ASR Forum: The Politics of Marriage in South Africa

Introduction

Meghan Healy-Clancy, Guest Editor

South African President Jacob Zuma has been married six times and currently has four wives—wedding two of these wives since assuming the presidency in 2009. The expense of these unions and related upgrades at his lavish family homestead in rural Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal, have engendered considerable controversy, in a national context marked by economic crisis and declining marriage rates. But this very married president has also earned the admiration of some South Africans, who see him as proudly upholding the responsibilities of an ideal Zulu patriarch (see Hunter 2014). Debates around the propriety of Zuma's polygyny reveal broader concerns around the connections between family life and leadership in a deeply unequal, diverse democracy. Is it right for a leader to use the public funds of a modern state to broadcast his commitment to a traditional form of marriage? Should a leader's marital relations simply be a private matter, as they largely have been for Zuma's rival, former president Thabo Mbeki, and his wife of four decades, Zanele? Nelson Mandela's recent passing has similarly provoked discussions about the role of marriage in shaping leadership: from Mandela's abandonment of his first wife to become a leading African National Congress (ANC) activist, to his nationalist romance with Winnie Mandela, to his statesmanlike marriage as president to former Mozambican first lady Graça Machel (see, e.g., Harris 2013).

African Studies Review, Volume 57, Number 2 (September 2014), pp. 1–5

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doi:10.1017/asr.2014.44

This *ASR* Forum, "The Politics of Marriage in South Africa," is based on the conviction that such debates are not sideshows to the stuff of politics. Indeed, marriage offers an ideal lens through which we can apprehend the making of political communities. In 2014, as we have celebrated the twentieth anniversary of South Africa's first democratic elections, both the country's strides toward a common society and the tenacity of many forms of social division have been striking. As a unifying institution that has nonetheless operated quite differently, in law and practice, for South Africans of different classes, genders, sexualities, races, ethnicities, and regions in the past and present, marriage provides intimate insights into the making of these connections and inequalities.

We build upon an impressive and growing body of scholarship on transformations in marriage, family, and love in colonial and postcolonial Africa (see, e.g., Parkin & Nyamwaya 1987; Thomas & Cole 2009). Three decades ago, Kristin Mann saw the unique potential of studies of marriage to "present the African past as it really was: a world inhabited by men and women and shaped in fundamental ways by the interaction between them." While pioneering social histories of Africa predominantly focused on male experiences, leaving "the study of women to women's studies," Mann argued that "we will only begin to understand basic problems in African social, economic and political life when we start to examine the relationship between the sexes." Studies of marriage offered fertile ground for this exploration, as her work on colonial Lagos showed. "But if the perspective is to fulfill its potential, others must carry it beyond the study of domestic life," Mann urged (1985:10). Heeding this call, scholars working across the continent have since demonstrated the mutually constitutive relationships between domestic transformations and political and economic change (e.g., Comaroff & Comaroff 1992; Hunter 2010; Osborn 2011). They have highlighted how disputes over marriage and family speak to the production of historical knowledge and expectations for the future (e.g., Cohen & Odhiambo 1992; Thomas 2003).

Yet major questions remain for scholars of South Africa in particular, and of the continent generally. The articles in this forum speak to two overarching issues with relevance for postapartheid South Africa: How have marital ideals and practices created and subverted racial, ethnic, gender, and class categories? And how have the economic dimensions of marriage changed over time and across space?

The articles in this forum suggest that marriage has been critical in constituting categories of difference, even while creating new forms of community. My article, "The Politics of New African Marriage in Segregationist South Africa" (7–28) examines how marriages between Christian mission-educated women and men bridged ethnic divisions, creating new forms of racial and national consciousness in the 1930s and 1940s. Yet transcending ethnic divisions hinged on inscribing differences between women and men. I demonstrate that by writing about their roles in mediating

interethnic marriages in newspapers and memoirs, women insisted both on their importance to cultivating racial and national consciousness and that their roles were different from those of African men. I thus reveal how African nationalism was predicated on ideals of black married women's domestic authority that authorized their leadership of new social institutions, at the same time that these ideals constrained women's engagement in male-led political groups like the ANC.

Natasha Erlank's article, "The White Wedding: Affect and Economy in South Africa in the Early Twentieth Century" (29–50) underscores that the Christian communities from which these African nationalists came were suffused not only with overarching gendered distinctions, but also with subtle status differences. Between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s, church weddings became spaces of spectacle and contestation in which clothing and rituals defined an aspirational black middle class. Through newspapers, creative writing, and missionary sources, Erlank shows how church weddings represented a reconfiguration of precolonial forms of social capital, which indexed new forms of class distinction and sexual mores. Indigenous forms of bridewealth—gifts of cattle, conferred from a groom's family to that of his bride—generally remained essential. But new commodities, such as engagement rings and white dresses, also became critical to reinforcing familial and social networks and to defining this class's respectability in a racialized society. Erlank therefore demonstrates how appropriations of "white weddings" enabled the consolidation of a racial, class, and religious identity. But this identity hinged on women's sexual purity and required conspicuous spending, creating enduring difficulties for women and for economically struggling families.

The economic costs of marriage have continued to rise, as Dorrit Posel and Stephanie Rudwick's "Marriage and Bridewealth (*Ilobolo*) in Contemporary Zulu Society" (51–72) makes clear. African marriage rates have declined precipitously in South Africa since at least the 1960s, while the average age at first marriage has risen. While multiple factors have shaped this shift—apartheid housing and labor policies, as well as women's rising access to education—the economic burdens of marriage are significant. Bridewealth remained an integral component of African marriages through apartheid and into the present. Yet over this period, across South Africa, bridewealth has increasingly come to be paid in cash, by the groom rather than his father, and settled before the wedding. These factors have meant that rising unemployment since the 1970s has led increasing numbers of young people to forestall or reject marriage. In President Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal, particularly deep popular regard for ilobolo as an integral cultural institution has coincided with particularly protracted crises of unemployment. Marriage rates are consequently lowest among Zulu-speaking South Africans, of whom fewer than a third are or have been married. Posel and Rudwick's interviews with Zulu women and men in metropolitan Durban reveal longings for the security embodied by ilobolo, as interviewees recognize its economic impossibility in many cases.

