

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Julie K. Fergusson for the of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Speech Communication, History, and Sociology presented on March 19, 1996. Title: Stephen Biko's Rhetorical Vision of Black Consciousness.

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Stephen Biko was a black leader in South Africa who died in police custody on September 12, 1977. Biko's death echoed within the Republic of South Africa and around the world, showing that racial tensions in that country were severe. At his death he was a hero to the black majority and a threat to the white minority.

The rhetoric that survives reveals Biko's dominant themes. Biko worked to create an awareness among blacks that it was possible to combat white suppression. Four main themes, I argue, emerge from a study of his rhetoric. They are Black Humanity, Black Unity, Black Courage, and Black Self-Reliance. These themes became part of the ideology behind the Black Consciousness Movement and stood in opposition to four themes of white dominance: dehumanization, separation, fear, and control.

In his work on rhetoric and the construction of social reality, Ernest G. Bormann suggests that certain "fantasy themes" within a group's rhetoric "chain-out" and become the

"rhetorical vision" that a group holds in common. The fantasy themes, and in turn the rhetorical vision, can motivate the group to action.

The purpose of this study, then, is to analyze the fantasy themes within Biko's rhetoric to learn more about the role of rhetoric in social movements and in the constitution and reconstitution of Black Consciousness.

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Stephen Biko's Rhetorical Vision of
Black Consciousness

by

Julie K. Fergusson

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This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Barbara Fergusson.

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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
ASA	African Students Association
ASUSA	African Students Union of South Africa
BPC	Black People's Convention
GSC	General Students' Council
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
SASO	South African Students Organization
SRC	Students Representative Council
UCM	University Christian Movement

STEPHEN BIKO'S RHETORICAL VISION OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

INTRODUCTION

Stephen Biko,¹ black leader in a white dominated South Africa, died in police custody September 12, 1977. His story touched, angered, and frustrated me, and through this study I hope to learn something about the man, what he stood for, his historical standing in the Black Consciousness movement (BCM),² and indeed his role in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. One of the most intriguing aspects of Biko's story is the insight into the black struggle for freedom revealed in his surviving rhetoric. The purpose of this study is to examine Biko's rhetoric and its connection to Black Consciousness ideology in South Africa.

The study is important because it deals with the exercise of the human will in that most vital of human conflicts, the struggle for social justice. Moreover, the focus on rhetoric, on persuasive public discourse, as a part of this struggle sheds new light on the language of race and

¹ There is confusion about the correct spelling of Biko's first name. I will use "Stephen" as the correct spelling, but at times "Steven" may appear when using quotations from written text.

² There is confusion with the capitalization of the word "movement" when referring to the Black Consciousness movement. In Biko's references to it he does not capitalize "movement"; therefore I have chosen to do the same.

equality. Through his rhetoric Biko redefined the nature of black existence in South Africa and constructed the social reality of Black Consciousness. Oddly though, while Biko's life has been described at considerable length, his rhetoric has received little attention.

Gail Gerhart's Black Power in South Africa examines the black struggle in South Africa with a strong focus on the Black Consciousness movement and its relation to the entire anti-apartheid movement. Other works such as Biko³ and Apartheid: A Graphic Guide by Donald Woods, Move Your Shadow by Joseph Lelyveld, and Black and Gold by Anthony Sampson discuss Black Consciousness and Stephen Biko's role within it. Newspapers such as the New York Times, London Times, and the Johannesburg Sunday Times reported on Biko and the events surrounding his death. All of these works are important but they neglect to address Biko's rhetoric in critical terms of influence and the creation of a social reality.

Some of Biko's rhetorical contributions can be found in Millard Arnold's account of the BPC/SASO trial⁴, the interview of "Biko on Death" in the New Republic, and I

³ Wood's work was my initial introduction to Stephen Biko and my motivation to learn more about the man and his rhetoric. Donald Woods was Biko's friend. He eventually had to leave South Africa because of persecution and his determination to publish this book.

⁴ The BPC/SASA trial took place in Pretoria in 1976. A group of nine young blacks was on trial for alleged subversion by intent. Biko played a leading role in the trial.

Write What I Like, a compilation of his writings edited by Aelred Stubbs. These texts are essential to anyone interested in his rhetorical contributions. They are not, however, critical assessments.

This study is significant, therefore, because it examines what others have not: Biko's rhetoric. By so doing it can begin to fill an important gap in our understanding of Biko.

This fact is certainly true where, as in this paper, fantasy theme analysis is employed. Robert Bales initiated fantasy theme analysis and Ernest Bormann expanded the concept. It suggests that rhetoric be examined in terms of "fantasy themes"⁵ contained within it, and looks to how these themes are chained out into a rhetorical vision that encompasses the ideology of a social movement. It seems to be the best form of analysis for this study because it can uncover a movement's origin and motivation, and reveal a facet of movement studies different from other approaches.

My argument begins with an explanation of this method, including a justification for rhetoric as an important

⁵ A fantasy theme is a dramatizing message or part of a message and includes characters (personae) in action within a given scene. Ernest G. Bormann, "Fetching Food Out of Evil: A rhetorical Use of Calamity," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 63 (April 1977) 130-139. A fantasy theme is an interpretative word, phrase, or statement depicting current events, events in the past, or envisions of events in the future. It can tell a story that accounts for a group's experience and is the reality of the participants. Sonja K. Foss, Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland P, 1989) 290.

feature of social movements. In the second chapter I give a brief historical account of the black struggle against racism in South Africa, with special focus on the role of the Black Consciousness movement and its founder Stephen Biko. In the third chapter I detail Biko's rhetoric and his rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness. Four main themes, I argue, emerge from a study of his rhetoric. They are Black Humanity, Black Unity, Black Courage and Black Self-Reliance. These themes became part of the ideology behind the BCM and stood in opposition to four themes of white dominance: dehumanization, separation, fear, and control. Also included in this chapter is a discussion of Biko's martyrdom and its effect on the rhetoric of Black Consciousness. In the conclusion I discuss what has been learned about rhetoric and fantasy themes and, in turn, what has been learned about Biko and the BCM.

CHAPTER ONE
RHETORICAL VISION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The worth of any study depends, at least in part, on the strength of the methodology used, and this study is no exception. This chapter, therefore, will first examine the importance of rhetoric in movement studies and then turn to an explanation of fantasy theme analysis and the construction of a rhetorical vision.

Rhetoric and Social Movements

Hans Toch describes a social movement as "a large scale, informal effort designed to correct, supplement, overthrow or in some fashion influence the social order."¹ He suggests that a social movement occurs because a large number of people feel the need to solve a problem that they have in common.² The impact this problem has on people causes them to join, or launch, a social movement. With sufficient membership, the movement can work toward mild or extreme change, or oppose it, depending on the severity of the problem.

One vital characteristic of a social movement is its

¹ Hans Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements (New York: Bobbs, 1965) 5.

² Toch 5.

ideology. According to Toch, the most important appeals of a social movement are embraced in its ideology.³ The ideology Toch refers to is "a set of related beliefs held by a group of persons."⁴ Toch notes that

The ideology of a social movement defines the movement, and contrasts it with other movements and institutions. It also furnishes an objective description of solutions offered by the movement for the problems of its members.⁵

Ideology then, is the shared, deep conviction of members that can define the movement and distinguish it from opposing groups. Clearly, ideology is essential to the identity of a movement. But what are the means used to communicate this ideology? How does ideology become so embedded in a movement that it becomes nearly synonymous with a movement's identity?

Stewart, Smith, and Denton argue that rhetoric is the means through which a social movement develops and maintains its ideology. They define a social movement as

an organized, uninstitutionalized, and significantly large collectivity that is created to bring about or to resist a program for change in societal norms and values, operates primarily through persuasive strategies, and is countered by an established order.⁶

³ Toch 21.

⁴ Toch 21.

⁵ Toch 21.

⁶ Charles Stewart, Craig Smith, and Robert E. Denton, Jr., Persuasion and Social Movements (Prospect Heights, Il: Waveland P, 1984) 14. For a closer look at rhetorical movement studies see the selected bibliography in the above book. Listed in this bibliography and of

This view of a movement suggests some key elements that are significant to this study. A social movement must be organized, lack institutional status, propose or oppose change, encounter opposition, acquire sufficient scope, and use persuasion. Perhaps a brief discussion of each is warranted.

Organization as a key element means the social movement must have at least minimal structure and a sense of procedure. A social movement is organized if certain features can be identified. Basic features include: leaders (or spokespersons), membership (or followers or believers), and one or more sub-groups. If these features of organization are not present the phenomenon is more of a trend, a fad, or social unrest, not a social movement.⁷

The second key element described by Stewart, Smith, and Denton is the lack of institutional status. A social

particular interest are Leland Griffin's "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 38 (April 1951) 184-88 and "On Studying Social Movements," Central States Speech Journal, 31 (Winter 1980) 225-32. Also, see Malcolm O. Sillars "Defining Movements Rhetorically: Casting the Widest Net," Southern Speech Communication Journal 46 (Fall 1980) 17-32, Robert S. Cathcart "Defining Social Movements by Their Rhetorical Form," Central States Speech Journal 31 (Winter 1980) 267-73, Herbert W. Simons "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements," Quarterly Journal of Speech 56 (February 1970) 1-11 and Michael C. McGee "'Social Movement': Phenomenon or Meaning?," Central States Speech Journal 31 (Winter 1980): 233-244. One journal of specific insight completely devoted to the rhetorical phenomena of social movements is the Winter 1980 issue of the Central States Speech Journal.

⁷ Stewart, Smith, and Denton 3.

movement is not part of an established order. For example, an environmental movement exists in the United States, but some of its sub-groups have become part of the established order. The Wilderness Society, for example, strives for the preservation of the spotted owl⁸ but it is not by itself a social movement because it is an established organization working for change through institutionalized means. Saving the spotted owl might, however, be a goal of the (as yet) uninstitutionalized environmental movement, especially if the sub-group in question is EARTH FIRST! Or, to borrow an example from Stewart, Smith, and Denton, a union movement gave birth to unions, which are now part of the established order. A social movement then, must be an uninstitutionalized collectivity.⁹

As such, the social movement must propose or oppose change. This is the third key element. Societal norms, values, and/or policies are typical targets of change and innovative, revivalistic, or resistance methods may be employed.¹⁰

The fourth key element discussed by Stewart, Smith, and Denton is the opposition encountered by the social movement. A social movement is either countered by an established order, or resistant to a movement for change.

⁸ Kathie Durbin, "Report on Owls vs. Timber Industry Lacks Perspective on Impact," Oregonian 6 May 1990, A27.

⁹ Stewart, Smith, and Denton 4.

¹⁰ Stewart, Smith, and Denton 6.

The opposition feels threatened by the social movement and will "take action against [it] . . . if the movement becomes an apparent threat to its authority. . . ." ¹¹

The opposition encountered will not be great unless the fifth key element is present. That is, the social movement must be large in scope. This idea implies that the movement must be significant enough, sufficiently large in geographical area, time, events, and participants, to fulfill the set goals.¹² It must be a recognizable force in society.

The sixth key element is the means of communication. The identity of the movement, its ideology, is communicated through persuasion. The persuasive power of a social movement is designed to "affect the perceptions of audiences and thus bring about desired changes in ways of thinking, feeling, and/or acting."¹³ While all six elements described by Stewart, Smith, and Denton are important, persuasion is the most crucial element. Persuasive public discourse, or rhetoric, is the most common tool for communicating ideology, and hence for defining and identifying the social movement.

Depending on the events and circumstances surrounding the movement, effective rhetoric can include sit-ins, public

¹¹ Stewart, Smith, and Denton 8.

¹² Stewart, Smith, and Denton 10.

¹³ Stewart, Smith, and Denton 11.

speeches, demonstrations, letters, pamphlets, and editorials. These certainly are not the only ways rhetoric can be used, but they are some of the most frequently employed.

The influence of rhetoric on a social movement can be immense, but it is not always positive. Sometimes rhetoric can kill a social movement while at other times it can give it life. Either way, the power is significant, for rhetoric can be used as a means of confirming and reconfirming commitment to a movement, and it can create and maintain the ideology upon which a movement is based.

Fantasy Theme Method

There are a number of ways to explore the rhetoric of social movements, one of which is fantasy theme analysis.¹⁴ In this section I will examine how Robert Bales and Ernest Bormann use fantasy theme analysis, and then focus on the main stages of this critical tool.

In the twentieth century, Robert F. Bales has popularized and documented fantasy themes. He believes that imagery and metaphor are contained in fantasy themes and are important to group interaction. These themes can be powerfully influential, particularly in small group

¹⁴ Fantasy theme analysis is similar to content analysis. In content analysis researchers can examine virtually any form of communication in order to discover common patterns recurring in different times and places. Earl Babbie, The Practice of Social Research, 4th Ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1986) 266-67.

situations such as public ceremonies, plays, artistic productions, and rituals. He even suggests these fantasies are present in riots, mob-scenes, lynchings, and panic moments.¹⁵

Bales relates fantasy to overt behavior, suggesting that at times fantasies can lead to action, but states that

Fantasy is connected with overt behavior as the unconscious aspects of the mind are with the conscious aspects, that is, through many distorting and concealing defenses.¹⁶

In group interaction these fantasies are inspired by the uses of symbols¹⁷ through communication and action, and once conveyed they tend to start a chain reaction. People in the group become more involved and attentive.

Interaction usually speeds up, a pitch of excitement is heard in the voices; often there is some conflict or an edge of hostility. The volume of sound often goes up as the group begins the chain association.¹⁸

Bales suggests that three common attributes of group fantasy chains are helpful to know when analyzing a situation. All three are significant and all must be included in a complete analysis. One is the subject of the conversation or communication, the second is the present

¹⁵ Robert F. Bales, Personality and Interpersonal Behavior (New York: Holt, 1970) 136.

¹⁶ Bales 137.

¹⁷ Bales describes symbols as words, metaphors, and images.

¹⁸ Bales 139.

state of the participants¹⁹, and the third is the background of the participants.²⁰ The interaction of these attributes can determine whether the group fantasy is continued or terminated.

Bales emphasizes human reactions rather than the nature of the theme itself in his description of fantasy themes. Ernest Bormann, on the other hand, suggests that Bales' theory of fantasy themes can be applied to the analysis of rhetoric and its effects on receivers. He applies Bales' fantasy theme ideas to the rhetorical analysis of social movements. His work has had profound effect on and within the rhetorical analysis community.²¹

Bormann moves away from Bales' work and argues that the moments Bales describes²²

¹⁹ Bales classifies this present state as the "here-and-now" state of the participants including their relations, problems, and attitudes.

²⁰ Backgrounds of the participants refers to their past experiences in relation to families, friends, and environments. Hans Toch notes that "every person's perception of the appeals of his movement is partly a reflection of his private concerns and interests. Each member's views are colored by his unique past experience. These personal images of social movements can produce differences between conceptions and preconceptions in subsequent perceptual encounters." Toch 161.

²¹ James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist, and William E. Coleman, The Rhetoric of Western Thought, 5th ed. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1993) 363.

²² "The culture of the interacting group stimulates in each of its members a feeling that he has entered a new realm of reality--a world of heroes, villains, saints, and enemies--a drama, a work of art. The culture of a group is a fantasy established from the past, which is acted upon in the present. In such moments, which occur not

happen not only in individual reactions to works of art, or in small group's chaining out a fantasy theme, but also in larger groups hearing a public speech.²³

With the use of mass media the themes can reach even more people in more communities. Once these fantasy themes chain out in a group they can form what Bormann calls a "rhetorical vision." This rhetorical vision, in turn, becomes part of the movement's social reality and can, as I argue below, engage other competing visions. The three main stages in this process are fantasy themes, fantasy chains, and the rhetorical vision.²⁴ Each of these must be briefly described.

only in groups, but also in individual responses to works of art, one is 'transported' to a world which seems somehow even more real than the everyday world. One may feel exalted, fascinated, perhaps horrified or threatened, or powerfully impelled to action, but in any case, involved. One's feelings fuse with the symbols and images which carry the feeling in communication and sustain it over time. One is psychologically taken into a psychodramatic fantasy world, in which others in the group are also involved. Then one is attached also to those other members." Bales 152.

²³ Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," Quarterly Journal of Speech 58 (1972): 398.

²⁴ Bormann identifies fantasy types as well, but his descriptions of fantasy types have been rather vague and inconclusive. He suggests that fantasy types form when members of a group within a larger community share scenarios or outlines of the plot of fantasies. He calls these communication incidents and compares them to inside-jokes. Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: Ten Years Later," Quarterly Journal of Speech 68 (1982): 294-296. According to some critical analysts, they are different from fantasy themes because they tend to be more general, even abstract, but do not constitute a complete rhetorical vision. Golden, Berquist, and Coleman 434. In this study fantasy types will not be included as a significant characteristic.

What is a fantasy theme and how can it be identified? First, what is fantasy? Like many words in our language, fantasy has evolved and has been interpreted a number of different ways. The root of the word has origins in the Old French (fantasie), Latin (phantasia) and Greek (phantasiá) languages. These original meanings convey a sense of imagination, appearance, perception, or a visionary notion.²⁵

The first concept that may come to mind when the word fantasy is spoken is that of an imaginary world. Visions of fairy tales, make believe friends, and a world beyond reality emerge, world's akin to Alice's Wonderland and Dorothy's Oz. But this is not the only sense of the word fantasy. Fantasy can mean anything from "A supposition resting on no solid grounds; a whimsical or visionary notion or speculation" to "an ingenious, tasteful, or fantastic invention or design."²⁶ Even though Bormann does deal with dramatizing in his analyses, he cautions against believing that all fantasy themes are purely imaginary. Other critics agree and state that the "technical meaning for fantasy is the creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need."²⁷ Important

²⁵ "Fantasy," The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology, 1988.

²⁶ "Fantasy," Oxford English Dictionary 1989 ed.

