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Karel Schoeman: an Afrikaans voice in Africa: A historical, sociological and linguistic approach into the life and work of South African writer Karel Schoeman (1939-2017).

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Karel Schoeman: an Afrikaans voice in Africa

A historical, sociological and linguistic approach into the life and work of South African writer Karel Schoeman (1939-2017).

**Master thesis in African
Studies, Leiden University**

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**Twelfth century mosaic of a Solomon knot on the floor of the
Basilica dei Santi Maria e Donato, Venice. (photograph: R. Winters, 2020).**

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Introduction

Karel Schoeman (26 October 1939 – 1 May 2017) was one of South Africa's most prolific writers. His idiosyncratic style contributed to a unique form of authorship. Schoeman's novels were awarded with many prizes and the output of his historical work is unsurpassed. His status however remains relatively unknown in the world outside South Africa. This can be attributed mainly to the fact that most of his work is written in Afrikaans.

Schoeman was raised in three languages. His first language was Dutch, which was spoken at home with his mother. Afrikaans was his second and English his third language. His first unpublished novels were in Dutch and English. From his early twenties on he wrote predominantly in Afrikaans. A decade later he distanced himself from the Afrikaner part of the community. This raises the social-linguistic problem of how it is possible for an author to deeply engage in a language and at the same time not be part of its social group. This matter will be discussed in paragraph two where the course of Schoeman's life and his attraction and aversion concerning the Afrikaners can be followed and in paragraph four which deals with Schoeman's creative writing. Schoeman's work has been the subject of several articles, reviews and theses; many of them are of South African origin. A thesis that investigates the problem posed above has not been written yet.

The main academic reflection about Schoeman's oeuvre is published in 2002, as *Sluiswagter by die dam van stemme. Beskouings oor die werk van Karel Schoeman*, (Lock keeper at the pond of voices. Views on the work of Karel Schoeman), edited by Willie Burger and Helize van Vuuren (387 pages). The volume's goal is to gain greater prominence for Schoeman's oeuvre. The diversity and approach of the twenty six contributions to *Sluiswagter* reflect the multi-layered nature of Schoeman's writing. Sluiswagter's discussions are of psychoanalytic, socio-social, ethical, structural, historiographical and philosophical nature. In its introduction Schoeman's main themes are explained, which are the problematic relationship between European civilization and Africa, between the Afrikaner and the African space, and, on a philosophical and practical level, between man and landscape, life and death. Included is also an essay by Schoeman himself: 'Die GAR (Groot Afrikaanse Roman)', where Schoeman expresses his skepticism on the state of Afrikaans and its literature. Also there is a transcription included of the interview conducted by professor Gerrit Olivier with Karel Schoeman on 26 October 1999. Olivier states in his contributing essay 'Beskouing' (contemplation) that to understand Schoeman, one must try to understand the relationships between all Schoeman's books, realizing that everything he has ever written is based on the belief that our humanity will be more complete if we allow our memory to be expressed as fully as possible. Olivier believes that a lot of research is needed to make the meaning of Schoeman's authorship academically conceivable.¹

In my thesis I hope to contribute to the body of work concerning the interpretations of Karel Schoeman's authorship. I intend to do this by investigating aspects of his use of language and the relation of his written word with place and time. My main research question is: which factors attributed to Karel Schoeman's choice to write and publish primarily in the Afrikaans language? To answer this question the following sub questions need to be answered:

- 1) How did the oeuvre of Karel Schoeman evolve in relation to his geographical mobility?
- 2) How can Africa be recognized in Schoeman's work?
- 3) What are the characteristics of Schoeman's creative writing style?

Paragraph one sketches a short biography of Karel Schoeman and is geared towards the importance and imprint of language. The second paragraph, that deals with the first sub question and is titled 'Karel Schoeman's choice for writing in Afrikaans, seen in relation to his mobility', is about Schoeman's authorship in connection to the places where he lived and how this affected his subjects and styles. This idea dawned on me when, in 2017 and 2018, I travelled to Ireland, Scotland and South Africa and explored Amsterdam, while visiting the places where Karel Schoeman lived. I was reading his work at the same time. It was an undertaking that resulted in my book *Reise met Schoeman. In die voetspore van die skrywer* (Travels with Schoeman. In the footsteps of the writer, 2020). Schoeman lived in Europe for many years. All the time he kept on writing, but did not deviate from the Afrikaans (except for some historical subjects that for various reasons needed to be published in English).

Paragraph three (sub question two), 'How Africa can be recognized in Karel Schoeman's work' is born out of Schoeman's own statement that "kuns moet uit interaksie met die omgewing ontstaan, en groot Afrikáánse kuns kan slegs in Afrika gewortel wees"² (art has to arise from interaction with the surroundings, and great African art can only be rooted in Africa). The paragraph investigates the way how Karel Schoeman's interaction with Africa is revealed in his writing.

Paragraph four (sub question three), 'The characteristics of Schoeman's style of creative writing', presumes that Schoeman appreciated the Afrikaans for its 'seggingskrag' (power of expression) and its stylistic properties. By describing some of Schoeman's applications of Afrikaans grammar, syntax and metaphors, I hope to make my idea acceptable.

Many of Schoeman's historical works read like novels. And many of his novels are historical narratives. This way of working fits into the ideas of American historian Hayden White (1928-2018), who developed the concept of metahistory. White argued that the writing historian makes unconscious choices that are born from a poetic predisposition or insight. The writing historian decides how he or she is going to present the historic 'truth'.³ White's metahistory explains there is an underlying structure of imagination which is of linguistic nature.⁴ White's ideas were later incorporated as the base for the so-called linguistic turn of history studies. His concept underlines Schoeman's view of reproducing history as well as producing a story. It is an art inspired on thorough research of the data in the sources, which is a mark of Schoeman's literary performance and historic writing.

The methods that I applied during my research are of historical, linguistic and sociological nature. Historical because I followed Schoeman's life diachronically, using his own publications and archival resources. Synchronically because I studied Schoeman's linguistic use of the Afrikaans language during the evolvement of his writings. A sociological view came through the studying of Schoeman's correspondence with other people and through my own communications with them. Furthermore I used my own correspondence from 2014 until 2017 with Schoeman as a source. I also leaned on my experiences obtained while writing

Reise met Schoeman, where I built on artistic values to present a historical picture of parts of Schoeman's life.

I believe my own position as a historian fits well with the kind of research I did for this thesis on Karel Schoeman's life and work. A lot of understanding can be obtained just by following the chronologic course of his life. A wider understanding came from Schoeman's novels. After his death I started to read his books. While reading in Afrikaans, to my surprise, I could in a linguistic way re-connect with my own youth. The reason for this is that there are certain words of my own dialect of Nederduits⁵ that are not used in standard Dutch, but that have survived in Afrikaans. While reading Schoeman's writings I encountered words that reminded me of my grandparents and their farms, and how we used to speak (I did not speak a word of standard Dutch until the age of 6). An example is the word 'dijnserigheid' (Nederduits), 'dynserigheid' (Afrikaans), which translates as 'haze'. But 'haze' is not the same thing as dynserigheid; there is a slight difference in the quality of the air. Haze can occur anywhere, but dynserigheid is something of the open landscapes in the Eastern Netherlands or the South African Free State. Another example is how the Afrikaners say that, for instance, they don't care about something at all: 'dit interesseer my glad nie', or: 'ek stel glad nie belang nie'. The 'glad nie' is a regularly used term in Nederduits, only we would say 'glad niet'. So the Afrikaans is a language that is close to me as a human. From 2017 on I learned to speak and write Afrikaans although I'm not fluent in it. For this thesis I re-read several of Schoeman's books. With the research questions in mind, a new layer of meaning in his work was uncovered for me.



1. Short biography of Karel Schoeman

This biography is written from the viewpoint where it touches on language.

Karel Schoeman was born on 26 October, 1939 in Trompsburg, a village in the province of the Free State, South Africa. Not 'Karel' but 'Tromp' was his official first name. Later in life he changed it to the name by which he is known: Karel. His parents, who originally came from Bloemfontein, owned a hotel in Trompsburg. The marriage was not a happy one and the hotel business ran low because of the war. The family moved back to Bloemfontein in 1941. The parents separated, sold the hotel and eventually divorced. The child grew up in a single mother household. There was however a lot of contact with his mother's parents, Dutch immigrants who had come to South Africa in the late nineteenth century. After the divorce Karel's mother, Johanna Christina van Rooijen, chose to pursue a life away from Bloemfontein. After a restless period in Cape Town the mother and child settled in the city of Paarl, in the Western Cape.⁶ Paarl was mostly an Afrikaans speaking community. The choice for Paarl fitted with the father's request to rear the child in an Afrikaans speaking environment.⁷

Karel Schoeman received most of his primary and secondary schooling in Paarl. Back then, English and Afrikaans were South Africa's official languages, which dominated the school systems. Later in his life Schoeman would praise the collection of the Paarl public library (which was of British-English orientation), where as a child he often went to borrow books and magazines. He could read at the age of six. From an early age on he created a personal, imagined mental space that was based in and on books.⁸ A local coloured lady was his babysitter who looked after him when his mother was at work. While wandering around the old cemeteries, the lady told him stories about the people that were buried there. These visits played into Schoeman's later tendency to historical imagination.⁹

A religious imprint came from the Catholic church. Karel Schoeman's mother was raised as a protestant but did not attend church. He acquired an individual interest in the Catholic religion, which was inspired partly by an appeal to mysticism. It was in the church where he, as a privileged white civilian, once more became aware of apartheid, where white people sat on one side of the aisle and black people on the opposite.¹⁰ His primary education time was not of a flawless nature: in one school he was bullied so much that his mother decided to move him to another institute, a smaller school that was attended by children from families with mixed incomes. In 1952 there was a four or five months stay at a German Catholic boarding school in Cape Town.¹¹ Karel Schoeman matriculated in 1956 at the Paarl *Hoër Jongenskool* and his essays in English appeared in the school yearbook.¹²

With his Afrikaner father, Markus Petrus Schoeman there had hardly been any contact after the divorce. Karel had experienced this as a denial.¹³ The father passed away in Bloemfontein in 1952. Initially Karel did not feel the absence of a father as a severe omission, but later in life he would experience emotional problems concerning unprocessed grief.¹⁴ In this same year, in 1952, both of his grandparents at mother's side, Henderikus Hermanus van Rooijen and Hendrika Elizabetha Oliemans-van Rooijen, also died. How close Karel's tie was with them is testified by the fact that he wrote a biography of his grandmother, in Dutch, when he was 12 years old.¹⁵ His grandparents spoke Dutch at home, but the grandfather played a role

in the development of Afrikaans. He identified with the Afrikaners and was a member of the Afrikaans Verbond, a social-cultural network of Afrikaners in 'word and deed'. One of their ideals was to promote the use of Afrikaans. Van Rooijen, a primary school teacher, co-authored three Afrikaans history schoolbooks.¹⁶ After the Spanish flu pandemic Van Rooijen founded, following the initiatives of the Afrikaans Verbond, the undertaker company AVBOB in 1918.¹⁷ First this organisation aimed to provide affordable burials for Afrikaners but later grew out to a nationwide company for all.¹⁸ Van Rooijen's unpublished autobiography remained in Karel Schoeman's hands for some time. Karel's first language was Dutch, which was spoken at home with his mother and his grandparents on mother's side. Second came Afrikaans and English, that was spoken in schools and in the communities where they lived.¹⁹ Schoeman stated that he was '*verdeeld grootgeword*', he grew up 'divided'.²⁰ At the same time, being a working mother and a single parent was quite unusual; social conventions resulted in the relative social isolation of mother and child.

Karel Schoeman and his mother moved back to Bloemfontein in 1956. This first period of Karel Schoeman's life, from his earliest memories of the hotel, through the restless period moving around with his mother, the loss of his family, their life in Paarl, traumatic experiences at school, to the return in 1956 to Bloemfontein, proved to be of decisive influence on his personality and authorship. He developed an introvert disposition and in his future writings he would often express a longing for the Free State. Although his mother had managed quite well in Paarl, she had always kept her eye towards the Free State with memories of the landscapes of the high plateau with its dry and brisk atmosphere, which was quite different from the more subtropical climate of the mountainous Western Cape. The memories of their stay in Paarl were also imprinted in the young man's mind which he later described as follows:

“Die verblyf is niks meer nie as ‘n tydelike oponthoud. Die plek waar ons gehoor het, was die Vrystaat, en ek onthou dat ek as klein kind uitgestaar het na die noorde van die dorp, waar die beklemming van die omringende berge bevrydend wegval, en geglo het dat daardie ruimte voortvoer na die groter ruimtes van die veld: net daar anderkant, het ek by myself gedink, lê die Vrystaat.”²¹

(The stay is nothing more than a temporary delay. The place where we belonged was the Free State. I remember how, as a small child, I stared at the north of the town, at the spot where the obtrusion of the surrounding mountains fell away in a liberating sense, and believed that space continued to the fields beyond: I thought to myself, there lies the Free State.)

To underscore the role and importance of the languages that Karel Schoeman was exposed to in his youth, I will briefly summarize these. As a very young child the most direct influences came from his parents. His mother was Dutch speaking (although she corresponded with her friends in English). She spoke Dutch with her parents and with Karel. She attended mostly Afrikaans speaking schools.²² Her first language was Dutch and her second was Afrikaans.²³ Which language she and her husband spoke to each other is not known, but this was likely to be Afrikaans. Markus Schoeman's family had been living in South Africa for over two centuries in and around Oudtshoorn and were true Afrikaners.²⁴ The hotel they owned during

Karel's earliest years was frequented mostly by Afrikaans speaking people.²⁵ The child would walk around in the café (until the age of two) and would therefore be exposed to groups of Afrikaners socializing. The grandparents on his mother's side spoke Dutch to each other, to their children and to Karel. Johanna and her siblings would also speak Dutch to each other. (The grandparents on the father's side had little or no influence. The Schoeman-grandfather has passed away before Karel was born and Karel's autobiography doesn't mention any personal contact with the Schoeman-grandmother, although once he mentioned that she was of Huguenots heritage.²⁶) In Karel's contact with his father, he would be exposed to Afrikaans. That Markus wanted Afrikaans for his son is illustrated by the following account: once, after the divorce, Markus had Karel with him for a few days. When he took the child to the shop to have him pick out a present, the child first reached his hand for an English book, but Markus corrected this and pointed him towards an Afrikaans book.²⁷

In the Van Lyndale Kindergarten in Paarl presumably the spoken language would be mostly Afrikaans. From the age of seven on, Karel attended two secondary schools in Paarl where the main taught languages were Afrikaans and English. The short stay at the German boarding school in Cape Town would however include an exposure to German. Furthermore, one of his mother's sisters was married to a German; this family that Johanna and Karel regularly visited in Seepunt, was German speaking.²⁸ In his secondary school period Karel Schoeman developed an appeal to Latin literature,²⁹ an interest that befitted his involvement in Catholicism where parts of the services were performed in Latin. He also learned to read in Hebrew³⁰ and as addressed below, in his early twenties he mastered the Irish Gaelic language in spoken and written form.³¹ Karel Schoeman always maintained the statement that Dutch was his first and Afrikaans his second language.³²

In Bloemfontein he studied at the University of the Orange Free State and in 1959 received the BA degree with Dutch, Afrikaans and English as majors. Between 1954 and 1959 Karel Schoeman wrote his first novels, among them two in Dutch and at least four in English. All or some of them were set in an Afrikaner rural setting. They remained unpublished but some of the ideas fed into his later publications.³³ As mentioned in the introduction, the African space was an important theme in his work. About the role of space Karel Schoeman wrote in his autobiography:

“Ek het gevind – *Hierdie lewe* is die mees markante voorbeeld – dat iets in ‘n landskap of ruimte my aangryp voordat ek bewus is van die gebeure wat daarin plaasvind, en dat wanneer hierdie ruimte eenmaal voldoende vorm aangeneem het voor my geestesoo, die mense en gebeure gou genoeg hul plek inneem om dit te vul.”³⁴

(I have found – *Hierdie lewe* is the most striking example – that something in a landscape or space will seize me before I am aware of the events that take place in it, and that once this space has taken sufficient shape in my mind, the people and events take their place soon to fill it.)

Beside his final years in university Karel Schoeman received formal education in the Catholic faith and in October 1959 he was baptized. As his baptismal name he chose ‘Karel’ after Karel

van Sezze, a seventeenth century Italian Franciscan.³⁵ In 1960 he worked at the cataloguing department of the Bloemfontein public library and also had a secretarial job with the *Uniefeeskomitee*, a post that he got because of his multilinguality.³⁶ In 1961 he embarked on a study with the Catholic Seminary in Pretoria in preparation for the priesthood in the Franciscan Order. He left for Ireland at the end of 1961, to be a student of the Franciscan novitiate in Killarney and Galway.³⁷ He stayed there uninterrupted for two and a half years. In Ireland he – being more interested in Ireland’s history and literature than in the religious teachings – learned about the long political and cultural oppression by the British and the deliberate destruction of Gaelic culture and the Irish language. His interest went so far that he learned to speak and write in Irish.³⁸

The stay in Ireland widened Schoeman’s horizons in various ways. His two most important conceptions of this period were firstly the start of, what he called, his ‘Afrikaans phase’³⁹ and secondly the existential realization that he did not want to be a priest after all.⁴⁰ He developed the opinion that all Afrikaners should speak their language, the Afrikaans, in ‘undiluted’ form. Later, back in South Africa he would carry this attitude so far that he adamantly refused to speak in any other language, even to his mother, for as long as four years.⁴¹ In Ireland he took on a similar attitude: once he mastered the Irish Gaelic, he refused to speak in English with his fellow students.⁴² Irish is only spoken daily in certain parts in the West of Ireland, although every child learned it at school. Most Irish people conversed in English with each other. Karel believed strongly that the Irish and the Afrikaners should protect their culture by speaking the language that gives an identity to their culture. The point here is that, away from Afrikanerdom, Karel Schoeman became Afrikaans in Ireland. One thing he however did not support was the idea and policy of apartheid. He was a pacifist and never entered military service.⁴³

Early in 1964 the episcopal release from the Christian vow arrived and Karel Schoeman returned to South Africa with the ship *Windsor Castle*. Back in Bloemfontein he moved in with his mother, regained his old job at the public library and started a two year course in Library Science at the University of the Orange Free State, which ended successfully with a certificate.⁴⁴ The library’s collections and personnel were English orientated, while the university was focused towards Afrikaans. In this surrounding, where Karel Schoeman worked in the library at daytime and attended lessons in Afrikaans in the evenings, his awareness of the difference in cultural meaning between the two languages and their speech communities grew. In his own reflexion, in the context of South Africa’s changing political demeanor of that time, he expresses this growing awareness of elemental difference between the two language groups as follows:

“Terwyl die Afrikaanssprekendes nog altyd bewus was van hul identiteit as Afrikaners, met die voorregte en verpligtings wat dit inhou, van hul eie plek binne die Afrikanerdom, en van die Afrikanerdom self as lewensvatbare en geloofwaardige entiteit, het die Engelssprekendes al hoe meer begin besef dat hulle in Suid-Afrika geen bepaalde plek of duidelike lojaliteit het nie [...]”⁴⁵

(While the Afrikaans-speakers had always been aware of their identity as Afrikaners, with their entailed privileges and obligations, of their own place within the

Afrikanerdom, and of the Afrikanerdom itself as a viable and credible entity, the English-speakers began to realize all the more that they had no specific place or clear loyalty in South Africa.)

