

**AFRIKAANS ALTERNATIVE POPULAR
MUSIC 1986 - 1990 : AN ANALYSIS OF
THE MUSIC OF
BERNOLDUS NIEMAND
AND
JOHANNES KERKORREL.**

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1992

THIS LONG ESSAY IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF A BACHELOR OF MUSIC DEGREE

I CERTIFY THAT UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED
THIS LONG ESSAY IS MY OWN ORIGINAL WORK.

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1980s the South African alternative media documented the emergence of a small but fast growing popular music movement within Afrikaans youth culture. By 1990, this music movement reached phenomenic proportions, generating musical events of the magnitude of Houtstok (South Africa's first rock festival which was attended by more than twenty thousand people)¹ and the Voëlvry tour (a national tour by "alternative" Afrikaans musicians, which was attended by eighty-five thousand people)². In 1990 even Newsweek documented the significance of Afrikaans alternative popular music in a lengthy article.³

Afrikaans alternative popular music made a deep impression on the Afrikaans and, also White English South African, consciousness. In 1989, Shaun de Waal documented the significance of the Voëlvry tour:

"The simple conjunction of rock 'n roll and Afrikaans in the form of the Voëlvry tour has caused more of a stir in the South African music-consuming public than anything since the teenybopper hysteria of the Rabbitt days - and that was altogether a much flightier affair"⁴.

Afrikaner youth was ignited by the emergence of this music movement. Afrikaans alternative music expressed a radical non-acceptance of mainstream Afrikaner nationalist ideology and offered a critical re-appraisal of hegemonic Afrikaner culture. The Afrikaner youth supported this message with such enthusiasm that Afrikaans alternative popular music came to be seen as a significant and dangerous youth-orientated social movement. The music came to be recognised as the symbolic manifestation of the emergence of an Afrikaans counter-culture in Afrikaner youth⁵, both by Afrikaner cultural authorities such as the F.A.K.⁶, the A.T.V.K.⁷ and the S.A.B.C.⁸, and the dissenting Afrikaner youth themselves. A concerted effort was made by the cultural authorities of Afrikaner hegemony to suppress this music. Gary Rathbone reported in 1989:

"The rock 'n roll rebellion has been translated into Afrikaans with remarkable success.....their move from obscurity to public notoriety seems thoroughly to have unsettled the captains of Afrikaner volks-kultuur.⁹

Religious protest, bannings and negative reporting by the S.A.B.C. formed part of the resistance to Afrikaans alternative popular music:

"Opprobrium has been heaped on the Voëlvryers by dignitaries of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk; the S.A.B.C. has banned most of the songs on the Voelvry album....all but three on the Gereformeerde Blues Band's album Eet Kreef!, and most of Bernoldus Niemand's album. And it devoted some of Netwerk to a ridiculously "concerned" examination of this new, dangerous phenomenon.¹⁰

Furthermore, the Afrikaans alternative musicians became a target of state investigation and intimidation.¹¹

Before the recent development of alternative Afrikaans popular music, Afrikaans popular music had been, in most instances, characterised by trite and banal musical constructions which acted as a conservatoire for hegemonic Afrikaner ideology. The escapist, fantasy-

nature of this popular music is noteworthy for its almost complete denial of the realities of the social realm. Hanneli van Staden has described the escapist function of mainstream Afrikaans popular music:

"Deur oor strande, seemeene, swaeltjies, kalwer-liefde en rugby te sing, word die volk se aandag afgelei van sosiaal-politieke kwessies - wat veral in die huidige tydsgewrig in Suid-Afrika brandend aktueel is. So help ligte Afrikaanse musiekkunstenaars om 'n valse bewussyn onder Afrikaners te skep en bevorder."¹²

Moreover, much mainstream Afrikaans popular music does not simply deny the realities of the social realm, but attempts to create a particular kind of social reality. The music moves beyond neutral escapism in its function to the propagation of hegemonic Afrikaner nationalist ideology. Franne Benadie, of the mainstream Afrikaans pop duo Innes and Franne Benadie, appeared in a music video screened by the S.A.B.C. on the 1992 Teletreffers programme (a mainstream pop or "light music" video programme) singing a song called "Mooiste Taal" in which the refrain repeated "Ek is 'n Boerseun-Afrikaner, die mooiste, mooiste taal"¹³

The lyrics of a mainstream Afrikaans pop song by Louise du Toit-Smit, winner of a joint S.A.B.C. and A.T.K.V. song competition, have been described as "military propaganda"¹⁴ by a music critic. The song, "Omkeer", is made up of lyrics such as these:

"Sy kyk diep in my oë. Sy gee my weer 'n kyk.... My arm is om haar skouers. Ek sê: Ek wil met jou praat. Vanaand moet ons groet, my maat! More is ek soldaat. Sy sê: Reg, jy't jou orders, gaan doen jou army ding. Gaan rol rond, rond in die stof en sweet."¹⁵

This type of mainstream Afrikaans pop song propagates acquiescent uncritical acceptance of Afrikaans hegemonic ideology. Artists who, like Benadie and du Toit-Smit, have exploited patriotic national sentiment in the Afrikaans popular mainstream include Carike Keuzenkamp, Herbie and Spence, Rudie Neitz, Charles Jacobie, Marie van Zyl and Vickie du Preez, amongst a host of others.¹⁶

The nature of the lyrics, their propagandistic and escapist functions, illuminates the ways in which mainstream Afrikaans pop is completely acquiescent to both market forces and the all-powerful forces of the culture industry such as the S.A.B.C., the F.A.K. and the

A.T.K.V. Together with the monopoly of the mainstream record companies Decibel and M.F.P.¹⁷, these cultural and media organizations control the form and content of

Afrikaans mainstream pop music. Hannali van Staden states:

"Die swak soort Afrikaanse musiek [mainstream Afrikaans popular music]....voer die botoon en word aktief bevorder deur die S.A.U.K., die F.A.K end die A.T.K.V".¹⁸

The A.T.K.V. and F.A.K. promote Afrikaans mainstream pop to the tune of hundreds of thousands of rands annually.¹⁹ As well as staging song competitions the F.A.K. promotes music festivals which are organised in conjunction with the S.A.B.C. and televised annually.²⁰ The A.T.K.V. also has close ties with the S.A.B.C., co-organizing annual songwriting competitions with this state organization which, in the later 1980s, was widely acknowledged to be a mouthpiece for hegemonic Afrikaner nationalist ideology.²¹ The S.A.B.C., in programmes such as Debut, Teletreffers, and Op Versoek, promotes Afrikaans mainstream pop exclusively. H. van Staden comments:

"Watter gesigte word oor en oor in programme soos die gesien? Die van kunstenaars wat sing oor die mooi en veilige dinge - die natuurskoon, sonsondergange en fauna en flora."²²

Thus, it is clear that mainstream Afrikaans popular music has been hijacked by the culture industry of South Africa. The major record companies who nurture and sell this product, Decibel and M.F.P., are notoriously conservative and exact a tight control over the mainstream music industry in South Africa. Furthermore, the influences of Afrikaner nationalist organisations such as the F.A.K. (described as "die kulturele vluel van die Broederbond")²³ and the S.A.B.C. ensure that Nationalist Party ideology, the ideology of the Afrikaner hegemony, is reproduced in the content of mainstream Afrikaans popular music. Furthermore, direct state intervention has been documented:

"Die intimidasie waaraan alternatiewe kunstenaars al blootgestel is, in 'n skreiende skande. Kerkorrel het dreigoproepe ontvang en meeluister-apparaat is in sy telefone geplant. Veral met die Voelvry-toer was die optrede aan die orde van die dag. Toe 'n TV-span....kort voor die Houtstok-fees onderhoude met

kunstenaars by die Voortrekker-monument en op Kerkplein in Pretoria gaan opneem het, het Nasionale Intelligensie hulle ingewag.....Die organiseerders van die Houtstok-fees het ook voor die fees talle naamlose en suggestiewe oproepe ontvang en hul fone is meegeluister."²⁴

In specifically catering for the conservative cultural hegemony of Afrikaans culture, an audience which conforms to an ideology often bordering on fascist, the popular music of the Afrikaans mainstream is unable to resist complete standardisation and exploitation as a commodity.

The standardisation to which I refer is a feature of certain popular music, such as American swing\big band music of the 1940s, identified by T.Adorno as "uncritical music"²⁵ A characteristic of such music is that:

".....a piece is totally made up of easily recognisable and (through frequent repetition) generally accepted formulae, within an overall scheme which remains always basically the same."²⁶

Such formulae, which are generally accepted through much repetition, are the primary vehicles for mainstream

Afrikaans pop composition. The music is, in the main, urbanised volkslied²⁷ - like song or mainstream pop ballad form set in disco or country-and-western stylistic construction. Lyrics conform predominantly to the stylized sentimental romantic love themes of liefdesliedjies²⁸. To a lesser extent national sentiment, flora and fauna of South Africa; significant-symbols of Afrikaner culture such as rugby and military service; religious themes, or translations of European folk songs generate the lyrics of the popular mainstream.

