

Christianity, Education and African Nationalism: An Intellectual Biography of Z.K. Matthews (1901-1968)

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Dedication

To Bongolethu Nombila



Declaration

I ascertain that *Christianity, Education and African Nationalism: An Intellectual Biography of Z.K. Matthews (1901-1968)*, is my own work that has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by full references.

Date: 15 November 2013

Signed: Ayanda Nombila



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Introduction

I encountered ZK Matthews in a course on the *History of Anthropology in Southern Africa*, lectured by Andrew Bank, during the Honors degree in 2011. Since then I sought to follow this figure as a project for the Master's thesis. Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews was born in 1901, Kimberley and died in 1968, United States of America. I shall call him ZK as he was popularly known. ZK has not been given credence as a subject of study, even though there is much that can be produced from studying his ideas.

ZK grew up in South Africa. He was among those black “natives” South Africans who received education at the turn of the 20th century. Educated by the missionaries at the Lovedale Institute, and went to attain a BA Degree in 1924 at the newly established black University College of Fort Hare. In the mid-1930s he took studies at Yale University and the London School of Economics. ZK dedicated his life to the education and politics of black South Africans, right from the late 1930s until his death in 1968. A number of organizations, including Teachers Unions, research institutes and church organizations, attest to his service. It was under the African National Congress (ANC), which was established in 1912, that ZK undertook his work as politician, educationalist, Christian, and lawyer of the African people.

How do I propose to do a study of ZK then? Here we are dealing with a biographical subject; however we are not going to follow this conventionally. It is an ideal in dealing with a life of an individual to follow his life from birth to death. That would take a form of recording a narrative about the life (*bio*) of the individual; where he would be seen as one of the big-men of the ANC, a leader of the people whose life unfolded for a purpose of servicing the struggling black peoples of South Africa and Africa as a whole. As much as this is good, in his PHD thesis Ciraj Rassool has warned us of the “biographical illusion”, where the relationship between subject-individual, history and society are left untheorized.¹

¹ Rassool, C., 2004, ‘The Individual, Auto/ Biography and History in South Africa’, PhD Thesis, History Department, University of the Western Cape, p.4.

Chapter Outline

My study begins by looking at the ways in which ZK Matthews has been remembered. I raise questions about his legacy in the post-apartheid period, in relation to the limited ways in which he has been studied and in relation to the broader politics of memory. What follows this is an analysis of ZK's political and educational writings, as a new way of thinking about his intellectual contributions to nationalist thought.

Chapter one of this thesis will raise questions about the legacy and memory of ZK in the post-apartheid moment. I analyze both the popular and the scholarly representations of ZK as have been attempted by people and organizations to remember him. The popular representations of ZK have been produced by the University of Fort Hare, through an exhibition of his life and legacy and an Annual Memorial Lectures. ZK we must recall, was once a student, a lecturer and Rector of the university.

On the scholarly side there is only one existing attempt to produce an auto/biography, one by ZK himself and edited with memoirs by Monica Hunter Wilson. The name of the book is *Freedom For My People* published in 1981. I analyze the circumstances of the production of this book. And secondly I point out that the interest here was on the liberal-Christian view of ZK. It focused on ZK's relationships with people of different kinds, his service at Fort Hare and the public society, and the ANC. I also provide an analysis of two seminar papers by Paul Rich (1994) and Cynthia Kros (1990), and one long essay by William Saayman (1996). All these studies so not attempt to produce a discourse on the nationalist thought of ZK, rather they focus on limited archival work and they rely on the ambit of liberalism and Christianity to understand ZK.

In relation to the first point, there has not been a study of ZK to deal with the question of nationalism in interesting ways as I will do here. The analysis of the scholarly representations I have done in chapter two of this thesis show a narrowness of ZK. They have assumed him a priori as liberal and Christian, without paying attention to his texts. Here as way of remembering ZK as a nationalist intellectual I probe his texts bringing their details to the fore.² In chapter two

² Some of these scholars I will analyze them in the first chapter. But interestingly ZK Matthews gets to be mentioned on some books in nationalism in South Africa. See Walshe P., "Continuing Influence: The American Precedent, Christianity and White Liberals", in *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa* (London and Los Angeles:

of this thesis I have given a rigorous analysis of ZK's texts, arguing that what he grappling with was to produce an African modern subject.

Using the notions of the “problematic” and “thematic” by Partha Chatterjee³, I have analyzed the texts to bring out the argument as it, to show how ZK attempts to work-out this notion of the African modern subject. His intervention is specifically on debates on political rights and civil rights, citizenship and belonging, africanization of education, “race”, and culture. Through discussing such issues I argue that there is a new subject that nationalism seeks to produce; it is modern yet African-national. In that sort of argument it becomes clear that African nationalist intellectuals cannot be simplistically labeled as liberals, that they were mimicking an idea of the nation as having a “modular character” according to Bernard Anderson.⁴

To dispute this line of thinking I have deployed the notion of the “justificatory structure” from Chatterjee, to pay attention to the contents of nationalist politics of ZK. Chapter 1 shows the content of nationalist politics, through paying attention to what the texts claims as political and historical possibilities for the African and the evidences used to support those claims. We show that ZK argues that the Africans will have to rule themselves under their own national order, having replaced the other dominating colonial order.

Few scholars have attempted to conduct biographies of nationalist thinkers. Paul la Hausse de Lalouviere has made a case for the study of Zulu politics of nationalism through the lives of two Zulu *kholwa* intellectuals, named Petros Lamula (1881-1948) and Lymon Maling (1889-1936). He argues that having realized their mortality in the British colonial system as the result of the effects of dispossession and conquest, their “nationalist search to redeem the past was as much about individual self-assertion as it was about collective identity, and became increasingly bound

Christopher Hurst & Co and University of California Press, 1987). He relates ZK with the older generation of the ANC-referring to Xuma, Calata, Moroka, which was influenced by Christianity- “many congressmen retained a strong inclination to moralise on the basis of Christian ethics, an inclination which therefore survived the transformation from reliance on a moral regeneration of society to accept the need for determined and mass political organization”, 345. Walshe's book does not focus on the writings of nationalist intellectuals as we are proposing to study it here. Another study would be that of Saayman W.A., *A Man With A Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor ZK Matthews* (South Africa: University of South Africa Press, 1996). ZK is again put as a Christian liberal.

³ Chatterjee P., *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World* (London: United Nations University, Zed Books, 1986).

⁴ Anderson B., *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

up with Zulu history and ethnic consciousness”.⁵ On the other hand Hlonipha Mokoena has probed on the identity of *kholwa* intellectuals, through an examination of a life of one intellectual of Natal, Magma Fuze. In her book *Magma Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*, Mokoena argues that native intellectuals simultaneously adopted and mended the western and indigeneous cultures, a process that was indeterminate and contradictory.⁶

What is significant in these studies is the insertion of the vernacular terminology *kholwa*. It signifies a specific moment in the story of nationalism in South Africa. This study of ZK will focus on a particular moment, and there is a reason for this. He, unlike all these other nationalist thinkers embodied both the period of the British colonialism and the apartheid moment. Significantly it is the moment of the apartheid that animates his writings on the politics and education of the African. On a broader level, the question of this time was that of the native question.



⁵ La Hausse de Lalouviere, P., *Restless Identities: Signatures of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnicity and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1818-1948), and Lymon Malind (1889-c. 1936)* (South Africa: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2000), 8.

⁶ Mokoena, H., *Magma Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual* (South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011).

Chapter One

Remembering Z.K. Matthews: Popular and Scholarly Representations

Z.K. Matthews died of a heart attack in 1968 in the U.S.A. This chapter I traces the ways in which he has been remembered. Writing this chapter will take the form of a query about the ignored intellectual contributions of ZK in the histories of political struggle in South Africa. Why does he not take a more prominent symbolic place in the post-apartheid period? ZK was a prominent figure in the political struggle for self-definition and autonomy of the African political subject from the apartheid/colonial experience. It is clear that he became the leading figure in the intensification of the discourse of self-definition with a broad multiracial perspective in the African National Congress (ANC) in the period from the 1940s to the 1960s. He served as ANC President of the Cape from the late 1940s, and the Native Representative Council (NRC) for a long time. His close affinity with the then President-General of the ANC (1952-1967) Chief Albert Luthuli led to the crafting and the subsequent production of the Freedom Charter in 1955, in which ZK's broad intellectual outlook was felt. His contributions, as I will argue in the subsequent chapter, were felt in the field of African education and the general liberation politics. The University of Fort Hare and Adams College, and the World Council of Churches are some of the organizations that attest to ZK's broad sense to public service.

Ciraj Rassool and others have argued that there has been a proliferation in the production of political biographies, popular and scholarly, in the years after apartheid.⁷ Political biographies have tended to focus on prominent figures in the struggle for the liberation of black South Africans from segregation and apartheid. If one considers the broader historiography of memorialization in the post-apartheid period, one finds that the names of certain heroes appear again and again: Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu. Most recently you find biographies of contemporary leaders of the ANC, including Thabo Mbeki, Kgalema Motlanthe, Jacob Zuma, Cyril Ramaphosa, and many others.⁸ ZK does

⁷See Rassool C., "The Individual, Auto/ Biography and History in South Africa", (PhD diss., University of the Western Cape, 2004).

⁸ See Gevisser M., *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* (South Africa: Jonathan Ball, 2007); Gumede W.M., *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC* (South Africa: Zebra, 2005); Harvey E., *Kgalema Motlanthe: A Political Biography* (South Africa: Jacana Media, 2013); Butler A., *Cyril Ramaphosa* (South Africa: Jacana Media, 2008); Gordin J., *Zuma: A Biography* (South Africa: Jonathan Ball, 2008).

not appear on this list. His full biography is yet to be written. In more popular publications he is usually forgotten. So for example in a recent book published by the ANC marking its centenary celebrations, ZK did not appear at all! The book is titled *Unity in Diversity: 100 Years of ANC Leadership (1912-2012)*. It provides a leadership *timeline* of the African National Congress. It shows its presidential leadership from John Langalibalele Dube (1912-1917) to the current leadership of Jacob Zuma. It also gives importance to other leaders of the ANC.⁹ How do we explain this neglect? What has been the politics of memory in the ANC? Which lives have become important and why? Which not? Is this symptomatic of the tendency for nationalist movements to omit memory for certain ends?

In their study of Albert Luthuli, Sithole and Mkhize have raised interesting questions about the contestations of memory of certain individuals in the public sphere. Sithole and Mkhize opt for an analysis that foregrounds the concepts of “selective rememberings”, “imaginings” and “representations”.¹⁰ Thus they highlight that different organizations, people and places have different and conflicting interests in people of importance, like Luthuli or ZK. How has ZK been presented in public political discourse? Which institutions, places and people have shown interest in ZK? In relation to the notion of “selective rememberings”, why has he not taken prominence in the ANC-centric nationalist memorialization of liberation struggle heroes in the post-apartheid period? My question is how should we remember the work of a nationalist intellectual in the post-apartheid democratic public sphere? How do we recognize the work of a pioneer in the field of black education in South Africa? How do we recognize someone whose ideals and ideas played significance, to such profound documents as the Freedom Charter, a document that is principal to the democratic state of South Africa?

I also look at the scholarly representations of ZK. What kind of ZK should be remembered in the academy? Here I focus on the auto/biography *Freedom For My People* (1981) by ZK Matthews, and edited with memoirs by his one-time colleague and longtime friend Monica Hunter Wilson.¹¹

⁹ Swanepoel D. and Schoeman R., *Unity in Diversity: 100 Years of ANC Leadership (1912-2012)* (Johannesburg: BM Books, 2012).

¹⁰ Sithole J. and Mkhize S., 2000, “Truth or Lies? Selective Memories, Imagings, and Representations of Chief Albert John Luthuli in Recent Political Discourse”, *History and Theory*, 39 (2000): 70.

¹¹ Matthews Z.K. and Wilson M., *Freedom For My People: the autobiography of ZK Matthews, Southern Africa 1901 to 1968* (London and Cape Town: R Collings and D Phillip, 1981).

Frieda Matthews, the wife of ZK, published *Remembrances* in 1994, though not with a focus on Matthews.¹² There was also a publication which came as a textbook for schools which was written by the educationist Susan du Rand in 1993. The textbook is the form of a short biography in the series *They Fought For My Freedom*.¹³ Also in this post-apartheid moment seminar papers on ZK appeared, by one Paul Rich (1994), the other by Cynthia Kros (1990).¹⁴ Then a scholarly essay appeared (1996), by Willem Saayman entitled *A Man With A Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor Z.K. Matthews*.¹⁵ Saul Dubow's *South Africa's Struggle for Human Rights* mentions ZK's central role in the fight for human rights. ZK's significance appears as a result of the role he played in the drafting of the *Africans' Claims in South Africa*, a document which was adopted by the ANC in 1943. He chaired the drafting committee. Dubow claims that ZK's "intellectual imprint is clear in the document's espousal of the democratic rights, citizenship, human dignity and anti-colonial national self-determination".¹⁶

Most of these publications were produced from 1990 to 1996 and therefore they signal the interest in memory-work in the new post-apartheid democratic public sphere in South Africa. I will make a case that these publications produce a certain kind of ZK, focusing narrowly on certain aspects of his contributions in public service in the church, education and the ANC. But most importantly, beginning with *Freedom For My People*, they all rely on limited materials, and they do not deal with ZK in sufficient detail.

Locating Z.K Matthews's intellectual contributions in the post-apartheid public sphere

My focus is on the contributions of ZK towards the formation of what we have today: the democratic nation of South Africa. However, to begin with, it will be fruitful to speak about what has come to define the process of making memory and history in the post-apartheid South Africa. I will do this with a focus on the ANC-centric production of history. After all the ANC was a

¹² Bokwe F., *Remembrances*, (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1994).

¹³ Rand S., *Z.K. Matthews* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1993).

¹⁴ See, Kros C.J., "'Deep rumblings': ZK Matthews 'Culture Contact' and the Eiselen Commission of Inquiry into Native Education, 1934-1939", (paper presented in at the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 6-10 February 6-10, 1990); Rich P., "Z.K. Matthews and the Democratic Theme in Black SA Politics", (paper presented at the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1994).

¹⁵ Saayman W.A., *A Man With A Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor ZK Matthews* (South Africa: University of South Africa Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Dubow S., *South Africa's Struggle For Human Rights* (South Africa: Jacana Media, 2012), 57.

political home for Matthews; it is the political party to which he dedicated his political life and thought.

Soon after the ANC came to power it undertook a series of memorialization programmes, through the establishment of heritage sites such as museums. Certain political figures have been appropriated through such memorializing programmes. This has taken place through the creation of museums, the renaming of places and spaces, the production of televised documentaries and commemorative annual memorial lectures. The University of Fort Hare failed to turn Matthews's house into a museum, which is in a state of disarray in Alice.

Tony Bennett wrote that the nation produces “history which is made rather than given, which is the result of an active process of organization through which other histories—other possible frameworks for organizing events into sequences and interpreting their significance—are either eliminated or annexed to and inscribed within the unfolding unity of the nation's development”.¹⁷ Writing more specifically about the politics of memory in post-apartheid South Africa Gary Baines observed that since 1994 there has been a concerted effort to build an ‘imagined nation’, at the heart of which has been the creation of “new sites of memory—memorials, monuments, public holidays, national symbols, commemorative events and civic events—are created or established so as to forge a national consciousness. But national identity and collective memory survives only to the degree that it satisfies individuals' demands for a usable past”.¹⁸

This process in South Africa has involved a number of aspects. Firstly as we saw there has been many auto biographies of liberation struggle heroes and a vast output of traditional hagiographic biographies of the liberation struggle. That is happening, for example, through the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), which sought to produce an official history of the liberation struggle.¹⁹ However, this project's periodization of the liberation struggle is limited as

¹⁷ Bennett T., *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 141.

¹⁸ Baines G., “The Politics of Public History in the Post-Apartheid South Africa”, in *History Making and Present Day Politics: The Making of Collective Memory in South Africa*, ed. Stolten H, (Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainsstitute, Uppsala, 2007).