In the concept of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined communities*⁴⁶ it can be said that the Afrikaners were more of an imagined community than the South African English. The Afrikaners had a culture of shared communication, for instance through myth and music,⁴⁷ with which they reached out to imagined fellow-members of the wider Afrikaner community, that they might never personally meet.⁴⁸

During the years in Bloemfontein Karel Schoeman typed out his Irish journals. They were published as *Berig uit die vreemde. 'n Ierse dagboek* (1966) and *Van 'n verre eiland. 'n Tweede Ierse dagboek* (1968). Schoeman explained in his autobiography that the main motivation for publishing these diaries lay in the fact that there was a lack of Christian instruction books for Afrikaans speaking coloured people. Schoeman: 'it was a sort of propaganda for the Catholic faith'.⁴⁹ However, this motivation of religious instruction is not immediately evident from the content of the books. In fact, a lot of the text is spent on descriptions of Irish landscapes and stories on Irish history. Furthermore Karel Schoeman translated the handbook for the Maria Legion in Afrikaans (1966), was involved with an Afrikaans prayer book and helped compile the Afrikaans Catholic Church diary (1970). All of this happened at a time when the Catholic Church in South Africa was looked upon antagonistically by a large part of the predominantly Dutch Reformed Afrikaner society.⁵⁰ The quality and correctness of the translation of the handbook was checked by the Afrikaans poet N.P. van Wyk Louw. Karel Schoeman visited him in his home in 1965 when he brought the translation to him.⁵¹ It was the first meeting with Van Wyk Louw, whom he admired greatly and would do so for the rest of his life. The approximately 4,000 cards carrying the words that Karel Schoeman identified as Afrikaans Catholic terms, are still kept by the priests of the Oratorium of St. Philip Neri in Oudtshoorn.⁵²

Karel Schoeman's stay in Ireland had strengthened his Afrikaner identity and his work for the Catholic institutions intensified it.⁵³ The following translated citation from Schoeman's autobiography illustrates the role that the Afrikaans language played in his authorship:

"My enthusiasm for Catholicism was waning. I believe that for me it started more and more about the medium than the message that had to be conveyed through it, and the challenge of articulating things that had never been said in Afrikaans [...]."⁵⁴

In 1966 he started to long for broadening his horizon beyond Bloemfontein and went to live in Johannesburg. He worked here as a translator at the Witwatersrand Technical College. Although he claimed to be lonely, he enjoyed Johannesburg's libraries, movies and theaters. Schoeman wrote three more novels. His eloquent use of Afrikaans placed him in a category of his own. According to John Kannemeyer, the South African authority on Afrikaans literature, Karel Schoeman was of all Afrikaans novel and short story writers after the movement of Sixty to about 1970, by far the most important figure.⁵⁵ Another literator put it like this: 'Ons het die Sestigters gehad, en die Tagtigers; daar was moderniste en die post-moderniste; en dan was daar Karel Schoeman' (We had the Sestigters, and the Tagtigers; there were modernists and the post-

modernists; and then there was Karel Schoeman).⁵⁶ In 1970 Karel Schoeman received the *Hertzogprys* for literature. In the meantime his name as successful author bore the attribute of aloofness; he avoided contacts with literary circles. His outsidership became one of his social literary trademarks and the protagonists in his novels mirrored his solitary outlook on life.⁵⁷

The *Hertzogprys* was handed to him in The Hague because by then he was living in the Netherlands, in Amsterdam. After briefly contemplating a stay in an Israeli kibbutz, he had changed his mind and had travelled to the Netherlands in 1968. There he got a job as a librarian at the public library and would stay for five years. Again, like in Johannesburg, at first he felt lonely – suicide had crossed his mind⁵⁸ - but after one or two years he felt comfortable in Amsterdam, a city that he loved and revisited many times. One of the things that made Amsterdam different was its social freedom towards homosexual life. Karel Schoeman visited the gay sauna's and clubs like *De Odeon Kelder* on the Singel that attracted visitors from all over the world.⁵⁹ He had a few relationships but none lasted long. Strangely enough he socialized more with fellow South Africans who lived abroad in exile (among them the poet Elisabeth Eybers) and preferred their company over the Dutch people whom he experienced as formal and unimaginative.⁶⁰

In Amsterdam Karel Schoeman finally said goodbye to the Catholic church. When the Catholic leaders declared their position on homosexuality, which was that love is good but that homosexuals were advised to seek guidance,⁶¹ Karel Schoeman, after contemplating the dilemma for a long time, made his choice.⁶²

But Karel Schoeman never lost his longing for hermeticism, religious or not, and in 1973 decided he wished for a more simple life and to serve others. Financially he could get by from the royalties of his books. He gave away all his furniture and clothes, just took a few essentials and his portable typewriter and moved to England where he found a place to work as a volunteer at the Sue Rider charity foundation. This organisation offered home to men, many of them Polish, who were disabled during the war. Having acquired experience in nursing, Karel Schoeman got a job in 1974 as a nursing trainee at the Stobhill hospital in Glasgow, Scotland. Referring to his time in Scotland he stated that this was the happiest period in his life:⁶³ his affection for the rugged Scottish landscapes, the sober lifestyles of the Scottish, their genuine acceptance of him as a person. The positive feelings relating to his nursing work were so great, that later in life he felt unable to correspond and write about it.⁶⁴ But there were also significant bolts of depression.⁶⁵ When the hospital's director encouraged him to enlist for a higher nursing grade course and offered him a formal position, he turned it down and after a period of severe doubt decided to return to South Africa. This was in 1976, shortly after the Soweto uprisings that exploded after the government's decision to introduce Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in local schools, which was the latest measure of accumulating racist rules. The troublesome state of his home country had played into his wish to be with 'his people',⁶⁶ which may be interpreted as a form of home sickness in the context of personal drama.

All through his Dutch and Scottish periods he had kept working on articles, novels and a travel journal, of which the English based *Die Hemeltuyn* (1979) got the best reviews.⁶⁷ Some works of this period got bad reviews, for instance the Amsterdam based *Die Noorderlig* (1975).⁶⁸

From 1976 on Karel Schoeman lived in his home country for the rest of his life. He always longed for Europe and undertook many trips to the north, but never settled there

anymore. First he got a job at the *Taaldiensburo* in Pretoria, a governmental organisation that duplicated stately documents in English and Afrikaans.⁶⁹ Karel Schoeman, being used to the more relaxed social attitudes in Europe, did however experience adaptational problems in the conventional reality of the white South African social world; he found that homosexual men lacked emancipation.⁷⁰ In 1978 he once more moved to Bloemfontein where he found the center of the city completely changed. He also noticed that the city was, what he called, ‘*verafrikaanst*’.⁷¹ Furthermore, in the progress of modernity many of the colonial-style buildings had been demolished. From a feeling of loss he started to do historical research and published a series about Bloemfontein’s history and architecture. These non-fiction studies were the start of Karel Schoeman as a historian.⁷² According to Schoeman the difference between fiction and non-fiction is an artificial construct.⁷³ I believe what he meant was that historical ‘facts’ can be retrieved from archives, but that the story in which those findings are embroidered is a matter of language and imagination, just as it is with the creation of fiction. This idea matches with Hayden White’s concept of metahistory which includes strategies of explanation and ideological visions.⁷⁴

In Bloemfontein, where Schoeman worked as an assessor of books at the Provincial Library Service of the Free State, he was left free to conduct historical research within his job contract. The job of assessor differed from his earlier job as a librarian in the way that he now had to negotiate his choices for the books that he had selected as suitable for the provincial libraries. The job was in this respect Schoeman’s first true experience of working in the adult world of Afrikaners and it turned out to be a disappointment. In his autobiography Schoeman stresses the fact that he was not raised as an Afrikaner and that the Afrikaners were actually a strange entity to him.⁷⁵ His own ‘Afrikaansness’ so far was partly imagined and in reality the Afrikaners turned out not to live up to this image. Schoeman’s discord existed mainly with the Afrikaner men, city dwellers, who, as he found, ‘just wanted to protect their status’,⁷⁶ a statement that is indexical of a social-political atmosphere of favoritism. Also, in his attributed status of historian, where he was invited into local academic circles, he developed the feeling that he did not feel at home with them.⁷⁷ This latest Bloemfontein period was the beginning of Schoeman’s realization that he would gradually scale down his socializing with the Afrikaners. In retrospect, these were the people that he returned to in 1976, and presumably had been his target audience. Everyone, however, with the command of Afrikaans (which were/are not just the white Afrikaners but people of all colour) could read his books, and did so because some of his novels were on the mandatory literature listings in education programs.⁷⁸

Most of Karel Schoeman’s writing remained in Afrikaans, but for certain historical subjects he made the choice to render them in English. This happened especially in the 1990s and the first decade of 2000. Schoeman’s statement, without providing any further explanation, that ‘*Afrikaans is die enige taal wat ek kán skryf*’ (Afrikaans is the only language in which I can write) overall remained valid; besides many of his historical works all of his novels were written in Afrikaans.⁷⁹

To escape, what he calls, the East-Berlin like atmosphere in Bloemfontein, in the early 1980s he went for outings to Cape Town, a town where British culture had made a large impact and where the English language had the upper hand over Afrikaans. There he initially connected and socialized with the local literary circles.⁸⁰ Karel Schoeman would live and work in Cape Town for sixteen years. He held several positions at the South African Library (SAL),

among them Head of the Iconographic Department and Head of Special Collections. The work at the library gave him the rewarding opportunity to do research in its collections, including uncatalogued archives.⁸¹ As explained in the next chapter, Schoeman's production peaked. Eventually his time in Cape Town was not a happy one. This had to do among others with his job and view of the SAL. He took a critical stance towards the collection policies of the state and provincial libraries⁸² and disapproved of the lack of funding of the SAL.⁸³

Karel Schoeman retired in December 1998. A few years before he had already bought a house in Trompsburg, where he retreated during weekends and now went to live there permanently. His mother had died in 1989 in Bloemfontein. He lived a quiet life and with the arrival of the internet his social contacting mainly happened through use of the computer. He maintained correspondences with people all over the world. In his home he had a private library and would borrow books from Bloemfontein's libraries, also making use of the international inter-library request services. The main impact of Karel Schoeman as historian would be from approximately the late 1990s to 2015 with large volumes about the Free State, slavery and the Boer wars. Although Karel Schoeman never profiled himself as a fighter against oppression and discrimination, his work bears clear marks of critical involvement in South Africa's society. He was a committed writer with deep concerns of the unfair dispensations in his country, as Luc Renders, publicist on African Literature, mentions in his consideration of Schoeman's work in *Sluiswagter by die dam van Stemme*. Renders: 'Involvement in social-political problems runs as a red wire through his books'.⁸⁴ Especially in Schoeman's non-fiction work one can notice a motivation to emphasize the multiculturalism of his country and to generate attention for the disadvantaged, for their cultures and the true face of Africa.⁸⁵

Of the few persons who were close to him during retirement were two Sotho sisters, Jemima Meku and Mamohau Lekula, who worked for him in the household. They communicated in Afrikaans and Sesotho with Schoeman.⁸⁶ His relationship with them went further than just regarding them as domestic workers.⁸⁷ Karel Schoeman trusted the sisters' insights in minor medical issues (Mamohau being a trained nurse) and they proved to be loyal company. He took concern in their families, among other a historical interest in the life of their old father who came from Lesotho. Schoeman's final book, *Die laaste reis*, tells the story of three trips to Lesotho, where Jemima and Mamohau accompanied him.⁸⁸ The thought of Europe however was always with him and during his retirement he undertook several farewell trips to Western-European cities.

In 2008 he moved house to the senior center Noorderbloem, at the edge of Bloemfontein, where he maintained a life in isolation. In the second-last book he wrote, *Slot van die dag* (At close of day), he describes thoughts and meditations of old age and the process how he lived up to the point of suicide, on 1 May 2017. This day was chosen deliberately, being Labour Day and also the day that the Irish call *Bealtaine*, May day, a remainder of pre-Christian traditions. *Slot van die dag* is in fact a plea for renewed debate in South Africa to stimulate the discussion on issues regarding legal euthanasia and assisted suicide.

2. Karel Schoeman's choice for writing in Afrikaans, seen in relation to his mobility

Karel Schoeman's work evolved in several stages. This chapter investigates how the stages are connected to his mobility. Below I will first briefly elaborate on the development of Schoeman's working methods of novel and history writing, and then make a connection of Schoeman's application of language and subject matter in relation to the places where he stayed. The subject matter may reflect aspects of the country of residence or may reflect the author's feeling of distance and longing for a place.

Oversight of the places where Karel Schoeman lived:

1939-1941: Trompsburg	South Africa
1941-1943: Bloemfontein	South Africa
1943-1957: Paarl	South Africa
1957-1961: Bloemfontein	South Africa
1961-1964: Killarney, Galway	Ireland
1964-1966: Bloemfontein	South Africa
1966-1968: Johannesburg	South Africa
1968-1973: Amsterdam	Netherlands
1973-1974: Cavendish; several European cities, without permanent residence	England
1974-1976: Glasgow	Scotland
1976-1977: Pretoria	South Africa
1978-1982: Bloemfontein	South Africa
1982-1987: Cape Town	South Africa
1987-1989: Cradock and Cape Town	South Africa
1989-1998: Cape Town	South Africa
1998-2008: Trompsburg	South Africa
2008-2017: Noorderbloem, Bloemfontein	South Africa.

Concerning Schoeman's working method, a major switch is noticeable when it altered from conceptualizing an internal idea where the production of words are formed by the unconscious, to a more mechanical form of external research where historical facts are assembled and arranged into a story. The products of the first method are usually called fiction and the latter non-fiction. As explained in the former chapter, Karel Schoeman considered this distinction between products an artificial construct. He however did distinguish a big psychological difference in writing from the unconscious (which would typically result in novels) and the perfunctory search in historical sources (which may be labelled as history). Schoeman stated that writing from the unconscious came from a process of pain, while a product based on research was laborious but in fact mentally less demanding and therefore psychologically more rewarding. He found the compiling of a historical narrative was analogue to the imagined

process of making a mosaic.⁸⁹ Additionally, Karel Schoeman felt that his creative writing that came from the unconsciousness, could only be executed in Afrikaans.⁹⁰ Hence all his novels are in Afrikaans. Historical writing demanded creativity as well but here there was also a mechanical aspect involved, hence Schoeman could also apply his third language which was English. Most of Schoeman's historical writings are in Afrikaans however some are in English.

Karel Schoeman's choice to write in Afrikaans was also a kind of method. Schoeman valued the concept of psychological distance in his authorship. Schoeman stated that writing in his second language created a mental distance to his subjects. To explain this, he cited the example of the Dutch writer Bart Slijper (1963-) when Slijper referred to the early poems of Willem Kloos (1859-1938). Kloos was Dutch but his early sonnets were written in German:

“... ‘het schrijven in een vreemde taal moet wel voor een zekere afstand zorgen tussen het gedicht en de dichter, en het helpt daardoor de confronterende diepten van het gevoel te verkennen’. Afstand is nodig, is noodsaaklik.”⁹¹

(...writing in a foreign language must create a certain distance between the poem and the poet and thus helps to explore the confrontational depths of the feeling. Distance is crucial, is necessary.)

So writing as a whole in Schoeman's second language was an indirect, linguistic method of keeping distance.

How Schoeman's output holds a relation to his mobility is explained as follows.

Bloemfontein - the early period.

Karel Schoeman stated in his autobiography that the years 1954 until 1959 were 'practise years'. They were the last three years of his high school period and the two years at university. Schoeman points to the influence of American literature. The American novelists expressed a reality that was recognizable to Schoeman because they explored a land that was colonized by Europeans. The American stories of colonized lands embodied a different world than the worlds depicted in the older, established British literature. While reading American literature Karel Schoeman's awareness of the essence of the Free State, its countryside and history, grew. Among the authors that he read were John Steinbeck, Tennessee Williams and Alfred Kazin. The black writer James Baldwin gets a special mention because Baldwin expressed a sense concerning English that was already in this early period manifest to Schoeman: "My quarrel with the English language had been that the language reflected none of my experience".⁹²

A major influence also came from the movie *Gone with the wind* with its epic story of the violent downfall of an unsustainable culture. Schoeman watched the movie many times, the last time in Amsterdam in the early seventies where it finally lost its enchantment on him because of modern adaptations on the colours and screen size.⁹³ The writings of Virginia Woolf inspired him because of the rhythm of her prose, the deeper meaning this invoked



‘Free State landscape’. Oil on panel, 50 x 35 cm. Ria Winters.

beyond words (‘the inexpressible expressed’), and because of her ‘stream of conscious writing’.⁹⁴

Of the South African literary influences were mainly the older generation of traditional writers, for instance C.M. den Heever and his novel *Droogte* (1930) with its motives of the continuity of the generations and the cycle of birth and death.⁹⁵ Schoeman’s own titles of the early unpublished novels reflect the rural settings: *Op die grens*, *The End of the Summer*, *On the Plains* and a historical novel *The trees stand waiting*. Overall the themes were love, loneliness, failing human relationships and the awareness of the temporality of earthly things. All were written with the backdrop of Free State landscapes. The titles of the unpublished Dutch novels are unknown (although one may have been called *Zon*).⁹⁶ Remarkably, *Op die grens* was later transformed into a film script which in 1990 won him the SAUK (*Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie*) prize for television drama.⁹⁷ The English novel *On the plains* evolved in the Afrikaans novel *’n Lug vol helder wolke* (published in 1967).⁹⁸ There were also other, smaller try outs called *Excursion* and *The Scent of Roses*. The latter deserves special mention because this was inspired by the novel *Nog pas gisteren* (1951) of Dutch-Indonesian writer Maria Dermoût. In his try out, Schoeman simulated Dermoût’s nostalgia for the old Dutch-Javan lifestyle in his own rendering of the old Bloemfontein of his grandparents in the unpublished *The Scent of Roses*.⁹⁹ In a later part of his life Schoeman’s archival research about Bloemfontein would mark his shift in methodology

Schoeman mentioned that except for one manuscript he destroyed all his early writings before he departed to Ireland.¹⁰⁰ The earliest clue of Schoeman’s choice to write in Afrikaans is to be found in these unpublished try outs. The characters featuring in these novels were

Afrikaners and although Schoeman succeeded in rendering descriptions of place and time in Dutch or English, he found it problematic to have Afrikaners conversing to each other in those languages. He resolved this problem by inserting Afrikaans dialogues in the Dutch and English prose. And then there was a moment when he asked himself ‘why not write completely in Afrikaans?’ That is how he proceeded; writing in Afrikaans went well, more or less to his surprise, and the next novel was in Afrikaans, which he called ‘*Verhaal*’ (Story). It was written during his last year at university. It was set in the Anglo-Boer war and dealt with two ladies on a farm that unexpectedly had to look after a wounded soldier who dies in the end. Schoeman considered this try out his best effort so far.¹⁰¹ The manuscript was kept in his mother’s house while her son, after getting his BA at university, went to stay at the Seminary in Pretoria for six months and thereafter disappeared to Ireland for more than two years. After his return this manuscript would be published as his debut – together, in one volume, with another story that he started writing on board the ship while travelling back home, called *In ballingskap* (In exile) - as *Veldslag* (1965).

The Catholic influence: Pretoria and Ireland

The mission of the Catholic South African apostolate was to win souls for the ‘only true Mother church’ among the white and non-white population. In 1960 Karel Schoeman, while staying in the Franciscan house in Pretoria and following classes at the Seminary, had started to manually supplement his copy of the English-Afrikaans dictionary by inscribing words in it that he considered as meaningful and that were missing in the dictionary. Besides the wish to help convert the Afrikaners to Catholicism, it was this linguistic challenge to render Catholic terms in Afrikaans that interested him. To figure out how to present words and terms in Afrikaans for a culture that had no Catholic past, challenged his creativity.¹⁰² The Seminary’s elders knew of Schoeman’s knowledge of Afrikaans literature and gave him the task to acquire a basic collection of Afrikaans literature for the student’s library.¹⁰³ The acknowledgement of this niche of knowledge of Afrikaans and Afrikaans literature was another step in Schoeman’s acquired cultural attributes in relation to the Afrikaans language.

