

*Horror in Paradise* is unique for a number of reasons. First, it offers us new insights into the Delta area, mostly from scholars who live and work in Nigeria. Anyone familiar with the literature on the Niger Delta knows that, while the field has blossomed in the past decade or so, it has featured few voices of scholars who live, teach and research in Nigeria. In a sense, Niger Delta studies have been dominated by outside voices, mostly academics or journalists based in North America and the United Kingdom who jet into Nigeria, do research for two weeks or more, and return to their bases abroad. This is not a bad thing in and of itself: the Niger Delta has gained a lot from the interventions of these scholars and commentators. But the danger with this scholarly pattern is that, at some point, one begins to read signs of hasty conclusions and inadvertent condescension. Therefore, part of the uniqueness and allure of *Horror in Paradise* is that fourteen of its seventeen chapters were produced by local scholars who thus have the chance to join in the global discussion about events in their own backyard.

Divided into four different segments that address diverse issues in the Delta region, such as environment, culture, gender, governance, development, security and the amnesty programme, the book is shaped by a discourse of horror. The editors conceive of horror, interestingly, 'as the seemingly willful betrayals of the golden opportunity that the discovery of oil and exploitation of oil resources harbour for the development of the Niger Delta and Nigeria generally' (p. 21). But perhaps more than any other work in the field, the book traces and names quite explicitly the roots of the horror identified for the Delta, arguing that the injustice in the region can be traced to 'those who favour oil interests ... that still disproportionately benefit the North' (p. 4). These rather stereotypical notions of northern advantage express the sense of disempowerment experienced by many people in the Niger Delta and form the basis for the editors' demand for inclusion, as they argue that the real search for justice must take account of 'the cultures and livelihoods of the indigenous people of the Niger Delta' (p. 4). It is the emphasis on the local experience that proposes as a framework for understanding and dealing with the Niger Delta crisis 'a new civilizing arrangement' (p. 6).

Given the importance of Niger Delta oil to Nigeria's political economy, the 'reclaiming of the locally-defined civil society' (p. 6) is nothing less than a Sisyphian task. And yet it illuminates why the book's extended interpretation of horror is its most fascinating contribution. The editors' argument that the horror currently being committed in the Niger Delta is not only that of 'lost hopes, lost livelihoods, lost generations, lost cultures and wisdom, but of a lost potential for what Nigeria should have become' (p. 7) resonates with the discourse of resentment that surrounds the topic. What is often understood as a local crisis is really a trauma whose horror holds the entire nation in its grip.

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CARLI COETZEE, *Accented Futures: language activism and the ending of apartheid*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press (pb \$34.95–978 1 86814 740 3). 2013, xvi + 182 pp.

In an undergraduate lecture given earlier this year at the South African university currently known as Rhodes, Dr Naledi Nomalanga Mkhize, a historian, television presenter and educational activist, sparked a social media storm when she

switched briefly from the university's lingua franca of English to isiXhosa. Given that South Africa has eleven official languages, and that the topic of discussion concerned a case study that crossed cultures, borders and languages—the alleged discovery, in Inverness of all places, of the skull of King Hintsa by an isiXhosa chief following instructions received from the spirits of his ancestors—Mkhize's code-switching was not just unsurprising but entirely appropriate. And yet, it seems, for many of the non-isiXhosa-speaking students in the lecture theatre, and particularly for those racialized as white, this code-switching was disruptive and alienating: a cause not just for debate but complaint.

Though short-lived, the furore that surrounded this event brought into sharp relief the complex and peculiar ways in which language is charged in present-day South Africa, while offering an important portent of the ongoing campus activism that began some months later, in the form of #RhodesMustFall and associated local and global movements. More specifically, it also highlighted how sparks set off in the university classroom can shed important light on the wider imbrications of language and power in the region. Published in 2013, Carli Coetzee's *Accented Futures: language activism and the ending of apartheid* deals with exactly these issues, and in doing so offers a valuable and timely framework for understanding both the origins and the implications of these more recent events. Coetzee's study takes shape as a series of careful reflections on specific moments and materials related to the 'modes of writing, reading, and teaching' that take place on a daily basis in the country's educational institutions, and particularly its universities (p. ix). Drawing heavily on Coetzee's personal experience as a student and teacher in South Africa and the UK, its ten chapters range in focus from academic papers and conference proceedings to public artworks and open letters, from canonical literary works to archival documents and artefacts. Although at first glance this selection seems somewhat haphazard, and the work's disciplinary profile unclear, it soon becomes apparent that in *Accented Futures* Coetzee has achieved a rare and impressive feat, producing a study that approaches cutting-edge scholarship with real rigour and coherence.

