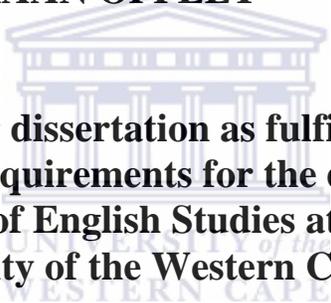


**THE VALLEY TRILOGY:
A READING OF C. LOUIS LEIPOLDT'S
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE FICTION
circa 1925-1935**

By

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**A minor dissertation as fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
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I hereby declare that 'The Valley Trilogy: A Reading of C. Louis Leipoldt's English-Language Fiction circa 1925-1935' is my own work and that nowhere in it is plagiarism committed.

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Dedicated to
Rachel and Abby,
with special thanks to
The Mandela Rhodes Foundation
and the UWC English Department



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Foreword

C. Louis Leipoldt is known as a canonical figure in the history of Afrikaans poetry. He is customarily included in the pantheon of writers such as C.J. Langenhoven who not only established Afrikaans as a standardized national language in the early twentieth century but also contributed to the idea of the Afrikaner Volk as a distinct nation within South Africa. He is regarded as a literary father figure because of his being the first major poet of importance with his 1911 collection, *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte* and subsequent volumes of poetry in the 1920s and 1930s. Throughout the years after his death in 1947, Leipoldt's Afrikaans works, which included the first major Afrikaans plays in *Die Heks* and *Die Laaste Aand*, were an integral part of the Afrikaans schooling and higher education curriculum.

The recent publication of Leipoldt's *Valley* trilogy, three novels written in English in the 1930s (but not published in his day) now reveals Leipoldt in a very different light. These three novels were written as a critique of sectionalist Afrikaner sentiment and politics, with a core argument against the folk-iconography of the Voortrekker, which had been propagated by Gustav Preller in the first decade of the twentieth century. Not long before the writing of the *Valley* Trilogy Leipoldt had worked as a journalist on *Die Volkstem*, which was edited at the time by Preller, with whose cultural and political views Leipoldt clashed. At the time of writing the *Valley* Trilogy, Leipoldt was regarded as an elder statesman of the Afrikaans literary canon. Indeed, in terms of poetry, he was considered the first figure of importance. The image of Leipoldt as author of these novels is more of a classic cosmopolitan liberal than a pioneer of the Afrikaans language and member of the white South African Nationalist establishment.

The literary historian Stephen Gray brought out the first two volumes of the trilogy with substantial editorial intervention in what were otherwise rambling manuscript texts. Before he was able to edit the third of the trilogy the entire set was published in a compendium under the collective title of the *Valley* trilogy (henceforth used in this thesis as the collective term for the three novels), but without any editing at all. This

publication in the original form is of value to scholars who might wish to compare texts, but at the same time the lack of good editing is very evident to the reader

The first novel in the sequence, *Chameleon on the Gallows*, was published by Gray in 2000 as a single text with a critical introduction, one year before the compendium-volume trilogy itself in which it is published as *Gallows Gecko*, Leipoldt's original title. This novel was based on an earlier Afrikaans novel, *Galgsalmander*, which Leipoldt wrote in 1928-1929, and published in 1932.

Stormwrack, the second novel in the trilogy, had already been published by Gray in 1980 to mark the centenary of Leipoldt's birth. A novel of the Anglo-Boer War considered to be a classic of South African fiction, this was reissued in Gray's edition (again with a critical introduction) along with *Chameleon on the Gallows* in 2000 to mark the centenary of the war.

The third novel, *The Mask*, was first published in the unedited compendium trilogy in 2001. It is loosely based on Leipoldt's Afrikaans play, *Afgode*, which was written in 1928 and the novel is written in a highly theatrical style, as indeed were parts of *Stormwrack* and *Chameleon on the Gallows*.

While there may still be ongoing debate about Gray's editorial intervention, he must be credited for his efforts in allowing Leipoldt's "forgotten" work to reach a wider audience, especially with the publication of the provocative *Stormwrack* in 1980, a full fourteen years before the change of political dispensation in South Africa. In acknowledgement of Gray's work, I have decided to refer to the first novel of the trilogy as *Gallows*, suggesting a combination of Leipoldt's unedited manuscript and Gray's abridged version as a coherent whole. Gray's version of *Stormwrack* was also preferred above the unedited version, although, again, both were consulted for the writing of this project.

As yet, little has been written on the *Valley* trilogy. Outside of recognition for his memoirs (*Bushveld Doctor*), food and wine guides and the poetry collection *The Ballad*

of *Dick King and other poems*, Leipoldt's status as an English South African writer has been minimal. The belated publication of the *Valley* trilogy is a serious undertaking in displaying Leipoldt as an English-language South African writer and it allows for new criticism on both the previously unavailable work and on Leipoldt himself.

Alongside Gray, JC Kannemeyer stands as the foremost authority on Leipoldt. His lifelong academic probes into Leipoldt's literary works are notable enough, but it is especially his momentous 1999 biography on Leipoldt that sheds priceless light on one of the more beguiling, complex figures in South African history. Gray's has been the most complete (if brief) English writing on Leipoldt, while Kannemeyer has certainly unraveled Leipoldt to Afrikaans readers. Both Gray and Kannemeyer are also specialists in the fields of South African literature and its history, and both have placed Leipoldt accordingly in their respective, and respected, surveys. It is apt then, that an academic writing project about an Afrikaans writer's unknown English works should refer to the findings of these two scholars.

Critics like Kannemeyer and Gray have written extensively about Leipoldt and have indeed addressed the trilogy, but this was with reference either to the novels in their manuscript form or to the two titles published (and introduced) by Gray. With all three novels now published there is an opportunity for original critical and scholarly work to be done. C. Louis Leipoldt based his literary work, in Afrikaans and English, on the idea of nation building towards a progressive South Africa, a theme he examines with a newly emphatic inclusive liberalism in the *Valley* trilogy. Today, in a time of national transformation, Leipoldt's liberal ideas deserve to be given the broader scope he had intended for them.

In re-evaluating Leipoldt by means of his English-language work a risk is run of implying that Afrikaans literature in general is narrow-minded or guilty of separatism. A worst-case scenario would be for this study to be taken as an Anglophone slight on accepted Afrikaans literary views. This is to be avoided by emphasizing a necessary distinction between Afrikaans literature in general and the racist views of Afrikaner nationalism, and

by suggesting that Leipoldt is of importance exactly because he can be seen as both an Afrikaans and English writer and that, in accord with his own ideas expressed in the *Valley* trilogy, he ultimately did not desire division between these two languages and their speakers. (He hardly could have, as he was a renowned polyglot who spoke up to eight different languages.) At various points, depending on context, I use the term Dutch/Afrikaner or Afrikaner for Afrikaans-speaking groups, or Dutch speakers. However, where necessary, the term applies to English and Afrikaans speakers as well.

A tendency in critical writing on Leipoldt is to draw heavily from his personal life. Certainly, Leipoldt's biographical details inform much of his work, and the *Valley* trilogy is no exception. Where it was possible, Leipoldt's biographical elements have been incorporated into this thesis, but ultimately, for further interest, I can only urge readers to find Kannemeyer's 1999 biography, *Leipoldt: 'n Lewensverhaal*. Also, as Cape history is significant to the *Valley* trilogy, relevant cultural specifics, along the lines that Leipoldt incorporated them have made their way into this project, but even then, limitations needed to be applied. There cannot be great elaboration, for instance, to avid readers of the role of food in literature, on the influence of cooking and kitchen activity in the construction of the *Valley* trilogy if only because Leipoldt himself, while making regular reference to it, could not find a space to accommodate it in a similar fashion to the later Cape food and wine guides he would publish.

Today, in a time of national transformation in South Africa, Leipoldt's liberal ideas deserve the broader scope he had intended for them, and so are due an assessment.

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INTRODUCTION

C. Louis Leipoldt was born to a missionary family in the Cape Colony, and under private tutelage, became an astonishingly refined reader, an intellectual, with the cosmopolitan ability to interpret the worldliness of things and possessing the gift of the linguist in his ability to speak, read or write in up to eight languages. Born in Worcester, outside of Paarl, he was raised in the Hantam region, in the valley town of Clanwilliam. His father was a German-speaking Moravian missionary and encouraged Leipoldt's interests in literature. He had vast international and local experience, which would see him travel the European continent as a medical student, see the Americas as the resident doctor on board Joseph Pulitzer's yacht, journey across the Cape Colony as a war correspondent during the South African War and work as the first medical inspector of the Transvaal's rural schools. His published writing was equally as broad: he wrote pioneering works on juvenile health care in both England and South Africa, oversaw the first South African Medical Journal, food and wine guides to the Cape, cooking books, short prose, children's stories, detective novels, critical social commentary in up to four different languages, personal memoirs and, of course, groundbreaking Afrikaans poetry and dramatic works. He also pursued an interest in botany, nurtured in him by the eminent Englishman Dr Harry Bolus. The library in his family home, as well as the local town library in Clanwilliam, as well as his private education, was the starting point for a varied and colourful existence. Clanwilliam, situated between mountain and river, was his base for exploring the natural and moral complexities of the world. The greater part of Leipoldt's fictional output drew its material from his childhood.

During his youth in the Hantam, Leipoldt witnessed a friendly co-existence between English and Dutch/ Afrikaner settlers, despite increasing tensions between the two groups in other areas of the Cape Colony, and the Afrikaner Republics. While Leipoldt's upbringing was largely Cape English with a notable patrician influence, his exposure to and familiarity with the Dutch/Afrikaner population was as influential, especially with the greater emergence of the Afrikaans language, which

had begun to overshadow Dutch as a popular language in the country. He had blood relations on both the English and Dutch/Afrikaner sides, and like many in the Cape, could profess loyalty to either. On the English side, there was a natural or adopted loyalty to Queen Victoria and to English culture; the British army had, by the 1890s, secured much of the modern world. On the Afrikaner side there was a strong sense of establishing a separate national identity, in which the Afrikaner could claim to be the founder of his own country and culture, based on the events of the Great Trek of the 1830s that saw the establishment of the independent Afrikaner Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

The Valley community of the Hantam region, and the Village of Clanwilliam, are recreated throughout Leipoldt's Afrikaans work. The scenic beauty of the region informs many of his revered nature poems, most notably perhaps '*n Handvol Gruis Uit Die Hantam* and *Oktobermaand*, and Leipoldt's character studies of the Valley folk emerge in short stories like *Die Kooi van die Weduwee Priem* and *Die Dwergvroutjie*. Much of Leipoldt's knowledge of the Valley community and its history came through both his keen interest in assimilating himself with the community and through listening to its legends through oral tradition. Within the young Leipoldt a sense of tradition and rootedness in Clanwilliam was combined with bookishness that inspired great enthusiasm for exploring the world beyond the Valley borders. The Cape yeoman, or squire, lived well with the passionate Dutch/Afrikaner, in Leipoldt's view, because both could claim ownership of the Cape, the gateway to the rest of the world and a perpetual source of outside enlightenment and knowledge, especially from a European influence. Whereas Republicans were keen on establishing a nationhood that owed nothing to Europe, the Cape Afrikaner and Englishman nurtured himself on grace, Old World farming and a bond to the intellectual and moral qualities of Europe. The presence of German missionaries, the employment of Malay cooking in Cape kitchens and allegiance to the Queen were hallmarks of the cosmopolitan Cape existence in the later 1800s.

Leipoldt's first serious experiences outside Clanwilliam came during his late teens, when he started working as a journalist for various Afrikaans and English-language newspapers, ultimately doing his most notable work for *The South African News*. Leipoldt was already active as a journalist when the South African War was declared between Republican Afrikaner forces in Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and the British government ruling the Cape. As a reporter, and eventually as editor, for *The South African News*, the teenage Leipoldt traveled the Cape Colony as part of a Circuit Court, reporting on the court cases held against Cape Afrikaners accused of rebellion against the English Government. Many Cape Afrikaners were convicted of aiding Republican commandos entering the Colony, or of having sympathies with the Republics, and were punished under the system of martial law. While there were numerous controversial facets to the organization of martial law, one that caused great debate was the public execution of convicted rebels. In smaller communities, many witnesses had actually been forced by the government to attend these executions, despite the fact that a statute in England abolished the practice in the 1860s, thirty years before the South African War. Apart from the apparent barbaric nature of public executions, there was another serious issue in the divisiveness this practice spread, as many Cape Afrikaners were motivated to join the Republican cause after witnessing these executions.

“Mart’jie Louw” is the term Afrikaners used for Martial Law during and after the years of the South African War, and Leipoldt would appropriate it famously in his landmark poem, *Oom Gert Vertel*. This is the title poem of Leipoldt's first major Afrikaans publication, the collection of poems, *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*. The poem features an elderly Afrikaner, Oom (Uncle) Gert, relating the account of the deaths of two young Cape rebels under martial law. In a Browning-esque dramatic monologue, Oom Gert relates the “story of our death” to a young man, a man he calls “neef” (nephew) following the familiar practice of the Dutch/Afrikaner, a story about the death of two young rebels at the hands of the English martial law system in a small Cape community. It becomes clear that Mart’jie Louw has not only provided Oom Gert with a villain that will long haunt him, but that Mart’jie Louw has succeeded in afflicting Oom Gert with a sense of

guilt for his role in the deaths of the rebels. Oom Gert is the embodiment of the Cape Afrikaner, a confused man with patriotic loyalty to the Republicans, and a historically adopted loyalty to Queen Victoria. Somewhere, he betrays both loyalties, and his penalty is survival itself, or memory. His conscience will forever prey on him, as he kept silent about his role in the capture of the two young rebels, one of whom was engaged to marry his daughter. He, an elder, survives a war that hunted the blood of the young, those who were to be the nation builders of the country's future.

The young Leipoldt looked furiously at martial law, as well as the sub-human conditions Afrikaners were exposed to in English concentration camps. In scathing attacks against the government in his war correspondence, the young Leipoldt is revealed as emotionally affected and in denial of his pre-dominantly Cape English upbringing in favor of a pro-Afrikaner stance. Much of this emotional impact informed Leipoldt's literary output, most notably the *Oom Gert Vertel...* collection, in which many of the poems were composed during the South African War.

However, by the time the *Oom Gert Vertel...* collection was released, during the first year of South African Union between English and Afrikaner, Leipoldt had been away from South Africa for nine years, having left in 1902 (before the war had ended) to pursue medical studies in London. In the period between 1902 and 1911, Leipoldt's cosmopolitanism, nurtured largely through his private education in Clanwilliam, was allowed to develop. From his earliest days in the UK, Leipoldt, in letters to his benefactor Dr Bolus, revealed his multinational character and avoided taking either a pro-Afrikaner or a pro-English stance towards South Africa, and this aspect was allowed to expand during his time abroad. After visits to European countries and medical experience gained, Leipoldt returned to the Union of South Africa permanently in 1914 to great acclaim as the writer of the *Oom Gert Vertel...* collection, which was largely considered to be a pro-Afrikaner nationalist work, one that would be referenced by many Afrikaners trying to claim national independence from the English. However, Leipoldt gave greater attention to his medical career at this point, and did not produce any major literary works that could justify his

popular status as an Afrikaner nationalist writer. By the 1920s, Leipoldt appeared to rebel against that assumed identity, voicing his thoughts against the increasingly powerful Afrikaner National Party under General JBM Hertzog, who sought to claim an authentic mass Afrikaner identity that owed nothing to English influence. Leipoldt, at this time, was affiliated with the South African Party (SAP), which was also led by a prominent Afrikaner in Jan Smuts (Hertzog's erstwhile military comrade), albeit one who had a strong leaning towards English culture. Leipoldt worked alongside fellow SAP-member Gustav Preller at the Transvaal-based *Die Volkstem*, but never agreed with the latter's pro-Voortrekker stance of seeing the Great Trek as the Rosetta Stone of the modern Afrikaner.

By the early 1930s, Afrikaner Nationalism had strongly asserted its dominance in South Africa, with the Afrikaner seen as a uniquely African figure, whose history began with the events of the Great Trek in the 1830s. By this time, Leipoldt was engaged in the writing of the *Valley* trilogy, as well as an English essay called *Cultural Development*, for the *Cambridge History of the British Empire*. In that essay, as well as in Afrikaans articles for *Die Volkstem* in the late 1920s, Leipoldt openly criticizes Afrikaans as a language nurtured on political and cultural agitation, and not on literary or linguistic merit, and also doubts the lasting appeal of Afrikaans culture when it is developed on anti-English sentiment.

With the *Valley* trilogy, Leipoldt goes back in time to trace the evolution of the rift between English and Afrikaner, and situates the South African War as the specific moment where his historical novels find the obvious representation of sectionalism, and how it impacts the future of South Africa. The tension between the two white sections had enormous influence on the non-white population of the country, and with the selfishness inherent in claiming state, it was inevitable that those outside the white population would be most affected. Leipoldt holds both white sections responsible and, in *Stormwrack*, models this blame on English passivity and Afrikaner zealousness. The character who symbolizes the passivity is Andrew Quakerley, an English Oom Gert, perhaps, who retreats into his obsessively cultivated garden rather than engaging in social concerns regarding tensions

between English and Afrikaners in his community. The Boer commandos are shown by Leipoldt to be ruthless and unscrupulous, not hesitating to senselessly shoot natives who serve English masters or coercing neutral Cape Afrikaners into becoming rebels, knowing full well that the rebels would be executed while the commandos would not.

It is with the executions in the Cape Colony, even more than with the war itself, that Leipoldt saw the loss of grace in the rudimentary treatment of noble Cape families under martial law. The ideals of the past, nurtured still into the present, died with the executed rebels, those who embodied the twin loyalties to both English and Afrikaans and ultimately had to make a choice, as there could be no neutrality. When Andrew Quakerley chose to be neutral, his life's work in his garden was destroyed during the war. The moral compass began to career wildly out of control at this point, and the twentieth century history of South Africa was allowed to take its course. There could be no gentleman's war, not after the public executions that were implemented through martial law by the English and the coercing of young Afrikaners into becoming rebels on the part of the Republicans. Those with loyalties to both sides, like Andrew Quakerley, would pay dearly just for that fact alone. There was no choice given to anyone, and while war, to Leipoldt, already carried an unreasonable price to pay, the consequent future of the country was itself too large a price for the events of the South African War.

As an affected young man who witnessed the horrors of the concentration camp and the injustice of martial law Leipoldt did, perhaps, initially affront the English in his journalistic writing and lay all guilt upon them. By the time Leipoldt re-emerged from his time in the UK and Europe, blame did not matter anymore. It is true that he appeared to be the passionate Afrikaner, writing poems appealing to "his" people. It is also true that later he appeared to be the unsatisfied Englishman, lambasting Afrikaans in an essay called *Cultural Development*, written for the *Cambridge History of the British Empire*. Certainly, *Gallows* and *The Mask* suggest the heated Englishman, or English Afrikaner. But *Stormwrack*, perhaps the English *Oom Gert Vertel*, is the clearest sign of Leipoldt's moral trajectory with the *Valley*

trilogy, and it ultimately eschews any political or social grievance other than the loss of grace, tradition and humanity.



1.1. *Galgsalmander* and *Gallows*: A Comparison

In 1928, Leipoldt began working on *Galgsalmander*, which would first appear in serialized form in *Die Huisgenoot* from August 1929 to January 1930. This Afrikaans novel is a rustic comedy with a period setting dating to the 1840s, and focuses on a small community of Dutch farmers and English settlers. It tells the story of Amadeus Tereg, who served as an executioner for the Colony and who, under the changed identity of Everardus Nolte, becomes a noted community leader in Clanwilliam, in the Hantam region of the Cape. He keeps his past and his old identity a secret from the Valley folk of Clanwilliam, and the novel details both this and his efforts at ingratiating himself into the community. However, once Nolte's story is resolved, the novel's action moves towards the romance between Mabuis, a gypsy nomad-type schoolteacher taken in by Nolte, and the widowed, and wealthy, Mrs Priem. The novel is essentially a *plaasroman*, but Leipoldt also details the idyllic existence of the Valley community through a journalistic recounting of place and character. While the play *Afgode* was completed in 1928, and would lay the blueprint for *The Mask*, it is with *Galgsalmander* where the *Valley* trilogy actually began. This was the (perhaps unintentional) blueprint for *Gallows*, and the English text is an improvement on the Afrikaans novel.

