici’s Tuscan countryside – under serious threat from modernity, battered by the war, but somehow enduring. The contrast with the environs of his youth was marked:

The Karoo climate is primitive, violent, dramatic; Italy’s climate is sophisticated, subtle and elegaic. So it is with the scenery too. Man has moulded these hills, terraced them; controlled the streams for centuries; every acre of ground is watched, studied, cared for, personally, like a child. In S.A. it’s a case of “Laat God se water oor God se akker loop” and “Kneuk maar op”!<sup>10</sup>

These observations were recorded in a letter home to his family, written shortly after Jan Smuts visited and addressed Butler’s division. His thoughts turned to politics:

Well, S.A.’s future is going to be like the Karoo climate, I’m afraid - violent and dramatic. We are very primitive and improvident. When I study the efforts of our backvelders in Parliament, particularly on the colour question, I get into a right fit of the blues ...<sup>11</sup>

At that time, when he compared Europe as he knew it (developed, ‘old’) to Africa as he knew it (undeveloped, ‘new’), he was thinking primarily of white South Africans – the “we” who are “primitive”. In Sienna, he was shown a number of paintings that had been removed from the town’s churches and placed for safekeeping in a mansion abandoned by its count. This stimulated an “intellectual and artistic ferment” within him; after his “secondhand groping” in “almost art-less South Africa”, he was thrilled to be “in the presence of the actual works” (forgetting, in his fervour, that most of the paintings he saw were not originals but copies of “the great masters” by their pupils).<sup>12</sup>

Yet the self-denigrating “we”, insecure ex-colonists who have grown up on the periphery, are not always enamoured with what they discover at the centre. If Butler felt he was an “inheritor” of all things European, he also knew that he was “coming to an ancestral home on fire.”<sup>13</sup> The speaker in the long poem *Elegy: for a South African tank commander* is disoriented because the centre has not held:

We, from the outposts, meeting you half-blind  
and lost among your ruins, we must call  
on ancient, common ancestry to find

a voice to match our young worlds, walking tall -  
and not the bitter, witty, weary strain  
of greatness haunted by decline and fall.

(I.i)

He is “in the position of many Westerners, secularised, deprived of the cosmic consolations of nature or religion, encapsulated in time, reduced to the routines of industrialised cities” but, because he is a European who comes from Africa, he can call on both his “ancient ... ancestry” in Europe and his experiences (or imagined memories) of non-industrial, timeless Africa.<sup>14</sup> If Rome is the ‘eternal city’, Africa is eternal because it is ‘outside of time’.

Captain Butler’s letters home left his young wife Jean feeling that, by comparison to Italy, “Johannesburg seems very colourless ... no traditions, no secrets, no romance.”<sup>15</sup> Butler’s response to her complaint is riddled with impulses that contradict his previous enthusiasm for history-rich Europe:

Sometimes my mind reacts against these old, storied lands, whose soil has been criss-crossed by great men and saints; out of whose ruinous stones history runs as water from a rock. I long for the simple barbaric lines of a land with almost no known history; where the sun asserts its authority in the wastes, simplifying issues; where man must respond simply and boldly among the elements.

One assumes that by writing about “the wastes” he has expanded the sphere of reference beyond Johannesburg to “the simple barbaric lines” of South Africa outside the industrialised cities (in which, after all, the Romantic urge to “respond simply and boldly among the elements” would be as difficult to fulfil as in Rome or Paris or London). In *Bursting World* Butler suggests that this letter was his first articulation of ideas that would recur in poems like *Home Thoughts*. One imagines that he has in mind such lines as

I have not found myself on Europe’s maps,  
a world of things, deep things I know endure  
but not the context for my one perhaps.  
I must go back with my five simple slaves  
to soil still savage, in a sense still pure:  
my loveless, shallow land of artless shapes  
where no ghosts glamorise the recent graves ...