²⁷ Ernest Borman [sic], "Fantasy Theme and Rhetorical Theory," in Golden, Berquist, and Coleman 367.

to recognize is that fantasies can be imaginary but, as some fantasy theme scholars note, they can surface out of the actual events shared by the group.²⁸

Bormann views a fantasy theme as a rhetorical topic that is developed over time, or as a rhetorical way of making sense of an event. It is a creative interpretation of events that is developed through public discourse and gains some degree of public acceptance and usage. He suggests that when people share a fantasy theme they can make sense out of what may have been confusing and they do it in common with the others who share the fantasy with them.²⁹ Many rhetorical critics acknowledge and add that these themes

are always slanted, ordered, and interpreted, they provide a rhetorical means for people to account for and explain the same experiences or the same events in different ways.³⁰

In Bormann's initial explanation he used an analysis of Puritan ministers' rhetoric as an example. There were two common fantasy themes within the Puritan rhetorical vision:

The first was the pilgrim making his slow, painful, and holy way, beset by many troubles and temptations. The second was the Christian soldier fighting God's

²⁸ Borman [sic], "Fantasy Theme and Rhetorical Theory" in Golden, Berquist, and Coleman 367.

²⁹ Bormann, "Fetching Good Out of Evil: A Rhetorical Use of Calamity," 130.

³⁰ Borman [sic], "Fantasy Theme and Rhetorical Theory" in Golden, Berquist, and Coleman 368.

battles and overcoming all adversaries in order to establish the true church.³¹

Both of these are contained in the rhetorical vision shared by the participants, which was that their migration to this "new world" took place as God's chosen people. They saw all of their actions, including conquering new territories and converting the natives, as God's wish. No matter how adverse the conditions became they were able to endure because of the themes within their shared rhetorical vision. But how do fantasy themes become rhetorical visions? What about the chaining out procedure Bormann considers vital to this process?

The Puritan minister, as Bormann explained, is the primary spokesperson recognized as the voice of the movement. He developed the fantasy themes and passed them on to the Puritans. The Puritans picked up and reiterated the themes, passing them on from one person to another. This procedure of passing on the fantasy themes is what Bormann calls "chaining out." The themes are picked up and altered, and as the procedure continues they grow stronger and become more deeply embedded in the culture.

The fantasy chain is the result of the chaining out activity. It is the means by which the fantasy themes are communicated among the members of the social movement. It can also be a means of attracting members. This

³¹ Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," 404.

communication helps to gain attention, awaken interest, exploit grievances, implant ideas, dispel doubts, arouse feelings, create new objects, and develop new perspectives.³² The fantasy chain binds the group together. In essence, the fantasy chain is a means of encouraging belief in and spreading the knowledge of, the fantasy themes. When members discuss fantasy themes they are testing and legitimizing values and attitudes common to the group in order firmly to establish and define the resulting rhetorical vision.³³ This brings us to the third stage of the rhetorical process of constructing social reality, the rhetorical vision.

"A rhetorical vision is a unified putting-together of the various scripts which gives the participants a broader view of things."³⁴ Bormann compares it to a "master analogy" that is able to bring together the assorted elements as a more "meaningful whole."³⁵ Usually a rhetorical vision can be identified as a key word or slogan such as, The New Deal, The New Frontier, Black Power, The Cold War, The New Left, The Silent Majority, and the Moral

³² Toch 87.

³³ Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," 398.

³⁴ Ernest G. Bormann, The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1985) 8.

³⁵ Bormann, The Force of Fantasy 8.

Majority.³⁶ But these titles do not constitute the entire meaning of the rhetorical vision, and in fact they may be misleading. A rhetorical vision must encompass the deep structure of the fantasy themes that chain into it and not just some contrived and superficial label.

Once a rhetorical vision materializes, a rhetorical community may also emerge. This community is formed by the people who share the fantasies, and their involvement is often, although not always, documented as membership in the group by ceremonies, confirmation and baptism, paying dues, and carrying a card.³⁷

In this new rhetorical community the members who share fantasies must create a new consciousness³⁸ and begin to communicate if they are to increase their level of organizational efforts.

Only after the emergence of a shared consciousness will they begin organizing behaviors and develop their rhetoric of organization, including terms for status and leadership and for formal organizational units such as committees, circuits, and parishes.³⁹

Once this level of consciousness is attained, the group then begins to determine its expressive boundaries and in turn often finds one person who symbolizes its efforts.

³⁶ Bormann, The Force of Fantasy 8.

³⁷ Bormann, The Force of Fantasy 8.

³⁸ This new consciousness includes the awareness and knowledge of the community's values and ideological philosophies.

³⁹ Bormann, The Force of Fantasy 10.

This person is usually associated with the founding of the movement and is able to represent the entire operation.⁴⁰

This leader is usually the one who communicates to the members as well as to the public. At this point one can see the importance of rhetoric to a movement's advancement and growth. The leader is able to advance the movement by expressing rhetorically its goals, values, and ideologies, and rhetoric at this point can also re-emphasize the movement's philosophies. The rhetorical vision in this way becomes the social reality for the members of the movement. It represents the world as they see it, and is the structure within which they work, hope, and dream.

Bormann recommends fantasy theme analysis⁴¹ because of the discoveries that may result through its execution. He writes:

The rhetorical critic can describe the social reality contained in the shared consciousness as represented in the rhetorical vision constructed from a study of the fantasy themes and types, the analogies and figurative language in a body of discourse. The critic can then go on to illuminate how people who share the consciousness associated with the rhetorical

⁴⁰ Bormann, The Force of Fantasy 11.

⁴¹ For a critical view of fantasy theme analysis consult G.P. Mohrmann, "An Essay on Fantasy Theme Criticism," Quarterly Journal of Speech 68 (1982): 109-132. Mohrmann finds fault with fantasy theme analysis from Bales' initial explanation to Bormann's expanded conclusions. Mohrmann argues that the basis for constructing the themes are too weak to support the vision, and overall, he does not think the method has enough strength to warrant its use in rhetorical studies. I believe that Mohrmann's argument overlooks the value of what the fantasy themes and corresponding rhetorical vision can reveal about a specific topic.

vision related to one another, how they arranged themselves into social hierarchies, how they dealt with conflict and changing circumstances, how they acted to achieve the goals embedded in their dreams, how they were aroused by the dramatic action and by the dramatis personae of their rhetoric.⁴²

Moreover, by focussing on actions and reactions that may be caused by the rhetoric, fantasy theme analysis provides insight into the motives of members of social movements. Bales suggests that shared fantasies can cause people to be "powerfully impelled to action"⁴³ and Bormann sees the relevance of this idea. By studying the fantasy themes and rhetorical vision people in a social movement share, we can begin to understand their "drive for action."⁴⁴ Bormann suggests that,

Motives do not exist to be expressed in communication but rather arise in the expression itself and come to be embedded in the drama of the fantasy themes that generated and serve to sustain them. Motives are thus available for direct interpretation by a community of scholars engaged in rhetorical criticism.⁴⁵

To summarize, a fantasy theme analysis examines fantasy themes chaining out into a rhetorical vision that encompasses a rhetorical community with a shared consciousness exemplified in a trusted and capable leader.

⁴² Bormann, The Force of Fantasy 24.

⁴³ Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," 406.

⁴⁴ Bormann, The Force of Fantasy 8.

⁴⁵ Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality" 406.

There are a number of steps or procedures and questions to answer when performing a fantasy theme analysis. The first step is to outline the fantasy themes, the second step is to observe how the themes have chained out, and the third step is to examine how the chaining out of these themes has contributed to and helped shape the rhetorical vision.

Fantasy theme analysis therefore can be a significant tool for the rhetorical critic. In this study I will use fantasy theme analysis to focus on how a rhetor is able to construct one rhetorical vision to counter another. Specifically, I will examine how Biko was able to retaliate against the white rhetorical vision of black subservience using his vision of Black Consciousness. If, as Leland Griffin once noted, "Rhetoric has had and does have a vital function as a shaping agent in human affairs,"⁴⁶ then in this study, fantasy theme analysis can show how Biko's rhetoric shaped the Black Consciousness movement and contributed to the emergence of black resistance to white domination in South Africa.

⁴⁶ Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal of Speech 38 (1951): 188.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

To investigate the rhetorical vision of Stephen Biko it is necessary to set the stage of events and provide the history that surrounds the rhetoric. Lloyd Bitzer made a point of establishing the importance of the situation in any rhetorical event. The situation requires or "invites" the orator's discourse; it gives rise to the rhetoric. In other words, rhetoric is situational. In order to understand a speech you must understand the context in which it is manifested.¹ As a result, it is important to examine the historical and contemporary context within which Biko's rhetoric occurred. For this reason I first provide a brief history of South Africa's racial differences. I then focus on race and racism with an investigation of the white power structure and its rhetoric of racism. I conclude this chapter with an examination of Biko and his history in the movement.

¹ Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Contemporary Rhetoric: A Reader's Coursebook, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1972) 40.

South Africa's Past: Black Struggle
and a Brief History Through 1960

Racism in South Africa is extensive and can be traced back to one pivotal event. From the moment white people landed in South Africa, racism was constant, and exploitation and domination of blacks² consistent.

That moment occurred in 1652, when, as William J. Wilson notes, "the Dutch East India Company established a refueling station on the Cape for Dutch ships sailing to and from the East Indies."³ As the Dutch started to settle in the area, they physically displaced the blacks setting a precedent for how blacks would be treated in the future. Even though they had lived and worked the land for centuries, blacks were forced further and further inland. They just did not have the weapons to defend themselves and

² I will be using the term "blacks" to describe those people within South Africa classified as African, Coloured, or Asian. "The term 'non-white,' formerly applied to this group, is no longer acceptable to blacks, as it defines them by what they are not, as well as using white for the frame of reference." Lyle Tatum ed., South Africa: Challenge and Hope, 2nd ed., (Washington: Hill and Wang, 1987) ix.

Biko defines the term 'non-white' even further explaining that the term black is "not necessarily all-inclusive." Non-whites do exist because of their goal to become white, but "black people--real black people--are those who can manage to hold their heads high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man." Steve Biko, I Write What I Like, Aelred Stubbs ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1986) 48-9.

³ William J. Wilson, Power, Racism, and Privilege: Race Relations in Theoretical and Sociohistorical Perspectives (New York: Macmillan, 1973) 162.

hold on to their land. As two recent observers noted, "arrows were no match for muskets."⁴

The Dutch were soon joined by the French and the Germans. The British took over in 1824 and decided to abolish slavery. Nevertheless, while the British appeared to respond to the growing concern in the international community over the inhumanity of slavery, they had no intention of creating legitimate social or political equality among the races. The system they devised increased black dependance on the British in the form of small wages that could now be taxed. Blacks would find it almost impossible to overcome poverty.

Yet even this step was too much for the Dutch. The Boers,⁵ as the Dutch were called, rejected the abolition of slavery because they needed the blacks to work the land and saw no advantage in even controlled wage labor. They therefore decided to leave the Cape and British influence, and headed inland. They considered themselves the "Chosen People" and set out toward their own "Promised Land"⁶ in a venture north known as "the Great Trek." The Boers

⁴ Donald Woods and Mike Bostock, Apartheid: Graphic Guide (London: Camden P, 1986) 22.

⁵ Boers is the first classification of the group now referred to as Afrikaners. The origins for this group are in the Dutch settlers. Important to note here is the distinction between Afrikaners (white people of Dutch-Huguenot ancestry) and Africans (black ethnic group originating on the African continent).

⁶ Woods and Bostock 26.

encountered different native peoples and fought many violent battles along the way. Most of these fights they won, killing thousands of blacks in the process. In the end they carved out two of their own colonies.

Between the years 1843 and 1858 Britain recognized the division of South Africa into four colonies. The British inhabitants mainly settled in the Cape and Natal colonies while the Boers settled in the Orange Free State and Transvaal. The blacks were slaves in the Boer states and "free" in the British states. In 1860 Indians were brought in from India as indentured servants to work on sugar cane plantations, thus creating a more complex lower class.

More conflict arose between the Boers and the British when gold and diamonds were discovered. The two groups fought for ownership of the most valuable land, culminating in the bloody Boer War of 1899-1902. Even though this conflict was supposed to be a fight between whites, more blacks than whites lost their lives because the British operated concentration camps. These camps were used to keep Afrikaners and their slaves as prisoners but, due to poor conditions, disease spread rapidly killing thirty-five thousand whites and fifty-thousand blacks. Britain brought in forces from its other commonwealth countries and eventually defeated the Boers.

Shortly after the end of the war, in 1910, Britain granted white-governed South Africa independence but it was still considered a member of the Commonwealth. This

independence did not change the treatment of the Blacks. Shortly thereafter the 1913 Native Land Act prohibited blacks from owning land thereby increasing labor dependence on the whites.

Black resistance to white domination began as soon as the Dutch arrived, but the first black political organizations emerged only in the 1880s. In time they realized the need for one combined group and thus formed the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912. The ANC proved to be the most effective black representative group throughout the years.⁷ Another notable anti-apartheid organization was the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). It did not have the strength in numbers that the ANC had, but it proved significant in the fight.⁸ The black organizations used non-violent demonstrations, strikes, and petitions to protest but they were largely ineffective.⁹ The Afrikaners still had exclusive power over almost all aspects of black life.

Afrikaner power was formalized in 1948. That year marked a turning point in South African history because in

⁷ Gail M. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology (Berkeley: U of California P, 1978) 212-15.

⁸ Gerhart 212-15.

⁹ For more history of this period in South African history consult Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology and Tatum, South Africa: Challenge and Hope.

1948 the National Party¹⁰ won the parliamentary elections over the United Party,¹¹ and the conventional system of apartheid was born. Even though blacks had been discriminated against since 1652, apartheid put many of the formerly unofficial rules into written laws. Literally, apartheid is a formal policy that means "separateness," and it gave the minority white population of 1.2 million complete control over the majority black population of five million.¹² Oliver F. Williams notes that apartheid laws "deny blacks the right to vote, to move freely in their own country, to attend the (better) white schools, and to own businesses in white communities."¹³ There were as many as 317 Apartheid laws initiated in 1948. The most powerful of these was the Race Classification Act which classified every South African into one of four racial groups: white, black, coloured, and Asiatic (Indian).¹⁴ This act ensured that whites would keep all political power because only whites

¹⁰ The National Party was founded by Afrikaners and generally considered to be discriminatory in their beliefs.

¹¹ The United Party was known to be more liberal than the Nationalists, but still followed many of the same guidelines.

¹² Oliver F. Williams, The Apartheid Crisis: How Can We Do Justice in a Land of Violence? (San Francisco: Harper, 1986) 30.

¹³ Williams xi.

¹⁴ Tatum 4-6.

received voting privileges. In essence, the act gave whites unconditional control.

Subsequent apartheid laws solidified this control. The Population Registration Act reinforced the Race Classification Act, and the Mixed Marriages Act which prohibited marriage between a white person and a black person. The Immorality Act outlawed sexual acts between a white person and a person of any other race, and the Bantu Education Act ensured "that there was no place for blacks in the white-zoned communities above menial forms of labor."¹⁵ The Group Areas Act is now considered to have been the most cruel of the apartheid laws, for it declared racial zoning in the country and thereby physically restricted all of black existence.

Areas were defined within which only members of specified race groups could live or occupy premises. 84% of the territory was designated for whites only, although whites made up barely 15% of the population. 2% was reserved for either 'coloureds' or 'Indians'. Taking the country as a whole, blacks, over 80% of the population, were restricted to ownership or occupation of under 14% of the land--the 'tribal homelands.'¹⁶

The new government took further steps to ensure minority rule was not seriously challenged. It outlawed any group opposed to apartheid, including the ANC and the PAC, "the two most effective movements of black resistance to Apartheid."¹⁷ The government also took away other

¹⁵ Woods and Bostock 84.

¹⁶ Woods and Bostock 22.

¹⁷ Woods and Bostock 88.

fundamental human rights. It established statutes giving it the power to:

Imprison anyone without trial
Banish anyone from any part of the country to another
Forbid anyone to speak in public
Forbid anyone to write for publication
Forbid anyone to travel
Forbid anyone to be in any room with more than one other person
Ban any gathering, march, meeting or demonstration
Ban any organization
Confiscate the passport of any citizen without explanation
Enter any premises without a search warrant¹⁸

Therefore, for anyone not white, civil rights were minimal.

In 1960, the Afrikaner Nationalist Party declared South Africa a republic, and broke away from the British Commonwealth. Apartheid laws became more strict and severe. One example of this severity was the establishment of the "homelands" policy. This caused over three and a half million people to be moved forcibly from one place to another. Little or no regard was made for individual rights, including wishes to keep families together or to maintain employment.¹⁹ The homelands, sometimes referred to by Biko as "black spots," were designed to separate blacks from each other. The government hoped that this separation would cause tension and dissension among blacks so that anti-apartheid efforts would fail.²⁰

¹⁸ Woods and Bostock 88.

¹⁹ Roger Omond, The Apartheid Handbook, 2nd ed. (Middlesex, Eng.: Penguin, 1985) 131-38.

²⁰ Donald Woods, Biko, 2nd ed. (New York: Henry Holt, 1987) 361-362.

Although the ANC fought the government through non-violent means and was inspired by the advice and example of people such as Mahatma Gandhi, violence played a role in the organization. The non-violent philosophy survived the Bulhoek Massacre of 1921, at which police opened fire and killed 163 people when protestors refused to comply with racial zoning laws. However, in 1960, when the PAC and ANC joined together in a protest to burn pass books,²¹ non-violent beliefs crumbled. At this demonstration, now known as the Sharpeville Massacre, police opened fire and killed 69 black people and wounded 186. Many of these people were shot in the back as they rushed to escape the scene. Outrage and horror ensued. As a result, underground military organizations were founded to combat white rule.

The ANC created Umbkhonto weSizwe (the Spear of the Nation) and the PAC created Poqo (We Alone) but the ANC, led by Albert Lithuli and Nelson Mandela, still tried to avoid a bloody revolution. They concentrated their military efforts on the destruction of property, while the PAC's Poqo attacked humans. Nevertheless, all efforts seemed defeated when Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and six other ANC leaders were given life sentences at the conclusion of the Rivonia trial in May of 1964. As Gail M. Gerhart concluded, "Silence

²¹ Pass laws restrict Africans from moving freely within South Africa. Africans had to carry a "pass" or a "pass book" with them at all times. Penalty for not carrying this identification resulted in imprisonment.

pervaded African political life in the 1960's to an extent which had not been known since the years before 1912."²²

Race and Racism

At the root of the South African conflict, and crucial to our understanding of Biko's rhetoric of Black Consciousness, is the notion of race and the problem of racism. Of constant interest to sociologists, poets, and politicians, race has become a central factor in our efforts to come to terms with the human condition. It has become "a recurrent ingredient in the ethnosemantics of group identity and intergroup relations,"²³ and it deserves a brief discussion here.