Galgsalmander suffers from an amateurish unevenness heavily reliant on an oral-style narration offered by Leipoldt, who intrudes on his own story with frequent comments and humorous quips. The narrator makes irritating asides, and there are too many snippets of dialogue between characters that are either repetitive (and repetition is a major cancer in this novel, possibly due to serialization) or wholly meaningless, even if one does consider that it gives a fair idea of different dialects of Dutch and Afrikaans spoken by different races at the time. It seems Leipoldt was also determined to give each character, no matter how marginal, a history and a space somewhere in the plot, and this naturally resulted in weakening what little effect the plot already had (Nolte's secret, once revealed, is an anti-climax). Kannemeyer (1999: 542) criticizes *Galgsalmander* for this unengaging plot revolving around the "pseudo problem" of Nolte's secret, and also for the long-

windedness that carries on after his secret is revealed, into the love story between Mabuis and Priem. As consistent prose the novel suffers, but Kannemeyer (1999: 542) and MSB Kritzing, in a review of the novel for *Die Volkstem* in 1933 (Nienaber, 1948: 344-348), agree that it succeeds in vividly describing the idyllic world of Leipoldt's youth and that in its vivid scenery, it can be considered a "nature novel".

Gallows does not fare much better with its storyline— again, there is the shift from Nolte to the marriage of Mabuis and Priem and the descriptions of the Valley at times outweigh the unfolding of the plot. Too much is made of giving each character a history, although Gray's version is merciful on this. The Robert Louis Stevenson-like mystery of Nolte's secret (Leipoldt would do the same in *The Mask*) is made bearable by the fact that, unlike *Galgsalmander*, the novel reveals a more human side to Nolte when it is apparent that he is still genuinely disturbed by his actions as executioner. The transition into the wedding of Mabuis and Priem is still uncomfortable in the narrative, but again, unlike *Galgsalmander*, Leipoldt prepares us for it to some extent with earlier comic and melodramatic scenes between the couple.

The similarities between the two works are not only to be found in their weaknesses. The basic storyline is the same, with Nolte coming to the Valley with a new identity and desperate to keep his secret. Both novels address the issue of acceptance and friendship, with *Galgsalmander* in particular emphasizing this with its personal focus on the Matryk character and his friendships with Nolte and later, Mabuis. In *Gallows*, acceptance is alluded to on a broader scale of racial and cultural inclusivity that eschews the personal at times (although Matryk is offered some scope). Nolte is accepted by the community in both novels both before and after his secret is revealed, and Mabuis gets similar treatment.

Both novels also address the issue of identity. This revolves largely around Nolte, who in the two novels twice undergoes a change of identity; at first he is Tereg, the executioner, then Nolte the Valley farmer, and finally, "Gallows Gecko" or

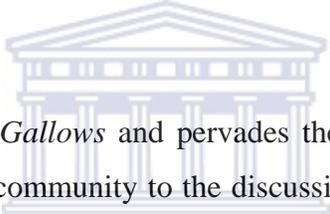
“Galgsalmander”, the Valley legend. From the sinner to the prosperous member of the community, Nolte’s “search” for his identity is common to both novels. However, his eventual fate differs in the two novels: in *Galgsalmander*, Nolte, despite being revealed as keen to be elected as Valley representative to Parliament, waives the nomination and is content to spend the rest of his days without ever leaving his farm; in *Gallows*, he is off to Parliament, pursuing another identity there as a politician. In each case, Nolte is presented with his own national identity as a white South African who is brought to question the responsibility of that identity with regards to a multi-ethnic nationhood. In *Galgsalmander* it is Oom Dorie who opens Nolte to the idea of cosmopolitanism in the Valley Canaan, of a co-existence between English and Dutch/Afrikaner in the community; in *Gallows* this is taken further with the arguments for racial inclusivity a politically hopeful Nolte is constantly faced with by numerous characters in the novel.

The quest for identity is also shown in Mabuis’ tale in both *Galgsalmander* and *Gallows*. The Roman Catholic Mabuis, almost literally, finds his identity before marrying the Dutch Reformed Priem when he discovers an honorable heritage as well as a religious pardon granting him the right to enter into matrimony.

The two novels follow a similar structure when exploring this theme of identity, moving from Nolte’s resolution to Mabuis’, and both end with the wedding of Mabuis to Priem. Without directly stating it, the English novel infers especially the religious similarities between Nolte and Mabuis that in *Galgsalmander* are expressed through Nolte’s closing words: “We are two children lost in Israel.”(Translated from Afrikaans) (Leipoldt, 1932: 408)

Both novels also have a character whose chief concern is an individual’s identity: Martin Rekker. Described as an aristocrat in *Galgsalmander*, the Valley elder is both a mayoral guardian of the Valley as well as an historian. He possesses a keen, scrupulous eye for a stranger’s identity, chronicling personal heritage and standing, or armiger, and it is he whom Nolte at once respects and fears. Martin Rekker’s is the ultimate seal of approval for entry into the Valley’s genteel membership, and it

is he (along with another elder, Oom Dorie) who coins Nolte's immortal nickname after his secret is revealed. Rekker either tests a stranger's traits or allows them passage through a game of chess, a metaphor used in both novels. In *Galgsalmander*, the "aristocratic" Martin Rekker is too thinly explored for such an assessment, and it is noteworthy that he comes across as more suspicious of Nolte's true identity (and more intolerant of Mabuis' religion ahead of the wedding) than is compatible with his ready acceptance of the former hangman later, when his secret is revealed. However, in *Gallows*, it is Martin Rekker who mediates most of Leipoldt's thoughts on liberal Cape traditions and challenges to the history of an exclusively white master race in South Africa. In the English version he is more sympathetic, and far more broad-based. In both novels, it is Rekker who recognizes both the heritage and nobility of Nolte and Mabuis, and as such assures their place in the Valley.



Cosmopolitanism is central to *Gallows* and pervades the novel, ranging from the acceptance of Mabuis into the community to the discussions on racial equality and voting rights for natives. In *Galgsalmander*, cosmopolitanism is treated peripherally but it does feature in Leipoldt's exploration of the Valley: Thomas Seldon represents the English settlers in the Valley and his business partnership with Nolte is the former executioner's only relevant acquaintance with an English speaker. Readers of the Afrikaans work are allowed to view a letter to a relative in which Seldon voices his thoughts on living in South Africa and adopting it as his new home, but that is as far as the insight into any English character goes.

Seldon features in both novels as a satisfied, prosperous English settler at ease with life in the Valley and his stable position as part of the community, but in *Gallows* Old Quakerley (Leipoldt calls him Charles Quakerley but he is Andrew Quakerley Sr in Gray's revision) is used to greater effect to show this relationship between Dutch/Afrikaner and English. Here it seems clear that Leipoldt sought to improve on *Galgsalmander's* Seldon and his solitary letter by fully addressing the issue through Old Quakerley in the English novel. Through a conversation Quakerley has with Nolte and Reverend de Smee (supplemented by other scenes with Reverend

Uhlman and Von Bergmann), Leipoldt gives readers his thoughts on national sectionalism.

Religion is also a major concern to both novels, and Mabuis' Catholicism is a discussion point in each. However, where *Galgsalmander* distracts itself to the point of exhaustion with debates between Mabuis and Oom Dorie on creed and salvation, *Gallows* is more interested in exploring the union of people from different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, so in addition to the wedding that is common to both novels, the English text also concentrates on challenging the religious notion of a white master race through the views of the missionaries Uhlman and Von Bergmann.

Where both novels strongly concur is on the concept of utopianism. Leipoldt chose the *plaasroman* as his framework in both novels, and immediately he posits Nolte's young farm, Knolkloof, as a utopia that suggests not only farm building but also nation-building, more so in *Gallows*. Nolte's work on Knolkloof is driven by passion and determination, a sign of the physical capableness that Nolte the hopeful politician (who must then be a nation-builder) possesses. Through farm building, nation building is subsequently explored, and Nolte's prosperity on his farm is soon paralleled by his rise to political prominence.

The Valley itself is scrutinized by Leipoldt's careful eye, and in both novels the reader is exposed to countless scenic descriptions (whole chapters are devoted to such descriptions in *Galgsalmander*) throughout the seasons, as well as being able to witness, through Leipoldt's near-romantic vision, the bond connecting people to land. The critical opinion, shared by Kritzinger and Kannemeyer, that Leipoldt was providing a document in *Galgsalmander* more concerned with portraying a certain time and space than with plot is apt—in this light *Galgsalmander* is a supplement to Leipoldt's poetry and his lifelong fascination with the beauty of the Hantam region. That Leipoldt had intended to set the action of *Galgsalmander* in a nameless utopia is clear when it is noted that the name Clanwilliam is mentioned only once early on, most likely a neglected leftover from the quick-fire serialization. That intention was

fully realized later in *Gallows*' almost veritable Paradise of man living in harmony with himself and the land.

So far, through mutual and surface similarities, the two novels have much in common even though they eventually move in different directions. *Galgsalmander* is almost conversational in its narrative, as if the whole story were really being told orally; subsequently it reads poorly as literature in the light of its own tendency to sway irregularly between moments of preaching, reverence and actual story telling. Herein lies the key to the transition from Afrikaans to English Gray (Leipoldt, 2000: 10) speaks of –a move by Leipoldt from a stolid, slurred and partially inspired little book to a novel of polemic and humanitarian idiom.

The major differences between the Afrikaans and English works, that which ultimately guides their thematic content, are the addition to *Gallows* of the characters Uhlman, Von Bergmann, Old Quakerley, and the extra location of the mission station at Neckerthal. Through these changes Leipoldt set out to construct his alternative reading of history and his incorporation of a worldly, Cape liberal-based inclusivity with which he could comment on 1920/30s sectionalism in South Africa.

Nolte's excursions to Neckerthal, nowhere apparent in *Galgsalmander*, begin to resemble pilgrimages, as each time he leaves the mission station he is enlightened and revitalized, or at the very least impressed, by his encounters with Uhlman, and looks differently at both his standing in the Valley and his political ambitions after these visits. It is from Uhlman that Nolte adopts a model of schooling to be implemented at the Valley; Neckerthal is helpful in providing him with materials his new farm home requires when he first settles in the Valley; the mission station becomes a holiday destination for Nolte and his family and Uhlman's management of native labor becomes an educational system to consider. Most important, it is at Neckerthal that Nolte is exposed to Uhlman's views on a South African future based on racial equality and equal political rights. Nolte also makes a similar "educational" journey to Von Bergmann's station at Genadendaal and the beach

jaunt with Oom Dorie's family becomes an opportunity for Nolte's first true political undertaking when he meets the backward pan-dwellers, and vows to return to them.

With the addition of Quakerley in *Gallows* comes perhaps the most crucial difference between this novel and the earlier Afrikaans work: a dialogue centered upon the tense political climate between English and Dutch/Afrikaans settlers in the form of a late night conversation between the obdurate Quakerley, Reverend de Smee and Nolte. This moment in the novel doesn't only address the issue of segregation through culture and language but also connects to Uhlman, Von Bergmann and even Martin Rekker's thoughts on white South African (national) history and how it could negatively affect the South African future—the future that had come to pass in the 1930s when Leipoldt was writing the novel.

1.2. Contesting The Great Trek

In the early to mid 1920s, Leipoldt worked with Gustav Preller at the Transvaal-based Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Volkstem* (Voice of the People), or *De Volkstem*. Both were members of the South African Party under Smuts, and both communicated and wrote in English and Afrikaans. In theory, the combination of Preller, who promoted the view that the Voortrekkers were the founding fathers of the Afrikaner people, and Leipoldt, who was seen as the poet champion of the Afrikaners' cause in the South African War, seemed promising. They were among the foremost scribes of the two key episodes of Afrikaner history. Yet, for various, somewhat unclear reasons, which Kannemeyer (1999: 485-486) documents, Leipoldt and Preller were never in sympathy with one another. They did not work in harmony at *Die Volkstem* and in 1925 Preller, in his capacity as acting editor, discharged Leipoldt from his journalistic duties.

Whatever their personal differences, it seem that they were also at odds regarding their respective views on the Afrikaner in South Africa. In 1919, Preller became assistant editor of *Die Volkstem* and editor of *Die Brandwag*, another Afrikaans

publication Leipoldt contributed to. During their years together at *Die Volkstem*, it is possible that Preller was unhappy with the seniority Leipoldt enjoyed with the causerie¹ nature of his articles and columns, which were at times well-informed, and at times slapdash and careless. The nature of Leipoldt's writing at this time ran counter to the beliefs of Preller: Leipoldt was giving increasingly louder voice to his ideas on Afrikaner identity, and this included his thoughts on the Voortrekkers. Whereas, at times, Leipoldt could validate his arguments with sustained polemic, there were also many instances of his being brash and opinionated. There is no telling which aspect of Leipoldt's writing may have affected Preller negatively.

Between 1919 and 1920, Leipoldt was working on his second collection of poetry, *Dingaansdag*, which he initially promoted in 1917 (Kromhout, 1954: 75) as a series of poems about the Great Trek. Dingaansdag (Dingaan's Day) is the name given to the day that saw battle between the Voortrekkers and Zulu warriors on 16 December 1838. It is also commonly remembered as The Battle of Blood River and was later set aside by the Nationalist government as a public holiday, known as the Day of Good Will or the Day of the Covenant. This religious overtone is due to the fact that the day before the battle, Trek leader Jan Celliers prayed to God for a Voortrekker victory against the Zulu king Dingaan and his warriors, and promised that, if the Trekkers were victorious, the day would be commemorated as a Sabbath, a day of thanks. This was naturally in keeping with the Trekker belief of being God's "Chosen People", or neo-Israelites. Leipoldt's poetry collection was most likely expected by his Afrikaner audience to be a tribute to the Great Trek and its leaders, much like *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte* was thought to be a tribute to Afrikaners who experienced the South African War.

However, Leipoldt's collection, once released in 1920, proved to be a massive disappointment, both critically and commercially. It was generally lambasted for not being of the same merit as his debut collection, and even after a revised edition was published in 1925, which improved the linguistic content, it was still received

¹ A term coined for Leipoldt by Kannemeyer that alludes to the conversational register and informal nature of much of his critical writing.

unfavorably. Perhaps most disappointing of all to those who expected a homage to the Great Trek from the same poet who had apparently produced so moving a homage to the Afrikaner's South African War, was the fact that Leipoldt treated the Trek itself very tangentially. In fact, very little in *Dingaansdag* actually suggests a tribute to the Voortrekkers, or even a sympathetic reflection.

There is some explanation for the response to *Dingaansdag*, the collection. Like the *Valley* trilogy, which Leipoldt would complete twelve years later, *Dingaansdag* seems to read backwards in time to comment on the present. Leipoldt stands outside the events of the Great Trek itself and instead focuses his attention on his contemporaries and how they draw from its history. Preller, Langenhoven (*Eerste Skoffies op die Pad van Suid-Afrika*), DF Malherbe (*Vir Vryheid*) and HH Joubert (*Verse oor Piet Retief*) had all paid tribute to the Voortrekkers in moving poems or prose pieces that appealed to mass Afrikaner sentiment. In contrast, Leipoldt took a more critical stance towards the Great Trek. Kromhout (1954: 67) cites Leipoldt's foreword to *Dingaansdag*, in which he offers the collection as a reading of the contemporary Afrikaner's existence, as helpful to understanding its intentions:

“This collection makes no claim to historical accuracy and equally little to dramatic coherence. It is an amalgamation of scattered thoughts on reflection of our volk conditions...”

(Translated from Afrikaans)

It is also at this time, six years after CJ Langenhoven had struck a blow for Afrikaans in 1914 by successfully having it implemented as a primary language at school level and coining the phrase “Die Taal is gans die Volk” (The Language is the People), that Leipoldt is more notably agitated by the drive towards an exclusive Afrikaner independence. This drive had as its major aim the establishment of an Afrikaner South Africa removed from the British Empire, thereby moving towards cultural propaganda that secured sectionalism within white South Africa society, and further alienated non-whites from racial and political equality (Merrington, 2003: 35). Between 1924, when General JBM Hertzog came to power for the nationalists, and 1930, extreme steps were taken to securing this exclusive

Afrikaner group identity– which would manifest greatly in the 1930s under D.F. Malan; and to Leipoldt, the signs were evident by 1920, particularly in the efforts of Langenhoven.

In his later English memoir, *Bushveld Doctor* (1937:169), Leipoldt reveals that he was never particularly enamored of the Great Trek. More precisely, he didn't share the general Afrikaner enthusiasm for singular heroic figures like Potgieter, Retief, Celliers and Pretorius, Trek leaders who were all further immortalized in works by Langenhoven, Preller, Totius and Cilliers. He preferred to think of the Great Trek as a collective effort, a shared experience by a community of people; and even then, Leipoldt was once noted as complaining about having to spend time writing about the Trekkers with their petty differences and narrow-minded view of freedom and liberty (Kannemeyer, 1999: 438). In Kromhout's (1954:73) assessment, the poems in *Dingaansdag* seem to be a call for Afrikaners to keep moving progressively, to keep "trekking", and not to settle a nation on the achievements of a group of people Leipoldt would later brand as deserters in *Gallows*. Kromhout (1954:76) also cites an article by Leipoldt in *Die Huisgenoot* of the 22nd and 29th of March 1922, '*Die Olifantsrivierkloof*', in which he laments that the youth of the 1920s were being immersed in the story of the Trekkers and were not being educated to the history of many South Africans who lived under the Dutch East India Company before total English occupation of the Cape. While Kromhout is not clear as to which particular era Leipoldt concentrates on, it is most likely that he is referring to the early Trek boers like Koenraad Fiet (and Leipoldt would return to the story of Fiet throughout his career) who preceded the Voortrekkers by two decades in the 1810s when they ventured into the South African interior beyond the Colony borders. Possibly with his trademark brashness, Leipoldt, in this piece, says: "In comparison to the earliest treks the (Great Trek) of a century ago was child's play." (Translated from Afrikaans)

Preller's *Voortrekkermense* series are complete histories or biographical histories of the Voortrekkers with diary and letter excerpts written by the Trek leaders. They are detailed works, some even with illustrations seemingly aimed at presenting a heroic

visualization of the Voortrekkers. These works were mostly selected by *Die Burgerleserskring* (a reader's society tied to the Afrikaner daily, *Die Burger*) and, according to Preller's foreword to the first volume published in 1918, had as their major aim the nurturing of consciousness of the Afrikaner volk in terms of group identity, legacy and future social convention:

“Along with other documents, this piece allows the Voortrekkers to be viewed as they viewed themselves, on the trek, in the laager, on the hunt and in the domestic circle; their labour, religious practice and recreational activity, their habits and the fashion of their period. Moreover, this volume also supplies information on many historical events of importance. How the truth can be more wonderful than the wildest flights of imagination is shown in the following pages; and the expectations are not ideal, that these historical but at- times personal documents would make a contribution to the literature and lyric of our volk.” (Translated from Afrikaans) (Preller, 1918)

Preller's lifelong interests in the Voortrekkers and broadcasting of Afrikaner identity earned him universal praise from his peers, and won him a reputation as perhaps the foremost scribe on the saga of the Voortrekkers, even though he also wrote about the South African War and the tension between Nationalist and Unionist Afrikaners during World War One. Preller's concern was to see the Great Trek cemented as a uniquely Afrikaner event, or as a central defining event to Afrikaners, from which Afrikaner art and culture were to draw from endlessly in the building of a distinctly Afrikaner South Africa:

“...Take the Voortrek! -It is an instance that is unique of its kind in human history, in which thousands upon thousands were seen to be moved to a certain conviction: the collective effort to leave the fatherland and, somewhere on the other side of the border, to establish their own free country. In Retief, maybe also in Potgieter, in Pretorius a. o., that ideal exists consciously. The question is, what of the masses? It is only with the masses that execution of the ideal is possible... The motivation behind everything, the core idea that leads to execution, is the desire to break away from the English and to be free.... It is the mass community of the Voortrekkers who make the history of the Voortrek...” (Translated from Afrikaans) (Preller, 1925: 15)

Against this kind of thinking, Leipoldt writes little of the Voortrekkers, and more of those who stayed behind in the Colony. On principle alone, he and Preller differed greatly in their approach to South African history. Preller's historically accurate, precise and informed writing spoke of paying reverence to the Trekkers; Leipoldt's inconsistent, opinionated but morally engaging writing argued for a reconsideration of the historical value of the Trekkers. The likes of Preller and Langenhoven appealed to mass Afrikaner sentiment not merely through passionate lobbying, but also through groundbreaking advances in establishing Afrikaans literature. While Leipoldt may have gained great recognition during the First Language Movement in the 1910s, his reputation was largely based on one work (*Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*), while Preller and Langenhoven's remarkable output and consistency are symptomatic of their determination to promote the Afrikaner history of South Africa. Leipoldt's noted 'apostle of the opposite view' stance is some mark of his consistency in contesting 'orthodox' thinking at any given time.