¹⁹ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Vols 1-6, 1960 to 1996, accessed at <http://www.sadet.co.za>. See also, Legassick M., “Debating the Revival of the Workers Movement of the 1970s: The South Africa Democracy Education Trust and Post-apartheid Patriotic History”, *Kronos*, 34 (2008): 240-266.

it only begins from the 1960s to 1996. It cannot therefore capture the broad scope, and longer history of the liberation struggle in South Africa. Secondly, the volumes are broadly connect with the ANC's nationalist project along with their naming and re-naming streets, airports, museums, and so on. To this we can add the making of history where a certain theatrical narration of history is given.²⁰

These processes involve the selection of larger-than-life individuals and personalities by the ANC to appropriate them into post-apartheid history. These individuals African nationalists are written into the present from the past. So that, the relationship between the past, the present and the future is stabilized in a linear fashion, a “Road to Democracy”, that takes precedence along with a vision of a “rainbow-nation”. Mandela, for example, is known as the “father” of the democratic nation. The ANC does this to perpetuate itself and thereby the knowledge that the history of the ANC becomes the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa.²¹ Such a history is exclusionary, selective and romantic. Ndlovu—Gatsheni notes similar patterns in Zimbabwe, where a “selective deployment of history, memory and commemoration is used to establish hegemony and claim uncontested political legitimacy”, resulting in the “repression of alternative memories and imaginations of the nation”.²²

Grappling with such issues Sithole and Mkhize have noted that significant people tend to be used as “political symbols” for a number of purposes, by different organisations, people and institutions.²³ Their frame of reference is that history is a “particular form of socially created knowledge...shaped by the pre-occupations, circumstances, and ideologies of the historians producing it, and by the kinds of questions and arguments authors choose to employ. It is therefore a contested terrain with many possible makers, both in the academy and in the wider

²⁰ Scott Coupes indicates some of these documentary films in the life of Luthuli, (1) *The Legacy of a Legend* (2005) by the National Film and Video Foundation, (2) *Servant of the People* (2007) by the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Office of the Premier's: Coupes S., *Albert Luthuli; Bound by Faith*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Press, 2010), 4.

²¹ This ANC-centric view of history is even perpetuated through the media by ANC historians such as Jordan P, “ANC: On a century of movement”. *Mail and Guardian News*, 23 December 23, 2011.

²² Ndlovu-Gatsheni S. S, 2011, “The Construction and Decline of Chimurenga Monologue in Zimbabwe: A Study in Resistance of Ideology and Limits of Alternatives”, (paper presented in conference at the Nordic African Institute, Uppsala, June 14-18, 2011). I am not suggesting that the situation in Zimbabwe should be conflated with that of South Africa, only to indicate some of these similar patterns resulting from nationalist history.

²³ Sithole and Mkhize, *Truth Or Lies*.

society”.²⁴ Centering their study on the life and representations of Albert Luthuli, Sithole and Mkhize argue that they do not simply regard some representations and images of Luthuli as “lies” and other as “truths”.²⁵ History is not a simple matter of truth and lies, but a constructed reality of various socially mediated notions. As noted above, they recommend that representative images of Luthuli can be analysed in relation to the concepts of “selective rememberings”, “imaginings”, and “representations”.²⁶

The process of making history in the post-apartheid involves issues related to collective memory. What people should remember is mediated through certain socially created notions of what is important and of what is not important. And most importantly there is a narrative of the nation, one which we are all associated with as citizens of the nation. These processes are not insular from the workings of power and politics. Hutton noted that “collective memory is constructed”, and its “key to its influence is political power—contests over the use of such power—the politics of public memory”, he says.²⁷ I want to elaborate this by noting the observation made by Hobsbawm in *The Invention of Tradition*. He writes that “the history which became part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of the nation, state or movement is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularised and institutionalised by those whose function is to do so”.²⁸

This discursive frame helps us to understand why the nation will always give a certain narration of history. The ignored contributions of ZK in post-apartheid South Africa can be explained by looking at the ways in which history is made and appropriated by the ANC as a nationalist movement. We should note that by the time the ANC was busy intensifying the armed struggle in the 1960s, ZK had gone into exile in Zambia where he worked for the World Council of Churches. By this time the youth of the ANC had taken a strong hold of its mother body and influenced it immensely. The formation of Umkhonto we-Sizwe (the military wing of the ANC)

²⁴ Sithole and Mkhize, *Truth Or Lies?*, 70.

²⁵ Sithole and Mkhize, *Truth Or Lies?*, 70.

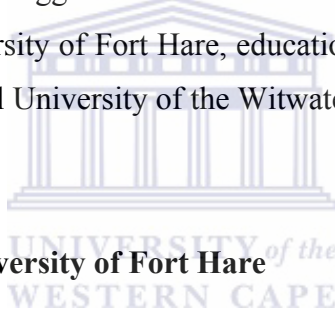
²⁶ Sithole and Mkhize, *Truth Or Lies?*, 70.

²⁷ Hutton P., “Recent Scholarship on Memory and History”, *The History Teacher* 33 (2000): 537.

²⁸ Hobsbawm E., “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”, in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Hobsbawm T, and Ranger T., (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 13

signalled this radicalization of the strategy of struggle in the ANC.²⁹ The ANC in the post-apartheid moment seems to be pre-occupied with the reading of its history as radical and militaristic, with the desire to preserve its revolutionary image as a liberation movement. These are some of the issues which might explain why Matthews does not appear to be significant in the post-apartheid public sphere.

I have mentioned that the Centenary Celebrations of the ANC resulted in the production of a book entitled *Unity in Diversity: 100 Years of ANC Leadership (1912-2012)*. This book provides a leadership *timeline* of the African National Congress. It shows its presidential leadership from John Langalibalele Dube (1912-1917) to the current leadership of Jacob Zuma. It also gives importance to other leaders of the ANC who fought for the democratic rights and liberation of the black people in South Africa.³⁰ This includes business peoples, such as Patrice Motsepe, and academics who contributed to the struggle in the ANC. ZK does not appear at all in this timeline. Neither for that matter does University of Fort Hare, educational home to many of these leaders, though the historically white liberal University of the Witwatersrand is important in the book.



The Matthews Legacy at the University of Fort Hare

I would now like to look at what I understand here to be regional and localized representations of the memory of ZK. I focus on what has been happening at the University of Fort Hare: the attempt to preserve his house, on annual memorial lecture series, and the ZK Matthews exhibition at the university's administration building.

The Matthews House is relevant in the post-apartheid nation of South Africa for a number of reasons. The memorandum of the idea of the Congress of the People, which subsequently led to the adoption of the Freedom Charter, was spearheaded by Matthews and it was written in this house. ZK was sanctioned by the leadership of Albert Luthuli, then President General of the ANC. The document today is foundational of our democracy. It was in part its socialist and popular perspective that led to the arrest of ZK in 1956, along with others for what became

²⁹ See Magubane B, et al, "The turn to armed struggle", in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970*, (South African Democracy Education Trust, South Africa: Struik Publishers, 2005).

³⁰ Swanepoel and Schoeman, *Unity in Diversity: 100 Years of ANC Leadership (1912-2012)*.

famously known as the Treason Trial. This foundational document has been celebrated by the ANC. In 2005 a 50th anniversary celebration of the Freedom Charter was held by the ANC in Kliptown. The area was renamed the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication.

The house was also used for the liberation struggle and for different purposes including education. Monica Wilson and Frieda Bokwe note that the house became a home for educational and political debates.³¹ The Matthews house belonged to all who were part of the struggle, black and white, from the ANC and in general. Such a house deserves to be turned into a museum for posterity.³² The house can be a place where the young generation of the democratic South Africa can derive inspiration from the work and life of pioneer: African intellectual, educationist and politician.

The University of Fort Hare has tried in other ways to preserve the legacy of ZK. Their efforts can be seen on two levels. One is an Annual Memorial Lecture and the second is an exhibition on campus. The memorial lecture is an attempt to preserve the memory of ZK through reflections on his intellectual project and a concerted effort to think about the relevance of his thought in the present and for posterity. Two of the former presidents of this country, Kgalema Motlanthe and Thabo Mbeki delivered some of the lectures. Both portrayed a ZK who was a public intellectual and academic simultaneously. Mbeki construed him as one who did not agree with the Booker T Washington theories of separate development. Mbeki said ZK was a leader of the people, an educationist and one who mingled and mobilized the masses towards a common struggle for the black peoples liberation.³³ Mbeki also fondly recalled the last moment he saw him at Fort Hare in 1959, when he was at the age of 16. He was amazed and excited to find himself debating with the leader of the African people.³⁴

³¹ See Bokwe, *Remembrances*; and Matthews and Wilson, *Freedom For My People*,

³² This has been the case to some of the ANC figures, such as Alfred Xumas' house in Johannesburg, Sophiatown; Nelson Mandelas' house in Soweto; and Albert Luthuli house in Groutville, Natal. The vision and mission of the Luthuli museum in Groutville states that its purpose is "To conserve, uphold, promote and propagate the life, values, philosophies and legacy of the late Chief Albert Luthuli in the struggle against apartheid oppression respect for human rights as well as life devotion to non-violent resolution to world problems", accessed at <http://www.luthulimuseum.org.za/index.php/about/vision-and-mission>, October 31, 2013.

³³ Mbeki T, "He wakened his responsibilities", (address at the ZK Matthews Memorial Lecture, University of Fort Hare, 12 October 12, 2001).

³⁴ Mbeki, *He awakened his responsibilities*.

The exhibition mentioned above is an attempt to present the life of ZK in connection with his work at the University of Fort Hare. It highlights the role he played in education, along with politics. The exhibition is placed in the administration, perhaps to reflect the fact that ZK was once the rector of the University.

Matthews and Wilson: *Freedom For My People* (1981)

I will now look critically at biographical writings about ZK. I frame this section around the questions of representation and constructions of ZK as a subject. I divide this into different historical moments: one pre-1994 and the other the post-1990 moment resonating with the democratic state in South Africa. I will begin by looking at the 1981 publication *Freedom for my People*. This was an unfinished autobiography by Matthews, which was edited for publication by Monica Hunter Wilson. She also added five new chapters based mainly on personal memory. In relation to this autobiography, I shall also look at some of the book reviews.

ZK wrote the draft of *Freedom For My People* at the height of apartheid, and in the years before his death in 1968. He begins the book with his childhood and his family life in Kimberley. The opening chapter is entitled “The man on the white horse” a reference to a colonial official called Superintendent Bird.³⁵ This *makgoa* (Tswana term for white people) represented the image of the *tikoloshe* (traditional bogeyman, short in height and very hairy who came to punish or disrupt people’s lives at night).³⁶ Metaphorically Superintended Bird signified, and even symbolized darkness, displacement and misfortune to the people in Kimberley. Bird came to check and arrest all those who had not obtained the pass, yet continue to resided at the Kimberly location to work on the mines. We later discover in ZK’s narration that this *makgoa* is differentiated others like Robert Moffat, the Christian London missionary. Those are good, civilized men of God, who represent education and the noble cause of preaching the Gospel of Christ.³⁷

Immediately, Matthews turns his narrative to his educational history and achievements, and the sacrifices made by his family. Reflecting on the fact of the Andrew Smith Bursary of 20 pounds he won, he remembers that his family saw it as the duty to pay the rest of the amount for the

³⁵ Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 1.

³⁶ Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 1.

³⁷ Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 1.

purpose of studies as the amount was not enough for the entire schooling period. Of this moment ZK writes of his excitement and appreciation

‘We must see him through’, my father said and my brother John unhesitantly assented. It meant that some of his small hard-earned income would for years to come, be spent on giving me the chance of a high school education. I never knew in detail how my family managed, how much of my father’s meager savings and meager salary, how much of John’s hopes and efforts, went into giving me my start. I know only that it was an offering of the spirit that is forever beyond repayment.³⁸

Matthews’s autobiography then zooms in on his student days at Fort Hare Native College. He then moves to his years at Adams College where he served as the first black Headmaster of such an institution in South Africa. Prominent in this period is his encounter with the figure of a Albert Luthuli of the ANC in Natal and his early activism leading to his becoming elected as the President of the Natal Bantu Teachers’ Association in 1930. From there the book introduces us to his travels through the United States, Europe and East Africa. During this period he got an M.A in Education from Yale University and spent a year attending the famous anthropology seminars of Branislaw Malinowski at the London School of Economics. Returning to South Africa, Matthews tells us about his political activities from the 1940s to the 1950s. The rest of the other work is, in Wilson’s words, “his own account is thinnest where his contribution was perhaps greatest; as a lecturer, Professor, and Acting Principal at Fort Hare; as Treason Trialist who dominated the court; and as an administrator of inter-Church Aid”.³⁹

Importantly the latter section of the book is strongly shaped by Wilson. A word on Wilson’s sources is appropriate here. Wilson draws on archival materials, letters and documents from her long-time friend Frieda Matthews. She also utilized commentaries from former students and colleagues; and his political, and ecumenical correspondence, as well as evidence from court records of the Treason Trial and from the files of the World Council of Churches. Relying on these sources, Wilson was able to produce ZK as, “a man for reconciliation”, a “statesman”, and a “man with a shadow”. By “man with a shadow”, Wilson draws here on indigenous metaphors, which suggest a man of status and respect. Wilson’s ZK as principally localized one: she

³⁸ Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 29.

³⁹ Wilson M, “Preface”, in *Freedom For My People*.

concentrated on his contributions at the University of Fort Hare.⁴⁰ His more cosmopolitan perspectives do not come out.

What I have been doing so far is to talk about the narrative structure of the book. I now look at some of the responses from scholars upon the publication of this book. A series of book reviews came after the book was published. Some assumed a challenging image and the others praised it. Hilda Bernstein wrote in a rather dissatisfied manner, hoping for a fuller study of ZK Matthews, though acknowledging Wilson's attempts to put Matthews onto the stage of history. She anticipated that "one day there will be a full biography of ZK".⁴¹ Ellen Hellmann also felt that a fuller "detailed biography is longed".⁴² Alan Lennox-Short wrote that "the book loses some of its freshness, its sap, its vitality, even though it is well edited".⁴³ Most shorter newspaper reviewers simply highlighted the revered importance of ZK with titles like "The steadfast pioneer" and "Interests grows in Freedom Charter".⁴⁴

To read Matthews's autobiography closely is the most challenging part of this chapter. My quest is to have an understanding of the circumstances of its production. This requires me to engage not only the text as we have it here, but to look closely at the lives of the individuals associated with the text. A degree of commending is due to Wilson for having engaged in such a huge task. She did it out of loyalty to her long-time friends as she expressed this that "if black asks that sort of thing of white nowadays in this country one does not refuse".⁴⁵ In ways the life of the text, *Freedom For My People*, owes its existence to her. Hence, in my analysis here she takes centre stage. There are three ways in which I think we can understand her role in this book. Firstly, I trace how Christianity features as a theme in Wilson's scholarship and subsequently in *Freedom For My People*. Secondly, I want to suggest that we locate this publication in relation to

⁴⁰ Wilson spends time writing about his 24 years at Fort Hare.

⁴¹ Bernstein H, "The man who cast a shadow", *South April Reviews*, 1981; available at The Godfrey and Monica Wilson Collection, Manuscript and Archives Department, UCT Libraries, B.C. 880.

⁴² Hellmann E, "Why does South Africa destroys its sons?", *Book Mail/RDM* 1981; available at The Godfrey and Wilson Collection, B.C.880.

⁴³ Lennox-Short A, "Review of Freedom For My People", *The South African Broadcasting Corporation*; available at The Godfrey and Wilson Collection, B.C. 880.

⁴⁴ See Caradon L, "The steadfast pioneer", *The Guardian*, March 18, 1981; available at The Wilson Collection, B.C. 880. 2. Also see The Star, "Interest grows in Freedom Charter", September 18, 1981; available at The Godfrey and Wilson Collection, B.C. 880.

⁴⁵ Correspondence between Wilson and Desmond Clark, quoted in Morrow S. and Saunders C., "Part of One Whole: Anthropology and History in the Work of Monica Wilson", in *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and Interpreters* eds Bank. A and Bank L. J., (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 303.

Wilson's later career, it could be a return to history. Thirdly, I look at how she constructs Matthews's politics.

There is also no doubt that Wilson wrote the book in circumstances that require some attention. Firstly, the book was produced by a liberal at time in South African history when apartheid. Censorship was the order of the day. At first Wilson preferred the title "If this be treason", but she changed this as it became apparent that the title had already been used elsewhere.⁴⁶ One might add that this initial title could have brought about unwarranted political attention from the apartheid government. The correspondence between Wilson and the two publishers, David Philip in Cape Town and Rex Collings in London speak of the problems of publication at that time. They anticipated that the book would cause a political reaction in South Africa, but it never did. They even wondered about the local edition or whether, like Wilson's coedited Oxford History of South Africa, some of the chapters would have to appear with blank pages as a form of pretext.⁴⁷

I now consider Wilson's sense of duty in producing an autobiography of ZK Matthews.⁴⁸ ZK was a friend of Wilson's. He was a fellow anthropologist and a fellow Christian. He was her head of department of African Studies at Fort Hare under who she began her teaching career as lecturer in social anthropology. He was what she taught was a politician with a statesman like personality. Wilson and ZK shared a religiously inspired vision of a non-racial democratic society in South Africa.

The mixing religion and scholarship is crucial on Wilson's work. Social scientific scholarship has tended to be critical of this; however, to ignore the religious connection in Wilson's work would limit our understanding of '*Freedom for My People*'. David M. Gordon has argued that we should think of religion as "part of modernity and, not its past", further stipulating that

⁴⁶ Wilson Collection, uncat. draft notes, Biography of Matthews, B.C. 880.

