

Resource Reviews Bronmateriaalbesprekings

OUR COMMON FUTURE by World Commission on Environment and Development.
Published by Oxford University Press. Oxford 1987.
383 pp. R30,25.

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was set up by the UN General Assembly in December 1983 with three objectives:

- to re-examine the critical environment and development issues and to formulate realistic proposals for dealing with them;
- to propose new forms of international co-operation on these issues that will influence policies and events in the direction of needed changes; and
- to raise the levels of understanding and commitment to action of individuals, voluntary organisations, businesses, institutes, and governments." (pp.3-4)

The Commission operated in an open and participatory way and attempted to obtain the broadest range of views possible. For this reason it held meetings, site visits and public hearings in most parts of the world. In addition, reports were commissioned from experts in various fields and particular significance was afforded the views of youth and women.

The WCED report consists of 12 chapters under three sections, namely, Common Concerns, Common Challenges and Common Endeavours. These are preceded by a useful overview of the 12 chapters which, although it is not made obvious, is essentially a precis of the report. Each chapter presents the existing situation as the Commission perceives it and various strategies for addressing problems.

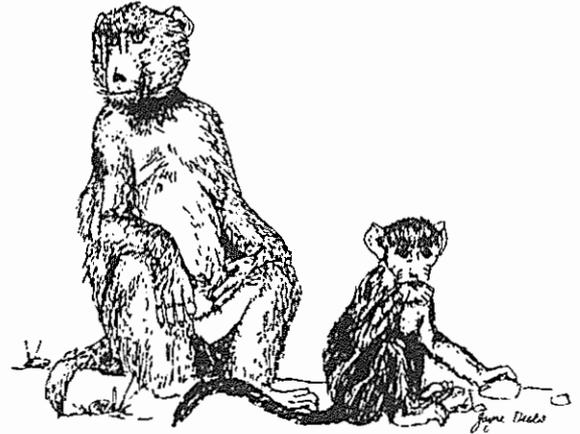
The report focuses on 'environment development' issues, using the two words as a single expression on occasions. The inseparability of the two concepts is emphasised throughout, for example

"It is futile to attempt to deal with environmental problems without a broader perspective that encompasses the factors underlying world poverty and international inequality." (p.3).

It defines 'environment' and 'development' as follows:
'Environment' is where we all live; and
'development' is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode." (p.xi).

These definitions show that while the report deals with some of the most complex issues facing humanity, it manages to present them in a 'down-to-earth' way. Of course, by avoiding complexity the report can be accused of over-simplification and of missing key debates. However, the report is wide-ranging in its treatment of major issues and covers these remarkably well, considering the problem of communicability mentioned below.

There are two issues which, I believe, should have received more attention by the Commission. The first is the ability of the report to communicate its contents to the reader. For a lengthy document which is intended to reach a wide audience, in particular



policymakers, it should have been presented in a way which allowed a more ready accessing of information. This is true especially since the report attempts to "formulate realistic proposals" (p.3). For this reason the contents page should have contained more than just the chapter headings. Further useful additions would have been a summary of recommendations at the end of each chapter and an index.

The problem of communication has been solved to a degree by the publication of a reader's guide to the report (Hinrichsen, 1987) which brings "a slimmed down version of *Our Common Future* to a wider audience of both ordinary people and decision-makers" (ibid. p.5). Since the report runs to almost 400 pages this is a useful companion to the publication.

The second issue which should have received more attention is education. Although the report rightly points to education and teachers as critical components of the solution to any environment/development problem (p.ix) there is little on education specifically and what there is, even in the short section (pp.111-114) which deals with education directly, tends to refer to health education, family planning and human resource development only. While data concerning global school enrolment are provided, such figures presented in isolation from the nature and quality of education they represent are meaningless. What should have appeared is advice relating educational approaches most appropriate to the wide range of environmental concerns encountered by societies in various parts of the world and how sustainable development can most effectively be promoted.

Nevertheless, the report is of particular importance for environmental education in Southern Africa since it provides a perspective which goes well beyond nature conservation education or preservationist approaches to conservation. For this reason it is felt that the WCED report should be read by all environmental educators: it provides a context and a perspective which cannot be disregarded.