Some of the Seminary’s priests were Irish. From them, and from archbishop W.P. Whelan, whom he knew from Bloemfontein, Karel Schoeman heard about the Franciscan monasteries in Ireland. He was above all attracted to the works of the American poet and Trappist monk Thomas Merton (1915-1968). Under Merton’s spell Karel Schoeman envisioned a life for himself with elements of asceticism and mystic surrender. In August 1961 he flew to Dublin, where he stayed for a week and discovered the city before entering the noviciate in Killarney. He was well informed with Ireland’s history. What was new to him was Ireland’s culture, the fact that this was an all-white population where no distinctable separation in social classes existed (as this did in South Africa between white employers and black servants). The realisation that something was fundamentally wrong with the segregationist system in his own country grew from a mere inherent suspicion to a more acute awareness.¹⁰⁴

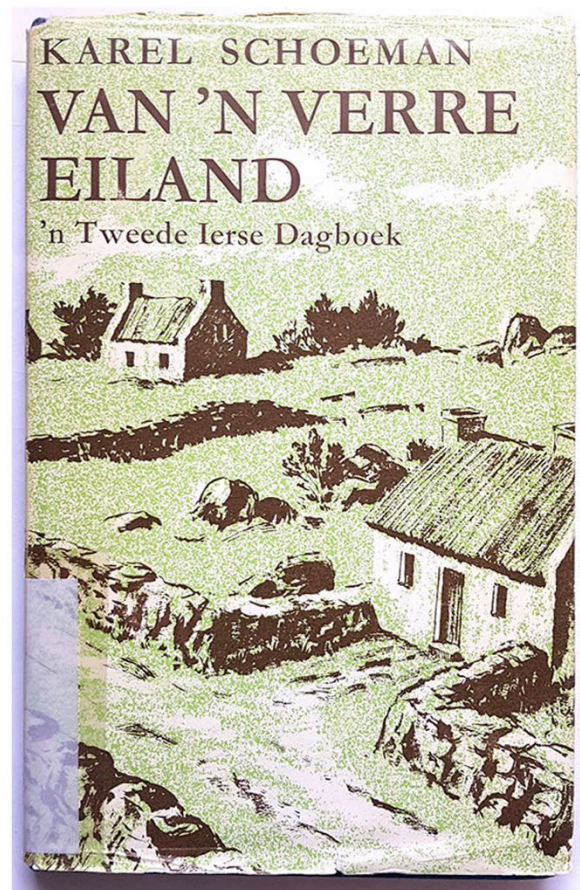
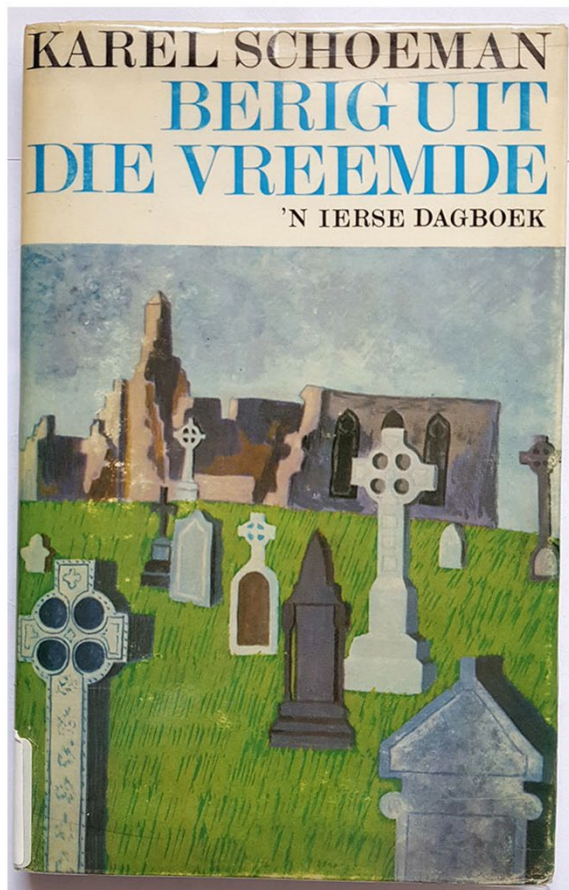
At this point something needs to be said about the seeming paradox of Schoeman’s growing ‘Afrikaansness’. Karel Schoeman, with his white privileged background, his political aversion against the political business that was upheld by the Afrikaners’ ethnical Nationalist

Party and his advancing entanglement with the language that marked the very identity of those Afrikaners, seems – seen from the outside – to be an existential contradiction. But for Karel Schoeman in this phase of his life it was not. The adoption of the Afrikaans language and with it the psychological connection with the people who spoke it – the people of his father – was a way of distinguishing himself as a person and creative writer. Also it must be kept in mind that Afrikaans was and is not just the language of whites. Afrikaans evolved from Dutch but has Malay, Bantu and Khoi tongue influences. It is the home language of many coloured South Africans.¹⁰⁵ To automatically connect the ‘identity’ of the Afrikaans language to the nationalistic ideology of the oppressive minority government (as I noticed often happens when talking about Afrikaans) doesn’t quite hit the mark and is partly anachronistic. Afrikaans is also ‘just’ another language in the world of languages that exist on the planet.¹⁰⁶ Where it might differ from other languages is that it is a young language, with a literature that was and still is going through several phases, embedded in South Africa’s social-political history. In his publications about the history of Afrikaans literature, John Kannemeyer places Karel Schoeman in his neutral chapters about ‘Novels after sixty’.¹⁰⁷ And as André Brink, himself being an author with the ascribed attributes of an activist writer, once stated that “geen literatuur is óf goed óf swak vanweë sy graad van betrokkenheid of die aard van sy ideë nie!” (no literature is good or weak because of its measure of [social] involvement or the nature of its ideas).¹⁰⁸ In other words: to be valid, Afrikaans prose or poetry does not necessarily have to reflect a political position of the writer. That said, as mentioned before, Karel Schoeman’s writings often bear marks of social involvement, something that is clearly shown in Irish novel *By Fakkellig* (see below).

Karel Schoeman’s production in relation to his stay in Ireland comprises one novel, two journals and four translations or retellings of Irish legends:

- 1966 *By fakkellig*
- 1966 *Berig uit die vreemde, ’n Ierse dagboek.*
- 1968 *Van ’n verre eiland; ’n tweede Ierse dagboek.*
- 1970 *Uit die Iers. Middeleeuse gedigte vertaal deur Karel Schoeman.*
- 1973 *Helde van die rooi tak.*
- 1975 *Gode, helde en konings; middeleeuse verhale.*
- 1976 *Finn en sy mense; die avonture van die fianna van Ierland.*

The two journals are Karel Schoeman’s first non-fiction publications. They set the tone for Schoeman’s later switch from writing novels to writing history. The journals offer a view into the noviciates’ daily life and commemorate the Catholic feast days. Most obvious are the descriptions of the weather, nature, landscapes and the Irish history. As one reviewer in the Catholic-Protestant magazine *Die Brug*¹⁰⁹ remarks after reading the first journal: ‘This is not the diary of a monk in an Irish monastery. [...] Mr. Schoeman introduces us to Ireland, its cities, people and customs’.¹¹⁰ One part of Ireland’s history that Schoeman commemorated was the failed Irish uprising of 1798 against British rule. This historic rebellion got a place in the novel *By Fakkellig*: the main character, David, a loner, son of a British landlord who lives in a mansion near Killarney, slowly turns his sympathy towards the Irish rebels. He helps them, but



Karel Schoeman’s Irish journals, published in 1966 and 1968 (Human & Rousseau).

was caught. At the end of the book he is awaiting execution. The story itself is told in a traditional way, but there is a deeper layer towards the historic-political South African situation when apartheid was still a fact.¹¹¹ By writing about Ireland Schoeman was able to criticize and speak about South Africa in an indirect but pure form.¹¹² The publications of 1965 and 1966 were not Schoeman’s true debuts. In Ireland Karel Schoeman had taken up the creative challenge to translate poems from the Middle Irish (900-1200 AD) into Afrikaans. In 1964 a series of seven poems ‘*Uit die Iers*’ appeared at the opening pages of the August issue of the literary magazine *Standpunte*.¹¹³ One poem is Christian in nature, the others are about nature, love and Gaelic thoughts. In his explanation Schoeman wrote:

“Dit is daarom dat ’n mens Ierland in sekere opsigte beter kan leer ken in hierdie gedigte van ’n duisend jaar gelede as in die verengelse en verwordende land van vandag”.¹¹⁴

(This is why one should get to know Ireland better in certain aspects, in these poems of a thousand years ago, than in the anglicized and altering country of today.)

Schoeman’s idealism to show (to instruct) the Afrikaners the importance of maintaining their own culture through the Irish example, lasted until the mid-1970s. He translated and retold Celtic legends of the *Cúchulainn* cyclus in four books, in Afrikaans. This strategy to ‘educate’

or rather explain the other-worldliness to his people matches with Hayden White's concept of metahistory.¹¹⁵ Schoeman collected much of the resource material during his years in the early sixties in the monastery. In 1976 he returned to Ireland for two months to study the old manuscripts in the university's reading room in Galway. To retell these legends demanded a further form of creativity because of the inevitable process of making choices for omissions and re-ordering.¹¹⁶

Another inspiration concerning the evolvement of languages came from the Irish dictionary *De Bhaldraithe* (1959), with modern translations of English words into Irish.¹¹⁷ With the arrival of modernity, technical apparatus and the transition to a society where many people lived in cities, the language needed an 'update'. In *De Bhaldraithe* words for things like radio broadcasting (*Craolachán*), airplane (*eitleán*) and cornflakes (*Calóga arbhair*) had to be invented. Karel Schoeman admired this, as did he also appreciate the new grammar book that was written by the Christian brothers for the first and secondary schools (at that time education was in the hands of the Catholic Church).¹¹⁸ It is here, in this admiration, that I see a felt connection with the strive of Karel Schoeman's grandfather, Henderikus van Rooijen, who endeavoured to bring Afrikaans to the forefront and tried to protect and promote it by editing and writing school material.¹¹⁹

Karel Schoeman had learned how to keep a language alive by active amendment and brought this knowledge back with him when he returned to South Africa in February 1964. A year later he had also experienced what it was like to lose a language: when he found himself no longer to be in a position to practise his Irish, he felt he lost it. In an attempt to retain something of his Irish, he wrote an essay in Irish, which in 1965 he sent to the Irish magazine *Comhar Teorante* in Dublin. The essay was an adaptation of *Veldslag*. In the accompanying letter to the editors he explained he wrote: '*ós rud é go bhfuil mo chuid bheag Ghaeilge ag imeacht anseo san Afraic*' (because my little bit of Irish is fading from me while I am in Africa).¹²⁰

South Africa: city life and more Catholic influence

Back in Bloemfontein he got in contact with the Catholic Apostolate in Pretoria. Although his religious interest in Catholicism was waning, he still took a linguistic interest in writing Catholic brochures and translations of Catholic dictionaries and a prayer book. Besides writing articles for *Die Brug*, Karel Schoeman was involved in the following publications:

1966 *Die amptelike handboek van die Maria-legioen*. Dublin: Concilium Legionis Mariae

1968 *Kerkwoordeboek. Deel 1 Engels - Afrikaans*. Pretoria: Katolieke Afrikanersentrum.

1970 *Kerkwoordeboek Deel 2. Engels - Afrikaans*. Pretoria: Katolieke Afrikanersentrum.

The period dating from his return from Ireland to approximately 1968 was what Schoeman called his 'Afrikaans period', a time where he only conversed in Afrikaans and started to intensively read Afrikaans fiction and non-fiction. Among the fiction he read were traditional novels like *Ampie. Die natuurkind* by Jochem van Bruggen (1938), *Bart Nel* by Johannes van Melle (ca. 1942) and contemporary novels like *Sewe dae by die Silbersteins* and *Een vir Azazel* by Etienne Leroux (1964).¹²¹ The late 1950s and 1960s was the period in which several South

African writers loosely formed a literary movement called *Die beweging van Sestig*; in short called the *Sestigters*. They took position against apartheid and offered a conceptualization of the Afrikaners as a group that was determined to crush all other groups for their own survival. The *Sestigters* produced poems, prose and opinion pieces that reflected this rebellious nature.¹²² When Karel Schoeman was in Ireland, his mother had sent him paper cuttings about the uproar that the *Sestigters* had caused in the Afrikaans press. As a result he had expected to return to a literary world that ‘was worth the trouble’. After reading the novels that had caused controversy, like *Ons, die afgod* by Jan Rabie (1958), he did recognize there was a ‘temporary renaissance of Afrikaans literature’ but also evaluated for himself that halfway through the 1960s the peak was already over.¹²³ Karel Schoeman did not associate himself with the *Sestigters*, nor did he with any other movement apart from the attraction that he retrospectively felt for the late nineteenth century art movement called the *Tachtigers* (movement of Eighty).¹²⁴ Dutch writers like Willem Kloos, Frederik van Eeden, Albert Verwey and Hélène Swarth and painters like Jac van Looy sought to convey their thoughts in nuanced impressions and were looking for new, original imagery that did justice to their individual emotions. Schoeman later in his life stated that it was ‘Nescio en die Tagtigters waarby ek my die meeste tuis voel’ (I feel most at home with Nescio and the movement of Eighty).¹²⁵

When staying in Johannesburg for two years Karel Schoeman socialized with colleagues, friends and the theatre group *Truk*. There were outings to the movies, theatre, feasts and small parties.¹²⁶ When he saw a play by Samuel Beckett, he retained the admiration for Beckett’s prose that he found sounded like music. But Karel Schoeman’s loneliness persisted. His time in Johannesburg is reflected in his novel *Spiraal* (1968). The story takes place in a once well to do neighbourhood of the city and concentrates on the neglected boarding house of an East-German hostess and her three lodgers. The perspective of the events comes to the reader through the main character, Anton. There is an overall emphasis on the loneliness and meaningless existence of the three lodgers.

Through Schoeman’s connection with *Truk* he got to attend several plays, among others *Oom Wanja* (Uncle Vanya) by Anton Tsjechov. Schoeman translated this play from German and English publications into Afrikaans as *Oom Wanja: tonele uit die plattelandse lewe in vier bedrywe* (1968). But the review of Robert Mohr suspects that Schoeman did more research than just the already existing translations of the play. Mohr writes, to render a play...:

“... suiwer in ‘n vertaling weer te gee, is ’n groot opgawe. Dit vereis sensitiviteit, nie virtuositeit nie. Karel Schoeman het, meen ek, beskeie na Tjechov geluister, en sy vlugtige kwaliteite eg tot ons laat spreek. Elke karakter praat Afrikaans met ’n eie stem, sonder dat ’n vertaler se styl tussenbye tree”.¹²⁷

(... reproduced purely in a translation is a big task. It requires sensitivity, not virtuosity. Karel Schoeman, I believe, listened modestly to Chekhov, and let his fleeting qualities really speak to us. Each character speaks Afrikaans with their own voice, without interfering with a translator’s style.)

When I read *Oom Wanja*, I did notice a difference in tone and style compared to Schoeman's classic novels. Some of the characters spoke in a folksy style. It indicates that Karel Schoeman had knowledge of different Afrikaans speech styles and speech groups.

In the meantime another source of income through the royalties that Schoeman received was formed by the so-called 'voorskryfmark' books. Schoeman got the order of the formal education system to produce books in Afrikaans about the lives of famous figures like Shakespeare, Rembrandt and the Strauss family. Those books were placed on the literature lists of students.¹²⁸

Another novel that is connected with his 'Afrikaans phase' and Schoeman's inspiration from traditional novels like *Bart Nel*, is called '*n Lug vol helder wolke* (1967). In this story Schoeman lets his main character, the young man Kobus, revolt against the traditional custom to take over the farm after the father's death. '*n Lug vol helder wolke* was later made into a television drama which was received positively by the audience.¹²⁹

In Johannesburg, where the street life was less segregated than in Bloemfontein, Karel Schoeman witnessed police brutality towards black people. The Afrikaner world in the meantime had, since the 1960 Sharpeville massacre and consequent uproars in the years after, become paranoid and turned inward. Gradually Schoeman felt less at home in South Africa and called the corrupting use of power by the Afrikaners 'evil'.¹³⁰ Schoeman started to buy Dutch novels by modern writers like Mulisch, Wolkers and Van het Reve, as well as French books. When he later lived in Europe he had the collection sent over; they filled a crate.¹³¹ Sometime, during the end of his stay in Johannesburg he abruptly stopped reading modern Afrikaans literature.¹³² It signalled the end of Karel Schoeman's Afrikaans phase.

Amsterdam and cultural freedom

The three main novels that are connected with Schoeman's stay in Amsterdam are *Op 'n eiland* (1971), *Na die geliefde land* (1972) and *Die Noorderlig* (1975). Schoeman started writing *Op 'n eiland* in Amsterdam but the inspiration had come from an infatuation with a man he had known in Johannesburg.¹³³ The story is placed on a Greek island and centered around four characters, two men and two women. The influence of Amsterdam's relaxed atmosphere concerning homosexual love and Schoeman's further assertion of his homosexual identity,¹³⁴ is recognizable in the undefined relation that develops in the novel between the main character Ruud and his host Johan. *Op 'n eiland* is the first novel where Schoeman explicitly fictionalizes homosexual attraction. The novel's Dutch element is clear: Johan's wife Hilde is Dutch, the female lodger too. Johan is South African, so is Ruud, who lives in Amsterdam. Because none of them speak Greek they are trapped in their isolated little world in the rural house on a hill. However, among the four of them a certain social distancing remains; they seem to be unable to really connect to each other. According to Kannemeyer:

"Selde in sy oeuvre het Schoeman soos hier daarin geslaag om die broosheid en onvolkomenheid van die verhouding tussen mense deur middel van gesprekke, gebare, suggesties en stiltes so suiwer op te vang".¹³⁵

(Rarely Schoeman has succeeded in catching so purely the brittleness and imperfection of the relationship between people by way of conversations, gestures, suggestiveness and silences.)

To get inspiration for the backdrop of island life, Karel Schoeman visited Jan Rabie and Marjorie Wallace in their home on Crete for a few weeks. Seen from a linguistic point of view there is an interesting detail that occurred during this visit: according to the South African literary historian John Kannemeyer, Karel Schoeman at some stage only wanted to speak in Dutch to his hosts – to their annoyance - because he feared that the Afrikaans would impoverish his Dutch.¹³⁶ What can be hesitantly concluded from this detail is that Schoeman may once have considered a permanent stay in the Netherlands.¹³⁷

In Amsterdam he visited the *Zuid-Afrikahuis* on the Keizersgracht and the communist bookshop *Pegasus* on the Singel. Both offered access to literature that was forbidden in South Africa. The direct outcome of the acquired knowledge of the true state of his homeland was the publication of *Na die geliefde land* in 1972. The story is located in a post-revolutionary South Africa with a prefigurative perspective. It fictionalizes the story of a white community being oppressed by a hostile autocratic government. The novel caused controversy in South Africa¹³⁸ but escaped censorship because no names of existing places, political figures or governments were mentioned. This novel brought Schoeman the Central News Agency prize. *Na die geliefde land* was Schoeman's most prominent novel that reflected, what Hermann Giliomee calls, *Volkskritiek* (popular criticism).¹³⁹ According to Alan Paton the novel's 'theme is nothing less than the death of Afrikanerdom'.¹⁴⁰ Schoeman's inspiration for place and atmosphere in *Na die geliefde land* came from a mix of memories of the farm of one of his half-sisters, where he once stayed during a school holiday, and the epic scenes from *Gone with the wind*. The book was entirely written during Schoeman's stay in Amsterdam; the concept of the novel was heavily influenced by the critical reflections towards his country that he got acquainted with in the Netherlands.¹⁴¹ Another novel displaying *Volkskritiek* was *Om te sterwe* (1976). In South Africa Karel Schoeman was considered as 'onafrikaans'.¹⁴²

England and Scotland: happiness, followed by a difficult choice

In 1973 Karel Schoeman became a nurse. First he worked as a volunteer with the Sue Ryder Foundation, looking after handicapped war veterans. The family that ran the institution owned properties in England and Scotland. During short holidays Karel Schoeman travelled around the country while staying in the Ryder family's houses. The home where he started to work as a nurse, in Cavendish, was a mansion with a fountain and a garden. This house is portrayed in the novel *Die Hemeltuyn* (1979), Schoeman's main novel that was conceived during his English and Scottish period. Like *Die Noorderlig* the story was located in Europe but there was a deeper parallel with South Africa's reality. In *Die Hemeltuyn* Schoeman tells the story, seen through the memory of the protagonist, Nicholas, a South African student residing in England who stays with a British family for the summer. The shadow of World War II that is about to break out, looms over them, but the characters in the mansion drinking tea and playing tennis seem oblivious of this threat. Nicholas is, as a typical Schoeman character, an outsider. He enjoys

his stay, appreciates the aristocratic land life, but doesn't really know how to behave in the elite company. Still, he manages to communicate with the landlord, landlady, children and personnel. At one stage Nicholas converses with the landlord, Mr. Chalmers, who confides in him, saying that he served in the British army during the Anglo-Boer War, that he got wounded and realized the pointlessness of this war. Schoeman lets Chalmers say: 'n Lelike besigheid, 'n lelike besigheid' sê hy nou. En ons het niks daaruit geleer nie, heeltemal niks' (An ugly business, ugly business, he now said. And one from which we didn't learn anything, nothing at all).¹⁴³ The connection with *Die Hemeltuyn* in relation to Schoeman's place of residence is worth noticing because of firstly, through his nursing practice, Schoeman got personally acquainted with World War II veterans and their stories (and of, imaginably, the uselessness of war) and secondly was able to directly interact with British people. The latter possibly resulted in a manner of looking at the British in a less biased way and portraying them for his Afrikaans readers as a people that were able to reflect on themselves. Like one of *Die Hemeltuyn*'s characters, Mrs. Mackintosh, says:

“Ons is 'n verspote volk, ons sit vasgegroeï in domheid en selfingenomenheid, die onreg wat ons in ons geskiedenis teenoor andere gepleeg het, skreeu uit ten hemel, en tog, tog is dit 'n mooi land hierdie. As julle ons ooit wil veroordeel, dink aan hierdie aand en aan hierdie tuin, en vergewe ons 'n bietjie’.”¹⁴⁴

(We are a ridiculous nation, we are stuck in stupidity and self righteousness, the injustice we have committed in our history towards others is screaming out to heaven, and yet, yet this is a beautiful country. If you ever want to condemn us, think of this evening and this garden, and forgive us a little.)