As Gray (Leipoldt, 2000: 10) notes, the story of Everardus Nolte is really the story of a man who chose not to trek. In *Galgسالماندر* an early impression of Nolte is that he is a phony trekker, who only considers moving from the Colony to Natal to escape his identity as Amadeus Tereg. In *Gallows* he does not for a moment consider settling anywhere else but in the Valley. From the beginning, Nolte plans and considers his move to the Valley with all the care and attention to detail of a Trekker journeying inland. He carefully surveys the land and estimates his chances of prosperity there and then 'treks' to the Valley with his family, pursuing the dream of a Promised Land within the Colony and not outside of it.

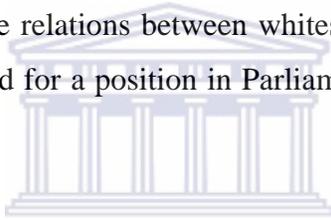
Leipoldt, the Afrikaans historian, was enthusiastic about the concept of Great Trek and would go on to publish work on it in *Die Groot Trek* (1938), but Leipoldt the English writer had reservations about the glorification of singular figures (the Trek leaders Potgieter, Pretorius, etc) and the celebration of certain, particular events. In *Bushveld Doctor* (1937:169), Leipoldt would complain that Afrikaners were too hasty to celebrate occurrences like the Battle of Blood River (which he sees as an unremarkable military action that did not influence the Trek as much as folklore

would claim) and to revere Trek leaders like Potgieter and Pretorius. Instead, he claims, it is the notion of the Trek as a whole and all the communities who played a part in it, rather than the singling out of historic dates and leaders, that should be commemorated and not a scattered public holiday or day of prayer here and there. In *Die Groot Trek* (1938:23), considerably flawed regarding accuracy and fact though it may be, Leipoldt even calls on his readers to recognize that the Trekkers were no different from those who stayed behind in the Colony regarding heritage, race, creed, beliefs and languages and he desires an overall notion of community that is shared and practised by both groups so as to identify them as one and the same people, not separate.

The 'English' Leipoldt does, however, make a heated case for those who stayed against those who trekked, and in *Gallows Gecko* he fires at will: Von Bergmann and Uhlman confront Nolte, during his first visit to Neckerthal, with the outlook that the Trekkers should have stayed in the Colony and resolved their differences with the English (and consequently, the natives), claiming that "they should have worked on their own salvation" (Leipoldt, 2000: 65); a pro-Trekker sympathizer disrupts the annual Jubilee celebrations for the Queen by collecting money for Trekker families struggling in the interior and arouses a jingoistic response from the Valley youths and a consternated one from the elders, and Leipoldt's own narrator time and again criticizes the belief that the Trekkers alone saw to the idea of a modern Dutch/Afrikaner identity, comparing them unfavorably with the hard-working Valley folk who negotiated the difficult land and built their farms there.

Nolte, as Leipoldt's alternate trekker, foregoes his identity as the sinner Amadeus Tereg (for the killing of a white man is a sin in this Afrikaner creed) and enters a Canaan that is comfortably close to Cape Town, and that offers a look at a "lost" history of South Africa in the wake of the Trekker saga. In this Canaan, the mutual co-existence between Dutch/Afrikaner and Englishman questions the reasons for the Trek, for if life in the Colony could be this tranquil then why was there cause for the exodus? If Leipoldt, through Nolte, does indeed ask this question then he also answers it through him: the rift between Afrikaner and Englishman is deeper

than merely the Trekkers' grievances with the government, and Nolte himself characterizes this rift. Throughout the novel there is a pervading sense of fragility: that the relations between the two white groups could shatter easily largely due to increasing Dutch/Afrikaner nationalist and historical rhetoric emerging through the events of the Trek itself. Though the relations between the Valley's English and Dutch/Afrikaner sections are amicable, tensions between national identities through language and heritage (and conservatism and cosmopolitanism) are evident, and significantly, only the Valley's elders-those who have some experience of overcoming difficulties- in both sections are aware of the tensions and how to manage them and avoid larger debate by working together as a community. The Valley youths, as shown by the Jubilee incident, are hotheaded. Nolte, then, represents the generation between the young and the old. The future of the Valley's intra-race relations (and its race relations between whites and natives) is placed in his hands when he is considered for a position in Parliament once representation is granted to the District.



However, Nolte is a complex character. He listens to and readily comprehends the racially inclusive and cosmopolitan views of Von Bergmann and Uhlman, but he is not quite as ready to accept these views or to work on actualizing them in quite the way these men propose. On the one hand, his fluency in both Dutch and English and his skill at oratory seem to be positive factors in preserving the harmony between the two white sections of the Valley, particularly when he placates the youths at the Jubilee (although this incident is itself an ominous sign to the future) and when he starts campaigning to become Valley representative in Parliament. On the other hand, with this strong political sense as well as a friendly, sociable disposition to both his English neighbors and his native subordinates, it is ironic that he is sluggish in wholly appreciating the theories and practices of Von Bergmann and Uhlman towards building a South Africa free of sectional and racial dispute (even Uncle Martin and Old Quakerley can welcome this), and that his intentions aren't quite clear when he becomes more certain of his seat in Parliament. The lingering question here is: whom will Nolte represent? To represent the Valley as he knows it is to draw on the co-existence of the Dutch/Afrikaners and

the English, but to which side will he sway in heated political debate, and how will this influence his racial judgments?

It is doubtful whether Nolte will be such a promising leader. The future he is supposed to secure by the end of the novel will either consolidate Englishman and Dutch/Afrikaner, or pit the settlers' offspring against the 'Trekkerkinders', the future generations of Dutch/Afrikaners who would become the Boer commandos of the South African War.

1.3. Local Values and Cosmopolitanism

In Leipoldt's short story *Die Koei van die Weduwe Priem* (*The Widow Priem's Cow*), from the 1932 collection *Die Rooi Rotte en ander verhale*, a small-town elderly Afrikaner (in what looks again like Clanwilliam, this time of the 1930s) clashes with an English cleric over the issue of her cow disrupting his weekly Sunday evening service. This simple story with its idiosyncratic characters and firm grasp of dialect is typical of the Afrikaans Leipoldt, but also notable as another link to his English work, this time through both its theme of consolidarity after struggle, and its central character, the widow Priem. 1932 was a busy year for Priem, as she also appeared, albeit in a younger form and under a different moniker (although Priem is part of her name), in *Galgsalmander*, which was published in book form that year, and also in the unpublished *Gallows Gecko*, the reworked *Galgsalmander*. While the Priem in the short story exists in a contemporary (to the 1930s) setting and is a frail old woman, she is as capricious and intractable as the younger Priem who exists a century earlier in both *Galgsalmander* and *Gallows*. She is also a widow in each case, lending her to romance—although the Priem in the short story does not marry the preacher, she does make a romantic gesture at the story's ending. With her type, it seems, Leipoldt found a means of exploring the relationship between insider and outsider, the settled Afrikaner in a community and the unfamiliar newcomers to such a community.

Priem in *Gallows* is an independent woman in her late forties who has been widowed for fifteen years and has remained faithful to the memory of her late husband. She is known as one of the wealthiest landowners in the Valley, due in no small part to her skill at managing her farm (in many ways the Valley folk see her as their Queen) and she has an even greater reputation for turning away would-be suitors. Priem epitomizes the philosophy of the Valley, that of steadfastly adhering to a design of life. Naturally, she is due a suitor to complete the other picture of a wife and mother (and then to adhere to that design), but in her choice of suitor and the kind of romance that follows, Leipoldt finds a space to illustrate his thoughts on the local merging with the cosmopolitan.

Priem is business-orientated and stern, and her first meeting with Mabuis occurs when he arrives at her farm not to court her, but to discuss her son, Frikkie, a pupil at the Valley school. Priem, a practical woman, wishes for corporal punishment to be meted out to her son rather than the spells of detention (a concept she can't comprehend) Mabuis subjects him to for poor progress in class. The hours Frikkie spends in detention delay his work on his mother's farm, which in turn slows down the levels of enterprise of the farm. After they both spend more time together while nursing Nolte during his illness, the story moves to their romance.

In *Gallows*, Priem's relationship with Mabuis is a parallel to the Valley community's relationship with Nolte, as well as to the relationship between the Dutch/Afrikaner and English components of the Valley. When Mabuis wanders into the Valley, it is hard for the community to see past his French heritage, his Catholic convictions and his drunkenness, although easy for them to be in awe of his wealth of knowledge on a variety of subjects, his career as a soldier, his musical talent and his skill at chess. After he proves himself an able farmhand and has impressed considerably with his Renaissance Man qualities (he is also good at sketching), he is appointed schoolteacher at Knolkloof.

Mabuis is a cosmopolitan, and this both conflicts with and impresses the Valley folk. When he sketches a nude boy at the beach, he is immediately reprimanded by

the Bible-toting Oom Dorie, who wastes no time in mouthing scriptures to him, although Mabuis has the insolence to challenge the elder as to the accuracy of the placement of the Holy Words. Conflict along these lines was inevitable with Mabuis, and while Oom Dorie may be overzealous and narrow-minded, drawing a nude boy seems to be a deliberate provocation of the Valley folk. However, Leipoldt boldly endorses this by having Rev. Sybrand de Smee give the sketch his blessing along with constructive commentary for the artist. During this particular stay at the beach, Mabuis further charms the Valley folks with his flute and through “saving” the life of a boy from drowning, even though he nearly drowns himself because he can’t swim and afterwards undergoes a temporary relapse into alcoholism when he is resuscitated with brandy. His drunken antics, however, do not repel anyone and further endear him to his new friends.

That he is a schoolteacher bodes a welcome sign for the Valley in accepting his worldliness. The final step to his assimilation into the Valley occurs when he marries Priem. Much is made of his mysterious background and his Catholicism to her Dutch Reformed faith, and these are seen as logical obstacles to their union. However, as Mabuis’ tale parallels Nolte’s in more ways than one, the Valley folks are generally eager to claim him as one of them and these obstacles are overcome, albeit melodramatically, when after a trip to Cape Town Mabuis is found to be suitable to marry the widow. The wedding becomes the great event Leipoldt closes the novel on, attended by all sections of the Valley and the Village, and a happy indication that the local and the cosmopolitan can merge.

But against this ‘can’ is a conditional ‘if’ which Leipoldt expounds throughout the novel. Mabuis is not the only representative of Leipoldt’s cosmopolitan ideal to be free of segregation and its limitations. At the hidden mission station at Neckerthal the Reverend Uhlman was already putting into practice his theory of nation building and also in the valley itself was a decent number of those of a different mind towards the autonomist attitude.

Old Charles Quakerley, in an important moment in the novel, discusses the issue of national sectionalism with Nolte and De Smee, and his concern is that language and heritage are too often, and too quickly, seen as the standard by which a true South African is measured, and that exclusivity is the germ of distrust between a nation's peoples. By his reasoning, only a common grievance, such as perhaps England sending its penal contingent not to Australia but to the Cape, can unite the Dutch/Afrikaner and the English:

“...National feeling presupposes a nation, and what you take for it is sectional feeling. That is just my point. If we had a common grievance...it may weld us together, and from that welding may in time spring a nation. But we are not that yet. Certainly you are not, although you are in the majority, and just as certainly we English-speaking colonists are not a nation. We are at the most clans, and clannishness is accountable for most of the misunderstanding between us.” (Leipoldt, 2000: 171)

Quakerley's meditations are extremely advanced for his time, and bold commentary on the 1930s Leipoldt was situated in. He does not wish to be a part of a group when he responds to De Smee's statement that he is “one of us”:

“ ‘As one of us. Exactly. But, parson, surely you can see that that is the very thing that tends to division and estrangement. Let us drop the possessive and start equal. Mister Nolte, I am sure, would not like to be called ‘one of us’ if he decides to settle in England. Shiver me, parson, but that is the very kernel of it, and-a very unpleasant one it is too, far too bitter, sometimes, for the swallowing.’

‘Ah’, said the pastor reflectively, “I can take you. It has not struck me that way before, but I can see it. You object, naturally, to the-how shall I say it-toleration, hey?”

‘Of course, any man would object to being tolerated when he thinks himself equal with the fellow who does the tolerating... you wouldn't say that because my wife is Dutch I *tolerate* her.’ “ (Leipoldt, 2000: 170)

Quakerley's argument is put forth again when Nolte returns to Neckerthal, and then later when he goes to Von Bergmann's station at Genadendal. At Neckerthal, Uhlman states that the new constitution the Colony is about to get is framed by theorists, those who are unacquainted with circumstances in the Colony, and areas like the Valley. This points to those inside the Valley, too, as they could not possibly be aware of the relations of the Valley and the Colony to both the country and on a larger scale, the continent and the rest of the world:

“But the time must come when what we do in the Colony, in South Africa, even in this little Valley of ours, reacts upon humanity as a whole. We should bear that in mind, and go warily, and above all we should not do what we may later on have to regret having done... I should be unfaithful to my convictions and to my upbringing, in fact to my whole conception of Christianity and civilisation, if I admitted your premise that the difference between white and black in this country is so great that the two can never have equal footing as regards civic rights.” (Leipoldt, 2000: 175)

Following this trail to Genadendal, Nolte is similarly moved by Von Bergmann's case when he consults him on the matter of granting qualifications based on property to native voters:

“ ‘I make no distinction between race or colour, but I do make a distinction between moral, economic and social qualities. And I think the franchise should draw such a distinction. That would solve some of your difficulties- not all, nor forever. You must remember that the natives will progress towards civilisation, just as we have progressed. I am quite aware that there are people who deny that the native can ever be on the same level with us, but they are wrong, quite wrong... I should be untrue to my convictions if I denied them the right to have some say, however slight at first, in the management of the political affairs of this country.’

‘But in that case, your reverence, they would overpower us. They are far more numerous than we.’

‘We too can grow as a community, Meneer Nolte. We have the whole of Europe to draw upon...’

‘...But this after all is our country, your reverence, not the native’s...’

‘I don’t see how you can say that... I think, if you will pardon me for saying so, we are all a little frightened at the idea of sharing this country with others. Look at the feeling there is against the English. I do not say they do nothing to warrant it... But that is not the way our farmers here look at the matter.’” (Leipoldt, 2000: 202)

Once again, as Von Bergmann is a German with a noble heritage who has made South Africa his home, but still chooses to send his male children to Europe for their education, the argument here comes from a patrician point of view, which is at times too centered merely in the Cape to effectively speak on matters pertaining to areas outside the Colony. Leipoldt does not bend to historical accuracy, and as stated earlier, shapes and shifts history to his own narrative purposes. In effect, the Cape is the microcosm of the world.

1.4. The Moral Universe of *Gallows*

The moral universe of the *Valley* trilogy is one derived from comparison between the Colony and the Republic of Transvaal; a liberal Cape tradition based on dynasty, topics of genealogy and progress, the establishment of farmsteads and the arrival of the 1820 settlers is set against a Republican state that can claim no tradition (Merrington, 2003:39). As the Republics were literally still in the making during the 1840s of *Gallows*, this first novel then concentrates largely on the worlds of the Valley and the Village and places them in opposition to the Voortrekkers, those who broke away from the Cape tradition and would go on to found the Republics.

On the basis of comparison alone, the implied author’s world view is intensely structured, allowing little or no entry for others. The Valley, the Village and Neckerthal come to represent the Colony, and Nolte’s course to becoming their first Member of the Cape Legislative Assembly becomes something of a journey through the various elements of this moral universe. In the Valley, he makes a

success of the land he claims, turning it into a prosperous farm that will cement his reputation with the Valley folk, serve as basis for his own dynasty by being passed on to the hands of his son and gain him entry to Parliament. In the Village he is exposed to the regular interaction between Dutch/Afrikaner and English, and sees the impact of these relations in the characters Old Quakerley, De Smee, and Thomas Seldon. In Seldon, he sees a prosperous English settler, well respected by the community, and whose children are raised alongside children of the other white section. Quakerley and De Smee have Nolte as a witness to a discussion between the dangers of unacknowledged sectional feeling, that which is merely passed off as tolerance. At Neckerthal, Uhlman tells Nolte of theological and educational developments in Europe, and how these are to be sourced by South Africans, especially in pursuit of eliminating racial barriers. The only entry, then, of a 'Northern' or Voortrekker feeling into these worlds, is through Nolte himself. He is the character who must wrestle the cosmopolitanism he experiences against older notions of white supremacy and a general, perhaps natural Dutch/Afrikaner reverence for the Trekkers, even though he did not trek himself. On his way to Parliament, he will then either sway towards this new world view of inclusive humanism and a South African identity that transcends questions of settler origins, language and race (Merrington, 2003: 38), or he will be Republican-minded, and bring into this tranquil Cape all the components of exclusivist national feeling.

Leipoldt often assumed ownership of many stories he told about Clanwilliam's past. With each oral transmission of a story or legend, or with each successive 'handing down', the narrator claims a sense of authorship. As Gray (1984:1) puts it:

"Leipoldt's Valley fictions are narrowly but intensely restricted to an analysis of one coherent South African community (Clanwilliam), where many historical records were destroyed by accident. This kind of history, then, cannot be wholly scientifically researched but would depend on other sources, most notably oral tradition... Leipoldt's divagations on history and memory included his third-hand acquisition of Clanwilliam's history as a child and how oral transmission is the best material for making history, thus making tradition the valuable possession instead of (lost) recorded fact...Leipoldt does accurately and scientifically give its [the Valley] geographical location and qualities, even though he never

mentions place names. With the natural presumption that such an isolated community life encourages, the locals to this day use the definite article in description: the District, the Valley, etc. ... However, there is no one-to-one correlation between the page and history...”

Gray then goes on to use a poem of Leipoldt’s, *XXVIII* from *Dingaansdag*, which deals with the story of early trekboer Koenraad Fiet, to show this theory at work:

“[Leipoldt’s] is not a faithful retelling—it is, in fact, a total recasting of the tale by an urbane technician who merely wished to use the authority of an oral folk-memory as a supposed authentication of his interpretation of history...” (Gray, 1984:6-9)

The worlds of the Valley, the Village and Neckerthal, then, are complete in this fiction, more so than in reality, and here the author can use literature to comment on the reality it draws from. Here, it is possible, even accepted, that Trekker sympathizers would be unwelcome; it is a happy occurrence when the children of English settlers can swap languages with the children of Dutch descendants of settlers from the Old Company era, and with their German or Swedish counterparts; it is a promising sign that upon seeing the backward pan-dwellers, dismissed by Uncle Dorie as being “God’s concern”, Nolte resolves as both a politician and a compassionate individual to bring social improvement to them; the mission station is the true microcosm of what systems are to be put in place in allowing the country to progress on all levels.

However, Leipoldt does look critically at such ambitions, using it as the specter of disaster that inevitably must loom over this community and the subjunctive ‘coulds’ they have the opportunity of implementing: in a point also explained in *Cultural Development*, Leipoldt notes that the Seldon children are taught English history and raised to embrace their English heritage, but they are not taught the English history of South Africa, nor do their parents feel the need for them to nurture any elements of the Dutch/Afrikaner culture; the ideas of culture and civilization are in danger by the end of the novel, with representative and responsible government ominous as tools that could be misused to create disorder; though they are granted entry to the

franchise based on property as the right to vote, natives, or non-whites, are in danger of persecution from racist thinking precisely because they were granted that opportunity, and they remain a segregated part of this society—even as a segregated audience to something as warm and communal as the musical art of Mabuis; good educational and socio-progressive systems are in place at Neckerthal, but how much impact is a small, remote station allowed to have on the larger world outside it?

Perhaps, of all dangers, degeneration is the clearest one to this Valley. When a group of “native lepers” steal their way through the Village after the Jubilee celebrations, there is no doubt that, as they would have been in Biblical times, they are branded as outsiders, pariahs who may never see either the Canaan of the North or the Canaan of the Valley itself, nor possibly even the “New Canaan” Nolte is urged by Uncle Martin to spy out over the mountains. It is a brief moment in the novel, but it immediately hints at a greater notion of the preservation of the Valley: the only way to keep it pure is to exile those who can bring illness to it (Coetzee, 1988: 151), even if the diseased were never given the same opportunity of avoiding their plight. Neither Nolte nor the narrator ever return to the lepers throughout the rest of the novel: they are best forgotten, shunned and removed from memory. But it is not that easy, since degeneration is implied at other moments in the novel, mostly in conversations with the elders regarding the education of the children and grandchildren. The European values Leipoldt continually advertises from his own background were taught to Uncle Martin, but he in turn is worried that a lack of such values hampers the youth. As this then becomes a theme that runs through the entire *Valley* trilogy, based on Leipoldt’s medical interests in degeneration in the third generation, the youth of *Gallows* are already at a disadvantage, unless intervention like the school Nolte builds at Knolkloof comes more frequently. When Uncle Martin speculates that “we are degenerating” (Leipoldt, 2000: 71), it is more Leipoldt speaking of the 1930s South African than the 1840s South African, but it is without doubt that, by placing the reader firmly in the 1840s, he allows him/her to see what is a great cause for alarm given later developments:

“The three novels cover roughly three generations, and his [Leipoldt’s] trajectory of building, defending, and moral collapse, seems to enact this speculation, which then becomes a biological antiphon to the political theme. The biological concept is also presented as a cultural issue...” (Merrington, 2003: 41)

These are only some of the concerns Leipoldt raises as a view of a limited era of sectional harmony evinced largely through English tradition, and class-based practitioners of that vision. Rural values, Old world farming methods and beliefs and a peaceful time rich in possibility for synthesis and growth in the womb of the Valley before industrial change and modernization serve as a sort of frame in which Leipoldt’s reading of history comes into its own, and answerable to its own logic but all the time pleading for a re-writing of actual history.

