

**Parodic imagination and resistant form in historical fiction: a study of  
Ann Harries's *Manly Pursuits***

**Tessa Bavasah**

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**Supervisor: Professor Peter Merrington**

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## ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I examine the historical novel *Manly Pursuits* (1999), by Ann Harries. The novel deals with the late nineteenth century in Oxford, England, and in particular the year 1899 in Cape Town. The focus of the novel is on Cecil John Rhodes and his entourage, and their obsession with empire, which culminates in the South African War in 1900. Featured characters include Chamberlain, Jameson, Kipling, Oscar Wilde, Charles Dodgson, John Ruskin and Olive Schreiner. The story is told through the first person narration of Wills, the only entirely fictional character. Wills is an Oxford don who has had dealings with these imperialists and who shares the same Victorian upper-middle-class upbringing as them. The Victorian society is the framework which is seen to have developed the class and gender-based values and imperialist thinking of Rhodes and his following. Using the theoretical framework of Michael Green's concept of resistant form, (*Novel Histories:1997*), Harries's novel is interpreted as showing resistance to this society and its values. Resistant form means accepting the reality of past events, yet showing resistance, through various fictional strategies, to the way these are or have been interpreted. As such the novel is showing resistance to imperialist thinking, the Anglo-Boer War, apartheid and all the resulting legacies for South Africa. In my analysis of the novel, I show that the characters, (including the narrator), which emerge from this Victorian society are sexually crippled and socially eccentric. Their repressed sexualities are expressed in the form of fetishes, which are often, and certainly in the case of Rhodes, metonymies for empire. The author, Ann Harries employs the use of parody to heighten the effect of these malfunctioning characters. The resultant humour allows for a send-up, a choice of resistant form through parody, irony, satire, and pathos, of the values and thinking of the time. In diminishing this society, resistance is being shown to the resulting impact on South Africa. In particular, the vision of Cecil Rhodes, as well as his milieu, is reappraised and the Rhodes legacy is

thereby interrogated. A comparison is drawn between Ann Harries's subsequent novel, *No Place for a Lady* (2005), and *Manly Pursuits*, which further highlights her resistance to this period in South Africa's history. *No Place for a Lady* illustrates the actual hardships of the war, including the concentration camps and Kitchener's scorched earth policy. Unlike *Manly Pursuits* however, this novel subscribes to the genre of the historical romance novel. The main character, Sarah, gives up her humanitarian principles for a marriage and family. Emily Hobhouse on the other hand, a philanthropist who wants to keep fighting against injustices, in this case the abusive power of the imperialists, comes to a sad demise. She is regarded by the men in the novel as being mad and ends up being taken away in a straitjacket. There is a parallel between the treatment of Hobhouse, and the way men regard Olive Schreiner in *Manly Pursuits*. Both women are outsiders as they are not married and their undertaking of humanitarian causes is seen as motivated by hysteria due to failed love relationships. They do not fit into the mould of conventional Victorian womanhood. In the depiction of the women in the novels, I see the author as further showing resistance to the values, attitudes, and behaviour practices of Victorian society.

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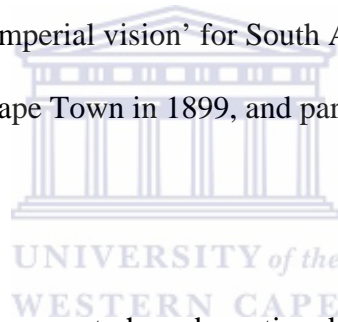
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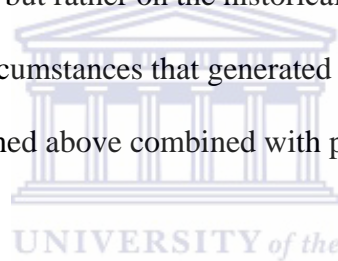
## Chapter one: introduction

THIS THESIS EXAMINES THE HISTORICAL NOVEL *MANLY PURSUITS*, BY ANN HARRIES. The novel is a satirical look at the events leading up to the South African War (1900-1902). This (Harries's first novel) is a tour de force of humour and compassion, richly researched and textually intriguing. Published in 1999, the novel is a fictional synthesis of the social, political and cultural milieu in which Rhodes developed his 'imperial vision' for South Africa. The novel is set partly at Rhodes' Grootte Schuur homestead in Cape Town in 1899, and partly in Oxford, England, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.



The emphasis on Cecil Rhodes seems to have been timed to coincide with the centenary of the South African War, as well as the centenary of his death in 1901. Harries was present at the international conference on the legacy of Rhodes, held at St Antony's College, Oxford, in 2002, a conference also intended to mark the centennial occasion. This conference, hosted by William Beinart, leading historian of Southern Africa, was an opportunity to review the profile and legacies of Rhodes, from a scholarly and critical perspective. Subsequent to the Rhodes conference, Paul Maylam published his *The Cult of Rhodes: Remembering an Imperialist in Africa (2005)*, which tracks the twentieth-century history of the Rhodes hagiography. The purpose of Harries's novel is evidently to engage, with the full range of irony and intimacy available in narrative fiction, with this same concept of the peculiar aura of grandeur and madness associated with Cecil Rhodes. Centenary commemoration is an aspect of history as heritage (whether critical or otherwise) and it is interesting to ask how narrative fiction can contribute to the shaping and revising of matters of public heritage or memory.

Because *Manly Pursuits* engages with this particular period, Harries's novel qualifies as a work of historical fiction. This means that she has reconstructed a historical period in a novel form, drawing on the conventions of narrative fiction. This understanding of the historical novel genre as engaging with the past, can be taken a step further. Historical fiction, in the words of Lukacs and quoted in Michael Green's book, *Novel Histories*, "does not become an independent genre as a result of its special faithfulness to the past, but rather on the historical circumstances which generate it"(1997:65). The historical circumstances that generated *Manly Pursuits* are, broadly, the centennial moments as mentioned above combined with postcolonial reassessment of the past.



Of course, speaking strictly in terms of the genre, Sarah Johnson, (2002:Online), expresses the obvious point that "a novel should only be called 'historical' if the plot reflects its historical period so well that the story could not have occurred at any other time in history"(2002:1). Green is more concerned with the kinds of engagement with this reconstruction of the past, in terms of the author's own fundamental interpretation. On the face of it, the historical novel may range in its interpretations from nostalgia and a conservative attempt at preservation, through to satirical revisionist views. Many historical novels (this is particularly true in South Africa) have sought to reconstruct exemplary views of the past, that would tacitly rehearse or reinforce contemporary values by means of the implicit precedent set up in the reconstruction (heroism or honour or other broad constitutive values). Harries's novel is remarkable in that it provides a deeply informed and thorough reconstruction of a particular milieu and, at the same time, undermines that milieu by means of rich narrative irony. Her choice of a first-person intradiegetic and fallible narrator enables this.

In the case of *Manly Pursuits*, the historical context, the Victorian period which she examines, is crucial to the underlying intention of the novel, which is to make sense of contemporary South African reality by examining and questioning the perception of the past events, which gave rise to this reality. Thus, Ann Harries does not merely reflect the history, but actively constructs the characters and plot around the particular circumstances of the period in a certain way, and for a specific purpose. This action ties in with Michael Green's version of a 'novel history', which "acts upon its construction within that history in the very act of its construction"(1997:34). Marita Wenzel, in her paper, 'The many "faces" of history: *Manly Pursuits* and *Op soek na general Mannetjies Mentz* at the interface of confrontation and reconciliation', supports this reading of the novel. She interprets the novel as "...[focussing] on confrontation with the past by exposing past injustices and undermining various myths and legends constructed in support of popular beliefs"(2002:Online). Harries' rendition is no less important than the traditional non-fictional 'history', which in the past has been given more recognition as being a 'truer' account than a story. The writing of history, like the writing of a story, involves narration and analysis, in which the writing would be based on a point of view. Both are representations of the truth. Green quotes J.M.Coetzee on this point as follows:

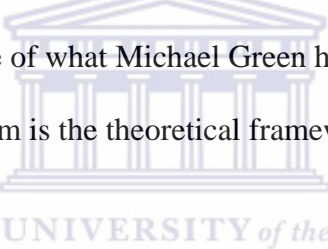
The categories of history are not privileged, just as the categories of moral discourse are not privileged. They do not reside in reality : they are a certain construction put upon reality. (1997:19)

Further, of course, we anticipate in narrative fiction a greater degree of textual play, of emotional content, of atmosphere and of shifts in narrative perspective, than is appropriate in formal history-writing. The 'construction put upon reality' is all the more rich and suggestive due to the devices of fiction, as we shall see in the discussion that follows.



*Manly Pursuits* focuses on the late Victorian period. This thesis aims to show that this novel, in its particular construction of this historical period, aims at an analysis which discredits this social, political and cultural milieu. In doing so, this interpretation shows resistance to imperialism, which arose from this period, and the consequent results for South Africa.

The central argument of this thesis then, is to show that the critique in the novel, in its form and content, qualifies as an example of what Michael Green has termed ‘resistant form’. Michael Green’s concept of resistant form is the theoretical framework for this dissertation. ‘Resistant form’, in Green’s terms,



recognise[s] the inevitable constructedness of its subject within its own creative processes, yet create[s] that subject in such a way that that subject challenges the terms within which it is constructed – thus resisting the very forms within which it is produced (1997:6).

‘Subject’ here means both the human subject and (in the older conventional sense) the subject matter, the historical occurrence or events under scrutiny. Resistant form means accepting these past historical occurrences and events as having happened, yet challenging the construction of these events by resisting the terms of their construction. In doing so, the understanding of the present is also questioned in that the present is a result of an ‘illegitimate’ past. In the words of Foucault as cited by Green, “demonstrating the foreignness of the past, relativizes and undercuts the legitimacy of the present”(Green:1997:29). The purpose of resistant form is to allow readers to formulate insights which are independent of outside authority, thus to act upon history autonomously and evaluate the present critically. Michael Green’s larger purpose in developing his theory of historicism in the novel, is to “[awaken] national sensibility and with it a feeling and understanding

for national history” (1997:65). This broader intention returns us to the question of how we respond to public historical moments such as centenaries. The strategies by which Harries has achieved the purpose of defamiliarizing or ‘demonstrating the foreignness’ of her subject matter are the main emphasis of the analysis that follows.

A case study of Wally Serote’s novel, *Gods of Our Time*, (1999), is an example of a novel that can be read as following the principle of resistant form. Dealing with the end of apartheid, a very simplified interpretation is that the novel is rewriting history in a way which counters a view that the demise of apartheid was mainly due to international pressure and internal divisions among the Afrikaner camp. Moslund describes Serote’s portrayal of history:

Serote offers a much needed critical response to the many proclamations that apartheid ended primarily because of the pressure of economic sanctions imposed by the international community and internal divisions in the white camp with capitalist and academic interests ranged against worker interests. (2003:43)

Rather, Serote emphasises the role of the people at grassroots level, as the prime agent in changing the country. In his novel, he thus presents the impact of the hidden people of the struggle, the workers, the black trade unions, and all the people who made up the resistant movement. In doing so, Serote is showing resistance to some dominant versions of this history, versions that (according to Moslund) result from the fact that “academic historians in South Africa have always remained and continue to remain predominantly white and male” (2003:41).

In keeping with Michael Green’s purpose of resistant form, Moslund argues that Serote’s novel shows resistance to the past, so that new evaluations can be done in the present,

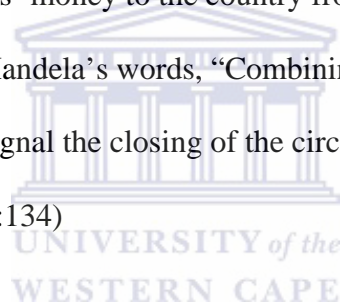
The resistant movement is foregrounded as the prime mover in the collapse of apartheid, yet it is done in a way that passes judgement on the present rather than endorsing the current structures of power. (2003:57)

In this way the present South Africa is evaluated. Is the new government serving the ideals of the people who fought for and died for it. Is the new government alleviating oppression and not instituting a new form of elite hegemony?

The publication of *Manly Pursuits* in 1999 seems to have been timed to engage with a set of centenary events, the centenary of the South African War, (and in particular the events that led towards this conflict), and the death of Rhodes in 1902. The centenary of his death was not marked by celebration. This is in contradiction to the centenary of his birth which took place in 1953, in what was then Southern Rhodesia. This event, which was opened by Britain's Queen Elizabeth (the 'Queen Mother'), was a celebration of colonial development. It was characterised by the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition which was, in the words of Paul Maylam, "the embodiment of colonialism, Eurocentrism, modernism and capitalism"(2005:42).

The centenary of Rhodes's death some fifty years later reflects a period in history where concepts and practices like racism and imperialism have been rejected, or are at least being questioned. The South African War devastated the country and caused unbridled death and suffering. In addition to an estimated 20,000 black people, ten percent of the Boer population of the two republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State) perished during the war. Thus it is not surprising that the centenary of Rhodes' death, and the South African War, were not marked by events which celebrated him and his 'achievements'. The conference held at St. Anthony's College, Oxford, at the end of 2002 was the only significant academic event to mark the centenary of Rhodes' death.

Here the papers did not focus simply on Rhodes' life, career and character, but rather, as Paul Maylam points out, "on the current trends in the discipline of history: the focus on memory and representation, the interest in the history/literature interface"(2005:140). The desire was no longer to pay tribute to the man and his deeds, his imperialism, racism, capitalism and exploitation, as they are no longer respected. In fact the links with Rhodes are now changing. We see it in the partnership with Nelson Mandela in the establishing of the Mandela Rhodes Foundation. This organisation has the purpose of restoring Rhodes' money to the country from which it was acquired to benefit the needy and disadvantaged, in Mandela's words, "Combining our name with that of Cecil John Rhodes in this initiative is to signal the closing of the circle and the coming together of two strands in our history."(Maylam, 2005:134)



Ann Harries's novel, as a postcolonial novel which coincides with the centenary of Rhodes' s death, similarly reflects this revised view of Rhodes. Thus the novel, in dealing with the history of imperialism, is understood as a resistance to colonial occupation and imperial control in South Africa. Ann Harries is offering a critique of these historical events. Harries herself says "I certainly have a critique of imperialism which in the case of South Africa led to Apartheid, largely through Rhodes's own fanatical ambitions,"(from an interview in April 2006). As a post-apartheid novel, *Manly Pursuits* stands in judgement of the factors which contributed to Apartheid. Imperialism is one of these factors.

Harries has written another novel, *No Place for a Lady* (2005), which is also a work of historical fiction, and which also deals with the politics of British imperialism. This novel focuses directly on the South African War. The novel tells of the horrors, the pain, starvation, mutilation and death

which happened during the war. The novel also clearly blames the British for the atrocities of the war. It uncovers the suffering and devastation caused by Kitchener's scorched earth policy, the horrors of the concentration camps as well as other hardships which are caused by war. These, for instance, are the instructions given to General Roberts, to implement the scorched earth policy,

Gather all food, wagons, Cape carts, sheep, oxen, goats, cows, horses, mares foals, forage, poultry. Destroy what you cannot eat or remove...Burn all houses....The object is to destroy or remove everything which may help the enemy or his horses or oxen to move or live. (2005:219)

By exposing the inhumanity of the British leaders and their policies, *No Place for a Lady*, like *Manly Pursuits* is offering a critique of these events.



Harries reminds us that the leaders were rewarded for their part in causing death and destruction.

Just as Jameson is knighted for his part in the Raid in *Manly Pursuits*, in *No Place for a Lady*,

Milner is rewarded for his role in the war, a war which cost an estimated loss of 30,000 lives, 26,000 of these being women and children who died in concentration camps:

Sir Alfred is to receive a peerage in return for his role in the war: he will assume the title Lord Milner of St James and of Cape Town, and will have even more power over the Colonial and War offices. (2005:357)

Harries exposes more distortion by revealing the British propaganda. The camps are said to have been, "very well looked after" (2005:359), and the British are reported to have had "great care and consideration...for the same, very often ungrateful, women" (2005:365).

The inhumanity is further shown in that the work of philanthropist movements, who attempt to aid the victims in South Africa, is not welcomed. In a fictional telegram from Joseph Chamberlain to

Sir Alfred Milner, (03/04/1900), he gives the Queen's sentiments regarding the British women who have come to aid in South Africa,

The Queen regrets to observe the large number of ladies now visiting and remaining in South Africa, often without imperative reasons, and strongly disapproves of the hysterical spirit which seems to have influenced some of them to go where they are not wanted. I conclude their presence interferes with work of civil and military officers. (2005:144)

Continuing the battle is far more important than helping those who are suffering. These organisations were seen as threatening as they were also often anti-imperialist and their members outspoken against the greed of the British.