⁴⁷ Wilson Collection, Correspondence Letters between M Wilson, David Phillip and Rex Collings, B.C.800

⁴⁸ In its preface she writes for an example, "I felt this to be a great honour and gladly accepted". It can only be of little difficulty for us to understand why she took the job to produce his autobiography with great honour. One might even recall her comments to Desmond Clark, after she was approached by Frieda, that "if black asks that sort of thing of white nowadays in this country one does not refuse!", WC, uncat. corr., Frieda Matthews, Monica Wilson/Frieda Matthews, June 7, 1976, Hogsback; quoted in Morrow, S., and Saunders, C., 2013, 'Part of One Whole': Anthropology and History in the Work of Monica Wilson,' in Bank, A., and Bank, L., *Inside African Anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, p.303.

“human agency” is largely affected by “invisible spirits”.⁴⁹ Taking that as something to reckon with I want to locate Wilson’s book of 1981 with one she had published in 1971: *Religion and the Transformation of Society*. Wilson’s preoccupation with religious scholarship is further elaborated by Gordon elsewhere. Gordon says that in this book Wilson developed “a fully-fledged structural historical model that argues that distinct realms of religious power, thought, and action, emerge with the expansion in the scale of societies.....(have)Wilson developed a theory of religion connected to the structural features of ‘traditional’ small-scale societies and ‘modern’ large-scale ones”.⁵⁰ In order to link this, we must recall Wilson’s own words:

In this book I am trying, as an anthropologist, to analyse the implications of change in scale. I have spent my life trying to do so objectively. But also I am making a choice, a judgment of value as a Christian. Change in scale is not something a Christian can be neutral about. We are commanded to treat a stranger as a neighbour, to preach the Gospel to all the world. The nature of the choice is particularly clear in my own country, where there is constant pressure to limit different racial groups. As a Christian I totally reject such limitation.⁵¹

That gives us an outlook on Wilson’s scholarly vocation. Her Wits counterpart and anthropological colleague, W.D. Hammond-Tooke, confirms that Wilson was a deeply religious person, one who believed in the afterlife. Hammond-Tooke gives a vivid expression of this by suggesting that in her publication of the books based on her and her husband’s joint Nyakyusa fieldwork, “it was clear that she felt Godfrey’s presence continually with her and that she regarded the writing up and publishing of the material they gathered as a sacred trust and a labour of love”.⁵²

South African scholars have recently called attention to the relationship between private and public lives. My argument can further be articulated by citing their perspective. Religion is something that has been regarded as private; scholars, even those who are religious, have tended to detach their scholarship and public lives from their religious and spiritual lives. Duncan

⁴⁹ Gordon D. M., *Invisible Agents; Spirits in a Central African History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 2.

⁵⁰ Gordon D. M., “A Historiography of Invisible Worlds: Spirits, Divine Kings, and Historical Time in Central Africa”, (paper presented at the African Studies Association Meeting, Philadelphia, November, 2012).

⁵¹ Wilson M, *Religion and the Transformation of Society: A Study in Social Change in Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 24.

⁵² Hammond-Tooke W. D, *Imperfect Interpreters: South Africa’s Anthropologists 1920-1990* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1997), 82-83.

Brown notes that religion and spirituality are important parts of post-coloniality, even though they have been ignored and treated with inadequacy by postcolonial theorists.⁵³ He writes that they “are closely woven into the fabric of South African public and private life though not always seamlessly or in matching threads”.⁵⁴

On the other hand Andrew Bank consolidates this by looking tracing Christianity as a thematic grounding in the works of Wilson. He notes that Christianity was more “systematic and historical rather than personal and anecdotal”.⁵⁵ He explains his approach in the following manner

My approach to spirituality—here a biography of a religious life and associated work—might best be described as an experiential one. I am interested primarily in making a case for her (Wilson’s) Christian identity, beliefs and practice as a changing lived experience rather than a textually derived dogma or guide to life. While biblical texts were, as we shall see, a marked feature of her childhood, education and the Scottish missionary tradition played a role, my reconstruction rests on an analysis of her religious life as something experienced through social relations: first with her missionary father, then with her spiritual sisters at Girton, then with Christian networks of interpreters in the field in Pondoland and Banyakyusa.⁵⁶

What Bank does here is to put significance to Wilson’s earlier work, which dealt with “Christianity as ‘an inner state’ and with the individual experiences of Christianity”.⁵⁷ Her first serious study on Christianity was an essay “An African Christian Morality” published in 1937. It focused on “religious sanction” in Banyakyusa where she had done fieldwork in churches and Christian villages. Here she was interested in describing the relationship between “belief and behaviour in the largely separate Christian communities, in particular the way in which the religious ideas of these Christians constrained their behaviour in ways that tended to enforce

⁵³ Brown D., “Religion, Spirituality and The Postcolonial: A Perspective from the South”, in *Religion and Spirituality in South Africa: New Perspective*, ed. Brown D., (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009).

⁵⁴ Brown, *Religion, Spirituality and The Postcolonial: A Perspective from the South*, 1&6.

⁵⁵ Bank A, “An Adopted Daughter: Christianity and Anthropology in the Life and Early Work of Monica Hunter Wilson (1908-1982)”, (forthcoming), 4.

⁵⁶ Bank, *An Adopted Daughter: Christianity and Anthropology in the Life and Early Work of Monica Hunter Wilson (1908-1982)*, 4.

⁵⁷ Bank, *An Adopted Daughter: Christianity and Anthropology in the Life and Early Work of Monica Hunter Wilson (1908-1982)*, 5.

social conformity”.⁵⁸ Christianity was to appear in most of her scholarship in the later stages of her life. It appeared in a collaborative work between her and Leonard Thompson; a two volume liberal compendium *Oxford History of South Africa*.

She also took this in a public lecture she gave on the history of Christian South African intermediaries in colonial South Africa, beginning with African Christian converts on missionary institutions.⁵⁹ There are two things she highlights in the lecture. The first is that she tied education with religion; the second is that she characterised *The Interpreter* as one who listens and talks, as a person of reconciliation and integrity.⁶⁰ She defined the interpreter as “the man between whose primary function is communication, and secondary function negotiation”.⁶¹ Wilson’s ZK embodied these features. She notes in the autobiography, for example, that ZK was preoccupied with how most African history was written by narrow-minded colonial scholars and that he longed for the day when the African scholar took his pen to write history from his own perspective.⁶² Wilson commends ZK for his wide grasp of anthropological theory, his awareness of problems in anthropological research and the need for analysing the changing African context “as opposed to narrow ethnographic studies”.⁶³ Wilson’s ZK was therefore “a Christian man-between, a negotiator, a conciliator whose contribution arose as much from his sense of self, from his ‘shadow’, and balanced ability to see things from both sides as from his political contribution to the liberation struggle”.⁶⁴

I must also consider Wilson’s application of Xhosa metaphors in illustrating the wisdom and character of ZK. Wilson learnt Xhosa as a school girl at Lovedale. Chapter twelve of *Freedom for my People* takes the form of a memoir titled *A Man with a Shadow*, which can be translated as *i-Ndoda enesithunzi* in Xhosa proper. Her understanding of this is that it refers to “a man of dignity and authority, the sort of authority-that derives from an integrated personality. The man

⁵⁸ Bank, *An Adopted Daughter: Christianity and Anthropology in the Life and Early Work of Monica Hunter Wilson (1908-1982)*, 41.

⁵⁹ Wilson M, *The Interpreters*, (Grahamstown: The 1820 Settlers National Monument Foundation, 1972).

⁶⁰ Wilson, *The Interpreters*, 20-24.

⁶¹ Wilson, *The Interpreters*, 20.

⁶² Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 118.

⁶³ Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 19.

⁶⁴ Bank, *An Adopted Daughter: Christianity and Anthropology in the Life and Early Work of Monica Hunter Wilson (1908-1982)*, 44-45.

who loses his identity casts no shadow, he has no force”.⁶⁵ Wilson links ZK’s ideals about society, his fight for education of the Africans, his religious convictions, his fight for full citizenship rights for Africans; and argues that there were “there were no contradictions”.⁶⁶ She describes ZK as an *umkoba*. This is a yellow-wood tree that spreads its branches widely and for her it symbolized his scope of interest.⁶⁷

In *Freedom for my People* Wilson’s description of ZK was that of a man standing for an “open society”, a “common society” He was a “statesman with a large African following”.⁶⁸ Her preoccupation was with how social change played out in the life of an African, in terms of his commitment to African education, his establishment of Christian’s networks around Africa and the world, and his politics. Sifting through her draft notes of the chapters, I found a list which best converges her sense of the man and his views.

- (1) seeking educational opportunity for Africans
- (2) a practising Christian
- (3) personal ambition achievement for Africans
- (4) religion and politics merged
- (5) racialism incompatible with Christianity
- (6) still stood for non-violence
- (7) Z.K. always on the side of cooperation
- (8) A man for reconciliation
- (9) not a creative scholar
- (10) never time for research work
- (11) Native Education Advisory Council
- (12) not Tswana nationalist
- (13) Royal Commission
- (14) full citizenship
- (15) spoke Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, English, Afrikaans. Read French and Latin.⁶⁹

This thinking about an African, whose full assimilation of Western values according to Wilson was seen in his practice, is helpful in terms of my reading that Wilson was concerned with social change. Her interest was in how Africans moved from small scale societies to much more

⁶⁵ Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 216. Wilson might have also added that this kind of person is sometimes displaced from his own people, and even feared by some. Some may regard him as higher than though personality. Some regarded him as a “Gqoboka”-that is a vernacular meaning someone who is too much educated that he has lost his culture, and the culture as practised by the people.

⁶⁶ Matthews, *Freedom For My People*, 216.

⁶⁷ The consistency of this might be difficult to prove though, as some have noted that in fact Matthews was not approachable and specifically his views were in conflict with those of the ANC Youth League. Wilson notes in *Freedom For My People* the Youth League of the ANC tried to persuade him to pursue their policy and they would vote for him if he does so, but he refused for he could not rely on their formulations. Secondly, Daniel Massey notes the differences between the youth and Matthews in Fort Hare, Massey D, *Under Protest: The Rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare* (South Africa: UNISA Press, 2010), Chapter 1, 27-94.

⁶⁸ Wilson, in *Freedom For My People*, 216, 222, 233.

⁶⁹ Wilson Collection, draft notes, Manuscript and Archives Department, UCT Libraries, B.C. 880.

broader societies.⁷⁰ In ZK she saw an African who had transcended tribal-sentiments, one who was a practising Christian who stood for non-violence and non-racialism, an educationist who represented the African cause in commissions and councils and therefore stood for cooperation rather than conflict: the “right” way for a liberal of Wilson. This representation of ZK draws attention to the close affinity, his religious and his political views and imagination.

Post-apartheid biographies, 1990-1996

It took more than a decade before scholars in the academy again showed interest in ZK. In 1990 the Wits historian Cynthia Kros presented a seminar paper that emphasizes the fact that ZK was a “culture contact” student. She drew attention to the relations between ZK and Malinowski.⁷¹ Kros creates ZK as a man whose ideas were influenced by the anthropological views of the days. She does this by focusing on specific aspects of Matthews’ anthropological approach, notably the (in my view misplaced) comparison of his ideas with those of the later apartheid ideologue Werner Eiselen whose history Kros has studied in more detail. This lumping together of a future apartheid ideologue with the insider ethnography of an African nationalist rests in stereotyped and oversimplified ZK’s account of ethnographic approach. It forecloses the possibility of locating ZK in a newer African insider ethnographic tradition. Thereby forecloses the possibility of asking productive questions about the broader socio-politico structures with which black intellectuals in the 20th century like Matthews were grappling with: social change, and cosmopolitanism vs. the upholding of cultural tradition.

Another unpublished conference paper was written by Paul Rich in 1994. Rich is well known for his fierce book-length critique of the South African liberal tradition.⁷² Rich tries to document the achievements of Matthews in the period from the 1930s to the mid-1950s. Among other things, he states that Matthews was the one who proposed that a Congress of the People be held in Kliptown, in which a Freedom Charter was discussed and adopted.⁷³ Rich touches on ZK’s use

⁷⁰ Wilson, *Religion and the Transformation of Society: A Study in Social Change in Africa*.

⁷¹ Kros, *Deep rumblings’: ZK Matthews ‘Culture Contact’ and the Eiselen Commission of Inquiry into Native Education, 1934-1939*.

⁷² Rich P., *White Politics and The South African Liberal Tradition* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1984).

⁷³ Rich, *Z.K. Matthews and the Democratic Theme in Black SA Politics*.

of anthropology to fight and dismantle discrimination, but makes very little use of archival sources.⁷⁴

ZK's political contribution was the focus of a school textbook published in 1993. The textbook took the form of a short biography in the series *They Fought For My Freedom*. It was written by educationalist Susan du Rand.⁷⁵ As its title indicates this is more of an uncritical hagiography, lacking details and complexity.

The fourth in this group of biographies produced is the one by Willem A. Saayman, *A Man With A Shadow*.⁷⁶ This book deals with the contributions of ZK in the consolidation of the Christian church in South Africa. Saayman, a theologian at the University of South Africa (Unisa) was interested in African Christianity. His broader interest was to look at African Christian leaders and the establishment of Independent African Churches. He presents what he calls a "a missiological interpretation of ZK's life and times in order to facilitate our understanding of Christian mission in the South African context, past and present".⁷⁷ Saayman also briefly traces ZK's community work looking at places and influences associated with his public service. Saayman claims that Matthews was the product of his upbringing, his education and socio-political context, and his Christian faith. What ultimately stands in this study is that Matthews was a Christian convert, one whose little work is related to a project to the Christian church in Africa. This role of Christianity as this summary suggests, dominates this 90 page study; with no broader intellectual outlook of ZK. Its sources are likewise limited, confined to a few speeches ZK gave in relation to church issues. Even these speeches are not analyzed in detail to in relation to content, style and intellectual production.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that there has not been sufficient attempt to appropriate the memory of Matthews in the post-apartheid moment. Despite his massive intellectual activism for the

⁷⁴ Rich, Z.K. *Matthews and The Democratic Theme in Black SA Politics*, 6-11.

⁷⁵ Rand, Z.K. *Matthews*.

⁷⁶ Saayman, *A Man With A Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor ZK Matthews*.

⁷⁷ Saayman, *A Man With A Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor ZK Matthews*, 97.

liberation of the South African oppressed classes from the 1940s to the 1960s, he has not been a serious subject from any of the political biographies that have been produced with proliferation. The existing attempts to preserve his memory are localized and regionalized in the Eastern Cape, in the University of Fort Hare. In thinking through this problem, I have laid down my discussion into two frameworks. I looked at popular representations of ZK Matthews and then at scholarly representations.

In terms of the popular representations, I argued that the University of Fort Hare has made an attempt to preserve Matthews's memory by refurbishing his house at Alice, though with little sources. There has also been an Annual Memorial Lecture and an exhibition exists in Fort Hare's administration building. Both of these though are only suitable for those, whose tastes are elitist, the public cannot reach these easily.

On the other hand, I have also shown that memory is a politicized issue. ZK Matthews's contributions are lost from the ANC-centric narrative of the liberation struggle, precisely because of the ways memory is made to speak to certain political investments. The popularization and consolidation of memory comes with exclusions, displacements and forgettings. Thus I have shown the writing of history itself is a socially mediated issue with the politics of the present and the past intermingled. In this case I have shown that from the ANC produced volume for the celebrations of its 100th centenary leadership, ZK Matthews was completely excluded.

Freedom For My People published over three decades ago, sadly stands as the only serious scholarly work on this important Africa intellectual. I have looked at the circumstances of the production of the book by Wilson. I have analyzed and linked her interests in religion and social change, anthropology and history, in relation to how she came to produce the kind of ZK Matthews we see in the book. Her interest in Matthews was "a man for reconciliation", one who shared with her a vision of a non-racial South Africa, and non-violent programme of action. In him she found hope for a better future. The full scholarly biography that reviewers like Ellen Hellman eagerly anticipated has yet to be written. The waning scholarly interest in ZK Matthews after the democratic moment suggests that may be many years in coming.

Chapter Two

African Modernity and Nationalism: An Analysis of Educational and Political Writings of a Nationalist Thinker

From the 1940s to the 1960s ZK Matthews began to expound his ideas on the political and educational issues about the black native experience. This chapter makes an analysis of some of these writings. I will argue that ZK's writings should be viewed under the ambit of nationalism. In that sense my concern is to understand the kind of subject formation which is at the core of the imaginary of nationalist intellectuals in the mid-20th century in South Africa.⁷⁸ This subject ZK is producing, I argue, is one that can be understood as an *African modern subject*. There are key conceptual issues I want to introduce that ZK's intervention on nationalist politics opens up, which I argue enables him to set out a discursive frame for his imaginary towards what this African modernity should look like.⁷⁹ These conceptual issues emerge in his intervention in debates on political rights and civil rights, citizenship and belonging, africanization of education, "race", and culture. We will see that at stake here in this kind of modernity, is that as it attains a distinctive status of the African-national, it ceases to be universal. Therefore what we see in the writings of ZK is the attempt to produce a kind of distinctive modernity.