1.5. The uses of nature and the natural environment in the novel as a form of utopianism

“From 1920-1940, the Afrikaans novel concerned itself almost exclusively with the farm and platteland (rural) society with the Afrikaner’s painful transition from farmer to townsman.” (Coetzee, 1988: 63)

Leipoldt chose the *plaasroman*, described in the above quotation by Coetzee as customarily detailing the plight of poor ruralists migrating to the cities for economic survival, as the medium for the exploration of his progressive thoughts, choosing a farming community to represent South African society. However, in straying from the convention of focusing on rural farmers struggling for survival in urban areas, not only does Leipoldt emphasize the moral values inherent with the Valley folk of treating farming as akin to nation building, he also shows similarities with other English farm narratives in Pauline Smith’s *The Beadle* and *Little Karoo* stories, which, published in the 1920s, precede Leipoldt’s *Valley* trilogy by some years. In fact, one must assume that Leipoldt must have read or been aware of the fact that the setting for Smith’s stories was also a Valley, in this case the Harmonie farm homestead in the Aangenaam Valley of the Little Karoo. Coetzee (1988: 69) sees this Valley as a kind of Eden, and he examines how Smith’s communities see their

Valley: “Harmonie is not in South Africa but in the Little Karoo; not in the Little Karoo but in the Aangenaam Valley.” In another light, this could be more of a resistance to broad generalization of locale, or a preference for the intimately local.

In an arresting argument, one that can be adapted for the purposes of this essay, Coetzee (1988: 175) states that in white South African writing, tributes to landscape and nature are more likely disguised odes to the pastoral farm of childhood. Because of the struggle to find a language in which to fit the South African landscape, most South African poets could not choose between Europeanizing African scenery, and letting the land find its own tongue. The South African landscape, in this analysis, is not easily read, and Leipoldt’s own poem, *Die Soutpan*, is cited:

“Hier praat die veld ‘n onverstaanbare taal” (“*Here the veld speaks an incomprehensible language*”) (Coetzee, 1988:167)

Furthermore, poems like Leipoldt’s ‘*n Handvol Gruis Uit Die Hantam* are, to Coetzee, rare instances of Afrikaans works where the landscape outside of the farm causes any transcendent impression of existence and yearning for childhood memories as carried by nature itself. For Coetzee, the harsh landscape of *The Story of an African Farm* is perhaps the truest model of South African countryside: arid, cruel and timeless. Vegetation hides landscape, and it is rock, and not foliage, which is to be read. Botany in itself is not enough and thoughts of nature, then, invariably cross into thoughts on the childhood farm (Coetzee, 1988: 167). Through the *plaasroman*, yearning from the urbanised 1920s to an earlier, lost world of man’s harmony with nature and his agricultural prosperity, this scheme filters through. With Nolte as our spectator to the splendor of the Valley, Leipoldt seems to find a discrepancy between farm and landscape.

Gallows alternates between moments of intense farm labor and productivity, and softer, quieter moments where the majestic scenery of the Valley is taken in. With the former, there is a strong suggestion of nation building, that Nolte the eventual politician is using his energy in the creation of a farm that is to be representative of

him. There perhaps, Leipoldt tries to frame the farm, Knolkloof, in European or English tradition, as it is the patrician, cosmopolitan views (that are more Continental than South African) he wants Nolte to follow when he goes to Parliament. His success on his farm determines his success in office, as both require management, skill and transparency. As Coetzee (1988: 66) states:

“... The farmer has both rights and obligations. However absolute his ownership, he has duties to the land, to his heirs and even to the ecology of the farm—that is, to the farm as part of nature. He is, in the language of myth, forbidden to rape the land. Instead he must husband it, giving it a devoted attention that will bring it to bear manyfold, yet keep it fertile for succeeding generations... in the Old World model the farm is naturalized by being integrated with the land, and in turn historicizes the land by making the land a page on which the generations write their story...”

This is the language, then, in which the South African landscape can be captured and read—with the farm as integrated with the land. What sets Leipoldt’s, or Nolte’s, farm apart is the fact that, metaphorically, it shows Leipoldt’s Valley Dutch/Afrikaners’ determination and work ethic. Nolte’s management of the farm possibly suggests his future political career and his farm could then epitomize the nation that he is to help build. Either Nolte will use the English and European influence to strike a blow for sophisticated, broad-minded thinking and racial equality, or he will deny it—or he won’t be heard either way!

The farms Knolkloof, Sandvlei, Hoek and Langvlei in *Gallows* are all models of functioning utopias: well-cultivated, carefully planned out and a barometer of the character of their individual owners. From the moment Nolte gets orange seeds from Old Quakerley (a presentiment of *Stormwrack*) and seeks initial advice from Uncle Doremus van Aard, Leipoldt’s narrator makes it known that the Valley is giving graciously to the stranger, and we can presuppose that at some point or other, depending on his level of success, he is to give back.

The true utopia here, the broader figure of Leipoldt’s vision, is not any of the farms but rather the Valley itself. This notion lends itself to criticism in light of Coetzee’s

argument that an overall tendency in landscape writing in South Africa is to have behind it thoughts of the farm. By claiming the Valley as a complete utopia, one can understand that it again speaks of an integration of farm and landscape. In a resounding moment, Leipoldt lets go of any political, cultural or moral slant by giving his readers a look at the Valley from a vantage point at altitude:

“At sunrise he had reached the pass and started to climb.... It was only when he had gained the middle ridge, where the path broadened out, that he had time and opportunity to rest and assimilate the beauty of the scenery... He looked upon an imposing panorama of valley and hills, the like of which he had not seen before. Higher above him the footpath straggled, now less steep in its ascent, towards the skyline, a curved ridge of green which showed that behind it lay land more or less level. Below him it descended steeply, in places almost precipitously, until it was lost to sight in the distance. He could see the pass broadening out below, the space between the high walls widening and the walls themselves decreasing in height, until they fell away on each side and the Valley was below him. The River lay ribbon-like, its banks darkened by the bush that grew upon them, its curves outlined with precision. From it stretched the green wheat lands, their colours perpetually changing as the breeze waved their crops backwards and forwards. He could see many farms, plots of greenery set in a frame of dull gold, for the sun, striking the level sand, cast reflections around them. Later, far away to the right, he could glimpse the Village, a collection of tiny whitewashed houses embowered in green trees and bounded by the white sands where the River received its tributary. Beyond the Village lay ridge upon ridge of slate-coloured mountains, following the course of the River westwards. He could trace almost the whole length of the Valley, and see his own farm, though part of it was hidden by a mountain spur, and already he could note that its greenery made a splash against the dull yellow of the surrounding veld.” (Leipoldt, 2000: 47)

A lengthy quotation, but necessarily so since, of all the numerous scenic descriptions in the novel, this is the most complete one in terms of rendering Leipoldt's grand design of a utopia. Nolte, at this point in the novel still a veritable stranger to the District, is on his way to the hidden mission station at Neckerthal—a location he would gain increasing amounts of wisdom from—and is on a mountain pass that overlooks the Valley. In this description, Nolte has a God-like vantage

point, and sees a portion of nature answerable only to itself—note the mountains “following” the course of the river, and the minor imposition of “tiny whitewashed houses” on this map he bears witness to. His own farm is a testament to the vitality and potential he feels at this point when its “greenery made a splash against the dull yellow of the veld”, but it is the Valley in its entirety that allows him this Romantic ascension of spirit.

Rather as if Buddhist-interested Leipoldt were writing about Lhasa in Tibet, this view of the Valley transcends any mere attempt at nationalizing the sight, or trying to achieve an organic folkloric vision. This view of the Valley is open and free to anyone—in fact, the pass Nolte takes is a native footpath. There can be no sectionalism in sharing this view.

1.6. The idealization of settlement, community, and nation building

As already discussed, Leipoldt wrote ‘backwards’ in time, offering his Valley of the 1840s as a means of commenting on social conditions and political climate in the South Africa of the 1930s. While the completion of the *Valley* trilogy by 1932 antedates the centenary of the Great Trek by six years, as well as the more intense nationalist lobbying under DF Malan in the mid-1930s, Leipoldt had experienced enough of the 1920s to foresee that national Afrikaner identity was determined to dominate the political life of South Africa, and that it would move towards whole scale implementation sooner rather than later. By 1932, with the effects of worldwide depression very apparent in South Africa, due largely to Hertzog’s misguided upholding of the gold standard, the National Party was losing ground, and would soon join forces with its former rival, the South African Party, and become the United Party in 1934. Yet, the Afrikaner extremists were still vigorous in their moves toward an English-free Republic, in which non-whites were only to play subordinate roles. A one-time secret society, Die Broederbond, made great advances by the end of the 1920s to ensure the mass growth and fixture of Afrikaans language, arts and culture. They were associated with the Federation of

Afrikaner Cultural Associations (FAK) to legislate Afrikaans literature, language practice, drama, financial corporations and businesses as far as possible.

If Leipoldt could indeed see the work Die Broederbond and the FAK were doing by the 1930s, then he alters the situation with Nolte a century earlier. His fiction, again, incorporates parts of history, as well the present he found himself in, to sustain his views against what he witnessed and envisioned. When Nolte first arrives in the Valley, he is aware of the 'country and its kind', the fact that he is an outsider to the way of life in the Valley community and that only through hard work could he prosper there. He immediately strikes lasting relationships with the Valley elders, the genteel folks who serve as the moral guardians of their society, and with their blessing he goes about establishing his farm, Knolkloof. The early chapters show Nolte working away vigorously—not only is farming a delicate and serious matter, but the idea of a homestead was to provide a base for one's legacy, and Nolte is determined to make a success of Knolkloof. The descriptions of his labour on the farm suggest a wider frame of nurturing not only farmland but also the land of the country, especially in lieu of his later political ambitions. He is building a utopia that is both aesthetic and utilitarian, that will enable him to prosper financially, that will nourish him, and that will be his final resting place. As he develops the farmland, he even selects a spot underneath two poplar trees where he and his wife are to be buried.

The world that Leipoldt gives Nolte is more than just a century removed from the South Africa of the 1930s; it also seems distant on almost every practical level. While there is no doubting that in many parts of the Colony in the nineteenth century there were mutually friendly relations between Dutch and English, this moral universe of Leipoldt's is almost impossible to verify as based on fact. However, it is clear that this was Leipoldt's response to the political developments made by the 1930s nationalists. Nolte's ideal farm, his idyllic relationship with the Valley folk, the remarkable individuals he encounters and the political career he pursues are almost the opposite of the world Leipoldt was criticising. Nolte, in one way or another, goes from the promising start of *Gallows* and gives rise to future

generations that degenerate successively to the unsatisfactory race relations and sectionalism of a century later. The historical sweep turns the light, comical *Gallows* into a tragedy in retrospect, after *Stormwrack* and *The Mask* have been read, and that is an objective of Leipoldt's.

Leipoldt, at numerous points in *Gallows* and through characters like Uncle Martin, addresses the concern that the younger generation lack comparison with the Valley elders regarding their knowledge of the past. The influence of Europe is more and more denied in the quest for a distinctly Afrikaner nationhood through the Great Trek. This is the reason Uhlman and Von Bergmann send their male children to Europe (Santa would balance the sexes in *The Mask*) for their schooling, so as to expose them to a richer, more universal cultural influence. This is more true for the 1930s than the 1840s, especially as it is after the turn of the twentieth century that the move for a strictly Afrikaner state sees the systematic denial of Dutch and European heritage by more narrow-minded language and literary practitioners, which was a source of apprehension to Leipoldt, as his general writing in this period shows. His argument against the Trekkers was that in breaking away from the Cape they denied the accessibility of modern European advances in philosophy, political enlightenment and steps towards nation building. The Trekker sympathizer interrupting the Jubilee is a typical example of a moment of intrusion: it is made to seem that his presence, apart from stimulating the youth, is a hindrance to the ebb and flow of Valley life and its settlement, and that his kind is unwanted there.

At the end of *Gallows*, Old Quakerley muses that such interruptions are to become more frequent, especially after the founding of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Though they have the independent states they clamored for and went in search of, those who broke away would not leave the Colony alone and would return to agitate. This presentiment not only directly addresses the Boer Commandos invading the Colony during the South African War, but the general apprehension that was visible between Dutch/Afrikaner and English, that would only boil over into substandard relationships that would take their toll on the entire country and its future.

2.1. *Stormwrack* as sequel to *Gallows*

As a sequel to *Gallows*, *Stormwrack* continues certain themes and motifs found in the earlier novel, although at times showing progression in certain themes or showing an increased possibility of the destruction of the positive aspects of these themes. The dynastical saga logically continues. Andrew Quakerley, son of Old Quakerley (or Quakerley Sr), is the central character, marking a shift from a Dutch/Afrikaner protagonist in Nolte to an English one with Andrew, although both live amicably with the other white section; the Rekkers are still a prominent, aristocratic family but the focus is on their being brought down from their refined reputation and being treated as all others under martial law with the imprisonment of old Martin Rekker (son of the previous novel's Martin Rekker and father in this novel to another Martin Rekker, who can be called Young Martin), which then concentrates on Leipoldt's premise of an increasing sense of losing tradition, of the invasion of patrician, class-based ideals by northern meanness introduced in the previous novel. The continued appeal that tension between the two white sections has on the youth is a forceful dispute in *Stormwrack*, attesting to another career-long concern of Leipoldt's, one that is most evident in *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*'s tragedy of the death of young South Africans.

Like his father and his father's kinsmen in *Gallows*, Andrew does not agree with the politics of the North, and as the genteel folks did in the earlier novel, he contests that the North was settled by those who broke away from tradition and responsibility when they trekked away from the Cape. In this case, the North has no settled convention on which to stand, and consequently those who hold with its separatist policies do not have the interests of the country at heart, but those of the Republics only. When the Jameson Raid occurs, Andrew laments that the actions of the English parties involved have in effect given the separatist Dutch/Afrikaners the justification they needed to mount further tensions against the colonial government. At the time of the Jameson Raid, antagonism had already built up over a period of years between English and Afrikaners in South Africa. The Raid, in Andrew's

theory, plays into the hands of Dutch/Afrikaner extremists, to whom war is an inviting opportunity to try and establish an exclusively Afrikaner nationhood.

Early on in *Stormwrack*, Leipoldt shows how the Village elders are concerned with the psyche of the youth after the Jameson Raid. He concentrates in particular on Andrew's grandson Charlie Crest and Michael Storam, the teenage son of the Village magistrate, who seems an immediate Boer-sympathizer. Michael, by the time war is declared, is of an age to take up arms and he does so, although remarkably on the side of the English.

The execution of the young, simple-minded Org Bons and the forcing of senior Villagers to witness the execution not only refers to *Oom Gert Vertel's* similar drama; it also directly links to *Gallows* with the presence of a Nolte and a Van Aard among the witnesses, and once again, as is the case in many Leipoldt works, the punishment is death by hanging. Whereas witnesses to Nolte's work as hangman were sympathetic, those who witness the death of Bons are further turned against the English, and more inspired to rebellion in some cases. This is exactly what the younger Leipoldt had in mind when he condemned martial law in an article for the *Manchester Guardian*, 19 March 1902, claiming, "...martial law in the Cape Colony has done more to add recruits to the Boer forces than anything else..." (Kannemeyer, 1999: 165-167). However, there are others in the Village who turn against both the English and the Boers, as the latter successfully coerced many Village youths into the war and suffered a lighter penalty for it, although in this novel Leipoldt does not mention the concentration camps that were the locations of inhuman suffering by the Boers at the hands of the English.

The central motif of Andrew's garden utopia is perhaps the most visible link to *Gallows*. The *plaasroman* form of the earlier novel is alluded to from the opening chapters of *Stormwrack* onwards, although with an increasing suggestion of its eventual destruction as the novel progresses. Nolte's efforts at cultivating his farm in the earlier novel have a reasonable continuance in Andrew's garden, keeping intact the concept of cultivating the land as cultivating the land of the country, or

cultivating the country. Husbandry of the soil, or an allegiance to it, states that Andrew ensures the continued organic growth of the utopia of the previous novel, although the scale is significantly smaller: from the Valley we move to the Village; from farm building we move to cultivating a garden. Through the study of Andrew Quakerley and his obsession with his garden, Leipoldt's idea is that, in minimizing the scope of things, there is an inherent tendency towards selfishness: whereas the Valley could metaphorically accommodate the hopeful cosmopolitanism promulgated by Von Bergmann and Uhlman, but never did, we now have a garden that can only be a scaled-down symbol of a utopia, and nothing more. (One could even allow for this theme to emerge as a perpetuation of Leipoldt's theory of degeneration.) The garden is Andrew's selfish obsession, and for all its magnificence, is a tragic statement of the consequences of Andrew's passivity, and that of others like him. There cannot be anything more than a mere garden: the potential for South Africa to show inner harmony between all groups and sections is smaller, and is inevitably doomed both by war itself and post-war developments. Metaphorically, in *Stormwrack*, the country has shrunk to the size of a garden. Nolte had help in the "creation" of Knolkloof; Andrew raised his garden by himself like a selfish parent. That he is a Cape Englishman with ties on both sides underlines his susceptibility, his being too accepting to keep things stagnant and not try and implement change where he could have. Instead, he merely paid attention to his garden, thinking that it would not change, either. The final destruction of it is then also the destruction of the Valley of *Gallows*.

2.2. Leipoldt's changing representation of war-time atrocities

To pigeonhole Leipoldt, at any time in his career, as either a nationalist or an anti-nationalist is extremely difficult. While he may have had Dutch/Afrikaner sympathies during his time as a young journalist, these were derived from a worldly trajectory of sympathy for those who suffered the harsh consequences of war. By the 1920s and 1930s Leipoldt may have been vocal about his feelings against the National Party, but apart from his brief interest in and activity for the South African Party in the 1920s, he never openly campaigned against the nationalists outside of

his thoughts and opinions expressed in articles, essays and letters. Kannemeyer (1999: 134) is one of many critics who rubbishes a popular opinion that only by the 1920s is a political turnaround evident in Leipoldt's work, citing specifically *Uit Drie Werelddele* (1923) as the point where Leipoldt is less Afrikaner and more English, or more worldly. On this point, Kannemeyer, like Kromhout, is adamant that Leipoldt was never openly nationalist, and that throughout his career he spoke in support of a universal idea of acceptance and amicable co-existence between sections, if not for the end of sectionalism itself.

To dispute Kannemeyer is beside the point, as Leipoldt's sustained argument for a "different" South Africa is the moral fabric of the *Valley* trilogy. However, whereas Kannemeyer (1999: 135) cites Leipoldt's wartime writing as already demonstrating a lack of patriotic sentiment for the Afrikaners, the matter is worth investigating. While Leipoldt can rightly be said not have indulged in Afrikaner sentiment, elements of his writing during the South African War do bare traces of a quasi-nationalistic stance and, if taken at face value, could point the way towards reading Leipoldt as the 'volk' poet that for many *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte* suggested he was.

As a young journalist covering the South African War, Leipoldt at times reveals the sympathetic Afrikaner many found in the writer of *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*. At the age of 19, Leipoldt wrote for the *South African News*, an English pro-Boer daily he was later to become the editor of only a year later, and he traveled the Cape Colony with a circuit court, sitting in and reporting on the special hearings for rebels caught in the Colony. His contributions as a war correspondent for, among others, *The Manchester Guardian*, are important to understanding his thinking at this time. He also visited numerous concentration camps, most famously the notorious camp at Aliwal-Noord, where he reputedly composed a well-known poem in the *Oom Gert Vertel...* collection, *Aan 'n Seepkissie*, in 1901. Letters he wrote as a correspondent to the Amsterdam-based weekly, *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, find Leipoldt at times scathing, at times cleverly critical of the English, and in some instances, of the Boers. Many recurring motifs in his literature have their roots

during this period, as the letters especially detail cases that would emerge fictionally in his prose and allegorically in his poems.