Emily Hobhouse, reconstructed by Harries as a major sympathetic character in *No Place for a Lady*, plays an integral role in one anti-war organisation, and is an example of a woman who was badly treated by the British due to her attempts to expose the abuses perpetrated by the British during the war. When she is arrested as being mad, the author Arthur Conan Doyle is made to say 'That'll teach Miss Emily Hobhouse to go showing photographs of dying children to the British Public in the hope of stirring up pro-Boer feelings.' (2005:372)

Both of Ann Harries' novels are historical novels. Both reveal the atrocities and show the callousness and greed of British imperialism. However, despite the similarity to *Manly Pursuits*, of it being a historical novel, and a novel which is offering a critique of an historical period and its subsequent events, *No Place for a Lady* crosses genres in that it also conforms to the historical romance novel genre. Tina St. John, writing about the obvious protocols of popular historical romance, insists that:

the trick to a commercially successful romance novel is to keep your historical

content somewhere between pretty wallpaper and the primary focus of your story. It should provide a foundation and a framework for your story, but never forget that your focus—and your reader’s focus—should be rooted on the characters and their budding romance. (1998:Online)

While the historical context in *No Place for a Lady* is far from being mere “pretty wallpaper”, this novel does follow the expectations of popular romance as the story focuses on the relationship and romantic love between two characters, and the novel ends on an optimistic note for them, with a marriage and family. It is also a work of historical fiction as the romance is dependant on the context, from Michael Green, “[the] romance was part of the real world; its reality often manifested itself in acts of romantic possibility”(1997:206). It involves a British nurse who comes to South Africa to work, and a South African soldier. Patch and Sarah would never had met if it had not been for the war, and their romance develops when he ends up wounded in hospital and she nurses him. The history is a framework in which a romance develops. Another point to note is that their subsequent life together also reflects the particular circumstances of the Cape, including the leper colony as Patch’s mother is a leper. Harries’s narrative strategy in *No Place for a Lady* is very different from that of *Manly Pursuits*. The tight narrative irony in the earlier novel is lacking in *No Place for a Lady* and the emphasis in this second novel on the role of the independent ‘New Woman’ (as well as the protest against war) is weakened by the form of the plot that moves with a compulsion of its own to the rather trite closure of marriage and family in a flower-decked cottage.

In the case of *Manly Pursuits*, then, the argument is to show how this novel is an historical novel which qualifies as an example of Michael Green’s concept of resistant form.

Ann Harries deals with the historical circumstances of the Victorian period. These historical circumstances developed and endorsed imperialism. In South Africa imperialism led to the British, predominantly under the leadership of Cecil John Rhodes, taking over land, mineral wealth, governing the people, almost having ownership of the entire country. Eventually the only territory which had complete independence from British leadership was the Transvaal. The struggle with the Boers for the Transvaal led to the Jameson Raid, and eventually culminated in the Anglo-Boer War. These events had dire consequences for South Africa. They contributed to Afrikaner Nationalism and the establishment of Apartheid. In the words of Michael Green, “The past is a crucial definition of social definitions, [nationalisms], of this sort” (1997:16). As such, the Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaner Nationalism, and Apartheid, with all its atrocities, are direct consequences of British imperialism.

By reworking historical events, Ann Harries imaginatively exposes and examines the root causes of imperialist thinking. The Victorian society which endorsed imperialist thinking, is shown as being repressive and hypocritical. Harries’s version of this social milieu serves to diminish the basis for the formation of imperialist thinking and thus shows how unfounded the actual actions of imperialism and consequent destruction were. By discrediting this period and the formation of these values, resistance is shown to the subsequent events. While it recognises the present as a product of imperialism, it challenges the terms in which this history has been constructed, thus resisting the very forms, the Victorian period, within which imperialism was produced. The contemporary order is not understood as the inevitable and predetermined conclusion of historical cause and effect. Harries’s position as an historian thus stresses discontinuity in the historical process.



Rather than a crusade against colonial history however, the novel is also an amusing and entertaining engagement with this history which makes it a unique and delightful read. Peter Merrington in his review of the novel in the *English Academy Review*, sees Harries' style as "sustained light burlesque, by which means she quizzically ridicules the grand self-images of the English imperial patriarchy"(1999:266).

The author employs the use of satire. According to the *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, by A.J. Cuddon,

[The satirist] takes it upon himself to correct, censure and ridicule the follies and vices of society and thus to bring upon contempt and derision upon aberrations from a desirable and civilized form. (1977:599)

The protest in *Manly Pursuits* takes the form of ridicule. The society, resultant characters and events are made fun of by depicting them as excessive, sensational and melodramatic. They are parodied and the effect of this parody is humour. Parody is,

The imitative use of the words, style, attitude, tone and ideas of an author in such a way as to make them ridiculous. This is usually achieved by exaggerating certain traits, using more or less the same technique as the cartoon caricaturist. In fact, a kind of satirical mimicry. As a branch of satire, its purpose may be corrective as well as derisive. (Cuddon: 1977:483)

The method Harries employs is to imaginatively reconstruct and engage with the influences of the society which resulted in these imperialistic ambitions in an attempt to explore the psychopathology of these ambitions. The reworking of this period, including the reconstruction of the Rhodes milieu, (including Alfred Milner, Kipling, Olive Schreiner, Oscar Wilde and Charles Dodgson [Lewis Carroll]), presents itself as a cameo of patrician values at the close of the late nineteenth century. These class-based, racist, gender-specific and imperialist influences are part of an upper-middle-class social environment which is governed by strict codes of behaviour. The characters are alien to the implied reader as he/she does not share the values of this fictional world. The implied reader is

assumed to be from a postcolonial perspective, thus racism, gender-bias, classism are issues to be examined from an enlightened point of view. The situations and characters seem ridiculous and are a source of amusement and sympathy. At the same time, the force of the humour derives from our vestigial recognition of the milieu that Harries reconstructs.

Excessive moral rectitude, an obsession with gentility and respectability, are among the values of the society. These values which endorse socially correct and proper codes of behaviour, lead paradoxically to socially eccentric and sexually repressed beings. The characters are pressured to repress or hide their real desires in order to conform to the Victorian norms and values. The Freudian understanding of repression is when unacceptable feelings are repressed from consciousness. However it is revealed that there are huge discrepancies between the private lives of characters, and their public figures. This too is in tune with the Freudian analysis of what happens to repressed feelings. These repressed feelings are often not successfully suppressed. When they do break through, they result in extreme or perverse behaviour. Freud used the term, “faulty functions”, (Jacobs, 1992:35), to summarize this behaviour. Thus the societal pressures and restrictions contribute to the formation of bizarre, pathological and sexually deviant characters.

The author parodies the pathologies and sexualities of the characters. The characters and influences of the period are exaggerated and great schemes are diminished through informed laughter. Her use of humour emphasises the effects of this society. The text thus becomes a humorous examination of the values and practices of the society which contributed to imperialist thinking. In the novel, the purpose of parody is derisive. By creating the characters to be ridiculous and comedic, resistance is being shown to the thinking and resulting imperialistic behaviours of these same characters. As

products of a repressed and hypocritical society, these caricatured characters bring dark humour to the field of imperialistic vision.

The author thus ultimately shows resistance to imperial history through the irony in the interpretation of this period in history. The title, *Manly Pursuits*, becomes increasingly ironic as the characters' warped sexualities are exposed. The author is emphasising how ludicrous their desire for conquest and warfare is, in the midst of their sexual and emotional underdevelopment. Victorian society is ironic as it upholds morality and yet nurses a political world of corruption, as well as an underworld of 'decadence'. The marked upper middle-class interest in aesthetics is ironic in Harries's treatment, as it is an obsession with empire rather than a genuine interest in art and the philosophy of art. The purpose of acquiring objects of art as well as the form aesthetics takes reflects the materialism of the middle-classes. The link between Victorian subject-formation and the characters' obsession with empire is understood to be a consequence of the values of middle-class society. By treating these values with irony, the author is showing resistance to them.

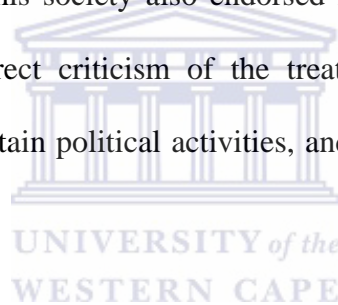
As the warped values of the society and the resultant behaviours of the characters are revealed, a secondary effect of the readers' understanding of the violent practices of the late Victorian upper middle classes is one of fetishes, fixations on objects or people which arise from displaced sexual desire. Their repressed sexualities are given expression in the form of fetishes. Thus their behaviour which expresses imperialistic desire, their collecting of countries, men, birds, art, objects, art, conquests, expansion, as well as cultural importation, are understood to be manifestations of displaced sexual desire. In view of the reading of the novel as resistant form, fetishist metonymies,

ie the objects of their fixation, become metaphors for the imperial project at large. These fetishist metonymies are parodied by the author.

While *Manly Pursuits* is a highly entertaining and amusing novel due to its satirical narrative, and the critique takes the form of interpreting the society which helped to form this thinking, there are also elements in the text of explicit intellectual resistance. Social Darwinian theories were used to apply a distorted and narrow interpretation of the concept of natural selection to human systems. These theories that would justify British exploitation as a natural process of domination by strong against weaker nations, are contested throughout the novel. These theories were moreover not supported by Darwin, “Darwin knew of – and rejected- the notion that his description of natural processes had any useful application in shaping human culture,” *Social Darwinism*, (2000:Online).

A specific key element in the plot is the matter of the infamous lost telegraph messages alleged to have passed between Rhodes and Jameson and Joseph Chamberlain, British Colonial Secretary, concerning the Jameson Raid and its purpose of inciting war. Characters like Leander Starr Jameson and Olive Schreiner reveal information to the narrator, Wills. In doing so they are intended by Harries to fill in a missing link in the official record of this critical moment in Southern African history. The hugely ineffectual Wills becomes the recipient of crucial information, and – with comic pathos – fails in his charge. Schreiner, as a counter-voice, also directly criticises the treatment of the indigenous people and the Boers, as well as the machinations that promoted war in South Africa, practices which are championed by characters like Rhodes.

*Manly Pursuits* qualifies as an example of resistant form. It is a resistance to the social and cultural matrix of imperialist ambition. The influences of the society are shown as having directly affected the formation of the characters. Irony is employed to reveal the ludicrous inadequacy of motive and behaviour. The novel critiques by poking fun at these characters by means of employing parody, hence the characters and these behaviours are caricatured, and the events are (in line with Victorian melodrama) sensationalised. The resultant humour is designed to diminish the society which produced the characters. As this society also endorsed imperialism, imperialistic thinking is thus diminished. There is also direct criticism of the treatment of the Boers and the natives, the disclosing of corruption in certain political activities, and the refuting of arguments used to justify imperialism.



Chapter two examines the historical reconstruction of England and Cape Town. The history is a backdrop in which the characters and influences of the society are introduced. The real historical links are exaggerated and as thus are rendered comedic. The Victorian society endorses empire and sexual morality. The patrician upper-middle-class values of the society are class, race and gender-biased. The hypocrisy of morality is revealed in the 'decadence' which arises as a reaction to the rigid and stifling pressures. In Cape Town, the events which lead up to the Anglo-Boer War, are examined.

Chapter three examines Wills, the first-person narrator and the only entirely fictional construct, as an example of resistant form. Through the evidently pathological persona of Wills, Harries critiques the patrician attitudes that contributed to imperialistic thinking. She diminishes these values by allowing Wills to disclose how they have determined his own social and sexual pathologies. His

role as narrator is to focalise the effects of the society, and the views of the other characters, through his own brittle subjectivity. The choice of the first person intradiegetic narrator allows the author to achieve a combined intimacy and a critical distance. She is able to filter the milieu through the focalisation of a character who is intimately part of the upper-middle-class privileged English world of the day, and who is also in other respects querulously remote from the vigorous imperialist image that was associated with Rhodes and his cronies.

In Chapter four, the characters of Rhodes, Ruskin and Charles Dodgson are discussed as examples of subject-formation as resistant form. Like Wills, they are revealed to be sexually crippled and socially eccentric. In the disclosing of their distinctly ‘unmanly’ sexualities, the irony of their pursuit of warfare is highlighted. The obsession of Rhodes with aesthetics and collections is actually metonymous for empire-building. Thus the violent discourses and practices of the late Victorian upper middle classes, are understood to be parodically fetishist.

Chapter five focuses on Olive Schreiner. By means of her own novel, *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (1898), and her direct anti-war campaign, she serves to show the destruction caused by imperial activities. As the only prominent woman in the novel, she is caricatured to be ridiculous and clumsy. Her active participation in political activities is also accentuated. She is the direct opposite of conventional Victorian womanhood. Ann Harries is showing resistance to the society and the ideal of Victorian womanhood through her exaggerated presentation of Schreiner. Schreiner also reveals information about unknown political activities of the British during the Jameson Raid. She tries to get this information made public so as to avert the South African War. Harries is making the point that corruption, if exposed, might change the course of history. Jameson discloses

actions such as his part in the Raid, as well as the role played by the German emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm. Resistance is also shown to imperialism by the refuting of the pseudo-Darwinian argument that the British are the fittest race, and as such justifying their plunder of countries.



## Chapter two : historical reconstruction

THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH HOW ANN HARRIES HAS SET UP THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. The novel *Manly Pursuits* is a reworking of a period in history. Harries has chosen to set the novel in Cape Town in 1899, specifically in Cecil Rhodes's Estate, Groote Schuur. The narrative also reverts to earlier moments in late Victorian England, particularly Oxford, in order to introduce the characters and the influences of the time. Areas of particular emphasis in her reconstruction are the public ethics of the ruling elite, the material background to Oxford and Groote Schuur at the time, the role of Oxford thought in the propagation of ideals about imperialism, the student friendships between some of the main characters, the acquisitive materialism that extended into the world of art, and the existence of a kind of counter-culture, the culture of aesthetic 'Decadence' and homoeroticism, which sets up an ironical counterpoint to the 'manly' virtues of empire-building. This irony also works to expose the hypocrisy of the dominant puritanical social ethics.

Harries seems to be writing for a specialist reader, one who knows quite a bit about the personalities and the texture of the period. Her engagement with this informed implied reader assumes that this reader shares her values which are not those of the period and the characters she has chosen to include. Hence, by means of conversation with the enlightened implied reader, her highlighting of the racist, gender and class biased values, and her exploration of the homoerotic counter-culture within the ruling elite, in themselves create a sustained kind of in-joke. The use of a first-person fallible narrator, (the ornithologist Wills), helps to focalize the text closely through the eyes of a



privileged member of the Oxford-educated ruling elite, while also setting up rich opportunities for ironic subversion of the milieu.

Harries diminishes the values of this Victorian period and its social practices by means of humour. Her parodied presentation renders the characters as ridiculous. The author employs irony to criticise the values of the period and the viewpoints then held. She thus exaggerates the focus on empire, and on class, race and gender bias, and in resisting these values she exposes the irony of the repressive nature of Victorian morality. This interpretation becomes a satire, a way of ridiculing the flaws of the society in a humorous way. Her examination of this society thus qualifies as resistant form. She is showing resistance to the framework and texture of the society and thus to the imperialist thinking it gave rise to.

Harries' fictional reconstruction of the late nineteenth century in England deals with the Victorian elite, a highly privileged small world. 'Correct' behaviour and a repressive sexual morality are shown to have been the dominating social influences. The major goal of the elite 'ruling class' is evidently to extend imperial power. In the late nineteenth century, Empire was at its height. With the Industrial Revolution, Britain was developing rapidly in industry, and empire-building was part of the economic expansionism. In the words of Clayton and David Roberts "Britain's great industrial lead at mid-century was the result of striking innovations in textiles, iron, railways, shipbuilding, and machines of every kind." (1985:581)

These inventions enabled Britain to produce goods cheaply. They also enabled Britain to have powerful military might. England however needed colonies to support its produce as British

markets were saturated. The opening of the Suez canal, and the naval and military superiority which the British enjoyed, enabled them to extend their influences to other countries.

In Africa, Cecil John Rhodes was in just the powerful position to gain colonies for England as he had amassed huge sums of money on the diamond mines. These words by Rhodes in 1895, quoted by Bernard Semmel, show that he was wholeheartedly absorbed into the thinking of the period, “[We] colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced by them in the factories and mines.(1960:4)

With the extension of British rule and conquests, systematic ethnicist attitudes evolved concerning the colonised peoples. Elleke Boehmer describes colonial attitudes as:

[P]reoccupations with cultural difference, dislocation and ‘taint’, as well as with the inventive hybridization of languages and social habits emerging out of contacts with other cultures. (1998:xix)

Some of these attitudes were not only due to the colonial encounter. At a time of immense economic and social change, England as a nation was not sure of its identity. In this climate, distinct attitudes and ways of thinking were born, the aim of which was to gain psychological security in a politically insecure environment. In the words of David Thomson:

Unity was sought in the vaguer, more unreal entities of race and empire....The collision of ideas, rapidly becoming a clash of ideologies, took concrete shape in new movements of violence. (1950:234)

Jingo patriotism with its racist connotations was an easy reaction in the search for a psychologically secure world. Added to this were emphases on respectability and on manly virtues. This complex Victorian code of values is well attested as resulting in kinds of sexual repression with an emphasis on self-control, discipline and prudence, all considered to be strong stabilising forces in reaction to a

nation in flux. Thus a particular sexual morality as well as strong ideas of imperialism became the dominant values. Harries recreates these codes of behaviour and interprets their consequences on the subjectivity of her characters.

In examining the late nineteenth century, Harries focuses on the imperialistic influences of Oxford in particular. The importance of Oxford University in imperial and commonwealth policy is well recorded. At one level was the work of preparing young men to enter the Indian Civil Service. At another was the power of the idealist philosophy known as neo-Hegelian idealism, which promoted the idea of civilization as an evolutionary force, and the importance of civic duty to the state. See Semmel (1960) and Madden and Fieldhouse (eds.) (1982) for detailed discussion of these influences.

The role of John Ruskin, a Professor of Art at Oxford, features prominently as propagating imperial idealism at the University. This figure of Ruskin is immensely useful to Harries in drawing together, based on historical fact, a grouping of idealistic young men – some of them obsessed with empire-building and others with art and aesthetics, and as we shall see there are ironic overlaps between these interests.

The eighth of February 1870 is the date that Ruskin gives his inaugural lecture which Rhodes attends. In this lecture, in the words of Elleke Boehmer, “He, [Ruskin], supported imperial expansion in so far as it was spiritually elevating for the English.”(1998:16) Moreover he promotes the idea that the colonies are inferior and uncivilised. From the “Conclusion to [Ruskin’s] Inaugural Lecture”,

[S]he,[England], must guide the human arts, and gather the divine knowledge, of distant nations, transformed by savages to manhood, and redeemed from despairing into peace (ibid:19).