The debates I will introduce here will enable me to establish the structure and content of his arguments; what he claims is possible for the "native" and what his justifications are. I will give specific attention to how he tactfully attacks the ahistorical and political inequities of an apartheid government's practices. ZK's criticism can be framed on as a dialectical mode: that is

⁷⁸ There are two things I would like to note with regards to my periodization here. The first one is that the period Matthews began to write his ideas is the one characterized with the dying days of British colonialism, and one on the other side of it characterized by the anticipation of the coming of apartheid. Secondly, relevant to that I must note that there is a difference between British colonialism and apartheid rule. The former was settler colonialism and saw its mission as that of the civilization of small backward peoples, through a policy of assimilation and trusteeship. The later was developed within the Union by an internal white minority, whose main aim was total separation of races, for the preservation of their own culture and development along their own lines. I will come back with details of this late in this chapter.

⁷⁹ Partha Chatterjee, whom I will introduce later in this work said of this nationalist subjectivity "the problematic in nationalist thought is exactly the reverse of that of Orientalism. That is to say, the 'object' in nationalist thought is still the Oriental, who retains the essentialist character depicted in Orientalist discourse. Only he is not passive, non-participating. He is seen to possess a 'subjectivity' which he can himself 'make'. In other words while his relationship to himself and to others have been 'posed, understood and defined' by others, i.e. by an objective scientific consciousness, by Knowledge, by Reason, those relationships are not acted by others. His subjectivity, he thinks, is active, autonomous and sovereign".

on one level his discourse is an anti-colonial critique and on the other hand it is an imaginary of a post-colonial future. This criticism allows ZK to engage in a constructive discourse of the past, present and future about what is possible for the African. That is, we can be able to see how his interventions can be justified historically and politically as discourse. At the heart of this, it would seem that ZK also had to carefully outline his arguments in relation to the existential and political problem of a multi-racial society. His thought on this was different from the nationalism of the Afrikaners, and that section of African nationalism within the black political movement in South Africa. Although it could possibly be claimed historically that *Africa for Africans* by the Pan-African nationalists ZK believed that it was possible for all races to live together without the exclusion of the others. In the writings I will analyze here ZK notes the conflictual nature these kinds of ideologies brings along, and how these might be averted through a policy of cooperation.

Here I am dealing with a particular kind of a nationalist thinker. In that way I am calling to attention the idea of British liberal subject formation. Born in 1901, ZK was a “native”⁸⁰ intellectual, deeply troubled by the plight of himself and his people. From inception it should be clear here that when he begins to write his ideas, he is one of the few black natives who are able to do so, for western education (symbolized by the logocentric character) was still developing in the black community at that time. Thus a status of elitism was assumed by these few black educated men, described as *Aamagqoboka* in the Eastern Cape.⁸¹ By this therefore I mean even though ZK is grounded in African culture from his upbringing, in his intellect he is produced by western education, thus by virtue of this he adopts certain norms and practices of the West. Central to my thesis here is to establish how ZK struggles to retain the distinctiveness of the African experience, while arguing for a certain kind of modernity that might draw on different strands of experiences. This distinctiveness as we shall see does not necessarily mean a kind of mix of ontologies and epistemologies. ZK’s africanization debate relies for example, on the

⁸⁰ My understanding of the term *native* is the one expressed by Mahmood Mamdani, “native does not designate a condition that is original and authentic. Rather, the native is the creation of the colonial state: colonized, the native is pinned down, localized, thrown out of civilization as an outcast, confined to custom, and then defined as its product”: *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012), 3.

⁸¹ This word means the educated ones or the better ones. It is a Xhosa term used to describe those who have accumulated the status of difference from the rest, that is of civilization. It is important to bring it here because ZK was educated in the Eastern Cape, Lovedale and Fort Hare. He lived there most of his life, and this is a term that would have been used to describe him.

notion of an African national culture and history. That is a one that pre-exists modern colonialism, and therefore distinct. The distinctiveness of this culture was encapsulated by its reliance on notions of subsistence economy, its education based on loyalty of the tribe transcribed through oral traditions.⁸²

In brief we can locate ZK's writings, in order to make a case for what I broadly think is his African nationalist thinking in the mid-20th century. He belongs to the second breed of native intellectuals that the British missionaries undertook to convert in South Africa. His intellectual tradition might be put alongside those of the Chief Albert Luthuli, John Tengo Jabavu, Dr Walter Benson Rubusana, to mention a few. We can therefore speak of a growing native intellectual tradition which is produced by a British liberal tradition of thought, where ZK fits in. In its distinctive political form, it had the Cape Franchise. Here I borrow Hlonipha Mokoena's concept of *Kholwa Intellectuals*, although with acknowledgement that she uses it in the case of Magema Fuze of Natal with the location's specificities.⁸³ The project of making and converting these Africans into becoming "new civilized" persons is a well known fact. With enthusiasm the missionaries undertook this process. It was under their Christian religious tutelage that a certain margin of natives became religious ministers, educated intellectuals and politicians later. This process was one with many layers, with a number of events unfolding to change the existential conditions of the Africans. Such includes the epistemic and physical violence that occurred in the lives of Africans.

ZK's texts and their situation

The next move at this juncture is to describe ZK's texts that I will be analyzing here. ZK's texts speak to a broader historico-political problem in Africa, in Asia, and other colonized nations of the time; that problem is that of anti-colonial sovereignty. In December 1943 the African National Congress decided to convene a conference in Bloemfontein on the question of the Atlantic Charter and its meaning(s) to Africa. What came out of this conference which was

⁸² ZK seems to have comfortable to rely on such notions of the pre-colonial African cultures. It might raise problems to us today though, as the European humanities and social sciences went through a sweeping critic of its universalizing knowledge and its othering of other alien peoples, from the 1960s onwards. This anthropological image of the African as we will see in detail that ZK seemed to have relied upon is problematic.

⁸³ Mokoena H., *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual* (South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011).

chaired by ZK is a document titled “Africans’ Claims in South Africa”, with a Bill of Rights specifically demanding full citizenship rights for the Africans in the Union of South Africa.⁸⁴ The document emphasizes the notion of self-determination for the small nations of Africa, noting that in the other parts of the continent sovereign rights and the establishment of the administrations chosen by Africans was becoming high in possibility and African education.⁸⁵ This document has a lot to say about the context in which ZK began to consolidate his career in politics, and it is from here that he began to write more of his ideas about education and politics.

On the other hand I want to situate ZK’s writings and the African’s Claims in South Africa document as animated by the post-World-War-Two moment. Thus the developments that occurred in this period resulted to the language of anti-colonial sovereignty. This understanding I borrow from David Scott in his *Refashioning Futures* (1999). This period covers the 1930s, the 1940s, and the 1950s, and it is one which can be understood as an “historical form of the nation-statehood problematic that emerged as an ideological and political project with the nationalist movements for political independence”, further more in detail this moment was “characterized by intense ideological polarization between procapitalist and prosocialist directions, by a sharpening of the anti-imperial critique of political, and cultural dependence on the West, and by the articulation of the demand for self-reliant self-determination and nonaligned Third World solidarity”.⁸⁶

In the early days of the National Party rule ZK began to comprehend the idea and meaning of apartheid, its founding principles and its myths. The first article I will analyse here appeared in 1953 in the *Journal of International Affairs* which dedicated its theme as the “Crisis in Africa: A Study of Africa South of the Sahara”.⁸⁷ ZK’s article in this American journal was titled “Apartheid-Another View”. In the article he argues that the problem with apartheid it is ahistorical and amoral; it is based on a historical inconsistency and inconherence. He also argued that it does not rest on democratic notions of political representations, and therefore excluding

⁸⁴ African National Congress, “Africans’ Claims in South Africa”, (ANC Historical Documents Archive), accessed August 27, 1943. <http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/anc/1943/claims.htm>.

⁸⁵ *Africans’ Claims in South Africa*.

⁸⁶ Scott D., *Refashioning Futures; Criticism After Postcoloniality* (United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 1999), 221-222.

⁸⁷ Matthews Z.K., “Apartheid-Another View”, *Journal of International Affairs*, 7 (1953).

Africans from the political community. In an untitled document in the early 1960s he returns to this question of apartheid in much more detail, where he elaborated how this concept of separate development and Homelands is incompatible with the national political governance.⁸⁸ Thus his intervention on the chieftaincy type of administration in the Homelands is against tribalism. Chiefs were different; there was the modern type of chiefs (they were selected government stooges), and there was pre-colonial chiefs (and these were the leaders of the people, which ZK thinks they need to be incorporated into modern politics through education). His emphasis on these articles is that the black natives as a nation, not as multiple racial-ethnic tribes, are capable of ruling themselves within a common political structure that will be based on a national dimension.

Upon the publication of the Tomlinson commission report, ZK was asked to respond to what the commission had to say about Civil Rights for Africans. In 1956 he wrote an article titled *Civil Rights for Africans and the Tomlinson Report*. In this he argues that Africans have no civil rights and political rights in South Africa. For him the word rights carry ambiguities, such that its practicality is a matter of legislation. It would not be possible for Africans to have civil rights in a country where there are such laws as Separate Amenities Act. ZK concludes that even though human rights might be inalienable to the individual, they can only be preserved by political rights through the legislations of the state. For Africans to obtain these, they will have to have proper political representation. It is only when Africans are given the chance to build their own political structure, and choose their own government that they will be able to have these rights.

One of the problems of ZK's contextual problematic was the issue of African education. In 1968 he published the *Education for Nationhood*. In this critical essay he outlines some of the conceptual issues on Africanization of education. We must recall that at this time some of the African countries had already obtained their independence. South Africa was one of the few still under a special kind of colonialism, apartheid. Here outlines the shift in the curriculum that will thought African students. He says it will base on the African national culture and history. And this indeed says something about ZK's nationalist thinking. He also describes that a change in the structure of education will take place. As the African nations shift the responsibility of

⁸⁸Matthews Z.K., "Untitled Political Article", 1959, ZKM B4.

education from the missionaries to becoming a national policy of the new governments, they will also replace the expatriate white gentlemen. He also published a wide range of articles on the south African native education within this tone of problematic, such as *Higher Education for Bantu in South Africa* (1940), *The educational Needs of the African* (1952).

I will deploy the notion of problem space, which I borrow from David Scott, to understand the theoretical conceptual problematic ZK is thinking with here. A *problem-space* for Scott includes the “conceptual-ideological ensembles, discursive formations, or language games that are generative of objects, and therefore of questions”.⁸⁹ In this notion Scott advocates for the notion of *criticism as strategic*, to think about the questions that enabled the kinds of answers and responses that were provided.⁹⁰ In addition to establish what the questions are that takes on a critical purchase at different historical conjectures. What were the questions that posed a purchase for ZK’s moment? From which horizon did he feel he could formulate the answers as propositions to these questions?

This notion works properly in the work of ZK. His discourse was an anti-apartheid/colonial one, because his historical conjuncture demanded him to respond to the kind of problems that it posed. He inhabited two moments in the unfolding of the historical narrative in South Africa: apartheid and colonialism. There were necessary questions that he had to address, and give answers to. Were Africans capable of ruling themselves? Were they different tribal groups? What was the status of those tribes in relation to the citizenship of the country? Were they capable of education? What kind of education was best for them? Did they have a different culture and history? Were natives original inhabitants in the land of South Africa? All of these questions were necessary to be answered by ZK in order for him to argue for Africans to become a modern subject. His immediate preoccupation, therefore, was vindication of the natives and the overcoming of apartheid. His thought was an anti-colonial discourse, for the independence, autonomy and self-determination of the black natives in South Africa.

⁸⁹ Scott, *Refashioning Futures; Criticism After Postcoloniality*, 8.

⁹⁰ Scott, *Refashioning Futures; Criticism After Postcoloniality*.

Discursive framework on the question of nationalism

Partha Chatterjee and Benedict Anderson

A point of departure for me here is to think through the work of two prominent scholars who have made a contribution to the question of the nation, and nationalist thought and the subject formation in a time of colonialism. My discussion of these two scholars will focus and elaborate more the Chatterjee argument. The reason will be clear soon as we follow in detail his argument against that of Anderson and other liberal discourses on this problem. On the main my intention in this project in relation to these arguments is to problematize the question of African nationalism, as a theoretical problem, as a problem of thought, and thus as a productive space to think about ZK Matthews's anti-colonial and anti-apartheid thinking. The standard liberal histories of nationalism in South Africa have not been sufficient in exploring ZK's thought as a theoretical problem of nationalist politics. They have simply assumed him as a liberal, without exploring the content of his thought. In interrogating his writings I shall ask the question, what kind of liberal was he?

I want to begin with Anderson's important idea of the nation as an "imagined political community".⁹¹ This for Anderson means that the nation is "thought out" and constructed by a people of a community. The nation therefore is *limited* to certain boundaries and populations; it is sovereign as a result that it was born out of the pluralism of Enlightenment and Revolution Age; and it was "imagined as a community".⁹² What happens then in order to arrive at what Anderson regards as imagined political community-the nation?

The inspiration of this was the withering away of the homogeneous religion and the sacred language of the old age. These were cultural roots of the community. This phenomenon happened at a time when there was the emergence of capitalism, the print press and communication, and the linguistic diversification. Anderson outlines this in the following way "what, in a positive sense, made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a

⁹¹ Anderson B., *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

⁹² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity”.⁹³ Therefore, “the essential thing is the interplay between fatality, technology, and capitalism”.⁹⁴

The above process was soon followed by the emergence of three types of nationalisms. They took a “modular character” that gets to be mimicked by the third worlds, according to Anderson. These types were Creole nationalism, linguistic nationalism and official nationalism. For Anderson therefore nationalism takes a modular form that gets to be repeated and mimicked by the colonized worlds.

On the other hand, in his book *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, Chatterjee resumes his argument by making a critique of the contributions of Western scholarship in thinking about the question of nationalism. He explains that the problem with this line of thought has been a much broader problem of a “liberal-rationalist dilemma”.⁹⁵ This is a problem of a bourgeois conception of knowledge that has dominated the human sciences for a long period. This problem on the first instance lends itself to a sociological determinism; meaning that it equates “nationalism to certain universal and inescapable sociological constraints of the modern age, or alternatively, reducing the two contending trends within nationalism, one traditional and conservative and the other rational and progressive, to their sociological determinists”.⁹⁶ Secondly it resorts to a functionalism; that is “taking up an appropriate attitude towards a specific nationalism by reference to its consequences for universal history”.⁹⁷

The liberals and Marxists who have made it their cause to think this problem through have not escaped this problem. The commonality among these schools of thought is that they read nationalism as a European historical phenomenon which gets to be exported to the Third Worlds, of Africa and of Asia. The European conservatives believe that nationalism is an archetype development of the Western world, and therefore impractical to the other world. Non-western worlds cannot achieve it because they do not possess the cultural values of Enlightenment that precedes its possibility to exist. They also think that nationalism is against the very spirit of

⁹³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 42-43.

⁹⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 43.

⁹⁵ Chatterjee P., *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World* (London: United Nations University, Zed Books, 1986).

⁹⁶ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 22.

⁹⁷ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 22.

freedom, of liberty, and therefore it is not the product of reason but sentiments.⁹⁸ The problem here is that nationalism is a paradigm in which it is believed that people think as a collective. They are a nation because they possess a certain homogeneous national culture and language, and therefore they must be united. On the other hand Western Enlightenment is about freedom of the individual, as an autonomous being and rational-self.

On the other hand the liberals think that nationalism forms that historical development of industrialism and democracy, and progress. Their contention is that nationalism is possible in other worlds. However, one needs to judge its productivity sociologically. One is that if it does not work in a specific non-western world, it is because of the conditions in which it applied. Somehow, one must be relative to its conditions of existence when making a judgment of those nationalisms in Africa and Asia for an example. The argument goes that there is a bad and good nationalism; that there is a classical, orthodox and original, and there is western and non-western nationalism.⁹⁹ The liberal-rationalist “refuses to pose the lack of autonomy of nationalist discourse as a theoretical problem” explains Chatterjee.¹⁰⁰

To make clear of the direction I want to take here, I must give the detail of Chatterjee’s nuanced critique then. Chatterjee, in delineating his critique against the liberal writings of nationalism, provocatively states that “neither side can pose the problem in a form in which the question can be asked: why is it that non-European colonial countries have no historical alternative but to try to approximate the given attributes of modernity when that very process of approximation means their continued subjection under a world order which only sets tasks for them and over which they have no control?”.¹⁰¹ This broad question, which will enable us to think about nationalist thought in the colonial world as a productive problem, cannot be asked in the “ambit of bourgeois-rationalist thought whether conservative or liberal”, because to do so will be to “place thought itself, including thought that is supposedly rational and scientific, within a discourse of *power*. It is to question the very universality, the ‘givenness’, the sovereignty of that thought, to go to its roots and thus to radically criticize it. It is to raise the possibility that it is not just military might or industrial strength, but thought itself, which can dominate and subjugate. It is

⁹⁸ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*.