The distinctive politics of marriage in KwaZulu-Natal has a history: the colony of Natal was where bridewealth was first officially regulated, with a maximum of ten cattle—delivered before the wedding—the condition of marriage for commoners from the late nineteenth century. Ironically, the impetus for this change was to make it more affordable for young men to marry, since a ceiling of ten cattle prevented older, already married men with more financial resources from paying higher ilobolo for more wives. This policy accompanied taxation based on the huts—i.e., the wives—on each homestead, which made polygyny more expensive for those already married. Behind these innovations was the influential British official Theophilus Shepstone, who saw the regulation of African marriage as fundamental to governing a society predicated on women's agricultural labor in polygynous homesteads. The combined effect of the "hut tax" and ilobolo restrictions was to limit the accumulation of older patriarchs while pushing young men to labor for wages to fund their marriages. As Nafisa Essop Sheik's "African Marriage Regulation and the Remaking of Gendered Authority in Colonial Natal, 1843–1875" (73–92) demonstrates, colonial definitions of African "customary" marriage law thus had profound effects on African men's domestic authority. Drawing upon archival and newspaper sources, Sheik emphasizes that seemingly liberal interventions to make polygyny expensive and to abbreviate the process of paying ilobolo—as well as a new requirement that young women give their consent before marriage—had negative consequences not only for older men, but also for young married women. Critically, the demand that ilobolo be settled rapidly detached women from their natal home more rapidly and firmly than had previously been the case. Once a man had completed his ilobolo payments, he became the guardian of his wife, in a colonial legal regime in which women were perpetual minors.

The articles in this issue therefore begin to trace a history of the politics of marriage in South Africa: from the colonial consolidation of the authority of young husbands that Sheik discusses; to the self-assertion (as well as restriction) of young wives in the segregationist Union of South Africa that Erlank and I explore; to the decline of marriage amidst enduring longing for domestic security that Posel and Rudwick describe. The politics of marriage has already attracted attention from scholars interested both in the roots of South Africa's body politic (e.g., Hughes 2012; Lissoni & Suriano 2014), and in the politics of South African bodies (e.g., Hunter 2010). As debates around marriage continue to swirl in public and in South African homes, this *ASR* Forum urges scholars to think more deeply and broadly about what the politics of marriage can tell us about South Africa's past, present, and future.

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The Politics of New African Marriage in Segregationist South Africa

Meghan Healy-Clancy

Abstract: For the mission-educated men and women known as "New Africans" in segregationist South Africa, the pleasures and challenges of courtship and marriage were not only experienced privately. New Africans also broadcast marital narratives as political discourses of race-making and nation-building. Through close readings of neglected press sources and memoirs, this article examines this political interpolation of private life in public culture. Women's writing about the politics of marriage provides a lens onto theorizations of their personal and political ideals in the 1930s and 1940s, a period in which the role of women in nationalist public culture has generally been dismissed as marginal by scholars.

Résumé: Pour les hommes et les femmes éduqués dans les missions appelés "nouveaux" Africains dans une Afrique du Sud ségrégationniste, les plaisirs et les défis de se faire la cour et du mariage ne sont pas seulement des expériences personnelles. Les "nouveaux" Africains ont aussi publié leurs récits conjugaux comme des discours politiques sur les races et la consolidation de la nation. Grâce à des lectures attentives d'articles journalistiques et de mémoires négligés, cet article examine cette injection politique de la vie privée dans la culture publique. L'écriture des femmes sur la politique du mariage mettent en lumière les théorisations de leurs idéaux personnels et politiques dans les années 1930 et 1940, une période où

African Studies Review, Volume 57, Number 2 (September 2014), pp. 7–28

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© African Studies Association, 2014
doi:10.1017/asr.2014.45

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Key Words: Gender; marriage; race; ethnicity; nationalism; South Africa

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"How can we build Africa when we regard each other as aliens?" In early 1942, a journalist posed this question to readers of the *Bantu World,* a Johannesburg newspaper with a national circulation. This question did not emerge in front-page reporting on a political convention. Nor did it appear in an editorial treatise against "tribalism." It was not posed by a prominent political leader like African National Congress President Alfred Xuma, a frequent contributor on similar themes. Rather, this big question appeared in the women's pages, in a column by "Miss Rahab S. Petje," an urbane young writer who would soon be attracted to the African National Congress Youth League in Johannesburg (African National Congress Youth League 1944). Her column focused on a more immediate challenge than that of building Africa: "Why we modern girls find it so very difficult to get married." She blamed "barbarism and backwardness in our parents, and worse still, segregation": she complained that parents, particularly "uneducated" parents, discouraged otherwise ideal unions between young women like herself, "an educated Mosotho lady," and eligible young men who were "Zulu B.A.'s, Xosa B.A.'s, etc." She urged parents to accept interethnic pairings between "educated" youth, so that their daughters might become proud "mothers of Africa" rather than "old maids" or "fallen girls" (Petje 1942).

Scholars of South African political history have paid much attention to contemporary discourses of panethnic (often called pan-"tribal" at the time) unity staged at political conventions and in newspaper editorials—discourses usually issued by men (see Limb 2010; Rive 1991; Cobley 1990; Couzens 1985; Walshe 1971). Indeed, scholars have characterized women as marginal to African nationalist politics before the 1943 formation of the African National Congress Women's League (e.g., Erlank 2003; McClintock 1995; Walker 1991). But political histories have generally neglected to explore the political interpolation of private life in public culture that was also characteristic of the 1930s and 1940s, which Petje's writing exemplifies.

This article explores how mission-educated men and women broadcast marital narratives as political discourses of race-making and nation-building. It first situates this complicated class of writers and readers within segregationist South Africa, where they were known as "New Africans." It elucidates the significance of Petje's writing about interethnic marriage by examining the racial, gendered, and class politics of New African public culture, and particularly of the women's pages of the *Bantu World.* It then turns to the marital memoirs of a consummate New African couple, the ANC activist Zachariah Keodirelang (Z. K.) Matthews and his educator wife, Frieda Bokwe Matthews. Composed, revised, and published between the early 1950s and the mid-1990s, these memoirs reveal a prominent New

African woman's authority in mediating ethnic affiliations to create and write about a New African family. For both Petje and Matthews, writing about interethnic marriage allowed them to assert that the making of racial consciousness was a project in which women were integral.