### III No tradition, or almost none

The declaration that “barbaric”, “savage” (South) Africa has “almost no known history” is barely redeemed by the buffering of “almost” and “known”, but it is a significant softening. A semi-comical exchange in Butler’s second play, *The Dove Returns* (1956) – set on a farm in the Free State during the Anglo-Boer or South African Wars – couches the sentiment in similarly hesitant language. Paul van Heerden, son of absent farmer-turned-commandant Karel, is quizzing tommy Victor Maycock and his superior Sergeant Hime about their attitudes to South Africa. Hime comments that they have found in Africa “No tradition, / Or *almost* none. A clean slate, / Or *almost* clean.”<sup>16</sup> Victor is more outspoken in suggesting that he would like to settle with his family in South Africa after the war, because his son will have better opportunities than in England:

London is too packed to allow a man  
To expand; and in London you walk  
Up to your ruddy eyebrows in the glories  
Of our history, and then you feel,  
What’s the point of making any more?  
But here the past don’t wet the uppers  
Of your boots. It’s a nice, free,  
Frightening feeling.

One can imagine Butler responding in like fashion. It suited the young poet of *Home Thoughts* that Africa should be “artless”. He wished to create a unique African identity for himself and, although there is a hint of regret in the lines “I have not found myself on Europe’s maps ... I must go back”, in the new “context” of South Africa Butler could be a fresh and significant presence – an original and substantial figure, a ‘Roy Campbell’ (but one who would remain on African soil). The prospect must have enthused his artistic ego. It was a daunting task, but an intoxicating one: a “free, / Frightening feeling.”

Here we may also consider Butler’s appropriation of and elaboration on *Four Years in Southern Africa* (1829), the enthusiastic recollections of explorer-adventurer Cowper Rose, for the twin 1820 settler texts of his play *Take Root or Die* (1970) and his ‘children’s novel’ *A Rackety Colt* (1989). In the latter, as both historian and author-collator, Butler seems to affirm the viewpoint of the narrator, the (fictionalised) young Tom Stubbs, who esteems Rose for his celebratory “version” of Africa: “He’d brought home to us that there were other ways of thinking and feeling.”<sup>17</sup> Those ways are intimate with local geography; they do not see Africa as foreign or threatening – “Your children will have no regrets ... They already accept this landscape.” Yet the appeal of Africa to young Europeans is, once again, seen to be in its vacuity and passivity – it is unmarked territory, “a landscape with no scars or historical embellishments. It has a certain innocence. It is easier to breathe, to hope, here; to shake off *ennui*, to think fresh thoughts ...”

Rose is wrong, however, to refer to “vast tracts” in which “there is no past, and very little sense of time”, where “Mankind is in its infancy.”<sup>18</sup> For Butler, returning to explore South Africa with

the “five simple slaves” of his senses would not be sufficient. The soil was not “still pure”, but bloodied, damaged and enriched by both pre-colonial and colonial histories. There were many “ghosts” to “glamorise” the “graves”, and not all of them were “recent”. Increasingly, the poet of the new accommodated the scholar of the old and, ultimately, the two were fused in pieces such as *Pilgrimage to Dias Cross* (1987), which enacts a literary resurrection of various historical ghosts. Over the years, Butler’s project of revivifying South African history and culture would extend Hime’s self-correction (“almost”) into a direct negation – that is, an affirmation of South African “tradition”.

This was by no means an exclusively white or English-speaking tradition. Butler’s primary historical research interest was, of course, the 1820 settlers, but he actively sought out and studied more ‘indigenous’ Africana. During the last two decades of his life in particular, the breadth of his research stretched from the importance of nose-bleeds in some African shamanistic rituals, to the mysterious presence of zebras, to the association between star constellations and certain African creation myths, to the location of cairns or gravestones in various parts of Africa (such as the *isivivane* of the Xhosa or the *Heitsi Eibib* graves of the Khoi). The latter subject, like many of his minor pursuits, he eventually had to put aside, but not because he considered it obscure or trivial; a private self-assessment, *Stocktaking 1995*, records that he passed the project on “with regret because it is a fascinating topic, needs writing up, and has v. wide implications for history & culture [sic], possibly leading all the way to Egypt.”<sup>19</sup>

#### IV

##### What is there to be reborn?

During his war service on both sides of the Mediterranean rim, Butler had associated Egypt with Europe – steeped in human history, unlike most of Africa. Fifty years later, he recognised a trans-continental unity: South Africa and North Africa share a common African inheritance. Thus he embraced, albeit with an unconvincing hint of Afro-jingoism, the principle of an “African Renaissance”. Since Thabo Mbeki and others first touted that phrase, it has become a familiar piece of jargon in conversations about socio-economic or politico-cultural conditions in South Africa and across the continent. This is unfortunate, as the intellectual impetus originally provided by the concept encouraged widespread debate. Butler’s article on *The African Renaissance – a long view* (1999, two years before he died) is introduced as “an amateur’s reaction to the knee-jerk response of many to the idea that Africa could have a renaissance at all”:

What is there to be reborn? Where is its counterpart of Greco-Roman civilisation?