⁹⁹ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 10.

¹⁰⁰ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 10.

¹⁰¹ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 10.

to approach the field of discourse, historical, philosophical and scientific, as a battleground of political power”.¹⁰²

Thus my focus on the thought of ZK Matthews as an African nationalist intellectual will have to take into consideration the dialectical relations of power, culture and knowledge. I shall explore the writings of ZK to think among other things about his response to colonial knowledges and to the conditions of existence of the “natives”. It is here that one is able to see what is it that he advocated should be done, the claims he made, and the justifications thereafter. Following that through the reading of texts, Chatterjee would explain that nationalist texts were written to address ‘the people’ who were believed to be constituting the nation and on the other hand they were addressed to the colonial masters whose claim to rule Africans were rigorously questioned by nationalism.¹⁰³ But most importantly one should note the contradictory tone in these nationalist texts. That is nationalism “to both, sought to demonstrate the falsity of the colonial claim that the backward nations were culturally incapable of ruling themselves in the conditions of the modern world. Nationalism denied the alleged inferiority of the colonized people; it also asserted that a backward nation could ‘modernize’ itself while retaining its cultural identity. It thus produced a discourse in which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of ‘modernity’ on which colonial domination was based.”¹⁰⁴

This contradictory element is the site of productive activity in thinking about the thought of ZK Matthews. It is this contradictoriness that poses “the theoretical insolubility of the national question in a colonial country, or for that matter, of the extended problem of social transformation in a post-colonial country, within a strictly nationalist framework”.¹⁰⁵ Chatterjee in a way wants us to challenge or to think with this question on its philosophical or even its epistemological basis. What does it mean to do this then? Chatterjee explains in the following:

What will be required, therefore, is an explicitly critical study of the ideology of nationalism. Both sociological determinism and functionalism have sought to interpret

¹⁰² Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 11.

¹⁰³ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 30.

¹⁰⁴ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 30.

¹⁰⁵ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 39.

nationalist ideology by emptying it of all content-as far as nationalist politics is concerned, their assumption is that ‘thinkers did not really, make much difference’. Our position, however, is that it is the content of nationalist ideology, its claims about what is possible and what is legitimate, which gives specific shape to its politics.¹⁰⁶

What is important here is to analyze nationalist thought, within its defined contradictoriness, as both a polemical, distinctive and moral discourse. Nationalist discourse makes assertions and claims and their practical realization and it justifies these through a set of historical and ethical possibilities. The suggested way of doing this then is to establish or “constitute the discursive field in its own theoretical terms”.¹⁰⁷ This means at one level to think of the problem in “terms of a political theory”, whilst on the other level it means dealing with the interpretation of texts as a corpus of writings in nationalist political theory- this “necessarily means to explore the their meaning in terms of their implicit or even explicit reference to things, i.e. their logical and theoretical implications”.¹⁰⁸

That can be done through the establishment of the problematic and the thematic. That is to explore social ideology, as a “formal theoretical discourse, which asserts the existence, and often the practical realizability, of certain historical possibilities from the part which seeks to justify those claims by an appeal to both epistemic and moral principles”.¹⁰⁹ Let us elaborate more by quoting Chatterjee in length. The claims are the “identification of historical possibilities and the practical or programmatic forms of its realization”.¹¹⁰ The thematic is that part which forms the “justificatory structures”, meaning “the nature of the evidence it presents in support of those claims, the rules of inference it relies on to logically relate a statement of the evidence to a structure of arguments, the set of epistemological principles it uses to demonstrate the existence of its claims as historical possibilities, and finally, the set of ethical principles it appeals to in order to assert that those claims are morally justified”.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 40.

¹⁰⁷ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 40.

¹⁰⁸ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 40.

¹⁰⁹ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 38.

¹¹⁰ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 38.

¹¹¹ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*, 38.

With a little bit of digression, I would like to bring a few thoughts here to the problem of colonialism-as knowledge producing machinery and its relation to culture. In more explicit terms I want to say a little about the dynamics of colonialism. Nicolas Dirks have argued that in our attempts to grapple with what colonialism was all about; we should place culture at the center of our project. Colonialism was based and produced by a variety of “cultural technologies”, that is why colonialism “was itself a cultural project of control”.¹¹² This is echoed by Cohen when he calls us to pay attention to the application of colonialism’s “investigative modalities” in our search for a better understanding of “colonialism and its forms of knowledge”.¹¹³ This brings to our attention that “colonial knowledge both enabled colonial conquest and was produced by it; in certain important ways, culture was what colonialism was all about..... Culture became fundamental to the formation of class society, the naturalization of gender divisions in Western bourgeois society, and to developing discourses of race, biology, and nationality”.¹¹⁴ But most revealing and provocative is the following description by Dirks:

The parallel mutualities of colonizers and colonized on one hand and colonialism and culture on the other makes more difficult than ever to devise historical narratives of cause and effect. If culture itself, as an object of knowledge and mode of knowledge about certain objects, was formed in relation to colonial histories, it is all the more difficult to recognize the ways in which specific cultural forms were themselves constituted out of colonial encounters. This becomes even more daunting when we realize that these cultural forms became fundamental to the development of resistance against colonialism, most notable in nationalist movements that used Western notions of national integrity and self-determination to justify claims for independence. In turn, Western colonial nations did not simply exploit colonized nations for economic profit, but depended upon the process of colonization and colonial rule for securing the nation-state itself.¹¹⁵

These dynamics therefore must suggest for us that the problem is not in black and white. To appreciate the problem of nationalism we will have to acknowledge the many relationships

¹¹² Dirks N.B., “Colonialism and Culture: Introduction”, in *Colonialism and Culture*, (eds) Dirks N.B., Colombia: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 3.

¹¹³ Cohen B., *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹¹⁴ Dirks, *Colonialism and Culture*, 4

¹¹⁵ Dirks, *Colonialism and Culture*, 4

between institutions of power, institutions of knowledge and their disciplines, culture and society, and national revolutionary movements. This will bring us forth the existential political milieu, in which the African intellectuals, Z.K. Matthews in our case, were forced to respond and think. Some of these earliest experiences are noted by Mokoena in the following manner:

By the end of the nineteenth century one could talk of an incipient class of educated and literate Africans, especially in what was then called the Cape Colony. Although these individuals moved into various professions and occupations, as the products of mission education they collectively shared an identity of being both Christian and educated. They were *amakholwa*. Being an *ikholwa* was a political and social, rather than just a religious identity. Above all, by converting to Christianity and subscribing to progressive ideals of private property ownership, individual rights and the protestant work ethic, the *amakholwa* within the limited sphere of colonial governance acquired, according to their own understanding, the rights of British subjects¹¹⁶

Without spending much of our time on this we might further note another interesting observation that Mokoena makes, “What is of interest in this politicization of the *amakholwa* is that the terms they used to express their political aspirations, whether in public arenas or published books, were almost always borrowed from the political vocabulary of the colonial order”.¹¹⁷ Thus for this project it is important to locate discourse in the space of dominating power. The dialectic relationship between the colonial power as a dominating phenomena and the native’s thinking as a ruled subjects’ are explored here.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Mokoena, *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*, 20.

¹¹⁷ Mokoena, *Magema Fuze, The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*, 21. I am aware, however, that Mokoena does not conflate the apartheid period with the epoch of the *Kholwa* intellectuals she is talking about. She states on the same book that “in this period, the debate centered on the urgent issues of what the writer’s responsibility was to his society and his or her vocation. Again, there is no direct relationship between the situation of the writer during apartheid and the era of the *Kholwa* intellectual”, 7.

¹¹⁸ Another work that have attempted to do work on these individuals is that of Ndletyana M., *African Intellectuals in 19th and early 20th South Africa* (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, 2008). This is a could have been an interesting book had it took into consideration the writings of those intellectuals into detail to explore the dual/ambiguous character in the thinking of those intellectuals, such as Tiyo Soga, Ntsikana, and John Tengo Jabavu. In this book we are told about the reality of conversion to Christianity, the introduction of the book and education through the ‘policy of civilisation’, and that these led to the ‘clash of cultures’. It also only introduces us rather with less details of how these intellectuals could be regarded as the foundations for nationalist thought and black consciousness. It is a biographical and introductory book. A more scholarly and detailed account would have been more productive.

The framing of the Argument for African modernity in the thought of ZK Matthews

I must now come to the task at hand, which is to elaborate the contents of the thinking of ZK Matthews as it is shown in his writings. As I have discussed in greater detail above Chatterjee's insightful suggestions about how we must conduct a study of nationalism in the colonial world is at the center of my work. I take it from his notions of the "problematic" and "thematic", to explore in greater detail the work of one nationalist intellectual, ZK. Now, at this juncture in thinking about the kind of the "justificatory structure" of knowledge that ZK builds, I must elaborate further what these terms means for my discussions.

The "problematic" here will refer to the certain historical claims or assertions ZK makes about the native Africans. One would be that Africans have a pre-colonial history. We will see how this notion allows ZK to make assertions about a kind of a pre-colonial culture and pre-colonial political structure. His problem is how these can be transposed to fit a particular modern condition, which has its own blunders and which can be fruitful to some extent. Thus the issue of whether Africans can rule themselves is out of question for him; but of importance is the question how Africans can practically realize their self-rule in the modern condition, one that is tangled or even signified by colonialism and apartheid. It is the question of how Africans invent their own democracy, out of which they are not under any particular dominance. Nationalist thought in Chatterjee's formulation, therefore, seeks to produce a positive discourse, one in which it will endeavor to replace the structure of colonial domination with a new national power.¹¹⁹

But how does he come to justify those assertions? What are the forms of evidences he relies upon? What are the epistemological grounds he relies upon to make those claims? What kind of a critique he offers against apartheid? What are its historical inconsistencies? What are its political displacements, and unethical practices? These questions will be answered here by looking at the justificatory structure of knowledge in relation to the assertions made by ZK. By this I refer to the thematic: the appeal to both epistemic and moral principles, the logics and evidences of the arguments.¹²⁰ We will find these questions addressed by ZK in his discussions

¹¹⁹ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*.

¹²⁰ Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and The Colonial World*.

of African education, the issue of chiefs, the discussions on belonging and citizenship, and human rights and political rights.

The apartheid concept

The main question that ZK deals with is that of the apartheid. But what were the main concepts of apartheid? According to him there were two schools of thought that have dominated the thinking of whites. The moderate school of thought was the white colonialists, whose ideals were expressed in the Inter-Colonial Commission of 1903-05. The other is the radical school, the white Afrikaner nationalists whose ideals are expressed by the racial laws of the National Party.¹²¹ The reason why he notes this is because there was a shift in the manner in which the category of the native as a subject of race was understood. In Afrikanerdom it was clear that the only way to deal decisively with the native question was to put into application the concept of apartheid, meaning separate development. In that formulation it assumed that Africans can rule and develop themselves along their own lines. The white British moderates, let us assume for now, attempted to parent the Africans under trusteeship. It assumed that they were not capable of ruling themselves; therefore a process of civilization would enable them to attain later a status to do so. For example it was possible for some time in the early 1900s for the black natives to attain franchise voting rights, through the accumulation of wealth and education.

Apartheid, it is said, traced its conceptual ideas from notions of volkekundiges. The main idea was that people are racial-tribal groups; that means they had their own homogeneous culture and ideological structure of difference. By implication therefore, they were bounded together by as a racial group by a kind of *ethnos* ontological order.¹²² The concept of development was therefore tied to that of particular groups' different ideological structure of existence. Natives were to be allowed to develop along their own lines; by being forcible put on certain native areas where they would work their own socio-economic development, by being thought on their own schools

¹²¹ Matthews Z.K., "The African Response To Racial Laws", *Foreign Affairs* An American Quarterly Review, 30 (1951).

¹²² Gordon R, "Apartheid's Anthropologists: The Genealogy of Afrikaner Anthropology", *American Ethnologist* 15 (1988). See also Dubow, who has argued that apartheid rested on the exploitation of a "biological concept, and this related to theological and cultural explanations of human difference", "Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid and the conceptualization of race", *Journal of African History*, 33 (1992): 209. In relation to this see, Sharp J., "The Roots and Development of "Volkekunde" in South Africa", *Journal of African Studies* 8 (1981).

and universities. In addition to this was the capital factor; that made it necessary for the whites to seek for an unskilled labour from the black community. For an example ZK argued, the development of Native Reserves was just another source to strengthen the reproduction of capital as the white government would be provided with cheap labour.¹²³

Inaugurated in 1948 through the coming to power of the National Party, Afrikaner nationalism introduced the policy of apartheid. There are major shifts that enable all this: the introduction of separate political representation, and the creation and setting up of homelands. A variation of acts accompanied that moment which include: (a). The Group Areas Act 1950, (b). Separate Registration of Voters Act, (c). Bantu Authorities Act, described as the “Magna Carta for Africans”, (d). Christian National Education, and (e). Suppression of Communism Act.¹²⁴

Another problem that came to trouble ZK was that of education. There were different visions for native education. For someone like Loram there was a lack of a comprehensive structure of native education policy and practice, and therefore race adjustment was difficult to handle.¹²⁵ He had found it necessary therefore to bring along the experiences from the Booker T Washington Negro American experience of education, in which to educate the native would take a form of self-defense by the Europeans.¹²⁶ This means Loram thought to educate the natives was to do so to avoid political and economic conflict or contradictions between black and white. Therefore I assume that the problems of education were laden with political and economic issues. Loram undertook his study to help his European colonial government on how to better govern the natives. Encapsulated in this vision was that Africans should be educated along lines of their own abilities. There should be developed a curriculum suitable for their aptitude and attitude, and their culture. For once it was thought that elementary education would be suitable as it would lay the grounds for manual labour that is needed from the African population. ZK’s writings will respond against this ‘academic colonialism’ in education scholarship.

On a prominent gesture education was thought of as an instrument, in which one would appropriate certain ends. That in a sense was pushed further by the study on South African

¹²³ Matthews Z.K, “The Habilitation and Development of the Reserves”, *The South African Outlook* 75, (1945).

¹²⁴ Matthews, *African Response To Racial Laws*.

¹²⁵ Loram C.T., *The Education of the South African Native* (London: Longmans, Green, 1917).

¹²⁶ Loram, *The Education of the South African Native*, 12.

education undertaken by Peter Kallaway. Kallaway points to the need to take the broader context of the social, economic and political when doing education studies for blacks. In South Africa, Kallaway points out; the formulations of Bantu education policy were inter-related with the general development of the ideas connected with the Christian National Education and Fundamental Pedagogics.¹²⁷ Kallaway further explicitly says that “educational policies are an aspect of the struggle between different classes in society, and that further we should ask “what schools are for, whose interests they serve, what kinds of knowledge or skills they reproduce, or what their relationship is to the labour market”.¹²⁸ He further argues that in South Africa schools were the “sites of struggle”.¹²⁹

This argument brings together the contestations of what kind of knowledge should be included in the curriculum formulations and the broader state educational policies. Most interestingly it notes that education policies are a result of a historical contestation between dominant and dominated groups. Kallaway therefore would not have missed the point to link Bantu education to the political and economic needs of the white population to consolidate the reproduction of capital in South Africa.¹³⁰ These were some of the historical and political questions that surrounded the issue of education of the natives, that ZK intervened into.

Education and Africanization

I want to talk about the concept of Africanization which was central in ZK writings about education. Immediately I must note that his writings here are situated in the context of independence in the continent of Africa. His imagination of education for the Africans is informed by the seeming reality that its knowledges will no longer rely on western histories. So in a way his kind of education is one in which the Africans will receive under the self-government of their own, and therefore it would be one they will receive as citizens, not as subjects of other alien nations. So that, what ZK elaborates is a kind of education for Africans which is going to be relied upon under a national policy of education, not one based on missionaries or Homeland (ethnic) basis. So in a way this will relate to how he thinks about the

¹²⁷ Kallaway P, *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (South Africa: Ravan Press, 1984), 2.

¹²⁸ Kallaway, *Apartheid and Education: the Education of Black South Africans*, 3-4.

¹²⁹ Kallaway, *Apartheid and Education: the Education of Black South Africans*.

¹³⁰ Kallaway, *Apartheid and Education: the Education of Black South Africans*.

question of political rights and citizenship. In that way I want to expound how the visions and dreams espoused by nationalism are provided a distinctive content within the discourse of the nation.