The book itself, at around 170 pages of prose, is relatively slim for such an ambitious and wide-ranging project. And yet *Accented Futures* not only does justice to the moments and materials on which it is based, but ultimately offers its readers something more than the sum of its parts. Formally more like a short story collection or essay collection than a monograph proper, Coetzee's vignette-like chapters are far more substantial than at first they appear. Indeed, as the book progresses, this brevity reveals itself to be a strength rather than a shortcoming, with each chapter providing an accessible and provocative springboard for discussion, in both the classroom and the common room. In this vein, Chapters 2 and 3—on the collaborative project and publication *There was this Goat: investigating the Truth Commission testimony of Notrose Nobomvu Konile* (2009) and on translation and incomprehension in the work of Njabulo Ndebele respectively—are particularly skilful, managing to convey the specificity of their source materials to readers while also gesturing to their wider resonances in thoughtful and provocative ways.

Without question, the intervention that Coetzee makes in *Accented Futures* is long overdue and builds on decades, if not centuries, of protest and dissent. That it takes a white academic for these issues to be 'heard' is, of course, deeply problematic, as she herself acknowledges. Coetzee's positionality at the interface of the South African higher education establishment and its others is central to *Accented Futures*, which explicitly addresses both her relative privilege and the professional and personal implications of her critique. While this makes for some repetitive passages, it can also be seen as an important welcoming gesture not only to readers unfamiliar with the South African context, but also to an emerging

generation of South African students for whom the events and texts that Coetzee describes do not strike quite the same kinds of historical and political resonance as for previous generations. Further, although for some the work as a whole might seem too forgiving, Coetzee's lightness of touch belies a deeper commitment to reflection and transformation at both personal and institutional levels: a commitment sensitive to the limitations of the kind of intervention that Coetzee herself can and should make, and informed too by current debates on the politics of translation and on what Robin DiAngelo has termed white fragility, among other things.

This is an important eye-opener for some, and a useful tool of contextualization and mobilization for those already familiar with the issues Coetzee interrogates; for this reviewer, *Accented Futures* is essential reading for teachers and students at all levels of higher education in South Africa, and complements well other recent publications such as *Being At Home: race, institutional culture and transformation in South African higher education institutions*, edited by Pedro Tabensky and Sally Matthews (2015). It is also a valuable resource for those who research South Africa's literatures and cultures. And yet, to think of *Accented Futures* as a book for South Africans and South Africanists only would be to underplay its wider resonance, for the insights and provocations that Coetzee offers here are by no means limited in relevance to the South African context. As the drive to decolonize higher education gains ground and momentum, the challenges that Coetzee poses to herself and others in *Accented Futures* will only become more pertinent to researchers, teachers and learners in universities in Europe, the United States, and beyond, and the template the book offers for reflective and transformative practices more valuable.

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JOEL E. TISHKEN, *Isaiah Shembe's Prophetic Uhlanga: the worldview of the Nazareth Baptist Church in colonial South Africa*. Bern: Peter Lang (hb £51 – 978 1 43312 285 9). 2013, 232 pp.

Isaiah Shembe founded Ibandla lamaNazaretha, the Nazareth Baptist Church, in around 1910, the same year in which the Union of South Africa was formed. Shembe himself was born around 1870 in Ntabamhlophe near Estcourt. In 1873, after Langalibalele of the Hlubi clan was deposed, the Shembe family was forced to move to the Free State to live on a white-owned farm. Six years later, in 1879, the Anglo-Zulu war broke out. Both these events are mentioned in 'Isaiah Shembe's Testimony' (Papini, August 1999 issue of *Journal of Religion in Africa*) and I suppose they played a role in shaping Shembe's world view.

The Union Government introduced a number of laws, many of them anathema to black people. Black educated elites, most of whom were Christians, resisted this formation and its laws, and in 1912 formed the South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress). There has been much debate, however, regarding the involvement or otherwise of the African-initiated churches, including Ibandla lamaNazaretha, in the politics of resistance. Joel Tishken's is the first book-length study to tackle this issue with regard to Ibandla lamaNazaretha. It makes a convincing argument that Shembe and his Ibandla lamaNazaretha were neither resistant nor acquiescent. The church's foundation is its prophetic nature: prophecy was Shembe's *Uhlanga*, the source of his theology and world view.