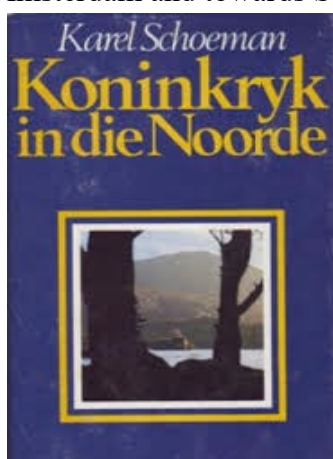
It is my impression that Schoeman portrayed the British in this particular piece of text to hold up a mirror for the Afrikaners themselves. He is speaking for the Afrikaners just as much as for the British. Another observation that arises from the dialogues in *Die Hemeltuyn* is that Schoeman doesn't seem to have a problem of rendering English conversations in Afrikaans. This is somewhat remarkable because earlier in life he did have problems with rendering dialogues spoken by Afrikaners in English (see above). This may be due to the fact that the dialogues, like the one cited, were constructed in an Afrikaans state of mind for Afrikaners, rather than in an emphatic fashion towards the British.

Although enjoying his time in Europe, Karel Schoeman's mind was never far away from South Africa and its Afrikaans readers which he kept considering as his public. In 1976 the South African Broadcasting Corporation evolved from radio to also television broadcasting.¹⁴⁵ When Schoeman saw this coming he wrote a couple of screen plays: *Besoek* (1975), *Die Somerpaleis* (1975) and *Die jare* (1976). They had the same themes as his novels: the main characters were outsiders, there were subtle interhuman relationships with the political situation vaguely in the background. The reviews on the published texts of *Besoek* and *Die Somerpaleis* were not enthusiastic.¹⁴⁶ In 1979 it was decided that *Die Jare* would be produced for television and that *Besoek* and *Die Somerpaleis* might follow. About the original conception and writing of the screenplays Schoeman states: 'Dit was 'n klein oplewing wat plaasgevind het in die tyd toe ek in Skotland was en met die televisiemedium in aanraking gekom het' (It was a small revival that took place when I was in Scotland and came in contact with the medium

of television.)¹⁴⁷ The words ‘’n klein oplewing’ indicates to something of hope, that there might be another source of communication – through visual story telling on TV - with the Afrikaners and a source of financial income.

Although the following may seem a little farfetched, the writing of the screen plays does have a relation to the place where he stayed. Not necessarily to his factual Scottish residence, but to Schoeman’s physical and psychological distance from South Africa. Karel Schoeman often stated that, to be able to write, it was necessary to take distance. He wrote: ‘Waar ek dit in eerste instansie oor het, is egter afstand in die sin van ruimte, die ruimte wat moontlik slegs verkry kan word deur afstand dóén, deur *Entsagung*: emosionele afstand’. (What I mean in first instance, however, is distance in the sense of space, the space that can possibly only be obtained by taking distance, by *Entsagung*: emotional distance.)¹⁴⁸

Another novel that was written with the ‘support’ of distance was *Die Noorderlig*. Schoeman wrote it when living in the U.K. The novel was an attempt to make closure with memories of his life in Amsterdam. The book is about two university friends who after many years meet in the Dutch capital. They start talking about the third member of their circle of South African friends: Estelle Naudé, a young poet with a politician father whose apartheid ideas she completely rejects. Estelle commits suicide because she feels powerless in the face of the discriminatory rulers. South African readers might have picked up the parody that was played here: Estelle figured for Ingrid Jonker, one of the *Sestigers*, the poet who committed suicide in 1965. But I only got the clue after reading Daniel Hugo’s review, ‘Karel, André en Ingrid’. Not only the figure of Ingrid Jonker was fictionalized in a camouflaged way, but the boyfriend she had in Amsterdam, Francois, which Schoeman portrayed as cold-blooded, was according to Hugo unmistakably the personification of André Brink.¹⁴⁹ Jonker and Brink had in real life been lovers for years. (Brink wrote a destroying review of *Die Noorderlig* but did not reveal the parody.¹⁵⁰) So, although the setting of the novel was Amsterdam, the story was very much about South Africa. And because it was written in the U.K. it had a double layer of distance: towards Amsterdam and towards South Africa.



Koninkryk in die Noorde (1977) is a travel journal that Karel Schoeman wrote during and after his stay in Scotland.

Karel Schoeman has stated that his time in Scotland, when he was living and working in Glasgow, was the happiest of his life. This had to do with the people which he experienced as honest and straight forward, and his job as a nurse that gave him much satisfaction. His life in Glasgow features in the novel *Afrika. 'n Roman* (1977). The protagonist, the restless South African photographer Gisela, wanders around Glasgow and becomes aware of the inseparable ties with her home country.

Schoeman also appreciated the Scottish landscapes a lot. His travel experiences were put down in the travel book *Koninkryk in die Noorde; 'n boek oor Skotland* (1977). He could have stayed in Glasgow but in 1976, the year of the Soweto uprising, chose not to. It was a difficult decision.¹⁵¹ About his choice to return to South Africa, Schoeman writes in his autobiography:

“... die begeerte om my openlik te assosieer met die mense met wie ek my in laaste instansie die diepste verbonde gevoel het. Dit was, dink ek nou, die beslissende keuse in my lewe, die keuse waarmee ek my plek aanvaar en daarvolgens stelling ingeneem het, sover ek in elk geval ooit probeer het om so iets te doen of selfs daartoe in staat is. En as ek [...] in die buiteland aangebly het [.. tot] 1994, toe al die ballinge begin terugkeer [...] sou ek dan opnuut moes begin het, na 26 jaar in die buiteland [...]; maar vir ’n middeljarige Afrikaanssprekende man sou dit nog moeiliker gewees het om aansluiting te kry by die nuwe Suid-Afrika van 1994 as wat ek dit agttien jaar vroeër in die praktyk reeds gevind het. Vir my was dit reg om terug te kom in die jaar van Soweto, om met my volk te wees in hierdie tyd, daar waar my volk hom tot sy verdriet bevind het.”¹⁵²

(... the desire to openly associate myself with the people with whom I ultimately felt most deeply connected. It was, I believe now, the decisive choice in my life, the choice with which I accept my place and take a position accordingly, as far as I have at any rate ever tried to do so or even am able to do such a thing. And if I [...] had stayed abroad [.. until] 1994, when all the exiles started returning [...] I would have had to start all over again, after 26 years abroad [...]; but for a middle-aged Afrikaans-speaking man, it would have been even more difficult to join the new South Africa of 1994 than I had already found it in practice eighteen years earlier. For me it was right to come back in the year of Soweto, to be with my people at this time, there where my people, to their regret, found themselves.)

A linguistic reason for his return to South Africa was:

“... want as ek nog onbepaalde tyd sou weggebly het, sou dit vir my al hoe moeiliker geword het om nog in Afrikaans te skryf, en al hoe minder moontlik om nog iets oor of vir die Afrikaner te sê. Vir wie sou ek uiteindelik nog geskryf het, en waaroor, en as ek nie meer kon skryf nie, wat sou ek daar moet doen, in Glasgow of Cavendish, Amsterdam of Berlyn?”¹⁵³

(... because if I had stayed away indefinitely, it would have become more and more difficult for me to write in Afrikaans, and less and less possible to say anything more about or to the Afrikaner. Who would I have written to in the end, and what, and if I could not write anymore, what would I have done there, in Glasgow or Cavendish, Amsterdam or Berlin?)

And finally, a more practical reason for Schoeman’s return was that one day in Scotland he realized that he did not want to grow old in a country where darkness fell at five o’clock in the afternoon.¹⁵⁴

At this point something needs to be said about Schoeman’s ‘planning’. The narrative, like I have told it so far, may give the impression that Karel Schoeman made deliberate plans for his

travels and stays. Although he, of course, planned trips shortly before he went, he did not prearrange his life in the stages that I constructed. Karel Schoeman was quite an impulsive character and let things happen as they came along. His choice to return to South Africa after a content life in Scotland is one of the few moves that he explicitly clarified in his autobiography, and the only one that is linked to a historical event. His overall view of life can be best described in the way he once made a character utter in *Die Hemeltuyn*:

“Die lewe gaan sy eie gang, nè Nicholas: dit ontwikkel volgens sy eie patrone. Jy doen ‘n keuse, jy besluit tot iets, sonder om ten volle bewus te wees van die erns van wat jy doen. Bereidwilligheid en goeie wil is al wat nodig is, dan neem die lewe oor en voer jou saam.”¹⁵⁵

(Life takes its own course, is it not Nicholas: it develops according to its own pattern. You make a choice, you decide on something, without being fully aware of the gravity of what you are doing. Willingness and good will are all that is needed, then life takes over and carries you along.)

Bloemfontein, the turn to historical writing

After Karel Schoeman returned to South Africa, he lived for almost two years in Pretoria before moving to Bloemfontein in 1978. It was the fourth time that he took residence in this city. In the 1960s and 1970s South Africa’s economy had been booming. It was a period that Schoeman associated with the thought ‘toe die Afrikaners alle sin vir waarde en verhoudings verloor het’ (when the Afrikaners lost all sense of value and relationships).¹⁵⁶ During the economic prosperity Bloemfontein’s center had undergone a facelift; many of the old colonial buildings had been demolished and replaced with concrete Bauhaus style buildings. Schoeman found to his distress that he hardly recognized the inner city. He was not the only one, because in a 1970s issue of *Die Huisgenoot* an article appeared with the title: ‘Is Bloemfontein Suid-Afrika se lelikste stad?’ (Is Bloemfontein South Africa’s ugliest town?)¹⁵⁷ Schoeman decided he would write a book about Bloemfontein with the purpose to save the memory of the old town. In fact, he was searching for the Bloemfontein of his grandparents. This time Schoeman’s work in relation to the places where he lived did not evolve from a physical distance, but a mental distance where he looked back to the past.

He started to do research in the archives and newspapers and gathered oral information through interviews in order to record the city’s history. He had no model to work from, he had not studied history at university, had no experience in doing historical research, but during the two years he worked at this project he learned how to collect and organize research data and how to recreate them into a narrative. Karel Schoeman became a self-taught historian. It was, what he calls, an ‘onverwagte ontwikkeling waardeur my verdere lewe aanmerklik verander sou word’ (an unexpected development by which my further life would change considerably).¹⁵⁸ He discovered that he really liked writing non-fiction. He enjoyed organizing data, to position them into a chronological way, just like he had enjoyed classifying and cataloguing books as a librarian.¹⁵⁹ Bringing a systematical order in things soothed his mind.



Landscape just outside Bloemfontein. Watercolour, 20 x 32 cm, Ria Winters.

In 1980 the book was published as *Bloemfontein. Die ontstaan van 'n stad 1846-1946*. The book has an explanatory effect. It consists of a densely printed 307 pages, a section with 174 photographs, a bibliography, endnotes and a register.¹⁶⁰ Schoeman's use of language in this non-fiction work differed from his novels. It was of a more pragmatic register and less prosaic. Also the visual aspect, the use of photographs, in his work was new.

During the research on Bloemfontein Karel Schoeman had stumbled upon other subjects and primary resources that related to the history of the Free State. One was the case of the so-called Cox murders. The execution of the Englishman Charles Leo Cox by the Free State Government in 1856, due to the murder of his wife and children, had caused a sensation throughout South Africa. Schoeman found the case interesting because of the human aspect of it. He reconstructed the life and death of Cox, and thereby gave shape to the early years of Free State history.¹⁶¹ This book, together with two biographies (first, the memories of Sophie Levisseur, an influential lady in Bloemfontein politics and second, the biography of the last president of the Orange Free State, Martinus Steyn and his wife Tibbie) and an architectural book about the Orange Free State, are connected to this particular Bloemfontein-period in Schoeman's authorship.¹⁶² The writings were an attempt to articulate Schoeman's deep personal feelings about the Free State and convey these to others. Schoeman also wanted to emphasize clearly that the Free State had its own history and its own identity.¹⁶³

Nonetheless, Karel Schoeman felt a desire to get away from Bloemfontein in the early 1980s. It was in the period when social unrest and controversy concerning South Africa's role in the Namibian War of Independence (1966-1989) rose. Schoeman's disposition as a pacifist did not sit well, he felt, in Bloemfontein's atmosphere: there was a busy military complex stationed just outside the city. In addition to his mental resistance that was now connected to his place of residence and him wanting to escape, Schoeman realized that, if he wished to expand his historical work, he needed to find a job in a national library where he could browse through the collections. Through the mediation of the director of the South African Library he got a position at the South African Library in 1982. Schoeman also played with the thought that Cape Town was more of a worldly city than Bloemfontein, something that attracted him at the time.

Cape Town and the South African Library, sixteen years of high production

During the sixteen years that Karel Schoeman worked at the South African Library his production peaked. From 1982 until 1998 he wrote close to twenty monographs (historical works, biographies and novels), more than sixty articles for the *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, and about twenty five articles for other periodicals like the *Africana Aantekeninge en Nuus* and the *South African Historical Journal*. The articles are written in a register that differs from the style in Schoeman's historical monographs: the articles are concise and read less as stories. The articles are edited transcriptions of early nineteenth century primary sources. The articles are in fact primary sources themselves: they add facts to the body of existing work. They provide historical information about the tail end of, what is called in historiography, the long eighteenth century.¹⁶⁴ Some of the articles give rare insights in personal experiences of black people.¹⁶⁵

In the Cape Town period Schoeman also produced the majority of the so-called *Vrystatia* series, a sequence of publications of historical subjects about the Free State of which there were no English or Afrikaans publications available yet.¹⁶⁶ The first one in this series (fifteen in all) concerned the publication of Sophie Levisseur's memoirs which Schoeman edited during his time in Bloemfontein. This book was also Schoeman's first publication in English (not taking the essays of his school years into account). The reason behind this was that Levisseur's memoirs were written in English; Schoeman transcribed them, leaving the original meaning intact rather than translating them.¹⁶⁷ The material for the *Vrystatia* came from nineteenth century diaries, letters of civilians and government officials, and reports of missionary stations. Schoeman's work consisted of compiling, transcribing, translating and editing. As stated before, compared to writing fiction, this kind of work demanded a different kind of energy and pace and a more mechanical way of working. Karel Schoeman built up a routine in the non-fiction work and found the research physically and mentally rewarding, especially during the period between his 40th and 50th year that he described as unhappy.¹⁶⁸

Like Levisseur's memoirs, many of the resources that formed the base for the *Vrystatia* publications were in English, hence twelve *Vrystatia* were published in English and just three in Afrikaans.¹⁶⁹ Another reason to publish the majority of the *Vrystatia* in English may have been the consideration that the information would be of interest to British historians. The Free State had resided under British administration from 1848 until 1854 as the Orange River Sovereignty and became a colony of the British Empire in 1902 after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Its status as the Orange River Colony lasted until 1910 when South Africa became a union and it became the Province of the Orange Free State. In 1994 the name changed to the Free State province.¹⁷⁰ The *Vrystatia* series is separately outlined in the supplement with this thesis, 'Bibliography of Karel Schoeman's publications'.

Another development was that Schoeman started, around the time of his mother's death in 1989, to read the works of Carl Jung and allowed Jung's ideas to influence his own flow of thoughts. Schoeman translated Rob Nairn's *Tranquil mind*, a book about Buddhism and executed this with the same creativity as he once translated Catholic English terms into Afrikaans.¹⁷¹ The linguistic reward to find Afrikaans words for subjects that were new to the language, was still felt.¹⁷²

The more non-fiction work Schoeman wrote, the more it became entangled with his fiction. Research for the historical book about Bloemfontein infiltrated into the novel '*n Ander land* (Another country, 1984). In this book the Dutchman Versluis travels to Bloemfontein in 1877 with the hope to cure his tuberculosis. Versluis gets to know the settlers of European descent who live there, but keeps them at a distance. Karel Schoeman was able to fictionalize their characters through the documents that passed through his hands while doing the research in the archives. He had also previously been unaware of the fact that Bloemfontein once was a centre for tuberculosis treatment until he came across the information in old papers.¹⁷³ Versluis does not recover from his illness and Schoeman makes him slowly go through the process of accepting his looming death in this 'other country'. The 'other country' is not only meant geographically, but is a metaphor of the past.¹⁷⁴ '*n Ander land* was considered as one of Schoeman's big novels, it was compared to *Der Zauberberg* by Thomas Mann¹⁷⁵ and

contextualized in the literary movement of aestheticism (the *Tachtigers*) that developed in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁶ *'n Ander land* was also evaluated in the light of identity-writing and how the aspect of sexuality is underplayed.¹⁷⁷ *'n Ander land* was completely written in Cape Town; the relation of this novel with the place where he resided (Cape Town) is that the geographical distance gave him the mental opportunity to view the country of *'n Ander land* - the Free State - more objectively and was therefore able to let the unconscious do its work.¹⁷⁸

After *'n Ander land* Schoeman did not start with another novel until three years later. In the 1980's he mostly worked on non-fiction. The next novel was called *Afskeid en Vertrek* (1990). It was written over a time lapse of three years. *Afskeid en Vertrek* is the only novel that is shaped by the connection of Schoeman's place of residence (Cape Town) and the story's place of action. The main character, the unworldly poet Adriaan, tries to survive mentally amidst a dysfunctional social situation and the general disruption of a civil war, the latter being inspired by the riots and policing in Cape Town's townships of the 1980s.¹⁷⁹ The story itself does not reveal much about the specifics of the war that is going on; the periphery is blurred to the reader. There is the theme of people leaving, of emigrating to other countries. They don't feel at home in South Africa anymore, and neither is Adriaan. There is a sense that the current political state cannot go on for much longer. Another theme in *Afskeid en Vertrek* is criticism on the South African literary world. Adriaan is sceptical of the local literary circles and he rejects the plan of one of the writers to found a new literary magazine.¹⁸⁰ Analog to the war, Adriaan feels there is also a disruption of language. It is the first time that Schoeman openly takes position in a literary debate, although he does it in a unilateral way, through the novel.¹⁸¹ In *Afskeid en Vertrek* sexuality was not underplayed like in *'n Ander land*. The novel ends with a passionate meeting between Adriaan and a German man.

Just like the research data that were collected for the Bloemfontein book fed into *'n Ander land*, it happened likewise with the book about Van Wyk Louw's youth, *Die wêreld van die digter* (1986) that fed into the novel *Hierdie lewe* (1993). In this novel an old woman on her death bed is telling the story of her life.¹⁸² To do research on Van Wyk Louw's boyhood's life Karel Schoeman had travelled extensively through the Roggeveld in the Northern Cape Province and visited the houses and farms in and around Sutherland where the Louw family used to live.¹⁸³ Schoeman made the trips by taking irregular leaves from his job in Cape Town; the journey to Sutherland is approximately a four hour drive. The impression of the place's dusty streets, the whitewashed walls in bright light that stood out against the swell of the landscape with its bare hills and mountains made their way into the atmospheric descriptions in *Hierdie lewe*.