Leipoldt, the teenage journalist, had little time for viewing intricate, factual situations from both sides. Although his writing is generally gripping and points the way to his later literary output with its inventiveness in maintaining the reader's attention, it is also hampered by many of the same faults that pervade all his later work: opinionated, brash, not always too attentive to facts or timelines and not always sensitive to more complex issues that mark both Afrikaner and English political and social inconsistencies during the war. When writing in English for *The Manchester Guardian*, Leipoldt articulates his thoughts and opinions passionately but in a controlled manner, very much in the mould of the Cape English gentleman. When he writes in Dutch for *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, he plays towards a blatant notion of 'volk appeal' in his style and register, and he is thoroughly critical of the English government as a whole. A somewhat idealistic Leipoldt, who has a reverence at this point for the Republics, neglects issues like the pre-war mandate of the Republics to establish Afrikaner nationhood on very little cultural basis, a point the older Leipoldt laments frequently. Like the writer of literary causeries that he was, Leipoldt's journalistic contributions were informed by his zealous view on things, and as such it was fairly easy for Leipoldt to allow his own youthful energy to obstruct his professionalism at times. For instance, in a letter to *Het Nieuws van de Dag* dated 31 December 1900 but published 22 January, 1901 (Leipoldt, 2002: 64-66), Leipoldt celebrates the Republics and Republican Afrikaners, and accuses Cape Afrikaners of being weak and stolid. He generally argues that the war could be won for the Afrikaners if there were more support from those in the Cape. After a theatrical sketch in one of his letters (Leipoldt, 2002: 32-35) to *Het Nieuws van de Dag* (published 15 August 1900) that tells the story of two Cape farmers who dispute their respective allegiances to the Boers and the English, Leipoldt carries the concern of rebellion further with *De Rebel* in 1900 (for Dutch publication *Elseviers Geillustreerd Mandschrift*), a sketch written in Dutch in which he shows the brutal treatment of a Cape Dutch loyalist, Elias, at the hands of the British, who accuse him of aiding rebels and arrest him under martial law, forcing him to be

separated from his ailing wife. When no charges can be brought against Elias, he is released after two months and returns to his home, where he is temporarily not recognized by his coloured servants or by his faithful dog. He discovers that his wife died while he was in prison, after which he decides to join the Boer commandos he was initially accused of aiding. He dies in action, and the sketch ends with the revelation that his was a tale narrated by a cigar-smoking magistrate to a young, unidentified character, presumably Leipoldt himself in his capacity as a journalist/listener, which then foreshadows the poem, *Oom Gert Vertel*.

While *De Rebel* is more a condemnation of British tactics under martial law, it also suggests a complacency that inevitably dooms Cape Afrikaners who do not take action from the very beginning in aiding the Boer commandos. In the timeline of Leipoldt's writing at this point, it corresponds to the letter, mentioned earlier, in which Leipoldt berates Cape Afrikaners for their passivity. However, the piece comes across as pure propaganda, perhaps unintentionally, and is significantly damaged because of that. The charges brought against Elias that he might have signaled raiding commandos from his farm, are most likely inspired by the actual case of a Cape Afrikaner who was accused of the same, which Leipoldt mentions in a letter to *Het Nieuws van de Dag* (Leipoldt, 2002: 28), dated June 24, 1900 and published July 19, 1900. The exact charge is also laid against Old Martin Rekker in *Stormwrack*, after commandos attack his farm and kidnap his son.

Leipoldt reworked *De Rebel* in 1904 while in England, for *The Monthly Review*, and called it *The Rebel*. This time around, there is a more substantial and sustained narrative. Again, the protagonist is a Cape Afrikaner who would become an outlaw but here Leipoldt pays more attention to the process of "conversion" by establishing dramatic tension early on when it is clear that the young protagonist, Frikkie, nervously awaits the inevitable arrival of a commando to his farmstead. It is a first person narrative laced with motifs that recur in other Leipoldt works: horses that can be "commandeered", Frikkie treating the commando with hospitality as if they were guests (which occurs in *Stormwrack* when a Boer commando raids Seldon's farm) and a debate about loyalty to the English or loyalty to the Afrikaners, which

is at the center of *Oom Gert Vertel*, the poem, and *Stormwrack*. Like both Oom Gert and Andrew Quakerley (and Leipoldt himself), Frikkie also has blood relations on both sides and the conflict within Frikkie is evident.

The story ends with the commando having won Frikkie into joining them, and he leaves behind his children and his faithful domestic servant, who practically mothers them. While the thought of a domestic servant growing attached to her master's family is a familiar theme in South African literature and culture (the idea being especially prominent in the Trekker stories), and Leipoldt would explore its advantages and disadvantages at great length in *Afgode* and *The Mask*, another thematic concern emerges here that pervades much of Leipoldt's later output: the absence of the true mother/wife figure. In *De Rebel*, Elias's wife is ailing and dies while he is imprisoned, moving him to become a rebel; in *The Rebel*, Frikkie is a widower, his wife having died before the action of the story begins; many of the events in *Afgode* and *The Mask* revolve around the perceived absence of the mother figure; a grieving mother possibly commits suicide when she condemns herself for having moral responsibility in a crime committed by her son in Leipoldt's play *Moedersplig*; *Die Weeskindjie wat 'n Moeder wou hê* is a short story Leipoldt wrote about a doomed orphan's search for a mother figure and most notably, perhaps, is the fact that Oom Gert is a widower, and in many ways, so is Andrew Quakerley, as his wife Alice is a minor character more than she is a serious one in *Stormwrack*. While many thought Leipoldt to be a misogynist (Viljoen, 1947:93) in his private life (one may note the absence of any fundamental female presences in his personal relations), it should be observed that the absence of a strong female character in many of these works is a consistent omission, something Leipoldt wants to draw attention to as if to say that the male protagonists operate under a fatal lack of support in their domestic environments. Added to this is Leipoldt's own history of having a mother of incoherent temperament (Kannemeyer, 1999:55) and the fact that his stronger work, such as the poem *Vrede-aand* in the *Oom Gert Vertel en ander Gedigte* collection in particular, often pays tribute to women as the 'heroic' figures in South Africa's history. In these works, Leipoldt pays tribute to especially the women of the Great Trek and the Boer women of the South African War who

stood their ground against the English as much as their men did. The plight of mothers and young children, and not the concerns of men in the battlefield, is the driving force behind at least two or three of the war poems in *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*, and as early on as *De Rebel* and *The Rebel* this seems to be a deliberate point Leipoldt draws attention to. The absence of a complete mother and wife figure is a factor contributing to rebellion on the part of Cape Afrikaners, with the Cape land itself symbolic of a woman being ravaged by the wars fought on her body. By the time Leipoldt wrote *Stormwrack*, this was a concern he could extend to the length of the novel: the Rekkers have no visible female presence (young Martin is charged with being a rebel while his father has no wife to visit him while he is jailed) and Andrew's wife, Alice, is a loud, jingoistic presence Andrew tries to be rid of most of the time.

Leipoldt would devote great attention to the “young hotheads” in all three novels of the *Valley* trilogy, perhaps acknowledging that he was himself one through numerous characters, particularly Michael Storam in *Stormwrack* and Santa in *The Mask*. His writing during the war reflects the identity that he may have created for himself at this point, the beginning of his professional career: the passionate pro-Boer, the very identity the more mature Leipoldt of the 1920s and 1930s rebels against. The “ons” (our) possessive permeates his letters to *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, and he and Bolus, who was pro-English, were known to have friendly disputes regarding the war (Kannemeyer, 1999: 131). Whether or not it can be agreed that *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte* may have been misread as an Afrikaner nationalist text, the Leipoldt that emerges during the war years does a notable amount to identify himself as a nationalist in the making. Various instances in his war correspondence include criticizing those he had once championed, like John X. Merriman (letter to *Het Nieuws van de Dag*, published 15 February, 1901); supporting the heroic treatment of commandos infiltrating the border towns of the Cape Colony (whereas he presents this as an ominous event in *Stormwrack*) in a letter to *Het Nieuws van de Dag* (Leipoldt, 2002: 68-74) dated 15 February 1901, and showing curious appeals to racism in his writing about the injustice of imprisoning white convicts with coloured and black convicts (letters to *Het Nieuws*

van de Dag published 19 July, 1900 and 26 November, 1900). In fact, Leipoldt complains that “decent” white convicts are relegated to sharing prison space with the “common” kaffir. While much of Leipoldt’s work contains terms such as “kaffir” and “skepsel” in reference to non-whites, it was a general, if dissolute, use at the time in South African speech and writing and not always intended to be racist when found in Leipoldt’s fictional output, or that of many other writers at the time. However, as Professor Wium van Zyl (Leipoldt, 2002: 16) finds, the intention behind Leipoldt’s employment of the terms in these war letters borders on separatism and is an interesting instance of this occurring so forthrightly in his writing. While this may be influenced by his Cape patrician background and is more class-based than anything else, Leipoldt is at odds here with much of his other writing. As the later Leipoldt, the writer of the *Valley* trilogy and the reflective memoirs of *Bushveld Doctor*, would argue for racial equality and the younger Leipoldt aged 16 caused uproar with the same argument, this is an inconsistency worth noting. It is in keeping with the general tone of his writing at this time and is purely directed at the section he sided with. The readership he has in mind in these letters are the pro-Boer Dutch of Amsterdam, who Leipoldt speaks to as if they were Afrikaners, using the “ons” possessive to describe any subject related to the Dutch.

There can be no questioning the link between Leipoldt’s journalistic experience and his war poems in the *Oom Gert Vertel en ander Gedigte* collection. Not only are the connections textually clear, but also Leipoldt’s reputation as the writer of this collection rests largely on the well-noted fact that the poems were composed during the war, a good decade before they were published. While it is outside this brief to proceed with a full study of the poems, it is worth noticing where the war poems in the *Oom Gert Vertel en ander Gedigte* collection travel further through time and grow into the writing of *Stormwrack*.

2.3. Shifts towards intercultural conciliation

The central poem in Leipoldt's debut collection is the title poem, the story of Cape Afrikaner Oom Gert being interviewed by a young man (presumably Leipoldt himself, who claimed that he had heard the story from an elder in a colony community) asking for his recollection of the 'story of our death'. The old man tells of his involvement in the fate of two young rebels, one a blood relation, who were executed under martial law. While telling his tale complete with narrative asides mostly directed at his daughter to keep her from hearing too much (particularly as she was to marry one of the deceased), it becomes apparent that Oom Gert suffers as he relates his story. Ironic lines such as "Nee, neef, ek hou vas-en my gewete het my nooit gekwel nie" ("No, nephew, I stand firm, and my conscience has not bothered me since") and "Ek kon mos nie gehelp het dat die perde nog in die tuin gestaan het" ("I couldn't help that the horses were standing ready in the garden") point to an old man with a guilty conscience regarding his role in the execution of the rebels, and "Nee, oompie, moenie grens nie" ("No, little uncle, don't cry") is a remark made by one of the young men moments before his death that suggests a disparagement of the older man. At one point, in a moment of theatrical climax, Oom Gert is grabbed by the young man he is relating his tale to, almost as if he were to be shaken to confess his complicity. The dramatic structure of the poem, likened by many critics to the dramatic monologues of Browning, allows valuable access to themes such as the tension between law-abiding Afrikaners and rebels, and apprehension about the English who implemented the system of martial law. Leipoldt would further these themes, sometimes with greater intensity, to sustained effect in *Stormwrack*.

An indispensable element of the poem is that it confronts its reader not merely with a situation but with a human being, the first human being in Afrikaans poetry, according to the literary historian Professor N. G. Dekker (Kromhout, 1954: 82). The conversational tone and the informal, familiar nature of this meeting with Oom Gert is more prevalent than actual details about the war: Oom Gert's character is

more under scrutiny here, from observing his interruptive asides to his daughter to his emerging sense of guilt as he discusses the death of the rebels. The tension created through framing Oom Gert's character within his own recollections of war creates a dramatic tension between individual and collective experience, and at the same time suggests that the collective and the individual are inseparable. *Oom Gert Vertel* may be interpreted as a poem about an elder who was a martyr for the Afrikaners during the South African War and whose survival of the experience makes him something of a folk hero, but in the same breath it can be read as a tragic statement on war that the old man lives to be a hero and not the youths. His culpability in their deaths is no accident—Leipoldt concentrates on the theme too often in his later work. However, neither is Oom Gert to be read as a criminally guilty figure: in him Leipoldt marks the emotional suffering realistic of war, and what memory leaves the individual and the collective with. *Stormwrack* explores the subject of young Afrikaners fatally drawn into war in even greater detail, but the idea had occurred in *Oom Gert Vertel* already, marking Andrew Quakerley and his fellow genteel folks as the later Oom Gerts of Leipoldt's work.

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A seminal Afrikaans text, both as a poem and a dramatic monologue, Oom Gert's tale opens up another significant premise in the rest of the collection, as well as to Afrikaner sentiment: memory. There has been some speculation (Kannemeyer, 1999:301) about the motif of memory that occurs in the collection, most notably *In Die Konsentrasiekamp*, which ends with the words: 'Want ons onthou!' ('*Because we remember!*') This implies a bitter sentiment, a feeling that the Afrikaners could never have union with the British because of the ill feeling that war has left them with. For all intents and purposes, this has been the popular reading of that final phrase, possibly based in response to words spoken by General Louis Botha (Kannemeyer, 1999: 301), who urged Afrikaners to 'forgive and forget' the South African War. Leipoldt's own intention with these words may have been misinterpreted as a rallying cry to all Afrikaners never to forget their plight at the hands of the English, and to move towards an independent South Africa of white Afrikaner dominance.

Critics like Kromhout (1954: 85) and Kannemeyer (1999: 134) dispute this idea, and bring into debate the question of Leipoldt's nationalism and where it lay. To Kromhout, Leipoldt never disseminated any of the messages or qualities that would have earned him the title of Afrikaner nationalist, and he argues at length that Leipoldt, in all of his works (not counting, possibly, the *Valley* trilogy itself, as Kromhout seemed not to have read it), never betrays a nationalist stance of any kind. The 'ons onthou' and 'geduld' of *In Die Konsentrasiekamp* have little to do with revenge, and everything to do with forbearance (1954: 85). He hypothesizes that Leipoldt was too cosmopolitan, and too universal in his outlook of things, to be wholly appreciative of a distinctly South African identity. On the issue of Leipoldt's assumed Afrikaner nationalism with the poems in *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*, Kromhout argues that Leipoldt could not have had any serious nationalist ideals, as he was notably absent in the post-war years leading to the Union of South Africa in 1910. Between 1902, when the war ended, and 1910, with the Union established, Leipoldt was broadening his international experience in Europe, and could not have been as one with Afrikaners who were undergoing what Kromhout (1954: 119) basically describes as years of confusion in terms of national identity, a time when most Afrikaners were still reeling from the impact of the war and had to adapt to the prospect of a Union they did not necessarily want. However, the famous foreword to *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*, by Leipoldt's friend Professor JJ Smith, did much to cement this collection as a nationalist document, one year after Union and when many Afrikaners were in need of patriotism and the notion of an artist to express the emerging sentiments they as yet couldn't articulate. In his foreword, approved by Leipoldt and later referred to by him as a model of superior Afrikaans prose, Smith does almost more than the poems themselves to express that Leipoldt was now a 'volk' poet, someone who spoke for the Afrikaner people and for them only.

The purpose of this kind of study of Leipoldt's nationalism or a lack thereof is to investigate exactly where the *Valley* trilogy, with *Stormwreck* in particular, finds Leipoldt in his political beliefs. On one level, *Stormwreck* is an English reworking of *Oom Gert Vertel*, the poem, and while there cannot be any real debate as to

Andrew Quakerley's involvement in the rebel situation, it is clear that Quakerley shares a sense of culpability with Oom Gert in the fate of others. Andrew's Afrikaner godson, Martin Rekker Jr (Young Martin), is hunted as a rebel, causing Andrew much consternation and trepidation even though it seems clear that the young man is innocent and being persecuted under martial law. When he visits Andrew during a battle being fought in the Village, Andrew does not follow Oom Gert in helping the rebel, but instead calls for him to be taken into custody in his belief that a fair trial would ensue and prove Rekker's innocence. While Andrew, motivated by his sense of English fair play and a belief in the justness of English law, does what is morally the right thing, he suffers guilt after doing so. He had also seen enough of martial law to make him skeptical about those very ideals. This, combined with the accumulated toll that events had taken on him and ending with the destruction of his garden, proves to be too much for Andrew and he suffers a stroke. Bluntly, he suffers as Oom Gert never did, but in doing so, he also escapes the lifetime of guilt Oom Gert lives with. In his vegetative state, his memory is selective: the ruined garden is excluded from his thoughts, as if nothing at all happened to it. In short, he cannot remember, unlike many of the speakers in the *Oom Gert Vertel...* collection who cannot forget. CAPE

With both these elderly characters Leipoldt finds a container for the uncertainty and emotional perplexity of war: Oom Gert perhaps helped the rebels out of a sense of loyalty, but never owned up to his involvement in their case; Andrew had loyalties to both sides but spends most of the novel (and most of his life) evading responsibility for either, preferring instead to tend to his garden, which possibly is destroyed because of his lack of engagement earlier on, when it mattered. In both cases there is no clear nationalist ethic at work, as Oom Gert, an Afrikaner, and Andrew, an Englishman, both suffer under the ordeals of war.

In *Stormwrack*, Leipoldt also does much more to challenge the accepted view that he was an Afrikaner nationalist. The early focus on rector Mance-Bisley's reaction to the Jameson Raid is a short but sympathetic study of an Englishman who is surrounded by a Dutch/Afrikaner people he cannot understand, and can only

tolerate. In *Gallows*, Old Quakerley warned against mere tolerance in the place of a trustworthy and confident co-existence between the two white peoples. The rector is troubled by the action of the Raid and he even finds ways to *forgive* those who were involved in it as he cannot bring himself to doubt the English, which is a standpoint he will find increasingly challenged as the novel progresses. This kind of scope afforded to an English character is not rare in Leipoldt's Afrikaans work, but he attends to it here as a point of emphasis: by fleshing out an English character study, he can also suggest the exact same for the Afrikaner characters. Leipoldt's point is not to be exclusive, but to show the mutual war experience both sides may claim.

The Cape Afrikaners also get considerably louder voice through Leipoldt here, even if his authorial worldview is too easily betrayed. An early concern in *Stormwrack* is that in the face of crystallizing nationalisms, those who were anti-war were then automatically seen as enemies of Kruger. The idea that the Boer war challenge, which Leipoldt's narrator condemns as a childish act, did not necessarily speak for all Afrikaners is something the younger Leipoldt never took into much consideration, as his war letters showed. At one point in the novel, Young Martin Rekker confronts Egmond, Andrew's Boer nephew who is temporarily retired from the war effort because of injury. Rekker is against nationalism, and against the Transvaal as the epitome of Afrikaner nationhood, and he complains that the Transvaal gave no Afrikaner a choice when it decided to represent all Afrikaners in the war challenge. However, although Rekker's questions are valid, Leipoldt does not portray Egmond in a negative light: he is likable but confused, an apparent pawn who doesn't know what the emerging Boer commandoes have in mind but does not question their skill to actualize any plan. He voices the idea that all Dutch or Afrikaans-speakers should have been sympathetic to the Boer cause, but he states this as a sincere belief not tinged with malice or political astuteness. At this point in the novel, as if to further compound his idea that Afrikaners were not all passionate patriots at this time, Leipoldt briefly 'updates' his readers on Elias Vantloo, the suspect young lawyer in the Village who would go on to become a noted nationalist in *The Mask*. As Rekker and Egmond debate the Afrikaner issue, Vantloo is steadily

making his fortune by profiting from the war in selling his mobile services to both sides when it suits him.

A clear blow against both the Afrikaners and the English comes in an affair that is the clearest link to *Oom Gert Vertel*, the poem: the execution of the young half-wit, Org Bons. While there is censure by Leipoldt of the English for forcing senior Villagers to attend the execution (similarly to *Oom Gert Vertel*, the execution takes place on a rainy morning), the pressing concern is that Bons dies and Ras lives. While Bons, who clearly was easily misled and lacked any serious intellectual fortitude to be seriously dangerous, is hanged, Gideon Ras is not given the same punishment. Ras, like many other Boers who infiltrated the Colony from the Republics or openly opposed the English in the Cape, was aware that he would be spared a capital sentence for his crimes against the Colony and for converting Bons into a rebel. From the earliest chapters of the novel, Ras is portrayed as a mischievous little man who is out to spread discontent among the Cape Afrikaners loyal to the Queen. He is summarily described as ‘not of one of us’ and is ejected by the genteel folk. Bons is merely an extension of Matryk in *Gallows*: a simpleton who was easily influenced—in this case, influenced for the worse by a cowardly Boer. Ras, like Elias Vantloo later in *The Mask*, and the Trekker sympathizer in *Gallows*, is the kind of scoundrel who is too quickly idolized by gullible, sentimental followers, something the younger Leipoldt did not necessarily explore in his war correspondence. And while this kind of deliberate caricature (that is part of Leipoldt’s moral universe) cannot be wholly appreciated as a valid comment on Afrikaner nationalists, especially in the light of English wartime atrocities, it is somehow effective in sustaining the deeper argument for the effects of war on a small community.