The word "race" has been applied to human populations on a variety of levels, including

Nation-states, such as the Irish, Japanese, or German; tribes such as the Scythian, Iroquois, Zulu; language families such as Slavic, Latin, Semitic; minorities such as Jews, gypsies, Puerto Ricans; and phenotypically distinct but genetically hybrid aggregates such as whites, Negroes, yellows, and Coloureds are cognitively equivalent in many ethnosemantic contexts.²⁴

These labels vary, but the notion of dividing groups, of separation is constant.

²² Gerhart, 257.

²³ "Race," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968 ed.

²⁴ International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. In this instance it seems the author of this article is confusing race with racism. I will examine the difference between the two terms later on in this study.

This separation seems to be determined by one characteristic: color. Color is associated with race, especially that of certain easily distinguished groups such as the Mongolian, Caucasian, and Black.²⁵ As noted authority Derrick A. Bell, Jr. puts it, "it is not an accident that children's textbooks carry a list of supposed races as white, brown, yellow, red, and black. Color seems basic."²⁶

Bell argues that, genetically, color has little relation to race.

Expert opinion holds that very few genes are involved in the transmission of pigmentation, and that while color and a few other physical indications of race may run fairly true within a racial stock, they do not indicate the total inheritance of any given individual. It is said that not more than one percent of the genes involved in producing a person's inheritance are racially linked. Color is so linked, but there is no evidence that the genes determining skin color are tied to genes determining mental capacity or moral qualities.²⁷

Nonetheless, race is a term most often applied to groups of people sharing the same color skin.

"Racism" is the belief that race determines superiority and inferiority. One racial group believes it is better than another and takes action on those beliefs. This situation can be detected in institutionalized structures such as segregated school districts and

²⁵ Derrick A. Bell, Jr., Race, Racism and American Law (Boston: Little Brown, 1973) 84.

²⁶ Bell 84.

²⁷ Bell 84-5.

neighborhoods, and race-based or "racist" action also can be found in many discriminatory hiring practices. This type of overt racism, discrimination, is a form of institutional subordination. Bell defines institutional subordination as "a method of placing or keeping persons in a position or status of inferiority by means of attitudes, actions, or institutional structures."²⁸ Bell holds that institutional subordination is grounded in illusion and is firm evidence of racism.

Three terms emerge from this discussion: race, racism, and racist. Race does not necessarily include discrimination, and as Bell concludes, color is usually (aspersely) the basic characteristic for determining race. Racism, on the other hand, is the belief that human ability, worth, character, dignity, in short, all that is of human value, is determined by race. Racists are those people who, "out of their own anxieties, have manufactured the demon of race."²⁹ Racists exemplify racism in attitudes and actions, most often discriminating by color.

The Rhetoric of Racism

Racism is the root of South African conflict. The institutionalized structure of racism described above was supported by and legitimized by the rhetoric of racism. It

²⁸ Bell 89.

²⁹ Bell 85.

was this rhetoric of racism that Biko targeted with his own rhetoric, so it is important to look at the white rhetoric of racism.

The white power structure in South Africa used its rhetoric to support and maintain Apartheid laws. These laws resulted from white minority attitudes of and commitment to dominance. Emerging from these attitudes are four white fantasy themes that made up the rhetoric of racism in South Africa. These fantasy themes are dehumanization, separation, fear, and control. These rhetorical themes were supported by South African law and were designed to ensure the suppression of blacks. Further details of these laws are outlined at the end of this chapter and throughout chapter three.

Dehumanization is the fantasy theme which portrays blacks as less than human. Whites in South Africa treated blacks like animals and objects with little or no regard to their human feelings. As Biko asserted, the black man felt like "an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity."³⁰ In a conversation between former State President P.W. Botha and Frederik van zyl Slabbert³¹ the conflicts between the ANC and Buthelezi arose as a main topic. Botha stated his opinion in characteristic

³⁰ Biko 29.

³¹ Van zyl Slabbert was the former leader of the Progressive Federal Party which was the official opposition.

dehumanizing rhetoric, referring to all anti-apartheid groups as "bulls." He said, "I mean I told both of them [ANC and Buthelezi] that there are many more bulls in the kraal than they were aware of" ³² Botha was suggesting that there were too many anti-apartheid groups wanting control of the black struggle; his rhetoric epitomizes white dehumanization of blacks.

The second white fantasy theme involves the attempt to separate blacks. The homelands policy separated black families and friends, forcing them onto assorted pieces of infertile land all over the country. Then, the government denied blacks the right to move freely within South Africa, making separation permanent. The white minority government hoped to accomplish two things by this separation. First, it wanted to make working together to overthrow the government as difficult as possible based on the theory separation makes communication difficult. The second motive for the separation was to create individual homeland loyalties and thereby create opposition among homelands. ³³ The white government hoped that this would create conflict among the blacks, thereby distracting them and easing tension toward whites. Most of the ideas of "separate

³² Tatum 220.

³³ Joseph Lelyveld, Move Your Shadow (New York: Penguin, 1985) 15.

development"³⁴ are manipulated out of the Bible by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) to legitimize the minority government's discriminatory actions. A 1974 document by the DRC details the church's position on racial matters. It states, "In specific circumstances and under specific conditions the New Testament makes provision for the regulation of the basis of separate development of the co-existence of various peoples in one country."³⁵ In its attempts to legitimize apartheid-based actions, the authors of the document showed how the white rhetoric of racism supported black separation.

The third white fantasy theme is fear. Its goal was the perpetuation of fear between the races: white fear of blacks and black fear of whites. Whites feared black resistance and this is the basis for many of the apartheid laws. One of the most influential laws in preventing black resistance was the homelands policy described above. This separation of the blacks was evidence of white fear. Another example of perpetuating white fear was how Botha commonly referred to the ANC as a communist and terrorist organization. His words were, "if communist-controlled organizations such as the ANC should have their way with support from abroad, it will be a dark day for South

³⁴ Separate development is a term created by the white government to avoid stating the term apartheid which is most often associated with racism.

³⁵ Williams 43.

Africa."³⁶ This was Botha's rhetorical attempt at maintaining white fear of blacks by fostering the belief among white communities that the ANC was communist; a claim that the ANC leaders Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo have always denied.

Another fear, blacks fearing whites, was orchestrated by whites. One example of the how whites created black fear was the life sentences given to black leaders such as Mandela in 1964.³⁷ This was an attempt to stimulate black fear, discouraging other blacks from keeping black resistance alive.

The fourth white fantasy theme is control. This was directed at white liberals wanting to control the black struggle for freedom, but grounded in the dominant control whites have always had over blacks. In 1953 the Bantu Education Act was passed. This law controlled how and what Africans would learn in school. The Minister of Native Affairs at the time was Hendrik Verwoerd. He stated,

When I have control of native education I will reform it so that the natives will be taught from childhood to realize that equality with Europeans is not for them. . . . What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? . . . Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life.³⁸

³⁶ Williams, The Apartheid Crisis 52.

³⁷ Gerhart 257.

³⁸ Tatum 18.

This is a clear example of the extremes to which white control reached, but it went beyond the Bantu Education Act. Whites even had control over the black struggle for freedom.

Because blacks did not have the same human rights as whites, blacks depended on the white liberals for communication throughout the country. But soon it became a white struggle. The whites articulated black demands, but blacks did not agree with white interpretation of those demands. White liberals controlled the black resistance. Even Botha tried to answer what he thought were black demands. He decided to give South African citizenship to the blacks living in white government recognized, independent homelands. He said,

It follows this point of view that there should be one collective South African Citizenship for all who form part of the Republic. For this reason I announced on 11 September this year among other things that the South African Citizenship of those black persons who permanently reside in the Republic, but who lost their Citizenship as a result of independence, will be restored.³⁹

For the most part, blacks considered this only a cosmetic change because most of them did not recognize these homelands anyway. Blacks merely were seeking control over the country that was originally theirs.⁴⁰

These four white fantasy themes of dehumanization, separation, fear, and control culminated in the white rhetorical vision of black subservience. For most of South

³⁹ Williams 49.

⁴⁰ Woods, Biko 161-162.

Africa, black and white, this rhetorical vision of black subservience constituted the social reality of their existence.

The Rise of Black Consciousness

The Black Consciousness movement originated as opposition to the established order of white domination in an effort to combat black subservience. All attempts to form or belong to any black organizations after the Sharpeville Massacre were defeated through bannings and other forceful government discouragement. The Black Consciousness movement evolved after years of little indication of organized black struggle, and represents the first significant attempt after Sharpeville to dismantle white control.

The origins of many social movements can be traced to student organizations, and the Black Consciousness movement is no exception.⁴¹ In the 1960's the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) attracted a variety of students, black and white, and seemed to be the only group successful in helping blacks in any kind of a struggle.⁴² But not all students favored this help and as a result they formed the South African Student Organization (SASO). It

⁴¹ Gerhart 257-58.

⁴² Woods, Biko 34.

was an all black student organization motivated by the Black Consciousness ideology of Stephen Biko.

Biko was born in 1946 in Kingwilliamstown in the eastern Cape. He attended school at St. Francis College in Mariannhill in Natal Province, one of the few remaining private high schools for black Africans in South Africa. This was a fairly liberal atmosphere for him, but he was a person determined to reject white interference in black struggles. Gerhart notes that "he was not satisfied to have any white try to influence his thinking about the precise detail of either ends or means when it came to the future of Africans."⁴³

After Mariannhill, Biko went on to study medicine at the University of Natal in Durbin (Durbin University). He entered the non-white division known as Wentworth and as a concerned and involved student, Biko joined the NUSAS. He admired the NUSAS's attempts to protest racial injustice, but soon realized that this organization "could not meet the needs of the blacks."⁴⁴

Ever since Biko had been interrogated by the police in 1963 about his older brother's suspected Poqo activities, he had held "a strong resentment toward white authority."⁴⁵ When the liberal white members of NUSAS spoke for blacks,

⁴³ Gerhart 260.

⁴⁴ Tatum 62.

⁴⁵ Gerhart 259.

Biko became distressed, for he resented having the white leadership elucidate black objections and aspirations. As Gerhart explains,

Repeated over and over in words and symbols, this liberal approach, and in fact the entire liberal analysis, had to Biko's way of thinking become not an inspiration to constructive action but a sterile dogma disguising an unconscious attachment to the status quo.⁴⁶

As a delegate at the NUSAS annual conference in July 1967, Biko decided that the organization had some fundamental problems. Mixed accommodations and eating facilities were prohibited at the Rhodes University conference site, and this seemed hypocritical to Biko. He began to see that NUSAS was committed to merely artificial, not true, integration.⁴⁷

Biko and other blacks decided that it was their own responsibility to work toward the emancipation of the black people, so they broke away from NUSAS and founded the South African Student Organization. Biko was named president in July 1969 and he declared "self-reliance" to be the new message.⁴⁸ This new organization marked the rise of Black Consciousness and the rise of Biko's rhetoric in South Africa. The role of rhetoric at this point in the movement was crucial because objectives and values were solidifying

⁴⁶ Gerhart 260.

⁴⁷ Biko's explanation of his idea of true integration is discussed in chapter three.

⁴⁸ Gerhart 262.

at a rapid rate. Rhetoric was used to create and communicate the ideas and philosophies emerging from these radical students. One of the main rhetorical contributions of this time was the first SASO document drafted by Biko and the other founding members of the new organization.

With its novel ideas for the destruction of the apartheid system, SASO achieved some success as an organization.

When SASO spoke of a new need for blacks to define their own goals and values and chart their own course toward a more just society, it stirred a frustrated desire which many black students had long felt but which none had ever been able to articulate with the clarity and persuasiveness which SASO was now exhibiting.⁴⁹

The ideology behind this new organization was Black Consciousness. Biko briefly defined it as,

in essence the realization by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation--the blackness of their skin --and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the 'normal' which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realization that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. Black Consciousness therefore, takes cognizance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value system, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Gerhart 269.

⁵⁰ Biko 49.

Black Consciousness renewed hope for blacks because it valued blacks as human beings and not slaves of the state. Its aim was to make the black man "see himself,"⁵¹ and

pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth.⁵²

As the man who gave voice to this new ideology, Biko became the person commonly associated with the founding of the movement, designated by the rhetorical community of SASO. He envisioned all of the dominant philosophies of the movement and was responsible for communicating to the members and the public. Biko successfully reached numerous people within the country, and he soon became the accepted new leader of the anti-apartheid movement in the eyes of the international community.⁵³

Biko's political activities soon overtook his studies, and as a result of university pressure he was expelled and forced to leave the student environment. This action did not decrease his involvement and commitment. Biko soon formed the Black People's Convention (BPC) which was a more "'adult,' non-student wing" of the BCM.⁵⁴ The BPC also became a great success and as a result of the hope and the

⁵¹ Woods, Biko 38.

⁵² Woods, Biko 38, as quoted by Nyameko B. Pityana.

⁵³ Woods, Biko 113.

⁵⁴ Gerhart 289.

intense following it generated,⁵⁵ protests and strikes were encouraged by the membership. Once an anti-apartheid group became effective at persuading the black majority, the South African government usually banned its most influential leaders; the BPC and SASO heads were no exceptions. In March of 1973, authorities banned Biko and seven other SASO and BPC directors; in turn their replacements were banned as well. The white regime evidently felt threatened by the influence of these two organizations inspired by Biko's Black Consciousness ideology. Officials confined Biko to Kingwilliamstown. His banning order, like others, forbade

a person from being in the presence of more than two people; addressing an audience; being quoted by the media or having anything he had written, whether before or after his banning order, published or disseminated.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the Black Consciousness ideology spread; the black youth of South Africa being the most politically active. Students in the homelands were becoming tense and wanted change. One important focus of their frustration concerned the language of their education. They resented having to be taught in the Afrikaner language because most of them neither spoke it nor recognized its validity, and they saw no use for it in their future. As Anthony Sampson recalls, "they wanted to learn in English which they saw as

⁵⁵ Gerhart 289.

⁵⁶ Millard Arnold, ed. The Testimony of Steve Biko (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1978) xiii.

the language of Western culture and opportunity, while Afrikaans was the oppressor's language."⁵⁷

To combat this problem, students organized a rally in Soweto to show the government their disapproval. On June 16, 1976, an estimated 20,000 students started a peaceful march, but were stopped by police. Debates continue regarding who provoked whom, but the police opened fire on the unarmed crowd, and this action started riots that became the focus of international attention for weeks. By the end of the year between 700 and 1000 people had been killed and 5000 injured.⁵⁸ Although the protest cannot be attributed to SASO or BPC, certainly the Black Consciousness ideology permeated the students to rise and demand changes in their educational system.⁵⁹

Although he was banned, Biko continued to work subversively toward the liberation of the black people. The most meaningful event after his banning was his appearance and testimony at the BPC/SASO trial of 1976. The government had accused nine young blacks of

'endangering the maintenance of law and order in the Republic,' or alternatively, of conspiring to 'transform the state by unconstitutional, revolutionary and/or violent means'; '[creating] and [fostering] feelings of racial hatred, hostility and

⁵⁷ Anthony Sampson, Black and Gold (New York: Pantheon, 1987) 109.

⁵⁸ Winnie Mandela, Part of My Soul Went with Him, Anne Benjamin, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985) 113-15. Tatum 197.

⁵⁹ Tatum 63-65.

antipathy by the Blacks toward the White population group of the Republic'; and '[discouraging], [hampering], [detering] or [preventing] foreign investment in the economy of the Republic.'⁶⁰

The trial was deemed an important symbolic event in the black struggle, as important as the earlier judicial proceeding involving Mandela and Sisulu. As the designated BPC leader, Biko seemed to speak in order to communicate to everybody, black and white. Biko's reputation preceded him, and his testimony was anxiously anticipated in the courtroom. Millard Arnold attended the trial. He records the scene as follows:

A low murmur rolled across the crowded courtroom. Anxiety and anticipation caused most to squirm slightly in their seats. Steve Biko was to testify. No one knew it at the time, but it was to be the last public appearance Biko would ever make.⁶¹

Biko recognized that this was an opportunity to advance the Black Consciousness ideology and he used it as a platform. He knew that his friends had little hope of escaping the charges so he wanted to make the best of the situation. Biko's biographer claims that

as a witness for the defense he came to dominate the trial, and in the style of Nelson Mandela of a previous generation he turned the courtroom into a platform for the articulation of black grievance.⁶²

The government intended this trial to be a deterrent, but its plans backfired as Biko became more visible and in turn

⁶⁰ Arnold xiii.

⁶¹ Arnold xiii.

⁶² Woods, Biko 150.

more famous and admired. Biko used this opportunity to the fullest, and through his rhetoric raised Black Consciousness to new levels of visibility and glory. Gerhart summarizes Biko's rhetorical effect in this way:

Thus, instead of contributing to the suppression of Black Consciousness ideology, the trial, by giving the accused a continuous public platform through the press, merely disseminated that ideology even more widely, and held up to youth once again a model of 'rebel' courage. Convicted in December 1976 and sentenced to terms on Robben Island, the defendants could depart from the political stage confident that the freedom movement had never been stronger.⁶³

Due perhaps in part to his eloquence at the trial, Biko was arrested on August 18, 1977, and held in jail under Section 6 of South Africa's Terrorism Act. Less than a month later came the announcement that he had died in detention. At the inquest into his death the police revealed and described how,

Biko had been kept naked in his cell for two days, in handcuffs and leg-irons; and how when he collapsed he was driven 1,200 kilometers, naked in the back of a land-rover, to Pretoria prison hospital where he died on a mat on a stone floor.⁶⁴

This inquest concluded that Biko had died of brain damage, but no one was blamed for the death. No one explained how or where he had received the blow to his head.

At first, the government claimed that his death resulted from a seven-day hunger strike. Biko had become

⁶³ Gerhart 298-99.

⁶⁴ Sampson 111

"the twentieth person to die in custody in 18 months"⁶⁵ and this was one of the common excuses used. Other detainees had, according to the police, "jumped" out of windows and down stairs, been found hanging in their cells, and some were listed "'cause of death unknown.'"⁶⁶ But the outrage over Biko's death was different and could not be so easily covered up. As the London Times reported,

The explanations for several of the deaths had been unsatisfactory but none of the deaths could compare with that of Mr. Biko, the first important black leader to die in the hands of the security police.⁶⁷

And in a later interview, Donald Woods said, "This is the big one, the one they can't get away with. This is the death they will not explain away."⁶⁸ Woods also accused the Justice Minister of South Africa, James T. Kruger, of being ultimately responsible for Biko's death.