I take this as the contextual ground to take further the response against colonialism and thereby the claims he gave for education of the native Africans. Armed with the language of anti-apartheid, ZK carried out the vindication which argued that Africans were capable of education. As I have been trying to showcase, here again he relied on two broad theoretical frames; there was a pre-colonial or pre-modern education and modern/western education. I shall explore therefore the programmatic realization of the kind of education for African citizens of independent states. What are the politico-historical and epistemological grounds for this?

In arguing for the possibility of higher education ZK deployed the fact that many have gone overseas to obtain their education. This served to prove as example of a practical possibility for that Africans are able to obtain higher education when they have the opportunity, therefore the discourse of exceptionalism that characterized the thinking of many in the white population was invalid.¹³¹ He further said that it was just part of that ignorant discourse which argued that the African could become nothing but a “hewer of wood and drawer of water”.¹³² Exceptionalism was part of the theory of those whites who did not believe in the education of blacks. It argued that those who were able to obtain education were only exceptions in the black community, probable because of their special mental abilities which cannot signal the capability of the rest.

In line with this vindicationism, pre-colonial education argued that education was historically not something new to the African and therefore education did not denote western education. This pre-colonial and different education for ZK was based on loyalty, respect and knowledge of the local environment and economy. This different education opens the possibility of a critique of universalism, and on the other hand it allows ZK to capitalize on it in arguing for his possibilities. It was ironically the same language in which colonialism marked the native as the subject of difference, and therefore subject of rule. However, it seems to me that Matthews

¹³¹ Matthews Z.K., *Higher Education for the Bantu in South Africa*, General Education Seminar, 1940, ZKM C4.

¹³² Matthews, *Higher Education for the Bantu in South Africa*, ZKM C4.

would have argued that difference itself was a pre-colonial concept, to appropriate his difference as a positive political stand. Illuminating his views on pre-colonial education ZK noted

In primitive African society, the tribal authorities determined for the African child the course of his education, which emphasized respect for elders, loyalty to family, clan and tribal tradition, knowledge of the natural environment with its local fauna and flora, tribal lore and the single skills associated with a subsistence economy.¹³³

He argued that this was a content of African education before the colonial encounter. But that is not all there is. It also had its aims. ZK went on to say “The aim of education was to produce a loyal tribesman able to participate fully in the different facets of tribal life”.¹³⁴ It was therefore a holistic educational system. It was different from the European one which is based on speciality, competition and dynamic structural-economic developments. It prepares the African to be an all-rounder helper in his tribal life. Its method of instruction was the word of mouth, while the modern one was based on reading and writing.¹³⁵ He elaborated this with detail, and I quote it at length here:

With the coming of the Christian Church to Africa, the education of a proportion of African children was largely taken over by Missions. Those who did not come under missionary influence were of course not affected by this new system. The primary aim of education then became evangelization. The African child, and in some cases, also the adult convert, was taught to read and write, not merely because such knowledge was good in itself, but mainly because the possession of these tools of learning made possible a more effective and more lasting way of conveying the Gospel message, than having to rely solely on communication by word of mouth. Incidentally, the introduction of reading and writing as methods of instruction was contrary to the African method of instruction by word of mouth. The eye and the hand became more important than the ear as tools of learning. Admittedly, the education process could not be confined merely to

¹³³ Matthews Z.K, *Education for Nationhood*, March 1968, ZKM C4.

¹³⁴ Matthews, *Education for Nationhood*, ZKM C4.

¹³⁵ Matthews, *The Educational Needs of the African*, 1952, ZKM C4.

reading and writing and included other forms of learning as well, but whatever was added to the curriculum had to be consistent with and not antithetical to the main purpose for which the mission school stood, namely, the inculcation of Christian virtues and the promotion of a Christian way of life, both for the individual and for the community.¹³⁶

But what does this mean? Is he calling Africans to go back to a kind of an utopian society, where the white man does not exist? The answer is no. Before I give a detailed explanation of this, let me judge and elaborate why he does this. ZK's feeling of the need to explain this pre-modern African educational system might be influenced by, firstly, the need to counter those, both black and white, who think that by the word education it is meant 'Western education'. He lamented that when it comes to education "the mass of the Bantu population is still in a state of ignorance".¹³⁷ Secondly, he is arguing against the ignorant rational of the colonialist liberal educator, one who does not believe that Africans have their own system of education, and therefore should rely on the white man for such. ZK explained the issue:

Western education is better known in the world today because of its greater conquests in the realm of knowledge and experience. We admit that it is superior in many respects to such systems of education as it has been devised by the Eastern or other nations: but its ardent admirers ought to realize that education is capable of a much more wider and more fundamental interpretation than even Western education can lay claim.¹³⁸

What we must read so far is that ZK is not simplistically in favor of Western Education, or even the Eastern or African ones. There was a degree of belief in him that these systems were not sufficiently constructed in terms of their curriculum to meet the 'needs' of the African. This allows us to appreciate his educational discourse on a complex broader level. At this I must note that thought is not something that confirms with the context, but it diverges and critique the existing knowledges. First we must admit that he is not simple importing educational ideas from the West, to the African. There is a suggestion in his thinking that these ideas need a re-working,

¹³⁶ Matthews, *Education for Nationhood*, ZKM C4.

¹³⁷ Matthews, *Higher Education for the Bantu in South Africa*, ZKM C4.

¹³⁸ Matthews, *The Educational Needs of the African*, ZKM C4.

they need to be tested and contested along others. There was no universal educational system. But does he help us further on this?

He begins the answer to that by asking two suggestive questions. The first is, “Is not education rather the recognition of our experience in the light of the past experiences of our fathers, our neighbours, other races and of mankind everywhere?”, and secondly he ask, “while its roots (*education*¹³⁹) should be laid deep in the soil of our national background, must it not be nourished by elements derived from outside of itself?”.¹⁴⁰ These two questions are productive if are to think of their implications, and specifically to think of the challenge posed to the universality of the western experience. I am taking this as an epistemological, cultural-historical and ontological framework in which ZK tries to think about the question of African education. It is not a Western epistemic, nor shall it be regarded as simply African. But it resides in human experience, whatever the location or place, as he puts it

The whole task of any educational system is to put man in touch with the whole field of human experience, so far as that is possible within the life time of an individual.¹⁴¹

That, I think, should be enough to convince us that ZK was involved in a process of thinking about education. It should be sufficient to convince us to give his thought its pride it deserves as a form of knowledge in itself. Thought, I must conclude, does not comply with the context as we see here. Thought diverge from the normalized way of thinking. It does not succumb to usuality, but critique the status quo for the better. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why ZK’s writings in education have been ignored.

In taking forward this, therefore, I must note that ZK had to address what were the needs of the African in education. Here we find the expression of ZK’s discourse of the anti-colonial and post-colonial future expressed. His formulations were pre-occupied with making a difference between the requirements of the white man in terms of which they think to formulate the educational system and curriculum of the native, and on the other hand what the native needs

¹³⁹ My emphasis.

¹⁴⁰ Matthews, *The Educational Needs of the African*, ZKM C4.

¹⁴¹ Matthews, *The educational Needs of the African*, ZKM C4.

from education. Africanisation became his pre-occupation in terms of how the educational curriculum and structure should look like.

But let us speak to the broader context of his thinking about this issue of Africanisation. In the 1960s there was the fact of the New African States, independent from the colonialism of the world powers. One of the major issues they were preoccupied with was the in-cooperation of education into their national policy. They therefore had to establish national universities, and schools-secondary and primary. This is what he called the “education for nationhood” or nation-building.¹⁴² This broader context is signaled ZK’s deliberations on Africanisation. It appears that he is aware of the many conferences that resulted into plans to establish the educational frameworks by the New States of Africa. In May 1961 at Addis Ababa an outline for a twenty year plan of development for primary education was made; secondly, at Tananarive in July 1962 secondary education was the major agenda; and thirdly, in September in 1962 the higher education was discussed.¹⁴³

The above were just a few developments that were taking place in Africa. African states had to fill the gap left by Europeans, turning education from being a privilege for a few to being a compulsory thing for African children. He worries also that what will happen is that Africanisation will lead to many of the New States to replace the expatriate teachers with new African teachers in retaining of cause their image of self-determination.¹⁴⁴ This might lead to inadequacy as they would not be able to provide with full capacity for the education institutions they were about to establish.

In a sense Africanisation was an aspect of a major debate in the African continent at this period. In Tanzania it took a political and ideological discursive framework based on “rights and justice”; where Julius Nyerere attempted to dismantle citizenship based on colonial notions of race, nativism and tribal-ethnic lines.¹⁴⁵ Nyerere attempted to transform the legacies of colonialism through ideologically re-imaging the administrations and law systems. So that rights and citizenship would be based on individual dignity and pride, rather than group rights which

¹⁴² Matthews, *Education for Nationhood*, ZKM C4.

¹⁴³ Matthews, *Education for Nationhood*, ZKM C4

¹⁴⁴ Matthews, *Education for Nationhood*, ZKM C4

¹⁴⁵ Mamdani, “Beyond Settlers and Natives: The Theory and Practice of Decolonization”, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*, 117.

were based on colonial notions race and tribalism.¹⁴⁶ To others political leaders in Tanzania, Africanisation were a complete overcoming of the colonial state so that in turn *Africa would be Africa for Africans*. Theirs was a nationalism based on indigeneity, nativism and race. This later school was the one with a radical pan-African school of nationalism if you like.

Africanisation of the education and curriculum does not mean a negative denotation for ZK; it must take account of the existence of the 'white and other races' and the problems created by the existence of these.¹⁴⁷ ZK went on to argue that:

While we should do all we can to interest the native child in the culture of his own people and in the heritage which has come down to him from the past, we not forget that today the white man and all that he stands for forms a vital factor in the heritage of the Native child of today and tomorrow.¹⁴⁸

But what is it that might constitute Africanisation in detail? National culture, history and heritage became the buzz words in this discourse of Africanisation of education. ZK argued in the following manner:

Gone are the days when Africans were satisfied to learn all about the capitals, the capes, the peninsulas of Europe and America, while they remained ignorant of the river flowing through their village or the mountain from the village was situated. Knowledge of history must now have equal place with ancient or modern European and American history. The African child must be thought to pride in his own background, as well as in the rich traditions of the world. All this is what is described as the Africanizing of the curriculum in the African school, which must not be understood to imply any lowering of the standard of education.¹⁴⁹

But ZK the teacher, the practical man, who is concerned with the needs of the African recognizes that this is not complete. Thus he continues:

¹⁴⁶ Mamdani, *Beyond Settlers and Natives: The Theory and Practice of Decolonization*.

¹⁴⁷ Matthews Z.K., *The Aims of Native Education*, 1940, ZKM C4.

¹⁴⁸ Matthews, *The Aims of Native Education*, ZKM C4.

¹⁴⁹ Matthews, *Education for Nationhood*, ZKM C4.

But Africanisation is applied not only to the context of education, but also to those who teach in African schools. For many years to come African nations will not be able to provide all teachers in their schools and colleges and they will therefore have to rely on expatriate personnel, but as rapidly as is consistent with the maintenance of commonly accepted standards, African States will want to replace expatriate personnel with their own nationals, so as to give their schools the African imagine in keeping with the self-determination they have achieved.¹⁵⁰

Africanisation, therefore, includes a variety of facets. ZK was able to think about the idea of African Studies. As a onetime head of department of African Studies he saw these departments as providing a very elusive separatist mentality. He renounced the idea that they should study different groups as if those groups were living in their own world separate from the others. More specifically was the idea embedded in their understanding of culture, as something that is determined by biology.¹⁵¹ This resulted for him to a “kraal mentality” where broadly separate universities were established for certain different groups, e.g. College for the people of color in the Western Cape, College for blacks in the Transkei, and College for Indians in Natal. What is needed for him are Departments of Human Relations, which will study “study scientifically from all points of view the problems that arise when human beings with different cultural backgrounds and varying historical antecedents live in close juxtaposition as members of one nation, bound together by common interests and common hopes and aspirations”.¹⁵²

The discourse on belonging and citizenship

Part of what ZK does then is to refute the white historiographies or academic colonialism, is to provide his stand in the discourse of thinking about the origins of inhabitants of South Africa. In apartheid nationalist historiography the Africans were Bantu tribes who migrated from the North to the South, therefore were no less migrants in the Union as the white settlers. To account for the origins of the nation will allow the black natives the status of originality as inhabitants of the nation and, Europeans will be migrants. Belonging therefore would be understood not only from a racial conception of humanity, but from the geopolitical and historical stand. This, as we shall

¹⁵⁰ Matthews, *Education for Nationhood*, ZKM C4.

¹⁵¹ Matthews Z.K., *The Outlook for our Generation*, 1959, ZKM B4.

¹⁵² Matthews, *The Outlook for our Generation*, ZKM B4.

see later here, will provide ZK with a historical, political and ethical stand to argue that the natives are the citizens proper of the nation and therefore civil rights for Africans was not a negotiable.

The discourse on origins and belonging, as it operated in ZK's thinking, had to keep the concept of the pre-colonial, in order to work against certain white historiographies that argued for an empty land-thesis.¹⁵³ This debate in historiography was launched on three levels as Suren Pillay has argued: (a) temporality, (b) space, and (c) mobility.¹⁵⁴ White historiography or academic colonialism argued that there when they came to the South, they came to an empty land-occupied by no one, therefore no one has an authentic claim to it. If there is no prior right to this land, by implication it means that colonial settlement was not a process of displacement and dislocation of the African peoples.¹⁵⁵ The other claims that the Bantu, as a result of migration, came from the north to the South. Upon their arrival at the South they found the Bushman and Hottentots who had already made their stay at this land. The migratory-thesis claims that this involved a series of wars and conquests. The Bantu who were more militant were able to defeat the other groups. By implication therefore the Bantu and the Europeans do not necessarily belong to the land of the South, they are both migrants.

This historiography was one that was to be mobilized by the Afrikaner nationalist of the apartheid. We will see here that ZK will, by all means, speak against it. It is through it that the discourse of the nation was launched. The nation constitute of the citizens. The citizens are defined by origins, implicating belonging and autochthony. ZK would not have missed therefore the opportunity to appropriate the concept of the pre-colonial to dissipate the historiography that sort to distort the history of the nation as he saw it.

The concept of the pre-colonial is at the center of debates in nationalism in our post-colonial nation-state. The heritage of the nation is argued to be something that have been in existence for time immemorial.

¹⁵³ Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*.

¹⁵⁴ Pillay S., "Where do you belong? Natives, foreigners and apartheid South Africa", *African Identities*, 2 (2004): 215,

¹⁵⁵ Pillay, *Where do you belong? Natives, foreigners and apartheid South Africa*, 216.

ZK had to negotiate the notion of belonging in relation to the present circumstance of the natives in the Union and in relation to what future they will have. What he then does is to make a critique of apartheid historiography. Thus he said part of the problem was a certain kind of approach to the matter “the evolutionary approach, the appeal to history”.¹⁵⁶ This approach has got huge implications:

Under its pseudo-intellectual spell it is easy to mistake figments of the imagination for undisputed or indisputable facts and convince oneself that to account for something “historically” provides a kind of moral justification for the thing itself. Thus the advocates of apartheid have created the myth that when Jan van Riebeeck established his settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 there were no Bantu Tribes within the boundaries of what is known as the Union of South Africa, and that these tribes, migrating from their ancestral homes conveniently located somewhere outside, invaded a country which the whites had already claimed for themselves”.¹⁵⁷

He recounted this on different levels. Firstly, the point is irrelevant, for even if there were tribes that the Europeans meet in their journey, the “virtually extinct” Hottentots and Bushmen testify that “even if the white invaders had found any Bantu at the Cape of Good Hope, the legitimate hopes and aspirations of such tribes would not have received any greater practical recognition”.¹⁵⁸

Thus historiography in white scholarship was inconsistent. He says “to suggest that when the Voortrekkers left the Cape for the interior in 1836 they encountered nothing but empty open country is apparently not regarded as inconsistent with claim that the Voortrekkers had to conquer hordes of barbarians in the course of the establishment of their Republics”.¹⁵⁹ He adds that it is a matter of convenience that historians forget to add that the part of the region they are talking about is still uninhabited.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*, 145.

¹⁵⁷ Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*, 145.

¹⁵⁸ Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*, 146.

¹⁵⁹ Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*, 146.

¹⁶⁰ Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*, 146.