Well, for a start, the Greeks themselves acknowledged their debt to Africa, to Egypt. The pyramids, huge, monumental proof of advanced mathematics and engineering, were two millenia old before Euclid wrote his *Elements* in Alexandria.<sup>20</sup>

This represents a subtle back-peddling from Butler’s earlier view of Africa as “a land with almost no known history”, a continent of “simple barbaric lines”.

The title of the article, with its accent on “a long view”, is significant. The most trenchant – certainly one of the more vitriolic – criticisms faced by Butler was Mike Kirkwood’s simultaneous coining of, and attack on, “Butlerism”. Kirkwood’s 1974 paper, *The Colonizer: A critique of the English South African culture theory* accused Butler of “bad faith” in trying to reconcile “the contradiction between the long view of history and a romantic, nostalgic identification with a partial aspect” (that “aspect” being, presumably, the adverse conditions under which the English settlers ‘made a home’ in Africa).<sup>21</sup> The paper wounded Butler, despite his dismissal of it:

The S.A. lefties, or some of them, regard me as an old fashioned liberal-colonial writer. One of them tried to establish this by a prac. crit. of Bronze Heads [sic]. The dishonest little twit indulged in some very tendentious analysis of the first few stanzas of the piece, & failed completely to see how the conclusion of the poem modifies everything that has gone before.<sup>22</sup>

Notwithstanding this modification, the poem in question (*Bronze Heads, Ife, Nigeria, 1954*) does express a regret that the African landscape seems to remain largely unmarked by the events of an unwritten history:

How can Zimbabwe’s walls and these bronzes sum  
our continent’s long tale of joys and tears?

...

Sixteen centuries since the Cross, and none  
have paved a highway, keyed a bridge, or arch  
through which victorious regiments might march

...

vague ghosts in footloose air, since no scribe came  
to pen their deeds in palisades of words.

By contrast, *The African Renaissance – a long view* claims for Africa the pyramids, signifiers of a cultural commodity absent from the *Bronze Heads* poem. The article does not, however, make any concession to Kirkwood with regard to “the long view of history”. Butler’s “long view” takes him back beyond Marx and Engels to trace patterns in human history (or human behaviour) that have their foundations in both mythology and biology.

As for mythology – we may note that Butler’s understanding of historical cycles incorporates the Yeatsian gyre, but depends on more fundamental patterns that resonate with, for example, Jungian archetypes. Similarly, Butler was less interested in Nietzsche’s ‘eternal recurrence’ than in the latter’s reading of Greek tragedy, which he adapted for his own seminal formulation of the synthesis between Africa’s Dionysus and Europe’s Apollo. (The major prose interpretation of this theme was his 1962 lecture, *The Republic and the Arts*; the key poetic work, *Home Thoughts*.) The alignment of the ‘irrational’ with Africa and the ‘rational’ with Europe has, of course, received a sound critical lashing. Nevertheless, I would argue that this crude symbolic association fails to express adequately Butler’s complex and often contradictory attitudes to the encounter between Africa and Europe – and that, moreover, the Apollo-Dionysus metaphor was by no means the only lens through which he viewed (and viewed critically) rationality itself.

## V

**Relocating the rational**

'Reason' is a historically loaded term, subject to multiple definitions and connotations. Stephen Watson, in his introduction to Butler's *Essays and Lectures* (1994), places Butler "on the cusp of the old and the new" and suggests that "his work is in part an embrace of modernity, in part a critique of it. There is both attraction and repulsion, at the very least a tension."<sup>23</sup> This tension is a result of the much-contested 'achievements' associated with modernity and with the Enlightenment conception of reason – which entails a dislocation from the past, and has been subjected to criticism on these grounds. The extreme manifestations of modernity have also been our greatest tragedies (the racial theories underlying Apartheid, or the justifications for dropping the atomic bomb): the utopias of the Enlightenment were perverted into the all-too-real nightmares of the twentieth century.