Kruger said that he was indifferent to the death and told delegates to a congress of the National Party in Pretoria, "'I am not pleased, nor am I sorry,'" continuing with "'Biko's death leaves me cold.'"⁶⁹ To many, these

⁶⁵ Eric Marsden, "Outcry Against Death of Mr. Biko a Blow to South Africa's Attempt to Project More Liberal Image on Race," Times [London, Eng.] 15 Sept. 1977: 7.

⁶⁶ Tatum 65.

⁶⁷ Marsden, "Outcry," 7.

⁶⁸ Ray Kennedy, "Police arrest 1,200 students at commemoration of black leader who died in detention," Times [London, Eng.] 16 Sept. 1977: 6.

⁶⁹ As quoted in John F. Burns, "Tension is Rising in South Africa Over the Cause of Black's Death," New York Times, 15 Sept. 1977: 3.

statements were evidence of the insensitivity of the South African government, and the inevitable treatment of the oppressed.

Biko was an intelligent, insightful man, considered by some as one who could have peacefully saved the troubled country. But instead of working with Biko the white minority government chose to treat him with contempt, a contempt that resulted in his brutal death. Reverend Desmond Tutu, the Bishop of Lesotho, said

Mr. Biko was the most unaffected by racism of all the young blacks seeking peaceful change. It was now more difficult to believe that peaceful change could be achieved.⁷⁰

A month after Biko's death, fear prompted Prime Minister John Vorster's government to suppress all BCM-associated organizations and people. It even cracked down on "any further potential black leaders, many of them known for their moderation."⁷¹ It closed down the powerful black newspaper, the World, and banned forty-seven black leaders.⁷² At this same time the South African government banned Donald Woods, the editor of the Daily Dispatch and white friend of Biko, for his involvement in massive protest and his speeches against the treatment of Biko and the apartheid system in general.⁷³

⁷⁰ Eric Marsden, "Outcry," 7.

⁷¹ Sampson 111.

⁷² Sampson 111.

⁷³ Woods, Biko 1.

Outrage followed Biko's death. Riots and demonstrations lasted for weeks, and in one instance, 1200 were arrested at a demonstration at Fort Hare University near Biko's home.⁷⁴ Police even opened fire on youths in Soweto on September 21, 1977, killing at least one youth and injuring several others.⁷⁵ It was apparent that Biko's death had sent the country into an uproar unlike any in over seventeen years. As one New York Times writer observed,

A week after the event, it is clear that the death of Steven Biko has shaken South Africa more than any single event since the police opened fire at Sharpeville in 1960 killing 72 black demonstrators.⁷⁶

An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people gathered for Biko's funeral service in Kingwilliamstown on September 25, 1977. They arrived from great distances, but police using force kept at least 1000 away from the ceremony.⁷⁷ Thirteen Western countries sent senior diplomatic representatives to the funeral to pay their respects⁷⁸ and

⁷⁴ Kennedy, "Police...", 6. Raymond Carroll with Peter Youngusband, "Steve Biko is Dead," Newsweek 26 Sept. 1977: 41.

⁷⁵ "Policemen Fire on Soweto Youths," New York Times 22 Sept. 1977: A4.

⁷⁶ John F. Burns, "South Africa on Trial Again: Death of Black Brings Outrage and Questions," New York Times 20 Sept. 1977: 5.

⁷⁷ Nic Van Oudtshoorn, "Bans Go For Biko Burial," Sunday Times [Johannesburg, S.A.] 25 Sept. 1977: 1.

⁷⁸ Arnold xxiii.

anti-apartheid dignitaries such as Helen Suzman⁷⁹ and Desmond Tutu took part in the mourning.⁸⁰ Although racial tension was high, not one incident of racial violence occurred. Considering the circumstance, this fact surprised some observers.⁸¹

As news of the tragedy increased, so did international criticism of the ruling minority government. Sanctions were encouraged, and condemnation of the racist apartheid system reached an all-time high. At the United Nations Biko was eulogized as "a visionary who brought special hope to South African blacks." In addition, his death was referred to as "an atrocity committed by Prime Minister John Vorster's white minority government."⁸² At this same meeting, David M. Sibeko, the director of foreign affairs of the PAC, gave tribute to the young black leader. He condemned the government and stated his outrage at the death:

By killing Steven Biko, in a singularly cowardly manner, the Vorster regime and its death merchants wishfully calculated that they were removing a burning thorn from their racist flesh.⁸³

⁷⁹ Helen Suzman has been a constant opponent of apartheid and was a member of South African Parliament.

⁸⁰ Woods, Biko 218.

⁸¹ Woods, Biko 217.

⁸² Franay Gupte, "South African Leader Eulogized at U.N. as symbol of Black Hope," New York Times 24 Sept. 1977: 3.

⁸³ Gupte, "South African Leader...", " 3.

These reactions to Biko's killing underscore what should now be obvious: he was an influential leader in black South African communities in general and in the BCM in particular, and his death marked for many the end of yet another chapter of South Africa's turbulent history.

His passing also marks the end of this discussion of the context in which Biko's rhetoric was voiced. Several key conclusions can be drawn. First, it is clear that the Black Consciousness movement was in fact formed by a large number of people feeling the impact of, and needing to solve, a problem they had in common. The movement Biko founded and inspired therefore corresponds to the previously defined key elements of a social movement. It was organized, uninstitutionalized, proposed change, encountered opposition, was large in scope, and most importantly, utilized persuasion to communicate and establish the ideology, identity, and in turn, the name of the movement: Black Consciousness. Second, Biko stood at the center of the movement and gave it a powerful voice and a strong identity. Finally, Biko directed his rhetoric against the institution and rhetoric of racism that had developed over the years of white domination in South Africa. It is to Biko's rhetoric that we must now turn.

CHAPTER THREE:
FANTASY THEME ANALYSIS OF STEPHEN BIKO'S RHETORIC

Given the tumultuous situation in South Africa in the 1970's, it is now time to utilize the fantasy theme analysis in order to study Stephen Biko's rhetoric. By so doing, we can learn more about the man, his words, and his significance.

This chapter will outline the opposing fantasy themes that contributed to and helped shape each rhetorical vision. It will argue that Biko's rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness directly opposed the white rhetorical vision of black subservience. This illustration of how one rhetorical vision can work to counter another is how my study differs from other applications of fantasy theme analysis¹.

¹ For a further look into applications of Bormann's idea of fantasy themes and rhetorical visions refer to: Robert L. Schrag, Richard A. Hudson, and Lawrence M. Bernabo, "Television's New Humane Collectivity," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 45 (1981): 1-12. James W. Chesebro, "Paradoxical Views of 'Homosexuality' in the Rhetoric of Social Scientists: A Fantasy Theme Analysis," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 66 (1980): 127-39. Marsha Vanderford Doyle, "The Rhetoric of Romance: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of Barbara Cartland Novels," Southern Speech Communication Journal, 51 (1985): 24-48. Laurinda W. Porter, "The White House Transcripts: Group Fantasy Events Concerning the Mass Media," Central States Speech Journal, 27 (1976): 272-79. Becky Swanson Kroll, "From Small Group to Public View: Mainstreaming the Women's Movement," Communication Quarterly, 31 (1983): 139-47. Carl Wayne Hensley, "Rhetorical Vision and the Persuasion of a Historical Movement: The Disciples of Christ in

The themes outlined below were not labeled as such by Biko, but they emerge as predominant ideas in his surviving rhetoric. Some of this surviving rhetoric includes Aelred Stubbs' compilation of Biko's speeches, papers Biko presented at conferences, interviews given before and during his ban, letters written by Biko, and articles from SASO Newsletters written by Biko under the title of "I Write What I Like"² that reached people inside and outside of South Africa. The following themes incorporate rhetoric from all of Stubbs' compilation as well as Arnold's record of Biko's testimony at the BPC/SASO trial and the New Republic interview. Biko's rhetoric is based on events that are

Nineteenth Century American Culture," Quarterly Journal of Speech 61 (1975): 250-64. John F. Cragan, "Rhetorical Strategy: A Dramatistic Interpretation and Application," Central States Speech Journal 26 (1975): 4-11. John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields, "Foreign Policy Communication Dramas: How Mediated Rhetoric Played in Peoria in Campaign '76," Quarterly Journal of Speech 63 (1977): 274-89. David L. Rarick, et al., "The Carter Persona: An Empirical Analysis of the Rhetorical Visions of Campaign '76," Quarterly Journal of Speech 63 (1977): 258-73. Jolene Koester, "The Machiavellian Princess: Rhetorical Dramas for Women Managers," Communication Quarterly 30 (1982): 165-72. Ernest G. Bormann, Jolene Koester, and Janet Bennett, "Political Cartoons and Salient Rhetorical Fantasies: An Empirical Analysis of the '76 Presidential Campaign," Communication Monographs 45 (1978): 317-29. Ernest G. Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair: A Fantasy Theme Analysis," Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (1973): 143-59. Ernest G. Bormann, "Fetching Good Out of Evil: A Rhetorical Use of Calamity," Quarterly Journal of Speech 63 (1977): 130-39. Ernest G. Bormann, "A Fantasy Theme Analysis of the Television Coverage of the Hostage Release and the Reagan Inaugural," Quarterly Journal of Speech 68 (1982): 133-45.

² In the articles written for the SASO newsletter Biko used an amusing and revealing alias of Frank Talk.

prevalent in the history and folklore of South Africa³ and lend support to his assertions.

Black Humanity

The first theme, Black Humanity, is in opposition to the white theme of dehumanization. Perhaps Biko characterized the white theme of dehumanization best. He believed the problem of dehumanization was based on a "spiritual poverty" that Biko said "makes the black man fail to tick."⁴ Biko asserted that the defeated attitude of the black man was the deliberate design of the white man. He said, "The logic behind white domination is to prepare the black man for the subservient role in this country."⁵ Also, Biko believed that this "process of dehumanisation,"⁶ to a certain extent, had succeeded. The black man, Biko argued, accepted his inevitable position and had "lost his manhood."⁷

By all accounts, Biko was right; white attempts at dehumanization worked. Blacks were caught up in the white rhetorical vision, a vision that led blacks to feel more

³ Biko's rhetoric has this in common with other fantasy themes of other rhetors. See Golden, Berquist, and Coleman 434.

⁴ Biko 28.

⁵ Biko 28.

⁶ I have retained the British spellings that Biko used in his written work.

⁷ Biko 28.

like animals than humans. Blacks exhibited a "sheepish obedience" in the presence of their oppressors, and yet joined together to condemn whites behind their backs. The black made himself envious of white society and blamed himself "for not having been 'educated' enough to warrant such luxury."⁸ As a result of this perspective, the black man believed that there was no hope for any kind of change. Thus he maintained his life as best he could without avid resistance or protest. As Biko summarized,

All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity.⁹

Biko explained that the system of racism in South Africa was institutionalized, and as hard as they may have tried, blacks were not able to overcome this system of Apartheid formed by force. Biko noted that

To make the lie live even longer, blacks have to be denied any chance of accidentally proving their equality with white men. For this reason there is job reservation, lack of training in skilled work, and a tight orbit around professional possibilities for blacks. Stupidly enough, the system turns back to say that blacks are inferior because they have no economists, no engineers, etc., although it is made impossible for blacks to acquire these skills.¹⁰

This institutionalized racism was a frustrating circle that perpetuated the dehumanization of blacks.

⁸ Biko 28.

⁹ Biko 29.

¹⁰ Biko 88.

Another facet of institutionalized racism that contributed to black dehumanization was racist language. In the SASO/BPC trial, Biko spent a great deal of time explaining how the black man had come to think of himself as inferior. He related the word "black" to its usage in literature and explained that the

term black is normally in association also with negative aspects, in other words you speak of the black market, you speak of the black sheep of the family, you speak of--you know, anything which is supposed to be bad is also considered to be black.¹¹

Biko noted the association of blacks with "things." Here was another clear attempt at dehumanizing blacks. The black man was referred to not as a person, but as an object or an animal. Not only was the reference to things, but the things were bad. This reference seemed to evolve into the perception that the black man is bad as well. Soon the black man came to believe he was an inferior thing, an unwanted thing, a thing rejected by society.¹² Biko remembered a conversation with a white worker referring to his black assistant as "a lazy bugger."¹³ When Biko asked how he could stand the constant insults, the black man answered "I am used to him."¹⁴ It was just one example of how the black man accepted negative perception.

¹¹ Biko 103.

¹² Biko 103.

¹³ Biko 102.

¹⁴ Biko 102.

Biko countered white dehumanization rhetoric with the theme of Black Humanity. The Black Humanity theme stressed black individuality, identity, and pride separate from white influence. Biko wanted the black man to "pump back life into his empty shell."¹⁵ He felt that blacks must believe in themselves as real human beings instead of slaves and subordinates. Only when this confidence has been obtained can the blacks seek any political, economical, or social change.¹⁶

There were two contributing ideas to the theme of Black Humanity, one historical and the other political. The first way Biko sought to gain confidence and support Black Humanity was to "rewrite the history of the black man."¹⁷ Black history in South Africa looked dim. As the colonists invaded what they termed the "dark continent," they succeeded in distorting and disfiguring native history until it was all but destroyed. As Biko stated, these colonists reduced the history of the African society "to tribal battles and internecine wars"¹⁸ full of evil, tyrannical, and barbaric, superstitious tribes. Instead of accepting that the blacks had succeeded in creating happy, exceptionally prosperous and successful lives, the whites

¹⁵ Biko 29.

¹⁶ Biko 29.

¹⁷ Biko 29.

¹⁸ Biko 29.

were determined to destroy not only the pride, but all the customs necessary for the continued existence of black society. As a result of this distorted historic account by the whites, Biko explained it is

No wonder the African child learns to hate his heritage in his days at school. So negative is the image presented to him that he tends to find solace only in close identification with the white society.¹⁹

Biko disagreed with "the belief that the African culture is time-bound, the notion that with the conquest of the African all his culture was obliterated."²⁰ Hence, when he talked of aspects of African culture he termed it "modern African culture."²¹ Clearly then, the theme of Black Humanity was strengthened by modern African culture. It was an attempt to rewrite black history in Africa focussing on blacks as humans, not machines, sub-human species or animals.

Biko recommended that black history be rewritten with particular emphasis on black leaders, the man-centered society, music, mental attitude, religion, and economics. First, he wanted to concentrate on black leaders of the past. He suggested describing history through

the heroes that formed the core of resistance to the white invaders. More has to be revealed and stress has to be laid on the successful nation-building

¹⁹ Biko 29.

²⁰ Biko 41.

²¹ Biko 41.

attempts by people like Chaka, Moshoeshoe and Hintsa.²²

Since nations are built by humans, not animals, Biko worked to stress the importance of these early leaders. He believed it was important to have heroes to look to for signs of commitment to the core of the black community.

Second, Biko wanted to salvage the African notion of the "Man-centered society."²³ Westerners are often surprised at the African capacity for talking to each other if only for the enjoyment of communicating for its own sake.²⁴

The oneness of community for instance is at the heart of our culture. The easiness with which Africans communicate with each other is not forced by authority but is inherent in the make-up of African people.²⁵

This community ideal extends to the desire to share, in all age groups, because of the genuine care and consideration amongst the people.

House visiting was always a feature of the elderly folk's way of life. No reason was needed as a basis for visits. It was all part of our deep concern for each other.²⁶

He compared this oneness in the African society to that of whites and concluded that while

²² Chaka, Moshoeshoe and Hintsa are "Famous tribal chieftains of respectively, the Zulus, Basotho and Tswana." Biko 70.

²³ Biko 41.

²⁴ Biko 41.

²⁵ Biko 30.

²⁶ Biko 42.

the white family can stay in an area without knowing its neighbours, Africans develop a sense of belonging to the community within a short time of coming together.²⁷

The Man-centered society has the group as the focal point of life, and Biko was committed to saving this characteristic. "African society had the village community as its basis,"²⁸ and most things were owned as a group not individually. Farming and agriculture was successful as a joint venture and because of this involvement; "Poverty was a foreign concept. This (poverty) could only be really brought about to the entire community by an adverse climate during a particular season."²⁹

It was Biko's opinion that in this man-centered society, suspicion was uncommon. Biko explained that as a race the blacks believe in "the inherent goodness of man."³⁰ They always try to "refrain from using people as stepping stones."³¹ As Biko stated, "We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationships."³² This was an aspect of African life that helped support Black Humanity.

²⁷ Biko 30.

²⁸ Biko 43.

²⁹ Biko 43.

³⁰ Biko 42.

³¹ Biko 42.

³² Biko 47.

The third focus of the rewritten black history was the African love for song and rhythm. Biko explained that "Music in the African culture features in all emotional states."³³ This musical influence has not been lost throughout history. It continued to be expressed with conviction in work, battle, play, and worship. As Biko explained, "In other words with Africans, music and rhythm were not luxuries but part and parcel of our way of communication."³⁴ The tunes of the songs are adapted to the occasion and based on the group. Even though many of the songs have words, the tunes express more meaning to the people.

Fourth, the mental attitude is integral in the rewritten black history. This mental attitude is what Biko claimed was quite different from western thinking. Blacks take pride in this unique outlook. Instead of aggressively working to solve a problem, Africans tend to "experience a situation rather than face a problem."³⁵ This, as Biko interpreted it, was a more rational, sensible, and more human way of dealing with the circumstances of life, more rational, Biko said, than the "aggressive mentality"³⁶ of the Westerner, where a solution must be found immediately.

³³ Biko 42.

³⁴ Biko 42.

³⁵ Biko 44.

³⁶ Biko 44.

Religion is the fifth component in the rewritten black history. It was an issue Biko considered important in the African world and to Black Humanity. He stated that "All people are agreed that Africans are a deeply religious race," and it was a common belief that in all forms of African life the existence of a God was accepted without a doubt.³⁷ But this African religion differed from other religions as to the occasion of worship. Christianity has selected Sunday as the focus of worship, but Africans tended to manifest it more consistently in their daily lives.³⁸ As Biko claimed, "We would obviously find it artificial to create special occasions for worship."³⁹ He suggested that Christianity is a white man's religion, and that blacks were coerced into Christian membership upon the arrival of the first colonists. These colonists told the natives that African beliefs were barbaric and Christianity was the only salvation. As a result, most African customs and beliefs were lost and now the only option blacks have is Christianity. Biko explained:

This cold cruel religion was strange to us but our fore-fathers were sufficiently scared of the unknown impending anger to believe that it was worth a try. Down went our cultural values!⁴⁰

³⁷ Biko 44.