Ann Harries uses this event in the novel to show how he spurs the youth on to building up the English Empire. Harries quotes Ruskin's actual words: "The England who is to be mistress of half the earth, cannot remain herself a heap of cinders...."(MP: 41), and, "Will you, youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings....all I ask of you is to have a fixed purpose of some kind for your country and yourselves."(MP: 43)

Part of building England up meant founding colonies. The resources of these countries could be exploited to enrich England. Thus Ruskin says:

she[England] must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing every piece of waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching her colonists that their chief virtue is to be infidelity to their country, and that their aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea (MP: 42).

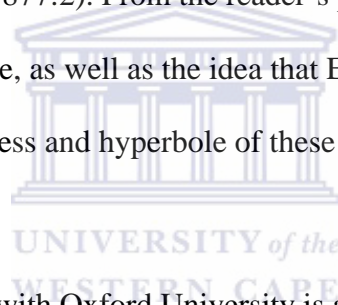
Harries's presentation of the profound effect of Ruskin's words on Rhodes is amusing:

[T]he expression on this youth's face could not have been more astounded, more ecstatic, as if his fate had just been revealed to him, and the rest of his life accounted for. (MP: 44)

Rhodes is shown as a one-dimensional character who is obsessed with empire.

While Ann Harries does parody Rhodes's reaction to Ruskin's words to create humour, Rhodes's real reaction to these words is in itself disturbingly hyperbolic. Rhodes wrote a document called "Confession of Faith" in 1877 in Oxford, (1877:Online). Later that year, in Kimberley, he made a few additions and changes. This paper, which is a direct response to what Ruskin is advocating,

shows that Rhodes accepted literally what Ruskin said. His solution, which he puts forward in the document, is to form a secret society, the aim being for “the extension of the British Empire”(1877:2). This society will enable young men to bring more territory and people, who are now “despicable specimens”(1877:1), under British rule. These people will then have a chance to become better human beings: “what an alteration there would be if they were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence”(1877:1). Without this purpose, he sees their lives as meaningless: “[T]hey live and die unused unemployed”(1877:2). From the reader’s progressive viewpoint, the advocating of the youth to go out and colonise, as well as the idea that England is the saviour of savage nations, seems ridiculous. The earnestness and hyperbole of these words are now disconcertingly comic.



Rhodes’s personal connection with Oxford University is also seen as a source of amusement by the author. Oxford was obviously extremely important to Rhodes. He travelled back and forth over a decade, while becoming a mining magnate in South Africa, to Oxford to get a degree. In the novel, Olive Schreiner ironically makes fun of his association with Oxford thus diminishing the ideas of imperialism which Oxford propagated. Schreiner says to the fictional narrator, Wills:

He [Rhodes], has the greatest possible reverence for Oxford. You must know that He [sic – Harries emphasises the hagiography by capitalizing the pronoun] took time from the diamond fields to gain an Oxford degree in order to qualify as a superior human being (MP:161).

Rhodes was influential in trying to make Oxford into an ‘imperial university’. In his will Rhodes bequeathed large sums of money as scholarships to fund those interested in the development of imperial connections at Oxford, thus showing further that Oxford was extremely influential in propagating and sustaining his vision. Harries pokes fun of these wills and their link to the creation

of a superior young man who will make it his mission to take over the world. The wills are described in the novel by Rhodes:

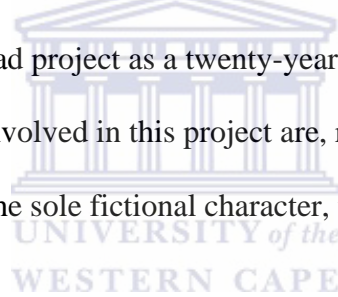
They concern the education of young male colonials and the establishment of a scholarship scheme whereby these young men will be sent to the University of Oxford 'for the instilling into their minds the advantages to the colonies as well as to England of the retention of the Unity of Empire.'  
...These young men will be groomed at Oxford in order to rule the earth. (MP: 311)

The links with Oxford also serve to show the gender discrimination which was operating as part of the thinking of the time. There are as yet no female scholars at Oxford. Women have no part in determining the future of England. As such, the scholarships that Rhodes bequeaths in his will are originally only for men. Moreover, these men cannot be married. These exclusionary conditions which are attached to the scholarships have long ago been done away with:

In 1959, the requirements that scholars be unmarried was amended for those in their third year at Oxford. Later, the prohibition fell away completely and in 1976 women were made eligible for the scholarship. (Maylam, 2005:80)

The earlier gender-biased patrician values are seen in the comments made by characters in the novel concerning Olive Schreiner. Harries is showing resistance to the Victorian idea of womanhood by choosing to make Olive Schreiner, a woman, actively campaigning against the pending war. In that male dominated society, it was not a woman's place to be educated, or to be actively involved in politics. So, when Schreiner tries to intervene and be heard, she is perceived as a hysteric, frustrated, and not worthy of being listened to or taken seriously. Milner says, in response to her request to meet with him, "I have already received some hysterical communication from the lady which I have chosen to ignore"(MP: 222), and the narrator, Wills, has to really persuade him to meet with her, "Ten minutes is all she asks"(ibid). Schreiner's role and how she contributes to the resistant form of the novel, are examined more fully in Chapter Five.

The famous 'Hinksey Project' serves to introduce other characters at Oxford who are exposed to Ruskin's influences and thinking. Hinksey, a village outside Oxford, is the place where John Ruskin gathered Oxford students to build a road. In addition to this being an art school project, it was also a challenge to rail. The thinking behind this was that roads do not cut through land and impose on nature. Roads can follow the natural curves of the land. This project was aimed at showing the link between nature, art, and the ethics of manual labour, Ruskin's own triad of interests. Rhodes attended Ruskin's Hinksey Road project as a twenty-year old youth. Other students who feature in the novel and who were also involved in this project are, remarkably enough, Oscar Wilde, Charles Dodgson, Alfred Milner, and the sole fictional character, the narrator, Wills.



Historically, Milner too, was strongly influenced while at Oxford and continued to be so in later life. At the time he entered Balliol College, it was under Benjamin Jowett, who together with Ruskin and T.H.Green were major influences at Oxford. Jowett saw his role as master of Balliol College to be in shaping the conscience and mind of young men who would enter the imperial civil service. Jowett established the Oxford neo-Hegelian idealist school of thought which reinforced this purpose. When, after the Anglo-Boer War, Milner formed the Kindergarten whose members were to help to run the affairs of the British Empire, all eleven members of the group had been educated at Oxford within the same philosophical ethic, mostly at Balliol or at New College. Milner's ideology and part in promoting the cause of empire will be expanded on later in this chapter

The historical backdrop for the novel in Cape Town in 1899, is at Rhodes's estate. The Cape was then governed as a colony by Britain, with a relatively autonomous local parliament of which Cecil

John Rhodes was Prime Minister. Rhodes had by this time, on his own initiative, colonised large portions of Southern Africa and various other parts of Africa and it was his ambition to take over the continent in its entirety for Britain by building a Cape to Cairo railway line. The struggle during this year (1899) was for the Transvaal which (along with the Orange Free State Republic) was still governed by the Boers. The unsuccessful attempt to take over this independent Boer republic by means of the Jameson Raid had resulted in disgrace for the English due to the blatant nature of the invasion. As a result, tensions were high between the English and the Boers with the threat of war looming.

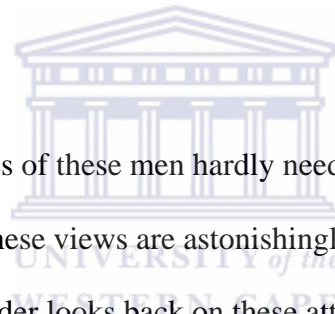


In collecting men to further his obsession with empire, Rhodes gathers around him Milner, Jameson, and Chamberlain, all who are actively involved in colonising Africa. Drawing on le Bon's crowd psychology and Trotter's herd instinct, in the words of Michael Jacobs, "Freud suggest[s] that what binds groups of people together is their internalization of their leader"(1992:60). Rhodes might well be understood as a charismatic figure who was reinvented by his followers as an internalized image, a kind of saviour, a figure of cult status for his fellow imperialists.

Rhodes, Jameson, Milner, Chamberlain, as well as Kipling, are staying at Rhodes's Groote Schuur estate. The explorer Selous and Frank Harris come and visit later on. In 1899, Rhodes and his following are picking up the pieces after their disgrace in the Jameson Raid. Moreover, they are making plans to fight the Boers, despite the disgrace they have just experienced. These men are all upper-middle class. Their patrician values are shown to be highly charged with class-based, racist, gender-specific and imperialist attitudes and visions.



This ideology is the common bond which holds them together. Freud's theory though is that, in order to do this, they have suppressed their instinctual needs of sexuality and aggression. They are loving to each other, but their hostility is not given an outlet. This would explain their cruelty and hostility towards those who don't belong, hence, their ruthlessness not only towards the natives, but also towards the Boers. Maylam quotes the biographer Dagobert Von Mikusch, who likens Rhodes to the fascists and nazis, "a man who grasped the significance of both race and state power in the spirit of fascism." (2005:11)



The racist and superior attitudes of these men hardly need to be exaggerated by Harries. To the modern post-colonial reader, these views are astonishingly dated. Humour is created through the readers' point of view. The reader looks back on these attitudes and finds them ludicrous as they are so far removed from progressive thinking. The characters provide humour as they take themselves so seriously, think they're so superior and are so proud of their thinking. Their self-importance and superiority are reduced to melodrama which is one of Harries' comedic tactics which also shows resistance to their activities.

The climate in which the novel is set in Cape Town shows the Boers as dissatisfied with English rule, and the indigenous people as having been ruthlessly dispossessed of their land. The Great Trek has happened for those Boers who wanted to get away from the English rule and influence. Harries elaborates Milner's disdain for the Boers and for them having trekked. He refers to them as: "the backward Trekboers, who had effectively sealed themselves off from British influence by living hundreds of miles inland upon a lunar landscape." (MP: 203)

The Boers are also obviously unhappy with the English and are trying to hold onto power in the Transvaal. Hence they do not want to give the Uitlanders (British citizens who were living in the Transvaal) the vote. Milner states the current position clearly, when he outlines the grievances of the Uitlanders in the Transvaal:

It all comes down to the issue of franchise. That old Boer isn't going to let the foreign Uitlanders vote unless they've been living in his wretched republic for seven years – fourteen years...(MP: 58).

Milner's manipulative understanding of this action by the Boers is that the Boer sees "The Englishman, the Uitlander, [as] the devil in disguise."(MP: 206)

As the novel is set in the aftermath of the Raid, which has shown how desperately the British want to control the whole of South Africa, the political situation is tense. So when Milner takes over his new position in South Africa after the Raid, his aim is to strengthen the position of the English by having control over South Africa. Edward Crankshaw, in his now very dated and sympathetic study, *The Forsaken Idea: A Study of Viscount Milner*, expresses Milner's desire as "a passion for the survival of this country, [England], with its sister nations and dependant Empire." (1952:4)

Milner also dismisses the disgrace of the role of the British in the Raid, and emphasises his own importance. He says, "Oh, I've been sent here to pick up the pieces after the Jameson débacle." (MP: 57) He finds that the Boers have become nationalised: "The Raid has united all the Boers in the country ....., and the Imperial position has been horribly weakened." (MP: 58)

Milner shows his superior attitude when he criticises Rhodes for his greed and his methods, saying, "He can't get enough of Africa for the Crown"(MP: 58), and, "His idea of diplomacy is fat cheques

slipped under the table”(ibid). Milner arrogantly feels that the current British are not doing an adequate job in furthering the aims of the Empire, so it is up to him to take over. His description of them emphasises his derogatory feelings:

Those British foreigners in the Boer republic who run the goldfields – and therefore the economy – are no better than a bunch of barbarians: there aren’t a dozen of them who can tell a vegetable from a violin.” (MP: 57-8)

Milner sees his tactical skills as superior, so he tries to reach a compromise with the Boers: “I’m meeting a delegation of Transvaal Boers in Bloemfontein in two days time, and I hear conciliation is once again in the air...or delaying tactics.” (MP: 59)

Walter Nimocks puts the crisis into perspective when he says that:

To both Afrikaner nationalists and British imperialists, disagreement over the rights of an urban minority in an Afrikaner state was only the most obvious sign of a deep-running struggle for control of South Africa. (1968:5)

If the Uitlanders weren’t allowed to vote, England was never going to have control over the Transvaal, and therefore South Africa.

Milner’s ambition and concern for the English, as well as him believing they were the best to rule, meant that when no compromise was reached, he had to go to war. His words to Schreiner after she begs him to rethink the war, again exaggerate his self-importance:

*I cannot tolerate the spectacle of thousands of British subjects,[Uitlanders], kept permanently in the position of helots, calling vainly to Her Majesty’s Government for redress. (MP: 283)*

Edward Crankshaw supports this view of Milner saying:

He [Milner] strove hard to avoid war... But always in his mind was the knowledge that unless the Boers made certain concessions [with the Uitlanders] war was inevitable. (1952:50)

This struggle for control of South Africa eventually culminated in the Anglo-Boer war, of which Milner (as High Commissioner) is in charge.

Statements that Rhodes made show him as racist, and that he thinks the English are superior.

William Plomer in his study of Rhodes, quotes him as saying, “two thousand years lie between us and the natives” (1984:125), and calling the ‘natives’, “fellow tribesmen of the Druids” (ibid, 1984:125). Rhodes’s racist and superior attitudes are embellished by Harries.

Thus Rhodes repeats these sentiments often to heighten his idea that the British are the supreme race, and that other races are uncivilised. Rhodes refers to the indigenous people in the novel as “Half-devil and half-child.”(MP: 212) As the best race, the British are not just supreme over these people, but over every race, even fellow ‘white’ races, the Boers. Rhodes talks about the Boer as “as lazy and unwashed as any Kaffir...., never seen a bar of soap in their lives, did you see their fingernails,...”(MP: 205). He talks about himself and the English as, “*the first race in the world*”(MP: 207), and as such “the best race to rule the world.”(ibid)

In the novel, Jameson also espouses that the British are “the superior race, evolved over the millenia”(MP: 211).

The class-based values are shown in the aesthetics of the period. Because this was a time of high empire (and its economic concerns), the interest in aesthetics was not only to celebrate beauty, but

also the ruling ideology, and materialism. Artworks were an indication of wealth and a lifestyle which the empire represented. Those who could afford it took an interest in and acquired artworks as a symbol of their social aspirations. Ruskin's ideas that art should depict a natural and moral universe had influenced the group called the Pre-Raphaelites to paint exacting details, especially regarding nature, but this group had dissipated by the late nineteenth century. The subject matter was now mainly narrative, in the words of Clayton and David Roberts, "respectable, edifying, and comfortable" (Roberts, 1980:633). This was because the purpose of these paintings was to adorn the houses of the middle classes. Buildings, like artworks, are described thus:

...similarly reflected the status quo. There was no unified style due to the diversity of influences. The forces of fragmentation were too great. What did result however was that structures were ornamental and grandiose rather than functional. This represented a proud and wealthy age (which celebrated the British Empire), as well as the tastes of the rich and influential people, prone to overstatement and exaggeration. (1980:635)

Not only did the aesthetics reflect prosperity, but also the Victorian morality. The Bourgeois became the leaders of society at large and morality suited their purpose. Industrialisation had brought squalor, slums and exploitation among the working classes, also drunkenness and moral squalor. Public concepts of morality were intended to counteract all this. The art critic Ruskin saw his mission being to resist the vulgarisation of art, and by means of improved public artistic standards, to uplift the lives of the working classes. It is of course illuminating to note Ruskin's jingo views on colonialism and imperialism, which undermine these lofty goals. This apparent contradiction points to the deeper tensions that lay within Victorian public concepts of morality.

Clayton and David Roberts explain the perceived social utility of this Victorian concept of morality:

Economically, it brought success and social advance; intellectually, it buttressed religion and assuaged doubt; psychologically, it brought order, cleanliness and chasteness to a world of drunkenness, dirt and profligacy. In an economy of unprecedented growth Victorian virtues led to jobs and prosperity. (1985:627)

All artists, including poets and novelists, were restricted by this core of Victorianism. Free expression was limited. As such, the aesthetics during this period were, as Karl Beckson writes in *Aesthetes and Decadents of the 1890s*, “viciously constricting” (1981:vii). Clayton and David Roberts comment on the moralistic attitudes to literature at the time:

Charlotte Bronte in *Jane Eyre* and Emily Bronte in *Wuthering Heights*... came perilously close to writing too frankly about sex, passion and the tyranny of males. Others charged Dickens with bad taste in dealing at such length with the world of crime in *Oliver Twist*. (1985:639)

The decadence of the period arose in reaction to the dominant ideology, to the strong puritanical morality, and class-based materialistic values, which were regulating the artists' creativity. Artists were searching for new expression and new forms of experience. They wanted to break free from the imposed limitations. Beckson explains the rise of Decadence as, “the artist's protest against a spiritually bankrupt civilization, his imagination striving for the unattainable to restore his wholeness”(1981:xi). Hence the form that aesthetics now started to take, reflected what would have seemed at the time to be highly provocative moral and spiritually depravity. Again in the words of Beckson, “[decadence reflected] a desire to shock with excursions into perversion, its devotion to artifice, and its desire to pull down the decaying temples of Victorian respectability” (1981:xi).