This dilemma is at the heart of *The African Renaissance – a long view*. The article expands from its emphasis on African civilisation(s) to an explication of human history in evolutionary terms, based on the then-recent discovery of a complete hominid skeleton at the Sterkfontein caves. Butler had by this stage become more and more fascinated by the study of early humans:

The Sterkfontein hominids were dwellers on the fringes of the forest and the plain. The assumption seems to be that their adoption of an upright posture preceded by many millenia the crucial increase in their skull and brain size. This increase made possible the development of reason.

Three and a half million years after Sterkfontein, reason has empowered us with such might that we are turning into an evolutionary disaster. We are a threat to every other form of life and to ourselves. We know this, but are too incapacitated by greed and conceit to take effective action against ourselves

Can we not reason? "I think," says Descartes, "therefore I am." *Cogito ergo sum*.

Put like that, it is simply nonsense. No man or animal comes into existence by thinking ... Biologically and psychologically, "we love therefore we are". It takes two to create one thinking ego. *Amamus ergo sumus*.<sup>24</sup>

It is worth considering the combination of biological frankness and apparent ethical sophistication with which he discusses sexual instincts ("Conceived in ecstasy, born in blood, nurtured at the breast, we are driven by desires, hungers, emotions, and we use thought to help gratify them") along with those sexual adaptations that were necessary to human evolution. The article places love and loyalty above sexual pleasure, for it was in the early hominids that "self-gratifying erotic desire" was first "qualified by communal familial affection" when the female hominid "succeeded in adding the sober responsibilities of parenthood to the intoxication of courting and mating, [turning] a male in rut into a man who ... cares for her and her offspring."<sup>25</sup>



Reason and the irrational come to the fore once again, but the line between them is blurred. To ‘love’ can mean a conscious, rational decision to overcome the unconscious, irrational sexual drive; but the argument of the article necessarily aligns love with care and affection, in opposition to reason. It takes more than instinct to evolve – or perhaps we should say that evolution requires the selfless nurturing instinct to accompany the selfish pleasure instinct – but, on the other extreme, the misuse of reason can threaten the survival of the species:

What the world needs is not more thinking but a renaissance of caring. The left hand portion of the brain, which contains the thinking computer, must, once again, make a major adjustment and listen to the right hand, the intuitive, mothering / emotional half.<sup>26</sup>

The article goes on to make a bold claim. It was in sub-Saharan Africa that, imitating the ostrich, hominids first walked on two legs, then danced. Likewise, they were the only primates to learn from the birds how to sing. One typescript of *The African Renaissance – a long view* gives a particularly revealing emphasis to this point. At the end of the paragraph on hominids singing and dancing, Butler makes an extravagant handwritten amendment: “We gave song and dance to the world.” Far from being “artless”, Africa is now seen to be the very source of all art.

Butler concludes with a humanist and ecological tour de force that turns South Africa into the inheritor of Africa’s greatest abiding civilisation:

To revert to ancient Egypt. Most of their gods were half animal therianthropes. The walls of the tombs of pharaohs and others are painted with African animals and birds which no longer exist in Egypt. In Southern Africa, many of them are still alive, although some are under threat.

Part of the African Renaissance – of which there are encouraging signs – may be to preserve and make available to the media-mesmerised, digitalised flat-dwellers of the so-called First World glimpses of what their own first real world may have been like.

We have a mission to remind the First World of the marvellous continent which contributed humanity itself to the world: and to remind humanity that the enlarged brain comprised not only a computer on the left side, but a right-handed home for the senses and the emotions and the capacity to care.<sup>27</sup>