³⁸ Biko 45.

³⁹ Biko 45.

⁴⁰ Biko 45.

He focused disapproval on the Catholic Church. He felt it was not relevant to the "young constituency," and suggested that it "adjust fast to a changing world" or risk the loss of the young people.⁴¹ The following is a listing of his major criticisms:

1. It makes Christianity too much of a 'turn the other cheek' religion whilst addressing itself to a destitute people.
2. It is stunted with bureaucracy and institutionalisation.
3. It manifests in its structure a tacit acceptance of the system i.e. 'white equals value'.
4. It is limited by too much specialisation.⁴²

Christianity, specifically Catholicism, could not satisfy the needs of the blacks so Biko sought another outlook.

The solution Biko suggested was to look deeper into the Bible for messages of "black theology."⁴³ He said that, "Obviously the only path open for us now is to redefine the message in the bible [sic] and to make it relevant to the struggling masses."⁴⁴ Biko saw blacks constantly dropping out of the church because they did not see relevance for them in the Bible and its teachings. Instead of rejecting Christianity as a condemning religion, black theology seeks to preach that it is a sin to allow oneself to be oppressed. In addition, black theology wishes to do away with the spiritual poverty of black people.

⁴¹ Biko 58.

⁴² Biko 58.

⁴³ Biko 31.

⁴⁴ Biko 31.

Black theology bases itself on the Christian message, but it "seeks to show that Christianity is an adaptable religion that fits in with the cultural situation of the people to whom it is imparted."⁴⁵ Biko believed that it was time for black theologians to "take up the cudgels of the fight by restoring a meaning and direction in the black man's understanding of God."⁴⁶ He reminded the black ministry and all the black people that "God is not in the habit of coming down from heaven to solve people's problems on earth."⁴⁷

The economic history of the black is the sixth component in the rewritten black history. Blacks made the country a success through their own labor but have received no advantage from their hard work. Biko suggested that economically the black people of South Africa need to use their power to their own advantage: "As the situation stands today, money from the black world tends to take a unidirectional flow to the white society."⁴⁸ He praised the "'Buy Black'" campaign originating in Johannesburg, and suggested establishing black banks because it focused economic advantage on black communities through blacks.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Biko 31.

⁴⁶ Biko 60.

⁴⁷ Biko 60.

⁴⁸ Biko 71.

⁴⁹ Biko 71.

Rewriting history focussing on black leaders, the man-centered society, music, mental attitude, religion and economics is one prominent element in the Black Humanity theme. The second element is politics. Biko envisioned a one man, one vote society.⁵⁰ He did not want to force whites to leave the country; instead he said "[We] intend to see them staying here side by side with us, maintaining a society in which everybody shall contribute proportionally."⁵¹ This is what he termed an "open society."⁵² Biko saw it as a society that has free participation from everybody with equal economic and social opportunities for everyone.⁵³

When Biko spoke of a new government, he spoke of what he believed was best for the majority. He believed that, for everyone to be truly human, socialism may have been necessary. Biko recognized the inequitable distribution of wealth in South Africa and realized that the system in place needed to be changed. He believed that for any kind of "meaningful change to appear there needs to be an attempt at reorganising the whole economic pattern and economic policies within this particular country."⁵⁴ The BPC wanted

⁵⁰ Arnold 41.

⁵¹ Arnold 40.

⁵² Arnold 41.

⁵³ Arnold 42.

⁵⁴ Biko 149.

to see "a completely non-racial society."⁵⁵ It wanted to be sure that groups were not dominant believing "that in our country there shall be no minority, there shall be no majority, just the people."⁵⁶

As a fantasy theme within Biko's rhetoric, Black Humanity functioned to strengthen black pride and black determination. Biko worked to conquer the white fantasy theme of de-humanizing blacks by re-humanizing them. Black Humanity is based on rewriting black history in South Africa concentrating on important leaders of the past, the man-centered society, importance of music, positive mental attitude, black theology, and black economic power. Black Humanity also involves politics. Biko believed that perseverance could successfully lead to a government serving all its people, not just the minority. As in musical expression, Biko suggested that Blacks have one defiant message in common, borrowed from the roots of soul: "'Say it loud! I'm black and I'm proud.'"⁵⁷ Biko believed that this was becoming the modern culture of the black, "A culture of defiance, self assertion and group pride and solidarity."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Biko 149.

⁵⁶ Biko 149.

⁵⁷ Biko 46.

⁵⁸ Biko 46.

Black Unity

The second fantasy theme, Black Unity, is in opposition to the white theme of black separation. Biko believed that Black Unity was vital if change were ever to occur. However, according to Biko, Black Unity could not be attained without solving four main problems contributing to black separation: disunity among anti-apartheid groups, ambiguous race classifications, lack of one common language and clashing black leadership. When Biko discussed each problem his solution was always the same: Black Unity.

The first problem Biko confronted was fragmentation amongst anti-apartheid groups. He knew that the more anti-apartheid groups there were, the more disruptive it was to the movement. Biko urged the ANC and the PAC to join forces because there would be more power and efficiency with one organization. He stated,

I would like to see groups like ANC, PAC and the Black Consciousness movement deciding to form one liberation group. It is only, I think, when black people are so dedicated and so united in their cause that we can effect the greatest results.⁵⁹

Biko felt strongly that freedom depended on one united front.

Another harmful form of separateness that Biko saw preventing Black Unity was the government's ambiguous race classifications. The government separated Indians, Coloureds, and Blacks, and gave some rights to Coloureds and

⁵⁹ Biko 148.

Indians; yet the government still denied Blacks these same rights. By giving rights to some people and not others, the government proceeded in its plan to break up what Biko described as one group: "the oppressed."⁶⁰

The Coloured Labour Party exemplifies this separation. It withdrew from a united black front, and in the end, Biko believed that this was a barrier to freedom.

Further operation within the system may only lead to political castration and a creation of an 'I-am-a-Coloured' attitude which will prove a set back to the black man's programme of emancipation and will create major obstacles in the establishment of a non-racial society once our problems are settled.⁶¹

Biko saw participation in and acceptance of the government's race classifications as a set back to the entire black struggle. In contrast, many disagreed with this point of view.

Those people who disagreed with Biko suggested that there was no hope for unity because

Coloureds despise Africans because they, (the former) by their proximity to the Africans, may lose the chances of assimilation into the white world. Africans despise the Coloureds and Indians for a variety of reasons. Indians not only despise Africans but in many instances also exploit the Africans in job and shop situations. All these stereotype attitudes have led to mountainous inter-group suspicions amongst the blacks.⁶²

Nevertheless, Biko maintained his philosophy and worked toward Black Unity. He suggested that instead of focussing

⁶⁰ Biko 36.

⁶¹ Biko 38.

⁶² Biko 52.

on the contrasts between groups, a focus on the common ground would be more productive. He reminded these groups that they were all oppressed by the same system to varying degrees. Separating only helped the white racist government, it did not help emancipate the persecuted.⁶³

The third problem contributing to black separation was language. When a witness at the BPC/SASO trial, Biko tried to explain the problem of language, a problem that he believed contributed to the separation of groups the government arbitrarily classified. He made reference to the origins of SASO and the problems it had communicating because the membership contained ten languages. The decision was made not to rely on Afrikaans because the historical connotations behind it provoked aggressive disapproval from the black man. English was chosen because it had more common ground associated with it, but it was never perfect. Translating anything to or from English can never have a completely equivalent meaning. Biko interprets this problem as follows:

I don't know other languages. I know a bit of Afrikaans, a bit of English, a bit of Xhosa. . . . Zulu and all the other languages share one common factor--that of attaching not an analytical but some kind of emotional meaning to situations, whereas English tends to be analytical. You have got to use a precise word, you know, to convey a precise meaning.⁶⁴

⁶³ Biko 52.

⁶⁴ Arnold 200.

Biko tried to explain this idea further by saying that blacks and whites can also interpret documents, like the ones they were discussing at the trial, in different ways.

He said,

You don't have to interpret it back into your language because your values as a person--whether you speak English or not--your values are affected by your culture, so. . . you perceive a document in terms of your general make-up, in terms of your understanding. And what I am saying to you is that not one Black person looks at this thing in terms of the precise meaning of each word. After this has been read, for instance, if you ask a Black person how were Whites described in that document, he will not remember the precise words. He will just have a vague idea. This is all I am trying to say to you about the meaning of language.⁶⁵

Biko believed that misunderstanding resulting from language interpretation could lead to intra-group and inter-group conflict. He did not want this factor to lead to further separation.

The fourth problem contributing to black separation was confusion over the leaders of the black world. So many different opinions came from different people that the black man was not being fairly or uniformly represented. He did not agree with people "working within the system,"⁶⁶ such as Zulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi whom, Biko thought, could only be considered a puppet of the apartheid government.⁶⁷ In Biko's opinion, Buthelezi did not represent the goals of

⁶⁵ Arnold 201.

⁶⁶ Biko 35.

⁶⁷ Biko 35.

the black people accurately. But since Buthelezi was legal under white law, the white world believed what Buthelezi and his followers said, taking their word as representative of the entire black community. Biko noted that,

Because of the increased verbalisation of black man's complaints, the people--especially the white world--began to take these various voices as speaking on behalf of and as leaders of the black world. This kind of picture was particularly built up by the English press, who followed in detail everything people like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi did and said. Of course in the absence of any organized opinion it began to sound even to some black people themselves as if this were the case.⁶⁸

Biko believed that people like Buthelezi, who worked with the government, accepted that South Africa belongs to the whites. The government claims independence of the homelands with puppet leaders like Buthelezi, but in reality, the apartheid system is the only government that acknowledges this declaration. By accepting the government's actions, Buthelezi is only encouraging separation among the blacks. This separation is what the racist apartheid government intended to happen all along.

Black Unity suffered when groups separated, but Biko realized that one of the main problems with these isolated groups was lost leadership. Biko believed in the qualities of the people, and wanted them to use their talents as a unified group. However, he believed that they were being manipulated. They liked the power and money these positions offered.

⁶⁸ Biko 35.

This is dangerous retrogressive thinking which should be given no breathing space. These apartheid institutions are swallowing too many good people who would be useful in a meaningful programme of emancipation of the black people.⁶⁹

Indirectly, Biko was speaking of Buthelezi. He saw the potential in the man but disapproved of his current role in African life. Nevertheless, Buthelezi was not the only person of whom Biko disapproved.

Biko understood the pressures on his people, but could not accept their compromises. He believed that even though "it may be more attractive and even safer to join the system, we must still recognize that in doing so we are well on the way towards selling our souls."⁷⁰ In the same vein, Biko pointed out that there really was no such thing as a black policeman.

Any black man who props the system up actively has lost the right to being considered part of the black world: he has sold his soul for 30 pieces of silver and finds that he is in fact not acceptable to the white society he sought to join.⁷¹

Accepting the system only caused further separation.

Biko became frustrated because the leadership that the blacks looked to for freedom was stifled in its prime. These leaders seemed to be the last hope for some and without them, most blacks tended to fall further into passive subservience.

⁶⁹ Biko 37.

⁷⁰ Biko 39.

⁷¹ Biko 78.

Clearly, black people know that their leaders are those people who are now either in Robben Island or in banishment or in exile--voluntary or otherwise. People like Mandela, Sobukwe, Kathrada, M.D. Naidoo and many others will always have a place of honour in our minds as the true leaders of the people. . . . These were people who acted with a dedication unparalleled in modern times. Their concern with our plight as black people made them gain the natural support of the mass of black people. We may disagree with some things they did but know that they spoke the language of the people.⁷²

Because these leaders were in jail, people saw little hope for change and lacked trust in any kind of leadership. The frustrated black man ended up channeling his anger inappropriately. Biko interpreted the violence in the townships as follows:

Deep inside his anger mounts at the accumulating insult, but he vents it in the wrong direction--on his fellow man in the township, on the property of black people.⁷³

Biko hoped to channel this energy toward one united effort at black freedom.

Biko tried not to let the four main problems of black separation discourage him and his followers. In order to have one united effort, Biko worked to establish a positive attitude in the black man. Black Unity appears to be the vehicle that Biko used to create this positive attitude. He explains it like this:

It works on the knowledge that 'white hatred' is negative, though understandable, and leads to precipitate and shot-gun methods which may be disastrous for black and white alike. It seeks to

⁷² Biko 37.

⁷³ Biko 28.

channel the pent-up forces of the angry black masses to meaningful and directional opposition basing its entire struggle on realities of the situation. It wants to ensure a singularity of purpose in the minds of the black people and to make possible total involvement of the masses in a struggle essentially theirs.⁷⁴

Biko is well known for the quality of having a positive attitude.

Fragmentation hurts the entire black struggle and, according to Biko, must be amended. Biko worked to unite anti-apartheid groups, discourage acceptance of government policies including race classification, homeland leaders, black policeman, and the Afrikaner language. If blacks want freedom, there must be Black Unity and a willingness to sacrifice in order to have complete satisfaction in the future: "leadership and security are basically incompatible, a struggle without casualties is no struggle."⁷⁵ It was not easy to suggest such extreme sacrifice, but Biko knew that struggle relied on a consolidated effort. For Biko, the only answer to state enforced separation was people enforced unity.

Black Courage

In this, the third fantasy theme in his rhetoric, Biko utilizes Black Courage to combat the white fantasy theme of

⁷⁴ Biko 31.

⁷⁵ Biko 97.

fear. This white fantasy theme includes white fear of the black population and black fear of the white population.

In South Africa there was fear almost everywhere. Although not easily understood, Biko described it as the tripartate system of fear,

whites fearing the blacks, blacks fearing whites and the government fearing blacks and wishing to allay the fear amongst whites-- [This] makes it difficult to establish rapport amongst the two segments of the community.⁷⁶

The South African government manipulated white fear and this was viewed by Biko to be rooted in early colonial habitation. Biko concluded that, in response to their fear of the black population, white settlers established for themselves a special status through violence. In one of his articles for the SASO Newsletter, titled "Fear--An Important Determinant in South African Politics," and other prominent rhetorical contributions, he traced the history of oppression, realizing that what the government did was no surprise considering its history. Part of the fantasy theme of Black Courage evolved out of Biko's opposition to the white fear fantasy held by the minority government. Black Courage operates on the premise that courage can conquer both types of fear. Biko knew that blacks needed to defeat their fear of whites and the white fear of blacks. Both types of fear were detrimental to Biko's movement.

⁷⁶ Biko 79.

White fear, the first fear Biko combats with Black Courage, began at the early stages of black and white interaction. Whenever blacks tried to resist persecution, violence became the means used to silence their attempts. As "perpetual rulers in a foreign land" the whites constantly had to show that they had the "upper hand."⁷⁷ "There is only one way of showing that upper hand--by ruthlessly breaking down the back of resistance amongst the blacks, however petty that resistance is."⁷⁸ To prove his point, Biko suggested simply examining the sizable security force the government employed. When the agents of the police force decided that there was nothing wrong, they easily could search until something became wrong. As Biko said, "The philosophy behind police action in this country seems to be 'harass them! harass them!'"⁷⁹ In spite of all the power that the South African government had, it still feared the black population, a fear that led to illogical action.

Like anyone living in mortal fear, they occasionally resort to irrational actions in the hope that a show of strength rather than proper intelligence might scare the resisters satisfactorily.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Biko 74.

⁷⁸ Biko 74.

⁷⁹ Biko 75.

⁸⁰ Biko 79.

The behavior resulting from irrationality led Biko to conclude that the South African security system "is force-oriented rather than intelligence-oriented."⁸¹

The irrationality of the police force was what Biko considered the background for political trials. "To them it looks as if something would be dangerously wrong if no major political trial was held for a period of one year."⁸² He believed that if an officer reports nothing, he will be scorned by his supervisor. Arrests allowed a security policeman to justify his employment. Biko remarked that "The strangest thing is that people are hauled in for almost nothing to be tried under the most vicious of Acts--like the Terrorism Act."⁸³ This same act was used to keep Biko in detention two times.

Biko suggested that white fear of the black population maintained the apartheid laws and forced blacks onto homelands. In such an unjustified situation where blacks were forced to live, it was almost a mystery that they could even survive such conditions. Biko remarked that,

Township life alone makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood. There we see a situation of absolute want in which black will kill black to be able to survive. This is the basis of the vandalism, murder, rape and plunder that goes on while the real sources of the evil--white society--are suntanning on

⁸¹ Biko 79.

⁸² Biko 74.

⁸³ Biko 74.

exclusive beaches or relaxing in their bourgeois homes.⁸⁴

The evil Biko referred to maintained the apartheid system as an example of vast misrepresentation and a violation of human rights.

The bantustans that the government designed for the blacks are typical of this misrepresentation. They are scattered on "unyielding soil," that is

often very unsuitable either for agricultural or pastoral work. Not one of the bantustans have access to the sea⁸⁵ and in all situations mineral rights are strictly reserved for the South African government.⁸⁶

In political terms Biko considered the bantustans "the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians (with the possible exception of the new United Party federal policy)."⁸⁷ Biko again adamantly disapproved of people like Buthelezi and exclaimed, "if you want to fight your enemy you do not accept from him the unloaded of his two guns and then challenge him to a duel."⁸⁸ Biko concluded his thoughts on the issue of bantustans by suggesting that "These tribal cocoons called 'homelands' are nothing else but sophisticated concentration camps where black people are

⁸⁴ Biko 75.

⁸⁵ Aelred Stubbs points out here that none of the bantustans have access to a major port.

⁸⁶ Biko 82.

⁸⁷ Biko 83.

⁸⁸ Biko 85.

allowed to 'suffer peacefully.'... Down with Bantustans!!!"⁸⁹

White fear, Biko argued, was illustrated in the dehumanizing of the black man in many everyday proceedings. Here, the fantasy themes of Black Humanity and Black Courage overlap, helping to strengthen Black Consciousness. Biko believed that Blacks were forced into dependance on the whites and fell into a role of unsuitable inferiority:

even young traffic policemen, people generally known for their grace, occasionally find it proper to slap adult black people. It sometimes looks obvious here that the great plan is to keep the black people thoroughly intimidated and to perpetuate the 'super-race' image of the white man, if not intellectually, at least in terms of force. White people, working through their vanguard--the South African Police--have come to realise the truth of the golden maxim--if you cannot make a man respect you, then make him fear you.⁹⁰

In the above excerpt, Biko addresses two types of fear, white fear and black fear, recognizing that these fears are interactive.