Another detailed study of the psyche of the loyal Cape Englishman occurs in the moments leading up to the ruin of Andrew’s garden, when he ponders the merits of the English justice system he had believed in his entire life. Martial law has brought much doubt to Andrew’s mind, damaging his sense of English fair play, of the English justice system as the greatest, most civilized in the world. Martial law and

scorched-earth policies have deeply unsettled Andrew, and by implication many others like him. In a scene filled with dramatic tension not far removed from *Oom Gert Vertel*, the poem, Andrew is debating his convictions of English fair play at the very same time his garden is being destroyed. Just at the moment he decides to perpetuate his commitment and faith in the English, he shows his generosity to both sides by aiding the wounded soldiers and later taking in Young Martin Rekker.

The Queen is a collective ideal the Villagers praise, and they remove her from any involvement in the war. Even the younger Leipoldt noted this—a portrait of the Queen hangs in Elias's home in *De Rebel*, and in the acerbic tone of most of his war letters, Leipoldt still found time to discuss what meaning Cape Afrikaners attached to her and he referred to her, with a mix of affection and cruelty, as “Ouma” (*Grandmother*). In *Stormwrack*, Andrew is symbolically linked to the Queen, both by age (she may be ten years his senior) and circumstance: as he reads news of her on her deathbed in Osborne, he is also at a point where his own death seems to be fast approaching, and this particular chapter in the novel ends with Andrew found sleeping underneath a tree, prompting a domestic servant to remark: “The old master is sure getting older every day” (Leipoldt, 2000: 183).

Leipoldt also addresses racism as a reason the war was extended. While the Boer commandos were guilty of senselessly and barbarically killing natives at will, the English used native labor in the war but never trained or recruited natives as soldiers. The sufficient manpower they would have gained could have stopped the Boers early on, but instead the war was left to drag on. There were coloured and black loyalties on both sides, with loyal servants following their Boer masters from the Republics and others aiding the English in the belief that an English victory would improve social equality for natives (Omer-Cooper, 1994: 147). The younger Leipoldt, in letters to *Het Nieuws van De Dag*, alternated between disparaging descriptions of coloureds and blacks involved in the war, particularly if they were on the side of the English, and heroic descriptions of those who supported the Boers. Against the latter is the fact that the younger Leipoldt does not seriously address the random and out of hand shooting of natives by Boer commandos. In

Stormwrack this is given prominence as a serious grievance. Opposing the English, racial inequality is held as a prejudice against utilizing sufficient manpower:

“...your colour prejudice here has certainly complicated matters a good deal. It is not only the Dutchman who would object to our using Basutos or other natives. Our loyal colonials would shriek with indignation... your loyal colonials puzzle me a good deal at times. I can see the Dutchman’s point of view-after all, he is a subject by conquest-but you are different, or should be.” (Leipoldt, 2000: 231)

And, this is emphasized especially when similar discussions in *Gallows* are remembered:

“I think our colour prejudice is the result of economic conditions... As you say, both English and Dutch have it, but it is most evident among the lower classes... Mr Porter used to declare that we are nourishing a feeling of caste, leading to the creation of the foulest and most disgusting of aristocracies, the wretched aristocracy of skin.” (Leipoldt, 2000: 231)

2.4. Organic Destruction

With his lifelong interests in botany, and his legacy of being among the foremost nature poets in Afrikaans literature, it seems almost inevitable that Leipoldt would have suggested the destruction of an organic utopia at some point in his later work, given his feelings on the political climate of South Africa. *Stormwrack* does exactly that. After creating an idyllic valley in *Gallows*, where man lived in harmony with nature and was nurtured by nature as long he was loyal towards it, in *Stormwrack* Leipoldt suggests the disintegration of a vision for an organic existence of tolerance and harmony between man and land, and man and himself. Leipoldt’s lament in *Stormwrack* could be along the following lines: sectionalism leads to intolerance, and from there man would destroy the earth that sheltered him—burn it with scorched earth policies and only seek the land for vantage points in battle, such as the Afrikaner commandos skulking in the mountains, or the Imperialists fighting the

commandos in Andrew Quakerley's garden. After this, then, the earth can no longer yield, the land is destroyed and with it, the country. (Symbolically, Leipoldt's famous poem, *Oktobermaand*, from the *Oom Gert Vertel* collection, heralding October as the 'loveliest month', is alluded to through the very fact that the South African War started in October 1899.)

The bond between Andrew Quakerley and his garden is a strange one. It is more to him than a slightly indulgent hobby. It is, as Leipoldt's narrator points out, an art to Andrew and he has an artists' obsession with it; his devotion to his garden is obviously modeled on Leipoldt's (and perhaps Dr Bolus') own deep interest in botany. Andrew's filial love for his garden is the real stormwrack of the novel's title because the war that destroys it is a war Andrew did little to prevent. While he jealously watches over his garden, his share of the South African land, he is passive towards the war that threatens it. Before war is declared, Andrew is disturbed by the signs that war may occur, but not moved to taking preventative measures against it. His response to any heated discussion about the climate of political unrest, or to any prompt for him to use his influence to dissuade the likes of Milner and Kruger (Andrew's aristocracy is well-known throughout South Africa, and at one point it is suggested that his garden might have been a better substitute for Bloemfontein, which was the site of the failed meeting between the leaders of the two sides aimed at preventing war) from declaring war is to engage with the matter to a point, and then retire to his garden.

The garden is Andrew's substitute for his wife, Alice, until such time when Pastor Uhlman becomes his human link to other characters in the novel through their intimate friendship. The garden is also a proxy for Andrew's role as husband and father: he dotes on it as both a father and a lover (in the context of Alice's replacement) and is detached from his own children and only moved to care about his estranged grandson, Charlie Crest, whom he tries to shape into the Quakerley mould of aristocracy. The garden is the reason many in the country still know of the Quakerley name and is the showpiece of both the Village and the District. To borrow Gray's (1984: 3) observation: we move from the Colony into the Valley;

from the Valley into the District; from the District into the Village and from the Village into the garden. The destruction of the garden then logically follows an inverse of this pattern, moving outwards and spreading.

In moving through these levels and minimizing the psychological geography of the novel, the tendency is for Leipoldt's grand scope of a utopian future for South Africa in *Gallows* to be scaled down considerably, until the microcosm of the country isn't just the Valley or the Village anymore, but the garden. Andrew's selfish absorbency into the garden means that it can only hold a limited resistance to the effects of war (it is not as strong as a communal effort), and after its destruction through war the ruin turns to rot by the next generation. To underscore the link between Andrew and his garden, Leipoldt has Andrew die immediately after his garden does. In fact, in a state of catatonic solipsism after suffering a stroke, during which Andrew is able to obstruct the memory of his ruined garden from his mind (he is able to forget, unlike those who lament the inability to forget in *In Die Konsentrasiekamp*), the only barrier between Andrew and his own death is the psychosomatic distance from his garden. When he finally emerges outside, after days of confinement indoors, the sight of his ruined garden is enough to finally end the life of Andrew Quakerley.

Leipoldt scatters harbingers of the garden and its master's fate throughout *Stormwrack*: as the English scorched-earth policies slowly lay waste to the farmlands and natural vegetation of the Colony, there is each time the realization that such organic destruction is coming closer and closer to the Valley, and the Village, even though Andrew denies that the Village could be targeted. When the English trader Seldon has his farm looted and burnt, there is the clearest presentiment that Andrew's garden would be next. Andrew sits and suffers quietly, numb and inactive for a few short moments while hearing the battle taking place in his garden, but he suffers a stroke after actually seeing the consequences of the rape of his soil:

“It tortured the old man’s soul to glance at every spot where a spade or hovel had been inserted into the soft ground to remove enough of that rich, fertile soil, so carefully tended year after year, and season after season, so judiciously blended with fertilizers to suit the peculiar conditions of the various plants destined to grow in it. Every gaping hole—and there were many of them, some isolated, as if the destroyer had made a chance dab at the ground, others aggregated together to form miniature craters and others, again, in array so close together that they collectively resembled a long, badly constructed circumvallation trench—cried to him in derision, just as it seemed to him that every tormented blossom and stem, not yet dead enough to have lost all semblance of life, called out for pity...” (Leipoldt, 2000:276).

That the action that destroyed his garden was nothing more than a diversionary attack (staged by the Boer commandos to occupy the Imperialist forces in the Village and distract them from another location designated to be breached) seems to emphasize the tragedy. Andrew’s husbandry is now replaced by nothing more than a savaging, a fatal violation of the land. His sister, Joan, accuses him of always having been weak and unwilling to engage in conflict, as if to mock the very ineffectual husbandry that ultimately failed to protect the land from rape and only further exposed it.

2.5. The Failure of Tolerance and Harmony

Towards the end of the novel, after Young Martin Rekker has been cleared of being a rebel, Dr Buren, an Irish immigrant, shares his thoughts for the future with Uhlman. Buren discusses the fact that Rekker had informed on the commandos when he stole into Andrew’s home the night of the clash in the garden. In doing so, Rekker helped clear his own name, as he was forced by the commando into joining them against his will, but Buren prophesies that Young Martin’s informing would be played out differently by history, that in the minds of later Afrikaner nationalists he would be seen as a traitor, an English-sympathizer. In short, he thinks that no matter how the war ends, sectionalism would run even deeper in South Africa.

Buren's prophecy, as well as Young Martin witnessing Andrew's death at the very end of the novel, is an ill omen similar to Old Quakerley's foreboding of unrest at the end of *Gallows*. In both instances, characters are left with a world increasingly troubled, and further removed from the near-utopia that once existed in the Valley. By the time of *The Mask*, set in the late 1920s, the future that was envisioned by the cosmopolitans of the first novel, set nearly a century earlier, has degenerated into an unsatisfactory and agitated state of affairs.

Buren hints at what is to come in *The Mask*: revered nationalists like Elias Vantloo who wish only to turn the white population of South Africa against each other once more, citing the South African War as the common Boer grievance. In this light, Young Martin Rekker creeping into the home of English Andrew Quakerley to inform on Afrikaner commandos could only be construed as outright betrayal.

In countering Buren's assertion, Uhlman hopes that the war can create a tradition for the two white peoples of South Africa to draw from. Echoing Old Quakerley in the previous novel, Uhlman theorizes that the country had little or no fixed tradition or past experience that the two white sections could share and simultaneously recollect in the same light. After the war, there could then be a chance to unite Afrikaner and English in an effort to prevent a repeat of the war in the future. Here is Leipoldt the cosmopolitan again, emphasising what he had already stated in media articles of the late 1920s: checking South Africans on their lack of moral tradition. Without tradition, he promulgates throughout the trilogy, there can be no building towards a progressive state—even language, according to Leipoldt in both his causerie articles and *Cultural Development*, will suffer. In the 1930s, when *Cultural Development* was published, Leipoldt was still hopeful that the two white cultures of South Africa could merge to create a fixed South African identity (Leipoldt, 1936: 844). However, he warns, this would be impossible with the persistence of Afrikaans as a political tool to reinforce Afrikaner identity, and that Afrikaans' rapid development due to political motives can only hamper its own

cultural growth (Leipoldt, 1936: 861). The war itself should have been a lesson that the two cultures may not be allowed to run divergently, but to Leipoldt's dismay, this was not to be. The lack of tradition is based, among other things, on the persistence of claiming a language and its cultural appeal as the test of patriotism, which was an anxiety during the war already, in Leipoldt's scheme:

“ ‘Language’, said the pastor reflectively, ‘is a great factor in building up national consciousness. But one can make too much of it, and I think some of us are doing that.’

‘I tried to tell you that there are some of us who would seek in this matter of language an apple of discord. They go so far as to make language a test of patriotism.’

‘And do you think that it will succeed?’ asked the rector interestedly.

‘What? This attempt to put in place of Dutch our local dialect? I cannot say. Nor do I think that it much matters. So long as English remains it must be the predominant tongue; nothing can conquer it, and even if Afrikaans supersedes Dutch, which it possibly will after a few generations, it can never have the same cultural significance that English has.

Not to our generation, and our children's at least.’” (Leipoldt, 2000: 93)

These sentiments are a carbon copy of what Leipoldt expressed in *Cultural Development* and numerous Afrikaans articles written during the late 1920s and 1930s. Mostly, they are clear affronts of the efforts of the extreme nationalist Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Associations (FAK) in promoting exclusive Afrikaner interests (and they could also be criticisms of writers like Langenhoven who also promoted Afrikaner interests in their works). Kromhout (1954:120) is somewhat vindicated when he observes that the older Leipoldt readily promotes English and defends its superiority over Afrikaans and seldom speaks positively about any aspects of Afrikaans culture, instead perpetually comparing it unfavorably with English. In short, his nation-building theories are all English-minded, again a betrayal of his patrician, class-based critiques.

However, this kind of criticism is not mindful to the fact that in *Stormwrack*, Leipoldt writes backwards to offer his views on how elements in the 1930s made use of the past of the Great Trek and the South African War to enhance their own political agendas. The younger Leipoldt did not, perhaps could not, discuss the language and cultural issues in his war correspondences, but the older Leipoldt could and saw it as an example of the failure of tolerance and harmony.

Through Andrew, Leipoldt also provides a case study for observing how passivity is fatal. Whereas the younger Leipoldt made brash assertions that Colonial Afrikaners were guilty of not doing enough to aiding the Republican forces that entered the Colony, the older Leipoldt has a more forbearing outlook, although one laced with frustration when it concerns Andrew. He is guilty of the passivity the younger Leipoldt berated Colonial Afrikaners for and the fact that he is English makes the situation more complex. Unlike an Afrikaner, he couldn't be accused of not doing enough to aid the Republicans as, logically, his loyalties should have been exclusively to the Queen. However, Andrew has blood relations on both sides and despite ultimately supporting the English, he is largely undecided throughout the novel, lending his sympathies to both sides. Perhaps this explains his reticence in engaging actively in tensions leading up to the war and during it, but it also condemns him for not using the considerable influence he appears to have had in contributing to appeasement. He can theorise a good deal, but does little to put his thoughts into practice when needed; instead, he retires from such conversations to be in his garden. When Andrew is shocked out of his complacency by martial law, he is keener to start using his influence, but it is too late.

Skulking in the shadows is Elias Vantloo, a character who appears only briefly in the novel and who is mostly brought up in discussion between other characters. Whereas Andrew may have been hesitant to act because of sympathies to both sides, Vantloo has no real sympathies and sells his services to both sides and profits from the war. Vantloo is a new breed of a kind that has no immediate relations or heritage in the District; he seemingly comes from nowhere and is excluded from the spirit of community in the Village and caters only for himself. The genteel elders do

not trust him and they reluctantly call on his services as a lawyer when Young Martin Rekker is declared a rebel. Vantloo is so detached from tradition as to be almost offensive, and Leipoldt makes him a caricature of nationalist greed in *The Mask*.

Leipoldt's thoughts on the failure of tolerance and harmony, when once in *Gallows* it seemed possible to work towards a South Africa free of sectionalism and promoting racial equality, are the notes he ends *Stormwrack* on. Young Martin witnesses Andrew's death and sees in it the passing of the old guard, the complete removal of the hopeful liberal world presented in the previous novel. In working backwards to critically examine the present of 1930s South Africa, Leipoldt re-examines the South African War and contests that it was being exploited to promote the very sectionalism that started it. In Gray's hypothesis, Leipoldt was showing the inverse of the Great Trek: the very same groups who had left the Colony in discontent to settle northwards were now coming back into the Colony (Gray, 1984: 9) to claim possession of South Africa. In fact, the idea that the North was something fatal to the Cape Colonial was an ominous allusion Leipoldt included in two of his earlier works: there is the reference to the north wind and north rain in '*n Nuwe liedjie op 'n ou deuntjie* and the "crossing of the Vaal" (mistakenly, Leipoldt mentions the Vaal River instead of the Orange River) in *In Die Konsentrasiekamp*, both poems from his debut collection.

Coming out of a wealth of feelings he had about the political and social climate of the South Africa he was in, Leipoldt's work in *Stormwrack* makes the novel a complex contestation of history. He acknowledged that the novel was supposed to be a pendant to Deneys Reitz's *Commando*, which was published in 1929 and quickly became a noted English text on the war as viewed from the Republican side. Leipoldt's journalistic experience informed *Stormwrack* and gives it a feel of startling authenticity and indeed it may be claimed that, had the novel been published in 1932, it could have been a worthy challenger to *Commando* with its depictions of wartime conditions. Leipoldt's focus on how a community is affected by war, instead of looking exclusively at the military experience, links directly to

his war correspondences and his war poems in the *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte* collection. In so far as these works concentrate on human suffering during war, Leipoldt may well be known as a poet for the people, but the context goes much further than any mere political pigeon-holing.



3.1. *The Mask* as sequel to *Stormwrack*

The action of *The Mask* takes place roughly a quarter of a century after the end of the South African War. Set in 1920s South Africa, after the Union of South Africa had been established in 1910, the novel focuses on the lobbying for Afrikaner nationalism through its characters Elias Vantloo and his daughter, Santa. Pierre Mabuis, grandson of the reformed alcoholic schoolteacher, and Buren, the Irish immigrant who first appeared in *Stormwrack*, emerge as foils to the Vantloos, with their hold on equal franchise for all races in the country.

From the opening chapter of the novel, Leipoldt sets out to depict Elias in a harsh manner and by implication those who harbour what Leipoldt considers as self-motivated interests in the country's future. Whereas the previous two novels displayed Leipoldt's belief in tradition, or belief in a Cape liberal tradition of family dynasties, the establishment of farmsteads and friendly co-habitation between English and Dutch/Afrikaner, Leipoldt creates Elias Vantloo as an icon of tradition's fall. This was strongly suggested in *Stormwrack*, when narrative asides to Vantloo revealed him to be an ambitious young lawyer with very suspect patriotic sentiments, as shown by his opportunistic profiting from the South African War. Then already, the Village elders, who once acted as guardians of the community through the likes of Uncle Martin Rekker in *Gallows*, removed Vantloo from the moral hybrid between the two sections. He was an outsider, unfavoured by either side but with enough capital and objective to establish himself in the community, and marry into one of the old noble families. From the outset, Leipoldt draws on this notion of Elias as a hateful interloper, someone determined to be recompensed for formative years spent in awkwardness and denial of any dignified status that comes, in this universe, only through heritage. Unlike Nolte in the first novel, he does not try and amalgamate himself with the Village community, but instead wants to govern it. By the 1920s, with the Afrikaner nationalist movement strongly asserting itself in the Union of South Africa, Vantloo, through a mixture of sympathetic leaning to the nationalists and crafty business investments, gained

power. In the character sketch that opens the novel, Leipoldt makes Vantloo a government to himself: he is the one to whom the struggling Village community, still reeling from the economic and social after-effects of the South African War and the 1914 Rebellion, turn for financial assistance. As in many *plaasroman* works, he is a capitalist who supplies mortgages to farmers and small franchises, thereby owning the land and those who live on it. Through the emerging nationalist rhetoric aimed at uniting all Afrikaans speakers, his professional assistance, conducted by heavy rates of interest returns, is seen as “friendly” and brotherly. In many ways, through conveniently professing loyalty to Afrikaners after the South African War, where he profited by secretly selling his services to the English, Vantloo is typically adopted as “one of us”. Those who elevated him to the position of power he enjoys are the ones he governs through his capitalist acumen and knowledge of *volk* conditions in the Village. To stamp his authority on the Village, he even claims the old Rekker home as his own, having married into the formerly aristocratic family through distant relation (much like Alice, Andrew Quakerley’s wife in *Stormwrack* who is noted for coming from a “common” background before marrying into the stately Quakerleys).

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Vantloo opens up Leipoldt’s study of conditions in the Valley community in the 1920s, but other themes re-emerge in *The Mask*. The past is a distant world that seemingly never existed, and only comes alive through reminiscence and hearsay. Andrew Quakerley’s grand garden is now merely a Valley legend, replaced in literary terms by Ayah Mina’s petunias in petrol tins. Vantloo’s wife, Maria, laments the loss of an organic and rooted past that she saw very little of because of her youth, marking it out as an idealized world that exists more in her imagination.