"New African" Men and Women in Segregationist South Africa

The term "New African" began appearing in the press at least as far back as 1928 to refer to an individual with a Christian mission education, cosmopolitan interests, and a sense of racial consciousness. This racial consciousness united people categorized as "native" or "Bantu" from across the Union of South Africa as *Africans*; these Africans claimed ties to other Africans across the continent and in the diaspora, at the same time as they made specific rights claims on the basis of their belonging in the Union of South Africa. The New African was clearly connected to the visions of a "New Negro" summoned by the African American intellectual Alain Locke (1925) and his colleagues in the mid-1920s, which heralded a "renaissance" of black cultural expression that would enable both collective political empowerment and individual psychological liberation from racism (see also Couzens 1985; Masilela 1996). The "talented tenth" of educated black leaders invoked by Locke's colleague W.E.B. Du Bois did not have a serious equivalent in South Africa, as we will see. The New Negro thus entered South Africa as a figure from another "temporality" (Chrisman 2006:31), and the tiny and tenuous class of mission-educated black South Africans looked to Locke's New Negro as a vision of their future selves. Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association was also a vector for the translation of a more militant New Negro into South African public culture. In 1926 the organ of the Cape branch of the ANC, the *African World*, claimed that "the UNIA created the New Negro. . . . The New Negro is a problem to those who do not understand him. They do not know what to do with him. But he knows what to do with himself. He is going to blast his way to complete independence and nationhood" (quoted in Vinson 2012:100).

The New African, like the New Negro, emerged as a multivalent icon that linked cultural, psychological, and political struggles. R. V. Selope Thema, a journalist who had cut his teeth on the ANC's *Abantu Batho* before becoming the editor of the *Bantu World* in 1932, first described the New African as a cosmopolitan thinker in the Johannesburg newspaper *Umteteli wa Bantu*. Writing as "A Wayfarer" (1928), he contended that "although the colour line is at present fenced with racial barbed wires[,] yet there is no racial bar which prevents the mind of the new African from appropriating the intellectual and spiritual heritage of civilised mankind." To indicate what he meant by "civilised mankind," he notably quoted Du Bois from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903): "'Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas.'" In his own "humble residence" in inner-city Johannesburg, Thema added, he had recently "enjoyed the company of Tagore the Indian Poet, Koo the Chinese social reformer, and Kagawa the Japanese Author.

It is wonderful, this mental fellowship with men of other races and other lands—And who can prevent it?" But Thema emphasized that "the awakening of the African was seen not only in the field of learning," but also

> in the ordinary occupations of life; in the farming and mining industries, in the factories and in the workshops. The New African is a creature that is emerging from oppression with vigour and vitality. He looks the white man in the face, and laughs at his puny efforts to fight against God's scheme of Creation. . . . The African has a force which conquers the chains of slavery and the iniquity of oppression, and that force is contained in the sunshine of his smile.

In his shift from the pleasures of cosmopolitan texts to the pleasures of antiracist struggle, Thema exemplified the ambiguities of the New African as an avatar of racial modernity: bookish but populist, forceful but smiling, appealing to *Umteteli*'s predominantly black readership without terrifying its white owners at the Chamber of Mines.

The concept of the New African developed over the next decade as a figure that combined ethnic pride with a commitment to panethnic unity in daily life and in formal politics. Although Zulu history and identity particularly appealed to many New Africans, especially in Natal (La Hausse 2000; Couzens 1985), these mission-educated people, as Shula Marks has emphasized, did not seek "an unconditional return to 'tribal' life" (1989:221). While ethnic consciousness, and sometimes even ethnic chauvinism, could facilitate cultural pride and stave off intraethnic class tensions while making the most of segregationist policies for black communities in the short term, New African leaders argued that "tribalism" was ultimately inimical to liberation from white domination. As the leaders of the All-African Convention put it in 1937, "The Africans are urged to close their ranks and pool their intellectual and material resources for the emancipation of their race from the thralldom of European oligarchy. . . . Your salvation depends on the unity of all the tribes" (Xuma & Msimang 1937). African racial consciousness emerged clearly not as an inevitable point of commonality in a context of ethnicized colonial administration, but as a strategic mode of affiliation. Anton Lembede, who became the first president of the ANC Youth League in 1944, stressed that "all Africans must be converted from tribalism to African Nationalism which is a higher step or degree of self-expression and self-realisation of the African spirit" (1945; quoted in Couzens 1985:260). Similarly, in 1945 the journalist and public intellectual Herbert Dhlomo compared the New African to two other figures: the "Tribal African," who eschewed racial solidarity, and the "Neither-Nor African," who did not respect his heritage or understand the possibilities of African national politics. The New African, by contrast,

> knows where he belongs and what belongs to him; where he is going and how; what he wants and the methods to obtain it. Such incidents as workers' strikes; organised boycotts; mass defiance of injustice—these

> and many others are but straws in the wind heralding the awakening of the New African masses. What is this New African's attitude? Put briefly and bluntly, he wants a social order where every South African will be free to express himself and his personality fully, live and breathe freely, and have a part in shaping the destiny of his country; a social order in which race, colour and creed will be a badge neither of privilege nor of discrimination.

Dhlomo's invocation of the "New African masses" reveals the fundamentally transformative ambitions of the tenuous cultural class of educated Africans to which he belonged: he sought not just unity among elites, but rather a just society.

The prominent New Africans discussed so far have all been male, and scholars have highlighted how New African nationalist organizing tended to exclude women. Most usefully, Natasha Erlank (2003) has pointed out that while African politics had historically been rooted in patriarchal relations, the liberal tradition on which early African nationalist politics drew was predicated on a "fraternal contract" between men. While the first tradition subordinated women, the latter had historically excluded them. Erlank focuses on how men's patriarchal and fraternal ideals legitimated women's marginalization from male-led politics. But women such as Charlotte Maxeke and Lillian Tshabalala also proposed gendered versions of these transformative ambitions. Maxeke, the American-educated leader of the Bantu Women's League and the National Council of African Women, brought models of African American women's achievements onto South African shores; she also initiated the historic union between an independent South African church movement and the African Methodist Episcopal Church (see Campbell 1995; Hughes 2012). Tshabalala followed her path to the United States and an AME school in Ghana, returning to Natal in 1930 to launch the Daughters of Africa as a national women's club movement based on African American models. The organizing work of such New African women encouraged women to think broadly about their place in South Africa and the world, and to transform that world. But according to their propositions, the public authority of the New African woman issued pointedly from her domestic authority. In a 1936 *Bantu World* piece, Tshabalala characteristically argued,

> The typical clubwoman is a home woman who has found that she cannot isolate her home from her community, government and social [life], and that health conditions also invade its sanctuary, and that in order to protect her brood she must go out from its walls for part of her time and do her best to make government and social order and physical conditions as fine as possible, that they may upbuild and not destroy.

In meetings with domestic workers, teachers, and nurses around rural and urban Natal and Johannesburg in the 1930s and 1940s, the Daughters of Africa promoted "communications that are extensive of the home," as

members summoned their domestic authority to build crèches, develop savings schemes, and protest injustices, from pass laws to high transport fares (see Healy-Clancy 2012; Nauright 1996; Higgs 2004).