Black fear, the second fear Biko combats with Black Courage, evolves out of the white fear described above. As Biko said, "the black community lives in absolute fear of the police."⁹¹ Biko saw the black fear and worked to combat it with black strength and black courage.

⁸⁹ Biko 86.

⁹⁰ Biko 75-6.

⁹¹ Biko 75.

According to Biko, the black man had no choice but to despise the entire white population. The whites seem to have control of the entire country even though they are clearly in the minority:

whiteness has thus been soiled beyond recognition. At best therefore blacks see whiteness as a concept that warrants being despised, hated, destroyed and replaced by an aspiration with more human content in it.⁹²

Blacks then start to use hate and contempt daily.

The attitudes that circulated among the black population were therefore overwhelmingly negative. The separation of black groups contributed to the rising black fear. To what does this lead? Is peaceful change possible? Biko suggested that:

The white strategy so far has been to systematically break down the resistance of the blacks to the point where the latter would accept crumbs from the white table. This we have shown we reject unequivocally; and now the stage is therefore set for a very interesting turn of events.⁹³

The only way to approach this white and black fear was through Black Courage. But another fantasy theme influenced Black Courage.

In the struggle for liberation, one in which he expended all his efforts, Biko sought unity among blacks. Black Unity, the second fantasy theme in this analysis, was fundamental in Biko's philosophy. Once unity was achieved, Blacks could work together toward a free South Africa, and

⁹² Biko 77.

⁹³ Biko 79.

Biko believed that through his efforts he had been successful in diminishing the fear among black people, and creating some unity. Here, the fantasy themes of Black Courage and Black Unity overlap. More and more blacks accepted Biko's suggestions and came forward to make a stand.

Through our political articulation of the aspirations of black people, many black people have come to appreciate the need to stand up and be counted against the system.⁹⁴

Biko was referring to the Soweto youth protesting their system of education. He said that once the fear diminished, blacks were able to take a stand. Since all of the people of Soweto were more solidified in their thinking, the struggle would benefit.⁹⁵

One interview with the New Republic revealed Black Courage. In this interview, Biko gave some insight into diminishing fear and the fine line between life and death. He praised the courage showed by the Soweto youth and explained that they had to overcome their own fear before they would be able to demonstrate against the educational system.

And of course, you see, the dramatic thing about the bravery of these youths is that they have now discovered, or accepted, what everybody knows, that the bond between life and death is absolute. You are either alive and proud or you are dead, when you are dead, you can't care anyway. And your method of death can itself be a politicizing thing. So you die in the

⁹⁴ Biko 145.

⁹⁵ Biko 145.

riots. For a hell of a lot of them, in fact, there's really nothing to lose--almost literally, given the kind of situations that they come from. So if you can overcome the personal fear for death, which is a highly irrational thing, you know, then you're on the way.⁹⁶

This example of Black Courage helped to support Biko's rhetoric.

According to Biko, Black Courage was essential in the struggle for freedom, but Black Courage, at times, may involve violence. When asked about violence Biko stated that the BPC explored non-violent means within the country as much as possible; in only one interview did he agree that some degree of black violence would be needed to counter white violence.⁹⁷

Blacks have had enough experience as objects of racism not to wish to turn the tables. While it may be relevant now to talk about black in relation to white, we must not make this our preoccupation, for it can be a negative exercise. As we proceed further towards the achievement of our goals let us talk more about ourselves and our struggle and less about whites. We have set out on a quest for true humanity, and somewhere on the distant horizon we can see the glittering prize. Let us march forth with courage and determination, drawing strength from our common plight and our brotherhood. In time we shall be in a

⁹⁶ "Biko on Death: The South African Martyr Tells How it Will Happen," New Republic 7 Jan. 1978: 12.

⁹⁷ Biko never publicly encouraged or favored violent change, but acknowledged in this instance, that a proportion of black violence may be necessary in order to answer to white violence. But, he makes a point of stating that white violence could be deterred by a unified black political front, as opposed to military struggle. A non-violent resistance was Biko's favored choice to obtaining freedom. Biko 143.

position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible--a more human face.⁹⁸

Black Courage can be manifested in many ways, but Biko hoped that violence would be a last resort.

Consistent with his previous themes, the core of Black Courage was in opposition to a predominant and dangerous white fantasy theme, fear. Whenever blacks confronted white fear or experienced black fear Biko encouraged Black Courage. He asserted that a proud, unified and courageous black community could combat the present fear which was responsible for the poor treatment of blacks throughout the years.

Black Self-Reliance

The final theme in Biko's rhetoric, Black Self-Reliance, emerged as a reaction to the opposing white fantasy theme of control. Whites controlled all aspects of black life including how blacks planned to fight white rule. Biko resented this control and considered it a significant problem. Black Self-Reliance is how Biko intended to solve it.

According to Biko the problem of white control exists in

that curious bunch of nonconformists who explain their participation in negative terms: that bunch of do-

⁹⁸ Biko 98.

gooders that goes under all sorts of names--liberals, leftists etc.⁹⁹

These are the people that say they claim no responsibility for the state of the country and want to be involved in the emancipation process. They say they feel the oppression just as the blacks do. These are the people to whom Biko sarcastically assigned the title "black souls wrapped up in white skins."¹⁰⁰

Biko's experience with white control mostly came from his involvement with NUSAS and the resulting all black organization SASO. It was important to the founding members of SASO to avoid the militant title that is at times associated with those blacks who refused to work with the whites. SASO did eventually gain support and respect, but it confronted some obstacles in the form of financial resources, "Traditional sectionalisation,"¹⁰¹ fear from members of police repercussion, non-acceptance by NUSAS, and lack of support from the Students Representative Council.¹⁰²

Biko noted four key characteristics of white control: prejudice, lack of productivity, questionable motives, and

⁹⁹ Biko 20.

¹⁰⁰ Biko 20.

¹⁰¹ The term traditional sectionalism refers to the problems within the system in regards to communication and recognition. As an all black organization it was hard to gain acceptance from most people. Biko 6.

¹⁰² Biko 6-7.

racism. All four characteristics surface when whites take control of the black struggle, according to Biko.

Prejudice was common in many of the student organizations with which Biko came in contact. NUSAS was one such organization. Biko saw prejudice as detrimental and a common characteristic of white control. In the history of NUSAS and indeed in most black organizations, white direction was common. White "teachers" always seemed to know what was best for the blacks. This type of integration philosophy, using a collective approach as a means as well as an end goal, is artificial. With integration came prejudice, and according to Biko, it was automatically present and could not be avoided. He described it as follows:

In other words the people forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their inbuilt complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest themselves even in the 'nonracial' set-up of the integrated complex.¹⁰³

Biko saw prejudice as detrimental and a common characteristic of white control.

The second characteristic of white control is a lack of productivity. As Biko stated,

Instead of involving themselves in an all-out attempt to stamp out racism from their white society, liberals waste lots of time trying to prove to as many blacks as they can find that they are liberal.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Biko 20.

¹⁰⁴ Biko 23.

Too much time is spent searching for common ground and each group battles for control because it feels its methods are the best. Biko found such integration unproductive.

The third characteristic of white control is motives. Biko questioned the motives behind white involvement and asked, "How many white people fighting for their version of a change in South Africa are really motivated by genuine concern and not by guilt?"¹⁰⁵ He felt the liberal was "in fact appeasing his own conscience,"¹⁰⁶ and Biko would rather have done without this kind of assistance. As whites spoke for blacks, they claimed "a 'monopoly on intelligence and moral judgement' and set the pattern and pace for the realisation of the black man's aspirations."¹⁰⁷ At the same time however, the members of these nonracial organizations, particularly NUSAS, wanted to remain in good standing in both the white and black world. These white liberal methods were a problem because, as Biko stated, they are

directed at and appeal to white conscience, everything they do is directed at finally convincing the white electorate that the black man is also a man and that at some future date he should be given a place at the white man's table.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Biko 65.

¹⁰⁶ Biko 65.

¹⁰⁷ Biko 21.

¹⁰⁸ Biko 21-2. For an interesting comparison, see Langston Hughes, Ask Your Mama (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961) 73.

From this statement it is apparent that Biko had some fundamental problems with the motives of white liberals.

Blacks were "tired" and had more of an urgency to their needs because they were struggling to get out of a situation they seemed unable to escape. The white liberals, on the other hand, enjoyed their conditions so they did not have that immediate need for change:

no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin--his passport to privilege--will always put him miles ahead of the black man. Thus in the ultimate analysis no white person can escape being part of the oppressor camp.¹⁰⁹

Biko questioned the motives of most white liberals. He knew blacks wanted to change more than just white conscience.

Racism, as Biko described it, was "discrimination by a group against another for the purposes of subjugation or maintaining subjugation."¹¹⁰ Racism is the fourth characteristic of white control. Biko blamed this racism solely on the demeanor of the whites. He said, "There is no doubt that discrimination against the black man the world over fetches its origin from the exploitative attitude of the white man."¹¹¹ But in terms of international severity, he believed that South Africa was the most troublesome of all countries.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Biko 23.

¹¹⁰ Biko 25.

¹¹¹ Biko 49.

¹¹² Biko 49.

Biko's examinations of human and race relations in South Africa led him to believe that when blacks in South Africa speak out for themselves, they are only responding to white racism. It is the whites who are being racist because they have the power to do so, and in Biko's opinion, "one cannot be a racist unless he has the power to subjugate. We are in the position in which we are because of our skin."¹¹³

For Biko, the solution to the problem of white control is Black Self-Reliance. Black Self-Reliance has three distinctive attributes: encouraging true integration, black independence, and white education.

The first attribute of Black Self-Reliance is true integration. SASO separated from NUSAS because NUSAS was not truly integrated; SASO needed its own unity and independence.¹¹⁴ Biko did not like making such a distinct separation from whites, but resigned himself to the fact that it was the only solution possible in the society in which they had been forced to live. He said that

While, as a matter of principle, we would reject separation in a normal society, we have to take cognizance of the fact that ours is far from a normal society. It is difficult not to look at white society as a group of people bent on perpetuating the 'status quo.'¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Biko 25.

¹¹⁴ Two fantasy themes overlap at this point, Black Unity and Black Self-Reliance.

¹¹⁵ Biko 12.

Black Self-Reliance is what Biko thought was needed, not an unproductive attempt at an integrated confrontation.

Biko believed that "true integration" existed in theory but he questioned the possibility of its realization in practice. He opposed the type of integration that meant the welcoming of blacks into white society and did not feel that it was true integration if blacks lived in "an already established set of norms and code of behavior set up and maintained by whites."¹¹⁶ Biko said that,

At the heart of true integration is the provision for each man, each group to rise and attain the envisioned self. Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching on or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-styles of the various groups. This is true integration.¹¹⁷

Biko saw that true and meaningful integration was only possible if joint admiration existed, and Biko thought that most nonracial organizations lacked this vital characteristic.

The second attribute of Biko's solution to white control was black independence. Biko believed blacks wanted to work for themselves, as the fantasy theme of Black Self-Reliance suggests. He metaphorically described it as follows:

¹¹⁶ Biko 24.

¹¹⁷ Biko 21.

The blacks are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game that they should be playing. They want to do things for themselves and all by themselves.¹¹⁸

So, Biko suggested that the white liberals leave blacks alone to take care of black concerns because, as he saw it, "Whites can only see us from the outside and as such can never extract and analyse the ethos in the black community."¹¹⁹ These white liberals "in fact are the greatest racists for they refuse to credit us with any intelligence to know what we want."¹²⁰ The whites, if they are sincere about their convictions, need to work at breaking down the problem of white racism. As Biko proposed, there is not a black problem. "There is nothing the matter with blacks. The problem is WHITE RACISM."¹²¹ Biko considered white racism the real evil in the South African society, the evil most in need of change. Real change, Biko believed, would occur only when blacks worked for themselves and when blacks became independent of white control.

The third attribute of Biko's solution to white control was white education. He felt the liberal must concentrate on educating his white compatriots as to the

¹¹⁸ Biko 15.

¹¹⁹ Biko 52-3.

¹²⁰ Biko 51.

¹²¹ Biko 23.

rewriting of history¹²² that will occur when freedom comes. Biko wanted to be able to have a smooth transition when the time came and described such a change with another metaphor:

The liberal must serve as a lubricating material so that as we change the gears in trying to find a better direction for South Africa, there should be no grinding noises of metal against metal but a free and easy flowing movement which will be characteristic of a well-looking-after vehicle.¹²³

In other words, Biko felt that the black struggle should be independent of white interference. If the white liberal really wanted to help, Biko welcomed his assistance, but the best way to help was to educate the white world, not try to use white control in the black struggle for freedom.

Black Self-Reliance needed true integration, black independence, and white education in order to combat white control. Biko did not envision a society that lets the black man into the white world. He did not think the black man should conform to white ideals. Instead, he wanted a society that lets the black man regain his history and customs in order to live according to his own rules. He resented liberals who fought battles for blacks. He wanted all people to fight for their own freedom.

I am against the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil (and a poor one at that). I am against the intellectual arrogance of white people that makes them believe that white leadership is a 'sine quo non' in this country and

¹²² Biko describes his attitudes of the rewriting of history within the fantasy theme of Black Humanity.

¹²³ Biko 25-6.

that whites are the divinely appointed pace-setters in progress. I am against the fact that a settler minority should impose an entire system of values on an indigenous people.¹²⁴

Biko wanted a South Africa that represented the cultures and rights of all human beings, not just what the liberals projected.

As such liberals, or as Biko suggested, black souls in white skins, proceed in their own struggle, they will understand the course of Black Consciousness. If they are true liberals, as Biko interprets them to be, they will understand the plight of the black people and leave them to their own fight. As Biko explained, white society has always controlled the power in South Africa.

Not only have the whites been guilty of being on the offensive but, by some skilful manoeuvres, they have managed to control the responses of the blacks to the provocation. Not only have they kicked the black but they have also told him how to react to the kick. For a long time the black has been listening with patience to the advice he has been receiving on how best to respond to the kick. With painful slowness he is now beginning to show signs that it is his right and duty to respond to the kick 'in the way he sees fit.'¹²⁵

Biko advocated Black Self-Reliance instead of white dependance and control.

He encouraged blacks to think and act for themselves as they searched and fought for their own freedom. Like the previous themes, the messages of Black Self-Reliance are simple, but according to Biko they were essential components

¹²⁴ Biko 24.

¹²⁵ Biko 66.

of Black Consciousness. They all seem to work together, aiding in understanding and coherence, in order to support the Black Consciousness ideology. As is apparent in the following statement of inspiration to his fellow students, it is blacks' responsibility to combat white interference with this fourth fantasy theme of Black Self-Reliance.

We have a responsibility not only to ourselves but also to the society from which we spring. No one else will ever take the challenge up until we, of our own accord, accept the inevitable fact that ultimately the leadership of the non-white peoples in this country rests with us.¹²⁶

This rather typical statement reveals Biko's commitment to Black Self-Reliance. Black Self-Reliance gained much of its strength from SASO's early rhetoric and continued as a blueprint for many future black organizations. In Biko's words,

what SASO has done is simply to take stock of the present scene in the country and to realise that not unless the non-white students decide to lift themselves from the doldrums will they ever hope to get out of them. What we want is not black visibility but real black participation.¹²⁷

This, in essence, was what Biko believed to be Black Self-Reliance, the fourth fantasy theme in this study.

¹²⁶ Biko 7.

¹²⁷ Biko 5.

The Fantasy Chain

Black Humanity, Black Unity, Black Courage, and Black Self-Reliance are all attempts to conquer the opposing white fantasy themes of de-humanization, separation, fear, and control of blacks. The four fantasy themes that emerge from Biko's rhetoric work together to chain out into Biko's rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness. Often, when Biko spoke, his audience members would pick up these predominant themes and pass them on to others.¹²⁸ This can be characterized as a fantasy chain. As more people heard of Biko and his ideas, the more influential he appeared. Biko was the leader and motivator of the BCM, and the four fantasy themes examined above exemplify his principal thoughts. Since all themes support the rhetorical vision of

¹²⁸ An example of this can be found at the time of SASO's origination. When Biko suggested that the black students needed to separate from the established NUSAS and start their own organization, the idea became a reality in SASO. Some of the people listening to Biko's comments were Clive Nettleton, of NUSAS, and Barney Pityana, who was instrumental in SASO's founding. Both Nettleton and Pityana took Biko's themes and passed them on in their own speeches and writings. Nettleton, for example, expressed Black Humanity in this way: "It is essential for the black students to elevate the level of consciousness of the black community by promoting black awareness, pride, achievement and capabilities." Woods, Biko 35-36. Pityana expressed Black Humanity this way: "The first step, therefore, is to make the black man see himself, to pump life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth." Woods, Biko 37-38. These are two clear examples of the fantasy chain.

Black Consciousness it is important to take a closer look at how they have progressed through fantasy chains.

Black Humanity, the first fantasy theme, came to mean black pride in all aspects of black life. It was a rejection of the attitudes the white government had imposed on blacks, and the black acceptance of those attitudes. Black education, for example, was one field that was controlled by the white government and that control was rejected by Biko. It can also be examined as one way Black Humanity chained out.

Because the white government had ultimate control over what was taught and in what language, blacks had little choice but to accept it. But Biko's rhetoric gave black youth in South Africa a new look at an old problem. They picked up on Biko's ideas of Black Humanity and questioned the method of education imposed on them. Black youth passed Biko's ideas on, spreading them throughout the townships. In this way the fantasy chain was utilized. Conceivably, the ultimate action demonstrating the result of the chaining out procedure, was the 1976 march in Soweto. Black youths protested being forced to learn in Afrikaans, a white language the blacks considered separate from their own heritage. For these blacks their own language was proof of their black humanity. Therefore, rejection of the legitimacy of Afrikaans created black pride in their lives and helped them to realize fully their black humanity.