The liefdesliedjie, the dominant genre in mainstream pop, is characterised by its propagation of rigid gender stereo-types which are consistently adhered to. In the lyric content women are always idealized as passive, acquiescent, and the victims of unrequited love. It is only in the domestic space, as the Afrikaner cultural nurturer, that the Volksmoeder²⁹ is presented as being powerful. Conversely men are portrayed as active manipulators of space and time, usually as farmers, soldiers or men of courage who engage in heroic struggles and quests. In this way it can be seen that the content of mainstream pop reflects the patriarchal nature of Afrikaner culture.

The lyrics of Afrikaans mainstream popular music are almost always "apolitical", non-satirical and mostly never critical or reflective of the current crises in Afrikaner and South African culture. Deviations from the aforementioned formulaic aesthetic models seldom occur. The music is described by Hanneli van Staden as being "Europese wysies met swak Afrikaanse lirieke en verbeeldinglose verwerkings."³⁰

An Afrikaans pop artist in the mainstream who exemplifies this kind of pop music is Bles Bridges, currently the most successful popular singer in South Africa. To date Bridges has released twelve albums which altogether have sold more than one million copies. By way of contrast, Michael Jackson has sold only 150 000 units in South Africa.³¹ Bridges combines a melange of disco, and some of the vas-trap³² rhythmic style of boeremusiek with a Las Vegas-like kitsch packaging of glitter, sequined tuxedo and cowboy boots. Bles Bridges states explicitly:

"Love is the only thing worth singing about. To sing about politics has never done anybody [any] good."³³

His consumerist orientation, above all other aesthetic considerations, is also made explicit by the following

explanation of the success of his albums. Bridges believes that:

"....you can judge success on a basis of 'is it marketable'? You can have the most fantastic commodity [my emphasis] in the world - if nobody buys it, it's a failure."³⁴

The commoditization of Bridges' music is complete. As he maintains:

"We tried all kinds of music. But let's be quite honest, in South Africa, what is the most successful music? Middle of the road music. Luckily, I'm doing exactly what I like to do."³⁵

A typical album recorded by Bles Bridges between 1986-1990 is *Laat My Lewe - Laat My Liefhê*, which was released in March 1989. The album features titles such as "Ek en Jy", a sentimental love song; "Kom Jodel Saam" a nonsense folk-like sing-a-long; and a cover version of a German pop song called "My Madeleine".

It is against this backdrop of the Afrikaner mainstream pop product that I wish to define the "alternative"

nature of the new popular style. Through an analysis of the music of Johannes Kerkorrel and Bernoldus Niemand I will endeavour to reveal how alternative popular music is a manifestation of new aesthetic values. These aesthetic values, expressed in both the form and content of alternative Afrikaans popular music, have generated a non-conformity and diversity in the repertoire. They are informed not by the exigencies of market forces, but by the expression of disjuncture of a marginalised Afrikaans counter-culture. In Bernoldus Niemand's work this expression of disjuncture is a fragmented response to the violence of Afrikaner male life in the apartheid system. In Johannes Kerkorrel's work, the rock 'n roll style has been adapted to articulate a critique of hegemonic Afrikaner culture and a call for radical social change, expressing the social disjuncture experienced by

Afrikaners who reject the ideology of the National Party. Hence, I wish to suggest that the aesthetic of Afrikaans alternative pop is the articulation of a social response to the hegemonic Afrikaner cultural codes, which in both form and content is an embodiment of a historical crisis in South Africa.

The historical crisis to which I refer is one of

Afrikaner cultural identity. The period of alternative composition addressed by this essay, 1986-1990, marks a profound impasse reached in the hegemonic shaping and control over Afrikaner culture and Afrikaner nationalism. Up until this period the cultural profile of the Afrikaner remained a mostly uncontested reality. However, certain historical events have triggered a fractionation of Afrikaner consciousness and have thrown Afrikanerdom into a deep crisis of identity and redefinition.

The last efforts by President P. W. Botha to keep grand apartheid alive unleashed an orgy of violence in the middle and late 1980s. The war in Angola, blanket repression, township violence, state censorship, detention without trial, the execution of political prisoners, and S.A.D.F. atrocities, reached their zenith during this period. South Africa's economy, ravaged by sanctions and brought to its knees by the burdens created by apartheid homeland policies and Nationalist corruption and mismanagement, forced President F. W. de Klerk to abandon grand apartheid and declare a "new South Africa" in February 1990.

The national disintegration and international isolation of South Africa, followed by De Klerk's radical departure

from the "Swart Gevaar" posturing and rhetoric of previous government leaders, had a profound impact on the national psyche. The Afrikaner, long accustomed to the role of White supremacist oppressor, was forced to reassess his\her sense of selfhood.

This experience of disjuncture is reflected not only in the music of the alternative Afrikaans composers, but also in other forms of artistic expression. The Grahamstown National Arts Festival, a revealing index of the cultural climate of White South Africa, saw a significant shift in the focus of artists and musicians in 1988. In an article entitled "Verwoerd's Kids Reject the Kappie", Kathy Berman described this shift:

"Last year the festival resounded with the unified cries of Freedom songs, this year it goose-stepped discordantly to the all-White beat of the volkswag³⁵.....here laid bare for all to witness was the anger, the bitterness and the shame of Verwoerd's grown children - deprived of their human dignity, they are as anarchistic as hell.....This year, the festival belonged to another of South Africa's dispossessed: the disillusioned Afrikaner."³⁶

Gary Rathbone also documented the significant surge of Afrikaans artistic expression in the late 1980s:

"As it is with music's intellectual half-relation, theatre, notably in the works of Ryk Hatting and Reza de Wet, there seems to be a feeling of something new and exciting rushing through the veins of Afrikaans culture. In an attempt to clear the language of all the muck it has accumulated over the course of the last 40 years of Nationalist rule, the new generation of songwriters, playwrights and idealists are setting out with a zeal and optimism..."³⁷

This new generation of Afrikaans artists are symptomatic of the radical re-appraisal of Afrikanerdom which is occurring, particularly amongst Afrikaner youth. The re-assessment of the cultural profile of the Afrikaner is providing a voice for this new youth-orientated counter-culture. Dirk Uys, manager of Johannes Kerkorrel, has observed this schism in Afrikaans culture and the ways in which alternative Afrikaans music, and other Afrikaans art forms, is the voice for a new counter-culture:

"We are bringing home a lot of those homeless people

who have never been able to identify with the current state of Afrikaans culture....What seems to be happening is that instead of Afrikaners being lumped together as one cultural mass with the same tastes, a polarisation of attitudes is developing, with the far right on one side and us on the other"³⁸

Hannali van Staden has documented the ways in which alternative Afrikaans popular music has been appropriated by Afrikaner youth:

"Dit lyk in elk geval nie of die Afrikaanse jeug begaand is oor Afrikaanse [mainstream] musiek nie....totdat die Voëlvry-beweging losgebars het. Die jeug se reaksie hierop het duidelik gewys daar is 'n behoefte aan Afrikaanse musiek waarby die jeug aanklink vind, gesing deur mense van hul eie geslag en oor temas wat relevant en aktueel is".³⁹

The musical procedures employed in Afrikaans alternative pop music embody the counter-cultural impulses felt by the alternative musicians and Afrikaner youth. The post-modern procedures of parody, pastiche and montage, the stylistic procedures followed by the alternative composers, question the cultural codes of the hegemonic

culture. These procedures produce a fragmented response to the hegemonic culture which reveals the ways in which the counter-cultural subject, in experiencing social disjuncture and alienation, is decentered and without a defined cultural identity. In being divorced from the parent culture, the Afrikaans youth counter-culture has had to undergo a radical exploration of consciousness in its redefinition of self. This has resulted in the adoption of a postmodern multiplicity of forms in which to convey their cultural resistance. H.Foster has stated that:

".....a resistant postmodernism is concerned with a critical deconstruction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo-historical forms, with a critique of origins, not a return to them. In short, it seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes, to explore rather than conceal social and political affiliations."<40

In this essay, I will argue that the procedures of parody and pastiche give the alternative pop musicians a vehicle for adopting new resistant identities, donning masks in an exploration of consciousness. Most often, hackneyed pop forms of the mainstream are used to denigrate their

extra-musical meanings. Montage, as I will call the stylistic juxtapositions and syntheses effected by Bernold^{us} Niemand in his compositions, is perhaps the most effective and, therefore, significant compositional procedure employed by the alternative musician. Ulmer has described the significance of montage in the post-modern world:

"Montage does not reproduce the real, but constructs an object, or rather, mounts a process in order to intervene in the world, not to reflect but to change reality."⁴¹

Where the mainstream recording industry creates a product whose function it is to preserve the status quo of uncritical consumerism for the sake of maximum profit, the alternative musician uses music as a vehicle for dissent and as a rallying point for critical listening. These postmodern procedures, I will argue, are the most appropriate vehicles for this expression of dissent and disjuncture.