Precisely because New African men saw women's roles as "managers of the house" as a key sign of racial modernity, they ceded significant space to New African women in engaging domestic issues in public culture, supporting women's expanding authority over homes and the community institutions emanating from them. Thus Rahab Petje, in "Civilisation and Matrimony" (1942), was able to get away with this assessment of marriage: "Women are the integrity of home, while men are just big babies that still have to be nursed and petted; not only in the sentimental point of view, but also in the economical point of view." I borrow the term "managers of the house" from the historian Afsaneh Najmabadi (2005), who has explored a similar process of women's association with domestic authority as a signal of modernist nationalism in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Iran.[1] Herbert Dhlomo (1930) emphasized that "the civics of any country begin in the home," urging women to engage with "self-improvement" societies to nurture proud, self-sufficient families. Comments such as "the question of happy marriage is of supreme importance to a civilised nation, because peace and prosperity of nations depends on happy homes" were not uncommon in the press (Lehana 1937). A *Bantu World* letter on girls' education highlighted New African men's encouragement of women's domestic authority as an indicator and force of progress:

> A girl is more clever than a man, and if she has been highly educated she becomes the greatest asset to the man that she marries, for a girl with a trained mind knows well how to manage her household, to take care of the husband and the children. . . . When a girl is uneducated she is the greatest drawback in the family, and the family retrogrades, instead of progressing and generally the family does not attain any highest civilization as the case would be if she had been an educated girl. . . . Girls must be highly educated even above education which a man has, because she has great work to do in the family, more important than of a man. . . . The girls are in reality involved in a great drama of human improvement. (Mnyandu 1936)

New African women, of course, often used their education precisely to escape their "great work" at home, but they authorized their public engagements in terms of racial service. For instance, in 1935 a recent college graduate named Pumla Ngozwana spoke before a panethnic group of high school girls, in an address that the *Bantu World* reproduced in full. "Before the emancipation of women who ever heard of a woman leaving her home and going about giving lectures?" she said of her own work. "That was an unknown thing. Her place was the home and nowhere else. Yet we have good examples of Bantu women who are devoting their lives to the service of their people." Through service such as delivering uplifting lectures, she urged, "race consciousness is another of the qualities we have to

develop. . . . We must work for a time when we shall all be just Africans or Bantu people without being too conscious of our various groups." Women did not see their efforts to build "the race" as ancillary to the unifying work of male-led and male-dominated political groups like the ANC, but rather as central. In a Johannesburg meeting of the Daughters of Africa in 1942, for example, "Mrs. W. M. J. Nhlapo, B.A." gave an address entitled "Women in the Centre of Things." In this address, which also appeared in the *Bantu World*, she stressed that "the African woman" should focus on "emancipating herself from the age-long inferiority complex born of the age-long idea . . . [that] her place is that of remaining and toiling in the home." But she should also take on the "task of seeing in the home, not an institution of a menial character, but the anvil on which men and women are to be shaped. Destroy the homes, you have destroyed the very life of a people."

New African marriages, as partnerships between men and women with gendered ideas of sociopolitical transformation, were accordingly also in a state of transformation. Before the coming of colonial capitalism in southern Africa, marriage had been the foundation of an economy premised on homestead-based agricultural production and pastoralism: it was far from a private or individualistic institution. It was through marriage gifts of cattle—known variously as *lobolo*, *lobola*, *bohali*, or *bogadi* (bridewealth)—that men brought wives into their new homesteads, and it was through women's labors as mothers and agricultural workers that these homesteads survived (Kuper 1982; Wilson 1981). As Jeff Guy (1990:40) has stressed, "This control and appropriation of the productive and reproductive capacity of women was central to the structure of southern Africa's precapitalist societies. It was *the* social feature upon which society was based." Marriage was a socially integral institution, predicated on the unions not only of families and homesteads, but also of polities. As Paul Landau (2010:2) has pointed out, "agrarian South Africa before the mid-nineteenth century was built not by tribes, but by active pioneers and state-makers"; and these "pioneers and state-makers" expanded their influence through ties of marriage.

Landau's study reminds us that the "nation-building" work of New African marriages was not a new development, but rather a new chapter in a long history of "popular politics," in which people shifted their political allegiances in pursuit of land, power, and well-being for themselves and their kin, deploying strategies that centrally included marriage (see also Osborn 2011). Nonetheless, the forms of marriage that New Africans pursued, and their social meanings, represented a significant historical shift. Nineteenth-century missionaries had urged converts to see marriage as a union of two individuals—uniting on their own volition, and creating a sanctuary from the world in which to raise Christian children (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992; Schapera 1941; Thomas 2009).[2] Yet missionaries, in their expressed ideals and in their own models of monogamy, could not present marriage as an exclusively private institution. For Christian social transformation to occur, missionary and convert couples had to serve, first and foremost, as radiant models: the family-as-sanctuary was valuable to the Christian

mission not only because each family cultivated its own relationships with Christ, but also because these families would inspire other women and men to follow their lead (Healy-Clancy 2013). Ironically, then, missionaries' fetishism of private domesticity was accompanied by an evangelical commitment to publicizing forms of monogamous, God-fearing family life that they termed "civilized." All of this occurred in a context in which the claims to civilization of African Christians fueled their self-awareness as a class, and prompted some of the earliest organization under "national" banners.

The private, modern family was therefore quite public at its inception. As Christianity became deeply rooted over the first half of the twentieth century, Africans selectively contested, took up, and reinvented missionary ideals and practices of home. This was a defensive response to the constraints of racialized land policies and restrictions on urban residence, to be sure. But it was also a creative effort to maintain some of the core relations of precolonial homesteads, which combined productive and reproductive activities and included extended kin. Upon marriage, New African women thus ideally led what we might call "public–private homes." New African families sought new forms of privacy, particularly against an overreaching state; but they also opened their homes to their communities and extended kin, as they embraced new ideals of public service. Some even ran clinics, schools, and other social institutions out of their houses (Cele 2014). This was the context of change to which Petje's call for interethnic marriage spoke.