The next chain to examine comes from the fantasy theme Black Unity. One example of this chaining out can be viewed in an article in the black Johannesburg newspaper City Press. Percy Qoboza, a respected journalist for that paper, commented on the 1985 rival clashes between supporters of the Azania People's Organization (AZAPO) and the United Democratic Front (UDF.)

There must be something immensely wrong with our communities if black-on-black violence continues unabated without any of us raising a finger. . . . The time has surely come for supporters of the United Democratic Front and the Azanian People's Organization to come together and reassess their values and project in their strategies the fundamental issues of what they want to achieve. Even more importantly, they must identify who the real enemy is.¹²⁹

Qoboza saw that separation only hurt the black effort and encouraged the two groups to stop the violence and unite in one struggle with one common goal. Through this press, Qoboza was reiterating Biko's rhetoric and in turn chaining out Biko's theme of Black Unity.

Black Courage, the third fantasy theme, emerged in opposition to two types of fear, whites of blacks and blacks of whites. Biko combatted this situation by determining that Black Courage could overcome any kind of fear.

The Black Courage theme was chained through black youth. Buti Tlhagale, a young Roman Catholic priest with close ties to the Soweto youth, remarked about widespread courage among the blacks. He noted that there had to be

¹²⁹ Graham Leach, South Africa (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987) 126-7.

courage or else evidence of black resistance would be non-existent. Tlhagle said,

The students you see here aren't waiting for any Messiah. They just get cut down so fast. A student leader lasts for three to six months. The police are on to them very fast. They go to jail, or they go to exile.¹³⁰

The only way these youths could survive this brutality was through courage. Biko's theme of Black Courage was resurfacing through the young blacks' efforts to combat persecution.¹³¹

The other aspect of the Black Courage fantasy theme was white fear of blacks. Biko had stated his views about fear many times, but perhaps the most noteworthy was his article on fear written in 1971. "Fear - An Important Determinant in South African Politics" outlines Biko's views that white fear of blacks was what drove white people to use violence. It was the white people's way of preserving their own way of life. The constant violence against blacks created black fear of whites. Black Courage chained out in Donald Woods' interpretation of the Sharpeville Massacre.

¹³⁰ Lelyveld 186.

¹³¹ Gerhart 294-295 and 298-301. Gerhart discusses the influence SASA and Black Consciousness had among the youth of South Africa. She details Biko's reputation and explains how he changed the mood of the black political movement. She cites the clenched-fist Black Power salute as underlining "this new fearlessness in a nonverbal language." Gerhart 295. This Black Power salute was shown in support of Biko and the other "highly courageous individuals willing to speak their minds without fear." Gerhart 295.

Written in 1987, it is evident that Woods exemplifies Biko's rhetoric of white fear.

Sharpeville was a microcosm of the minority white fear of black numbers in South Africa, and of inordinate response to this fear. It was inevitable because there was by now a discernible pattern in the periodic eruption of mass black anger against the race laws in South Africa, and because white South Africans lived under such tensions created by their racial fear that they were constantly on the edge of over-reaction to any black challenge.¹³²

Woods' interpretation outlines an obvious example of Biko's viewpoint on white fear. It, as a result, is representation of the third fantasy theme Black Courage chaining out to even the white press.

Black Self-Reliance, Biko's fourth fantasy theme, depicts black independence of white liberal leadership. This theme has chained out into organizations such as AZAPO. AZAPO restricts membership to blacks only and therefore is black controlled. There is no white liberal intervention, as Biko had advocated.

Another example of Black Self-Reliance chaining out can be seen in Beyers Naude's rhetoric. Representing the Christian Institute¹³³ and speaking to an audience at the University of Cape Town, Naude told white South Africans that they needed to consider seriously the possibility of black leadership and a new South Africa. He predicted what

¹³² Donald Woods, Asking For Trouble (New York: Atheneum, 1987) 118.

¹³³ An ecumenical organization formed in order to influence the white churches in South Africa on issues of humanity and racial equality.

may happen in a new society, and suggested that the whites accept and welcome a land free to all who live there. Naude said,

For whatever is going to happen in between, one thing I know: A new South Africa is being born--a South Africa in which I wish to live . . . a South Africa in which I wish to give of myself to all the people of our land.¹³⁴

Biko's advice was surfacing through Naude. Whites wishing to help in the black struggle needed to educate whites on what a new South Africa would be. Naude chose to do this instead of trying to control and speak for blacks in what Biko claimed should be a struggle controlled by blacks, not whites. Naude was chaining out Biko's fantasy theme of Self-Reliance, contributing to the ideology of Black Consciousness.

Even though Biko contributed more opinions than this study has examined, the four themes analyzed were the most prevalent and representative of his thoughts. It became apparent that Biko's ideas were absorbed by blacks and some whites in South Africa; his rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness had been detected. Yet, perhaps the most forceful event in solidifying these ideas was his death. After his passing, the chain created by the society at large elevated the ideas made popular by Biko when he was alive. This is not to say that his ideologies had no meaning until

¹³⁴ Lelyveld 310-311. After Biko's death and Naude's banning orders, it became a crime to print any of Naude's rhetoric including the above statement.

he died, but attention must be paid to the effect his demise had on the four fantasy themes. The related rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness was also affected, but to what extent? How did Biko's death contribute to the chaining out of the fantasy themes to the rhetorical vision?

Important questions to be answered here are, on what terms did Biko become a martyr and what are the consequences of such a label in this rhetorical analysis? How has martyrdom contributed to or helped the fantasy themes chain out into the rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness, if this is indeed what has happened? Death does not automatically make a martyr, so in order to study the term and its relation to Biko, a search into the meaning and consequences of it is necessary. It is my intention to contribute to the understanding of Stephen Biko and his rhetoric once the answers to the above questions are discovered.

Biko has been referred to as a martyr since the day he died. Numerous newspaper reports, books and interviews have described him as such. Eric Marsden of the London Times said,

As honorary life president of the Black People's Convention he was the leader of the whole black consciousness movement, with a vast following among black youth. He would become overnight 'black South Africa's number one martyr.'¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Marsden, "Outcry" 7.

A pro government newspaper the Citizen even said that, "Now he [Biko] is a black martyr."¹³⁶ The New Republic, The Nation, and the New York Times frequently used the term martyr. The name Biko and this term were almost expected by readers to be seen in the same sentence. The man was so important in the movement and among the youth that one Soweto teacher commented, "I don't know anybody under 40 who didn't hero-worship Steven Biko."¹³⁷ A man like this was surely not going to be forgotten; in fact, he was even described as the "single most important black leader of all."¹³⁸

On what grounds have these statements been made? What is a martyr? Historically, the word martyr has been used in reference to all kinds of sacrifices but the original Greek meaning of the word refers to a witness in a court of law without any anticipation of death. Later this definition expanded to mean this witness testifying in a court of law with the penalty of death for this act. The evolution of the term continued and as the concept of witness faded the inclusion of death became more absolute.¹³⁹ This new

¹³⁶ Kennedy, "Police" 6.

¹³⁷ Burns, "Tension" 3.

¹³⁸ John F. Burns, "Young Black Leader Dies in Detention in South Africa, Raising Fears of New Unrest," New York Times 14 Sept. 1977: A3.

¹³⁹ Mitchell Glenn Reddish, The Theme of Martyrdom in the Book of Revelation, diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1982) 10.

meaning involved religion, testifying or giving witness to, as scholar Alice Rusbar noted, the "knowledge one has of Jesus Christ and of adhering to His teachings."¹⁴⁰ In terms of Christianity, Rusbar adds that martyrdom is

a triumph of the word of God over Satan for the individual soul. It is also a victory for good in the perpetual cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil.¹⁴¹

The Christian interpretation of martyr then referred to an individual struggle to protect the word of God.

The exploration into the meaning of the term martyr leads to six distinctive features relating to this study. The first is loss of life. The meaning of martyr evolved to encompass, as the New Encyclopedia Britannica concluded,

one who voluntarily suffers death rather than deny his religion by words or deeds; such action is afforded special, institutionalized recognition in most major religions of the world.¹⁴²

This statement reveals that there must be voluntary loss of life for the person to be considered a martyr. It also reveals that Christianity is not the focus, but that religion is still associated with the term.

¹⁴⁰ Alice M. Rusbar, Heroic Martyrdom in Milton's "Samson Agonistes", Tulane University (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1982) 5.

¹⁴¹ Rusbar 21.

¹⁴² "Martyr," The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1987 ed.

Religious reference was of common acceptance when referring to the term martyr¹⁴³ but religious reference of martyrdom became less significant as language evolved.

Martyrdom can now refer to,

A great or constant sufferer (as from disease)--(to rheumatism)--one who adopts a specious air of suffering or deprivation especially as a means of attracting sympathy or attention.¹⁴⁴

This deteriorating focus on religion is the second characteristic of martyrdom. The focus of martyrdom turned more to sacrifice for a cause, not necessarily a religion.

A martyr may be characterized as "one who sacrifices his life, station or what is of great value for the sake of principle or to sustain a cause."¹⁴⁵ This person must be altruistic enough to give his life for the sake of others or for the cause.

The basic commitment to moral action transcends the martyr's immediate interest in his personal fate. Sustaining such commitment requires ego integrity and the ability to overcome instinctive drives to escape.¹⁴⁶

Many people give to the community and environment with generosity and sincerity but not all are willing to give

¹⁴³ Professor Ron Clarke, personal interview, 26 April 1989, Oregon State University. Professor Marcus Borg, personal interview, 27 April 1989, Oregon State University.

¹⁴⁴ "Martyr," The Third New International Dictionary, 1987 ed.

¹⁴⁵ The Third New International Dictionary.

¹⁴⁶ "Martyrdom," The Encyclopedia of Religion, 1987.

their lives. This is the third characteristic of martyrdom significant to this study.

Through the years the word martyr has acquired a wide range of meaning, but there seem to be some common characteristics. For example,

the martyr and his or her slayer are delegates, champions, or defenders of their societies. A few martyrs are suicides, but most are slain by judicial, military, police, religious or other functionaries.¹⁴⁷

This is the fourth characteristic of martyrdom.

The fifth characteristic of martyrdom is that a martyr takes on a "sacred" meaning upon his death. When something is sacred it is elevated beyond normal existence. The martyr has transcended everyday life and now carries more weight in overall worth to his reputation and his cause. Once the individual has reached this sacred state he is now untouchable to the opposition. It is harder to criticize the individual because of the effect the death has had on people internally (within the country) and externally (internationally.)¹⁴⁸ But, who really determines who a martyr is and how does this happen?

Determining who a martyr is leads us to the sixth characteristic of martyrdom. Would a person become a martyr if no one knew about what had happened? It seems to me that martyrs and their images are created through the rhetoric of

¹⁴⁷ "Martyrdom," The Encyclopedia of Religion.

¹⁴⁸ The Encyclopedia of Religion.

the people. Because public discourse plays such an important role in the communication and eventual interpretation of events, it is natural to include the rhetorical contribution to martyrdom. The Encyclopedia of Religion suggests that, "A martyr is delegated by the community and apotheosized by it."¹⁴⁹ Martyrdom is not automatic. The martyr image develops over time and chains out into the meaning designed and dictated by the rhetoric following his death, acquiring historical status along the way.

With the act of martyrdom, one individual is able to "save a nation, and a single-noble gesture has powerful repercussions,"¹⁵⁰ through the rhetorical chain created after the death. As the Encyclopedia of Religion explains,

The confrontation may unite the martyr's people, strengthening their opposition as they, under charismatic leadership, inch toward their own organizational power. The exemplary act of a martyr strengthens people's courage to bear their daily tribulations and directs their anger to the cruel, murderous adversary, the source of these tribulations. The martyrdom may also strengthen the adversary's will to repress the martyr's society. Martyrdom politicizes the relationship between the groups.¹⁵¹

This new found strength, resulting from the martyrdom, unites most people, not all.

¹⁴⁹ The Encyclopedia of Religion.

¹⁵⁰ Kathleen Anne Quinn, Mothers, Heroes, and Hearts Turned to Stone: Mythologizing and Demythologizing in Irish Drama, Washington State University (Pullman: privately printed, 1986) 182.

¹⁵¹ The Encyclopedia of Religion.

Depending on the circumstances, people may interpret the death differently. The movement that lost the member considers that loss one of martyrdom, but the opposition may not view it that way. It may deny the worth of the individual and commonly make statements critical of the opposing group: "Anti-martyrs act individually or as members of a small separatist cadre. The minority condemns them as traitors and their apotheosis as evil."¹⁵² The rhetoric of each side can shape the reputation of the martyr image. He may be a hero or a villain depending on the interpretative rhetoric conveyed. The Encyclopedia of Religion concluded as follows:

Functionaries execute the martyr as a terrorist, a criminal, or a heretic who threatens fundamental social values or the physical safety of members of the society. The societies of the slayer and the slain struggle to control the meaning of the slaying: is it to be understood by the world as martyrdom or as judicial retribution?¹⁵³

The meaning of the death then depends on the interpretation. Martyrdom can cause these groups to advance their cause, but how does this happen, and what place does martyrdom have in society?

Martyrdom can function as a political act. As the Encyclopedia of Religion stated, it reduces political authority by "challenging the sacred basis of the legitimacy

¹⁵² The Encyclopedia of Religion.

¹⁵³ The Encyclopedia of Religion.

of the adversary's authority."¹⁵⁴ The only thing that the opposition can do to combat this martyr image or myth is turn it around to favor its side: "Perhaps the greatest weapon of the state, particularly the modern state, is its ability to make martyrdom appear obsolete and meaningless."¹⁵⁵

In the determination of whether martyrdom is a politically active force, the focus on rhetoric is essential. Rhetoric is used to inform, influence and instruct, and the rhetorical chain created through martyrdom has the power to move men into an almost mythic realm from which they can continue to have an impact on the political situation.¹⁵⁶ Rhetoric and its impact is the sixth characteristic of martyrdom significant to this study.

From these characteristics it is apparent that martyrdom empowers the rhetoric contributed before the death. The fantasy themes prevalent in Biko's rhetoric then are re-emphasized upon his death. Because he died for his beliefs his martyrdom can assist in chaining out the fantasy themes of Black Humanity, Black Unity, Black Courage, and Black Self Reliance into the resulting rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness.

¹⁵⁴ The Encyclopedia of Religion.

¹⁵⁵ The Encyclopedia of Religion.

¹⁵⁶ Quinn 201.

The first characteristic of martyrdom to examine in relation to Biko is whether he sacrificed his life for the sake of the cause. Biko's beliefs centered around the human race living together in a peaceful society. Unfortunately, this was not the case in his country as the land and rights of the original inhabitants had been taken away since the Dutch landed on the Cape in 1652. But, rather than focussing on bitterness, Biko's fantasy themes that represent the Black Consciousness vision, contributed to a positive solution: the end of apartheid and in turn, majority leadership and black freedom. Summarizing an interview that he had with Biko, Theodore W. Jennings described Biko in terms of some ideas closely associated with Biko. Jennings said that these ideas may mean

hostility, hatred, and bitter separation from the whites. Some fear that ultimately those [ideas] will mean racism and race war. Steve Biko understood, however, that friendship requires freedom, dignity and respect. These things, far from being the enemy of friendship, are its basis. When people are truly free, only then there can be friendship, for then there is an end to fear and bitterness.¹⁵⁷

Jennings' conclusions exemplify Biko's martyr image and strongly suggest that Biko was devoted to his own cause and knew that his beliefs could result in the ultimate end of his life.

Biko was perhaps close to death at least one time before. He reportedly told one officer that it did not

¹⁵⁷ Theodore W. Jennings, "Steve Biko: Liberator and Martyr," Christian Century 94 (1977): 997-9.

matter what they did to him. When the officer told him "I will kill you," Biko's answer was "how long is it going to take you?"¹⁵⁸ Biko realized that his actions might in turn be the cause of his death. We understand that because he maintained his strong beliefs and took actions against the South African regime that he risked his life. He did not voluntarily seek death, but he did know what could happen. So, in keeping with the definition of the term martyr, we can conclude that Biko sacrificed his life for the sake of his cause.

Public discourse, the rhetoric of the people, is another important characteristic of Biko's martyrdom. It is of course critical to look at all sides of the issue because interpretation of the event differs and everyone may use manipulative rhetoric as the primary tool in spreading opinions. Donald Woods interpreted the death as follows:

Steve Biko's death echoed around the world. He was only thirty years old when he died, and he had lived in obscurity, silenced from public utterance by banning orders and restricted to a small town remote from the metropolitan areas. . . . Yet in his short lifetime he influenced the lives and ideals of millions of his countrymen, and his death convulsed our nation and reverberated far beyond its boundaries.¹⁵⁹

The above statement reveals that Woods knew the effect that Biko's death would have within South Africa and around the world.

¹⁵⁸ "Biko on Death" 12-13.

¹⁵⁹ Woods, Biko x.

People used Biko's funeral not only to mourn their leader but to let all know that they would carry on Biko's ideologies. They showed their anger at the government and their sorrow toward this loss by creating this martyr image. The loss of Biko was pivotal, and through this martyr image he was surely to remain a predominant force in many lives. Biko's funeral became one of the first ways that people began to create the martyr image that the name Biko still maintains today. Joseph Lelyveld describes the funeral as follows:

[the funeral] had to succeed as a political statement, an expression at once of outrage and renewal. There were 20,000 mourners that afternoon in King William's Town, several hundred of them whites, the rest blacks. As the casket was lowered into the grave in the segregated cemetery next to the railway track, their protest and conviction seemed to reverberate throughout the country.¹⁶⁰

The tremendous attendance and the reportedly emotional speeches given at the funeral contributed to the people's rhetoric. Many in attendance at the funeral saw Biko as a martyr and, as a result, may have used this realization to ease the pain of their loss. But they also were able to further their cause and give themselves additional strength,

¹⁶⁰ Lelyveld 298.

power, and proof of injustice.¹⁶¹ Such commitment helped people to unite and work together for a free South Africa.