Most significantly, the Afrikaans alternative pop musicians resist all forms of commoditisation, unlike the composers of the mainstream. The alternative musician has

circumvented the mainstream recording industry. All significant recordings and distributions of alternative albums have been effected by Shifty Records, a small independent company which is funded mainly by overseas anti-apartheid organizations. The S.A.B.C. does not play alternative Afrikaans popular music outside of news items which attempt to contrive a sensationalist reaction amongst listeners and viewers. Particularly during the period 1986-1990, alternative popular music was completely dismissed by the S.A.B.C. and mainstream recording companies. Thus performance venues are also alternative in their selection. Open air rock festivals like "Splashy Fen" or "Houtstok", the Grahamstown festival, campus tours like "Voëlvry", folk clubs and alternative cabaret venues like the Black Sun in Johannesburg, are the predominant venues for the performance of alternative Afrikaans pop.

Hence, all the channels of the mainstream record industry are actively avoided. The alternative musicians, who style themselves as marginalised rock poets, are self-fashioned and not the creations of the recording industry. The alternative Afrikaans musician is also not motivated by profit or record sales. Between 1986 and 1990, all alternative Afrikaans pop records were

available only by mail order, at stalls in flea-markets, at performances, or at alternative record shops. Most significantly, it is the intention of Afrikaans alternative pop composers, by being critical and reflective, to provoke an active conscientising response in their young audience rather than a passive consumerist acceptance. Dirk Uys has voiced the alternative Afrikaans musician's call for active, critical listening:

"I'm hoping we can impress the young Afrikaner to get out there and pick up a guitar, write poetry and generally just get motivated and creative."⁴²

In most cases Afrikaans alternative popular music maintains an uncompromising commitment to reflect the reality beneath those myths presented in mainstream Afrikaans popular culture and the White Afrikaner experience. In general, it is a radical music which consciously resists commoditisation and, hence, avoids the trappings of formulaic standardisation. It also functions as a voice and rallying point for a new but still unconsolidated and uncrystallised counter-culture within Afrikanerdom. In this way it fulfills a need for an alternative counter-cultural expression that reflects Afrikaner non-acceptance and alienation in the midst of

the larger political and ideological crisis in South Africa.

In attempting to establish broad stylistic categories in Afrikaans alternative popular music, I have conducted a general survey of available recordings between 1986 and 1990, and from this survey have arrived at the aforementioned themes and modes of organization in alternative composition. The three most important broad stylistic categories;—parody, pastiche and montage;—are represented in the work of the two major exponents in the Afrikaans alternative music scene: Bernoldus Niemand and Johannes Kerkorrel. In the body of this essay I have reviewed the two albums (one apiece) released by Niemand and Kerkorrel in the period 1986 to 1990.

INTRODUCTION : FOOTNOTES

1. Andrea Vinassa, "Die Boere Het Nie Hul Huiswerk Gedoen Nie" Vrye Weekblad, March 1992, p.17.
2. Ibid.
3. Chris du Plessis, "You'd Never Buy Brenda, So Who Does?" The Weekly Mail, December 21 to January 18 1990, p.31.
4. Shaun de Waal, "Rocking Rebels Discover R 'n R, The Weekly Mail, May 26 to June 1 1989, p.28.
5. Gary Rathbone, "Gereformeerde Moves in the Afrikaans Blues", The Weekly Mail, March 31 to April 7 1988, p.22.
6. The Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies.
7. Afrikaans Taal en Kultuurvereniging.
8. South African Broadcasting Corporation.

9. Gary Rathbone, "Rock 'n Roll Headache for Guardians of the Volkskultuur" The Weekly Mail, March 31 to April 16 1989, p.25.
10. Shaun de Waal, *ibid.*
11. Hannali van Staden, "Voëlvry of op Hok?" Vrye Weekblad, March 1992, p.13.
12. *Ibid.* Translation: "By singing about beaches, seagulls, swallows, puppy love and rugby, society's attention is taken away from socio-political issues - that particularly in the present context in South Africa are most relevant. In this way Afrikaans light music artists help to create and promote a false consciousness."
13. *Ibid.*, p.14. Translation: "I am a son of the Boer nation, an Afrikaner, the most beautiful culture."
14. *Ibid.* p.13.
15. *Ibid.* translation: "She look deep into my eyes. She looks at me again....My arm is around her shoulders. I say: I want to speak to you, tonight we must say

our goodbyes, my friend. Tomorrow I will be a soldier. She says: Right, you have your orders, go and do your army thing. Go and roll around, roll in the dust and sweat."

16. Muff Anderson, Music in the Mix. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981), p.148.
17. Hannali van Staden, p.15
18. Ibid. Translation: "This weak sort of Afrikaans music (mainstream Afrikaans popular music) is the boss of the show and is actively fostered by the S.A.B.C., F.A.K. and the A.T.K.V".
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p.13.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. Translation: "Wwhich faces are seen over and over in programmes such as these? Those of artists who sing about nice and safe things - the beauty of nature, sunsets and fauna and flora."

23. Ibid. Translation: "the cultural wing of the Broederbond". The Broederbond is an Afrikaner nationalist secret society.
24. Ibid., p.14. Translation: "The intimidation that alternative musicians are exposed to is a crying shame. Kerkorrel got threatening telephone calls and bugging apparatus was planted in his phone. Particularly with the Voëlvry tour, this was the order of the day. When a T.V. team - just before the Houtstok festival - conducted interviews with musicians at the Voortrekker monument and on Church Square in Pretoria, National Intelligence waited for them. The organisers of the Houtstok festival also received many anonymous and suggestive calls just before the Houtstok festival and their telephones were also bugged.
25. Max Paddison, "The Critique Criticised: Adorno and Popular Music," Popular Music 2 : Theory and Method, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.206.
26. Ibid.

27. volkslied: Afrikaner national folk song.
28. liefdes-liediies: Afrikaans love songs.
29. volksmoeder: Archetypal mother of the Boer nation. A mother as cultural bearer.
30. Van Staden, p.15. Translation: "European models with weak Afrikaans lyrics and unimaginative constructions".
31. Julia Beffon, "Bles: A Bridges Over Troubled Waters," The Weekly Mail, August 14 to 20 1992, p.31.
32. vas-trap: "two-step" Afrikaans folk dance. Main feature is the dotted rhythm metre.
33. Julie Beffon, p.31.
34. Ibid.
35. volkswag: The elite core of Afrikaans culture.
36. Kathy Berman, "Verwoerd's Kids Reject the Kappie," The Weekly Mail, July 15 to July 21 1988, p.27.

37. Gary Rathbone, "Gereformeerde Moves in the Afrikaner Blues." The Weekly Mail, March 31 to April 7 1988, p.22.

38. Gary Rathbone, "Rock 'n Roll Headache for Guardians of the Volkskultuur," The Weekly Mail, March 31 to April 6, 1989, p.25.

39. Van Staden, p.15.

40. Hal Foster, "Postmodernism , a Preface," in H.Foster, ed., Postmodern Culture (London: Pluto Press, 1983), p. xii.

41. Gregory L. Ulmer, "The Object of Post-Criticism," in H Foster, ed., Postmodern Culture (London: Pluto Press, 1983), p.86.

42. Gary Rathbone, "Rock 'n Roll Headache for Guardians of Volkskultuur," The Weekly Mail, March 31 to April 6 1989, p.25

BERNOLDUS NIEMAND: WIE IS BERNOLDUS NIEMAND?

In May of 1991 James Phillips, the composer-performer behind the pseudonym Bernoldus Niemand, was asked what motivated him to record an Afrikaans popular music album at a time when no-one outside of the mainstream Afrikaans commercial industry ventured into Afrikaans composition. He replied:

"I came from Springs on the East Rand, where there were heavy ous! - breekers? - where a guy couldn't speak English. Then I went to the army I did it (the recording) for the ous; for us."³

At this point, and at several others, Phillips has mentioned the seminal importance of the violent experience of military service and the violence of his bilingual, conservative Springs background. The rigid conservatism of Spring male life brought with it a violent insistence that he speak Afrikaans rather than English. Following the harrowing experience of two years in the S.A.D.F., at the time of the Angolan war, the violence of Afrikaner male life became a central issue in Phillip's life and produced within him a profound sense of alienation. I suggest that the violence of male life,

embodied in military service and in the intrusion of ideological codes to control the language which he speaks, has produced within Phillips a sense of social disjuncture. The experience of disjuncture has caused Phillips to reflect, in popular music compositions, on Afrikaner gender constructs as he experiences them.

8.

The 1980s, particularly the second half of the decade, saw Afrikaans cultural life ~~being~~ dominated by male artistic expression generated by experiences in the S.A.D.F. Frans le Roux wrote in February of 1988:

"There is a generation of young writers whose vision of South Africa, and the powers and currents at work in it, is characterized by brutal candour. This is especially true of young playwrights currently writing in Afrikaans. Deon Opperman (Môre is 'n Lang Dag); Wayne Robbins (Dis Al), and Anthony Akerman (Somewhere on the Border) define the White South African, in particular, the Afrikaans, psyche through military violence."⁴

The South African literary world was also faced with an emergence of work which used the military as a metaphor for the corrupt and unhealthy state of the Afrikaner and South African consciousness. The compilation of Afrikaans

and bilingual short stories, focusing on anti-conscription themes, Forces Favourites, was considered one of the most important South African literary developments of the late eighties: "...the final breaking out of the laager of an Afrikaans culture abandoning itself to the future....."⁵

South African cinema saw the release of Darrel Roodt's The Stick, a journey into the horror of the debased psyches of an S.A.D.F. group of soldiers in Angola, in 1988.