Events from the previous novel are crucial berths for dilemmas in *The Mask*. Buren (and even the stubborn Santa) appreciates the tragedy of the destruction of the Village library in *Stormwrack*, based in reality on the burning of Clanwilliam’s library during the South African War. Gray (1984:2) mentions that, with the public records of Clanwilliam destroyed, Leipoldt acts as scribe for the town, documenting his take on its history through experience and oral tradition. In *The Mask*, the

predicament is that there is no one to replace those lost records, with only memory and hearsay left to conjure up images of a world a majority of the characters would never have seen. Even the Quakerley garden seems never to have existed as it is romanticized by those who discuss it, rendering the impression to the listener—usually Santa—that its splendor is exaggerated, when indeed it was real.

The loss of the library, in particular, is seen by Buren as the start of obvious animosity between Dutch/Afrikaner and English in the Village, and this disaster is further perpetuated through modern nationalists, many of them young and hotheaded like Santa, drawing vicariously from that and other war experiences to further their propaganda. In doing so, the experiences of many who were actually involved in the South African War were being undermined. A hallmark of the nationalist movement was to revert to the destruction of the Republics during the South African War as a motivational means of enforcing anti-English sentiments, and systematically denying the policy of forgiveness and reconciliation. In *The Mask*, a slight semblance of that also occurs when the characters Jeremiah and Gertrude are described as having a guilt complex over events from “thirty years” ago—although their guilt concerns having allowed Maria to marry Elias, which coincides with the war.

The debate between Cape tradition and Northern spirit is naturally continued along these lines of loyalty to country, but once again there are characters who question the foundation of the country that was settled in the North. Just as *Gallows* featured characters that questioned the origin of the Great Trek, Gertrude in *The Mask* criticizes that very history and claims that the Republics were founded on no tradition whatsoever. Her resolve holds for both for the masses and the individual, and in it is a lesson for Santa: the struggle for the self is key, and owning up to great challenges to one’s beliefs. Here, the call is for the nationalist followers to look deeper into the exclusivist nature of their beliefs—exemplified by Santa, who must face the truth about her father, her idol. The emotional appeal made by Buren best sums up Leipoldt’s tendency: in dispute with Santa, he calls for her to recognize

both Dutch/Afrikaner and English contributions in the creation of South African history.

While, at times, Leipoldt seems to be exclusively pro-English in the novel, his challenges to the notion of Afrikaans as the 'language of the people' takes credence from the fact that, even in debate, Afrikaans is superseded by English. Even the fervent, pro-Afrikaans Santa speaks more English than she does the language she fights for. In fact, Afrikaans literature comes under scrutiny, and at once Leipoldt seems to include himself in the discussion: as Buren, he condemns the inconsistent quality of contemporary Afrikaans works, especially those aimed at using the South African War to promote anti-English feeling among the youth, who have no memory of the War. Buren considers wartime literature, contributed by those who experienced the war and write about its universal issues rather than any group-biased take, as legitimate and honest. Not only is Leipoldt repeating thoughts he had expressed in numerous newspaper articles and would express in *Cultural Development*, he may also be making reference to his own debut collection of poetry and how it was still largely considered as pro-Afrikaner. At another moment in the novel, Leipoldt seems to refer to his own status as an Afrikaans 'nature poet' when Mabuis challenges Santa to describe a field of colourful flowers in Afrikaans, and she fails to meet the challenge.

The greatest tragedy, to Buren, is the exclusion of English South Africans, like Andrew Quakerley, from contemporary wartime literature. In this argument, their contributions and sacrifices were as great as those on the Republican side, but because of the actions of the English military they are forever to be pariahs. Unintentionally, Santa arrives at a rare moment of sympathy for Andrew Quakerley when she walks past the site that used to be his garden; even though she correctly asserts that he received poetic justice for doing nothing to prevent the war, and compares his obsessive love for his garden to Maria's love for Elias (and she is not far wrong on either count), she feels the organic loss of the past her mother spoke of, and wonders whether Quakerley's ghost would ever return to wreak vengeance.

3.2. The liberal cosmopolitanism of *Gallows* replaced by unequal and unsatisfactory race relations

From the earliest chapters of *The Mask*, it is clear that Leipoldt is going to give broader scope to the coloured community of the Village. In *Gallows*, natives, coloureds or “half-castes” had bit parts as loyal servants, or as the “children” who were being educated at the school in Neckerthal. In that novel, they were more part of the fabric of discussions on the absence of a colour bar for voters in the Cape Legislative Assembly franchise of 1854, and of the implications for a future based on racial integration. In *Stormwrack*, non-whites formed part of another, more serious subject with the brutal, senseless shooting of natives by Boer commandos in the Colony, but again, they were treated as an abstraction, a moral dilemma of human rights. In *The Mask*, Ayah Mina emerges as a real character, someone who actively plays a part in Leipoldt’s exploration of racial themes. While Leipoldt begins his character study of her with a brief, scientific and historical account of coloureds in South Africa, he almost immediately engages in creating Ayah Mina as a central character in the *Valley* trilogy. In view of his consistency in exploring racial injustice in the trilogy (and many of his other works), it is not far-fetched to say that Ayah Mina and the events of *The Mask* round off Leipoldt’s historical sweep of South Africa: from the potential to altering history in *Gallows* by reducing racist sentiment, to the portrayal of events that directly influenced history in *Stormwrack*, to those most severely sidelined by history in South Africa in *The Mask*. Because, in Leipoldt’s scheme, the history that was effectively determined by the Dutch/Afrikaner and English, had the most direct bearing on those who were outside the white world.

The world the cosmopolitans in *Gallows* warned of effectively exists in *The Mask* as a result of the drive towards, firstly, union between whites in South Africa and later, Afrikaner solidarity and English passivity. Coloureds and natives involved in the South African War fought on both sides: there were the *agter-ryers* (after-riders), loyal coloured servants to the Republican commandos who carried

ammunition, food and supplies for their masters, and native Africans who supported the English cause as scouts, guides and weapon-carriers. The Boers tried shaming the English by saying that using coloureds or natives in the war was against a special code of morality in what was supposed to be a white man's war (Giliomee, 2003:258), but had no justification for their own out-of-hand shooting of unarmed natives during the war. After the war, Britain was anxious to avoid any further ill feeling with the Boers, and negotiated the terms for eventual white union at the expense of many Africans and other non-whites. In effect turning their back on natives who had supported their cause in the hope of improved social conditions, the British authorities denied a moral responsibility to implement policies which could have contributed to the elimination of colour barriers (Omer-Cooper, 1994: 147). From then on, with the emergence of strong Afrikaner nationalist sentiment, non-whites would be systematically pushed to the periphery of South African society with poor wages, increased labour and derelict living conditions that were an infringement of basic human rights.

The location is the only part of the Valley the coloureds may claim, the only land that British hypocrisy and Afrikaner greed allows them. The traces of white crime are evident in those like Sophia, the product of often cruel and anonymous sexual unions largely forced by white masters on their coloured servants. The tendency with the white characters in both *Gallows* and *The Mask* is to refer to natives as "children", but the word is then a portentous one that denies the true implications of future adulthood-that sooner or later, these children must grow up. Even Gertrude, who is against white superiority, still ignorantly thinks of natives as children, and her labeling them as such is somewhat opposed to Uhlman's opinion in *Gallows* that the term is at best a temporary one. The repression of non-whites is at some level present even in the thinking of those who are liberal-minded in *The Mask*, and it is the expatriate, Mabuis, who offers the clearest criticisms of racism and sectionalism from his outsider's point of view. He remarks on the immaturity of racial thinking in South Africa:

"Take the Native problem, for example. What South African, whether English

or Dutch, can take an unprejudiced view on it, unless he has been, as I have, expatriated and has learned that colour by itself, and race by itself, do not really matter in the long run? Yet you Nationalists take it for granted that every English speaking South African hold the Exeter Hall view of the Native, and every Afrikaans speaking one the South African view. And this while you know that Natal, which is predominantly English-speaking, is the most anti-negrophilistic province of the Union. That seems to me scarcely logical.” (Leipoldt, 2001: 559)

Leipoldt ties these concerns to his examination of how the Valley’s natural degeneration also impacts the humans who depend on it, and the unsatisfactory living conditions of the location marks how much wider the gulf between them and the whites—who are themselves struggling on the exhausted land—has grown.

3.3. The rise of the National Party in the context of European fascism, and the formalizing of sectarian interest

By the 1920s, the South African Party (SAP) and the Nationalist Party (NP) were the major representatives of the dominant two white peoples in South Africa. Under Smuts, SAP followers were mostly English, or English-speaking Afrikaners. Smuts was respected in Britain and strove towards union between English and Afrikaans-speakers, but he had a propensity to English-mindedness that most Afrikaners didn’t agree with. Afrikaners who supported Smuts were mostly affluent and well educated (Giliomee, 2003: 348), with a similar predisposition to Britain as a cultural center.

Under General Hertzog, Nationalists wanted an Afrikaner South Africa, free of colonial ties. By 1926, the National Party had succeeded in securing the promise of the Balfour Declaration, which in 1931 would grant equality between Britain and the Dominions. It was also at this time that DF Malan—who would be the great leader of the extreme Nationalists of the 1930s—clamored for a “clean” flag to replace the Union Jack (Giliomee, 2003: 397). Die Broederbond, a once secret society established in 1918 and affiliated to the FAK, actively set about promoting Afrikaans dominance in South Africa by the late 1920s.

The differences between the two parties were evident in the 1910s, with the advent of the National Party under Hertzog, who broke away from Smuts and the South African Party (formerly the Bond Party) a few years after the Union was established. Hertzog and his followers grew weary of Smuts' appeals for Afrikaners to adopt English models of thinking and cultural practices and claimed that the aim of the National Party was complete Afrikaner solidarity through the institution of Afrikaans as an official language and the recognition of Afrikaner culture. Despite these aims, the National Party had very little clear impetus to distinguish it recognizably from the South African Party (Omer-Cooper, 1994: 176), as both were led by erstwhile military comrades in Smuts and Hertzog, both of whom were seen as prominent Afrikaner leaders. Events around the 1914 Rebellion in German South West Africa (modern Namibia) during World War One, in which Nationalist Afrikaners rebelled against joining forces with the English to fight a campaign there against the Germans, saw clearer discrepancies between the two parties. At the same time, Langenhoven's success at implementing Afrikaans as an official language at school level struck a blow that was more favourable to the Nationalists.



The National Party began to lobby for Afrikaans government and gained in popularity over the war and post-war years by claiming the empowerment of white Afrikaans-speakers as priority, even extending to the uneducated and the unemployed by the early 1920s. Through their enthusiastic designs for nation building and dynamic lobbying for Afrikaner identity, the National Party captured the imagination of Afrikaners. With the support of the Dutch Reformed Church and the general Afrikaner disillusionment with the South African War, the National Party promised a proud, authentic nationalism and by doing so suggested that the SAP was complacent and lacking in initiative. As Giliomee (2003: 350) puts it:

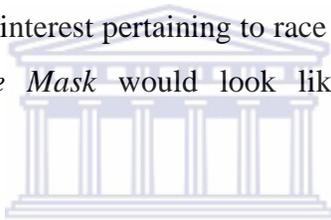
“The Afrikaner’s source of power was allegiance to South Africa as their only fatherland. Hertzog called the Afrikaners ‘pioneers’ of South Africa. With ancestry in Dutch, French and German, the Afrikaner was never heard to proclaim his faith in either.”

Giliomee (2003: 350) also goes on to document that writers and thinkers, both in South Africa and internationally, saw the Afrikaner, or Boer, as a unique species. The rugged farmer who could negotiate a selfish African earth and establish his nationhood through doing so intrigued even the likes of Olive Schreiner (Giliomee, 2003: 350-351), a one-time Rhodes supporter. In this analysis, the Boer was “creating” a white South Africa, and not merely extending English colonial or European continental influence. The drive towards independence was what characterized the Boer, beginning with the Great Trek in the previous century.

The Nationalist Afrikaners were almost paralleling their German counterparts in Europe in rebirthing and empowering their national group identity in the aftermath of war—in the South African case, both the South African War and World War One. While similarities between the German Nazi Party and the extreme South African Nationalists would be recognized by the 1930s, the interim period between the two World Wars saw both working towards vague models of fascism that would both be realized, in Germany on a more complete level, with the build-up to and outbreak of World War Two.

As mentioned earlier, the Afrikaner farmer was glorified in the *plaasroman* novels of CM van der Heever in particular, and while the Afrikaans literary output was generally weak (Giliomee, 2003: 399) in prose and drama, organizations like the FAK were, by the early 1930s, behind a spate of publications that were aimed at promoting Afrikaans as the more frequent household language (Omer-Cooper, 1994: 174)—medical journals, automobile buyers’ guides, household care instructional manuals, etc. In many cases these publications merely translated or followed English models (Giliomee, 2003: 351) in the same way that Afrikaans prose was still generally criticized for doing (Leipoldt, 1936: 860), but the appeals to group identity could overshadow claims of authenticity and originality.

Leipoldt immediately draws attention to these practices early on in *The Mask*, when the narrator reveals that Vantloo's nationalism was so fierce that even "foreign art" (Leipoldt, 2001: 521) was forbidden in his home. With this, he already scorns the characters of Vantloo and later, Santa, who is so ardent that she insists on flying the new national flag outside their home. These character studies, in turn, are the aegis for his criticism of developments revolving around the National Party in the 1920s and 1930s. As stated earlier, Elias Vantloo is a mean caricature, a man so unbelievably sinister and corrupt that *The Mask* threatens to be a comic parody of reality rather than a weighty contestation of it. Again, Leipoldt's Cape-based liberalism is apparently to blame for this blatant and crude representation of figures he opposed in reality (and in more than one instance it appears that Vantloo is modeled on Langenhoven), and were it not for the emphasis on human interest pertaining to race and tolerance found in the previous two novels, *The Mask* would look like little more than SAP propaganda to many.



Leipoldt acknowledges, as he did in reality, that the National Party did much to capture the imagination of many South Africans, and through Mabuis, in his capacity as an observer, he speculates that there is no real difference between the old SAP (the Bond Party he remembers) and the National Party, as both, to him, failed to live up to their own ideals. Elias himself agrees that the two parties are similar, but his fraudulent acts in the name of nationalism then deepens his culpability in damaging the country, which is what Leipoldt considers to be the germ of his grievances against the Nationalists.

Mabuis furthers Leipoldt's thoughts that Afrikaner nationalism was being nurtured on a feeling of hatred towards the English, and an almost childish jealousy of the cultural standing of English resulting in the branding of that culture as oppressive and unfairly advantaged against Afrikaans. Leipoldt's letters and articles addressing this issue will be reviewed later, but overall they are consistent in reflecting his feelings that the Afrikaans language and culture were being used as political propaganda weapons and not being earnestly

assessed, evaluated and designed for longevity. Sentiment alone, once the heat of the moment has passed, is not enough to ensure the cultural growth of a people and their language. While Leipoldt longed for honest, constructive comparisons with English language and culture in order to aid the growth of Afrikaans, he maintained that Nationalist Afrikaners only used comparison negatively to undermine English. When Mabus and Santa debate about these issues of language and patriotism, it is really Leipoldt presenting a dialogue of his thoughts and the arguments that would counter it. Santa holds with language as a test of patriotism and has a blind belief in the practices of the National Party.

The National Party eventually became notorious for an unreasonable oppression and antagonizing of native South Africans rooted in fear of their numbers and aimed at systematically depriving them of any resources that could have made them potentially threatening to the white population. Mabus attacks this, accusing Nationalist Afrikaners of depriving black South Africans of equal voting opportunities on grounds that they were not well educated and allowing uneducated, unemployed whites to vote. This kind of antagonizing, he warns, will hamper the social, economic and cultural welfare of South Africa and will have effects on the environment, which he points to when looking at the way natural resources were being exhausted by inept farming methods closed off to international, or English, influence. Some of these barriers result from Afrikaner language pride, such as when Santa blames the intricacy of the English language for illiterate farmers being unable to learn expert advice. In a visionary statement that attests to Leipoldt's ability to strategize and conceive, Mabus implies that lack of tolerance and a reluctance to develop black intellect and a black workforce that is not subservient to whites, would lead to South Africa's eventual exclusion from world affairs. He refers to these future implications as a "deluge" (Leipoldt, 2001: 551).

3.4. Social progress combined with environmental and moral ‘degeneration’, poverty, illness and abuse; Leipoldt’s class-based critiques

As discussed earlier, there is an instance in *Gallows* where, standing on a mountain pass, Nolte has a panoramic view of the Valley, and sees it in all its splendor and animation. Effectively, the opposite of that occurs in *The Mask*, when Santa and Mabuis take a drive through the Valley for land surveying that is anything but sublime. The degeneration of relationships between sections in the Valley has taken its toll on the land, and Mabuis points to the derelict old farm at Langvlei, which was owned by his grandparents, as an example of what he considers to be a constant exhausting of the land’s provisions without giving anything back to it. Once, like many farms in the Valley, it had been a near-utopia; now, it was a wasteland. Even Andrew Quakerley’s garden is now only a distant memory, and the ground that marks its ‘grave’ only spits up the bullets and artillery shells that destroyed it. Ayah Minah’s petunias in petrol cans on her stoep are an unacceptable replacement for the grand garden of the second novel and so too is Jeremiah’s tobacco plantation.

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The coloured location, where Ayah Minah lives with her sick daughter, Sophie, is plagued by consumption, and is therefore a risk to the white community of the Village. The increase in economic activity through the years of World War One had led to a considerable rise in the urban African and coloured population, and often these populations lived in appalling shanty town or location conditions. The great worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 drew attention to the poor conditions of such urban accommodations, and the dangers this held for the neighbouring white communities (Omer-Cooper, 1994:169). Sophia is but one of the many victims of consumption, acquired from the city, who is not nurtured in such areas as the location, while her father, Elias, shows great social progress just a few kilometers away in the Village. Those in the location typically attribute their impoverished conditions to an act of divine wrath from God, a visitation of punishment for whatever sins they must have surely committed.

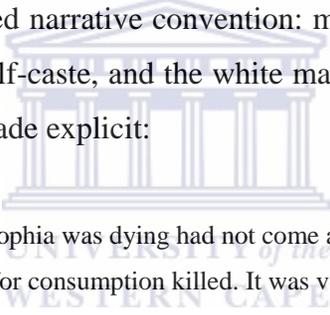
This then opens up the exploration of moral degeneration and with it, biological degeneration. Sophia is a “half-caste”, the product of union between white and non-white. Here, Leipoldt showed typical interest in the thematics of blood, which occupied both writers and scientists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Coetzee, 1988: 139), and his medical background allowed him further room to explore genetic collapse in those of mixed race. Sophia’s illness is due to exposure to detrimental living conditions, but it reaches further into the tendency in South African writing to link mixed races to disease and fatality. Leipoldt had already hinted at this when a group of native lepers stole through the Village in *Gallows*, and here he is able to pursue the matter more critically.

For all his medical interests and fascination with advances in medical science and technology in Europe, and for all his urges to the public to recognize such developments, Leipoldt did not necessarily fall into “using degeneration as biological explanation for a cultural condition” (Coetzee, 1988: 142). The world presented in *The Mask* is too closely linked to many situations in modern Western Europe, in which the effects and after-effects of World War One saw the exposure of urban and social decay in the major cities. Here, the “...entire medical and psychological science of degeneravity was an attempt to expel unsound members from the social body, and despite its proclaimed stand of objectivity, its ends were powerfully ideological...” (Coetzee, 1988: 142). Especially in the context of the post-World War One European fascistic model of nation building that was already showing its emergence in South Africa by the 1920s, Leipoldt’s study of degeneration that runs throughout the *Valley* trilogy is more a study of this ‘employment’ of cultural and societal exclusion, or extreme xenophobia. The “language of paranoia” (Coetzee, 1988: 149) permeates much of the thinking behind blood impurification, and the moves towards establishing acts that outlaw sexual union between whites and non-whites in 1920s South Africa were in all aspects a separation of the ‘lepers’, the ones who could taint white blood.

In light of this statute, Elias’s crime was committed many years earlier, which exonerates him of any actual offense, but the paranoia should then largely rest with

the coloured community: Elias has tainted the blood of Sophia, diseased it and killed her. Leipoldt's study of degeneration hardly aims at promoting preservation of whites; the leper in this case is Elias himself, who abused the responsibility his white superiority gave him. In *Gallows*, the cosmopolitans criticize the Trekkers (and their followers) for abandoning responsibility and for, among other things, not using the advantage of whiteness (schooling, etc) to nurture the natives of the country. Elias, who claims to be a product of the Trekkers, similarly shuns responsibility with all the power at his disposal. It is a case of him breaking the segregationist laws he had created himself. Even his wife, a white woman, is ill and weak, lending her an affinity to Sophia: two women ravaged by the same man.