The Politics of Writing about Marriage in the *Bantu World*

To understand more specifically the audience to which Petje spoke, we must consider the *Bantu World* and its women's pages more closely. From its 1932 advent, the *Bantu World* had published pieces on ideals and practices of family; this content found a home in a "women's supplement" called "Marching Forward" in November 1935. As Les Switzer (1997) has described, the *Bantu World*'s founding heralded white advertisers' rising interest in African consumers. By 1945, the white-controlled Argus group operated ten African-oriented newspapers under its Bantu Press division, including pioneering publications such as *Ilanga Lase Natal* (The Natal Sun) and *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Native Opinion), founded by mission-educated African men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By the time of the transition to apartheid in 1948, *Inkundla ya Bantu* (The Bantu Forum, 1938–52) was the only African-owned newspaper with a national audience (Ukpanah 2005). But the editorship of the other newspapers remained black, and their content remained multilingual. The *Bantu World* characteristically published most of its content in the mission-school lingua franca of English, but it also included translated and original content in Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Tsonga, and Afrikaans. Despite what Switzer, in the title of his article, refers to as their "captive" position under white control, these newspapers remained sites of rich debates over race and nation—and

these debates increasingly occurred in seemingly "nonpolitical" sections. In part, this was an ironic consequence of the commercial ownership structure: to attract readers and thus advertisements, these newspapers became more mass-oriented publications, including more images and reportage on social life from the 1930s (Ukpanah 2005). The *Bantu World*'s women's pages reflected this push; letters from readers suggest that it provoked popular interest, attracting advertisers hawking a new range of goods to women (Thomas 2008). While newspapers were not a mass phenomenon in this period, they did tap into a population that was aware of the power of texts. The African literacy rate increased from 12 to 20 percent between the mid-1930s and mid-1940s: by the mid-1940s some twenty-four thousand copies of the *Bantu World* sold each week; staff claimed that at least five people read each issue and, significantly, that they shared its contents with nonliterate neighbors and kin (Ukpanah 2005; Thomas 2008).

Indeed, we should be careful not to caricature this audience as particularly elite. Readers lacked significant economic, political, or cultural power—as the very ownership structure of the press in this period reflects. In a context in which factory or domestic workers could command higher incomes than journalists or teachers, the class histories of families and individuals were often highly varied (Hughes 2012; Limb 2010). Many black women in this period went from school to at least a spell in domestic service (Healy-Clancy 2013). Some of these educated domestic workers, like the future unionist and Federation of South African Women activist Lucy Twala, wrote for the *Bantu World*. Moreover, as Karin Barber has pointed out in her discussion of the politics of literacy across Anglophone Africa, few in this "educated elite" were as educated as they would have liked: "Literacy embodied aspiration, and aspiration was founded upon lack—a sense of personal inadequacy associated with an education perceived as incomplete" (2006:5). Education beyond the primary level remained rare for African men in this period, and rarer still for African women, in South Africa as throughout the continent. *Bantu World* writers and readers were defined less by occupation or income than by a shared culture, defined by their formative if incomplete experiences of mission education. They were rooted in what one 1940 editorial termed "The Book World": a world in which texts and ideas mattered as indicators and engines of racial progress. "Before Africans can take their place in the league of progressive nations, our people must be taught to read," the editorial contended. "Reading makes a people rediscover themselves and the world round them, impels them not only to progress, but to expression—to live more abundantly" (quoted in Peterson 2006:242). This text assumed an existing "our people," who must "be taught to read" (by educated Africans and their allies). Literacy would enable them to "rediscover" an identity as "a people" and join "the league of progressive nations." Above all, the *Bantu World* depicted its writers and readers as part of an *uplifting* class. This self-conception reflected as well as reinforced the politics of proximity accompanying segregationist policies in the urban areas from which most writers and

readers came. Although the *Bantu World* writers routinely evinced a sense that they were culturally superior to uneducated neighbors, they are better understood as an evangelizing class than as an exclusive elite. The scope of their ambition and limits of their success—in the face of challenges from both a racialized state and those in their communities who rejected their visions of progress—emerge acutely in the pages of the newspaper.

The *Bantu World* is a challenging source, befitting its complicated class of writers and readers. This difficulty is enhanced by writers' common use of pseudonyms, a technique that seemed to appeal less to their desires for anonymity than to stylistic play (see Newell 2013). The brothers Herbert Dhlomo and Rolfes Dhlomo, the most prolific journalists of this era, mastered the art of multiple monikers. One of Rolfes Dhlomo's key noms de plume was female: when he came to the *Bantu World* in his early thirties, he took on the role of "Editress" of the women's pages. This publication was therefore predicated on notions of racial and gender autonomy that were essentially fictional: black run but white owned, speaking for women but firmly under male control (Healy-Clancy 2012). These fictions make it difficult to unearth women's voices from layers of representation, suggesting why scholars have generally not looked to press sources to understand gender relations.[3]

In this compromised context, we can nonetheless see that Petje and other young women articulated ideas that placed pressure on men as well as women. In her "Civilisation and Matrimony" (1942), for instance, Petje made an "appeal to African women who are single like me," urging her readers to see that "marriage is a job. It requires brains and stamina from both parties. It does not mean a soft place for the woman, and a fool's paradise for the man. It needs strength, generosity and honesty, and human understanding." Yet women often couched these demands in language of patriarchy, reflecting the constraints of the discourse. For instance, in calling men out for disrespectful conduct, Petje appealed to chivalry: "Woman is and has to be the centre of admiration and respect. . . . We see today women disgraced, degraded, shunned and neglected, and even robbed of their lives by so[-]called gallants of today," she contends in "Do Women Deserve Inconsideration?" (1942). Similarly, Maria C. T. Piliso, in an article titled "Husbands Should Encourage Their Wives to Take Interest in Life" (1933), railed against men who subordinate their wives' career interests to their domestic responsibilities.

> As lovers, they were full of generous impulses [and] talked of the equality of the sexes, and a wife's right to lead as free an existence as her husband, but the marriage ceremony is hardly over before tradition asserts itself, and out comes the old, old catch phrase—sometimes disguised by modern slang—"A woman's place is in her home."

Behind modern marriages predicated on choice, she suggests, lurks patriarchy and the husbands' desire to control their wives' labor in the mode of a

traditional homestead head. She acknowledges that "a good many of husbands in their hearts would agree with me that, in this modern world and judged by modern standards, [such a position] is utterly fallacious." But men persist in trying to control their wives because they fear that if they do not, "they themselves may very well wake up one day to find that they have been dislodged from their position—a courtesy position, assigned to them by custom, seldom won in fair fight—as head of the household."

This writing nevertheless suggests that a new domestic order, in which authority is premised on merit rather than gender, might emerge through the agency of men, in their current roles as heads of household. Piliso contends, "My husband must insist on me continuing my career. Because if I do, I will be so much more sympathetic about his work. . . . Moreover, my being a worker myself, my own mind will be so attuned, my brain so organised to understand and cope with modern problems, that in moments of crisis he shall be able to ask my advice" (1933). Her closing remarks, while redolent of liberal individualism, are imbricated with an assumption that men still mediate between women and the world of wage labor and that women must convince their husbands of their right to work.