Along with these contemporaneous explorations in the dramatic and literary arts, into the Afrikaner consciousness through the prism of military violence, Phillips explores the White Afrikaans male experience.

The first song on the album, entitled "Hou My Vas Korporaal"⁶ [side 1 band 1], establishes the military experience as Phillips' point of departure. Phillips uses musical parody to fulfil a satirical programme, a parody which "capitalizes on the uniqueness of these styles and seizes on their idiosyncrasies and eccentricities to produce an imitation which mocks the original."⁷ The stylistic mechanisms of Afrikaans mainstream popular

music are used in a satirical lyrical setting, which denigrate their extra-musical meanings.

"Hou my Vas" features the "two-step" vastrap rhythmic accompaniment style punctuated by concertina block-chordal syncopations on the off-beat, in the style of traditional boeremusiek. A commercial country-and-western electric rhythm guitar also features in the arrangement, in the style of the mainstream Afrikaans pop artist "Die Kawayier", playing country-and-western broken-chord clichés and short "licks" in the American steel-guitar style. An electric bass guitar plays crotchet notes, all with root functions, uniformly on each beat of the 4\4 bar. The harmonic construction utilizes I - IV - I and ii - V - I progressions, not venturing beyond the chromaticization of the dominant seventh chord. The most striking feature of the formal arrangement is an all-male vocal chorus singing in a rugby-song unison style, a parody of volkslied and mainstream Afrikaans popular song clichés as well as an exploitation of the cultural\gendered volk cliché of the patriotic rugby player.

His amalgamation of similar commercial pop sounds and folk clichés supports a text which is both reflective of

the social realm in which the song is situated, and critical of it. The gist of the lyric is an anti-military, anti-complacency protest. In the refrain Phillips sings, "Ek speel oorlog met my beste dae, al my maatjies bymekaar"⁸. To this the all-male chorus responds laconically "Ja, ja, ja"⁹ in a responsorial folk-song fashion. The song is thus reflective of complacent male Afrikaner acquiescence to compulsory military service, and, in setting this reflection in a bitingly satirical song construction, is highly critical of it at the same time. In the third verse, Phillips states explicitly the nature of the previously implied acquiescence:

"dis my plig en nie my keuse

Hier sit ek, ek sit en vrek

Dis nie my skuld maar, ek hou my bek"¹⁰.

At this point the song effects a radical departure from mainstream Afrikaans pop song style. A voice becomes audible on the recording, screaming in military fashion: "Hou jou bek!" (shut your mouth!...). Following the third chorus refrain, this time with the descending scale of "Ja, ja, ja" repeated so as to emphasize the mindlessness of acquiescence, the verse disintegrates completely, into a montage of voices conducting a babble of interchanges.

In this collage\montage of voices, two themes are salient features: much is made of the double-meaning of the word "boom", translated either as "tree" or as "dagga"; and a voice is heard crying out: "Wat is jou naam?"¹¹. The disjuncture in the consciousness of Phillips is thus made explicit: the linear narrative established in the first two verses disintegrates into a stream-of-consciousness montage of fragments in the third verse. The voice crying out, "Wat is jou naam!", amidst a haze of drug-induced escapism, questions the identity of the young man protagonist in this song. In this way Phillips highlights the crisis in consciousness induced by the acquiescence to the pillar of Afrikaner male life, the army. This crisis in consciousness is a crisis of identity. Being moulded by the collective hegemonic ideology, acquiescing, leaves the fabric of individual consciousness rent. Re-examination of self and re-definition of consciousness become paramount.

Jackylin Cock has stated that within South Africa White culture,

"The notion of experiencing military 'combat' is central to the social construction of masculinity... this is essential in a patriarchal society."¹²

The crisis of consciousness in this instance thus articulates a departure from the hegemonic gender construction, a disjuncture in gender consciousness. A re-examination of gender consciousness, a re-definition of male identity, then becomes paramount. I suggest that music provides Phillips with a symbolic realm in which he addresses this crisis.

The song, "Hou My Vas, Korporaal", ends with a remarkable coda. An electric guitar tears into a Jimmy Hendrix closing blues riff, heavy with distortion, effecting a searing rock cadence. In this way Phillips reminds the listener of the strong under-current of resistance behind the humour of the parody.

This kind of stylistic juxtaposition is a device effectively employed by Phillips to act as a commentary on the text. The extra-musical meanings of popular musical styles have significant implications for the texts which they carry. The boeremusiek¹³ and popular mainstream Afrikaans styles, employed by Phillips in this song, bring with them extra-musical associations of mainstream Afrikaans ideology. Music of this sort is played at church socials, at family and volk gatherings on public holidays. It is the music that is propagated

and approved of by Afrikaner authority. By exaggerating the features of this style in a parodic fashion, and using it as a vehicle for a satirical text, Phillips is denigrating its extra-musical meanings.

In a similar fashion, Phillips uses parody as a primary organizing mechanism on "Welcome to my Car" [Side 1 band 2]; "Die Boksburg Bommer" [Side 1 band 4]; "Snor City" [Side 1 band 5]; "My Broken Heart" [Side 2 band 2]; "Visse" [Side 2 band 3]; and "Tribute to Jody" [Side 2 band 4].

Phillips draws his stylistic references from a very wide spectrum of popular music. "Die Boksburg Bommer"¹⁴ employs the rough textures of a hard rock style to paint a parodic portrait of the violence of male life. A rough, distorted electric guitar is a metaphor for power in its block-chordal punctuations of the accented second and fourth beats in the bar. The bass drum and electric bass guitar accent beats one and three in typical hard rock fashion, while the toms and snare drum emphasize the off-beats and effect local climaxes by means of rhythmic "fills". The form follows an interesting deviation from the blues-based harmonic progressions of hard rock, starting on IV rather than I after the dominant seventh

intro: IV - I - IV - I - V; followed by a typical rock cadence of V -IV - I.

"Die Boksburg Bommer" is an evocation of the powerful Afrikaans male stereotype. The boxer as mythical urban warrior provides a theme through which Phillips explores male fantasies of power and control. Again, the violence of male life is the foundation for one of Phillips' compositions. In the second verse, Phillips sings:

"Die Boksburg Bommer, hy's in control hy's in
beheer, hy laat ons nie bekommer....."¹⁵

South Africa in the late 1980s was characterised as a period of "total onslaught" by the Afrikaner Nationalist-aligned culture. The "swart gevaar"¹⁶ and the "total onslaught", catch phrases of P. W. Botha's regime, precipitated the development of a laager¹⁷ mentality in the 1980s. Control, through violent domination, seemed to be the primary focus of the Nationalist government, and is also the primary focus of Phillips' lyrics in this song. He exploits the masculine fear of loss of control and the need for a supremely powerful hero. This theme has much resonance in the Afrikaner psyche, a patriarchal minority steadily losing domination over a Black

majority. In the Voëlvry Tour, Phillips names his backing group "Die Swart Gevaar". He exploits the myth of the fighting spirit of the powerful Afrikaans male, a myth particularly resonant at the particular historical moment of the late 1980s.

The melodic structure of the three verses is aesthetically similar to the hard rock style of the instrumental accompaniment. The melody is repetitive, half-sung, half-declamatory, using a vocal delivery which is rough and without nuance. The pentatonicism of the melody of the verses is typical of the genre of hard rock. The satirical nature of the composition is revealed in the choruses, where the melody effects a stylistic transformation from hard rock "shouting blues" style to folk song or volkslied¹⁸ song style. The stylistic juxtaposition of a folk melodic style with hard rock electric accompaniment makes the macho bravado of the lyrics seem all the more irrational and sinister. In the choruses Phillips sings:

"Hiep hiep hoera! Jy's amper daar! Maak hom
hou klaar! Hiep hiep hoera!"¹⁹

while the electric guitar accompaniment becomes ever more

distorted and rough in timbre. This progressive dirtiness in timbre is accelerated in the final chorus, which in its repeat builds in crescendo to the point where it disintegrates into an anarchy of sound approaching the scrambled quality of white noise. The anarchy of sound is Phillips' metaphor for the destruction which accompanies the violent consciousness of a threatened hegemonic minority.

"Snor City"²⁰ [Side 1 band 5] focuses on another symbol of masculine power in the Afrikaner patriarchy: the moustache. Phillips parodies the disco fusion style so as to satirize the Afrikaner macho stereo-type embodied in the symbol of the moustache. A throbbing bass ostinato pattern or riff is repeated continuously to provide a foundation for the disco aesthetic. Electronically programmed drums beat out a monotonous emphasis on beats two and four of the 4/4 bar. The arrangement is fleshed out by electric guitar and synthesizer riffs which form a syncopated counterpoint to the bass ostinato. The vocal style is declamatory, in a manner which perhaps could be described as Afrikaans rap.