Oscar Wilde and Frank Harris feature in the novel as characters whose activities reflect the decadence of the society

Harries has chosen to include the trial of Oscar Wilde to highlight the hypocrisy of Victorian morality, as well as to foreground questions of gendered identity. As a homosexual and an aesthete, Wilde ran counter to the moral ideology of the time. While this Victorian morality was obviously not the universal feeling, it was the dominant one, and, as has been shown, the one which was most useful to maintain by those in power. Hence, the Victorians held homosexuality in horror, and Britain stood out at the turn of the twentieth century as the only country in Western Europe that criminalized male homosexual acts with draconian penalties. In 1861, a law was made, The Offences Against the Person Act, Section 61, which remained in force until 1956. This law read, from *Homosexuality* by D. J. West:

Whoever shall be convicted of the abominable crime of Buggery, committed either with mankind or with any Animal, shall be liable, at the Discretion of the Court, to [imprisonment] for Life. (1955:78)

This meant that, short of buggery, other homosexual acts were permitted. However, in 1885, a new clause was introduced which made all sexual acts between males of any age punishable by two years imprisonment. To commit a sexual act, it was not necessary for men to touch, exhibiting the genitals was enough for prosecution.

However, homosexuality was not new and was indeed widely practised. Oxford is a prime example. Oxford was a public school for boys and as such had masculine public school values which emphasized hard work, sportsmanship, and military glory. Yet the bonding between men could often assume the subversive forms of homoerotic desire. It was a place where, in the words of Richard Ellman in his study of Oscar Wilde, “boy worship was conspicuous” (1987:58). Among Ruskin’s roadbuilders and disciples was William Money Hardinge, who was known as the “Balliol bugger”(Ellman, 1987:58). However, the subject was kept as quiet as possible.

Wilde's disgrace came because he did not keep quiet. As an aesthete, he believed in free assertion of his individualism and that to deny his impulse would be to contract his nature. As a person with a high profile, Wilde's transgressions were publicised and they created a scandal. His 'feasting with panthers' therefore was too open for Victorian society and had to be punished. Wilde's homosexuality was outrageously expressed and he was punished for it. Harries shows Wilde at Clapham Junction, having lost his trial and now waiting under charge for the train to prison, "A downcast Sebastian, he stood linked by metal cuffs to a prison warden's arm." (MP: 327)

Ann Harries also satirizes the attitudes of the public:

The crowd had discovered his identity, and were shouting out his name: "Mr Hoscar Wilde, hauthor and poof in 'andcuffs!' ....their jibes were of the coarsest nature. One man stepped forward and spat full in Oscar's face...". (MP: 327)

Despite homosexuality being rife at the time, Oscar Wilde, due to being a public figure, was made an example of. He was a victim of Victorian puritanism, a scapegoat for vices that were otherwise kept hidden.

The hypocrisy of the 'morality' of the society is again shown in the unveiling of the activities at Frank Harris' party which Wills (the narrator) attends with Oscar Wilde. Wills was told by Wilde that he would meet:

men of Empire, soldiers and explorers, hunters and traders, who have lived for years in colonial outposts...I feel their stories of native habits and customs, to say nothing of the local flora and fauna, would be of interest to you (MP: 191).



The experience however is nothing such as Wills is led to expect. It is a party which serves to celebrate the bizarre sexual practices of these 'men of Empire'. We see the need for sensationalism, melodrama, the bizarre and the artificial in the decor, mind-altering substances, and sexual exploration. The house is described:

African masks hung side by side with Indian tapestries, while whips, spears, assegais and shields clustered round golden Buddhas, Islamic mosaics, Amazonian stuffed parrots and other foreign booty. (MP: 192)

Absinthe, among other drinks, causes Wills to "hallucinate wildly"(MP: 198), and the sexual exploits are expounded on by Wills:

I then saw the Lord of the Realm straddled across that very table, his buttocks exposed to the air, while Lizzie whirled above these pale mounds a rod of twigs which he proceeded to whip downwards, causing the noble Lord to call out in pain,... (MP: 199).

Furthermore, paedophilia is hinted at, as they are attended to by children, one of these whom Wills has an encounter with: "much was my astonishment to find our table's small servant suddenly cuddled into my lap"(ibid), and, "Overwhelmed by curiosity, I allowed my hand to slide beneath the flaming fabric, to determine the virgin sex of the little urchin,...". (ibid) This underworld stands in contradiction to the accepted Victorian moral code of decency and respectability. It serves to disclose the reality of activities which were engaged in despite the dominant values of the period. Harries critiques the society which upheld 'purity' and 'morality' by exploring the decadence.

Harries chooses to feature Lewis Carroll, also known as Charles Dodgson, in the novel as a one-time friend of Wills. Dodgson, like the other English characters in the novel, is also a product of Victorian middle-class society. His sexuality is depicted as deviant as it is expressed in a love for little girls. Wills becomes friends with Charles Dodgson as they share an interest in photography.

Harries has described their friendship, (I quote from an interview with the author in April 2006), “as possibly influencing Wills’s subsequent fascination with little girls”.

This chapter has sketched how Ann Harries has reconstructed a particular period in history. She has explored the influence of social values in England on the subjectivities of her characters. The influences of the society propagate imperialism and sexual morality. The ‘Decadence’ of the time has arisen in reaction to the constricting limitations placed on free expression, which are a direct result of the moral values. The purpose of Harries’s preoccupation with the Decadent sub-culture is to construct an ironical framework that challenges the ‘manliness’ so strongly emphasised by the empire-builders, and indeed to raise the spectre of Rhodes’s own sexual ambivalence. The middle-class values are racist, as well as gender- and class-biased. Harries has also disclosed the empire-building strategies of Rhodes and his following in Cape Town. Their racist attitudes towards the Boers and the indigenous people, as well as the self-importance of Milner, Rhodes and Jameson have been exaggerated to show them up. The purpose of the choice of characters, the way they and the narrator have been constructed, as well as the interrogation of the society she has constructed, will be further examined in the following chapters.

### **Chapter three: the narrator's role within the novel's resistant form**

THIS CHAPTER WILL BE DEDICATED TO THE NARRATOR, WILLS, and how, in terms of his role as narrator, and by means of his fictional subjectivity, he contributes to the resistant form of *Manly Pursuits*.

Ann Harries has written a novel in which she reworks a period in history, the late nineteenth century in England. The year 1899 in Cape Town, South Africa is examined in particular. This Victorian period endorsed imperialist thinking which had dire consequences for South Africa. The focus of this thesis concentrates on seeing the novel as a resistance to the social framework and the dominant historical grand narratives which contributed to the development of imperialist thinking. Harries's interpretation and presentation of the past qualifies as resistant form as it enables the reader to respond to the past with a revised rather than canonical understanding, and thus then, to re-evaluate the legacies of this past. She explores the social framework imaginatively, as an attempt to understand the origins of imperialist ambitions. Harries' highlighting of this society and its values is a satire, a way of exposing the flaws in this society and then diminishing this world by depicting it as ludicrous. Humour is created by exaggerating the effects the society has had on the characters. The characters and events are rendered as ridiculous. The reader is invited to criticise through the resulting humour and the bizarreness of the situations.

The really significant narrative choice by Harries, which enables her to achieve this general purpose, is her method of exploring the values and influences of Victorian society as contributing to

the development of socially and sexually repressed individuals. She does this through the first person narration of Wills.

Wills, the narrator, is the only entirely fictional construct in the novel. Through the evidently pathological persona of Wills, Harries critiques the patrician attitudes that contributed to imperialistic thinking. She diminishes these values by allowing Wills to not only disclose the effects of the society on the other characters but also to show how they have determined his own social and sexual pathologies.



Schlomith Rimmon-Kenan in *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, states that “the author is the agent responsible for the production of the narration and for its communication”(1983:3). As distinct from the author, a second level of narrative hierarchy is the implied author:

He, or better, *it* has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn. (1983:87)

The voice ‘it’ has chosen in this novel is the voice of the bizarre and fragile Oxford ornithologist Wills. Ann Harries’s implied authorial voice is merged with that of Wills, thus creating a strong illusion of critical distance from the narrative as far as authorial perspective is concerned – filtered through the sustained vision of the first-person narrator. However, the fact that Wills is a fallible observer leads us to identify the sustained separate presence of the implied author who is “setting him up”.

Wills is the filter, the focaliser, who transmits the narrative to the reader, the narratee. He describes as he experiences, so that the reader can make inferences from external observations. As participant

in the action besides commentator, Wills is “fallible”. He cannot penetrate the characters’ points of view with any full intimacy of understanding; he presents them through the process of his own encounter. He is the external focaliser to their words and by presenting their words, allows the reader to infer their consciousness.

“Consciousness is presented by the characters’ own verbal competence”, Dorrit Cohn reminds us in *Transparent Minds* (1978:44). Here, it is Wills’s educated verbal competence that selects and filters this through his own narrative. The character thus represents his ideological position through his way of seeing the world or his behaviour in it, as well as through explicit discussion of his ideology. The choice of the showing of events, what is presented, and how it is presented is a strategic device by the author to unravel the characters, as well as the society and its influences. The choice of a first-person narrator enables her to naturalise the historical milieu by the illusion of a period consciousness while also setting up the ironic possibilities that are made possible by a fallible perspective.

An example of Wills’s role as focaliser is when we experience him going to attend the famous inaugural lecture by Ruskin in Oxford as Professor of Art. Wills sets the scene: “So many people would be disappointed by admission into the lecture theatre, that it had been decided to move the venue to the much larger Sheldonian theatre.”(MP: 27) We thus know that Ruskin is extremely popular and that people want to hear his words. Then he tells us what he knows about Ruskin:

I had thought Ruskin was an art critic who had rescued Turner from obscurity and abuse, but it seemed he also had strong views on social reform for ordinary working people enslaved by the factory hooter and living in miserable poverty; Ruskin’s solution was free education, fixed wages and pensions. (MP: 26)

We then hear Ruskin's actual (historically recorded) words when he addresses the lecture:

[S]he[England] must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing every piece of waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching her colonists that their chief virtue is to be infidelity to their country, and that their aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea (MP: 42).

Knowing the historicity of these words, the informed ideal reader thus, (against the signals of the implied narrator), places considerable trust in the veracity or accuracy of the narrative voice, highly subjective though such a filter must be.

Ruskin is shown as being extremely influential in transmitting these ideals to other people. Wills initially is distanced from these words, "witnessing a great performance which had no connection with my own life"(MP: 43). But Ruskin is such a powerful speaker that he gets involved: "But such was the intensity of his words and the precision with which they had been chosen, that I felt myself straighten, as if his message were aimed at me alone." (ibid)

Wills also informs us of others' comments and responses as he observes them. To keep with Ruskin's lecture, Wills tells us the response of a woman who "gave a low moan and burst into tears" (ibid), as well as Rhodes's response, "his blue eyes were aflame; his mouth had dropped open..., as if his fate had just been revealed to him and the rest of his life accounted for." (ibid)

This technique teaches us about Ruskin's popularity, his imperialist ideas, as well as his eloquence. His impact and power are then further emphasised through the effect his words have on Wills, Rhodes, and other people.

A brief examination of Rhodes gives another example of a character expressing his ideology through his words and actions. Rhodes's action of commissioning Wills to bring songbirds from England to the Cape is an attempt to Anglicise the Cape. His perception is that any English influence will "*improve the amenities of the Cape.*"(MP: 5) He furthermore verbalises his imperialist ambitions frequently: "My dream concerns the entire Anglo-Saxon race"(MP: 168), and, "And it came to me in that fine, exhilarating air that the British were the best race to rule the world!"(MP: 207) Any ornamentation to the Cape such as (in this novel) English songbirds, would enhance his Anglicising mission.



When the characters and events are experienced using these methods, it allows for very detailed understanding of them. As focaliser, Wills allows others to betray their point of view, and as narrator, he states his own.

As a first person narrator, Wills has his own point of view. In the words of Rimmon-Kenan, "...all the items of the narrative content are filtered through some prism or perspective"(1983:3). As the 'filter', Wills has therefore been constructed in a very specific way and for a very specific purpose.

Ann Harries has constructed Wills to be an extreme example of the social and sexual pathologies which could result from this highly privileged social milieu. He is shown to be obsessive, pathological and neurotic, as well as sexually deviant. A sort of sympathetic humour is created by the way in which his condition is shown as extreme, and in how intensely he experiences his condition. The implied reader understands Wills's problems and the root cause of them whereas Wills does not. His limited point of view, and his problematic values, therefore render Wills an

unreliable narrator and also create ironic humour in his understanding of society, as they are shared by the implied author and reader. When the views of the implied author clash with those of the narrator, “the irony shared by the implied author and reader.... invites the reader to criticise”(Rimmon-Kenan,1983:102-103).

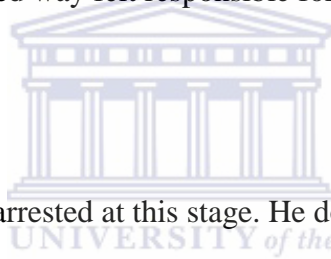
Wills is intimately part of the upper-middle-class English world. His childhood features in the novel as an example of a middle-class Victorian upbringing. His privileged home environment and hence his familial relationships have been governed by laws of ‘respectability’, ‘properness’ and social ‘correctness’. This way of relating was a symptom of middle class Puritan morality. The focus was on “self-control and discipline....to form habits of thrift, punctuality, industry, cleanliness, sobriety, modesty and deference”(Roberts, 1985:626), habits which were not formed through indulgence and affection. So while he has been well provided for, his emotional needs have not been met. Both parents were emotionally removed from him. His father was occupied with his collections of naturalist specimens, and his mother was singularly unmaternal. He describes his mother: “...., a vigorous woman more interested in horses than humans, kept out of my way,...” (MP: 113). He only begins to develop a relationship with his mother at the age of eight: “At the age of eight I had begun to notice my mother”(MP: 122).

Wills has thus grown up deprived of spontaneous familial love and affection. He has spent his frail childhood virtually bed-ridden, been educated at home by a tutor, has had no contact with other children besides his sisters, and has had emotionally distant parents. This is why he is so traumatised by his mother’s death, as she dies while he is in the process of developing a close relationship with her. He describes the growth of affection for each other:



I began to long for her rough goodnight kiss, always remembered by her at the last minute; indeed, often forgotten. And with the tentative emergence of my new feelings, a kind of abrupt fondness for her only son stirred in my mother's unmaternal breast. (MP: 122)

Wills's mother dies at this point. He feels that he caused her death as she fell from her horse because he requested to see her ride. She rode her horse because she wanted to show off her riding prowess to him. After his mother's death, he says, "I had quickly learn the dangers of close attachment, and in some unstated way felt responsible for her death simply because I had weakened her by loving her." (MP: 126)



Wills's development becomes arrested at this stage. He does not develop sexually or socially. As a consequence of his mother's death, Wills turns away from people, especially from women, due to fear of close attachments to them. After his mother's death, Wills's sisters die or end up in mental asylums and he is left to grow up with an emotionally distant father. He has never interacted with people and is therefore socially inept. As a result, he lives as a recluse, only interacting with Mr James, (who had been his tutor), and his wife: "Over the twenty-five years, as I grew more reclusive, their, [Mr James and Elspeth], visits had been almost my only contact with a society that was not connected with my experimental work." (MP: 321)

In this isolation, he has developed a passion for natural history, particularly birds, which is why he is commissioned by Rhodes to introduce birdsong in the form of nightingales to the Cape. Here again he has hidden away from the social world, in a laboratory, experimenting on birds.

From childhood, Wills has used illness to escape from the world. This self-inflicted illness has thus allowed him an opportunity to escape from social interaction. Wills's illness can be explained in Freudian terms as directing an outlet for his sexual impulses which he has repressed due to the oppressive nature of his Victorian upbringing. Repression is the term used by Freud, summarised as follows by Michael Jacobs:

...to describe a phenomenon whereby feelings which are unacceptable are repressed from conscious thought. ....[Repression] resulted from an initial situation in which the patient's feelings were excited, but were experienced as...unacceptable to the 'dominant mass of ideas constituting the ego'. The ideas and feelings are held back in the unconscious by the force of repression. (1992:36-7)

Wills represses his sexuality due to the fear of being disappointed again. His illness can thus also be understood as a way of rechanneling his sexual impulses. Angela Richards puts it as follows:

Between the pressure of the instinct and his, [the ill's], antagonism to sexuality, illness offers him a way of escape. It does not solve his conflict, but seeks to evade it by transforming his libidinal impulses into symptoms. (1977:79)

Wills's illness is a way in which he avoids expression of his sexuality. Repressed sexual feelings however are not always successfully held back. Often, repressed sexual feelings, when they are expressed, again in the words of Michael Jacobs, "find their way to expression indirectly and all the more easily along the wrong path to a somatic innervation." (1992:37)

Wills's sexuality is inverted. "Inversion" is a term used by Freud to explain stunted sexual activity. Homosexuality is one form which inversion takes. Freud sees men's pursuit of men, as being determined by their flight from women. However the flight from women does not have to manifest in turning to men. In Wills's case, he flees from women, but he needs an outlet for his repressed sexual feelings. Inverts can express their sexual feelings by focussing on a subject, (homosexuals

are an example of this), or they can make an object the recipient of their feelings. Expression of these sexual feelings may take the form of neuroses or fetishes, both which are considered pathological by Freud. Neurotic symptoms, the forms of expression which the converted sexual instinct then takes, are often perverse as they arise at the cost of the 'normal' sexual instinct. A fetish occurs because in the denial of one's sexual instinct, one fixates on something else. Michael Jacobs explains the objects which are fixated on as "supplanting the sexual aim" (1992:45).

Wills's love of birds, as shall be shown, falls into "...the category of the invert who finds sexual sensations in objects that are normally without sexual appeal", according to the formulation of Havelock Ellis, in his early study *Sexual Inversion. Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, VI, (1915: 9). Wills does not see emotional connections and associations the way most of the rest of the world do. Thus he displaces his instincts by a fixation on birds, objects which are not directly associated with sexual desire.