Hierdie lewe is the second of the *Stemme* trilogy. The other two are titled *Die uur van die Engel* (1995) and *Verliesfontein* (1998). In this series Schoeman lets his characters talk, mostly to themselves, about their inner lives during several stages of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century South African history. The trilogy is concluded by a fourth novel, the experimental post-modernistic *Verkenning* (1996) in which an anonymous Dutch protagonist also explores the South African past. Both the *Stemme* trilogy and *Verkenning* have been widely discussed in South African literary articles,¹⁸⁴ but the point here is that these big novels are all written in Schoeman's Cape Town period and are situated in the Karoo or in the Free State

Highveld. The opportunity to research the vast collections of the South African Library was beneficial in providing detailed historical information and inspiration for the stories. And the ‘distance’ that occurred while Schoeman was living in Cape Town and the imagination of Free State landscapes was fruitful in the conception of the novels. This idea of distancing is compatible with the statement of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur, that the appropriation of a fictional world goes together with a process of distancing, of taking leave of your own world.¹⁸⁵

The research data from the archives, naturally, also fed into Schoeman’s historical monographs. In some instances this happened in a ‘two-step’ process. Schoeman firstly processed his primary found data into articles and later used the same data and the processed information in monographs or novels.¹⁸⁶ For instance part of the article ‘From the collections of the S.A. Library: the ‘ethnographic’ album in the Grey Collection’ (in the *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, 1992),¹⁸⁷ comes back in the monograph *The face of the country: a South African family album, 1860-1910* (1996) where Schoeman describes the role of the Ngqika Chief Anta in the seventh frontier war between Boers and Xhosa.¹⁸⁸ There are many more examples but the point is the relation between the place where Schoeman stayed and worked (Cape Town and the South African Library) and his writings. Without his position at the library he probably would not have been able to reach this high level of production.¹⁸⁹

Publications that Schoeman (or the publisher) considered as beneficial for a wider audience than Afrikaans readers were written in English. Besides the twelve *Vrystatia* an additional thirteen historical monographs were published in English. Among these were two books about the novelist and suffragist Olive Schreiner,¹⁹⁰ four books where the subject was concerned with enslaved people and indigenous Africans,¹⁹¹ and a trilogy about the British Settlers in the Eastern Cape.¹⁹² The latter was not written in Cape Town but completed later in Schoeman’s life when he had retired in Noorderbloem.

Trompsburg and Noorderbloem. Retirement: autobiographic work and the VOC

In December 1998 Karel Schoeman retired and went to live in Trompsburg, the village of his birth. He did not have the obligations of going to work anymore and this gave him the freedom to travel for longer periods. He took trips of several weeks, sometimes a whole month, to European cities. Amsterdam, Berlin and Vienna were his favourites. His free time also provided him with the opportunity of self-reflection, to look back on his own life and that of his forefathers. The products that resulted from the inward and outward journeys were of an autobiographical nature.

Besides the autobiographical books Karel Schoeman worked on subjects relating to the Dutch East India Company (VOC). From his previous studies concerning the Cape’s colonial life he had internalized a lot of knowledge about the VOC and the colonists. Being far away from the South African Library’s archives, the application of primary paper resources diminished. During Schoeman’s retirement he mostly used secondary sources available in his private collection as well as in Bloemfontein’s libraries and would use primary sources predominantly if they were available online.

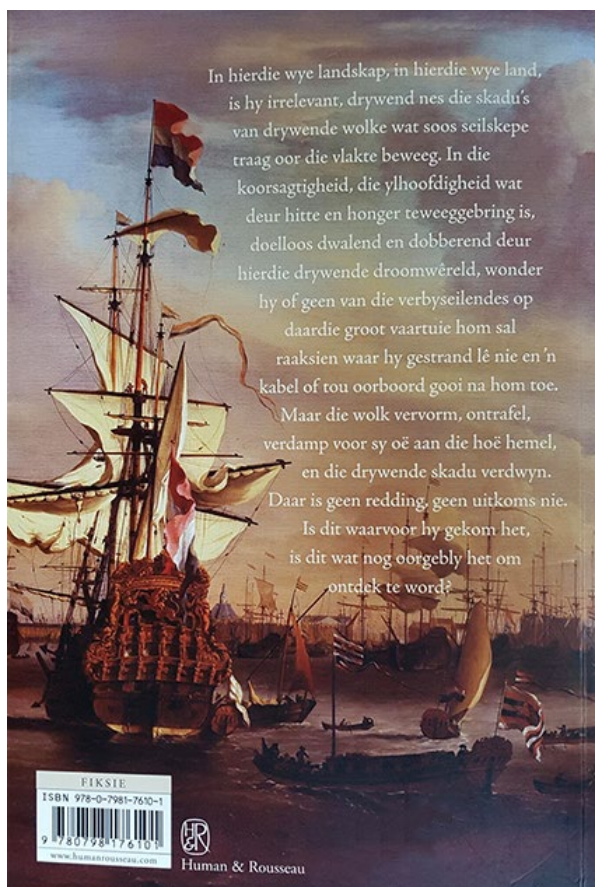
Schoeman's writings of this last period of his life can be divided in three categories, all non-fiction. But taking Schoeman's opinion in mind that the division between non-fiction and fiction is artificial, this should be taken with some care. The categories are:

- 1) Autobiographical works, including travel books (7)
- 2) Studies about his forefathers' lives (2)
- 3) Works about the VOC and biographies of colonists (20).

Apart from the travel books there is no strong relation between the place(s) where Schoeman resided and his retirement-writings. The travel books however are important because they reflect a renewed attachment to Europe.

One last fictional work appeared: the novel of the imagined life of the Italian artist Michelangelo, *Titaan: 'n Roman oor die lewe van Michelangelo Buonarroti* (2009).¹⁹³ The style of this novel differs from Schoeman's former novels, where the reader sometimes finds him- or herself in dreamworld. *Titaan* is a more conventional biographical novel. What stands out for me is Schoeman's demonstration of his profound knowledge of sculpture techniques. *Titaan* was built on extended readings of secondary sources and possibly also on Schoeman's memories of his visits to Italy in the 1970s which included a trip to Florence.¹⁹⁴

Another book of Schoeman's retirement period that deserves mentioning is *Skepeling. Aanloop tot 'n roman* (2017).¹⁹⁵ *Skepeling* is classified on the cover as fiction. But in reality it is an explicit mix of history writing with citations from primary sources and fictional writing



The reverse side of the cover of *Skepeling* (2017).

where an anonymous protagonist recounts pieces of a story. Historical narrative and fictional narrative were integrated. The largest part of the book is dedicated to historical narrative based on online primary sources. *Skepeling* is about the European men and women that arrived with the VOC at the Cape as an unruly people, who intermixed with Asians and Africans, and how they became the ancestors of the Afrikaners. The book has a critical undertone towards the Afrikaner past and future.¹⁹⁶ Schoeman labelled the book as an ‘experiment’.¹⁹⁷ It was something that he had always wanted to do: to apply historical sources to his own liking, adapting them and omitting to reference them in endnotes. The publication led to mixed reviews; historians had second thoughts about this manner of using sources and therefore appreciated the book less,¹⁹⁸ and those who admired the experimental character of it were positive.¹⁹⁹ The publisher’s categorisation of ‘fiction’ is understandable if one takes into account that the primary sources used and printed in *Skepeling* cannot be verified.

Karel Schoeman led a growing isolated life during the last years in Trompsburg (where in 2001 he moved from a house in the centre of the village to a quieter home on the outskirts) and from 2008 on, in Noorderbloem, where life was very quiet. What happened during this last period was that the Dutch language seemed to ‘invade’ Schoeman’s Afrikaans. Once he received a manuscript back from his editor which was full of corrected ‘Dutchisms’.²⁰⁰ During his retirement years Schoeman corresponded regularly in Dutch with Dutch people. Dispersed over the years there were at least five Dutch correspondents who on and off exchanged emails with him. Schoeman’s visits to the Netherlands (1998, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2013) brought a renewed feeling of attachment to the country of his mother’s parents. To a correspondent he wrote: “Met die ouderdom spreek Afrika my al hoe minder aan en raak ek al hoe meer Europees georiënteerd.” (With age, Africa appeals to me less and less and I become more and more European oriented.) And: “Met my onlangse besoek aan Nederland moes ek opnuut besef hoe wesenlik tuis ek in Europa en in Nederland is.” (During my recent visit to the Netherlands I had to realize all over how profoundly at home I am in Europe and the Netherlands.)²⁰¹ The deep-seated nature of his first language, Dutch, in his psyche, is made visible in Schoeman’s second last book, *Slot van die Dag*, where numerous references to his love for Dutch are made.²⁰² What also becomes clear in *Slot*, is that Schoeman believes he lost the ability to write a book in Dutch: “As ek geskrewe Nederlands goed genoeg beheers het om hierdie selfopgelegde taak in Nederlands te kan uitvoer, sou dit miskien makliker gaan” (If I would have sufficient command of written Dutch to execute this self-imposed task, this would maybe be easier).²⁰³

Notwithstanding the affection for his European roots, the last journeys that Schoeman undertook were very much in Africa; in March and April 2017 he travelled to Lesotho three times. The three travel stories were in first instance just sent to his regular correspondents,²⁰⁴ but shortly before his death he forwarded them to his publisher. Protea Boekhuis published the stories posthumously as *Die laaste reis* (2019).

Summary

Karel Schoeman’s writings evolved in accordance to his mobility. His choices to move from one place to the other were motivated either from entering Catholic schooling (Pretoria),

idealism (Ireland, England/Scotland), disillusion (return from Ireland), pragmatism (taking on a job, like in Pretoria and Cape Town), the wish for a worldly environment (Amsterdam, Johannesburg, Cape Town), a political event (the Soweto uprisings and the return to South Africa) or a longing for the Free State of his youth (Bloemfontein, Trompsburg). Schoeman's mobility influenced his writing. The places where he stayed had an effect on his subjects, his methods and his language.

Schoeman's first unpublished novels, written at the time he was still in high school and university, were in Dutch and English. He started to write in Afrikaans as an experiment and discovered to his surprise that it worked well. After finishing his first novel in Afrikaans and writing several more, he noticed that Afrikaans was actually the only language in which he could write creatively. In the Catholic Seminary in Pretoria he started to translate English Catholic terms into Afrikaans and got the task to assemble an Afrikaans collection for the student's library. These linguistic undertakings appealed to his creativity and strengthened his Afrikaans vocabulary. Schoeman's newly found niche of being an expert in Afrikaans was established. This expertise fed into his personal identity. So far he had not explicitly felt a strong connection with South Africa's Afrikaner white population, although he had enjoyed staying on the Afrikaner farm of one of his half-sisters. A stronger mental connection with the Afrikaners arose in Ireland. In the oppression that the Irish had experienced under British rule, Schoeman recognized a parallel with the history of his own country. The witnessing of how the Irish were losing their language installed an awareness in Schoeman's mind of the risk of the same happening to the Afrikaans language. During his 'Afrikaans phase', back in South Africa, he wanted to show his commitment to Afrikaans by refusing to speak to anyone in any other language for four years.

Schoeman's stay in Ireland shows, in terms of production, the most prominent connection of all his writings between Schoeman's place of residence abroad and subject matter: there are seven publications that deal with Ireland. All of them were written in Afrikaans and had the objective to instruct his readers, either about Catholic procedures (the journals), about being proud of a heritage (the translations of the legends) or to show political bravery and choose for 'the other side' (the novel *By Fakkellig*). Schoeman's journals and translations of the legends laid the foundation for his later historical methods. The deeper layers of the unwordliness of the legends also opened up a feeling for non-Christian spirituality that has a connection to the archetypal thinking of Jung.²⁰⁵

The connection between subject matter and place can also be seen in the novels that were written during or shortly after Schoeman's stays in Amsterdam, England and Scotland. *Die Noorderlig* is situated in Amsterdam and *Op 'n eiland* has strong Dutch connotations. *Afrika. 'n Roman* is situated in Glasgow. *Koninkryk van die Noorde* is a travel book about Scotland. *Die Hemeltuyn* is placed in England. Concerning the connection between subject matter and South Africa's cities there are *Spiraal* (Johannesburg), *Waar ek gelukkig was* (Bloemfontein) and *Afskeid en Vertrek* (Cape Town). *'n Ander land* is constituted on the border between Europe and the Free State, where the Dutchman Versluis travels from the Netherlands to die in Bloemfontein.

Schoeman's switch from fictional narrative into historical narrative happened in Bloemfontein during the early 1980s. When he saw the city again after an absence of more than ten years and noticed that buildings in Bloemfontein's centre had been demolished, he

experienced a negatively perceived change. He pursued to 'save' the old city in a book titled *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad 1846-1946*. Schoeman enjoyed doing research in archives and creating a story based on primary sources. His switch to historical writing was, as he stated, unexpected and pleasant. It would set the further course of his authorship. *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad* was also written from a longing back to the past, to the city of his early childhood years.

Besides the correlations in Schoeman's production between place and subject matter, there is also the connection between taking distance while residing in one place and subsequently create a vision on, or a longing for, another place. In the case of Schoeman's stay in Amsterdam he became more aware of the political situation in South Africa. It was something that could – in Schoeman's case - only be noticed explicitly from taking distance. While staying in Amsterdam *Na die geliefde land* was conceived through this distancing. In Scotland he produced three screenplays that were written for an Afrikaner television audience. Two screenplays however received unenthusiastic reviews. It is not quite clear why these screenplays show signs of a lesser creative conception on Schoeman's side. Maybe it can be contributed to the fact that he felt, while staying in Scotland, a country that he really liked, ambivalent on the choice to stay in Europe or return to South Africa. In case of the screenplays there may have been an economic reason too for writing them, caused by the arrival of television in South African homes.

Schoeman's sixteen year stay in Cape Town bears the mark of a high production of non-fiction work, which was induced by the opportunity to conduct research in the South African Library archives. Besides writing dozens of articles, Schoeman authored historical monographs that were pivoted around historical figures (mostly women), like the missionary wives Machtelt and Susanna Smit. For the twin publication pivoted around the life of the slave Armosyn it is suggested that this production had a pedagogical goal.²⁰⁶ Some of Schoeman's historical subjects were, because of the extended audience beyond Afrikaans, suitable for a production in English, like the second work Schoeman wrote about Olive Schreiner *Only an anguish to live here: Olive Schreiner and the Anglo Boer-War, 1899-1902*. Schreiner lived in England for part of her life and above all, her own novels were in English. These facts justified a production by Schoeman in English because of the wider English interest and readership.

Schoeman's further major novels, the *Stemme* trilogy and *Verkenning*, are also linked to the period in Cape Town. On the one hand there was the historical data of the South African Library archives and on the other hand the creativeness induced by the distancing towards the Free State and the longing for its landscapes that gave shape to these novels.

Schoeman's retirement years in the Free State, lived in relative isolation, are marked by a production of historical monographs on the European colonization of South Africa and by an inward turn and autobiographical thoughts. Schoeman travelled to Europe several times; in 1998 for the first time after an absence of twenty years. This renewed acquaintance strengthened his connection with his European roots and in particular the Netherlands. His first language, Dutch, sometimes seemed to get the upper hand over his Afrikaans. His innate sense of Dutch is made visible in *Slot van die Dag* where he quotes Dutch texts and remembers his mother's Dutch sayings. In *Skepeling* Schoeman attempts to fuse historical and fictional narratives. *Skepeling* shows Schoeman's critical view on the Afrikaner's past and future. It bears a strong relation with the criticism (the *Volkskritiek*) displayed in *Na die geliefde land* of

1972. Concerning Schoeman's critical stance it can be concluded that there is no difference between his fiction conceived during the apartheid-period (*Na die geliefde land, Om te sterwe*) and *Skepeling*, written in post-apartheid time. His view on the politics and prevailing opinions of the Afrikaners were unchanged over time and remained critical and 'onafrikaans'. Also after the 1994 political turnaround and the subsequent social-political change of the place of the Afrikaners in South African society, Schoeman believed that they did not fully get to grips with the situation and still considered themselves as somehow being superior. In this context I refer to South African scholar Louise Viljoen's analysis of Schoeman's autobiography *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek* (2002), where she remarks that Schoeman in some instances did not hide his contempt for the Afrikaner way of life and Afrikaner culture products, "iets wat in spanning staan met sy eie keuse om Afrikaans te skryf"²⁰⁷ (something that is in tension with his own choice to write in Afrikaans).

Schoeman's very last prose, *Die laaste reis*, about three trips to Lesotho, can be seen as a last personal, affirmative choice 'for Africa'.



The cover of *Slot van die dag. Gedagtes* (Protea Boekhuis, 2017), with a photograph of a Free State landscape.

3. How Africa can be recognized in Karel Schoeman's work

According to Karel Schoeman 'art must originate from interaction with the environment, and great African art can only be rooted in Africa'.²⁰⁸ This statement makes it interesting to investigate what the role is that the African environment or landscape plays in his work. To get knowledge of this, it is necessary to locate the texts where Schoeman's Africa emerges. Indirectly Africa is constantly present in his work through the use of Afrikaans: Afrikaans is the only language in the world that is named after the continent where it arose. So the author who writes in Afrikaans indirectly shows his or her connection with Africa. And to detach the image of the Afrikaans from the idea that it is only spoken in South Africa, there is the fact that the language has a wider spread: it is also spoken in parts of Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe.²⁰⁹ Afrikaans is, despite its origin, an African language.²¹⁰

When thinking about Schoeman's Africa it can be said that Africa is pivoted around the Karoo and the Free State Highveld. As explained in the former chapters Karel Schoeman was emotionally attached to these landscapes. I will now briefly explain the nature of the Karoo and the Highveld.

The Karoo is a geological basin of Triassic age, consisting of elevated plateaus that cover more than half of South Africa's surface. According to dr. Menan du Plessis the etymology of 'Karoo' originates from the Korana word *!'aukarob*, which, in Afrikaans means 'hardveld' (hard field).²¹¹ The name is symbolic indexical to the tough nature of the area. The Karoo is a semi-desert with low rainfall, arid air and extremes of hot and cold temperatures. It extends over the Western and Eastern Cape provinces, the southern part of the Northern Cape, and the western Free State.²¹² In the northeast the Karoo slopes upward to the Highveld, a plateau



A typical land & cloudscape in the Free State Highveld. Photograph: Ria Winters, 2018.

with an average altitude of over 1500 m. The Highveld contains the remainder of the Free State and stretches further towards Gauteng and the northern provinces. Its terrain consists of rolling grassland and savannah plains, sometimes interrupted by mountainous ridges. The Orange and Vaal rivers are the Highveld's main water drainage systems. These rivers also make up the southern and north-western borders of the Free State. Like the Karoo, the Highveld has an arid land climate, but occasional heavy rainfall can occur during the summer.²¹³ Clear weather often presents stark blue skies with typical cloud formations of an even dispersion. It was these type of landscapes that inspired Schoeman as places that were symbolic for the human perseverance to eek a living out of the dry earth and at the same time for the futility of

such efforts. Schoeman's early childhood memories were connected to the look and feel of these wide landscapes, with its colours of white, brown, lilac and blue. The cloudscapes got a place in the title of *'n Lug vol helder wolke* (A sky filled with clear clouds, 1967). The title of its earlier unpublished version, *On the plains*, was just as telling of Schoeman's landscape memories. The description in the opening paragraph of *'n Lug vol helder wolke* illustrates Schoeman's idea of the Free State's landscape:

“Dan kom die wolke op, langsaam deur die lug, en skadu skuif in wye patrone oor die vlakke, oor die heuwels en klipperige rante, oor die damme, oor die verlate paaie en seldsame plaashuise in die skadu van hul bome. Die aansig van die dag verander en die lig vertroebel, die lug swaar met onweer”.²¹⁴

(Then the clouds rise, slowly through the sky, and shadows move in wide patterns across the plain, over the hills and rocky ridges, over the dams, over the deserted roads and dotted farmhouses in the shade of their trees. The face of the day changes and the light blurs, the sky heavy with thunderstorms.)