> I hope my husband will do everything in his power to help me in the pursuit of my career, broadening of my experience, the development of personality. Whatever other accusations I may be in a position to lure at my husband's head, I shall not be able to accuse him of being a tyrant, chaining me all day long to our home's front door. I shall belong to myself, not him, nor to my home, nor again my children, but entirely and absolutely to myself. I shall be free.

The type of women's labor ideal for New African families was implied in the accompanying photograph of "Mrs. R. W. Msimang, Orlando district nurse": the paradigmatic profession of racial service, as Shula Marks (1994) has discussed. Whether these narrative strategies reflected Piliso's own views alone or also revealed those of the "Editress," their effect was to underscore the contestations in which New African marriage was enmeshed—debates that would deepen over the next decade, as women's urban settlement and public presence increased (Thomas 2008, 2009; Hellman 1948; du Toit 2005).

At least some men were also embracing ideals of companionate marriage over the course of the 1930s, even if this acceptance, in some cases, was accorded grudgingly. For instance, a 1937 "New Marriage Pledge" by one reader began, "I Promise: That I will adjust myself to the new status of woman and treat my wife as a partner and not as a chattel!" The vows conclude with a confirmation of marriage as a profession: "That I will look on marriage not as a lottery or a necessary evil or convenience of living but as a splendid art which it is every man's privilege to practice. That I will work for success of my marriage as I would for a career and not expect result in a minute or triumph in a DAY" (Haiyan 1937). In a 1937 letter to the editor,

Eccles B. Mathabane warned that youth were entering into marriage too lightly and affirmed that modern marriage should be "a business run by two partners—wife and husband." But he emphasized women's contributions to this partnership most heavily: "Less time than before marriage should be spent in amusements and more time devoted to the improvement of her home. She should attend to or supervise household affairs, stitch her hubby's torn shirts and trousers, mend his socks and then and only then will she find that she has little or no time for gossip and amusements." As Mathabane's pedantic tone suggests, New African men could still regard themselves as the ultimate authorities atop a domestic hierarchy, despite women's invocations of their management of the house to justify their public engagements.

It is clear that lurking in these often overheated discussions of love, sex, and marriage were certain racial questions—not only political and cultural questions of what Lynn Thomas (2008) has called "racial respectability," but also questions animated by eugenic anxieties. Concerns about failed motherhood were often rendered in biological terms, as "Editress" Rolfes Dhlomo's writings typify. Under the alias "X.Y.Z." in 1939, for instance, Dhlomo argued, "A woman must be chaste, for by her chastity she insures well for the future of her progeny, and hence for the social and moral uplift and advance of her nation. If a woman fails to do this, then she spells ruination for her people, and hence she's a murderer and a traitor." He was warning not only that women's reproductive health would shape the biological fitness of her children (and "her nation"), but also that women's conduct would shape the moral fiber of her children (and "her nation"). He claimed that "a woman who indulges in foul talk" is "slaying her race, and has no business to be alive"; she "is sure to produce an offspring of swearing reprobates and brigands." Women's smoking and acting "too modern" should also be "stamped out ruthlessly," for such a mother would "ruin her race." He emphasized that women's "natural responsibility over their offspring and race" gave them an "unalterable influence" in shaping model youth, or in "sowing the seeds of savagery in the poor innocent offspring."

In Petje's warnings about the deleterious effects of stunted interethnic courtships with which we began, we see how the politics of marriage was naturalized as a politics of racial salvation. The 1942 article that posed the question "How can we build Africa when we regard each other as aliens?" bore a revealing title: "Segregation and Unsociable Mothers and Fathers." Conversations about unmarried women in the *Bantu World* often accused these "modern girls" of being "too independent" to pursue marriage seriously (as discussed in Thomas 2008; see also Hodgson 2001). But Petje suggested that the "many old maids found about town"—"most" of whom were "fallen girls," heading for "degeneration"—really did not "want to be degenerates." The problem, she claimed, was instead that "uneducated" parents did not trust their daughters to pursue uplifting New African marriages. She walked readers through a nightmare courtship scenario between

a "very prominent and outstanding Zulu B.A." who was humiliated by the parents of his Sotho girlfriend "for the simple reason that he is a Zulu." Petje complained,

> They actually have no pride in their daughters and they even have no thought that the Zulu ogre, may in other ways raise them to the standard they could never have reached had she married a Mosotho drunkard. The same thing happens even amongst Zulus, Xosa parents, etc. who regard Basutos as aliens and therefore are not fit to marry their daughters or sons.

She particularly urged mothers not to see themselves as part of a "more advanced nation" than their daughters' suitors, emphasizing that the "pride and salvation of a mother depends on a daughter's sound marriage." To create New African families, Petje suggested, youth who had been educated at panethnic mission schools and socialized in diverse urban spaces needed to educate their parents to see "the nation" in more expansive terms. Petje argued that women—both daughters and mothers—were central to this process of building an African consciousness because they were central to biological and social reproduction: it was young women who "would one day be mothers of Africa," and it was their mothers who must ensure that their daughters raised children with "prominent and outstanding" New African men. Although the print culture in which she worked was multiply constrained, writing about interethnic marriage enabled Petje to make space for a gendered vision of New African politics—in which domestic hierarchies should be more flexible and empowering to young women as a matter of racial progress. But how did women navigate domestic hierarchies to build New African families? Memoirs of a New African marriage address this complex question.

The Politics of Marital Memoirs: Frieda and Z. K. Matthews

In 1935 at Adams College outside of Durban, Zachariah Keodirelang (Z. K.) Matthews presented a speech titled "The Tribal Spirit among Educated South Africans." He stressed that reports of African "detribalization" had been exaggerated, as elements of "the old political organization of the tribe" endured in mission-educated Africans' homes—in relationships of respect and hierarchy in families, and especially in courtship and marriage practices. Matthews emphasized that national consciousness would be attained not by the erasure of ethnic consciousness, but by the incorporation of ethnic pride into a broader racial movement:

> Hence the growing movement among educated South African natives for the promotion of a larger unity which will give full place to the peculiar traditions of each tribe and yet make possible cooperation between different tribes for their mutual benefit. Education, properly conceived, far

> from being a detribalizing instrument, could be made the chief integrative factor between natives of all types, rural and urban, educated and uneducated, tribal and non-tribal.