Wills continues throughout his life to think himself ill, and therefore to act like an invalid. The fact that Wills's physical and emotional fragility is self-imposed, and that his experience of his condition is so extreme, leads to him being experienced as a comedic character with a degree of likeable pathos.

So, while Wills has been given the task of bringing English birdsong to Cape Town, he has also come to the Cape to recuperate from 'illness'. He says, "My medical supervisors in Oxford agreed that the turmoil in my head would best be quietened by a complete change of environment." (MP: 5) When he arrives in Cape Town, he informs us that "[his] entire adult life has been stretched on the

rack of chronic dyspepsia”(ibid). He describes himself as ‘weak’, and that he “had only just vacated his sick bed”(MP:7).

His exaggerated experience of his symptoms is comic. Wills presents himself as a delicate individual who needs special care. He needs to take afternoon naps, eat only certain foods, and even, due to his fragile constitution, needs to eat in a specific environment: “I require silence for successful digestion.”(MP: 8) He also excuses his eccentric and unstable social behaviour as a symptom of his ‘illness’. He says,

The convolutions of my brain are but a macrocosm of the coils of my abdomen where ancient ulcers erupt and poison disseminates, so that orderly thought is replaced by chaotic outbursts. (MP: 5)

Wills’s arrested development is extreme. He reveals that he has an aversion to natural sexual development. Once again returning to the iconic figure of Ruskin, he says,

I am a man unacquainted with his body. I do not admire the exposed flesh of Michelangelo’s sculptures or Rubens’s overfed women. In particular- like Ruskin- I am repelled by bodily hair. I do not see the need for it. The late Mr Darwin could undoubtedly have explained to me how the unnecessary coils around my genitalia fit into the evolutionary process, but I doubt whether such an explanation would lessen my disgust. I avert my eyes when bathing. (MP: 243)

This revulsion for pubic hair is shared by John Ruskin who could not consummate his marriage with his wife due to the fact that she had pubic hair.

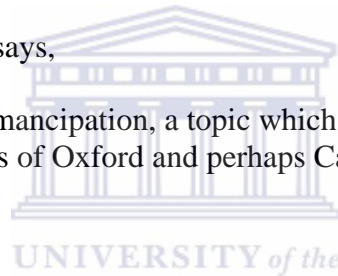
Wills’s anxiety and disgust regarding sexual relations with adult women are similarly excessively felt. When Frank Harris expounds on a sexual act with a grown woman,

And as I place my own lips against her bud of joy I feel an incomparable surge of ecstasy overwhelm my entire body : my tongue thirsts for the love juices that pour from those rosy lips(MP: 234),

Wills is completely revolted. Harries's implied author makes fun of his response: "a wave of nausea overcame me. Trembling, I ran to the window and pushed it open."(MP: 234)

Wills's aversion towards women could also be linked to his belief that women are definitely inferior to men. In this he has imbibed the patrician middle-class values of class and gender-bias. He believes that only Oxford-educated men, and maybe those with a Cambridge education, are intelligent enough to vote. He says,

[O]n the topic of female emancipation, a topic which, I feel receives far too much attention... In my opinion, only graduates of Oxford and perhaps Cambridge should be allowed to vote in England. (MP: 80)



As he thinks women inferior and is repulsed by them, he employs only men to work with him on his experiments. Of this choice he says, "I would have nothing to do with the females of course."(MP: 256)

Besides sexual immaturity, Wills's behaviour is childlike. When things do not go his way, his response is that of an indulged child: "I refused to budge"(MP: 6), and "communicated my displeasure by refusing to eat"(ibid).

Wills's fixation on birds and experimentation on them, due to it being a rechannelled sexual outlet, is extreme, an obsession. His interest is in vivisection, showing a violent and destructive pathology. This could also be explained as an outlet, his rebellion against the restrictions of the "correct" and "proper" code of his Victorian upbringing. His motivation to find out "how, why, when, where do birds sing? The human race deserves an answer"(MP: 254), is ridiculous as the human race is not

the motivation for his experimentation. In fact his experiments cause him disgrace in the eyes of society. Outsiders voice their displeasure by hanging a warning replica of him from a tree, “[t]he effigy which had been suspended from the highest branch bore a representation of my own facial features.”(MP: 295) The vivisection which Wills practices is not even necessary. He admits, “I had no need to vivisect.”(MP: 254) His vivisection is shown as an extreme compulsion that he enjoys. He does it with care, even ‘love’. His feelings of enjoyment are shown when he says:

To slit open the throat of a nightingale – under careful laboratory conditions, of course – is to embark on a voyage of discovery infinitely more thrilling....  
Yes, I have carved open the breast that Oscar set against the Rose’s thorn until it penetrated ‘her’ heart and the rose became crimson.(MP: 94)

The mutilation which Wills indulges in is presented as a force that drives him, similar to that of the sex instinct, and which gives him satisfaction and fulfilment.

So, his experimentation includes slitting birds’ throats to see what produces song. He deafens them by removing their cochleas to see if they’d still sing without being able to hear, and tortures them by rearing them, quite unnaturally, in isolation. This destructive aspect of his persona is also seen when he destroys his father’s prized possessions, his moths. Wills pulls one wing off each of them, showing his anger at his distant father, and in the process literally destroying his father who commits suicide shortly after this. Wills tells us that “Two weeks later, [after the destruction of the moths], he hanged himself in the conservatory. I had found his body, with its purple, protruding tongue.”(MP: 216) He confesses and admits blame for the suicide years later. He says, “He hangs because I have left half-winged messages in his safe place.”(MP: 295)

In disclosing Wills' horrendous pathology, Harries is showing how a seemingly correct, educated and respected professor, is hiding a dark, and troubled persona.

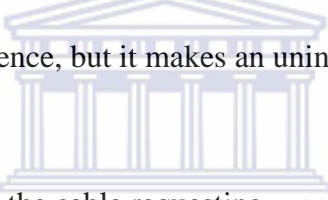
Wills is also sexually deviant. While he feels disdain and is sexually revolted by grown women, Wills feels comfortable in the company of a child. This is a symptom of his arrested development. When he comes to Cape Town, he seeks out the affections and company of a young child. In his choosing the company of a little girl, paedophilic tendencies are hinted at. Maria, a little girl of about six or seven, is affectionate and accepting of him: "she stretched up her arms towards my neck [and ] planted a kiss on my startled lips"(MP: 78). Wills begins to long for the child and starts to seek Maria out, his experience with her causing him "joyous exhaustion"(MP: 142). A photographic session which culminates in Maria romping naked shows his naive sensual enjoyment of her body: "I cannot stop looking at her beautiful body"(MP: 334), and "her buttocks would fit precisely into my cupped hands"(MP: 334). In this, his love for little girls, as opposed to grown women, Wills is in the company of Ruskin and Charles Dodgson.

Wills's unnatural social and sexual tendencies, as well as his extreme pathology, are a direct result of the influences and values of the society. By disclosing how the practices and discourses of the society have affected him, the construction of Wills's subjectivity qualifies as resistant form – all the more so, in the literary use of this concept, by the manner in which he is "set up" as an unreliable narrator.

While Wills is an intimate part of the English middle-classes, he is also an outsider as he is not involved in the politics of imperialism. Harries is discrediting the social milieu in the disclosing of

Wills' problematic persona, as well as through his focalisation and perspective of imperial activities. Wills has been deliberately constructed to be apolitical in order to contribute to the resistant form of the novel.

His ideological orientation, is the perspective from which he views the imperial activities of Rhodes and his entourage. Wills sees and speaks, and in doing so, reveals his own point of view. Hence he is critical of Rhodes ordering him to bring birds from Britain as it is the wrong season for them. His criticism is based on natural science, but it makes an unintentionally comic comment about the imperious demands of Rhodes:



Then, out of the blue came the cable requesting – *commanding* – me to leave immediately.....I argued that if we arrived in Cape Town in autumn all mating would cease and there would consequently be no birdsong for the nameless millionaire who required it so urgently. (MP: 7)

Wills shows that he is not motivated by imperialism as he cannot understand what is driving Rhodes to continue his imperial activities when he is obviously not well. He says of Rhodes, applying his own personal valetudinarian attitudes to life:

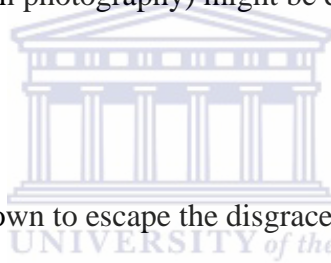
It is, of course, an absolute mystery to me how a man of his obvious ill-health, to say nothing of his Disgrace, should actually want to undertake the responsibilities of state in addition to his vast business enterprises (he has control over ninety percent of the world's diamond production, I am reliably informed) and Chartered Company. Surely what he needs now is rest, rest, rest?(MP: 79)

As a disciplined scientist and a professional naturalist Wills also argues ingenuously against the pseudo-Darwinian notions that the English should rule the world as they are superior. To Rhodes' question, "Fish...birds...apes...man...the Anglo-Saxon race? Isn't that how it goes?"(MP: 210), he replies,



On the 'Anglo-Saxon race', as you put it, I cannot comment, as this group is not a species...No one species, let alone race, is better than another...It is therefore pure fallacy to identify evolution with the onward march of progress..., and there is no evolutionary difference between a naked savage and the Queen of England. (MP: 211)

The fact that Wills is an expert on birds, that he's lived an isolated, invalid existence helps to explain his lack of imperial ideals. His focus has been different; on the natural world rather than on the political world and he is more objective, seeing the world through a kind of scientific framework which (in terms of his interest in photography) might be described as a not entirely objective camera lens.



Wills has also come to Cape Town to escape the disgrace he has been in due to his experiments on birds, and to gain his health. His aim is therefore apolitical in nature, to escape rather than to become actively involved in a different country. Moreover he has come largely against his wishes, but without much choice "My feeble voice was powerless"(MP: 7-8). As such he is determined to be uninvolved in what is happening and as such is the neutral newcomer who wants to keep a low profile. Because he is an outsider, people feel they can talk to him. Thus Wills becomes the confidante, the sounding board for people, among them Schreiner. The imperialists do not listen to her or take her seriously as she is a woman, and because she is critical of their activities. Wills is therefore the vehicle by which the reader is presented with Schreiner's resistant views and other information which would otherwise not be told.

While Wills is critical of Schreiner at first, he later finds himself drawn into her plot to avert the Anglo-Boer War. On his voyage to Cape Town, he hears about the book she has written which criticises the treatment of the natives by the British. Wills the misogynist shows his disdain for what

he hears about Schreiner, by saying, “I thank heaven she was not on my boat”(MP: 70). His aversion however, has nothing to do with the politics of the situation.

At the end of the novel however, on reflection on the war, he agrees with Schreiner’s political views. Her views on war are clear, “*Who gains by war?...Not Africa!...Not the brave English soldier*”(MP: 280). As the war has ended, Wills can reflect on it and on why Schreiner wanted to prevent war. He now agrees with her that war does no good and is sorry that he did not help to avert the war. He talks about the “*unmitigated disaster of the war that was to follow – a War that might just possibly have been prevented.....I now regret most bitterly that I did not.*”(MP: 337) This is a rare and new display of public conscience in Wills, developed through his interaction with the characters at Groote Schuur.

These words and this reaction shows that Wills has developed a social awareness. He realises the wastage of war. This growth in social awareness has been a process along a linear time scale. Just after he arrived, he was, “already homesick for Oxford”(MP: 9). Soon after he arrives in an invalid state, he begins to change. He feels free and adventurous, and follows the sound of a nightingale along an unfamiliar path,

At the same time something stirred in my dark soul, perhaps an atavistic curiosity to know where the path led, and something more : a sudden desire to abandon myself to danger. (MP: 36)

In the last chapter, Wills is in Ujiji, still in Africa, in the year 1907. This fact further shows the change in him. The placement of this chapter, (at the end of the novel and not the beginning), is important as it is the climax to Wills’ political awareness. It also serves to create suspense. If the novel had started with this chapter, the reader would have known from the start that Wills was

going to develop from being apolitical and uninvolved to becoming an active participant in trying to avert the war. Now we experience the development without knowing the outcome. Even so, there is once again something very bizarre about Wills's final situation. He has had to leave Oxford. Now he has had to leave the Cape. This rarified individual is in a peculiar exile, despite his fragile health and his morbid instincts. The situation of Wills at the close of the novel is again framed with a sense of comic irony, and of pathos.

There are two ways in which we experience Wills's character development: in England over the years, and then over the period Will spends in Cape Town. This technique of juxtaposing his Cape Town experience with his past experiences serves to highlight the differences between the two experiences more effectively as they can more easily be compared or contrasted. The growth that Wills undergoes in Cape Town is that he becomes less reclusive and more politically aware. He actually gets actively involved in political activities. This is in contrast to his life in England which led to his social and sexual development being stunted and him becoming pathological. This serves to again show up the environment of Victorian England as oppressive.

When in Cape Town, Wills is a stranger in a strange land. His past is obviously more familiar to him. As he lives, learns and experiences in Cape Town, he is reminded of past events which are relevant to his current experiences, thoughts and feelings, and he relives them. Wills's reminiscences serve to inform us about his life and the lives of others before he came to Cape Town. This travel through time is to satisfy questions in a narratee's mind about what has happened before.

This narrative technique is called analepsis. Rimmon-Kenan states that analepsis, “provides past information either about the character, event or story- line mentioned at that point in the text...., or about another character, event or story-line.”(1983:47)

This technique fills in gaps in the development of the narration. Wills introduces us to characters and issues. Drawing from Rimmon-Kenan, “[Wills] shows ‘prior knowledge’ of the character [for example, Rhodes as an Oxford undergraduate]...[and] can therefore identify the former to the reader”(1983:97). We meet the characters, are told what they are doing and thinking, and are then filled in with information relating to their pasts. By thinking back and telling the experience, Wills provides knowledge about the characters’ lives. By narrating what the characters have been engaged with, he introduces the themes of the novel. Thus Wills has experienced Ruskin advocating imperialism, has shown the inspiring effects that Ruskins’ words have had on Rhodes, been exposed to Dodgson’s photographs of little girls and Frank Harris’s decadent party, and witnessed the social demise of Oscar Wilde. The choice of the showing of events, what is presented, is a strategic device by the author to present the characters through the point of view of Wills, and in this way, to highlight the society and its influences. Further, as regards Wills’s own eccentric personality, the analeptic revelations about his childhood contribute to our deepening identification with him.

Wills thus has been created for a specific purpose and with a distinct character so as to fulfil this purpose. Wills is part of the patrician English-speaking world, has been Oxford-educated, and as such, has a history with the British men in the Cape who hold imperialistic ideals. He also interacts with these men in the Cape. Intimacy is created due to his experience and knowledge of them being

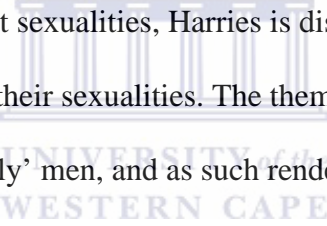
first hand. As a first person intradiegetic narrator, he filters the milieu as a character who is part of the world of the characters.

Wills takes us on a journey through his life from childhood to the present. He focalises the viewpoints of the characters and himself, and as such exposes the reader to the influences and events in the societies of England and Cape Town. Wills's repressed sexuality manifests itself in his obsession with birds which is seen as a fetish and in his arrested development, which is expressed in his love for little girls. As products of a similar environment and upbringing, it follows that certain other characters should also be sexually deviant, have arrested developments or be pathological. Chapter Four will be dedicated to the discussion of Rhodes, Ruskin and Charles Dodgson, and how they show resistance to the society by means of their complex blends of social and sexual pathologies, which goes to the heart of the ironic formal resistance in this novel, namely, the questioning of the manliness of 'manly pursuits'.

## Chapter four: characterisation and resistant form

IN THIS CHAPTER, I WILL DISCUSS PARTICULAR CHARACTERS OTHER THAN THE NARRATOR:

specifically Rhodes, Ruskin and Charles Dodgson. Ann Harries has chosen certain characters and constructed them in specific ways. Ruskin and Charles Dodgson are depicted as paedophiles, whereas Rhodes is hinted at as being homosexual. Harries is highlighting the irony of manliness in that the obsession with warfare and conquest is manly, yet the sexuality of these men is not.



In her parodying of their deviant sexualities, Harries is discrediting the social framework that contributed to the formation of their sexualities. The theme is to show that, in a central irony, Victorian society led to ‘unmanly’ men, and as such renders their focus on warfare, a conventionally ‘manly’ enterprise, ridiculous. This social milieu is also the one in which Rhodes developed his imperial ideas. Harries is resisting the very forms in which this history has been produced and the subsequent results for South Africa. In the words of Michael Green, “[She] resists the present, the very politics which produces it, and in so doing force it to question itself.”(1997:33) In this sense, Harries is a revisionist historian. Her revisionism is rooted in the probing of questions of gender and sexuality. The rewriting of this history questions the ‘legacies’ left by Rhodes and his disciples, thus asking new questions about the present as well as the past.

Rhodes’s desire for empire is understood to be a manifestation of his displaced sexual desire, the underlying cause being his sexual repression. His sexuality is given expression in the form of fetishes. Rhodes collects and gathers men, countries, birds, objects, and art, actions which involve conquests of various kinds, African expansion as well as cultural importation, all to further the aims of empire. The love of objects and collections is a fetishist metonymy for the imperial project at

large. Thus the interest in aesthetics is ironic as it is actually an expression of imperial designs rather than a 'pure' interest in objets d'art. The irony is doubled in that it then undermines the 'manliness' of expansionism. The irony of this interest in aesthetics contributes to our reading of the novel as resistant form. The ironic content as well as the humour created by parodying these fetishist metonymies serves to diminish the imperialistic activities and hence the society which gave rise to this thinking. By virtue of their parodic role in the novel, these fetishist metonymies are understood as a critique of the imperial project.