The half-caste, in South African writing, is a doomed species. Here, Leipoldt plays squarely to a somewhat accepted narrative convention: most South African writing condemned the "fate" of the half-caste, and the white masters responsible for it. At one point in the novel, this is made explicit:



"The knowledge that Sophia was dying had not come as a shock to her; she had anticipated it, for consumption killed. It was very prevalent among the Coloured people. The pure Native and the pure White could fight against it, but the half-caste, somehow, did not seem to be able to conquer it. Ayah Mina had seen many of the location dwellers suffering from it, and she knew that nearly all of them had died of it." (Leipoldt, 2001: 617)

Throughout *Gallows* and *The Mask*, Leipoldt shows characters comparing natives to children, and their white masters as their "parents". In this conjecture, the parents have then failed the children. Elias is the biological father of Sophia, and fails her by the very act of conception, for above anything else, she is destined only to grow up in the location, isolated from him yet tragically close also. Her death is to be a relief to Elias. Of course, Ayah Mina also fails Sophia, perhaps more so because she keeps Elias' secret. The old coloured woman is remarked to also carry white blood, which is used to explain the light complexion of Sophia by those who wish to avoid the truth.

With Ayah Minah, Leipoldt gives unusual depth in his character sketch, and through this a clear understanding of Sophia's lot emerges, since the girl herself has no dialogue in the novel and is more a representation of the mutual sense of moral guilt shared by all the other characters. Leipoldt is in agreement that the half-caste is a doomed figure, but it is not enough for him to merely leave this study at an abstract level, which is what Sophia represents. In *Ayah Minah*, there is an engaging case study of the coloured South African at a time when such representations were rare in South African literature.

Ayah Mina is one side of what Coetzee (1988: 150) describes as a union between the slave and the careless, the selfish, the stupid and the vicious. From this union, the offspring cannot house two kinds of blood, and neither can the child belong to either identity. As Coetzee finds with the characters in Sarah Gertrude Millin's works, Sophia had to carry Ayah Mina's shame of Elias' brutal union with her. Sophia then is the half-caste who carried a flaw in her blood that is an instinct for death and chaos (Coetzee, 1988: 152), the instinct to withdraw from life. She does not try to drown herself in more and more white blood; that blood already drowns her, as she is so light of complexion that upon seeing her for the first time in years, Santa immediately considers using medical science to investigate miscegenation. She is the object of shame and an outcast, conceived in an act of sexual defilement, and must inevitably be hateful of her own being (Coetzee, 1988: 156). As the earlier quotation from the novel shows, she is neither "pure" white or "pure" native. Sophia's illness is the moral situation itself, but most of it is actualized through Ayah Mina, as if she were speaking for Sophia. Leipoldt's narrator reveals that Ayah Mina always maintained a cold distance towards Sophia, doting all her affection instead on Santa and further making an outsider of Sophia. Santa then figures as Ayah Mina's search for more dilution of her own blood with that of white blood—Elias is the father but Santa was meant to be the daughter. The melodramatic hints at rivalry in the running of the Vantloo household between Ayah Mina and Maria speak of an enmity for the position of Elias's woman. Ayah Mina appears hateful of him throughout the novel, and like all the other characters uses the ruse of keeping Maria in the dark about the truth of things, but she nevertheless seems to

search for her place by his side. The narrative discourses on how she ‘raised’ Santa are more than just a depiction of a dedicated servanthood; she wants white maternity.

As for Elias, after his secret is revealed, and after the greater revelation that Maria knew all along of his being Sophia’s father, he is, like a defiler, exiled from the community he polluted (Coetzee, 1988: 151) on his wife’s command. However, she goes into exile with him, apparently because she now has a measure of control over him due to his shame. Like Ayah Mina though, she still has a disturbing passion for him, which made her live with his indiscretions and other villainy throughout their marriage. She chooses to spend her last years with him, believing in his humanity. This is a dramatic reference to Maria’s earlier nostalgic recollections of the Valley in the time of Nolte and Andrew Quakerley. There, it seemed that caught between an ideal past that was more in her imagination (as she could only experience most of it through hearsay), and the reality of men like her husband and others of the modern generation, she chose the romantic ideal, and shut herself off in apparent ignorance of Elias’ misdeeds. Now, with both of them harboring no more secrets from each other, perhaps she sees a chance to ‘reform’ him to the worldview that she longed for, at a house by the sea.

Also lamenting the loss of a perceived gracious past to degeneration are Mabuis, the expatriate, and at times, the Irish immigrant Dr Buren. Even the modern preachers, to Mabuis, have degenerated from the old stock:

“ ‘...You must admit that while in the old days the *predikant* was a highly cultured individual who stood as a centre from which practically all culture radiated... formerly the parson had to have a special dispensation. He was trained to work in the East, and had to obtain his *Acte Classicale* before he could accept a parish here. That meant not only a university education in Europe, with its sound classical scholarship, but also a special preliminary study of Arabic and Syriac. What average *predikant* can look back on such a training today?’” (Leipoldt, 2001: 556)

Mabuis goes on to discuss the Reverend Uhlman of *Stormwrack*, but by implication also refers to his father, the Reverend Uhlman of *Gallows*. Again, Leipoldt filters Mabuis' words with his own life experience, and at this point his novel of ideas seems more and more an improbable classist rant. A saving grace could be that, in defending these classically trained preachers and attacking what could only be the theological core that was at work for extreme nationalists by the 1920s and 1930s, Leipoldt is emphasizing his stand against moral degeneration through this patrician frame. An erudite preacher brings with him worldly influences that enlarge a moral scope of things to his parish; a preacher with political aims narrows the worldview of his community, making them resistant to foreign influence. Die Broederbond had the Dutch Reformed Church as its axis, and through it the history of the Afrikaner *volk* was elaborated into a civil religion (Omer-Cooper, 1994: 176), based on the pilgrimage that was the Great Trek, with Dingaansdag, as mentioned earlier, the Day of the Covenant. The Afrikaner language and culture and the emotional appeal to history was called to strengthen the Afrikaner (Omer-Cooper, 1994: 177).

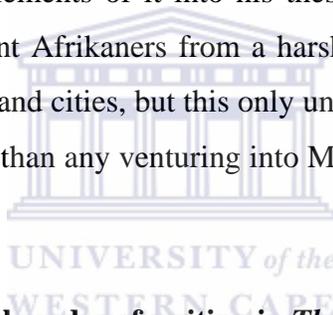
Mabuis is critical of what he sees, and the sectionalism implemented to prevent the African population from gaining any level of prosperity. They are not granted land rights, the right to equal education or fair business opportunities; rather, they are antagonized and oppressed to shift for 'poor whites', impoverished Afrikaners who were steadily being brought into the workforce through the Labour-Nationalist alliance as a means of perpetuating the promotion of group identity. The poor whites, in Leipoldt's view, were becoming "masters of the North", even though they were on equal footing with Africans and Natives regarding a lack of education and social skills development.

However, according to Merrington (2003: 47), Leipoldt's case thins out on this topic. While *Gallows* went against *plaasroman* convention and ignored the *platteland* crisis of rural farmers being pushed off their land to the cities, that novel's time frame and storyline serves as some justification for this. *The Mask*, however, is set in the 1920s, and it is at this time that social conditions in the

country inform the *plaasroman's* themes. The mainstream of South African modernity, as Merrington puts it:

“...lay squarely in the rapid urbanisation and industrialisation of the Transvaal mining communities... in terms of real politics and the marshalling of voters, as well as of questions of race, the emphasis would have been in the sprawling peri-urban blue-collar and working-class suburbs and townships.” (2003: 47)

Leipoldt does not wholly avoid these issues, but as the Valley remained his geographical border, he was reluctant to move outside of it, treating the mining regions as topics of debate, but not willing to investigate them completely. Leipoldt even acknowledges—through Buren, in contest with Santa—a lack of knowledge on the subject. He incorporates elements of it into his thesis, such as the nationalist drive in ‘saving’ these insolvent Afrikaners from a harsh survival in the capitalist environments of mining towns and cities, but this only unfolds as part of his general criticism of nationalism, rather than any venturing into Marxist territory or focusing on black migrant labour.



3.5. Melodrama and theatrical modes of writing in *The Mask* and *Afgode* as the source material for the novel

Leipoldt read Robert Louis Stevenson as a young man, and the stylistic influence of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* can be seen in the plot of both *Galgsalmander* and *Gallows*, with the situation regarding Nolte’s secret past and the conflict between keeping it secret and the need to reveal it. *The Mask* follows a similar example, with the final chapters especially drawn according to stage convention and reworked from *Afgode*, the Afrikaans play that was the source of the novel. The melodrama revolves around the plot device of all the characters trying to keep the secret of Elias’s true nature from Maria, and the final twist occurs when Maria is revealed to have been aware of her husband’s actions before anyone else.

In *The Mask*, numerous episodes are played out according to stage convention, including Santa’s discovery of her father’s secret paternity (suitably, and like *The*

Rebel, on a stormy night) and the climax in the study. Most chapters end on a suspenseful note, recalling the serialized form of *Galgsalmander*, and often this has to do with characters keeping secrets from Maria or planning to trap Elias. There are other notable theatrical semiotics at work: Maria and Sophia are ill, Elias fakes a heart condition and Santa is the doctor who cannot cure any of them; those in the location are plagued by consumption while Jeremiah revels in the growth of his tobacco plantation; Maria tells Santa that there is nothing worse than having one's beliefs relegated to rubbish, which is what happens to Santa when her belief in her father is shattered and Sophia's death scene is arduous and unsettling.

However, for all of these moments of melodrama, theatrical convention and emotional engagement, *The Mask* far outweighs its own source—namely, *Afgode*, the play on which it is based.

In *Afgode*, Elias and Maria Vantloo are Gys and Aletta van Staal; Eric van Deren is Simon Dakker; Jeremiah and Gertrude Gerster are Gert and Trui (a separation of the name Gertrude and another Leipoldt-recycled name in 'Gert') Tongerle, Sophia is Hester and Dr Buren is Dr Timotheus Hopkinson. Ayah Mina retains her name from the play to the novel, as does Santa. Most of the play's storyline was copied in the novel, although its politics are vague and undefined—Leipoldt possibly mistakenly refers to the expired Bond Party, rather than the South African Party, as active in the 1920s setting of the play. Sophia's death scene is not in the play, which commences that part of the storyline only after her death. Significantly, there is also no Mabuis to supply the outsider's point of view, or the cosmopolitan view.

Like *Galgsalmander*, *Afgode* can be thought of as a humble beginning for Leipoldt's grand English project. It is clear that in both works (both written in 1928-29) Leipoldt displayed a growing inability to be fully comfortable in Afrikaans. His premises are interesting more on an abstract level than they are actually engaging, and rather average plot structure is further undermined by unappealing, unrealized characters and a greater tendency to overblown melodrama, or overstatement. The criticism of worshipping false idols is clearly and often brought up in the play, but it

is not as actively engaging as it is in the novel, which is surprisingly more theatrical than the play most of the time. *Afgode* suffers from the same unevenness present in *Galgsalmander* and possibly even the typescript of *Gallows Gecko*: it appears to have been written in haste, with little editorial instinct to limit the rushed “brain flow” that presents itself, and at other times Leipoldt’s on and off-again enthusiasm with the project can also be sensed. It is noteworthy as standing alongside *Galgsalmander* as the actual origin of the *Valley* trilogy.



CONCLUSION

In the early 1920s, in response to the National Party-affiliated CJ Langenhoven being granted a column (*Stille Waters*) in the Cape daily *Die Burger*, *Die Volkstem* gave Leipoldt his own column, called *Diwagasies van Oom Gert*. This was more a hope that a senior, renowned Afrikaans poet like Leipoldt could equal the success of Langenhoven at *Die Burger* and perhaps also maintain SAP interest for its readers. However, whereas Langenhoven had a prolific and consistent Afrikaans literary output, Leipoldt's reputation, in both life and death, rested largely on the success of *Oom Gert Vertel en Ander Gedigte*. Leipoldt's column was a space for his outspokenness on numerous topics as diverse as medicine, culinary interests, race, heritage and political developments, but it was not as popular as Langenhoven's and often raised the ire of both its SAP and Nationalist readers.

Although he would run for political office for the SAP in 1924 and had an anti-Nationalist slant in his writing while promoting the SAP (Kannemeyer, 1999: 465), Leipoldt's articles and pieces reflected his broader interests rather than merely being party-oriented propaganda (arguably, Langenhoven's column could be exonerated in similar terms).

It is worth noting that accusing Leipoldt of promoting SAP interests is not obviously mistaken. When the overtly patrician point of view reflected by characters in the *Valley* trilogy is considered, their discourses fall in line with much of the dominant SAP thinking of the 1920s, with the emphasis on white union in South Africa and a leaning towards English culture. Leipoldt's articles continually call for a reigning in of "hasty" developments in Afrikaans, and promote European influence and enlightenment instead. In *The Mask*, Mabuis' nostalgic remembrance of how preachers and clergyman in pre-South African War times were classically trained and educated in Europe is unobvious political suggestion, and Santa immediately accuses Mabuis of being SAP. Leipoldt, in this kind of writing, does shun issues of Afrikaner poverty that were an important area of concern for

Nationalists and a general social malaise in the country, regardless of party affiliation. A one-time SAP candidate running at Wonderboom in 1924, Leipoldt does enough to justify Kromhout's assertion that most of his thoughts on cultural development and nation building were meant for the improvement of Afrikaners only, and not English-speakers.

The broad humanitarian issues behind Leipoldt's thinking give credence to much of his writing during the late 1920s. While it does motivate him to challenge Afrikaner nationalism frequently and at times finds him agitating Afrikaners without any suitable grounds, Leipoldt's cosmopolitanism and its ultimate goals are clearer to detect as a subject running through all his work at this point.

The patrician framing of many of his discourses, as mentioned above, did not always take into account that many white South Africans simply did not have access to the kind of background Leipoldt had. Leipoldt could at times be something of an elitist, who took it for granted that a European education would be appealing and accessible to all. In this sense, the *Valley* trilogy exposes a Leipoldt 'typical' of the Smuts-led SAP: English-minded, highly skeptical and possibly prejudiced against the Republics and disenfranchised because of the SAP's losses to the National Party. In related articles (Leipoldt, 1990) Leipoldt would assert that both 'Saps' and 'Nats' had an equal sense of nationalism but that one of the two did not necessarily spell the word with a capital 'N', and that newspapers operating on either side were doing much to promote harmony between the two groups in the views of their readers. In his pursuit of raising an awareness of democracy for all South Africans, Leipoldt was not above criticizing his own party, as his opinion on the reasons for the SAP's conceding popularity to the National Party in the mid-1920s shows: "We did not apply our principles in such a way that they promoted the authentic nationalism on which every people ought to be proud... While in the saddle we did nothing..." (Giliomee, 2003: 397). In another instance, he claims that the English-speaking SAP media was often incorrect in its interpretation of the public's national feelings (Kannemeyer, 1999: 466).

Further study of Leipoldt's causerie articles (and later, his memoirs in *Bushveld Doctor*) may suggest the patrician SAP member, but they also reveal his dogged pursuit of racial and cultural tolerance that often saw him isolate himself from both sections. This refusal to be pigeonholed causes problems regarding a search for an 'authentic' Leipoldt, but in light of the *Valley* trilogy it emphasizes his refusal to agree to racial and cultural segregation.

On topics of Afrikaans culture and its development, Leipoldt offered outspoken but often-visionary commentary, which remains provocative. An incident with Langenhoven, in which the writer of the *Stille Waters* column reacted extremely to criticism of his commercial work by Leipoldt (Kannemeyer, 1999: 474-76), may have inspired the article 'Ons Letterkunde' (Our Literature) (Leipoldt, 1990), a three-part piece published in *Die Volkstem* from November 1928 to February 1929 and clearly an Afrikaans forerunner to the Cambridge essay of 1936. In this article, Leipoldt discusses the South African education system that disregards Latin, Greek, Dutch and French literature at school level. He regards this system as a reason why English and Afrikaans writers have an inability to judge their own efforts and offer works of inconsistent merit, with Afrikaans writers in particular the target of Leipoldt's study, as generally weak Afrikaans literature was implemented at school level in the drive for Afrikaner nationalism.

As the article came in three parts, there was sufficient time for readers to respond to each section before the next was printed—and Leipoldt, through these responses, also determined that the topic needed further elaboration as he continued working on it. In the third part he mentions his appreciation of the constructive criticisms the article had been receiving, and he goes on to lambaste writers who are sensitive to criticism and who respond to it with childish ill-feeling and thereby, in Leipoldt's view, hamper the growth of a literature. In the third part of the article, Leipoldt's statement that "the time of the 'language is the people is over'" (Langenhoven's famous proclamation) is vindicated by his theory that "...the people are more than a language... they are culture, refinement and tradition where language is a factor, but not the only factor" (translated from Afrikaans) (Leipoldt, 1990: 40). As he

would in the Cambridge essay, Leipoldt here maintains that Afrikaans cannot compete with English in terms of national development, as English had a rich heritage and high cultural placement universally. Instead of language alone, Leipoldt felt that cultural development would allow Afrikaans and its literature to come of age, and that it was the duty of everyone who wanted to contribute to such work to do their level best to establish a literature that is democratic and inclusive of all races and cultures (Leipoldt, 1990: 40). No doubt aware, at this time, of the efforts of Die Broederbond (the article predates the founding of the FAK by a few months) in promoting a more ‘modern’ use of Afrikaans, Leipoldt laments that the reading public, fed mostly poor standards of local literature, were in danger of being governed by sentiment and not intellect. To illustrate his point, Leipoldt then savages Langenhoven’s *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika* (the lyrics of which would be used for the South African national anthem only years later), which he regards as a childish work that has great popular appeal as a result of political maneuvering of Afrikaans as a patriotic language, concluding with the thought that the art of reading is lost when language is used to promote politics.

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Perhaps the clearest indication of Leipoldt’s intent with this article, and others like it, comes in the form of a brief aside, seemingly squeezed into a paragraph and perhaps another example of Leipoldt’s slapdash, off-hand way of mentioning but not fully exploring key issues: “We are a mix of races... In such a collection language does not play a central role—not as central, say, as economic factors...” (Translated from Afrikaans) (Leipoldt, 1990: 40). The rest of the article suggests that cultural growth in South Africa is inclusive of all races, but must start with the proper union of English and Afrikaans. While Leipoldt concentrates on removing differences between ‘Saps’ and ‘Nats’ and promoting unity between the two that has the best interests of the country at heart, those “best interests” include taking responsibility for a large native element that easily outnumbers the white element—a concern that is again explored in *Cultural Development* and at length in the *Valley* trilogy. Had it been published, *The Mask* could have bettered *Afgode* as one of the first unbiased ‘issue’ novels with regards to racial and social inequality towards non-whites in South Africa.

With this background of cosmopolitanism revealed by Leipoldt's general writing in the late 1920s and early 1930s, along with the unfolding of events in a manner that he had in one way or another foreseen, the *Valley* trilogy has a firm basis for its ideas. However, it is severely limited because at times Leipoldt is too broad with his cosmopolitanism, threatening to abstract issues that deserved concrete discussion. Most significant of these, as already mentioned, is a detailed study of conditions in the mining towns and cities of the 1920s—at the very least, even a juxtaposition of these with the depiction of the Valley communities could have opened a richer channel for exploration for Leipoldt's thoughts on race and class. The hearsay factor of the Valley community being deliberately isolated from the metropolitan environment and only being updated of events through postcard is a useful literary device insofar as the emphasis is exclusively on these communities as microcosms of South African society. But when characters in this fiction actively debate important political issues, some agency is needed to connect these debates to concurrent events in the urban areas. While the fiction is in no danger of merely lapsing into allegory, or abstracting its own chief concerns, the assumption must prevail that revisions and reworking by the author would have altered the state of the *Valley* trilogy significantly. Leipoldt's concern regarding racism was arguably commendable for the 1930s, but apart from general input from characters in *Gallows*, he never really elaborates what his notion of racial equality is, or how it should be systematically implemented. His criticism of white superiority holds strong as anti-Nationalist reaction and humanitarian campaigning, but a deeper theoretical study than Ayah Mina's solitary role in *The Mask* was an option worth exploring, as it could have given more substance to his anti-racist thoughts.

However, these are novels of ideas, and their unpublished status must always be considered. Leipoldt was untapped as an English novelist, and made a quantum leap from very average Afrikaans efforts (detective novels and obviously, *Galgsalmander*) to the highly ambitious project he set himself with the trilogy. *Stormwrack* in particular is a singularly groundbreaking achievement in South African literature.

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