To understand where Matthews's national vision came from, we might look to his professional biography. He was born in 1901 near the diamond-mining center of Kimberley. His parents were Tswana Christians from modest economic backgrounds—his father worked in the mines as a shop clerk, and his mother was a domestic servant. But the family had strong connections to nationalist politics—Sol Plaatje, a founding member of the ANC, was Matthews's cousin. Matthews attended high school at Lovedale mission, the bastion of New African schooling in the Cape (Williams 1970). He was the first African to earn a bachelors degree in South Africa, graduating from the South African Native College at Fort Hare in 1923. He then became the first African head of the high school at Adams College in 1925. In 1930 he became the first African to complete the bachelor of laws degree from the University of South Africa, which he followed with a masters degree from the "Race Relations and Culture Contact" program at Yale and then a year's study with Bronislaw Malinowski at the London School of Economics. In 1936 he was appointed a lecturer in law and anthropology at Fort Hare. He was also active in nationalist politics, as a force behind the All-African Convention in the mid-1930s and then as ANC provincial president for the Cape in the late 1940s and early 1950s; in 1956, along with his son Joe and 154 other leading anti-apartheid activists from diverse backgrounds, he would stand in the famous Treason Trial. After his acquittal, he resigned from Fort Hare to protest its classification as an apartheid institution for Xhosa-speaking students.

Matthews's personal life also shaped his vision of education as a force for panethnic unity. His paternal line hailed from the Bamangwato chiefdom in present-day Botswana, from which his grandfather and namesake, Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews, had departed following a succession dispute to settle with the related Barolong chiefdom in Thaba Nchu, near the politically vibrant city of Bloemfontein. His maternal line was Barolong royalty. When he was a boy, his mother "would tell us story after story about people in our family and Barolong history" (1981:11). At Lovedale he remained connected to that heritage, forging a lifelong friendship with his classmate (and future Bamangwato regent) Tshekedi Khama. But also, he explained,

> As I look back on it now, it seems that the most valuable experience at Lovedale was the intimate contact it provided among boys and girls from different groups and different parts of the country. This contact rubbed away whatever I still had of the strange notions one grows up with about members of groups with different languages and customs. I got to know some of these languages, Xhosa and Zulu. I made fast friends with boys of these other peoples and learned through them that my own Tswana were not the only true humans in the universe. (1981:35)

Students made these connections despite the school's policy of structuring the residence halls and sports teams according to language group—a reflection of missionaries' tribalizing tendencies. One of the most important relationships of Matthews's life was forged across these boundaries. "If anybody had told me when I entered Lovedale that I would marry a Xhosa-speaking girl, I would have said he was talking nonsense. But that is precisely what I did," he recollected (1981:36).

Matthews met the young Frieda Bokwe, also a Lovedale and then Fort Hare student, through her older brother, Rosebery. The Bokwe family had been deeply rooted at Lovedale since its founding. Frieda and Rosebery's father was the remarkable composer and minister John Knox Bokwe, whose forebears had been among the first Christian converts in the region (Olwage 2006). Their mother was a teacher of Mfengu origins. Matthews and Rosebery Bokwe became close friends at Lovedale. "Rosebery and I shared classes and studies and we even shared the one pair of long pants which he acquired and which—great day—I too would wear, taking turn for turn with him," Matthews recalled (1981:40). He fell in love with Frieda Bokwe at a picnic on her seventeenth birthday, in 1922, but their families urged them not to rush into marriage: "The customary age for marriage among Africans of our kind was much beyond that. Moreover the completion of our schooling had to come first" (1981:70). They married in December 1928, after a three-year engagement. She was then twenty-three and held a teacher's diploma, and she was teaching at the Inanda Seminary for girls outside of Durban.

Significantly, Matthews's reflections on courtship and marriage were edited by his wife and by the anthropologist Monica Hunter Wilson, a white woman raised at Lovedale who was their friend. Between 1952 and 1953 Matthews recounted his memoirs of his youth; after his death in 1968 Frieda Bokwe Matthews and Wilson supplemented these early recollections with their accounts of his later career. The result appeared in 1981 as an unusually collective memoir: *Freedom for My People: The Autobiography of Z. K. Matthews: Southern Africa 1901 to 1968*. The book was billed as a "memoir by Monica Wilson," but the material came from Matthews himself or from his widow, who provided most of the material in the section about their engagement and marriage. In brackets before this section Wilson notes that "no account of his marriage was given by Z. K. in his autobiography and the following passage is taken from his wife's journal" (1981:89), and so Z. K.'s autobiography moves into Frieda's voice for the next several pages. Later Frieda Bokwe Matthews composed her own memoirs for her grandchildren, which she published in 1995 as *Remembrances*. Here she goes into more detail about her betrothal and marriage, positioning herself as central in mediating ethnic affiliations to create a New African family.

When she was growing up, Frieda Bokwe's strongest identification was with the cosmopolitan African Christian community around Lovedale and Fort Hare. In *Remembrances* she recalls her childhood as being passed in "happy afternoons at my mother's house when young people from all parts of southern Africa would spend an hour or two to enjoy something of

the homeliness which mother gave, and we girls fussed around, making tea and passing scones we all agreed were the best ever made" (1995:7). Among their many guests was the future Bamangwato regent, Tshekedi Khama. She also recalls her grandmother's stories of their Mfengu heritage, although her sense of a specifically ethnic identity seems to have been subordinated to a strong African Christian identity.

Nevertheless, she also remembers the "puzzled, rather antagonistic attitude" of her kin to the arrival of Matthews and his father, who accompanied his son to request Frieda's hand in marriage. Since Frieda's father had died when she was an adolescent, her uncles were in charge of these negotiations: "My mother had had to call them together to report that a visitor was coming from the land of the Tswana to take one of their daughters. One old man wanted to know where the sons of well-known Xhosa men were that a daughter of Knox/Bokwe should be married to a foreigner." He fretted, in Frieda's presence, that she would be "thrown away to people whose ways and customs were not known" (1995:10). Her uncles' hostility was such that Frieda decided to stay during the negotiations to mitigate tensions. Z. K. Matthews translated between Setswana and isiXhosa. The uncles nonetheless attacked the Matthews men over their English surname, which they explained derived from the missionaries who had converted Z. K. Matthews's grandfather. The uncles then asked for the Matthews's *isiduko,* or clan name, which alarmed Frieda:

> I had never asked Zac this. We had become somewhat detribalised in our quest, as students in a brand new college, for education and a western way of life. So such questions were never asked except by the newcomers who would be laughed at and treated with scorn if heard. I knew my *Siduko*, "MaRila" of the Bamba clan in the Ngqika tribe of the Xhosa nation, but had never been sure whether the Tswana had such traditions as ours. (1995:11)

Much to her relief, her future father-in-law replied easily, "I am Phuti of the Ngwato tribe of Bechuanaland." She recalled that her uncles relaxed immediately, since "although this man came from a town, and although he carried a white man's name, he was an ordinary country man, knowing his past and his tribe." The negotiations subsequently culminated in a plan for a small sum of *bogadi/ lobola* and a "Western engagement ring" for Frieda (1995:12).