To start with Rhodes, the irony of his sexuality, his obsession with imperialism and the irony of his interest in aesthetics are presented in an excessive and obsessive way, which creates humour. His character is developed around these few dominant traits. Rhodes is caricatured by the author.

Harries makes fun of the irony of Rhodes's manliness. Thus he is continually shown as having 'feminine' characteristics, such as speaking in a high-pitched voice, "woman's voice"(MP: 168), "falsetto voice"(MP: 11), and "queer soprano voice"(MP:13). This peculiar characteristic is attested to in most biographies of Rhodes, but Harries foregrounds it in her play with sexuality.

Rhodes is also depicted by Harries as having strong affections for men and not women. Rhodes's deep attachment to a young man in Kimberley, who died, is elaborated on: "He made me laugh. He had cheek. Do you know what he gave me Wills? He gave me *youth!*" (MP: 302) The intimacy is inferred by the living arrangements Rhodes had with him. Rhodes says to Wills, "I lived with him in a shack in Kimberley not much bigger than a miner's hut."(MP: 302) When his friend dies,

Rhodes's feelings are dramatic. He acknowledges his trauma to Wills, "all I could think of was, *how am I to go on living when he's gone?*" (MP: 302).

Rhodes even puts his imperial ambitions on hold when his friend gets ill. Rhodes left the gold and diamond fields to be at his friend's side thus putting this personal relationship before his business ones. He does the same with Jameson and the Raid. He stands by Jameson in the aftermath of the Raid, despite the damage this causes to his political career. Harries sees Rhodes's obsession with Jameson as an indication of Rhodes's homosexuality. She says, "I see a parallel between Wilde's obsession with Bosie leading to his downfall and Rhodes's similar obsession with Jameson, resulting in his disgrace." Rhodes reiterates this when he says to Wills,

And both your friend, [Jameson], and I were toppled because we valued our friendships more than even our countries or our own personal fame. I could have put the blame squarely on Jameson's shoulders. I could have avoided humiliation.(MP: 89)

There is no evidence of this kind of loyalty with women however. In fact, Rhodes is shown as taking very little interest in women. When Schreiner meets Rhodes again after their first meeting at the diamond field, he doesn't even remember her, whereas he's made a strong impression on Schreiner. Schreiner confides in Wills, saying "the episode beside the Big Hole which had changed my life so entirely had vanished from his memory."(MP: 172) Schreiner further says to Wills, "I would lay my head on the block that he, [Rhodes], never loved a woman. Men, certainly. But he has a horror of being left alone with a woman." (MP: 173) The only other woman spoken about in connection with Rhodes is Princess Radziwill, who wanted to marry him. He dismisses her vehemently: "She was intelligent enough, and vivacious...but marriage!"(MP: 86)



Various biographers, as well as Jourdan, one of Rhodes's former private secretaries, describe Rhodes's relations with men as indicating homosexual tendencies. In Paul Maylam's book *The Cult Of Rhodes*, Jourdan's thoughts and words are expressed:

[H]e noted that Rhodes 'seemed to have a liking for young men' and was 'particularly partial to people with blue eyes.' Jourdan also described how, when he started working in Rhodes's office in 1894, '[Rhodes] was exceedingly kind and tender towards me. He made me pull up my chair quite close to him, and frequently placed his hand on my shoulder.' (2005:22)

In the mentioning and expounding upon Rhodes's loyalty towards Pickering and his lack of closeness with women, as well as by choosing to liken Oscar Wilde's love for Alfred Douglas to Rhodes's love for Jameson, Harries is showing Rhodes to be a repressed homosexual. She also includes Wilde's trial in the novel. The trial illustrates why Rhodes would repress his homoerotic desires as it shows how Wilde was destroyed as a result of the moral and legal code of the time.

Oscar Wilde's homosexuality was blatantly expressed and he was punished for it. Not only was Wilde punished, but due to the moral ideology of the time, in the words of Jeffrey Weeks in his book *Sex, Politics and Society*: "Participation in the homosexual world was accompanied by a deep shame and sense of guilt and anxiety as the moral and medical ideologies penetrated." (1981:113)

This gives even more understanding for Rhodes having suppressed his homoerotic desire. In the light of Victorian society, the unacceptability of homosexuality to the dominant mass of ideas at the time, and Oscar Wilde's public disgrace, it is understandable that Rhodes repressed his love of men.

The repression of the 'normal' sexual instinct however does not hinder the instinctual desire from continuing to exist in the unconscious. Michael Jacobs, in his work on Freud, comments that

“feelings and ideas are dammed up, but under growing pressure find an alternative way to flow into consciousness”(1992:37). Rhodes has found other outlets for his sexuality. His obsession with empire is an outlet for his sexual repression. This obsession manifests in Harries’s parodic imagination as a fetish. Both Rhodes’s and Ruskin’s obsession with empire, a powerful exciting cause, can be seen as filling the need for and providing them with sexual sensation.

Rhodes wants to conquer, own, and Anglicise the entire continent of Africa, and even beyond. This would account for Rhodes wanting to own and control land and the mineral wealth which the land yielded. He had to ‘collect’ countries. In the so-called ‘First Matabele War’, which basically stretched from October 1893 to January 1894, Rhodes entered Bulawayo and seized the interior. The British now owned nearly half a million square miles of land, and by the end of January had issued over nine hundred new farm rights and registered nearly ten thousand gold claims. Rhodes is reported to have claimed, “I made the seizure of the interior a paramount thing in my politics.”(Plomer, 1984:79) The novel is set in the aftermath of the Jameson Raid. The Raid was an attempt to take control of the Transvaal Republic and its vast resources of gold.

In the novel, Rhodes’s ambitions to own land and wealth so that he can Anglicise the continent are parodied. The hyperbole results in him becoming a caricature. He says to Wills, “My dream concerns the entire Anglo-Saxon race, and for that I need all the riches this earth will yield.”(MP: 168) When Harries introduces Rhodes as a youth, he is already accumulating wealth. Oscar Wilde says of him, “That man rattles loose diamonds in his pockets.”(MP: 150) As the ‘best race’, Rhodes wanted to bring English people to Africa and this meant owning land. He gives voice to this many

times. He says, “Every acre added to our territory means the birth of more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence.”(MP: 207)

Rhodes’s ambition to control Africa continues throughout his life in his desire to build a railway “that will extend from Cape to Cairo.”(MP: 87) This desire is shown as an obsession. It is repeated many times by Rhodes, thus making fun of his ultimate dream, “*railway gauges, Cape to Cairo, twice the speed*” (MP: 82), and,

I tell you, if we change to a four-foot-eight-and-a-half-inch gauge we will go through Africa at a rate of fifty miles an hour rather than twenty. In other words we’ll get from Cape to Cairo in 110 hours.”(MP: 11)

To the narrator, Wills’s question, “Once you have Africa, what of other continents?” Rhodes excessively replies,

I would recover America if I could – just think, if we had retained America there would be millions more English living. Yes, I would procure the Holy Land – China – Japan...Why, man, I would annex the planets if I could! (MP: 299)

The scholarships which Rhodes left in his will to further the aims of empire are also a metonym for his obsession with empire. They also express his love of men and paranoia towards women. These are also parodied by the author and again show his fixation with empire as an expression of his sexuality. Only young men who are going to further the aims of empire are liable for the scholarships. They also have to be virile and sporting: “four-tenths scholarship, two-tenths athletics, two-tenths chivalry, manhood et cetera, two-tenths leadership”(MP: 311). Moreover, the scholarships cannot be for married men: women would get in the way of empire, in the way of his fixation.

Women getting in the way of imperialism is dramatised when Rhodes dismisses Joubert, who's been working for him, because he has become engaged to be married. This is another ludicrous scene in which we see Joubert "shaking with grief"(MP: 133) and "[sobbing], and collapsing back into his stricken state" (MP: 134). As one of the men gathered by Rhodes to work towards building the empire, even Milner knows that he has to give up his woman, saying that "One has to make sacrifices for the Empire, for the greater good." (MP: 110)

Rhodes's fixation with empire is further expounded on when Harries exposes the contents of his safe, his most prized possessions, his collections. These contents, as well as Rhodes's passion for them, are comedic in their presentation. He calls his collection his "little treasures" (MP: 85). Wills expects to see "glittering precious stones and priceless jewellery" (MP: 85), in keeping with his wealth. Instead, the safe houses an egg containing a model of the Orient express and symbolising the Cape to Cairo railway line, a pistol, a nightingale encrusted with diamonds which had passed through the bodies of miners, and his wills, all which are metonyms for what drove Rhodes. These objects are also, according to Maylam, "objects associated with phallic worship"(2005:98). His safe also houses love letters: "a glance at the diminutised name...gives me reason to believe they were written... by a male hand"(MP: 308), as well as letters from his mother. The fact that the love letters are kept with the miniatures which represent his imperialist aims, as well as his phallic interest, reinforces the idea of his sexuality being the driving force behind his imperialistic designs.

Rhodes's interest in aesthetics was also to further the aims of empire and celebrate and symbolise his lifestyle, rather than an authentic interest in art. Harries highlights the irony of Rhodes' interest in aesthetics.

The novel starts with Rhodes, a ruthless conqueror, after his disgrace for his part in the Raid, making arrangements to have nightingales imported from Britain to restore his health and enhance the environment with their singing. The irony of the focus on aestheticism in a time characterised by imperialism, colonial conquests and resultant warfare is deliberately foregrounded by Harries as showing resistance to the governing themes of this historical period.

Rhodes has ideas of 'uncivilised' Africa. He says to Wills, "I miss the early morning song of the blackbird...that dawn chorus...Their music is nothing less than the song of civilisation."(MP: 13) Bringing British songbirds to the Cape was in keeping with Rhodes's desire to "manipulate nature in the cause of imperial grandeur"(Maylam, 2005:155). "Rhodes strove to colonise the African landscape not only with 'superior' people, but with 'superior' animals (ibid). Harries in *Manly Pursuits* describes how Rhodes has changed the fauna and flora of the Cape by "grooming the mountainside.... with dark forests planted a mere twenty years ago"(MP: 5), and introducing kangaroos, llamas and zebras for the same purpose of imperial grandeur, "*to improve the amenities of the Cape.*"(MP: 5). Maylam states further that,

Like many a colonist, Rhodes wanted to enjoy the best of both worlds, the exotic and the familiar, the majestic African landscape and recognisable traces of the 'civilised' world. (2005:154)

Rhodes also imported animals like squirrels, "introduced to this country only a few years ago by my indefatigable host"(MP: 32), and flowers and trees, "tall Corsican pines"(MP: 32), for the purpose of 'enriching' the country.

Harries ridicules this interest in aesthetics by poking fun at the fact that, before he decides to import these birds, Rhodes has a fake clay model made of a nightingale, which 'sings'. The fact that the

imported birds don't sing (instead, the starlings sing the nightingales songs) and that many die, further ridicules the concept of importing English aesthetics to the Cape during a time of impending warfare.

There is a parallel between Rhodes instructing Wills to bring British songbirds to Cape Town and Florence Phillips, wife of the Randlord Lionel Phillips, commissioning the aesthete and art critic Hugh Lane to set up an art gallery in Johannesburg. In 1906, when South Africa was heavily picking up the pieces after the Anglo-Boer War, Florence Phillips decided to make it her mission to open an art gallery in Johannesburg. The period is slightly later but it shows the irony of the interest in aesthetics in South Africa, in times of warfare. Moreover, Hugh Lane bears a few similarities to the fictional Wills. He was a dandified art critic. He too fell into disgrace due to him abusing his special interest. With Wills, as has been discussed, it was vivisection on birds. Lane was discredited due to not being honest as some of the artworks by Rembrandt which he instructed to be bought, came under suspicion as not being authentic. This project, to 'raise the tone' of the nation by means of art, is typical of the period and has numerous other parallels. Rhodes's peculiar passions may therefore be understood as partly to do with his repressed sexuality and partly with a period obsession with aesthetics.

As with Rhodes and his songbirds, the focus on aesthetics amidst warfare by the Randlord Florence Phillips is ironic. When Florence Phillips returned to South Africa from England after her husband Lionel Phillips's disgrace due to his part in the Jameson Raid, she was making plans to have her portrait painted by an English artist. In her book, *No Ordinary Woman*, Thelma Gutshe recounts,

[S]piteful tongues joyously recounted how a magnate's wife, demonstrating her new home in Park Lane duly equipped with antique furniture and old masters,

informed her guest that her husband was even then making arrangements for her own portrait to be painted by an Old Master.(1966:131)

Rhodes's idea was to build a society in terms of Anglophile and imperial sentiment. Phillips had these same sentiments in her building of a post-war society. Her aim was to bring aesthetics to the colonised for the purpose of uplifting the society, especially the working classes. In her words, from his doctoral thesis *Old Masters and Aspirations: The Randlords, Art and South Africa*. by Michael Stevenson, the purpose is to "raise the tone of a working man"(1997:179). Raising the moral tone however meant to enhance South African society through outside influences, not celebrate what was inherently South African. Because imperialism was the order of the day, the purpose of art was to glorify, promote and celebrate western civilization. Artworks were an indication of the wealth and lifestyle which the Empire represented. Hence, the artworks which were to be displayed in the gallery were mostly ones which were imported from Britain and Europe. South African art was inferior. Her gallery housed only one work by a South African artist. Florence Phillips also shared Rhodes's thinking in that the idea of 'uplifting' South African society did not only mean importing artworks. She also had the ideal of importing English people. Gutsche comments:

More than ever before, she saw clearly what should be done to lift her country out of desolation and depression to the full glory of nationhood. She saw that hosts of immigrants should come to help develop the potentiality of the land.(1966:292)

Phillips and Rhodes' actions also tie in with the idea of heritage. These artworks, buildings, animal and plant life are "a means of propagating a new South African national identity within the international context of the British empire. The design and purpose of their estates were thus also aimed at building a new South African identity, as well as to reflect and further their social aspiration and status. Rhodes acquired property which he used to entertain his fellow imperialists.

His large estate, Groote Schuur, was a blend of the English and the Dutch, and was used chiefly to promote and celebrate his imperialism.

Phillips's and Rhodes's actions also tie in with the idea of heritage. These artworks, buildings, animal and plant life are "a means of propagating a new South African national identity within the international context of the British empire", '*Historicizing Heritage: Estates, bequests, and the Heritage metaphor, circa 1880-1930*', (Merrington, P. 2003:Online). The design and purpose of their estates were thus also aimed at building a new South African identity, as well as to reflect and further their social aspiration and status. Rhodes acquired property which he used to entertain his fellow imperialists. His large estate, Groote Schuur, was a blend of the English and the Dutch, and was used chiefly to promote and celebrate his imperialism. Phillips's house Hohenheim was furnished with a quantity of antiques and works of art which she had acquired in Europe. The gabled farm where she lived, Vergelegen, is a fusion of Dutch architecture and an English country estate. Another one of Phillips's houses Villa Arcadia, was a blend of Italian and Cape Dutch architecture, and housed arts and crafts. Like Rhodes, Phillips's numerous estates offered an environment which was used to entertain those in a position to offer social, economic and political advancement.

The irony of this interest in aesthetics is further shown in the grandiose and ornamental structures, which served as monuments to Rhodes's imperialism. He wanted to enhance South Africa for himself and his fellow British imperialists by glorifying his achievements. Hence Rhodes brings in the English architect, Herbert Baker, to design plaques and statues. Baker worked with Rhodes for ten years from 1892, and even after his death continued the 'tradition' of uplifting South African



society with imperial symbolism. The Rhodes Memorial still serves to commemorate Rhodes after his death. Today it is a huge tourist attraction which calls up his memory. Thus, rather than being gifts to the nation, Rhodes's generosity is uncovered as a monument to him, to serve the purpose of building an empire and celebrating him.

Rhodes made sure he was well represented in various forms all over the lands he conquered. He 'was' the land. Paul Maylam quotes the words of Basil Williams:

[E]verything in the city appeared to call up associations with Rhodes. The statue of the Old Dutch governor, Van Riebeeck, on the quay...was his gift; the road round the Mountain was planned by him...the old Dutch block-house on the Mountain was preserved by destruction from him; Grootte Schuur at Rondebosch, with its ample grounds and its masses of hydrangeas, was his home left for the public service of a united South Africa. (2005:47)

The 'works', to Rhodes, enhanced South Africa by celebrating himself and his imperialism.

These monuments were also designed to serve Rhodes's political aspirations. By political aspirations is meant the furthering of his imperialistic aims. This meant being strategic, and, in his case, strategy involved gaining favour with the Boers. Michael Stevenson affirms this: "A case in point is Rhodes, who perceived art chiefly as a means of furthering his political aspirations" (1997:34) Thus the plaque and statue of Van Riebeeck, both which were placed in Cape Town, can be seen as gaining favour with the Afrikaner Bond in the Cape parliament, and in particular with the Cape politician, 'Onze Jan' Hofmeyr.

Rhodes's political aims are further illustrated by the acquisitions in his home. His large estate was designed to enhance his imperialistic aims. Thus the house is decorated in Dutch style to impress

and thus gain favour with the Boers. Harries describes the house and reiterates this purpose in the novel:

Whitewashed Dutch gables, tapering Palladian columns....one is quite unable to see the carefully constructed Dutch interior until one's vision has adapted to the sudden darkness....I feel there is something deliberate about everything in this house, even its illusions. (MP: 50)

Harries also mentions a statue, “a bronze cast of the first disembarkation of Netherlandish gardeners”(MP: 34), which adorns the gardens of Rhodes's house, the aim of this statue being to further his ambition by impressing the Afrikaners.