When Karel Schoeman started to do historical research in the late 1970s for his book about Bloemfontein, not only his historical knowledge of the place expanded, but also of the geography of the area where Bloemfontein was founded. Bloemfontein's first farm was established in the early 1820's by a pioneer settler who wanted to get away from the Cape Colony. He chose a spot near what was later called the Bloemspruit, a small river that nowadays is canalized and runs through the city. This farm became a meeting point for hunters. Then shops and other buildings followed and the town took off amidst a wilderness where lions, hyena's and herds of wildebeest and antelope still roamed free. *Bloemfontein. Die ontstaan van 'n stad 1846-1946* is a non-fiction work, but my reading revealed something of Schoeman's travel experience through space and time. Schoeman describes the city's physical development, the growing population and economy.

Schoeman sets the city in a space: the wild animals in the surroundings are gradually wiped out, stagecoaches run their lines for the postal services, traffic from the south runs through the town towards the northern goldmines and with the arrival of the railways Bloemfontein becomes of age.²¹⁵ In the 1890s there were lots of trees in the gardens. Schoeman paints the impression of the contrast between (artificial) lush green and dry earth in *Bloemfontein. Die ontstaan van 'n stad* as:

“... die koel groen tuine in die hitte en die verblindende felheid van die son en die helder blommeweelde te midde van die droogte en die stof.”²¹⁶

(the cool green gardens in the heat and the dazzling brightness of the sun and the bright floral opulence in the midst of the drought and the dust).

Schoeman's non-fiction descriptions in the book on Bloemfontein fed into his novel *'n Ander land*. The description above is mirrored in a conversation between the protagonist Versluis and his host as:

“Maar dis dan ook ‘n óú tuin,’ gaan haar man voort, ‘n gevestigde tuin – byna dertig jaar, dis ‘n lang tyd in hierdie land. Ek het dadelik begin terwyl hulle nog besig was om die huis te bou, het ek al die bome en die wingerd geplant. Dit maak ‘n verskil.’”²¹⁷

(‘But it is also an old garden,’ continues her husband, ‘an established garden - almost thirty years, it has been a long time in this country. I immediately started while they were still building the house, I planted all the trees and the vineyard. This makes a difference.’)

It is this contrast of man’s explicit attempt to forge a fertile spot out of a barren, hostile land and the existential ‘uneasy’ feeling that arises from this paradox, that makes out one of the underlying themes of *‘n Ander land*. The main theme, according to John Coetzee, in his review of the novel, is about living and dying in South Africa.²¹⁸ Versluis’s life progresses through the novel up to the point where he accepts that he will die in Africa. The novel’s last pages testify to that acceptance by Versluis’s embrace of the landscape:

“.. die glans van die son op die wiegende gras, die geruis en geritsel in die plantegroei [...], om ‘n landskap so helder en deursigtig soos glas agter te laat, witgebleikte velde onder ‘n bleekwit lug [...]. Die leegheid neem jou op en stilte omsluit jou, nie meer vreemde groothede om van oor ‘n afstand onbegrypend betrag te worde nie; die onbekende land word vertrou ...”²¹⁹

(... the glare of the sun on the swaying grass, the noise and rustle in the vegetation [...], to leave a landscape as bright and transparent as glass, white-bleached fields under a pale white sky [...]. The emptiness takes you up and silence surrounds you, no more strange entities to be considered as incomprehensible from a distance; the unknown land becomes familiar ...)

Schoeman’s Africa is, despite everything, accepted as a place where he can die.

A similar interplay between a historical work and a novel and Schoeman’s creative interaction with Africa’s landscape can be observed in his search in the Roggeveld for the boyhood years of the poet N.P. van Wyk Louw. The Roggeveld is part of the Karoo. The interaction is shown in the non-fiction book *Die wêreld van die digter* (1986) and the novel *Hierdie lewe* (1993). When Schoeman took a week off from his work in 1984 and stayed in a Sutherland hotel to work undisturbed on the reviewing of the first proof of *‘n Ander land*, he became inspired by the Roggeveld landscape, which gave him the idea to write Van Wyk’s boyhood biography.²²⁰

Quite a large part of the *Die wêreld van die digter* is indeed dedicated to the geography and (pre)history of the Roggeveld itself. The book starts with a description how the Bushmen lived there and recounts the nineteenth century pioneer settlers’ transhumance way of life, migrating seasonably from the hills into the valleys with their herds of sheep.²²¹ Like in the book about Bloemfontein the author writes the Roggeveld’s history, set in the Karoo landscape that was once the home where lions followed herds of antelope. Schoeman also investigated

how the Afrikaans language evolved in the area around Sutherland and subsequently illustrated how Van Wyk conceived his Afrikaans poetry.²²² The Louws once owned a farm place in the Karoo, called Gunsfontein. Its name and that of other farms feature briefly in *Hierdie Lewe*.²²³ The novel's protagonist's identity – the old lady on her death bed - was conceived through pictures of Van Wyk's grandmother. The lady's voice was inspired by the storytelling of the housekeeper of the vicarage, where Schoeman stayed during his later Sutherland visits.²²⁴



The remains of the Gunsfontein farm in the Roggeveld. Photograph: Ian Nienaber.
Illustration in *Die wêreld van die digter* (Human & Rousseau, 1986), 172.

Below follows an example of two interlinking texts between the historic work and the novel:

Schoeman in *Die wêreld van die digter*:

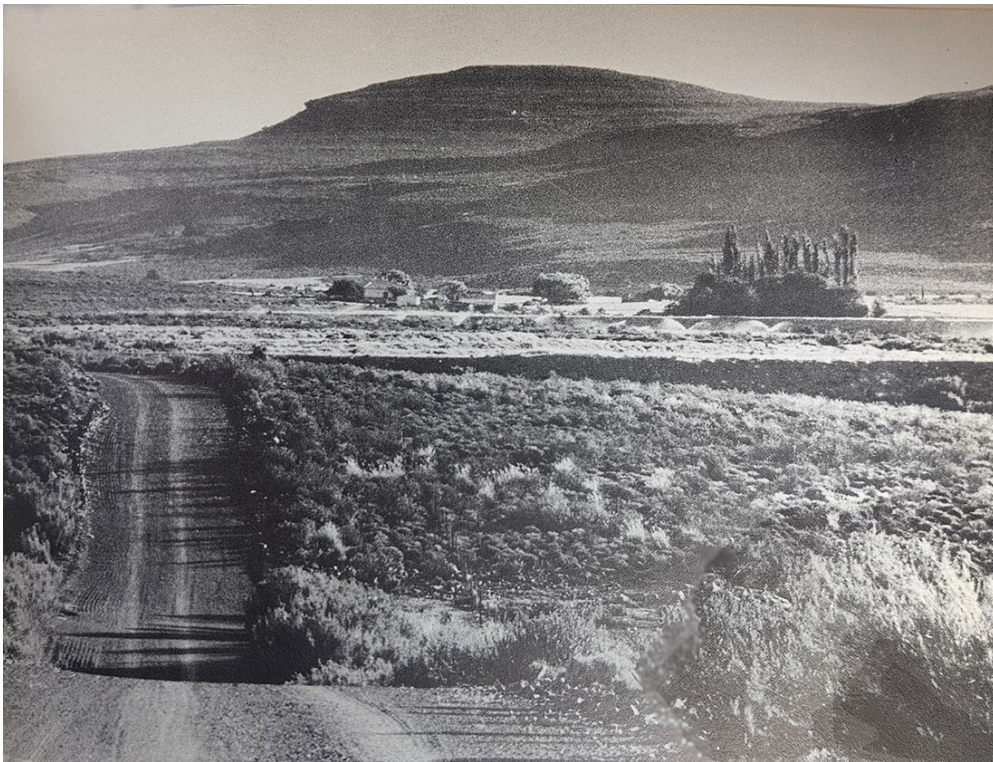
“... elke jaar het die bittere winter van hierdie hoogtes hulle in Mei of Junie met hul skaaptroppe by die bergpasse afgedwing na hul lêplase in die Karoo. In hierdie milder omgewing het hulle in grashutte oorwinter ...”²²⁵

(... every year the bitter winter of these heights forced them in May or June with their flocks of sheep through the mountain passes to their lairs in the Karoo. In this milder environment they overwintered in grass huts...)

Schoeman in *Hierdie lewe*:

“Het hierdie winter daardie jaar vroeg gekom, of is ons gebruiklike vertrek na die Karoo om een of ander rede uitgestel? Ons is weg van die huis in koue en waiende mis wat die eskarp omhul het, ons het afgedaal langs die Vloksbergpas na dieptes wat ons nie kon sien nie, die klein stoet van waens, ruiters en skaaptroppe ...”²²⁶

(Did this winter come early that year, or was our usual departure to the Karoo postponed for some reason? We left the house in cold and blowing fog that enveloped the escarp, we descended along the Vloksberg Pass to depths we could not see, the small procession of wagons, riders and flocks of sheep...)



A Roggeveld landscape. Photograph: Ian Nienaber. Illustration in *Die wêreld van die digter* (Human & Rousseau, 1986), 31.

Summarizing it can be said that Karel Schoeman’s interaction with Africa happened through contact with space (landscapes)²²⁷ and through historical imagination (via archives).²²⁸ Both inspirations can also be linked to Schoeman’s own childhood memories.

Later in his life, during retirement, the interaction with Africa additionally happened through Schoeman’s close contact with his African houseworkers. And as described before: Schoeman’s last journeys were to Lesotho, where he, together with Jemima Meku and Mamohau Lekula, visited the palace and graves of the Basuto monarchs of the House of Moshoeshe. During the last trip the guiding was done by one of the monarch’s family

members.²²⁹ What speaks from Schoeman's last written prose – *Die laaste reis* - is the admiration for Lesotho's mountainous landscapes and the rewarding moments of interaction with Lesotho's inhabitants. The massive mountains of the Tsehlanyane national park impressed him so much that he declared this visit the most impressive experience of nature he ever had.²³⁰ Karel Schoeman had previously never liked mountains.²³¹ But with this last view of Africa it was as if he saw it for the first time, on the threshold of his death.

4. The characteristics of Schoeman's style of creative writing

In this paragraph I will first discuss techniques that Schoeman applied in his creative writing. After that I will briefly elaborate on the nature of Afrikaans and Schoeman's linguistic place in it. Lastly I will compare Schoeman's authorship of his second language with other African authors who also chose not to write in their home language but in their second language.

About the Afrikaans language Schoeman said that, 'in theory it is an infinite space'.²³² To what extent a professional writer should have control over his language, Schoeman claimed the following:

“... hoe fyner en subtieler die aard van die kommunikasie wat beoog word, des te deegliker die kennis en vaardigheid wat vereis word. Mens moet jou instrument ken en beheers soos 'n pianis of violis sýne.”²³³

(...the finer and more subtle the nature of the envisaged communication, the more thoroughly the knowledge and skill required. You have to know and control your instrument like a pianist or violinist.)

It is my belief that one reason why Karel Schoeman wrote in Afrikaans is his appreciation of the linguistic properties of the language, for instance its inherent *seggingskrag* (power of expression). *Seggingskrag* lingers in some of the Afrikaans verbs that express action, like 'toespin', 'toedraai', 'toesak', 'indwing', 'ronddobber', 'oprank', 'aanskuifel' or 'padgee' (to camouflage, to wrap, to fall or to approach, to try and fit in, to float without direction, to climb up (of plants), to shuffle, to leave). Schoeman had a huge vocabulary, something that becomes clear by merely reading a few of his novels. A novel like *Hierdie lewe* with its references to rural landscapes and farmer habits, has a far different use of words as for instance *Spiraal*, which is located in the modern city of Johannesburg. The names of the farmer's utensils, the details of their clothes, the structures of the crops, the systems of the landscapes are all rendered with their own, particular denotations. Examples of words in the first few pages of *Hierdie lewe* that caught my eye as explicit Afrikaans propositions are: volstruiseierdoppe, oopoog, lendelam kar, geborduurde voorskootjie, brandsiek skaap, renosterbos, skraal gruisgrond, siftende kapok. Some of these words are difficult to translate in English and when this is done, the original meaning is partly lost: ostrich eggshells, open eyed, wretched cart, embroidered apron, scorched sheep, rhino bush, slender gravel soil, sifting snow.

One of Schoeman's main style characteristics, probably the most prominent one, is the application of rhythm in his novels, which created an aesthetic effect. As explained in chapter 2, Karel Schoeman got acquainted with the work of Maria Dermoût and Virginia Woolf during his youth. When Schoeman re-read Dermoût's novel *De tienduizend dingen* (The ten thousand things, 1956) sometime during the first years of his retirement, he remembered how he once was inspired once by Dermoût's rhythm. *De tienduizend dingen* is about Dermoût's melancholic memories of the people she used to know on an Indonesian island during colonial times. Through her rhythmic writing she evokes a sense of melancholy. An example of her

rhythm is displayed in the line: ‘Zij wist wel, dat een baai en rotsen en bomen over een branding gebogen een verdriet niet vertroosten...’²³⁴ (She knew well that a bay and rocks and trees bent over a surf do not comfort a sorrow...) The pulse generated by the repetitious ‘en’ (and), and the vowel rhyme of the long, drawn out ‘o’s’ of ‘bomen, over, gebogen, vertroosten’, causes an extra sensory effect on the reader which may transfer some of the author’s melancholic feeling. In Schoeman’s novel *Hierdie lewe* there is similar effect of rhythm and rhyme noticeable in the line: ‘Om die brokkies en klippies en skyfies, die lappies en draadjies en lintjies en briefies uit te soek en te rangskik ...’²³⁵ (To pick out the scraps and pebbles and chips, the rags and wires and ribbons and letters and to arrange them...). There is the repetitious ‘en’, and the rhyme of ‘ies’: brokkies, klippies, skyfies, lappies, draadjies, lintjies, briefies. The resonance of the short sound of ‘ies’ may evoke something of a crisp atmosphere that reminds of a landscape like the Roggeveld.

Virginia Woolf had her own specific technique of writing. How she translated inspiration into words is summarized by her statement that first there should be a feeling, an inspiration about something, then the rhythm should form in your mind and only after that the words should follow. So, first the feeling, then the rhythm and then the words. Schoeman identified with this method and made it his own.²³⁶ He used rhythm as a method. But the feeling for rhythm would not appear for him on command. Schoeman declared in 1999, in his interview with Gerrit Olivier, that he deliberately waited in silence until the feeling of rhythm appeared, and only then could write down the words.²³⁷ South African professor of Philosophy Johann Rossouw speaks of Schoeman’s ‘kenotic disposition’, which occurs when the writer as an artist empties himself in order to listen to what is given to him in his imagination.²³⁸ Schoeman stated in his autobiography that he took mentorship by Virginia Woolf’s technique and aimed to reach the same effect on his readers as she did on hers.²³⁹ The following example illustrates Schoeman’s use of rhythm in *Hierdie lewe*. The rhythm can only be heard if the reader has a command of the Afrikaans language. And even then it is a matter of the personal feeling for rhythm, which is not the same for everyone. The rhythm that I felt appears naturally when I read the text with pauses and accelerations. The citation is of a piece of text where the I-character moves from inside the house outward into the dark night. To me the rhythm symbolizes that movement. I have marked the pauses with ‘__’ and the accelerations with *italics*:

“*Staan op en gaan, __ staan op en loop deur daardie donker; __ trek die deur oop en gaan uit uit die slapende huis, __ uit oor die drumpel op die werf waar die land in die sterlig uitstrek. __ Oor en oor volg ek daardie bekende pad, sonder dat iemand my in die donker kan hoor, __ oor en oor aarsel ek voor die deur, __ aarsel ek op die drumpel, en dan eers kan ek my hand uitsteek na die grendel en die deur ooptrek, __ dan eers kan ek na buite uitgaan in die nag.*”²⁴⁰

In Elsa Silke’s translation of *Hierdie Lewe* as *This Life* (2005), something of the rhythm has been retained, but the translation has been cut short because the words ‘sonder dat iemand my in die donker kan hoor’ is summarized as ‘unnoticed in the dark’ and the I-figure as the ‘ek’ is less noticeable and largely disappeared in the rhythm :

“Get up and go, get up and walk through that darkness; pull open the door and leave the sleeping house, cross the threshold to the yard where the land stretches out in starlight. Again and again I follow that familiar path, unnoticed in the dark, again and again I waver at the door, waver on the threshold, only then reaching for the bolt and pulling the door open, only then venturing out into the night.”²⁴¹

A second technique used by Schoeman to create aesthetic effect, is to apply words that by their pronunciation mimic a sound in the physical world, which may evoke an image in the reader’s mind. *Hierdie lewe* is set in a dry and stony landscape; by the frequent use of words with hard k’s the reader experiences the tough surroundings through this auditory iconicity. An example goes as follows:

“Kaalvoet op die klipbank [...] met die klip kil onder my voete.
Onder my lê die bergerye, kranse, klowe en vlaktes van die Karoo.
Waar die jakkalse skuil, deur die leë spruite met hul klipperige beddings en die skeure
waar daar so lank laas water geloop het.”²⁴²

In the English translation in *This Life* the intended sound effect is altered and diminished:

The rock cold under my feet [...] yet I do not freeze or falter.
Beneath me lie the mountain ranges, cliffs, chasms and plains of the Karoo. [...]
[...] Past the ridges where the jackal hides, through the dry streams with their stony
beds and fissures where water has not flowed for many years.²⁴³

A third linguistic technique that is notable in Schoeman’s narrative space and grammatical construction is, according to linguist Luna Beard, the use of ‘heavy’ nouns where they play a significant role in a story and where they are placed in a certain order.²⁴⁴ She discusses this technique as applied in *’n Ander land*. Besides the emotionally-heavy phrases that constitute Versluis’s experience, there are grammatical constructions where a lot of nouns are placed at the end of sentences, as follows (the noun constructions where Beard refers to are italicised by me):

“Versluis kyk na die skamele vrouebesittings wat op die tafel voor hom lê: *die haarborsel, die naaistelletjie, die gesangboek; gekleurde linte, ’n paar sakdoeke.* (p 230) (Versluis looked at the humble feminine possessions on the table in front of him: the hairbrush, the sewing-box, the hymn book; coloured ribbons, a few handkerchiefs).”²⁴⁵

An example of a sentence-initial heavy nouns noted by Beard in *’n Ander land* is:

“*Die koorsaanvalle, die hoesbuie, die oomblikke van swakheid en floute en die bloedings* wat af en toe voorkom, neem hy waar, registreer dit, en skuif die bewussyn weer opsy: *drink ’n glas water, neem ’n hoesklontjie of drink loudanum of van die*

medisyne wat dokter Kellner vir hom voorgeskryf het, bly soggens langer in die bed of gaan lê oordag. (p 250) (The attacks of fever, the coughing spells, the moments of weakness and faintness and the sporadic bleeding, he observes, registers them, and then pushes the awareness aside again; drinks a glass of water, takes a cough drop or drinks laudanum or some of the medicine that Doctor Kellner prescribed, remains in bed longer in the morning or takes a nap during the day).”²⁴⁶

In 1985, in his article ‘Die GAR (Groot Afrikaanse Roman)’ Karel Schoeman wrote about his disappointment of the impoverished and uncreative use of Afrikaans in general, that people tend to believe that Afrikaans sentences should have a standard place for verbs, nouns and adjectives.²⁴⁷ Luna Beard’s analysis shows that Karel Schoeman’s use of syntax and the arranging of words was not ‘standard’, but that he played with sentence constructions to emphasize details he considered as important.

A fourth example, about the use of metaphors, is also pointed out by Beard. In *’n Ander land*, where the seasons appear to be carriers of emotions. The kind of metaphor she refers to is where the cognitive mechanism projects one experimental domain onto another.²⁴⁸ In the last pages of *’n Ander land*, where Versluis goes through an exalted sense of experiencing the clear, wintery landscape of the Free State, is metaphorical for his acceptance of dying in peace. Speaking of metaphors, John Coetzee has, in his appreciation of the last pages of *’n Ander land*, compared Schoeman’s writing with a symphonic movement.²⁴⁹

With the subject of music another important aspect of Schoeman’s writing emerges, which is the ‘meaning’ that is conveyed by what lies outside words. Schoeman stated in the 1999 interview with Olivier that in his authorship he always felt that where things really mattered, words were not enough. He meant that there was always the tension between the urge to communicate something, and the realization that every utterance proved inadequate.²⁵⁰ Schoeman explained this by using the metaphor of a sandglass:

“... en besef wat uiteindelik die moeite werd is, is onuitspreekbaar. En probeer jy nie meer worde soek nie. [...] Maar verby ’n sekere punt, by die noute van die sandloper, probeer jy nie meer nie, dan val die sand deur, as ’t ware in stilte.”²⁵¹

(... and realize that what is ultimately worthwhile is unpronounceable. And you don't try to look for words anymore. [...] But past a certain point, at the node of the sandglass, you don't try anymore try, the sand falls through, as it were into silence.)