Despite her comment about her and her future husband's "detribalised" life, Frieda Bokwe Matthews found that Z. K.'s sense of ethnic identity was much more pronounced than her own. She reported being miffed when, after her Christian wedding ceremony on the Lovedale campus, she encountered a group of unfamiliar paternal relatives:

> Seated on the green grass in front of my brother's house, crowds of traditionally dressed, in ochre-coloured robes, men and women whom I did not know. My brother told our expected guests that he had invited "relatives" from the villages at Ncera. This is where our family had originated and

> where the missionaries had laboured for twenty years, trying to convert the Xhosa, but whose labours had been in vain except for the first eleven who moved with the missionaries. (1995:18)

This historical engagement with Christianity, which introduced cleavages between traditionalists and a minority of mission-educated Xhosa speakers, was quite different from that of the Bamangwato, whose Chief Khama III had become an enthusiastic Christian two generations before (Landau 1995). But Frieda Bokwe Matthews emphasized that she came to accommodate their differences, seeing positive elements in her Tswana, Xhosa, and African Christian affiliations. She came to regard her "real home-in-law" as the Bamangwato heartland, Serowe, and she settled in Botswana after her husband's death. She gave all of her five children Tswana as well as English names, in deference to her husband's concern that "their true nationality should not be obliterated. Already the surname 'Matthews' was a handicap." But she also nourished her children's Xhosa and Christian identities. At home, she wrote that the "children became more Xhosa than Tswana in speech," while she and her husband spoke English to each other (1995:9,21,27). As her friend Phyllis Ntantala remembered her, "Of the African women I know, there are none as African and aware of their great African heritage as she is. And yet, on the surface, she is so English" (1992:ix).

In addition to providing insight into the ethnic negotiations of a prominent New African couple, Frieda Bokwe Matthews's memoir depicts the politics of marriage beyond her family. She expresses great interest in the marriage of Chief Tshekedi Khama's nephew, Chief Seretse Khama, to a British woman, for which he would be forced out of his chieftainship. In 1966, Seretse Khama would become independent Botswana's first president, with his wife Ruth Williams Khama by his side; Z. K. Matthews would serve as Botwana's ambassador to the United States. "The irony of it for me," Frieda Matthews recalled, was that shortly before the announcement of the marriage,

> Chief Tshekedi had read a letter to us from one of our important Xhosa chiefs, who suggested that the four great nations of southern Africa, the Tswana, Sotho, Zulu, and Xhosa, should draw closer together by intermarriage between the heirs to the thrones of each. This chief had four daughters, and he felt that the eldest should marry Seretse when he came back from England. According to African custom this was not an unusual suggestion. (1995:26)

But Chief Tshekedi affirmed his nephew's right to choose his wife, noting that "I daresay he had not reckoned with the possibility that Seretse would want a white girl." She also mentions, in passing, her role in the contracting of one of the more prominent transnational New African marriages. After Christopher Kisosonkole of Uganda came "especially to us to help him find a wife, an educated one, who would be a companion and not merely a wife," she set him up with her close friend Pumla Ngozwana (1995: 26,31).

Their 1939 pairing anticipated ANC President Alfred Xuma's 1940 marriage to the African American teacher and clubwoman Madie Hall, whom Xuma had similarly pursued in hopes of forging a companionate marriage through which he could lead "the race" (Berger 2001). Frieda Bokwe Matthews's marital narrative thus bolsters a broader narrative of marriage as integral to the expansion of political communities.

Conclusion

Frieda Matthews's marital narrative reads as mirror image of Rahab Petje's nightmare courtship scenario, with which we began. While Petje complained of African families unable to bridge ethnic difference to "build Africa," Matthews depicted her marriage as a model navigation of ethnic difference, which placed her at the helm of a New African family that would take leading roles in anti-apartheid politics. In both cases, women's marital narratives wrote a politics of home firmly into African nationalism. This article thus contributes to the growing interest in African studies in understanding the private and public politics of writing in colonial Africa and also to the broader efforts of historians of gender to understand "the term 'political' far beyond direct organized action against the colonial state and its functionaries" (Allman et al. 2002:7).[4] It has shown how the effort to "build Africa" was hardly confined to the halls of male-led political organizations, but rather was part of women's navigations of domestic hierarchies to assert new space for themselves in private and public life.

In particular, the New African women's writing explored here asserted women's central roles in mediating ethnic difference within families and in building a panethnic political community. When we reevaluate the development of New African identities through these gendered navigations of ethnicity, we see that women were as essential to the construction of racial consciousness as men were. But while New African men generally worked through idioms of public community building, women focused on more intimate navigations of difference. The implications of these gendered strategies for African nationalist politics in the apartheid years demand further consideration.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to my anonymous reviewers, Sean Redding, and Ella Kusnetz at the *ASR*. This essay has also benefited from the insights of my co-panelists on "The Politics of Marriage in South Africa" panel at the 2012 African Studies Association conference—Natasha Erlank, Brady G'Sell, Nafisa Essop Sheik, and Liz Thornberry—and on "Gendering Ethnicity in African Women's Lives" at the 2014 Berkshire Conference on the History of Women—Jill Kelly, Jan Bender Shetler, and Kathleen Sheldon. Thanks also to Jan Shetler and anonymous reviewers at the University of Wisconsin Press for their critiques of an earlier version of this essay; and to Catherine Burns, Daniel Magaziner,

and participants in the Wits Interdisciplinary Seminar in the Humanities (University of the Witwatersrand) and the North Eastern Workshop on Southern Africa (Burlington, Vermont) for their feedback on a related think-piece on the *Bantu World* women's pages.

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Notes

1. For similar African cases, see Pollard (2005) and Klausen (2004).
2. See also Mann (1985); Parkin and Nyamwaya (1987).
3. Strong exceptions are Thomas (2008, 2009); Soske (2010); Daymond et al. (2003).
4. On the politics of writing in colonial africa, see Prichard (2013); Newell (2013); Hofmeyr (2013); Andrade (2011); Glassman (2011); Soske (2010); Thomas 2008, 2009); Barber (2006).