Like Rhodes, the characters of Ruskin and Dodgson are also caricatured by Harries. They are of course also both products of the Victorian society which has rendered both Wills and Rhodes sexually repressed and socially eccentric. Again, in her ironic and comedic presentation of them, Harries is showing resistance to the society which has produced the activities of imperialism as the society has also produced them.

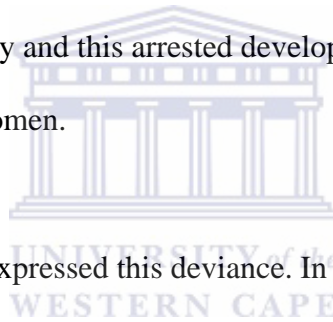
Ruskin and Dodgson are shown to be social misfits as well as having distinctly ‘unmanly’ sexualities. John Ruskin has been shown as the main exponent who in his talks incites young men to make building an empire their life's work, a very ‘masculine’ pursuit. However he is discredited when Harries depicts his sexual orientation, which is a product of the very society he endorses.

To reinforce the sexual morality which Victorian society propagated, an ideology of family life became the norm of ‘respectability’. John Ruskin was influential in elevating the home as a

microcosm of stable society and a sanctuary from an unstable and rapidly changing one. Jeffrey Weeks quotes Ruskin as having written in 1865:

Home is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt and division....a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by household Gods.(1981:29)

The irony of Ruskin's 'homemaking' is linked to his sexuality. Home, rather than being a sanctuary, is where Ruskin, like Wills, develops his sexual deviance due to the repressive structures. He does not mature socially and sexually and this arrested development results in him being attracted to children rather than to adult women.



'Home' is also where Ruskin expressed this deviance. In his personal life, his marriage was anything but a 'shelter' bringing peace and stability. His six-year marriage to Effie Millais was never consummated causing her a great deal of frustration and doubt as to her self worth. Her account of her experience as recorded in *Ruskin* by Quentin Bell, accused him of being "quite unnatural, that he had used her very ill and that the best she could say for him was that he was insane"(1963:61). Fully-developed women filled him with disgust. Effie Millais tells his reasons why he could not consummate the marriage:

[F]inally this last year he told me his true reason (and this to me is as villainous as all the rest) that he had imagined women were quite different from what he saw I was, and that the reason he did not make me his Wife was because he was disgusted with my person the first evening 10<sup>th</sup> April. (Bell, 1963:100)

Harries parodies this distaste for of women's bodies and sexual encounters with them. When he discovers Turners' sexual exploits with women, Ruskin's is traumatised, "[f]or weeks Ruskin was in a state of torture"(MP: 233). Ruskin's reaction is extreme. Harries has him burning Turner's paintings. This despite the fact that Turner was "his hero, his god":

He, [Ruskin] was filled with revulsion. It seemed to him utterly incomprehensible that the man who had produced Rain, Steam and Speed could also paint a woman's—t. He learnt that his hero, far from leading the pure and virtuous life that Ruskin himself lived, would go down to Wapping on Friday afternoons and live there till Monday morning with the sailors' women, painting them in every posture of abandonment. (MP: 233)

Because Turner created beauty without blemish his life too must be "blemishless"(MP: 233).

'Without blemish' here means not painting naked women or indulging sexually with them.

Ruskin's Victorian morality is also highlighted as ludicrous. He judges Turner as being immoral due to his sexual exploits with women, yet he himself wants to marry a ten year old girl. While the nineteenth century did glorify the child as a symbol of purity and innocence, Harries does not present this view. Harries sets up situations of potential lack of innocence in the novel. When Wills is photographing a naked Maria, she has Mrs Kipling rescuing her from his "contamination" (MP: 335), saying, "For shame, Professor!"(ibid).

As with Wills, Ruskins' passions were 'nympholeptic', hence he couldn't consummate his marriage with a fully developed woman. Again, to quote Quentin Bell:

He saw girls as he wished to see them until reality forced itself with brutal strength upon him. The figure that he visualised was a child..., it was only as children that women could play their part in his filial-paternal scheme of things. (1963:108)

Ruskin's passion was for a child, Rosa La Touche. It was the third, and most serious, emotional adventure of his life. He says "Rose, in heart, was with me always, and all I did was for her sake"(Bell, 1963:59). Harries has a character make fun of his love for a child. The character says, "He must have had his brains addled to fall in love with a ten-year-old girl, I'd say."(MP: 26)

Harries is showing resistance to the ideologue of imperialism in that Ruskin is regarded as a social outcast, sexual deviant, and even mad: “rumours were rife about his eccentric lifestyle, his bouts of madness, his reported dependance upon opium and sherry”(MP: 145). A person attending his talk says of Ruskin, “they do say his brain is affected now – too many grand thoughts hammering away inside them”(MP: 26), yet his advocacy of imperialism is taken so seriously. In his lifetime he was ridiculed due to his lifestyle, yet his imperial ideas were not.

In her portrayal of Charles Dodgson, Harries similarly depicts him as an emasculated misfit. He is a social outcast, is nervous, hobbles and stammers, his stutter only disappearing when he is in the company of little girls. Harries exaggerates his immaturity, his “unmanliness”, by describing his rooms as a “childrens paradise”(MP: 153). Wills says,

Every room we passed through was packed with toys, games and gadgets displayed in orderly fashion upon every available surface...the printing press, the dumbbells, the Ammoniaphone, the skeletons, the mechanical toys, the music boxes, the calculating machine (‘It adds up to one million pounds,’ he mentioned ... (MP: 153).

Like Ruskin, Dodgson shows obsessive tendencies towards little girls, among them include taking naked pictures of them. He takes great pains to allege the innocence of his association with these girls, saying, “They come with their mothers. Yet I have heard vile rumours...” (MP: 260). Wills sees Dodgson’s photographs of naked little girls as anything but innocent:

The little naked girls overwhelm me with their blatant physicality. They lie stretched out upon imaginary fields and rocks, as if waiting to be ravished by a passing Greek god. They stare at me with their insolent eyes. I see no innocence there. (MP: 260)


This fascination is presented as far from ‘manly’, or at least certainly asks us to revise our views of ‘manliness’. While he may not have engaged in a sexual manner with these girls, they were far

more interesting to him than fully grown women. He voices his love for them, “unreserved love; a love which demands of itself no mirror image”(MP: 260).

Ruskin and Dodgson have had the same kind of upbringing as Wills. Like Wills, they exhibit a nervous disposition. Rhodes too has a nervous condition which is why he has imported birds from England. They are supposed to aid his ailing health. They are all also socially inept. Dodgson stutters and Ruskin is thought of by the public as mad. All these characters are presented as suffering from an ‘arrested development’. They are sexually crippled and as such they cannot engage sexually with fully grown women. Rhodes is depicted as a repressed homosexual, while Ruskin and Dodgson feel more comfortable with children. The ironising of Ruskin’s, Rhodes’s and Dodgson’s ‘manliness’ is a ploy which makes the pursuit of empire appear ridiculous. By depicting them this way, Harries is interrogating the social milieu and its influences which have resulted in these pathologized characters. Harries’s overarching irony undermines the persistent emphasis in this social milieu on the ideal of virile heroism that was a kind of cult in late Victorian England.

## Chapter five: Olive Schreiner, suppression of historical record, counter arguments as resistant form

OLIVE SCHREINER IS THE MAIN PERSON FOCUSED ON IN THIS CHAPTER. The dominant characters in the novel, besides Olive Schreiner are all English. While Schreiner has English associations, she has grown up in South Africa and hence has not been subjected to and internalized the influences of the Victorian society the way the other characters have. Schreiner stands out as having a different set of values, hence she does not conform to the Victorian ideal of womanhood. She is also anti-imperialist.



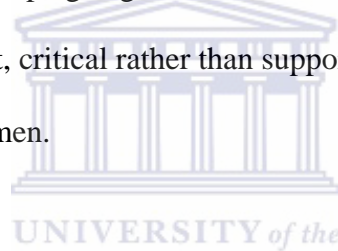
Schreiner is the voice whereby Harries directly criticises the actions of Rhodes and his men. By giving Schreiner, a woman, this crucial role, Ann Harries is showing resistance to Victorian society and to the conventional construction and role of women in this society. Hence, the qualities which make Schreiner different are exaggerated in order to emphasise them. She is caricatured as being unrefined and unattractive, a counterpoint to the Victorian stereotype of the ideal woman. Her active involvement in political activities is also accentuated. This chapter shows resistance to the framework of the society which endorsed imperialistic thinking by means of this parodied presentation of Schreiner. Resistance is also shown to imperialism through her criticism of the treatment by the English of the Boers and the natives, the illumination of the political activities of the British, as well as by means of counter arguments to imperialistic thinking.

Schreiner has been constructed to be the direct opposite of conventional Victorian womanhood. John Ruskin's essay, 'Of Queens' Gardens', published in *Sesame and Lilies*, (1865:Online), has

been taken as an eloquent statement of the ideal of Victorian Womanhood. In this essay, Ruskin assigns particular gender roles to man and woman. Women's role is:

[F]or rule, not for battle, - and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims and their places. Her great function is Praise: she enters into no contest,...(1865:1).

Schreiner is the direct opposite of this ideal. Schreiner takes the initiative, is outspoken, and actively gets involved in her campaign against war. She is not correct, proper and subdued. Rather she is aggressive and forthright, critical rather than supportive, qualities which were then not considered appropriate for women.



In the novel, Schreiner takes on a 'male' role. In his essay, Ruskin expounds on the male role:

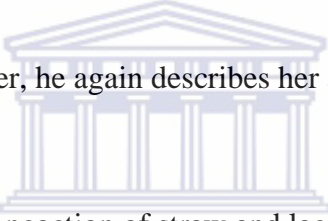
The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest.(1865:1)

As the role she takes is considered to be conventionally 'unwomanly', the presentation of Schreiner is that of being ungentle. These qualities are exaggerated in order to emphasise them, to heighten the idea of Schreiner as a figure who does not represent the ideal of Victorian womanhood. Thus she is caricatured to be ridiculous and clumsy. Schreiner is a quasi-comic figure. However, rather than diminish her, this presentation is meant to herald her and to oppose the unenlightened society which is not open to a liberated and progressive woman. This qualifies the novel as resistant form to the dominant ideology of the time. By means of her role and presentation, Harries is showing resistance to the gender roles and gender bias of Victorian society.



Schreiner is dedicated to a cause, and is not focussed on her womanly attributes. Her external appearance is thus neglected. Harries exaggerates her unkempt appearance and awkward lack of refinement. Her physical appearance and clumsy gestures lead to her being seen as an unappealing comic character by the male characters. Wills captures her on a photograph by accident as an unwelcome and unattractive presence. He describes her as “short, stout and imperious”(MP: 103), and says, “she was spoiling my photograph” (MP: 103).

When Wills eventually meets her, he again describes her as an untidy, unattractive picture of womanhood:



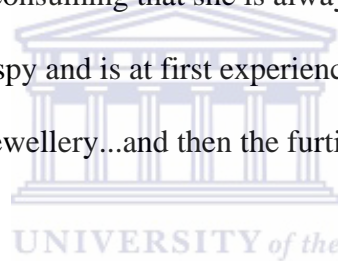
Upon her head she wore a concoction of straw and lace and battered silk roses...: her bottle-green jacket was ill-matched with her yellowish complexion, and she had made no effort to contain her thickening girth within the incarceration of her female stay.(MP: 157)

The view of women which is held by Wills and other male characters is focalised and expressed by Wills. Because she takes an active interest in ‘manly’ activities like Empire, war, conquering and political campaigning, Schreiner is seen by the men as one who is unnatural, even ‘manly’. They put her active interest in political activities down to her being frustrated as a woman. They therefore do not take her viewpoints into consideration. Wills receives information about Schreiner before he actually talks to her. The captain on the ship which takes Wills to Cape Town describes Schreiner to Wills as:

A mannish little woman, very highly strung,...She told me he[Rhodes] could finish her, but she had to speak out. It was her duty to expose his brutalities, she said. Very high-minded lady. Said he was laying the foundations for a national tragedy. She became very animated when she spoke of the native question. (MP: 70)

Wills shows aversion is to any dealings with her. His reaction is “I thank heaven she was not on my boat.”(MP: 70)

Schreiner’s passion and intensity are dramatised to emphasise these qualities. Wills’s impressions of Schreiner are of “heaviness” and “weariness”(MP: 33), and his photographs show her in the background as someone with “a troubled look in her dark eyes”(MP: 103). Her passion and dedication to her cause are so consuming that she is always present. She hangs around in the background like some kind of spy and is at first experienced as a presence rather than as a full person, “the sound of draped jewellery...and then the furtive footsteps”(MP: 133).



It is also hinted that Schreiner is showing her dissatisfaction with Rhodes and the other imperialists by setting fire to the forest. Wills is walking in the forest one evening when he experiences a fire.

Wills thinks he detects Schreiner’s presence:

[M]y ears sharpened to the faint tinkle of jewellery swinging against itself. And was I being fanciful, or did I for a few seconds inhale the faint aroma of this morning’s over-sweet perfume as well? (MP: 227)

As Rhodes’s house is being guarded against possible enemies, the non-indigenous forest becomes the target for Schreiner to protest against the Jameson Raid and upcoming war. Her suggested arson attempt further serves to dramatise her, and show her as a frustrated, and even mad, woman, who is going to extreme measures to express her dissatisfaction. Unlike the sweet, subdued caregiver which she is supposed to be, she is walking around in the forest alone at night and setting it ablaze.

When Schreiner eventually speaks to Wills, her own words give voice to her intense character and political convictions. She says, “*I am relying on you, Professor, to help me save this country from*

*total catastrophe.*”(MP: 158) His immediate response to her physical and emotional intensity is overwhelmingly negative: “If she had not spoken so solemnly I would have burst into embarrassed laughter; the woman was clearly deranged.”(MP: 158)

Wills is however eventually drawn into her plot to try and avert war and arranges for Screiner to meet with Milner. This meeting is hilarious. Schreiner’s clumsiness causes them both to fall. Wills is amused. He describes the meeting:

Olive was a dumpy pincushion with her legs splayed out. Her reticule had burst open, discharging its contents all around. Milner’s hat had landed upside down on a rock, as if begging for coins while the concoction on Olive’s head hung at an angle that released a torrent of dark unruly hair. (MP: 280)

By rendering Schreiner as ridiculous, Harries is indicating the impossibility of her task. The manner in which Schreiner has been constructed, in action, mannerisms and external appearance, is a caricature what a Victorian woman should not be. Obviously Milner is not going to take her seriously.

Wills has imbibed the racist, classist and gender biased views of the period. However, at the same time, he is distanced from the imperialistic image of the other characters. This is so that he can focalise the resistant viewpoint of Schreiner who can talk to him whereas she cannot talk to the imperialists. She can thus give her perspective on war, the native issue, the Boers, as well as expose the part of the British in the Raid. Her point of view on these issues qualifies as resistant form as it opposes the point of view propagated by the imperialists.

Thus Schreiner can tell Wills about her novel, and her direct anti-war campaign. By doing so she serves to show the destruction caused by imperial activities. By means of her novel and her arguments, she shows direct resistance to the views held, and hence to the treatment of the Boers and the natives by Rhodes and his following. She also tries to reveal information which the imperialists have concealed, in an effort to avert the possibility of war. This information is the evidence of telegrams which shows the British support for, and in particular, the support which Chamberlain gave, to the Jameson Raid. By revealing this information, Harries introduces a tantalising question. What would have happened if this information had come to the fore then? Would the historical events have altered? Would the Anglo-Boer War still have happened? Harries is showing resistance to imperial history by making the point that corruption, if exposed, might change the course of history. Harries is recognising how imperialist history has been constructed, yet, in her rewriting of the period, is challenging the terms in which this history has been constructed, thus resisting its construction.

In the suppression of what is known as the ‘Rebellion’ in Matabeleland in 1896, eight thousand natives were reported to have been killed. Rhodes’s words at the time, quoted by William Plomer, “You should kill all you can as it serves as a lesson to them when they talk things over their fires at night”(1984:131), thus show that Rhodes was ruthless in his quest for power for the Empire.

In her novel, *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*, Schreiner writes about this battle. She reveals how ruthless Rhodes was to the native people, and how strategic in seizing their territory. She denounces Rhodes and calls him “death on niggers”(MP: 51). In the taking of their land, she “accus[es] him of murdering and enslaving the Matabele people” (ibid). Furthermore, she depicts

Rhodes and his men as not having any conscience about this deed. The frontispiece of Schreiner's novel clearly shows the 'conquerers' as very relaxed among the carnage they have committed in the process of seizing this territory:

[A] truly shocking photograph of a number of dead Negroes hanging from ropes in a foreign-looking tree, while a larger number of white men pose for the picture beneath it, smoking, and at ease, as if unaware of the corpses in the boughs above them. (MP: 51)

Harries further depicts Rhodes as being very proud of his achievement by having him display this photograph in his bedroom, together with flags:

Next to a large photograph of himself in the company of grinning young men, inscribed *The Conqueror of Matabeleland*, a pair of large crossed flags was ostentatiously displayed, both of which, a label beneath them told me, Jameson had carried during the first Matabele War, and one of which was riddled with Shot. (MP: 83-4)

Schreiner's book, which exposes and criticises the treatment of natives by Rhodes as "death on niggers"(MP: 104), outrages Kipling who shows his contrary viewpoint, "*Life on niggers, more like, Jobs for niggers, and possibly, one day, civilisation for niggers*"(MP: 104). Furthermore, Kipling discredits her as a woman, revealing his gender-bias towards her.