The other inconsistency in this historiography is to claim for the things it has not done historically; things that are the sole achievements of the missionaries alone. The evangelization and education of the Africans were the products of the missionaries, and not the Afrikaner nationalists. Thus he explains further:

They (Afrikaners) pat themselves on the back for the evangelization and the educational development which has taken place among Africans, when the fact of the matter is that the credit for that work belongs to missionaries and missionary societies which carried on their in the teeth of the opposition or active hostility of the advocates of apartheid. The names of Van De Kemp, Moffat, Livingston, Philip, William Shaw, John Bennie, Stewart.....The real pioneers of mission and educational work among Africans- will not be found in the apartheid scroll of honor. One has only to compare the educational work done among Africans in Natal and the Cape prior to Union with the missionary sponsored position of Africans in the former Republics at that time to question the view that the separationists felt that they were religiously bound not to destroy the heathen but to convert them and “save” them.¹⁶¹

A discussion on indirect rule which is at the center of this problematic will come later here. Because I think important for us is to note the kind of a subject formation which is at work here, as ZK understands it. That is the British kind of a liberal formation of the subject. One that is turned to become civilized in western ways, through liberal education, notions of private property, cultural practices, and many other aspects. Black natives were to be under British tutelage for a long time, or put clear they were to be ruled under trusteeship.

We must note ZK’s view that the apartheid policy in South Africa had been in continuity for as shown in the relations between black and white. He explains that:

¹⁶¹ Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*, 146

For many years, both in before and since Union, relations between black and white in South Africa had been inspired in large measure by the spirit of apartheid, albeit called by different names at different times. Although other policies, such as assimilation and trusteeship, have had their adherents in the country and have in varying degrees exercised a moderating influence, the policy of apartheid has been in the ascendancy all the time.¹⁶²

The point that should not be lost here is how ZK make use of history and the critique he launches against apartheid historiography, helps him to open his possibilities for a political status of Africans as citizens. Apartheid historiography for ZK had no basis. It was a false narrative that only sought to make means to oppress a people in their own land of birth. The stakes for this debate however are more than that. Here ZK establishes the grounds for the theoretical bases of Africans becoming citizens, a transformation to being a national status. Achille Mbembe, concerning the question of the colonized in relation to the concept of the citizen noted that:

As for the native, docilely caught up in the family guardianship, he or she can only think of his/her enfranchisement at his/her own risk and peril. Consigned unilaterally to a sort of minority without foreseeable end, he/she cannot be a subject of politics, a citizen. Since the notion of citizen overlaps with nationality, the colonized being excluded from the vote, is not simply consigned to the fringes of the nation, but is virtually a stranger in his/her own home. The idea of political or civil equality-that is, of an equivalence among all inhabitants of the colony-is not the bond among those living in the colony. The figure of obedience and domination in the colony rests on the assertion that the state is under no obligation to the colonized and this latter is owed nothing by the state but that which the state, in its infinite goodness, has deigned to grant and reserves the right to revoke at any moment¹⁶³

¹⁶² Matthews, *Apartheid-Another View*, 147

¹⁶³ Mbembe A., *On the Postcolony* (London: University of California Press, 2001), 35.

ZK's well-articulated position with regards to the political rights of the Africans is found in a document he wrote in 1956, *Civil Rights For Africans and The Tomlinson Report 1954*.¹⁶⁴ ZK here is thinking in response to the Tomlinson commission of 1956 which was set to do a study of the native question in relation to the concept of apartheid, and thereby construct a "comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of the Native Areas with a view to developing within them a social structure in keeping with the culture of the Native and based upon effective socio-economic planning".¹⁶⁵ Historically white rule has employed the tradition of the commissions in grappling with the issue of the native question. The *Cape Native Affairs Commission of 1883* and the *Native Economic Commission of 1930-32* were two among many others.

The commission was set to see whether it was possible for the African people to stay together in the urban areas with the white people. It had to check on the problems of the Reserves. What were the challenges of black natives in the cities? What kind of education should be given to the black natives? The question about education was answered by the Bantu Education Commission though in 1949. Chaired by W. W. M Eiselen, it argued against control of African education by the provincial provinces but rather by the central government; and it argued for a proper development of separate education for the Bantu speaking peoples.¹⁶⁶

It was hoped that the Tomlinson Commission would give a clarification on the definition of apartheid, and that its own programmatic realizability was thought to have depended on "(a) the possibility of developing the Bantu Areas so that they would be capable of supporting the whole African population, (b) the question whether the general economy of the country could survive if the African labour force were withdrawn or severely curtailed, and (c) the willingness of both white and black to accept "apartheid" and their readiness to make the sacrifices which it would inevitable involve".¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Matthews Z.K., *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, Political Articles and Statements, 1956, ZKM B4.

¹⁶⁵ Houghton D.H., "The Significance of the Tomlinson Report", *Africa South*, 1(1957): 14.

¹⁶⁶ Eiselen W., *Report of the Commission on Native Education 1949-1951*, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1953). See also, Davenport T.R.H., *South Africa: A Modern History* (South Africa:Southen Book Publishers, 1988), 372.

¹⁶⁷ Houghton, *The Significance of the Tomlinson Report*, 14.

ZK's response to this commission was that it never did not say much with regards to the issue of rights for Africans, since its establishment was not to concern itself with such but with "how European rights in South Africa can be preserved as against the claims of the Africans for similar rights".¹⁶⁸ Thus the notion that is at work here is that of civil rights that are enjoyed by citizens of the nation, therefore transcending the status of native tribe. Thus the question is a broader one for ZK "what rights Africans possess or are likely to possess as citizens of the country of which they are nationals?" This question shifts the terms of debate from which Africans are understood as the multiplicity of different tribal groups, to one which they attain the status of being national (indigenous) citizens of the country. Thus his notion of blackness is one which natives attain a status of being national. In that way nationalism has found its uniting force, in which it is able to argue for sovereignty and self-definition of the black "race". Thus the problem of who were the citizens of the nation was one that needed a solving.

ZK made sure that it was known that the African in the industrial world was interested in both politics and jobs, contrary to the popular belief that the African was only interested in jobs not politics.¹⁶⁹ At stake here was a certain kind of understanding that relegated Africans to the status of a worker, therefore a simple resource to be used by the whites in labour markets. Even more to that, he was a foreign worker in the urban industrials since in his status of belonging he was of the homelands. So that the civil rights as described by the Tomlinson commission: political rights, constitutional rights, freedom of association, religious freedom, and freedom of travel, could never be met in a situation of South Africa. But why, and maybe how so?

ZK thinks that the problem is embedded within the meanings ascribed to the concept of rights itself. A right originates from two types of sources of understanding: one is a given right and the other is inalienable and intrinsic. Firstly, this given right comes from the state. A right given is a one that can also be taken away, ZK concludes.¹⁷⁰ The other rights are intrinsic as I have said. Let us invoke ZK at length here:

Inalienable rights which belong to the individual simply because he is a human being. Such rights may be recognised or protected by the state or the State may

¹⁶⁸ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans and The Tomlinson Commission*, ZKM B4.

¹⁶⁹ Matthews Z.K., "The Black Man's Outlook", *Saturday Review*, New York, May 2(1953).

¹⁷⁰ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans and The Tomlinson Commission*, ZKM B4.

refuse to accord them recognition, but that does not alter the fact that they exist or are claimed by the individual. Thus it may be said that every human being (born alive) has the right to life, and no one, not even the State has the right to deprive the human being concerned of his life without due process of law. This is a fundamental right.¹⁷¹

Without “due process of law”? This understanding makes it clear that rights are dependent on the state machinery, and its legislative bodies. They can only come as the result of the process of the state legislation, within that certain individual country. They are therefore a domestic affair, in which their protection can only rely on that specific territorial domain. There are questions that are not asked though here, that I would be interested to ask. What process of law that can be followed to take life, rather than protect life? Is the law above human life? Can the inalienable of human rights be terminated through due process of law?

The Africans must be fully interpellated into these practices of the modern government. For the native Africans to obtain these rights, they must become one. It is their unity as a nation that will enable them to overcome the backwardness imposed on them by the whites, thereby overcoming the oppression imposed by white apartheid. In this line of argument what comes to importance is the South Africa Citizenship Act of 1949, and his critique of apartheid in relation to the universalism discourse of human rights as it appears in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.

To be sure, by the 1950s for ZK there was no uncertainty that Africans have developed a sense of distinctive political consciousness, and indeed this brought about a shifting mode in the struggle. It was one which was marked by passive resistance movement, shown in the campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws of June 1952 which was launched by the African National Congress. There is also another event which raised a higher sense of political consciousness in the African, that is the Pan-African Conference which was held at Accra in December 1958.¹⁷² These two moments in the unfolding of the history of the struggle of South Africa were conciousising in the minds of natives. The fact that ZK puts an emphasis on passive violence as

¹⁷¹ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans and The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁷² Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4

the concioutising moment in the struggle says a lot about his approach to the political solution in South Africa also. He said:

The slogan “Africa for Africans” which had been largely discredited when the Marcus Garvey movement was at its height in the 20s-is coming back into popularity in some African circles.....After all the trend of events over the African continent is that the time is more than overdue for Africans to be forced from old-style colonialism and imperialism, and that in most Africa countries means “Africa for the Africans”. The undiscerning will not asking themselves whether such a policy is appropriate for South Africa with its large population of settled Europeans. What they content themselves with is that it would be intolerable for a pocket of colonialism and imperialism to be allowed to remain in South Africa when the rest of the continent is free from it. We have not yet reached that stage and in my it is still possible at the present for white nationalism in South Africa and Black Nationalism to reach a compromise which would make possible their co-existence in the country.¹⁷³

To begin with, the concept of rights is full of “ambiguities” according to ZK.¹⁷⁴ He stated “it would be a mockery to say that the Negro child has the right to go to the school as the white child unless the right of the Negro child to do so is adequately protected by legal authority”.¹⁷⁵ His understanding is that *rights* in South Africa, in relation to “the power to do”, are the basic conceptions in which the whites have derived and naturalized their authority to oppress the Africans. This is clear as ZK arrives at the conclusion that Africans have no political rights but “political disabilities”.¹⁷⁶ The Native Representation Act of 1936 was at the core of the deprivation of African rights because it maximized the theoretical character of rights and deliberately silencing the practical reality that Africans have none.¹⁷⁷

Now this reference to the “negro” debates in the American situation clearly is something to think about here. Talal Asad has indicated a shift in this debate on whether “negro” political struggle

¹⁷³ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4

¹⁷⁴ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁷⁵ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁷⁶ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁷⁷ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

should be based on civil rights or human rights, in the United States. For Asad the shift is brought about by Malcolm X whom in the 1960s began to criticize the civil rights movement, urging his fellow African Americans “to resort to human rights as a way of transcending the limitations of the American state.....a turn from the authority of one state to the collective authority of several other states-a fact indicating that one cannot escape from a world consisting of nation-states that are equal as sovereign entities but grossly unequal in power”.¹⁷⁸ This shift in this debate is elaborated in a speech by Malcolm X in 1964; let us see what he says in detail:

We need to expand the civil-rights struggle to a higher level-to the level of human rights. Whenever you are in a civil-rights struggle, whether you know it or not, you are confining yourself to the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam. No one from the outside world can speak out in your behalf as long as your struggle is a civil-rights. Civil rights comes under the domestic affairs of this country. All of our African brothers and our Asian brothers and our Latin American brothers cannot open their mouths and interfere in the domestic affairs of the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam. You may wonder why all of the atrocities that have been committed in Africa and in Hungary and in Asia, and in Latin America are brought before the UN, and the Negro problem is never brought before the UN.....When you expand the civil-rights struggle to the level of human rights, you can then take the case of the black man in this country before the nations in the UN. You can take it before the General Assembly. You can take Uncle Sam before a world court. But the only level you can do it on is the level of human rights. Civil rights keeps you under his restrictions, under his jurisdiction. Civil rights keeps you in his pocket. Civil rights means you're asking Uncle Sam to treat you right. Human rights are something you were born with. Human rights are your God-given rights. Human rights are the rights that are recognized by all nations of this earth. And any time any one violates your human rights, you can take them to the world court.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Asad T, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity (Cultural Memory in the Present)*, (Stanford University Press, 2003), 141.

¹⁷⁹ Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”, quoted in Asad *Formations of the Secular*, 141-142.

This shift that Malcolm X does is against such people as Martin Luther King who confined themselves to a discourse of civil rights. That discourse as it is clear, confines the struggle to be based on the domestic affairs of that individual state. King of the civil rights movement saw the struggle to be one in which African Americans were oppressed in the country of their birth, and therefore had to obtain their rights as American citizens in order to restore their heritage and pride. Whereas Malcolm X saw the need for a shift in this discourse to that of human rights, as universal, as an inalienable affair of humanity as a whole. Thus for Malcolm X their human rights could be solved by a court outside the confines of America.

Hanna Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* noted the paradox of human rights. In her formulation we find a contradiction which is inherent in human rights because as much they are said to be intrinsic to the human being, they need are only possible to exist when the nation from which the human exists recognizes them as such.¹⁸⁰ Arendt went on to say “the calamity of the rightless is not that they are deprived of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, or of equality before the law and freedom of opinion-formulas which were designed to solve problems within the given communities-but that they no longer belong to any community whatsoever”.¹⁸¹ Thus this is a contradiction which was at stake when ZK was thinking on this question. He thought that in order for the natives to be assured human rights and civil rights, they will have to be members of a political community, a “homogenous” collective people. Thus their rights protection can only emanate from this.

To be sure and precise I believe that ZK was grappling with the notion that the natives had to undergo a transform from the status of the tribe to the status of full citizens of South Africa. And therefore, informed by the historical injustice of the disenfranchisement and deprivation of Africans, ZK had to prove that historically Africans were the original inhabitants of South Africa, and they had the moral and political right to claim a full status of citizenship in the country.¹⁸² He has three categories in mind, which should help us understand the notion of citizenship in relation to what civil rights should mean to the African. He lists them: aliens,

¹⁸⁰ Arendt H, “The Perplexities of the Rights of Man”, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Great Britain: Andre Deutsch, 1986), 290-302.

¹⁸¹ Arendt, *The Perplexities of the Rights of Man*, 295.

¹⁸² Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

nationals and citizens of a State.¹⁸³ Drawing from the experience of the Nazi German Reich in which the Jews were nationals but because of their race were denied full citizenship; he makes the distinction between nationals and aliens. Aliens are “nationals of foreign countries who for one reason or another happen to be resident in a country other than that of which they may be citizens”.¹⁸⁴ Being a national on the other hand “may mean no more than being a member of an independent political community”.¹⁸⁵ Clearly as experience has shown ZK understands that these categories are none participants in the governmental institutions of those State. They do not have franchise voting rights for example. Most importantly the concept of race is the centralizing concept from which the citizen is determined.

What matters here is the third category, which the natives in the Union belong to. These are citizens of the State, “citizens proper”. They are citizens who are “capable of enjoying all the duties known to the municipal law of the State concerned”.¹⁸⁶ These are Africans. They are the one who were born in South Africa, who can claim to be the rightful owners of the land, who are the citizens of South Africa. Having noted this ZK appreciates the predicament situation of a country in which citizenship has to be given to a heterogeneous population, and specifically in which there is also a community of European settlers, i.e. “Christians & Jews, Moslems & Hindus, Catholics & Protestants, black and white, majority and minority, capitalists and workers”.¹⁸⁷ The end result of this heterogeneous population is that “the ruling power may be vested in one or other of the groups into which the country is divided. In such a case the dominant group may give a rather restricted meaning to the term. Thus the dominant group may with or without reference to or consultation with the dominated group decide upon which state-given or fundamental human rights shall be given to the dominated group, if at all”.¹⁸⁸ This is the situation resonating with South Africa, where the white population does this to the Africans.

¹⁸³ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁸⁴ Matthews, *Civil rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁸⁵ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁸⁶ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁸⁷ Matthews, *Civil Rights For Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

¹⁸⁸ Matthews, *Civil Rights for Africans And The Tomlinson Report*, ZKM B4.

Bantu Authorities and Nationalism

One of the most troubling issues in the politics of the Bantu at the time was the issue of chiefs and their role in the modern government of the time. At the center of this debate was the interpellation of the chiefs to the system of modern government. The nationalists of the apartheid had introduced the theory and practice of separate development; which according to Matthews was just a mere shift by the Afrikaner nationalists to liberalize apartheid.¹⁸⁹

Mamdani's recent book *Define and Rule* historicizes the way in which the political identity of natives was constructed in the colonial world. Mamdani gives us a detailed explanation of how the natives were defined by law, history and the new science of anthropology as customary tribes. Accordingly tribes were close to nature, they practiced customs, they were unchanging, and therefore uncivilized.¹⁹⁰ That formulation laid down the foundations of indirect rule in the colonial world; a technology of rule.¹⁹¹ Mamdani notes that this is brought about by a shift in the technology of rule which was developed by one of the British governors Sir Henry Maine after the Bengal insurgency of 1857.¹⁹² Law was applied to divide and rule the Africans. Mamdani explains the natives were to be governed through customary law, because customary law was "context-bound.....was as rooted in the ground as the peasants and his (the native) crops".¹⁹³ That was in comparison to civil law, and it "had transcended context", therefore "travel globally".¹⁹⁴ Separate development took the direction of this indirect rule. This is what has been called by Partha Chatterjee as the "rule of colonial difference".¹⁹⁵

The chiefs had a specific role to play in the system of modern government; it was that which was framed along the lines of the tribal chief as an Administrator in the Bantu Homeland. Consequently the chiefs were to play a specific role; as administrators of a kind of system of altered and transformed customs. There was a disquieting issue here, which was about political

¹⁸⁹ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4

¹⁹⁰ Mamdani M., 2012, *Define And Rule: Native as Political Identity*. South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012).