The lyrics marry the symbol of masculine power, the moustache, with the heart of Afrikaner culture and

nationalist politics, Pretoria. Pretoria becomes "Snor City":

"Ons is op soek vir net een skoon bo lip.....in
Pretoria
Want dit is die stad met geen bo lip glad.....in
Pretoria
Want orals in die strate is daar fans van country-
plate.....in Pretoria"²¹

Conformity is the foundation upon which the Afrikaans male gender construction is built. It is a conformity which promotes an acquiescent consciousness, a state of ideological unconsciousness. Phillips chants in a dark monotone:

"Stap, slaap, eet, drink, raak mal Stap,
Slaap, eet, drink, dink, eet, slaap.....in
Pretoria"²²

This chorus is chanted a cappella, suggesting the hollow vacuum of the acquiescent consciousness. The conformists to hegemonic Pretoria culture are depicted as robotic passive consumers, unthinking, without contemplation or enquiry of any kind. In this song Phillips is suggesting

that the nationalist government of Pretoria is built upon unthinking conformist acquiescence. This kind of conformity is found in the Afrikaner stereo-typed male who wears a moustache as a badge of acquiescence to the macho code and State ideology. John Shepherd has highlighted the relationship between the social construction of gender and ideology:

".....in the same way that it is not possible to study social processes independently of issues of gender, it is not possible to study gender issues independently of wider social processes...."²³

In "Snor City", Phillips is asserting that the construction of a male gender stereotype serves a social process. This process is the preservation of power for the hegemonic minority.

The parody of a country-and-western ballad in "My Broken Heart" [Side 2 band 2] is a satirical deconstruction of the adolescent nature of the most popular (in mainstream Afrikaans popular culture) song form - the romantic love song. The song is presented in steel-string guitar and vocal country and western style. The guitar is played in a conventional folk picking style, using broken chords

picked with fingers and a moving bass line picked with thumb. The harmonic construction of the piece follows progressions typical of the country-and-western style:

I - V7/I - IV - I - IV -/IV - I7 - IV - V - I - V

In the song Phillips implies that the theme of unrequited or lost love, so heavily exploited in country-and-western, is the province of the arrested adolescent mind. Phillips sings the song using the voice of an adolescent male, contriving a thick Afrikaans accent [in reality Phillips speaks with a neutral South African accent]. The verses consist of simple, child-like phrases:

"My broken heart/ is all / I have
 To keep me warm
 to keep me glad.
 My broken heart
 makes the whole world sad."

The failure of a relationship doomed the universe of this sad adolescent. The song is both touching and funny. The line "My broken heart is all I can see" tells the listener that the protagonist is child-like and indulgent, yet, at the same time, evokes a certain pathos.

"Tribute to Jody" [Side 2 band 4] is a parody of a rock ballad. It is played in a slow 6\8 tempo, with electric organ arrangement. A blues electric guitar plays short "licks" and melodic lines in counterpoint to the electric bass line and melody. The harmonic structure follows a variation on the eight-bar blues form:

IV - I - IV - I7 - vi - ii - V - I

After the two vocal verses, the electric organ is featured in a solo over one cycle of the eight-bar form. It is a typically blues style solo, employing the flattened third in triplet motifs and block-chordal punctuations of the melody.

The theme of the dislocated and indulgent adolescent young male is extended in this song. In the first verse the protagonist expresses his broken heart in an assemblage of rock cliches. For this expression, Phillips employs a highly stylized vocal delivery typical of "cock" rock. Shepherd described this vocal timbre as,

".....hard and rasping,.....produced overwhelmingly in the throat and mouth, with a minimum of recourse to the resonating chambers of the chest and head."²⁴

The other rock style parody on this album, "Die Boksburg Bommer" [Side 1 band 4], satirized male aggression and confidence. This parody, of a slower rock ballad style, is a satirical evocation of male self-pity:

"I called you on the phone, how many times on the
phone. And the voice said Jody is not home.
So I'll never hear your voice again - life's so
sad - it just makes you want to break down and cry.
Just to see you singing the wedding song.
Oh your bare chest, bare chest drove me wild.
Oh I smile, scream your name out so loud"

At this point voices are heard screaming out her name, "Jody", in an intentionally ridiculous wailing high-pitched fashion. It is at this moment where the full extent of the parody is revealed: the self-indulgent self-pity is reduced to a comical falsetto chorus of nonsensical croonings. Frith and McRobbie believe that the sexual swagger of "cock" rock belies a precarious and inadequate sense of the male gender identity, especially during adolescence:

"Numerous cock rock songs express a deep fear of women, and in some cases this fear seems pathological, which reflects the fact that the macho

stance of cock rockers is a fantasy for men
 Rock, in other words carries messages of
 male self-doubt and self-pity to accompany its
 confidence and aggression."²⁵

In "Die Boksburg Bommer", Phillips satirized male aggression in Afrikaans life, by means of a parody of the cock rock style. In this cock rock ballad, Phillips satirizes the self-pity and uncertainty behind the macho fantasy of that gender stereo-type.

"Welcome to my Car" [Side 1 band 2] is the most sophisticated of Phillips' parodic pieces. The motor car seems to be a powerful symbol in South African culture. Its significance as a cultural symbol has been exploited by most alternative Afrikaans pop musicians.

Chuck Berry utilised the motor car as a sexual metaphor. In alternative Afrikaans pop music the car as a sexual metaphor has been adopted, as in Phillips' "Marie Ferrari" [Side 1 band 3], but also extended to act as a symbolic discourse of both sexual and capitalistic exploitation as in "Welcome to my Car" and "B.M.W." by the Gereformeerde Blues Band.

The song employs standard stylistic features of the blues idiom. The electric guitar plays bent notes, utilising flattened third and seventh notes. The bass utilises a fat "wide" sound playing a lazy two notes to the 4/4 bar on beats one and three. In the instrumental break an alto saxophone performs a blues-style solo. When the drum enters the arrangement under the sax solo it employs brushes sweeping in urban blues style. In the final verse, with the sax continuing to fill out the arrangement, the drummer employs the ride cymbal to give the song a gentle swing feel.

The harmonic structure is, however, a radical departure from the typical blues 12 bar form. Although the progressions retain a blues melancholic cyclical feel, mediant relationships and unusual chords, in a ten bar structure, give the piece an impressionistic jazz aesthetic dimension:

Introduction: I - $\flat$ VI - I - $\flat$ VII [IV\IV] - IV

Verse: I - IV - I - ii - iii - ii - iv $\flat$ - ii - vi
- I - V $\flat$

After the introduction one expects to hear the rasping, throaty voice of a blues singer. However, instead of

employing the throat voice described by Shepherd²⁶, Phillips sings in a soft, uncertain adolescent voice, employing a thick Afrikaans accent. This child-like voice, perhaps consciously employed by Phillips as a satirical comment on the excessive machismo of male blues singers, tells of the dehumanising effect of the capitalist world:

"Welcome to my car, to my rolling limousine
To my gasoline centered boudoir.
Lined in black velvet, like a quiet space helmet.
Each gadget designed to unmake me.

Welcome to my jammy, steam up my windows please
Excuse all the drive-in debris
The Marquis de Sade would have gone green with envy
at the sight of the stains on my upholstery.

When I get bored by drive-in shows, I find the back
seat so bizarre.

So come on, steam up my windows please.

Welcome to my car."

The car is a metaphor for the alienated male
consciousness in a world of capitalist objectification

and commoditisation. The protagonist, isolated in his hollow interior life, is robbed of humanity by the material relations which govern his life in an industrial capitalistic society. John Shepherd states:

"The conceptualization of people as objects decontextualized from social relations implies the possibility for uncontested, unilateral control."²⁷

The capitalist system objectifies people, and things, so that they can become part of the market material exchange. The army, too, conceptualizes people as objects so as to achieve uncontested, unilateral control over their minds. The protagonist tells baldly of being objectified and controlled, decontextualized from normal social relations:

"Welcome to my jammy

Steam up my windows please.

Your mind might dictate to your body.

But your body dictates to dictators who know you to do things to them that no mind could ever do."

Phillips expresses explicitly the extent to which the individual has no autonomy, the extent to which the

institutionalized system has complete control. Sexuality is robbed of emotional contact, in a world where the individual has been radically decontextualised and objectified by the institutions of the State. The subject dies. This song is not about sexual desire, it is about sex as the only discourse between alienated people. It is an ugly sexuality without emotional communication, leaving not memories of love and desire but only stains on the back seat. The car is the alienated consciousness; it is the male sexual symbol which, having been rendered hollow by the radical objectification of institutionalised existence, denies the relational and the emotional.

In the songs which have been discussed, Phillips uses parody as means to comment on the social meanings of musical styles in popular culture. In some songs Phillips incorporates more than one style in a piece, presenting the audience with stylistic juxtapositions which form a musical montage. The superimposition of styles disrupts the context in which they are inserted, generating new meanings for the texts which they carry. A new totality, a polyvocality of integrated styles, is achieved.

"Marie Ferrari" [Side 1 band 3] is a fascinating montage

of musical styles used to reflect the bourgeois aspirations of White Afrikaans South Africans, and the trite conceptualization of romantic love in mainstream Afrikaans popular culture.

The song begins as a complete parody of a mainstream Afrikaans disco-pop love song, featuring a bank of synthesizers (imitating bells, strings and French horn) playing kitsch triadic figures, a quasi-operatic soprano backing vocal and synthesized concertina punctuations of the off-beat. However, certain elements of the arrangement effect a subtle transformation of style. The bass guitar line soon becomes more prominent in the texture, throbbing with a rough, hard sounding eighth quavers to the 4/4 bar.