Rhetoric was also used to spread knowledge of Biko, the martyr, outside South Africa so that support and changes could come of the unfortunate, unforgivable event. Peter Gabriel wrote and continues to sing a song titled "Biko" that generally recounts the events surrounding Biko's death. It is just a small part of the international uproar and disgust over the treatment and death of the BCM leader. Since the fourth century B.C., when Plato warned about how forceful, persuasive and even dangerous music can be,¹⁶² the power of music has not been overlooked.¹⁶³ Thirteen percent of all movement songs refer to "heroes, martyrs, tragedies, or victories,"¹⁶⁴ and this song seems to fit this mold. Gabriel ends his song with these words: "And the eyes of the world are watching now, watching now."¹⁶⁵ These final words contribute to Biko's martyr image and

¹⁶¹ As scholar Abdul-Wahhab notes, it is common for people to use the death as a way to ease the pain; the "beloved martyr gives direction and form to the maddening desires whirling in the masses." Waa'iz Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab, Revolution, Barbarism and Martyrdom, City of NY (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1982) 545.

¹⁶² Plato, The Republic, trans. Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books, 1968) Book IV, 424c, p. 102.

¹⁶³ Stewart, Smith and Denton 137-8.

¹⁶⁴ Stewart, Smith and Denton 157.

¹⁶⁵ Peter Gabriel, "Biko," Peter Gabriel, Geffen Records, 1980.

indeed call attention to the entire racist system in South Africa.

A film by Richard Attenborough titled "Cry Freedom," based on Donald Woods' book Biko, is also a tribute to the martyr image. The film reached a considerable audience, exposing the audience to the man and the almost inconceivable situation in which he lived.

The death of Biko seemed to have an effect on foreign powers, even the United States. As one observer noted,

The Carter administration took some important steps away from Pretoria: after the murder of Biko, through the insistence of Andrew Young they voted for the mandatory arms embargo at the UN in 1977; they stopped sales of military equipment in the 'gray areas' and withdrew their naval attache. Pretoria soon reckoned that their relations with the US were at an all-time low.¹⁶⁶

We can see that Biko's supporters tried to make something positive out of this tragic event, but what did the opposing side have to say?

One Johannesburg newspaper did not see Biko as a martyr and wrote that,

Biko was a nonentity until he died. Only after his death did the media, the left and the enemies of South Africa, following the pattern of the Nazis with Horst Wessel and the communists with Patrice Lumumba, raise him from obscurity and make him into a martyr.¹⁶⁷

In fact, the initial defensive reaction to the accusations surrounding Biko's death was that he had died of a hunger strike. Once the internal and international reactions were

¹⁶⁶ Sampson 126.

¹⁶⁷ Tatum 23.

discerned, the government and the security police realized quickly that this cover up had been a mistake.

The stronger the martyr image grew, the more and more nervous the government became. To support their accusations that Biko was a terrorist and a criminal, as Lelyveld said,

The authorities reacted reflexively by taking the offensive with mass arrests, bannings of organizations, bannings of individuals. . . . Biko's killers went free, while his friends and followers went to jail.¹⁶⁸

The image created through the rhetoric surrounding Biko's death made his name sacred. He rose from being a controversial leader to an untouchable martyr presenting an uplifting figure to his people. He was an inspiring figure because people stood up and fought rather than let the death go unnoticed. This, in itself, is a symbol of Biko as a martyr.

Biko's supporters became the main carriers of the fantasy chain. They passed on Biko's themes from one to another giving them strength as they travelled. When Biko died there grew an urgency to the cause to free blacks, so the fantasy themes took on a greater meaning as they passed through the fantasy chain. The meanings that evolved from Biko's death have re-emphasized and empowered the fantasy themes representative of that philosophy and contributed to the chaining out of the themes into the rhetorical vision.

¹⁶⁸ Lelyveld 298.

Biko may have done more for the Black Consciousness movement and in turn the anti-apartheid movement if he had lived. But, by remembering him as a martyr, the African people have used him for strength and encouragement in times of oppression, frustration, and anger. Biko's charismatic leadership and belief in non-violence¹⁶⁹ may have made a significant change if he had lived, but his death is significant as well.

The myths and variety of meanings evolving from the circumstances and resulting death of Biko give better understanding to the fantasy themes outlined earlier in this chapter. Biko's philosophy was to conquer the myths of white rule with opposing black ideologies leading up to one rhetorical vision.

Biko's Rhetorical Vision of Black Consciousness

The four themes of Black Humanity, Black Unity, Black Courage, and Black Self-Reliance within Biko's rhetoric have chained out into his rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness individually and through his martyrdom. It was Biko's goal to instill Black Consciousness in as many blacks as possible so that they would believe in themselves and work together toward change. As Biko himself explained,

What Black Consciousness seeks to do is to produce at the output end of the process real black people who do

¹⁶⁹ Biko's beliefs in non-violent approach to change have not been discussed in detail, but were widely accepted. Sampson 111.

not regard themselves as appendages to white society.¹⁷⁰

The philosophy of Black Consciousness, according to Biko, "expresses group pride and determination of the black to rise and attain the envisaged self."¹⁷¹ He believed that they have the power and determination to succeed in breaking down the white racist structure currently enveloping them. Biko further interpreted his vision of Black Consciousness as follows:

We have in us the will to live through these trying times; over the years we have attained moral superiority over the white man; we shall watch as time destroys his paper castles and know that all these little pranks were but frantic attempts of frightened little people to convince each other that they can control the minds and bodies of indigenous people of Africa indefinitely.¹⁷²

Biko did not want blacks to model their lives around a white heritage, so by using the term consciousness, he hoped blacks would acquire an awareness of their own culture and heritage. This realization could help in visualizing and working toward a free South Africa. "Consciousness," to Biko, was a sense of being - an understanding of one's past, present and future. Biko envisioned blacks engaging Black Consciousness and working together to reach one common goal.

This vision of Black Consciousness began to take shape long before Biko's death. During the days of his banning,

¹⁷⁰ Biko 51.

¹⁷¹ Biko 92.

¹⁷² Biko 72.

when he was to remain silent, he witnessed the determination and proud resistance among his followers. One such example was the Soweto uprising in 1976. Aelred Stubbs examines the possibility that the uprising was inspired by Biko's testimony at the BPC/SASO trial.

Can the example of this one man's courage have inspired the boys and girls of Soweto to face death, as they so bravely did just six weeks later? This is not to suggest that Steve was 'responsible' for the spontaneous uprising of 16 June; but perhaps the close association of these two events is not just an unrelated coincidence. Courage is infectious.¹⁷³

It was a tragedy that so many children lost their lives, but Biko was impressed with their persistence. Black Consciousness had motivated them and called them to action.

In an interview with Bernard Zylstra of the Canadian Institute for Christian Studies, Biko was asked "Where is the evidence of support among the younger generation for BPC?"¹⁷⁴ With certainty, Biko replied,

In one word: Soweto! The boldness, dedication, sense of purpose, and clarity of analysis of the situation—all of these things are a direct result of Black Consciousness ideas among the young in Soweto and elsewhere. This is not quantitatively analyzable, for the power of a movement lies in the fact that it can indeed change the habits of people. This change is not the result of force but of dedication, of moral persuasion. This is what has got through to the young people. They realize that we are not dealing with mere bread-and-butter issues. In view of this the real momentum is on their side.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Biko 121.

¹⁷⁴ Woods, Biko 119.

¹⁷⁵ Woods, Biko 119.

Biko was confident Black Consciousness had inspired some good action among these youths, and hoped for more action, without the tragedy of the Soweto uprising.

Biko's death seemed to solidify all of Biko's fantasy themes, assisting in chaining them out into his rhetorical vision, but perhaps the BCM needed this man to succeed. Biko was the most important figure in that movement, and his rhetoric may not have the same effect without the power and charisma of the man to execute it. This is not to say that Black Consciousness died along with Biko.¹⁷⁶ It remains a respected philosophy in South Africa and has inspired more organizations based on the same premises.¹⁷⁷ The rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness is still present in South Africa, spreading the ideologies encompassed in the themes, but they have taken different shapes and forms. The physical man may be gone, but his influence and inspiration lives on.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Theo DeJager suggest that Biko's Black Consciousness Movement laid the foundations for the succeeding revolutionary process. Theo DeJager, "Black Consciousness as a Revolutionary Philosophy," diss., University of Pretoria, 1989.

¹⁷⁷ The Azanian People's Organization (Azapo) was one such organization. It chose "to remain within a legal framework, and confirmed the non-violent philosophy of Mr. Biko who died in police custody." "Biko Philosophy Upheld in New Black Political Party," Times [London, Eng.] 2 May 1978, 4.

¹⁷⁸ As quoted on a poster depicting Biko's funeral, "Steve Biko did not die in vain!" (Eugene, OR: Northwest Working Press).

CHAPTER FOUR:

CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter will focus on two main points. The first issue to examine is what we may have learned about rhetoric and its relation to social reality from this study. What has been determined about fantasy themes and rhetorical vision through the application in this study? Also, what can be understood from comparing the Black Consciousness Movement to other social movements? The second issue to consider focusses on what this study has revealed about Stephen Biko, his attitudes, his effect in South Africa, his character, his martyrdom and the connection between martyrdom and rhetoric.

Rhetoric and Rhetorical Vision

The uniqueness of this study rests with the approach to the fantasy themes. It examines how rhetorical visions can compete for dominance and acceptance. Biko's vision directly competed with the white vision of black subservience. The two visions were supported by equally opposing fantasy themes chaining out through the death of this key figure. As a result, this study differs from previous fantasy theme applications and suggests that rhetorical critics ought to pay greater attention to competing rhetorical visions. This study therefore suggests

a new application to an established technique of rhetorical analysis.¹

Another degree of distinction in terms of method rest with the positive themes emerging from Biko's rhetoric. In previous analyses critics have concentrated on the manipulation of events and the rhetorical implications of such actions. In her analysis of the White House Transcripts, Porter concluded that there were four themes prevalent in the fantasies about the media. These included image control, appearance vs. reality, channel choice and timing of messages, and individual members of the media. While these resolutions are quite appropriate and indeed clever, they seem to focus on skeptical views of the transcripts.² Bormann's own analysis of the Eagleton Affair of 1972 concentrated more on emotions and motives within the symbolic action displayed at the time.³

¹ Other rhetorical critics have discussed more than one rhetorical vision, separate rhetorical visions, conflicting rhetorical visions, and contrasting rhetorical visions, but not competing fantasy themes and corresponding competing rhetorical visions. For some examples of these descriptions consult: Brenda Kay Cooper, "Through the Eyes of Gender and Hollywood: Conflicting Rhetorical Visions of Isak Dinesen's Africa (Dinesen Isak, Film Adaptations, Autobiographies)," diss., Ohio University, 1991, Thomas J. Carmody, "The Rhetorical Visions of Qathafi of Libya: A Fantasy Theme Analysis," diss., California State University, Fullerton, 1990, and David Landreth Dotlich, "Worlds Apart: Perception of Opposite Sex Managers in Three Modern Organizations," diss., University of Minnesota, 1981.

² Porter 272-79.

³ Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair" 143-59.

It has been my intention to show the positive themes that emerged from Biko's rhetoric in order to demonstrate the intelligence and insight that this man had in a time of unrest and instability. The themes Biko devised were positive approaches to a negative situation, and they were based on events that had actually happened or were currently in existence, rather than fantasies based on manipulation and dubious recollections. Biko's themes of Black Humanity, Black Unity, Black Courage, and Black Self Reliance surfaced from Biko's rhetoric as recurrent and significant ideas contributing to and shaping his ideology.

Black Humanity was an attempt by Biko to instill pride in black history and show significance in black contributions to the world. Biko brought out the unique characteristics of African society and gave these qualities positive value instead of degradation. He resisted white de-humanizing of blacks with his humanizing technique. Biko wanted to have the black man resist his own reference to animals and things and proclaim himself a proud human being. Fragmentation of blacks was a problem that Biko spent much of his efforts working against. He maintained that Black Unity was vital for change and aspired to bring the organizations against apartheid together in order to confront the racist regime as one cooperative, powerful force. Biko's third theme gave insight into the government's perspective. Through the realization of how this minority power uses fear as a determinant in South

African politics, Biko influenced his audience to overcome their own fear with Black Courage and confront the issues of forced oppression. In his fourth theme, Biko expressed his discontent of white liberals who wanted to help the blacks with their struggle. He classified them as "black souls in white skins," concluding that whites cannot understand the emotions and frustrations of blacks. Instead of helping blacks, whites should concentrate on their own racial inconsistencies in order to have a more sensitive new government when freedom occurs. This theme envisioned Black Self Reliance as the weapon in combatting white liberal interference in a struggle that could only be successful if the blacks fought for their own needs.

These themes are important to recognize because this was a new approach to a very old problem. For centuries blacks fought minority rule without sign of hope. Here was a man that gave initiative and motivation to a people with frustrated aspirations. Through his rhetoric Biko reached numerous people and moved them to action. This rhetorical analysis suggests that the themes Biko projected chained out into his rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness through the act of martyrdom. Through the chaining out procedure people were called to action and resisted persecution.

Perhaps another interesting facet of this analysis is the overall scope of fantasy chains. This study illustrates that fantasy chains do subside. It would be interesting to

examine further how and what causes fantasy chains to fade out.

This analysis also suggests a relationship between rhetoric and social reality in that the knowledge gained about rhetoric gives us a better understanding of social reality. This study was restricted to examining the social reality that Biko believed, but perhaps the ideas and themes that emerged from his rhetoric are not restricted just to South Africa. Biko's humanitarian ideas seemed to reach beyond the South African borders into international territory. This social reality of Biko's may not be isolated, as some observers may suggest. Learning about Biko's themes can reveal common characteristics in all of humanity.

As a comparison to other social movements, The Black Consciousness Movement is similar to movements such as the Contemporary International Peace Movement in that one leader's rhetoric is essential to the movement's future. One integral leader can have the power to motivate his/her members to action. What Biko did for the Black Consciousness Movement is similar to what Elise Boulding did for the Contemporary International Peace Movement.⁴ In contrast, the Black Consciousness Movement differs from movements such as the Palestine National Movement in that

⁴ Anna Lenell Spradlin, Elise Boulding and the Peace Movement: A Study of Leadership Rhetoric and Practice Within Social Movement Organizations, University of Denver (DAI-A, 1990) 61.

there was not one man or woman that could be characterized as the U.S. Palestine National Movement's one leader. Instead, the U.S. Palestine National Movement relied on a group of leaders to motivate their members and work for the cause.⁵

Biko and Black Consciousness

Through the examination and scrutiny of Biko's rhetorical themes this study indicates that Biko was not motivated by violence and hate as the government professed, but instead he believed in the rhetorical vision of Black Consciousness. Biko sacrificed his life for this consciousness in an attempt to create an awareness among blacks that they no longer had to believe the white version of society. In essence, he was working to reconstruct the minds of blacks. This vision encompassed an understanding of freedom through friendship, dignity, and respect.⁶ But, above all, it is evident that Biko's insight into the problems of his country indicated a lack of fear within him.

A man without fear and bitterness, a free man, neutralizes all of the establishment's weapons. Banning, for example, no longer means that one is cut off in rural isolation; it means that freedom and consciousness will be spread to the rural areas

⁵ James David Trebing, "Socially Constructed Realities and the Rhetoric of the Palestine National Movement in the United States: An Interpretive Analysis of an Attempted Transformation of a Universe of Discourse," DAI-A 51/12 (1991): 0101 (Kent State University).

⁶ Jennings 997.

themselves. The death of young people now radicalizes their parents instead of intimidating them. In these and in many other ways, the black consciousness movement and the vision of Steve Biko have robbed the establishment of its weapons, even the weapon of division--division into homelands, into competing groups, and so on. Instead of division, Steve Biko saw diversity--diversity of perspective experience and strategy, but a common commitment to freedom.⁷

Biko was able to intimidate those who used fear as their ultimate defense. This is a respectable accomplishment, considering the context within which he operated.

This study also suggests a connection between social movement rhetoric and martyrdom. There are many people who believed strongly in a cause and died, but did not become a martyr. I suggest that as a result of the process of these themes chaining out through the assistance of his martyrdom, his rhetorical vision is emphasized. This connection between rhetoric and martyrdom is worth exploring. The fact that Biko died for the themes in which he believed is reminiscent of previous martyrs like Martin Luther King, Jr. King professed his own rhetorical themes and maintained his position so strongly that even threats to his life did not stop him from spreading his message. Eventually King suffered the ultimate sacrifice, dying for his cause. Socrates was another who suffered this final sacrifice for his insistence on maintaining his beliefs. But what separates these deaths from others? What makes them so important? I suggest that it is the weight of their

⁷ Jennings 999.

rhetoric that emphasizes their death and contributes to their martyrdom. But it is also possible that their rhetoric was given added weight because of their martyrdom. When someone dies because of their beliefs there is an added connection between their words and their death. Death becomes a rhetorical vehicle for the transmission of visions.

Our world considers the spoken and written word valuable. Once spoken, the responsibility of these words connects to the speaker. Dag Hammarskjold asserts that a respect for the word is essential and integrity crucial in the global society.⁸ Considering the prominence given to the word, the survival of Biko's rhetoric is integral in his martyrdom. When a high visibility death occurs, a campaign for noticeability often occurs, and people rally around the cause. But this is only one aspect of martyrdom. There must be something else in order to give the person the status of a martyr and as I suggest, this must be a rhetorical contribution by the person who died. But many people have said things and died and remained insignificant; what is the component that consolidates the martyr image? The component is that the rhetoric must command considerable respect and attention before death. This study suggests that, once the sacrifice of death has occurred, proving

⁸ Richard L. Johannesen, Ethics in Human Communication 2nd Ed., (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland P, 1983) 8.

ultimate commitment to the cause, the rhetoric can take on an even more significant role. The rhetoric is given more force and as a result contributes to the martyr image. The two forces become nearly interdependent. Biko's contributions combined with his definitive dedication suggests that he is a respected martyr.

Stephen Biko paid the ultimate price for dedication to his rhetorical vision. This vision of Black Consciousness is not dead, nor is the influence he had on his followers. Biko has had a lasting effect in South Africa and around the world.

It is impossible to forecast what would have happened if Biko had lived to witness and participate in the ever-changing present day South Africa. We do know that Biko's aspirations for "One Azania--One Nation"⁹ came closer to reality since the first one person - one vote elections in April 1994.

Even though the world may view the death of Biko as tragic, the fact is that his martyrdom had, and continues to have, an effect on the people of South Africa in terms of re-emphasizing and communicating the valuable themes inherent in the Black Consciousness rhetorical vision.

⁹ Azania is the name used by the BCM and the PAC for South Africa. The phrase "One Azania--One Nation" was engraved on Biko's coffin along with an image of his face.

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