Schoeman used to quote philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) who said that ‘the unspeakable is - unspeakable - contained in the spoken’.²⁵² Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophus* (1921/22) dealt with the relation between language, thinking and reality. Schoeman may have read the *Tractatus* and it is clear that he felt there was common ground between Wittgenstein’s ideas and his own effort.²⁵³ Schoeman believed that the world is larger than what we conceive with our senses. There is the ‘residue’ which remains in the mental ether beyond the limits of language. I believe that Schoeman attempted to play on his reader’s

senses by applying the techniques mentioned above (and many more) in order to express something of the world's elusiveness.

There is one more technique that in this context deserves mentioning, which is the application of visual, optical signs, like light and dark and the denotations of colours, like Schoeman did in the travel journal *Afskeid van Europa* (Goodbye to Europe). I wrote an article about this, titled 'Kleurgebruik in taal. Die palet van Karel Schoeman' (The use of colour in language. The palette of Karel Schoeman).²⁵⁴ Schoeman painted an image into the minds of his readers when he wrote about look and feel of Berlin, Dresden, Vienna and Salzburg. The remarkable thing was that the colours he used in the chapter about Dresden, a city that he visited for the first time and did not like very much, were less bright than the colours he used in the chapters of the other cities. Dresden got cool, bleak pastel-like colours, while Salzburg, a city that he loved, received more colours that were brighter and warmer.

Lastly, in his writings about the Free State Schoeman often refers to the sharp light that overshines the landscapes, creating a metaphysical quality in the stories.²⁵⁵

Next I'm going to point out some facts about the Afrikaans language and explore Karel Schoeman's place in it. The grammar of Afrikaans is largely built on seventeenth century Dutch, although the Afrikaans shows some deviations in structure, for instance the double denial of 'nie ... nie'.²⁵⁶ In relation to Karel Schoeman's use of language and the Afrikaans syntax and vocabulary there is one specificity that deserves attention. According to South African linguists Wannie Carstens and Edith Raidt, the Afrikaans language of the 20th century has drastically expanded its vocabulary and adapted it to modern needs by creating its own forms and neologisms.²⁵⁷ Karel Schoeman contributed to this expansion through his work in the 1960s, when he 'created' Afrikaans catholic words for a catholic dictionary and prayer book. Because Afrikaans is a young language and moreover a language that is set in a context of rapid social change, Karel Schoeman could utilize this evolving linguistic space, make his mark on the language and actually helped building it. During the course of his life he progressed in 'owning' the language and felt confident to apply it in a creative and descriptive manner.

Another note is that Schoeman's Afrikaans bears the markings of Dutchisms. At the start of his writing career he received criticism from Afrikaans literary scholars on this linguistic anomaly (it was considered as not Afrikaans enough), but later it was accepted as a feature of his writing style.²⁵⁸ South African scholar Renée Marais points out one of Schoeman's Dutchisms as: 'Die sjaal gly van haar skouers en sy vang dit op'. In correct Afrikaans this should have been: 'Die sjaal gly van haar skouers af, en sy vang dit [-]'.²⁵⁹ (The scarf glides from her shoulders and she catches it).

What is also notable in Schoeman's writing and his search how to express himself through language is that, during the progressing of years, he developed a love for German, saying that the German vocabulary contained words that expressed meaning as no other language could.²⁶⁰ One such word I already mentioned, 'Entsagung', but there were others that sometimes popped up as Germanisms in his writing. Like 'aanstrengend', a word he uses in *Afskeid en Vertrek*,²⁶¹ but it does not appear in the Afrikaans dictionary.²⁶²

Schoeman's choice to write in his second language to communicate his ideas and feelings is not unique. There are other African authors who specifically chose for a language other than their home language as a medium to communicate and publish in. South African

Professor of Literature Willie Burger states that his home language is English, but that from a certain point onwards his mindset was formed by the Afrikaner culture and chose their language, the Afrikaans, as the language for his authorship. Burger does not identify with the Afrikaners, but uses their disposition as a looking glass to observe the world and as a means to react against.²⁶³ His main viewpoint of writing is from the perspective of literary criticism and has a pedagogical goal. The pedagogical goal bears a relation with Schoeman's writing.

Another South African writer who chose to write in his second language is Zakes Mda. He was born in 1948 in Herschel, in the Eastern Cape, as Zanemvula Kizito Gatyeni Mda. In 1963 he published a story in his home language Xhosa, *Igqira lase Mvubase* (the Mvubase witch), in the youth magazine called *Wamba*.²⁶⁴ During his youth Mda lived in Lesotho for a while, but later went to university in the United States to study, ultimately became a professor and developed himself as a prolific writer of novels and plays. Mda's main theme is to depict African societies in a state of transition; he appropriated the English language to do this.²⁶⁵ He writes from a dual impulse, to entertain and to instruct. The latter matches with the pedagogical goals of Schoeman and Burger, but Mda – and this is a difference with Schoeman's writing – reaches for a wider audience. In 2013 he said in an interview with the SABC about one of his novels which was set in the thirteenth century, that he wanted to show 'South African readers and world readers that we had a civilisation before we were colonised'. The linguistic problem that many expressions in Xhosa cannot be fully translated in English, carrying the specific associations and connotations that exist in Xhosa, does not deter Mda. He believes his European and American readers are clever enough to get the essence of his stories.²⁶⁶

Mda obviously doesn't belong to the group of African writers who plead for the sole use of their traditional African languages in African literature, like the Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1938-) does. Ngũgĩ's first language is Gikũyũ. He went through the formal education system in Kenya which was executed in English. He believes that the English language (like French and Portuguese) was forced upon Africans through colonial and imperial conquest and subsequently diminished the use of the indigenous languages. He initially published his work in English but did this for the last time in 1977; from then on all his creative work was decisively in Gikũyũ. He wanted to 'seize back the creative initiative in history through a real control of all the means of self-definition in time and space'. He felt that publishing in traditional languages could evoke an African renaissance.²⁶⁷ So, compared to Mda's strategy, this is the 'opposite' side of African writing.

Besides Mda there are other African authors who consciously use their second languages, like English. They are for instance Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) and Biodun Jeyifo (1945-), both Nigerian born authors. However, Achebe's position about the English versus autochthone language was paradoxical. He said in 1984 about his own publications in English: 'it produces a guilty feeling. But for me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it.'²⁶⁸ Achebe wrote about the cruelty and injustice of colonialism; his use of English is a form of resistance.²⁶⁹

Biodun Jeyifo is one of Africa's foremost literary critics, he is a social activist but does not agree with the viewpoint that authors should express themselves just in their autochthone languages. According to him English is (now) an African language and this justifies for African authors to write and publish in.²⁷⁰ Writers like Achebe and Jeyifo adapt the English grammar to assert their own independence and the self-confidence of post-colonial Nigeria. To

manipulate the syntax of the English to fit their creative needs is an assertion of power in itself.²⁷¹

But how do the writings of Burger, Mda, Achebe and Jeyifo compare to Schoeman's application of Afrikaans? I believe all five authors are directing some form of message in their writings, which may – seen in a broader sense - apply to every writer in the world. But what Schoeman, Burger, Mda, Achebe and Jeyifo have in common is that they specifically want to own their second language, adapt the grammar to their needs and 'feed' their narratives in an asserted, possibly manipulated way to their prospective readership. The difference between Schoeman and Burger on the one side and Mda, Achebe and Jeyifo on the other, is that the latter three have a much wider audience; with English they can, in theory, serve almost the whole world.

Another comparison needs to be made. Achebe and Jeyifo are post-colonial writers who react against the oppression and aftermath of colonialism and imperialism. Karel Schoeman also did this briefly during and shortly after his stay in Ireland. In the 1960s he identified with the Irish, what happened to them and their culture under British oppression, and projected this on the Afrikaner's nineteenth century history. The novel *By Fakkellig* is – for a part - a retrospective form of protest against imperialism. Schoeman's antagonism towards the English language also relates to this. But in the context of colonialism and imperialism and the social oppression that comes with it, the Afrikaans language owns both sides of the coin: in the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902 it was the language of the oppressed, and after the victory in the 1948 election of the *Nasionale Party* it became the language of the oppressor. In post-apartheid South Africa it is gradually losing the latter's stigma. Since 1996, with the acceptance of the new Constitution, Afrikaans has an equal place as one of the eleven South African languages, just as English.²⁷² But for the English there is an upgrade. English is now the main, most important language in the South African formal education system and Afrikaans is losing ground in that aspect, even at Stellenbosch University, an institution that used to have the Afrikaans at the forefront of its identity. The fear that Afrikaans would eventually disappear was always present in Schoeman's mind. His writings are a bulwark against this tide and occupy their own nuanced place in pre-apartheid and post-apartheid writing.

Conclusion

The factors that attributed to Karel Schoeman's choice to write and publish primarily in the Afrikaans language come from an array of circumstances and motivations.

Although Karel Schoeman's home language was Dutch, which was spoken with his mother and her parents, his Afrikaner father had, at the divorce, wished for an upbringing in the Afrikaner culture. This partially succeeded in Karel Schoeman's first and secondary education in the schools in Paarl where Afrikaans was the main spoken language. As a very young child he had also already been exposed to Afrikaans in the Trompsburg hotel and café that was briefly run by his parents. The images of the landscapes around Trompsburg and Bloemfontein were ingrained in Schoeman's memory and remained not only connected with memories of his mother and his grandparents, but also with a conscious or unconscious longing for his Afrikaner father and his family ('my vader se mense'). Schoeman's very first, unpublished novels in Dutch and English were placed in Afrikaner Free State farmer settings. Because he had trouble letting his characters speak in a non-Afrikaans language, he switched to completely writing in Afrikaans which, to his surprise and satisfaction, worked well and he felt motivated to keep it up.

Another factor in the process of appropriating Afrikaans was Schoeman's turn to Catholicism. In the Seminary in Pretoria he translated English catholic terms into Afrikaans and was involved in the translation of the handbook of the Maria legion. He enjoyed the creative challenge of inventing words in Afrikaans for a subject that did not have an Afrikaans vocabulary so far. Later in life he would do the same when he translated *Tranquil mind*, a book about Buddhism. The circumstance that Afrikaans is a young language which did not have the full body of the world's lecture and literature to its disposal (as translations in Afrikaans), opened up this void as a challenge to the author Schoeman. Not only did he construe Afrikaans words for Catholic and Buddhist terms, but he also translated foreign novels into Afrikaans. There was a market for his Afrikaans writings. Through external instigation Schoeman was also motivated by the request of the formal education system to produce books in Afrikaans about the lives of famous figures like Shakespeare, Rembrandt and the Strauss family, which were then employed for student use.

Schoeman's European travels contributed to taking psychological distance from his home country and caused an internal reflection on South African society. He disapproved of the apartheid system and got to know its true political face when he read forbidden books in Amsterdam. Paradoxically, especially in his Irish years, he identified with the Afrikaner people. His writings however had a pedagogical goal: to hold up a mirror for the Afrikaners. This motivation to keep writing in Afrikaans was strengthened when he received the Hertzog prize for literature in 1970, and which was followed by many other literature awards.

The publication of his two Irish journals was a form of catholic instruction. The publication of the four translations of Irish legends was also a form of idealistic instruction, to show the Afrikaners that history and culture is an important thing to have as a people. The underlying motivations for the journals and legends were that Karel Schoeman could artistically express his love for landscapes (in the journals) and his interest for pre-Christian history (the legends). The Irish legends and their mystical characters were also a pre-boding to

Schoeman's later interest in Carl Jung's ideas and archetypes. The legends formed another linguistic challenge to render traditional Irish terms into Afrikaans.

In Scotland Karel Schoeman produced more novels and three screen plays for television, all for an Afrikaans speaking public. Despite the satisfaction that his work as a nurse in Glasgow gave him he decided, after a period of doubt, that he should return to South Africa to be with his people after the Soweto uprisings in 1976. Schoeman's ambiguous feeling about his country was expressed in the novel *'n Ander land* where the sick Dutch traveller Versluis goes through a process of dying in Bloemfontein. This theme is symbolical indexical to Schoeman's own acceptance that he would die in Africa.

Schoeman's negatively perceived change of Bloemfontein in the late 1970s and his attempt to rescue the city's memories in a book (and with that the memories of his youth), marked his shift from novelistic writing to historical writing. Schoeman found the process of collecting historical material and putting them together in a narrative, very rewarding and compared it with the imaginary process of making mosaics. His three or four years in Bloemfontein also marked his rejection of the Afrikaners. In 1982 he moved to the more worldly and English-orientated city of Cape Town. His job at the South African Library, spanning sixteen years, provided him with the opportunity to do research in the library archives. Schoeman used the obtained knowledge for a profusion of publications of articles, novels and historical works. Some of the articles and historical works were in English and therefore had a wider readership than his Afrikaans publications. Schoeman however was not attracted to expressing himself in English; Afrikaans remained the language in which he could only express himself creatively in.

The creative influence came from landscapes of the Karoo and the Highveld. The sober and crisp landscapes were the landscapes of his childhood. During his Cape Town period he took journeys through the Karoo and during holidays retreated to his second home in Trompsburg on the Highveld. Schoeman filled his landscapes with characters through historical imagination, the metahistory whereof Hayden White spoke. The characters were grounded in the archival research. Schoeman applied several linguistic techniques to shape his creative writing, the most important being the required feeling for rhythm, which prevailed in importance above words. The Afrikaans vocabulary and grammar fitted very well with Schoeman's ability to render imaginary images into written words, words that would create pictures into the reader's minds or that would evoke an atmosphere, an elusive, invisible side of reality in which the human condition exists. Furthermore, Afrikaans itself as Schoeman's second language, created a certain distance between the author and his prose; this linguistic distance helped to explore the confrontational depths of Schoeman's inner feelings.

Karel Schoeman applied several registers in his Afrikaans: his novels were written in an artistic, poetic prose. His historical books were shaped as historical narratives and – compared with his novels - contained less rhythm and rhyme. His articles in scientific magazines were more sober and written in a concise script that matched with the style of the magazines.

Karel Schoeman's social-political position in the Afrikaans literature is a double one: on the

one hand he wrote from the underdog position of a member of a community with a possibly fading language (that he fought against by writing in it) and on the other hand he adopted an individual leading role as an artist to instruct the Afrikaners about their misplaced, alleged 'superior' feelings. In this historical, anthropological linguistic double-sidedness Karel Schoeman occupied his own niche in the Afrikaans literature.

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- 54 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 360.
- 55 Kannemeyer. 1983. *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse literatuur 2*, 542.
- 56 Chris N. van der Merwe. 2014. *Die houtbeen van St Sergius. Opstelle oor Afrikaanse romans*. Sun Press, 95.
- 57 About the outsidership of Schoeman's protagonists, see: Gert Jooste. 1995. 'Die vreemdelingskaptema in enkele romans van Karel Schoeman 'n Bespreking van die tussenskap', *Literator* 16(I) April 1995:139-150.
- 58 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 415.
- 59 Karel Schoeman. 1978. *Onderweg: reisherinnerings*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 91-93.
- 60 Karel Schoeman, 1971. *Op 'n eiland*, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 25. Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 411.
- 61 *Die Brug*. 12 september 1968. 'Die gawe. Gedagtes oor liefde en erotiek', 11, 21.
- 62 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 385.
- 63 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 437-456.
- 64 Email Karel Schoeman correspondence with Pieter Bol, 23-5-2001. Email correspondence Karel Schoeman with Ria Winters, 23-2-2017.
- 65 Correspondence of letters with an anonymous friend in Cape Town, dated 10 May 1976.
- 66 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 458.
- 67 Fanie Olivier. 1980. 'Hoogtepunt in prosakuns van Karel Schoeman', *Transvaler* 9-2-1980.
- 68 Anita Lindenberg. 1975. 'Hooffiguur en leser té ver verwyder', *Oggendblad*, 26-6-1975.
- André Brink. 1975. 'Karel Schoeman al hoe meer 'n tantietjie wat doilies hekel', *Rapport*, 22-6-1975.
- 69 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 468.
- 70 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 472-473.
- 71 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 476.
- 72 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 493.
- 73 Olivier. 2002. 'Onderhoud met Karel Schoeman'. In: Willie Burger en Helize van Vuuren (eds.), *Sluiswagter by die dam van stemme. Beskouings oor die werk van Karel Schoeman*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 20; Karel Schoeman. 2017. *Slot van die dag. Gedagtes*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 51.
- 74 White. 1973. *Metahistory*, ix-x, 274.; Hayden White. 1978. *Tropics of discourse: essays in cultural criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 68-71.
- 75 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 495. The term 'Afrikaners' is a cultural attribute of the people who consider themselves as such and are accepted by other Afrikaners as such. Afrikaners speak Afrikaans, but it must be taken in mind that the inhabitants of the towns of the nineteenth century Orange Free State, of whom many considered themselves as Afrikaners, spoke other languages at home too, like English, German, Dutch or Yiddish and a part of the urban population spoke English to each other. The rural Afrikaners mostly spoke just Afrikaans as their main language. Later, in the period when the nationalists were in power, Afrikaans-speaking

historians of the Free State would seize the state history according to their own ideologies, to write the orthodox doctrine that the Free State was Afrikaans (Afrikaans in the meaning of Afrikaanders, the people that were believed to be direct descendants of the trekboers that left the Cape Colony from 1835 on in mass migrations into the Southern African interior, to escape British rule) and omitting the fact that there were many other influences and languages that made up the Free State's constitution. In short: the term 'Afrikaners' has a fluent cultural character.

76 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 504.

77 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 505.

78 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 516, 458.

79 Karel Schoeman. 2017. *Afskeid van Europa*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 180.

80 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 517.

81 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 520.

82 Karel Schoeman. 1989. 'For the record'. *Leadership Institutions* Vol. 8 (2).

83 'Die S.A. Biblioteek in 'n krisis. The S.A. Library in a crisis'. 1986. Notes and news: van die redaksie. *South African Library Quarterly Magazine*, vol 40(3), 88-90. See also the thesis of Peter R. Coates. 2015. *The South African Library as a state-aided national library in the era of apartheid: an administrative history*. Thesis University of Cape Town; 210, 246, 252. <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/20094>.

84 Luc Renders. 2002. 'Die betrokkenheid van die buitestaander: Schoeman en apartheid', in: W. Burger and H. van Vuuren (eds.). *Sluiswagter by die dam van Stemme. Beskouings oor die werk van Karel Schoeman*.

Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 66. See also: M.J. Daymond, J.U. Jacobs and Margaret Landa (eds.). 1984.

Momentum. On recent South African writing. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, xiii, and Karel Schoeman in this edition: 'Rekenskap van 'n getuie (the account of a witness)', 96-100.

85 Ria Winters. 2021. 'De Africana-artikelen van Karel Schoeman in het Zuid-Afrikahuis'. Amsterdam, Zuid-Afrikahuis: *Spectrum*, 1 March 2021.

86 Dana Snyman. 2020. *Soekmekaar*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, ch. 20 'Ntate Schoeman'.

87 Ena Jansen. Like family. 2019. *Domestic workers in South African history and literature*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

88 Karel Schoeman. 2017. *Die laaste reis*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis.

89 Olivier. 2002. 'Onderhoud met Karel Schoeman', 20; Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 480.

90 The statement that Karel Schoeman 'could only write in Afrikaans' ("Afrikaans is die enige taal waarin ek kán skryf") is made in several of his publications or (rare) interviews, but it is most clearly uttered in Schoeman's email of 24 September, 2002, to dr. Pieter Bol: "Ik kan alleen in het Afrikaans (creatief) schrijven maar lees het slechts met moeite" (I can only write (creatively) in Afrikaans but read it just with difficulty).