This bass sound is clearly a reference to the British New Wave bass style, providing an aesthetic bridge to a sudden transformation which occurs after the second chorus. By means of the bass groove becoming more prominent in the arrangement, the disco aesthetic is transformed into a late-sixties rock "break" which contains elements of, and produces an effect similar to, the sudden dream transformation in the Beatles' "A Day in the Life." Above heavily distorted rock guitar, the lyrics

at this point reflect on the fantasy of the bourgeois "society girl":

"Sy steur daar aan die stories en die fotos van die magasyne.

Sy word verhinder om so te wees, maar dis 'n droom, dis 'n fantasy."²⁸

This radical transformation is then subtly blended with the former disco-pop aesthetic to produce a racy ska groove, where the previous concertina offbeat punctuations are taken over by the electric guitar's incisive offbeat stresses of fast urban reggae. The backing vocal is now sung by Phillips himself, this time in the style of a soul singer. Ska is an urban music associated with inner-city minorities in Britain. It is the music of dispossessed people, while the disco-pop song is the kind of product approved by the cultural elite and consumed by the wealthy middle class. It is significant that the shift from disco-pop to ska is in alignment with Marie's releasing of bourgeois aspirations and her celebration of the values of popular life:

"Marie Ferrari, het all haar boyfriends gou verloor.
Vir 'n skollie met 'n volksie, ware liefde het haar
getoor."

Once again the car is a symbol of power in a capitalist world. However, Phillips presents the world of capitalism and its attendant sexual values as a contested reality (both in the music and text of the song), and the "skollie in a volksie" brings Marie her true love. Both in form and in content, the song embodies a dynamic, dialectical whole.

"Reggae Vibes is Cool" [Side 2 track 5] incorporates a complex dialectical duality. The song begins by using stylistic features of the reggae idiom. The electric bass is prominent in the texture, playing riffs which emphasize beats one and three. Synthesizer chords "stab" on the off beat, producing sharp punctuated syncopations. The bass drum lays a heavy emphasis on beats two and four, displacing the usual accents of the 4/4 bar. The rhythm section offbeats a rollicking cycle above which a trombone plays a plaintive wail.

Phillips employs Afrikaans with an overlay of a Jamaican accent for the vocal delivery of the first verse. It is clear that the contrived accent is part of a parody of the hedonistic Afrikaner middle class who enjoy the fruits of privilege and deny the surrounding social chaos:

"Reggae vibes is cool, ooh ja,
 Als is lekker hier.....
 Nou's ek lekker voel,
 Cool, soos 'n swimmingpool".

This balmy cocoon of hedonistic pleasure is broken, however, by a sudden stylistic transformation. The synthesized offbeat is taken over by an electric guitar, lessening the sharp punctuation of the offbeat. A synthesizer plays sustained chords, breaking the rollicking rhythmic cycle. The bass guitar breaks into a rock boogie riff, with the drums transforming the reggae syncopations into a slow-rock 4/4 beat with a moderate rather than sharp emphasis on beats two and four. At this point Phillips breaks into English, voicing his feelings of disjuncture and alienation:

"What must I do in this, oh, strange place?
 I could be having daydreams, oh, but if you could
 tell me,
 if there is a better place. Is there a better place?
 Oh, mama tell me, Oh mama"

In "Marie Ferrari" the rock style was employed to effect a radical departure from bourgeois life. The same occurs

in "Reggae Vibes Is Cool". This is probably because of the perceived appropriateness of rock as a vehicle for dissent and revolution in popular culture. Simon Frith states that:

"....the intensity of the relationship between taste and self-definition seems peculiar to popular music....."²⁹

I believe that Phillips is momentarily employing the rock aesthetic as an identification with its revolutionary connotations in this song. Johannes Kerkorrel to be discussed later, utilizes the rock style as a KERKORREL revolutionary stance throughout his work. John Shepherd states:

"....progressive rock seems in most cases to represent an attempt to drop out from the framework within which the parent culture lives so comfortably, and to search for alternative cognitive and social modes beneath and outside that framework....What results is not the urgent and stridently distorted thrusts of punk culture, but a straighter, more heightened awareness, often drug-triggered (but not necessarily drug induced), of the world of industrial capitalism."³⁰

Rock has been documented to be the voice of middle-class counter-cultures. The Afrikaner youth, who define themselves through their taste for Afrikaans alternative popular music, are such a middle-class counter-culture, searching for alternative social modes outside of the Christian Nationalist Afrikaner cultural hegemony.

It is significant that Phillips chooses reggae as a vehicle for a parodic satirization of Afrikaner White middle class. Shepherd maintains that the search for alternative cognitive and social modes, "explains the attraction for hippie counter-cultures of the world views of dispossessed sub-cultural groups"³¹. Reggae is the voice of such a disposed sub-cultural group in Jamaica. The Rastafarian philosophy, which has its foundation in a doctrine of peace and the use of marijuana as a means to enlightenment, concentrates on the immediacy of the experiential here and now. This is a radical departure from the (essentially masculine) intellectual rationality of Western culture. By means of reggae's social meanings, Phillips is rejecting the linear rationality of western culture in this song.

After the rock chorus, the reggae riff is reintroduced. There is an electric guitar solo, followed by trombone solo, which take the listener deep into the reggae idiom.

The music loses its parodic exaggeration. After the second verse and chorus, the verse and chorus structures break down. The structural nature of the pop song disintegrates. Voices chant in an improvised fashion over the musical arrangement. In the break-down of rational consciousness, drugs once again become prominent in the vocal utterance. The chant of "Jamaica" is transformed to "Ja, make a pipe"³³. Most significant are the frequent references to the maternal, "mama". Each chorus ends with Phillips singing, "Oh mama, tell me, Oh mama". In this free section references are made to "mama Jamaica". The song ends with Phillips speaking, unaccompanied:

"Oh mama bring my cool vibes,³⁴
 Asseblief ma,
 Cool vibes,
 Ma."

Phillips thus explicitly rejects the masculine consciousness of his social realm in this song. He sees the evocation of the feminine, the radical departure from masculine rational ways of being; as the only way to find "cool vibes", a state of peaceful co-existence with others in the world. Reggae has extra-musical meanings which lend themselves to Phillips' expression of his

search for alternative cognition and social modes. Phillips sees the male gender construction in Afrikaans life, that definition of masculinity which has forced him to be a soldier, as a fundamental cause of the social chaos in South Africa. Hence this song ends with a call for the feminine, a cry for help to mother. Shepherd states that:

"....it is important to emphasize traditional notions of gender and 'sexuality' are not phenomena that are 'given' or 'natural', phenomena that 'popular' music either expresses or controls....Traditional notions of gender and sexuality can be re-negotiated by 'popular' musicians, and this is a process which became increasingly common during the 1970s."³⁵

Much of Phillips' work involves the re-negotiation of traditional notions of gender and sexuality. "Reggae Vibes is Cool" is possibly the most explicit in its rejection of the traditional notions of gender in the Afrikaner patriarchy. The most sophisticated of these re-negotiations are montage musical constructions which reflect the fragmented nature of his response to the violence of male life. This fragmented response lends

itself to postmodern expression, a medium which communicates the fragmented, "decentred" nature of the subject.

FOOTNOTES

1. ous: Translation: "Young men".
2. breekers: Translation: "Ruffians".
3. Question asked at interviews with me at Splashy Fen Folk Festival, May 1991.
4. Frans le Roux, "Brutal, Demented and Quite Brilliant", The Weekly Mail, February 12 to February 18 1988, p.23.
5. Hans Pienaar, "Tweetalig is Tops - Is There Still an Afrikaans Theatre?" The Weekly Mail, December 21 to January 18 1990, p.31.
6. Translation: "Hold me tightly, Corporal".
7. Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism amnd Consumer Society", Postmodern Culture, H Foster, ed.
8. Translation: "I am playing war games with the best days of my life; my friends and I together."
9. Translation: "Yes, yes, yes".

10. Translation: "Its my duty and not my choice. Here I sit, I sit and die. Its not my fault but I don't speak out".
11. Translation: "What is your name?"
12. Jo-ann Bekker. "Boeties on the Border but Susie's got her own gun too", The Weekly Mail, March 18 to March 24 1988, p.25.
13. boeremusiek: Afrikaans folk music style.
14. Translation: "The Boksburg Bomber".
15. Translation: "The Boksburg Bomber, he's in control, he's in control. He leaves us unconcerned, we need not worry".
16. swart gevaar: The danger of black insurrection.
17. laager: A circle of ox-wagons, representing the drawing together and gathering of strength of the Afrikaner nation.
18. volkslied: Afrikaner national folk song.

19. Translation: "Hip, hip, hooray! You're almost there!
Finish him off! Hip, hip, Hooray!"
20. Translation: "Moustache City"
21. Translation: "We are searching for just one smooth
upper lip....in Pretoria. Because that is the city
with no smooth upper lip....in Pretoria. Because
everywhere in the streets there are fans of country
music....in Pretoria.
22. Translation: "Walk, sleep, eat, drink, get
angry...walk, sleep, eat, drink, think, eat,
sleep....in Pretoria."
23. John Shepherd, Music as Social Text (Cambridge:
Polity Press, 1991), p.157.
24. Ibid., p.167
25. S Frith and A McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality", Screen
Education, No. 29, 1979, p.13.
26. Shepherd, p.167.
27. Ibid., p.156.