¹⁹¹ Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*.

¹⁹² Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Natives as Political Identity*.

¹⁹³ Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*, 20.

¹⁹⁴ Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*, 20.

¹⁹⁵ Chatterjee P., *The Nations and Its Fragments* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), quoted in Shani G, Empire, "Liberalism and the Rule of Colonial Difference: Colonial Governmentality in South Asia", *Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies*, 5 (2006): 19.

representation, since the chiefs were to be mediators between the Bantu and the white government. In clear formulation the Bantu were not citizens and part of the nation, but whites' citizens of the nation. Who will represent the Bantu? ZK had to grapple with this question in relation to this issue of political representation. Let us follow him. In 1959 he said separate development is based:

On assumptions that Africans can never learn to stand on their own feet or to develop the sense of responsibility which might stand them in good stead when called upon to run their own services. In other words it is not intended that the stage will ever be reached when either in their own areas or in services intended for them they should be masters of their own fate. As long as that is the theory and practice underlying the policy of separate development, it can never be other than an insult to the intelligence of the African people.¹⁹⁶

The above suggests different dimension on the issue, in the sense that even though the way in which I have been framing the problem here, that there was a difference between the civilizing policy of British liberalism and apartheid. ZK seems to be thinking that the problem of trusteeship persists in separate development. How could this problem read like in ZK's anxiety? The Bantu Authorities Act, which was also divide and rule, among other things was to be carried out under trusteeship. The so-called chiefs are not to be the voice of the people as such, but they will be pupils of the government. ZK's first impression of the so-called "Magna Carta for Africans" is that:

The Bantu will be divided into a multitude of units, each with the shadow instead of the substance of power. The purpose is to delay indefinitely the development of a sense of national unity among Africans. The African people were not consulted about the Act; had they been their leaders would have rejected it, for the efforts of all responsible leaders of the African people are directed toward welding the different tribal groups together.¹⁹⁷

His main concern was the question of political representation of the natives. He made the difference between the chief as the tribal-traditional leader that was always part of the natives structure of social life before the colonial experience. There were also those chiefs who were

¹⁹⁶ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4.

¹⁹⁷ Matthews, *African Response To Racial Laws*, 8.

modern; elected and selected by the colonial master under the guide of divide and rule. He gave a sense of this when he noted:

While in the case of most tribes, in Southern Africa, under the influence of the Christian missions, education, industrialization and urbanisation, the ideas of the people have undergone a revolutionary change, the chiefs have in the main remained relatively static. They have been passed by most modern developments in African society. Consequently to attempt to rest a scheme of development upon their views and their leadership, is really asking for too much. The most the chief can do under the present circumstances is to surround himself with the best informed among the members of his tribe and to rely upon them to help to access and evaluate the schemes concerning which he is called upon to express an opinion.¹⁹⁸

The chiefs who were therefore used by the apartheid government were the ones devised by them to rule effectively. They therefore stood for the interest of their masters, and not for the people. He continued to explain that political representation will not make sense under this ambit, as consultation will have meaning when:

The people's freely chosen representatives and not consultation with the servants of the government-the chiefs. Not only are the chiefs largely disqualified for this task because they are government servants who cannot give, on any subject, any views but such as are acceptable to the government, they are also disqualified because they represent in the main the least informed section of the African population.¹⁹⁹

Chiefs were did not come as a result of the democratic process according to ZK, and therefore political representation as encapsulated in the understanding that they would be speaking for citizens disconnects here. He wanted Africans to be consulted collectively under the ambit of a democratic system. Thus he noted above, with rather a tone of disappointment the assumptions that Africans can never learn to stand on their own feet or to develop the sense of responsibility which might stand them in good stead when called upon to run their own services. This

¹⁹⁸ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4.

¹⁹⁹ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4.

conflictual condition if allowed to continue would result in “the doctrine of natural consequences seems to be the only one that can be followed with the white man who has decided to harden his heart against all appeals by the African for a reasonable approach to the problems of the country”.²⁰⁰

How can one then link ZK thinking with that of the African National Congress (ANC)? ZK’s political home was the ANC. He was a chair of the *Africa’s Claims In South Africa* strategic and ideological document I have mentioned here, and he framed a memorandum of discussion for the *Freedom Charter* document.²⁰¹ Both these are clear statements in which Africans state their imaginary to overcome colonialism and all its forms, and thereby retain their land. ZK’s understanding of the ANC was that it “has as its ideal the welding of the African people into a nation which can stand up to, if not alongside, the white nation established here in 1910”.²⁰² According to the ANC, therefore, there were two nations in existence in the Union; the white and black nations. That was the idea informing the nationalist movement.

Thus as I have been discussing ZK’s problem here, it would seem that the only way nationalism could have found its expression was to transcend the very border line of thinking about the native tribes. The category of race in this formulation does not disappear, but it is transformed so that it reaches a national dimension. Having transcended that tribal border line, a new notion of blackness must take place as I have been showing in ZK thinking. It must be one in which blackness is understood as a national problem, rather than a local (Homeland) problem. Blackness, in ZK’s thought therefore, allowed blacks to become a collective that was capable of ruling themselves in a democratically chosen self-government.

Racial difference in that dimension does not disappear also. ZK seemed to be very careful and nuanced in this relation though. He said, in a rather critical outlook, that in relation to the concept of separate development the problem was founded by a kind of conception which based government on “thinking of the blood in dealing with national problems”.²⁰³ That is why

²⁰⁰ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4.

²⁰¹ Due to financial constraints I could not visit the ZK Matthews archival materials which are kept at the University of Fort Hare library, which this document is kept.

²⁰² Matthews, *African Response To Racial Laws*, 12.

²⁰³ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4.

according to him “human history has not produced a group of men who can so impartially divine what is good for others that self-government can be dispensed with. Africans will continue to believe that in dealing with their white fellow countrymen they are dealing with fallible human beings”.²⁰⁴

That notion of self-government takes a significant place here and is a radicalizing gesture. It is one that calls for the anti-colonial struggle against apartheid. For so long in the understanding of the African, they have believed that they will be able to work with the white man. But this call for self-government seeks to transform the natives, and thereby emphasis the language of anti-colonial struggle through national independence and sovereignty.²⁰⁵

That language of a sense of self-rule and independence becomes visible at a moment when the native intellectual feels a sense of disappointment, a sense of distrust, that his people will never be liberated from the colonial bondage. After the deadly Frontier Wars black people in South Africa:

Reluctantly accepted the rule of the white man but have endeavored to fight for the amelioration of their lot and the removal of the disabilities under which they labour by the usual democratic methods of persuasion and discussion. Through church and school, through working for the white man in varying capacities, in urban and rural areas, they have thought that they might eventually earn for themselves a respectable place in the new civilization which the white man brought to South Africa. They have formed political, social and industrial organisations or associations of various kinds and through them have made representations to the powers-that-be for the redress of this or that grievance. They fondly believed that the disabilities under which they laboured were due to their backwardness in the arts of modern civilization and that as they adapted themselves more and more successfully to the new ways of life they would be accorded more and more recognition as fellow-citizens of the white man.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Matthews, *African Response To Racial Laws*, 8.

²⁰⁵ Pillay S., “Anti-Colonialism, post-colonialism and the ‘New Man’” *Politicon* 31 (2004): 94.

²⁰⁶ Matthews, *Untitled Political Article*, ZKM B4.

As early as 1914, when the first deputation was sent to England to protest the Natives Land Act of 1913, there was this salient realization among the natives, that of despair and that was to animate a new imaginary of anti-colonialism.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the way to read nationalist thought can be done productively by critically looking at how it seeks to construct a discourse of its own about the possibility of rule. I have argued therefore that in ZK Matthews's thought we see a formation of a new subject; an African modern subject. This idea can only be established if we work through the written ideas of ZK. Only if we give them the meaning they seek to produce, the epistemological questions they pose, the historical and political questions he formulates to give answers to the problem.

I have then shown that he argued that a system of education for the African must rely on Africanisation; that is it must be based on the African conceptual and cognitive ideological issues, such as history and culture.

Secondly I have shown that his idea of blackness made it possible to frame on a broad outlook a new nationalist political structure in which it could be possible for Africans to rule themselves. He therefore rejected the idea of tribal chiefs as the main mediators between the government and the people. In fact what ZK to do was to transform the natives from a status of tribe, to a status of the people (a nation). Having transformed them to this national dimension, rather than the fragments of tribes which could be ruled by Homeland administration, he was able to argue that Africans can self-determine their own destiny in their own land, and thereby attain political representation was crucial.

The other point in relation to that was that Africans needed to be recognized as full citizens of the nation. They belonged to the South African political community on the broader national level. Therefore they were entitled to enjoy political rights and civil rights, as national citizens of sovereign state.



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Concluding the Project

I now summarize what this thesis has sought to do. I have sought in this study to deal with the ideas and representations of ZK Matthews. In the first chapter I have launched a critical analysis of both the scholarly and popular representations of ZK. A critical and full study of ZK has not yet done. The 1981 auto/biography *Freedom For My People* is not sufficient to capture the thought and life of this figure. The other works that have been done are even narrow and limited in their understanding of ZK. It also seems that there has also been a lack of reading ZK's archives and many articles he has published. The chapter also posed questions about the politics of memory in the popular nationalist movement (the ANC). ZK does not appear to be significant to the ANC's memorialized projects, even though he dedicated his political life to the pursuit of the liberation of black people. Why is this? I suggested that the view(s) have been that his orientation towards negotiation and Christian liberal ideas has been the key reasons for his neglect.

In dealing with his ideas in the second chapter, I have argued that his writings in education and politics provide an idea about a certain kind of subject that he grappled to form. I have stated that this subject was an African modern subject. ZK transcended the framework of "tribalism" which was proposed by the apartheid nationalists and championed a higher status of blackness in which the black "race" could be able to rule itself as a nation. He therefore argued for a shift in the status of the "natives" from the Homeland to a national citizen. That was a proposition of change in the structure of political representation: the black "race" would elect its own leaders for political representation rather than be ruled through the fragmentary administrative structure of Chiefs. This would have to happen on the understanding that social change was an inescapable factor, signaled for example by the existence of the white population and all that stands for in terms of social relations. Hence the African would have to rule on the basis of the policy of cooperation with the white "race". This was also seen on his ideas in education where he expounded the notion of africanization. Africanization meant thinking of education through the lens of a national culture and history.



In this photo appear Z.K. Matthews (middle right) and the high school boys at Adams College, where he served as Headmaster (1925-1932). The men he is standing with seem to be around the same age as he is. This tells us of the sense in which education was taken seriously in those days. There seems to be a sense of common cause among these gentlemen: signaled not only by the fact of same generation, but also by the dress-code. Formal dress signifies a sense of gentlemen-ness and goal orientated purpose.

The analysis in the chapters has been based primarily on a close reading of published texts. There are two directions that might be more fully explored in a longer thesis on ZK Matthews. Firstly, there are rich and untapped archival documents to be mined. I must therefore point to these potentially rich archival sources. The first one is the ZK Matthews Collection at the UNISA Documentation Centre for African Studies. In the UNISA Documentation Center there are educational and political writings, and educational and political submissions to Commissions of Enquiry. There is also a ZK Matthews Archive Collection at the University of Fort Hare. This includes his lecture notes from teaching at the University of Fort Hare, some writings in education and university related issues, and political documents such as the draft memorandum of discussion of the Freedom Charter.

Of particular interest here would be his work as a pioneering black African anthropologist in South Africa, one who later taught social anthropologists of the 1940s such as Livingstone Mqotsi, Godfrey Pitso, Nimand Mkele and others at the Fort Hare Native College.²⁰⁷ Matthews trained at the London School of Economics under Malinowski in 1934, after completing his M.A at Yale. He did many months of field-work among the Sotho communities in South Africa, filling 16 field notebooks and publishing a significant article in *Africa* in 1940, the leading anthropological journal of the time.

Rather than seeing him as trapped with Eiselen in the Bantu Studies discourse informed by the notion of strictly bounded “tribes” in need of separate development.²⁰⁸ I would locate Matthews along with Jomo Kenyatta and Esmeralda Robeson, his fellow African students at the London seminar who used anthropology ways to explore the politics of African nationalism and black identity respectively. While his Christian liberalism may have made his racial politics a more cautious one than that of the stridently African nationalist author of *Facing Mount Kenya* or that of the outspoken African American Rights activist Robeson, he shared their quest for grappling with how African culture and identity could be represented from the inside by Africans (or African Americans) themselves.

²⁰⁷ See, Bank A. and Bank L., *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²⁰⁸ Kros, ‘Deep rumblings’: ZK Matthews ‘Culture Contact’ and the Eiselen Commission of Inquiry into Native Education, 1934-1939.

Robeson was, in fact, a close friend of Frieda and ZK Matthews. She stayed over at the Matthews house in Alice in 1936 in the early stages of her grand ethnographic tour of South East Africa. Among the most valuable surviving photographs of ZK are the family portraits and images of his house that she took on that trip. They were reproduced in her book *African Journey*, which was published in 1945 in New York.²⁰⁹



²⁰⁹ Robeson E., *African Journey* (New York: John Day, 1945).

Bellow is ZK Matthews and Frieda Bokwe with one of their children. Taken from Esmeralda Benson, *African Journey*.



The Matthews' and their home at Alice.

Bellow is ZK and Frieda with their four children. Esmeralda Benson, *African Journey*.



Pauli (extreme left) with Jack Matthews and his wife, Frieda, and their children.

The above images show a sense of community and sociability in ZK's family. What we see here is the intimacy between the house and its people. In the first image we see ZK and Frieda, with one of their children, standing outside the house. They seem to be in a peaceful and joyful mood, seen in their smiling faces. Conversations are established with bystanders when people stand in that way. The yard seems to be well organized; with its beautifully leveled fence and grass. This symbolizes a well organized way of life for the Matthews family. This house today is in a state of decline. The second image shows the whole family. Again with their healthy mood, and this time they show a sense of unity.

The above photographs of the Matthews house are suggestive. They are suggestive of the possibility of a more fully-fledged visual representation of the life of ZK. We can see the house possessed a sense of life for the family. Many important people, including leaders of the ANC such as Thabo Mbeki, visited the house for education in politics and strategies towards the liberation movement. In this project I have talked about the disappearance of the memory of ZK on the public imagination in the post-apartheid period. More specifically has been the ways in which he has been sidelined by his own liberation movement, the ANC. I think in re-imagining this figure in the popular memory of the post-apartheid, his house might be taken as the central project to do that. The Matthews house is located in Alice in the Eastern Cape. We have mentioned here that ZK did some teachings in politics and education in it, during the 1940s to the 1950s. It was used for political purposes by the ANC members at large. ZK also gave lessons and discussions on the education and political matters to the youth of the ANC.

In imagining this house as a museum I am inclined to think that there are number of components that might constitute it as such. The first important thing would be the furniture in all the rooms. That includes the beds, the kitchen, the dining room, and the chairs used in the balcony. The furniture would also include books in ZK's study library in one of the rooms.

The inside walls of the house could be covered with some quotations from his writings, and some quotations by other people about him. There could also be framed certificates symbolizing his achievements in the field of education, and awards from different organizations. There also could be images of him: with family, friends, and colleagues. These images might tell a story of ZK from the people he meet from his travels in the United States, Europe and Africa during the

1930s and then 1950s to the 1960s. That might give us the sense of ZK as a cosmopolitan intellectual and his establishment of networks around the world. There also could be images of him within the country his own. An example would be ones with meetings of the ANC. Thus we can be able to narrate ZK the politician

In addition to these images there could also be something of the documentation of his letters. By that I refer to his correspondence with his family, close friends and associates. There are also field-work reports that can feature here. The Freedom Charter memorandum of discussion was also crafted in this house by ZK. That might be a significant document which might attract attention in the post-apartheid context as it laid ground for our democracy.

Considering all of the above I would like again to bring to attention a quote from the Albert Luthuli Museum which I have provided in the course of this work. The quote went “To conserve, uphold, promote and propagate the life, values, philosophies and legacy of (ZK Matthews) in the struggle against apartheid oppression respect for human rights as well as life devotion to non-violent resolution to world problems”.²¹⁰ Thus the legacy of ZK Matthews, his philosophical ideas, values and social practices could be preserved through the change of his house into a museum in Alice.


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²¹⁰ The Albert Luthuli Museum, accessed at <http://www.luthulimuseum.org.za/index.php/about/vision-and-mission>, October 31, 2013



ZK Matthews. Taken from the Historic Schools Restoration Project,
<http://www.historicschools.org.za/view.asp?pg=About&subm=About>



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