91 Karel Schoeman. 2017. *Afskeid van Europa*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 91.

92 James Baldwin, cited in Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 281.

93 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 115.

94 Karel Schoeman. 1994. 'A book that changed me', *Southern African Review of Books*, June 1994.

95 Kannemeyer. 1983. *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse literatuur 2*, 528.

96 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 295-298.

97 Erika Terblanche. 2017. 'Karel Schoeman (1939-2018)', *LitNet skrywersalbum*, 4-5-2017.

<https://www.litnet.co.za/karel-schoeman-1939/>.

98 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 298.

99 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 295.

100 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 298.

101 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 298, 323.

102 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 323.

103 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 324.

104 Karel Schoeman. 1966. *Berig uit die vreemde*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 14; Karel Schoeman.

1968. *Van 'n verre eiland*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 87.

105 W.A.M. Carstens and Michael le Cordeur (eds.). 2016. *Ons kom van vêr. Bydraes oor bruin Afrikaanssprekendes se rol in die ontwikkeling van Afrikaans*. Tygervallei: Naledi; Jakes Gerwel. 1979.

'Makliker om Afrikaans te wees: dr. Gerwel', *Die Burger*, 11-12.1979.

106 Gerrit Olivier and Anna Coetzee (eds.). 1994. *Nuwe perspektiewe op die geskiedenis van Afrikaans*.

Halfweghuis: Southern Boekuitgewers Bpk; W.A.M. Carstens and E.H. Raidt. 2017. *Die storie van Afrikaans uit Europa en van Afrika. Biografie van 'n taal. Deel I*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis.

- 107 Kannemeyer. 1983. *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse literatuur 2*, 526-542. John Kannemeyer. 2005. *Die Afrikaanse literatuur 1652-2004*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 415-452.
- 108 André Brink. 1976. *Voorlopige rapport. Beskouings oor die Afrikaanse literatuur van Sewentig*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 66.
- 109 *Die Brug* (the bridge) was a South African Catholic four weekly magazine, in which authors (mostly in Afrikaans) tried to find religious commonplaces between the Catholic and Protestant faith. Hence, the subtitle of the magazine is 'Tussen Protestant en Katoliek' (between Protestant and Catholic). Karel Schoeman's articles reflected his views on an Afrikaans or Afrikaner form of Catholicism, which meant a more sober form of Catholicism, but he also published secular travel stories in the magazine.
- 110 Ongeama Barker. 1966. 'Berig uit die Vreemde', *Die Brug*, November 1966, 21-22.
- 111 Ena Jansen. 1977. *By Fakkellig. Behandeld deur Ena Jansen. Blokboek*. Cape Town: H&R-Academica (Edms.) Bpk; Pdraig de Búrca and Helize van Vuuren. 2003. 'Die koloniale diskoers en politieke literatuur in Afrikaans: die Anglo-Ierse patriot in Schoeman se By Fakkellig en O'Flaherty se Insurrection', *Stilet*, IX(2), 188-199.
- 112 André Brink. 1973. 'Op soek na Afrika', *Standpunte* 110, XXVIII(8): 7
- 113 Karel Schoeman. 1964. 'Uit die Iers: 'Die Heer van die skepping', 'Die skrywer in die woud', 'My berig aan jou', 'Aileall se liefdeslied', 'Die twaalf winde', 'Gráinne het gesê', 'Die fort'. *Standpunte* 17(6): 1-3, 67-68.
- 114 Schoeman. 1964, *Standpunte* 17(6), 67.
- 115 White. 1973. *Metahistory*, x.
- 116 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 345.
- 117 *English-Irish Dictionary*. de Bhaldraithe, 1959. <https://www.teanglann.ie/en/eid/>
- 118 Schoeman. 1966. *Van 'n verre eiland*, 102-103.
- 119 Karel Schoeman. 1987. 'Van Rooijen, Henderikus Hermanus', in: C.J. Beyers and J.L. Basson (eds.), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek Deel V*, Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike navorsing, 877.
- 120 Karel Schoeman. 1965. 'Scéal ón Aifric: strainséar sa tír', *Comhar Teorante*, 5-5-1965. Ria Winters. 2019. 'n Vreemdeling in die land; 'n kortverhaal uit 1965 van Karel Schoeman in die Ierse taal', *LitNet. Boeke en skrywers*, 1-5-2019. (Translation from Irish to English: Seán Ó Laoi. Translation from English to Afrikaans: Ria Winters).
- 121 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 361.
- 122 Kannemeyer. 2005. *Die Afrikaanse literatuur, 1652-2004*, 268-274; Hermann Giliomee. 2003. *The Afrikaners. Biography of a people*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers Ltd, 554.
- 123 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 361.
- 124 M. Nienaber-Luitingh. 1977. *Beweging van tagtig. Blokboek*. Cape Town: H&R-Academica (Edms.)
- 125 Schoeman. 2017. *Afskeid van Europa*, 51.
- 126 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 382.
- 127 Robert Mohr. 1968. 'Pragtige, weemoedige roos' van die Dramakuns'. *Die Burger*, 19-5-1968.
- 128 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 448, 516.
- 129 Franz Marx. 1982. 'n Lug vol helder wolke. Television drama, ca. 100 min.; Anonymous TV correspondent. 1983. Dit 'lol' met drama se verfilming'. *Volksblad*, 15-2-1983.
- 130 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 421.
- 131 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 386.
- 132 John Kannemeyer. 2004. *Jan Rabie. Prosapionier en politieke padwyser*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 408.
- 133 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 402.
- 134 Karel Schoeman. 1978. *Onderweg, reisherinnerings*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 91-92.
- 135 Kannemeyer. 2005. *Die Afrikaanse literatuur 1652-2004*, 421.
- 136 Kannemeyer, *Jan Rabie*, 407.
- 137 Karel Schoeman. 2017. *Slot van die dag*; see page 92 where Schoeman wonders what would have happened if he had stayed in the Netherlands. Also page 95: 'In 1973 sou ek in Nederland kon aangebly het' (In 1973 I could have stayed in the Netherlands).
- 138 Etienne Leroux. 1973. 'Herrie oor roman is onnodig'. *Die Vaderland*, 16-1-1973.
- 139 Giliomee. 2003. *The Afrikaners*, 554.
- 140 Alan Paton. 1972. 'A noble piece of Afrikaans writing. A review of 'Na die geliefde land' by Karel Schoeman. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/DC/rejul73.7/rejul73.7.pdf>. See also: Daniel Hugo. 1981. *Na die geliefde land, Karel Schoeman. Blokboek*. Pretoria: Human & Rousseau-Academica Bpk.

- 141 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 169, 249, 429.
- 142 Rapport. 1973. 'En nou Breyten Schoeman ook'. Anonymous interview with Karel Schoeman, 29 July 1973.
- 143 Karel Schoeman. 1979. *Die Hemeltuין*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 59.
- 144 Schoeman. 1979. *Die Hemeltuין*, 89.
- 145 Alexia Smit. 2016. Intimacy, identity and home: 40 years of South African television. *Communicatio* 42(4), 1-10. See also https://af.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suid-Afrikaanse_Uitsaaikorporasie.
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- 147 Margot Trümpelmann. 1979. 'Karel Schoeman se werk op TV', *Beeld*, 25-7-1979.
- 148 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 536.
- 149 Daniel Hugo. 2020. 'Karel, André en Ingrid.' *Versindaba*. 'n Kollektiewe weblog vir die Afrikaanse digkuns.
<https://versindaba.co.za/2020/08/10/daniel-hugo-karel-andre-en-ingrid/>
- 150 André Brink. 1975. 'Karel Schoeman al hoe meer 'n tantietjie wat doilies hekel', *Rapport*, 22-6-1975.
- 151 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 455.
- 152 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 458.
- 153 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 460.
- 154 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 455.
- 155 Schoeman. 1979. *Die Hemeltuין*, 16.
- 156 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 476.
- 157 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 476.
- 158 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 477.
- 159 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 480.
- 160 Karel Schoeman. 1980. *Bloemfontein: die ontstaan van 'n stad 1846-1946*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.
- 161 Karel Schoeman. 1982. *Die dood van 'n Engelsman: die Cox-moorde van 1856 en die vroeë jare van die Oranje-Vrystaat*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.
- 162 Karel Schoeman. 1982. *Vrystaatse erfenis: bouwerk en geboue in die 19de eeu*; 1982. *Sophie Levisseur: Memories*; 1983. *In liefde en trou: die lewe van president M.T. Steyn en mevrou Tibbie Steyn met 'n keuse uit hul korrespondensie*. All published by Human & Rousseau, Cape Town.
- 163 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 482.
- 164 Frank O'Gorman. 1997. *The long eighteenth century. British political and social history, 1688-1832*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- 165 For instance: Karel Schoeman. 1984. 'David Sekonyana Motsieloa. A victim of the First Free State-Sotho War.' *Quarterly Bulletin SAL*, vol. 38 (4): 179-183; 1984. 'My lieve vader governor. Kwane (Jan Letele) en sy brief aan sir George Grey.' *Quarterly bulletin SAL*, vol. 39 (2): 67-72; 1986. 'n Stem uit die verstrooiing; of, hoe Dipapang die Difaqane oorleef het.' *Africana aantekeninge en nuus*, vol. 27 (2): 79-82.
- 166 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 481; *Historia* 30(2), anonymous reviewer, 'JG Fraser en James Briggs, *Sotho war diaries, 1864-1865*, (Vrystatia 3), (geregideer deur Karel Schoeman), Human & Rousseau, Cape Town en Pretoria', January 1985.
- 167 Karel Schoeman. 1982. *Sophie Levisseur: Memories*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.
- 168 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 530, 564.
- 169 Why three of the *Vrystatia* publications were in Afrikaans is not entirely clear. Karel Schoeman did not provide a reason for this. Motivations may have been as follows (but this is speculation: in the case of *Samuel Rolland (1801-1873), pionier van die sending van die Vrystaat* the wish for publishing it in Afrikaans may have come from the subsidiary for this book, the *Nasionale Afrikaanse Letterkundige Museum en Navorsingsentrum*. The Afrikaans prose of *Die Huis van die armes: die Berlynse Sendinggenootskap in die O.V.S., 1834-1869* may have come from Schoeman's own consideration that the original German texts (that he translated into Afrikaans) were of less importance to British historians. The reason why *Die herinnering aan J.C. de Waal* is in Afrikaans, could be because J.C. de Waal was an Afrikaner who had a seat in the Bethulie Volksraad.
- 170 Giliomee. 2003. *The Afrikaners*, 403-447.
- 171 Rob Nairn, Karel Schoeman (translation) 1997. 'n *Stil gemoed: 'n Inleiding tot die Boeddhisme en meditasie*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis; Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 360.

- 172 Karel Schoeman. 1998. 'n Stil gemoed. Gedagtes oor 'n vertaling', *Fragmente. Tydskrif vir Filosofie en Kultuurkritiek*, 2, 10-13.
- 173 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 531.
- 174 J.M. Coetzee. 2002. 'n Ander land', in: Burger and Van Vuuren. *Sluiswagter*. 140-143.
- 175 Kannemeyer, 2005. *Die Afrikaanse literatuur 1652-2004*, 424.
- 176 Mardelene Grobbelaar and Henriette Roos. 1993. 'n Interpretasie van Karel Schoeman se roman 'n Ander land binne die raamwerk van die laat negentiende eeuse estetiese en dekadente literêre tradisie', *Literator* 14(1), April 1993, 1-11. See also the review on the Dutch translation of 'n Ander land: Ingrid Glorie 'Het fin de siècle op zijn Zuidfrikaans. 'n Ander land door Karel Schoeman', *Vrij Nederland*, undated paper cutting in the year 1992, *knipselarchief Zuid-Afrikahuis*.
- 177 Marius Crous. 2010. 'Tussen mans: 'n perspektief op homososiale begeerte in Karel Schoeman se 'n Ander land', *LitNet Akademies* 7(20), August 2010, 1-13.
- 178 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 536.
- 179 Kannemeyer, 2005. *Die Afrikaanse literatuur 1652-2004*, 425.
- 180 Ena Jansen. 1990. 'Afskeid en vertrek boeiend – ongeag die Schoeman-sleur', *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, August/September 1990, 43-44; Luc Renders. 1990. 'n Skreeu in die leegte in: Afskeid en vertrek van Karel Schoeman', *Tydskrif vir letterkunde*, 4-16.
- 181 Gerrit Olivier. 1990. 'In 'n tyd van 'algehele ontreding', undated paper cutting, *Knipselarchief Zuid-Afrikahuis*.
- 182 Kannemeyer, 2005. *Die Afrikaanse literatuur 1652-2004*, 427. Karel Schoeman. 1986. *Die wêreld van die digter. 'n Boek oor Sutherland en die Roggeveld ter ere van N.P. van Wyk Louw*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.
- 183 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 545-546.
- 184 The majority of essays in Willie Burger and Helize van Vuuren (eds.), *Sluiswagter by die dam van stemme. Beskouings oor die werk van Karel Schoeman* (2002) are focused on discussing the *Stemme* trilogy and *Verkenning*. Additional evaluations are by Heinrich van der Mescht. 2013. 'Eensaamheid, alleenheid, vryheid: Joseph Joachim se F-A-E-lewensmotto ("Frei aber einsam") en Karel Schoeman se roman Hierdie lewe', *Litnet Akademies* 10(2), August 2013, 165-195; Helize van Vuuren. 1997. "'Op die limiete". Karel Schoeman se *Verkenning* (1996)', *Literator* 18(3), November 1997, 57-78; Jakes Gerwel. 1995. 'Dis 'n ongewone Schoeman, die. Die uur van die Engel', *Insig*, August 1995, 31, 33.
- 185 Ricoeur stated in Willie Burger. 2004. 'Listening to voices. Narrative and identity in the work of Karel Schoeman', in: Hein Viljoen and Chris van der Merwe (eds.). *Storyscapes. South African perspectives on literature, space & identity*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 36.
- 186 Van der Merwe. 2014. *Die houtbeen van St Sergius*, 89.
- 187 Karel Schoeman. 'From the collections of the S.A. Library: the 'ethnographic' album in the Grey Collection.' *Quarterly bulletin South African Library*, 46(4), 131-136.
- 188 Karel Schoeman. 1996. *The face of the country: a South African family album, 1860-1910*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 18-23.
- 189 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 523-524.
- 190 Karel Schoeman. 1991. *Olive Schreiner: a woman in South Africa, 1855-1881*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.
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- 191 Karel Schoeman. 1997. *A debt of gratitude: Lucy Lloyd and the 'Bushman work' of G.W. Stow*. Cape Town: South African Library. Karel Schoeman. 2007. *Early Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1717*, Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis. Karel Schoeman. 2009. *Seven Khoi Lives: Cape Biographies of the Seventeenth Century*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis. Karel Schoeman. 2012. *Portrait of a Slave Society: the Cape of Good Hope, 1717-1795*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis.
- 192 Karel Schoeman. 2019. *Bailie's Party: The Old World, 1757-1819; Bailie's Party: The New Land, 1820-1834; Bailie's Party: The Frontiers, 1834-1852*. Pretoria: Pretoria Boekhuis.
- 193 Karel Schoeman. 2009. Titaan: 'n Roman oor die lewe van Michelangelo Buonarroti. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.
- 194 Schoeman. 1978. *Onderweg*, 18-22.
- 195 Karel Schoeman. 2017. *Skepelinge. Aanloop tot 'n roman*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.
- 196 Chris van der Merwe. 2018. 'Skepelinge. Aanloop tot 'n roman', *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 55(1), 225-227.

- 197 Karel Schoeman in an email to dr. Willem Landman, 12-1-2017.
- 198 James C. Armstrong. 2018. 'Skepelinge. Aanloop tot 'n roman', 112: "Schoeman's treatment is impressionistic, and throughout he violates some of the usual scholarly standards, often suppressing dates, and supplying endnotes only selectively (an average of one per page)". *Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* 72(1), June 2018; Francois Verster. 2018. 'Lig maar elke klip op, anders sal hulle uitroep: oor die gevare van sekondêre navorsing – met bysondere verwysing na Skepelinge deur Karel Schoeman, en 'n tereggestelde slaaf', *LitNet Seminare en Essays*, 25-10-2018.
- 199 Johann Rossouw. 2017. 'Schoeman se laaste sin oor sy lewenswerk', *Netwerk* 24, 21-10-2017.
- 200 Karel Schoeman in an email to dr. Pieter Bol, 7 January, 2002.
- 201 Karel Schoeman in an email to an anonymous correspondent in Cape Town, 16-7-2010 and 27-2-2012. See also: Henriette Roos. 2002. 'Skrywer en Stamland: Karel Schoeman se Nederlandse verbintenis', *Stilet* XIV(1), March 2002, 1-19; Renée Marais. 2001. 'Nederland in de romans van Karel Schoeman', *Tydskrif vir Nederlands & Afrikaans* 8(1), June 2001, 15.
- 202 Schoeman. 2017. *Slot*, 15, 22, 30, 32 [...], 94-95.
- 203 Schoeman. 2017. *Slot*, 7.
- 204 Among others: Ria Winters, Louis Voortman, Willem Landman.
- 205 Carl Kieck. 'The later novels (1984-): a suggested Jungian approach with specific reference to *Verliesfontein*', in in Burger and VanVuuren, *Sluiswagter*. 83.
- 206 Olivier. 2002. 'Onderhoud met Karel Schoeman', 38.
- 207 Louise Viljoen. 2004. "'n Brief in 'n bottel': 'n Lesing van Karel Schoeman se die laaste Afrikaanse boek', *Journal of Literary Studies*, 20(2), 116.
- 208 Schoeman. 2002. 'die GAR', in Burger and VanVuuren, *Sluiswagter*. 17.
- 209 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaans>. According to Wannie Carstens and Edith Raith Afrikaans is spoken in South Africa and Namibia by twelve million people: W.A.M. Carstens & E.H. Raidt. 2017. *Die storie van die Afrikaans*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 166.
- 210 To underscore the fact that Afrikaans is an African language, see: Wendy Laura Belcher. 2021. 'Reflections Are We Global Yet? Africa and the Future of Early Modern Studies', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 33(3), 422. Doi: 10.3138/ecf.33.3.413. In a search string in MLAIB (Modern Language Association International Bibliography) for 'African languages' Afrikaans shows up as an African language.
- 211 Menan du Plessis. 'English-Kora index', *South African History Online*, https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20/12_du_plessis_chapter_06_b.pdf, 335.
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- 231 Karel Schoeman in emails to an anonymous correspondent in Cape Town: 'die berge is uiters beklemmend vir 'n Suid-Vrystater', 7-12-2009; '... selfs al is ek nie lief vir berge nie', 8-5-2010; '... al hou ek nie van berge nie', 11-9-2013.
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- 250 Olivier. 2002. 'Beskouing', 36.
- 251 Olivier. 2002. 'Onderhoud met Karel Schoeman', 32.
- 252 Schoeman. 2002. *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*, 131.
- 253 See Schoeman's citation from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* in: Karel Schoeman. 2017. *Slot van die dag*; on page 152 'Die Lösung des Problems des Lebens merkt man am Verschwinden dieses Problems. (Is nicht dies der Grund, warum Menschen, denen der Sinn des Lebens nach langen Zweifeln klar wurde, warum diese dann nicht sagen konnten, worin dieser Sinn bestand?) – Wittgenstein: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 6.521'. (The solution to the problem of life is seen in the disappearance of this problem. Isn't this the reason why people, to whom the meaning of life became clear after long doubts, why they could not then say what this meaning consisted of.)
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- 260 Email correspondence Karel Schoeman with dr. Pieter Bol, 14-6-2001. Schoeman: "Het Duits heeft een treffende uitdrukking voor de energie die nodig is voor het verwerken van verlies en voor het rouwen: "Trauerarbeit". Dit enkele woord heeft meerdere betekenislagen." (German has a striking expression for the energy needed to cope with loss and for mourning: "Trauerarbeit". This single word has multiple layers of meaning.)
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- 268 Thiong'o. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind*, 7.
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- M-Net Prize (1997) – *Verkenning*.
- Stals Prize for Cultural History from the South African Academy for Arts & Science (1997).
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- State President Award: Order for Excellent Service (1999).
- Honorary doctorate from the University of Cape Town (2000).

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