28. Translation: "She cares for the stories and the photographs in the magazines. She is prevented from being the same; its a dream, its a fantasy."
29. Simon Frith, "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music", in R Leppert and S McClary, eds., Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.144.
30. Shepherd, p.147.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., p.156
33. Translation: "Yes, make a dagga pipe."
34. "Cool vibes" is slang for "peaceful co-existence".
35. Shepherd, p.173.
36. Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism." Postmodern Culture, H Foster ed., (London: Pluto Press, 1983), p.57.

JOHANNES KERKORREL EN DIE GEREFORMEERDE BLUES BAND: EET KREEF!

Ralph Rabie, the composer and singer behind the pseudonym Johannes Kerkorrel, has used the rock 'n roll and rock aesthetic as a vehicle for social critique and a call for radical social change. Frans le Roux has described the nature of the Gereformeerde Blues Band's critique of the white Afrikaans society:

"This group of young Afrikaners is clearly not happy with the greed, political tyranny and military violence that is being ascribed to the Afrikaner. They mock at the Afrikaans jet-set with their materialistic obsessions....This generation is tired of being manipulated like a mindless bunch of sheep!"

Rabie has chosen the aggressive rock 'n roll stance as a stylistic vehicle for a social critique on this album. The perceived appropriateness of the rock style for radical departures from bourgeois cultural codes in popular culture has already been addressed in this essay. However, rock 'n roll, the stylistic foundation from which rock and progressive rock styles developed, has not been discussed.

Dirk Uys, the manager of the Gereformeerde Blues Band, maintains that rock 'n roll provides Rabie with a musical vocabulary which is suited for the delivery of rebellious social messages:

"The Afrikaner youth.....is not in a healthy mental state at the moment. They need to be inspired. Important to the cure for this malaise, as far as the alternative rockers are concerned, is a healthy input of rock 'n roll You can rock 'n roll in Afrikaans. It doesn't belong to any specific culture any more, but has become a universal medium of cultural rebellion"?

Cultural rebellion is the explicit agenda of The Gereformeerde Blues Band:

"Although the Blues Band members stress the importance of rock 'n roll in their approach to the cultural torpor in Afrikaans music, it is ultimately the message which is more important.....they see rock 'n roll as more of an attitude rather than a definitive musical genre."³

The message to which the Gereformeerde Blues Band is committed is one of revolution, of radical social change in South Africa. Rock 'n roll's rebellious connotations

make this style appropriate for Rabie's musical expression of his stance as an Afrikaner rebel. Shaun de Waal explains the power of the rock 'n roll style to speak as a collective voice for a rebellious Afrikaner youth counter-culture:

"Rock 'n roll had enormous social power in the 1950s and 1960s. It was a raw and dangerous form of music that tapped into the rebellious spirit of youth culture. Since then, it has been weakened by fashion and consumerism run riot and the instant disposability of the pop product. But in South Africa, in the late 1980s, it has rediscovered its upstart, liberating impact."⁴

There are several possible reasons for rock 'n roll having been rediscovered, by the teenage fans of Afrikaans alternative music and the Gereformeerde Blues Band, as a liberating music which lends itself to the voicing of protests and a desire for radical social change. It may be that the South African Afrikaans situation of an emerging youth-orientated awareness and social identity parallels the teenage rock 'n roll phenomenon of the United States in the 1950s. Racial segregation in a conservative social structure is a

common theme in the USA of the 1950s and South Africa in the 1980s. Both the young Americans and Afrikaners had previously lacked a rallying point and a sense of identity for the dissenting youth in a segregated racist society. In both societies rock 'n roll was seen as a dangerous, licentious, negroid musical style. Along with the dominance of American television programmes on SABC and the great popularity of country-and-western, "...South Africa's helter-skelter of fast-food outlets, supermarkets and customised surf vans makes us, in physical terms, the fifty-second state,"⁵ However, such parallels may be contrived. Similar circumstances and social factors do not necessarily produce similar socio-musical phenomena.

Yet, rock 'n roll has always had a special significance for the Afrikaans volk of South Africa. Charles Hamm has documented the ways in which the rock 'n roll phenomenon was regarded as a particularly dangerous threat to the Afrikaans culture by Afrikaner parents and cultural authorities in the late 1950s. Rock 'n roll was seen not only as a vehicle for inter-racial dancing and juvenile delinquency (a letter to the STAR newspaper in 1958 stated that, ".....the exact same tribal ritual and war dances may be seen at less cost, and in greater safety,

at our own mine compounds")⁷ but more significantly was used by the Nationalist government as a symbol of British culture and the antithesis of Afrikaner values.

British pop stars Tommy Steele and Terry Dene were the first rock 'n' rollers to visit South Africa. Steele was banned from performing in Pretoria after the leading Afrikaans newspaper, Die Vaderland, published a front-page editorial questioning the decision to allow Steele and Dene into the country. The Afrikaans press ignored Steele's presence, but ran a number of articles which suggested the evil nature and inter-racial effects of rock 'n' roll. The political writer, Robin Farquharson, was quoted by the STAR newspaper (19 November 1959),

".....as suggesting that the Nationalists deliberately set out to make political capital by linking widespread concern with juvenile delinquency to rock 'n' roll, then stressing the fact that Steele and the absent Terry Dene, the most visible symbols of this music at the moment, were English."⁸

This implied that the United Party, the official opposition who were English-speaking and orientated towards British culture, were responsible for any of the

destructive products or potential dangers of rock 'n roll in the country. The Nationalist government continued this policy against rock 'n roll music in the 1960s. Rock 'n roll was not banned, but the Afrikaans press and Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk continued to denounce it. The Afrikaner was always reminded that rock 'n roll and later rock music, "was the product of an alien and dangerous culture." Rock 'n roll was used by the Nationalist government for strengthening conservative nationalist values and hence for political gain.

Rock 'n roll is then a significant music in the history of the Nationalist government. Its appropriateness as a vehicle for alternative expression may be the result of this significance in the history of Afrikaner nationalism. It certainly does lend itself, by means of its youthful rebellious connotations, adequately to Afrikaner youth protest.

The rock 'n roll style is not only evident in the most significant, and most popular, of Rabie's recordings. The live performance of the Gereformeerde Blues Band is a vibrant rock 'n roll musical event, a colourful retro fifties-styled presentation which includes female backing singers wearing wide polka-dot skirts, bobby socks and

plastic sunglasses, and men wearing black leather bikers' jackets and greased-back hairstyles. Unfortunately the rebellious, fun element suggested by the fifties kitsch styling and rock 'n roll jive dancing is lost on the recording and the music does not quite convey the vibrancy and liberating impact of the musical event.

In the rock 'n roll and rock compositions on this album, Rabie does not use these styles in a parodic fashion, as does Beroldus Niemand. Rather than exaggerating the stylistic features of rock 'n roll music to fulfil a satirical impulse, Rabie takes on the musical vocabulary of the rock 'n roll style and makes it his own. This practice, pastiche, has been well documented by post-modern theorists. Frederic Jameson illuminates the ways in which pastiche enables the artist to speak through a stylistic mask without denigrating its extra-musical social meanings:

"Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask.... but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists

something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic."¹⁰

In the song "Ossewa", [side 1 band 3], Rabie offers an explanation of the meaning of rock 'n roll for the alternative Afrikaner youth culture. The song itself has its foundations firmly within the rock 'n roll idiom, employing standard rock 'n roll stylistic mechanisms without exaggeration. A distorted electric guitar is the most prominent element in the texture, playing a biting blues riff which is typical of the rhythm guitar style of rock 'n roll. The melody played incorporates the use of the flattened third and seventh notes, and emphasizes beats two and four in its rhythmic articulation. A piano fills out the rhythm section playing root chords in a rhythm and blues "comping" style (which is often incorporated into the later rock 'n roll style), adding flattened seventh notes for harmonic embellishment. The electric bass guitar plays mostly root notes, building a sense of rhythmic momentum by articulating eight quavers to the bar. In typical rock 'n roll style the drummer plays a driving "backbeat" rhythm, placing hard emphasis on beats two and four.

The harmonic construction of this piece is also typical of later 1950s rock 'n roll music. The verses of the song

are sung over a sixteen-bar blues-based harmonic structure:

I - IV - I - V - V7

The chorus structure takes the form of a standard blues turnaround:

IV - I - II - V

The song employs two themes which are closely related and typical of the rock 'n roll genre: travel, and the motor car. In the song a hitch-hiking journey is used as a metaphor for the historical development of the Afrikaner cultural consciousness. The car is a metaphorical expression of the significance of rock 'n roll for Rabie and his alternative audience. It is presented as the vehicle which will take the Afrikaner into the future, just as the ossewall of the Great Trek carried the Afrikaner on a journey which defined the nationalist Afrikaner culture in the past:

"Oh ek staan langs die highway met my ou vriend Mike
 Ons twee was op pad om Transkei toe te hike
 Die son bak neer, dit was baie warm weer.
 Ons was amper reg om moed op te gee

Maar skielik in die pad....dit kom vinnig nader, ja
die ding het laat spat.