She's nothing more than a female hysteric who isn't able to reproduce herself. Lost her child recently after a series of miscarriages. It's unbalanced her mind. (MP: 104) [Kipling also attributes the fact that she depicts Rhodes in a bad way as due to unrequited love], When it was clear there'd be no wedding bells, she turned nasty. (ibid)

Schreiner is judged to be hysterical as she does not conform to the conventional version of womanhood.

Schreiner also presents a different version of the Boer nation to what Milner and Rhodes have. She does not see them as backward and inferior to the English. She criticises the materialism and greed

of the English which results in their exploitation of the Boer and the native, as well as the raping of the land: “I say that the human spirit and even the human body are being crushed under this vast accumulation of material things, this ceaseless thirst for more and more;”... (MP: 282). She thinks that Africa would be better off being ruled by the Boers as they love the land for itself, and not for what it yields. They do not want to merely exploit it for wealth. She explains:

There is a spiritual depth in the Boer entirely lacking in the treasure hunters and goldbugs who leech off the mines in the North and pretend they have come to Africa for some greater purpose. The Boer loves Africa for her own sake, and curses the day that gold was found in the rocks of their simple Republic.(MP: 282)

Schreiner’s views on the Boers are in opposition to the opinions of the English. The English hold the view that the Boer are “lazy” and “loafers” (MP: 205), who sit around all day and drink coffee. Schreiner disagrees with this. She says, “I learnt that in the African Boer we have one of the most intellectually virile and dominant races the world has seen.”(MP: 282)

The Boers trekked to escape British control. In so doing they established an identity in opposition to the English. This quest for independence from Britain reinforced nationalistic feelings, forged an identity of exclusivity, and eventually contributed to Apartheid. The treatment of the Boers by the English thus had dire consequences for South Africa.

Information regarding the roles Jameson and Chamberlain played in the Raid, as well as the role played by the German emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm, is revealed. These versions, which were hidden from the public, present a different account of political events. The disclosing of this information serves to reveal another angle to what was happening in the society. This would serve as counter history. In the words of S.P. Moslund in *Making Use of History in New South Africa*:

Counter-histories rework and restructure the past psychologically, socially and metaphorically to change our experience and perceptions of truth and the limits of reality. Or allow events, truths and realities to exist by making them known and by calling them forth from the darkness and silence of repression and censorship. (2003:16)

It is Harries's argument in her novel that the early disclosure of this evidence might have resulted in different historical consequences.

Chamberlain and Jameson are shown as hypocrites who are dishonest as, since the Raid was a disaster, a "bungled Raid"(MP: 19), which discredited the English and encouraged Boer nationalism, they lie to cover their part in the Raid. We only encounter Jameson, in Part Two of the novel, but we learn a lot about him and the Raid before that. We learn how Jameson, to cover up his disgrace, defends himself:

[He] argued,[at his trial], that he had illegally entered the Boer Republic with his five hundred troopers, not to raid, but to *aid* helpless British women and children while their husbands rose up against the wicked Boers. (MP:19)

Jameson was punished and spent a few months in jail in Britain, but this was soon forgotten and he was again able to work for Britain and have a position in South Africa. In Harries's words, he was presented by the British as "the chivalrous knight who had redeemed the manhood of Britain by daring all"(MP: 19). Jameson reveals that he was heralded in Britain as a result of the blundering diplomacy of Kaiser Wilhelm who, after the Raid sent a telegram "congratulating [Kruger] on the preservation of his independence" (MP: 316). Jameson says:

The idea of Germany staking a claim in the Golden City and indirectly offering military aid to the beastly Boers was too much for British pride. National shame became national outrage. Suddenly I became St. George, shining armour and all, defending British honour against the Hun. (MP: 316)

This exposes the hypocrisy of the imperialists in Britain. Paul Maylam affirms this:

[T]he telegram the German Kaiser, Wilhelm, sent to President Paul Kruger immediately after the raid congratulating him on defeating Jameson and hinting that German support may have been available to the Transvaal republic, had it been called for. .... inflamed British public opinion against Germany and removed some of the heat from Rhodes and Jameson. (2005:116)

When the Raid failed, Chamberlain condemned it publicly as a “flagrant piece of filibustering” (MP: 287), and acknowledged no part in it, yet he had backed the Raid. Schreiner tries to disclose the part Chamberlain played in the Jameson Raid.

The evidence of telegrams which incriminate Chamberlain are what Schreiner instructs Wills to obtain Her words: “It was generally known that a number of telegrams had gone missing – telegrams, it was whispered, implicating our Secretary of State for the colonies – up to the neck! (MP: 20)

And later on Schreiner explains to Wills: “The telegrams indicated beyond doubt that Chamberlain had long been in favour of the Raid as a means of ousting the Afrikaners who stood in the way of his imperial designs.”(MP: 287)

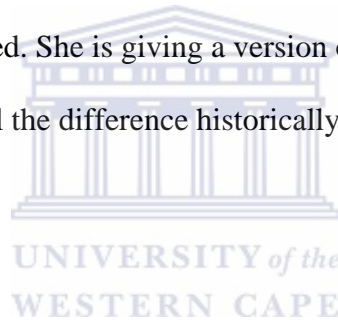
William Plomer, in his biography of Rhodes, mentions these telegrams in the build-up to the Raid, saying: “there was a touch of melodrama in the behaviour of the ringleaders. Mysterious telegrams were exchanged, in which the plot was referred to as the flotation”(1984:93).



In the novel, these notorious telegrams are found. They are however not released despite Wills's heartfelt and very rational plea to Jameson,

They, [the telegrams], indisputably prove Joseph Chamberlain's support and encouragement of your Incursion. If they are published now, the Colonial Secretary will be reviled as a blatant liar and your name will be forever cleared. More than that. If Britain's guilty secrets are revealed to the public, an Anglo-Boer War would become impossible. (MP: 318)

By revealing the role of the British in the Jameson Raid, Ann Harries is showing resistance to the understanding of what happened. She is giving a version of their activities which wasn't disclosed and which might have made all the difference historically as public sympathy would have shifted towards the Boers.



Wills is however forced to hand the telegrams over. Chamberlain and Britain are not exposed and the Anglo-Boer war becomes an inevitability.

Resistance is also shown to imperialism by the refuting of the social theories derived from the Darwinian argument that the British are the fittest race, and as such justifying their plunder of countries.

Wills has been constructed as apolitical. Because he is not part of the imperialistic thinking, Wills can argue against their Darwinian notions that they are the "fittest race", and as such justify their taking control of other countries as part of "natural selection" in nature. Harries's version of this argument serves to show how unfounded the basis was for the taking over of South Africa during this particular period, 1899.

Wills thus presents arguments against their Darwinian notions that the English have a right to try and conquer and rule the world as they are superior. To Rhodes's comments that:

It all boils down to power in the end: the race that can rule and control other races, that is the best race, the fittest race! Natural selection, the best race wins; that's what Darwin says: the race that can exploit natural raw materials can stimulate industry! (MP: 212),

Wills, speaking from an ingeniously scientific point of view, replies:

But look at the massive influence even the smallest species can have on the environment – and on the mightiest of human races at that!...Look at that scab mite *Astigmatate psoroptidae* – an organism so microscopic that it does not even have to breathe to survive – which has ruined your colonies' wool production ... look at the malaria parasite – an animal organism consisting of precisely one cell, only a step away from the vegetable kingdom. Yet the presence of that protozoan parasite has determined the fate, the history of whole geographical areas. (MP: 212)

Wills also shows up the ravages of war. Wills is also at first opposed to Schreiner's active political campaigning. As a product of this Victorian society, he believes like the other characters do, that women are definitely inferior. He finds it "incomprehensible...that women are men's intellectual equal and able to elect parliamentary representatives." (MP:257) Wills however changes his viewpoint about Schreiner and grows to respect her standpoint and campaign against war.

At the end of the novel we learn that Wills is sorry he could not avert the war and that he's sorry that it happened. He writes to Schreiner:

*Who gains by war? You once memorably asked him [Milner]. We certainly know who the losers are: the British taxpayers who lost over two hundred million pounds in this venture, and more than fifty thousand British, Boer and Afrikaner men and women who lost their lives in bloody battle or in refugee camps..., to say nothing of the thousands of black people who gave up their lives for what they thought was their country. (MP: 340)*

By this statement, we learn how destructive the war was, not only for the Boers and the natives, but for the British as well. The devastation is shown by highlighting the cost of the war. The suffering can be measured in loss of lives and money, as well as torture in concentration camps. Wills, the social outsider, the “mad scientist”, has read the situation from his ingeniously honest perspective and he ultimately becomes the spokesperson for our postcolonial viewpoint on this episode in South African history.

In the aftermath of the war, Harries shows that the imperialists who drove the country to war are still busy with their imperialistic aims. Rhodes has died, but Jameson is the Colony’s premier and “*is attempting to unify a country riven with hatred*”(MP:340), while Milner is “*busy anglicising the ex-Boer Republics*”(ibid). Moreover, they are being rewarded for their parts in the war. Milner has “*been made a viscount out of gratitude for precipitating the Anglo-Boer War*”(ibid), and Jameson, it is surmised, “*will be knighted before long*”(ibid).

Harries’s irony serves to highlight her sentiments regarding these men, the imperialists, and the part they played in creating the history of South Africa. Their Darwinist theories of superiority have been refuted, and their political plots and methods, as well as the exploits of those in Britain, have been exposed.

Resistance to the society has been shown by means of Schreiner’s criticism, and through the construction of Schreiner’s presence and subjectivity. Harries is showing Schreiner as being humane and correct in her disclosing of the treatment of natives, the Boers, the political corruption, and in her prediction of the damage war does. She is an embodiment of all that Victorian women

should not have been, but Harries is lauding her as a woman. By accentuating Schreiner's unconventional attributes, she is dismissing the gender-biased attitudes held by the male characters in the novel. Her parodied presentation thus shows resistance to the gender-bias of the Victorian society which did not respect women who were not passive, accepting and glamorous.



## Chapter six : conclusion

PREVIOUS CHAPTERS HAVE EXAMINED HARRIES'S REPRESENTATION OF VICTORIAN SOCIETY and its values and practices that were influential in the development of imperialistic thinking. This society has been revealed as being hypocritical and oppressive. As a result, the characters have developed to be anti-social and sexually deviant. They have been shown to be distinctly 'unmanly'. Their repressed sexuality has been given an outlet in the form of fetishes, which in the case of Rhodes resulted in a fixation on empire. Thus all his other activities, his collections of countries, aesthetics, men, are ironically a metonym for his obsession with empire. Ann Harries has parodied these obsessions. By employing melodrama, excess, and by sensationalising and exaggerating these influences and the results of these influences on the characters, she has designed an entertaining and amusing novel. The humour diminishes the situations and characters and they are experienced as monomaniacal, pathological and even pathetic, comic figures. Through her caricatured presentation of these characters, Harries is showing resistance to the framework of this society. She is thus also showing resistance to the resulting practices of these characters, imperialism being the main target of her satire.

In *Manly Pursuits* Ann Harries thus uses a method of humour to interrogate the past, and in so doing, to critically challenge imperial history. Harries's second novel, *No Place for a Lady*, written on the same theme, also shows resistance to imperialism by uncovering the devastation of the South African War, a direct consequence of imperialism.

Both novels end on a note stating that war should not have happened. In *No Place for a Lady*, Milner writes to Chamberlain as follows after the war has ended:

The black spot – the one very black spot – in the picture is the frightful mortality in the concentration Camps.....The whole thing I think now, has been a mistake. (2005:375)

In *Manly Pursuits* it is Wills who puts the situation into perspective in his letter to Schreiner, by calling the war an “unmitigated disaster” (MP: 336). He regrets that he did not hand the telegrams over to Schreiner as he might have prevented the war. While Wills “had every intention” (MP: 337) of eventually giving Schreiner the telegrams, he was forced, in a gathering of Rhodes, Mrs Kipling, Huxley and Jameson, to hand them over.

There are other parallels between the two novels. Both titles are loaded with gender ironies. In both the novels, it is women who try to speak out against war and imperialism. In both the novels, these women are seen by the men as hysterics who are frustrated because of their romantic relationships with men which have come to unsatisfactory endings. They are outsiders as women as they are taking an active interest in political activities, very ‘unladylike’ choices, hence the title of the second novel, *No Place for a Lady*. Furthermore, their preoccupation with war is seen as filling the void left in their lives due to their frustration with failed love relationships, not as a first choice. Schreiner is said to have been rejected by Rhodes himself, whereas Emily Hobhouse’s lover accepted bribes from her family to leave her alone. This realisation leaves her feeling bitterly betrayed by him.

One wonders what the author is trying to say in her depiction of the female characters. Is the title *No Place for a Lady* indicative of the author’s sentiments, or are they a reflection of the feelings of the men in the novel? Most likely it is again a literary ambivalence, indicating at once the period attitudes to women in a male sphere, as well as the real physical challenges that confronted the

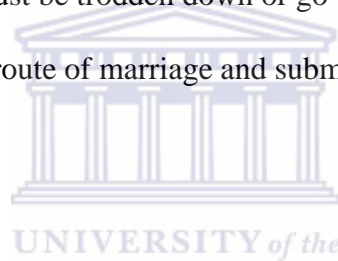
genteel heroine of this second novel who serves as a nurse in the military hospitals and the concentration camps.

Ann Harries certainly applauds the work of Emily Hobhouse and Olive Schreiner as they are the voices which are proven correct and which are echoed by men at the end of both novels. They are correct in their prediction of the catastrophic activities of the 'manly pursuits' executed by the men. It could be that these women were too progressive for the Victorian period and because they were outside of their assigned roles, had to have sad lives or come to a sad demise. It certainly seems this way. The main character, Sarah, does have potential. She does have strong principles. She would ideally have liked to hold onto her principles and make her life's work in partnership with a man. Patch, her lover, is not this man and Sarah is not strong enough to fight. Instead she abandons the greater cause and chooses the conventional marriage and submission to a man by marrying Patch and offering motherhood to his illegitimate offspring. She puts her position into perspective when she compares herself to Emily Hobhouse:

Would she have abandoned her humanitarian principles for love of this man? Yet some women could have the love of a man together with their charitable work: look at Lord and Lady Hobhouse, ..., who together, man and wife, had achieved so much for the improvement of mankind. But Patch is not exactly a Sidney Webb or a Leonard Courtney; he shows no interest in high moral causes, yet she is in love with him: it is all too complex for her to try to sort out at this moment. (Harries, 2005: 340)

Sarah does not sort things out. Instead she stops thinking, settles down and gives in to her expected role. Sarah chooses to compromise. *Manly Pursuits* does not discuss what happens to Schreiner after the war, but in *No Place for a Lady*, Emily Hobhouse is shown to come to a tragic end as she is regarded and treated as being mentally ill. Rather than seeing Harries's position as showing her becoming this way due to being rejected in love and therefore unfulfilled, I see her tragic end as

again a criticism of the Victorian society. Like Lyndall in Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (1883), Hobhouse is an outsider who does not gain respectability because she is not married and because she is involved in conventionally unwomanly activities. This work is accepted if it is done together with a husband, a man. The message is that any person, in this case women, who does not connect with the world as it is, has to struggle against huge forces. Lyndall, also subject to the pressures of Victorian society, expresses this condition when she says, "A woman must march with her regiment. In the end she must be trodden down or go with it." (1883:189) Sarah survives as she succumbs to the conventional route of marriage and submission to her husband. She gives up her quest to fight for humanity.



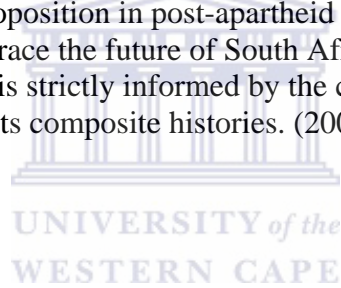
Her survival is not due to her being seen as superior by the author. Rather, the author uses her as an example to show the reality of the situation. There is no place in Victorian society for independent, enlightened and progressive women. War is therefore 'no place for a lady'. Lyndall dies, Olive Schreiner is seen as a hysteric. She is not respected as a woman, and therefore neither are her political opinions, while Emily Hobhouse is put into a straitjacket.

In terms of history and of sociological fact, this is fair enough. Harries finds a means of compromise and survival for her heroine in *No Place for a Lady*, and it is argued here that this compromise speaks of the difficulty of a woman's situation at the time. In terms of literary strategy, however, it might also be argued that the closure for the heroine, Sarah, in *No Place for a Lady* is a compromise on the author's part, accepting a highly conventional novelistic resolution. This may well be an ironic gesture on Harries's part, but it remains conventional. Perhaps the implicit resistance here is in the comparison between the fortunes of Sarah, and Emily Hobhouse.



In both these novels, Harries is uncovering and showing resistance to the forces of Victorian society. In doing so, she is showing resistance to the resulting consequences in the history of South Africa. The challenge now is to apply this new understanding of South Africa's history to post-apartheid South Africa so as to contribute to the journey towards shaping the new democracy. The issue concerns the legacies of the past and how these are reinterpreted in the present day. Moslund argues:

Although apartheid is over constitutionally and in terms of a democratically elected government, the basic proposition in post-apartheid historical fiction is that the past will continue to disgrace the future of South Africa unless the development of South African society is strictly informed by the challenge and the judgement that is passed upon it by its composite histories. (2003:123)



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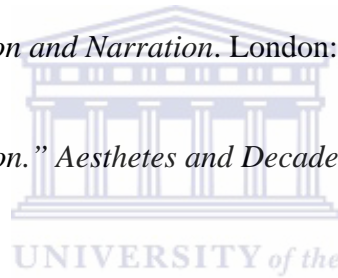
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