This may seem trite. It may, indeed, stem from the same crude conception of Dionysian Africa, in opposition to an Apollonian Europe, that we have already dismissed. If so, it stumbles at the same hurdle as other Africanist philosophies such as those espoused by Steve Biko and Kenneth Kaunda for political purposes – a necessary ‘conscientising’ – which have since lost credibility as fallacious attempts to define and promote the ‘essential’ qualities of Africa or Africans. Nevertheless, we are able to locate Butler somewhere between the extreme positions of *The African Renaissance – a long view* and the writing he produced half a century before. Although he labelled himself “old-fashioned”, throughout his life Butler was willing to face the issues of the day without losing the perspective offered by a “long view of history”.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Watson, Stephen (ed.), *Guy Butler: Essays and Lectures, 1949-1991* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1994), p.54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.57.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.60. There are other awkward political issues raised by the expressions Butler uses; these deserve mention in this context. Firstly, some might say that to “turn Africa into art” - the Africa of “the isipingo, the marula, the baobab” - is to make an idealised, Edenic Africa into a “hieratic” frieze, thus threatening to reduce political struggles or to undermine the immediacy of the pain and suffering caused by racial oppression (an argument that would reinforce, for example, Martin Orkin’s criticism of Butler’s plays *The Dam* and *The Dove Returns*). Secondly, although it is important that a culture ‘tries to name and give significance and value’ to its environment, there is an ugly side to the “culture of naming”: it is part of the colonisation process.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55.

<sup>5</sup> See Butler, Guy, *A Local Habitation: An Autobiography 1945-90* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1991), p.182 and p.191.

<sup>6</sup> Joyce, James, *Ulysses* (London: Penguin, 1992), p.45. Dedalus is actually contemplating the “ineluctable modality of the visible” and “the audible”.

<sup>7</sup> This wish to escape from an inescapable historical moment, or political reality, would surface repeatedly during a life lived under the regime of Apartheid.

<sup>8</sup> Butler, Guy, *Bursting World: An Autobiography 1936-45* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983), p.174.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.183.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.223.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.224.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.226.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.196.

<sup>14</sup> *A Local Habitation*, p.49. Again, one recognises the voice of van der Post (via Jung).

<sup>15</sup> *Bursting World*, p.225.

<sup>16</sup> Butler, Guy, *The Dove Returns: a play in three acts* (London: Fortune Press / Cape Town: Balkema, 1956), p.41. My italics.

<sup>17</sup> Butler, Guy, *A Rackety Colt* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1989), p.67.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66 and Butler, Guy, *Take Root or Die* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1970), p.67.

<sup>19</sup> Butler, Guy, *Stocktaking 1995* (Manuscript held at the National English Literary Museum - NELM - in Grahamstown).

<sup>20</sup> Butler, Guy, *The African Renaissance - a long view* (1999, draft typescript held at NELM), p.1.

<sup>21</sup> Kirkwood, Mike, *The Colonizer: a critique of the English South African culture theory*, pp.102-133 in Wilhelm, Peter and Polley, James (eds), *Poetry South Africa: Selected Papers from Poetry '74* (Johannesburg: AD. Donker, 1976), p.104.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Guy Butler to Denis Davison, 9<sup>th</sup> November 1977 (NELM).

<sup>23</sup> Guy Butler: *Essays and Lectures, 1949-1991*, p.4.

<sup>24</sup> The truism that ‘it takes two to create one thinking ego’ echoes the sentiments of Butler’s ‘High Corner (13)’ draft: *We are born as the result of the union of two people* (Typescript given handwritten heading, ‘Vol III from “Pilgrimage”, 26 June 1989’, NELM).

<sup>25</sup> *The African Renaissance - a long view*, p.2. This summative version is largely corroborated by contemporary views, although, as Jared Diamond points out in *The rise and fall of the third chimpanzee* (a work that Butler consulted – and contested – in his research into evolutionary biology) there are numerous conflicting theories regarding “the origin of concealed ovulation and concealed [and restricted] copulation in humans”; unsurprisingly, given the implications for male-female power relationships, none of these theories is free from gender bias (London: Vintage, 1991), pp.66-69.

<sup>26</sup> Butler’s conception of a “pleasure drive” in this context owes something to his hesitant interest in Freud. Elsewhere, Butler used the “pleasure principle” (and the need to overcome it) in order to chastise white South Africans for not acknowledging the “reality” of a multi-racial country. Both of these instances seem to gloss over Freud’s later work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

<sup>27</sup> *The African Renaissance - a long view*, p.3.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Guy Butler to Chris Butler, 21 August 1999 (NELM).