My God....dis 'n nuwe soort Ossewa

(Sweet, sweet Ossewa)

Hy kom tot stilstand met remme wat skreeu

Hou op, klim uit, ons moet nader tree.....

Hy gee nie op om answers to gee

Hy het 'n V6 engine binne in hom

En ek kyk 'n ware Elvis Presley gun ons weer

Dit was 'n regte, regte rock 'n roll ossewa

(Sweet, sweet Ossewa)¹²

The "funky nuwe rock 'n roll"¹³ is the new ossewa for the
volk, the vehicle which will transport the Afrikaner out
of its present cultural impasse, leaving the laager¹⁴
mentality far behind.

"Energie" [Side 2 band 2] is a rock 'n roll song which
voices Rabie's call for radical social change. It is a
typical rock 'n roll song, featuring a Chuck Berry
electric guitar riff, rapid eighth note piano chord
patterns in the style of Jerry Lee Lewis and a driving
backseat rhythm. The harmonic structure features a
typical rock 'n roll progression:

I - vi - I - vi - V

The song begins with a condemnation of Afrikaner apathy and acquiescence:

"Jy moet staan in jou ry.
Jy moet jou hare kort sny
Jy moet al die pryse kry.

Jy moet in 'n huisie bly
En vrou en kinders kry.
En jou karretjie ry.
Stem vir die Party.¹⁵

Ek se nee dis 'n mors.
Ek se nee dis 'n mors, ja.
Ek se nee dis 'n mors, 'n mors van Energie"¹⁶

Rabie sees the material privilege of the Afrikaans middle class a significant reason for their reluctance to challenge the ideological bankruptcy of the National Party. Conformity and acquiescence to National Party policy ensures their bourgeois socio-economic status. Rabie deplores this expedient apathy, and invites the young audience to break out of the old social order:

"Kom ons probeer Energie.

Ons is moeg van apatie

Ons probeer anarchie.

Ons soek 'n nuwe Energie".¹⁷

Rabie's advocacy of anarchy and revolution has resulted in his music being described as "anarcho-rock from an Afrikaans musical guerilla"¹⁸ by the press and his songs being banned. The rock 'n roll style is a most effective vehicle for such a social message.

F O O T N O T E S

1. Frans le Roux, "Young Afrikaners Dance to the Beat of Rebellion", The Weekly Mail, July 15 to July 21 1988, p.27
2. Gary Rathbone, "Rock 'n Roll Headache for Guardians of the Volkskultuur", The Weekly Mail, March 31 to April 6 1989, p.25
3. Ibid.
4. Shaun de Waal, "Bad-Mannered Boerepunk's Arrived" The Weekly Mail, May 26 to June 1 1989, p.31
5. David Kramer, Short Back and Sides. (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1982), p.6
6. volk: Afrikaans nation
7. Charles Hamm, "Rock 'n Roll in a Very Strange Society", Popular Music 5: Continuity and Change. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.160
8. Ibid., p.163.

9. Ibid.
10. Frederick Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" in Hal Foster, ed., Postmodern Culture (London: Pluto Press 1983), p.114.
11. **OSSEWA:** ox-wagon
12. Translation: "Oh I stand next to the highway with my old friend Mike. We were on our way hitching to the Transkei. The sun was beating down, it was very hot weather. We were almost ready to give up hope. But suddenly in the road....It comes fast, closer, yes the thing was really moving. My God.... it's a new kind of ox-wagon. (Sweet, sweet ox-wagon).

It comes to a stop with brakes which screamed. Someone climbs out, we must step closer.... He doesn't stop to give any answers. It has a V6 engine inside, and I see a real Elvis Presley welcomes us again. It was a real, genuine rock 'n roll ox-wagon. (Sweet, sweet ox-wagon)."
13. Translation: "Funky new rock 'n roll".

14. laager: A circle of ox-wagons symbolising the defensive fighting spirit of the threatened Afrikaner minority.

15. "Die Party" refers to the Nationalist Party.

16. Translation: "You must stand in your row. You must cut your hair short....You must get all the prizes. You must stay in a small house. And get a wife and children. And drive your small car. Vote for the Party.

I say NO it's a waste, I say NO it's a waste, yes. I say NO it's a waste, a wasted energy."

17. Translation: "Come let us try Energy. We are tired of apathy. We try anarchy. We seek a new Energy."

18. Nigel Wrench, "Rock's Wild Ones Take on that Mad Dog, Politics", The Weekly Mail, August 26 to September 1 1988, p.1

CONCLUSION

The aesthetic values of mainstream Afrikaans popular music are shaped by the demands of its audience, the Afrikaans hegemonic culture. Through the Nationalist-aligned Afrikaans cultural organizations such as the F.A.K. and A.T.K.V. and the S.A.B.C., the State and the South African music industry have colluded in producing a music, mainstream Afrikaans pop, which acts as a propagandistic agent and escapist fantasy for the Nationalist-aligned Afrikaner hegemony.

Afrikaans popular musical culture has become completely commoditised by the mainstream recording industry. M.F.P. and Decibel, companies who work in close collusion with the aforementioned Nationalist aligned organizations, and the S.A.B.C, are notoriously conservative in the exacting control over their products. In being driven by the profit motive as the only aesthetic consideration, they nurture music which is acquiescent to Afrikaans nationalist hegemonic ideology and refuse to record or distribute music which is in any way critical of this ideology and the cultural codes of the hegemonic Afrikaner class. Mainstream Afrikaans popular music acts as a conservatoire for hegemonic Afrikaner nationalist

ideology and cultural codes, denying the fractionation and crisis in the Afrikaner social realm. Thus mainstream Afrikaans popular music is completely exploited and commoditised, and is unable to resist formulaic standardisation. Hence it is an "uncritical" music, propagating acquiescent uncritical acceptance of Afrikaans hegemonic ideology and cultural codes.

However, the Afrikaner hegemony no longer has uncontested control over the cultural profile of the Afrikaner. The atrocities of the apartheid system have prompted many Afrikaners, particularly young Afrikaners, to question the cultural codes and ideology of the hegemony. This questioning has resulted in an exploration of the Afrikaner consciousness by the Afrikaans alternative pop musicians in an attempt to redefine the Afrikaner culture. These endeavours have been appropriated by the young Afrikaans counter-culture who have made a radical departure from the cultural codes and ideology of the Afrikaner nationalist hegemony.

The Afrikaans alternative music has thus come to symbolise the rebellious consciousness of the Afrikaans youth counterculture. Coplan has stated that:

"In urban South Africa, musicians and musical occasions have been important in re-establishing bases of social communication and order in situations of extreme dis-organisation, segregation, oppression and change."²

The relatively sudden emergence of alternative Afrikaans popular music is a manifestation of a need for the definition of the social identity of the counter-culture in a situation of extreme change and segregation. Hennion states that:

"...pop music organises youthful, mobile social groups still in the process of forming....It gives a self-image to latent communities whose members have in common the feeling of not belonging to an established social category...."³

Most significantly, alternative Afrikaans popular music is the manifestation of new aesthetic values. These aesthetic values are informed by the social disjuncture experienced by the Afrikaner youth counter-culture. These aesthetic values have prompted alternative composers to use postmodern procedures in composition which, in decentering the subject, embody the crisis of social disjuncture in the counter-cultural subject.

Johannes Kerkorrel has employed the postmodern technique of pastiche to act as a vehicle for social critique and a call for radical social change. It is a pastiche which exploits the counter-cultural rebellious social messages of the rock 'n roll style. Rock 'n roll has a special significance in the history of Afrikaner nationalism. It has been used by the State to symbolise the evils of the multi-racial democracies of Britain and America. For these reasons Kerkorrel has employed a pastiche of the rock 'n roll style to convey an expression of disjuncture and protest.

Bernoldus Niemand's music is a fragmented postmodern response to the violence of the Afrikaner male codes of the cultural hegemony. The violence of Afrikaner male cultural codes has caused Niemand to explore the gender constructs of his sex and their relationship with the Afrikaner cultural hegemony. Niemand is perhaps the most sophisticated, musically, of the alternative Afrikaans musicians. By the creative and intelligent use of parody and montage (stylistic juxtapositions), Niemand's music not only -

".....reflects the tendencies of society by passively mirroring them, but simultaneously and

actively opposes these tendencies by its negation of standardised meaning within its own structure...."4

Niemand's is a radical, committed music deserving of more attention in the South African music scene.

CONCLUSION : FOOTNOTES

1. Max Paddison, "The Critique Criticised: Adorno and Popular Music", Popular Music 2 : Theory and Method (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.206
2. David Coplan, "The Urbanisation of African Music : Some Theoretical Observations", Popular Music 2 : Theory and Method. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univeirsity Press, 1982), p.115
3. Antoine Hennion, "The Production of Success : an Anti-musicology of the Pop Song", in Middleton and Horn, ed.s, Popular Music 3, (1983), p.191
4. Max Paddison, p.207

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