In summary, the WCED report is seen as an important contribution to the environmental development debate. Without denying the existence of environmental crises the report goes beyond the doom-and-gloom message of imminent disaster and displays a sound understanding of the nature of the problems humanity is facing. Solutions to environmental problems are shown to be conditional upon a general appreciation that development and environment issues are inseparable, requiring major changes in attitude and social and economic organisation. Perhaps the most important statement in the report is the conviction that the changes required are attainable, workable and within reach of

any government that has the political will to heed them.

The WCED report is recommended reading for a wide range of people, from local, regional and national government officials and members of the planning profession, to academics, students, educators and other leaders in society.

REFERENCE

HINRICHSSEN D. 1987: *Our Common Future: A reader's guide*. International Institute for Environment and Development/Earthscan. London.

Alistair Clacherty

OUT OF THE AFRICAN ARK edited by Guy Butler and David Butler. Published by Ad Donker, Johannesburg, 1988. 281 pp. Price: (hb) R29,95 (pbk) R19,95.

Wild animals, reptiles, birds and insects - all from Africa - spring into focus through the telescopic lens provided by the poetry included in this anthology. The verse selection is arranged in a highly original manner, for the poetic viewpoint is complemented and elaborated with careful zoological notes provided by Carmen Welz and further, through examples of animal myths and pertinent African proverbs (in translation) which have also been included. This entertaining and informative combination of material is attractively illustrated with original work by talented South African artists and with reproductions of Bushman rock paintings and engravings. These contribute significantly to the definitely African feel of the book.

The title of the selection was suggested, so the father-son editorial partnership assert in their Introduction, by Roy Campbell's poem *The Flaming Terrapin*. It is worth quoting a section from this poem which purports to explain the origin of the fantastic variety of African fauna:

"Out of the ark's grim hold
A torrent of splendour rolled -
From the hollow resounding sides,
Flashing and glittering, came
Panthers with sparkled hides,
And tigers scribbled with flame,
And lions in grisly trains
Cascading their golden manes.
They romped ..."

Campbell has employed poetic licence to allow his Noah to beach the ark in the midst of the African continent!

Forty-five animals have been chosen for the Butler's ark. Some have only one poem devoted to them, others as many as eight. Seven poems concentrate on animals in their setting and 123 on individual animals or small groups. All are arranged alphabetically, so: A is for Ant, B for Baboon, Q for Quagga until we reach X for ...? - you'll have to read the book to find out - and of course, Z for Zebra.

The writing of forty-nine poets is represented. This includes poems by well-known South African writers like Campbell, Douglas Livingstone, Sydney Clouts, William Plomer and Thomas Pringle and poems from West African, Kenyan, British and American authors. It is

noticeable that it is the metropolitan writers who adopt a humorous stance towards the animals of Africa, as Ogden Nash in his description, *The Ant*:

"The ant has made himself illustrious
Through constant industry industrious.
So what?
Would you be calm and placid
If you were full of formic acid?"

The editors explain their selection of material as follows:

"This book is a collection of animal trophies created by culturally and historically diverse artists; trophies where the essence of the animal is stalked and captured from as many different angles and for as many different reasons as possible. We have presented images from those who hunted for food and clothing; those who hunted for sport; those who hunted for joy of killing, and those who sought to conserve. There are those who are familiar with the animals, and those to whom they are totally strange. Some see the animal as an index to the wisdom and glory of God; others use the animals to satirize man's vices or praise his virtues; others try to see each animal in its wonderful uniqueness."

(Introduction p.16)

Out of the African Ark should appeal to conservationists and nature lovers of all ages.

Sharon Ries

WE CARE! An environmental education programme consisting of a teacher/leader handbook, 50 activities and a colour poster. Published by S.A. Nature Foundation, Stellenbosch, 1988.

It was with interest and expectation that I awaited the arrival of the *We Care!* project materials for environmental education, suitable, I was led to believe, for at least a five year age range and for formal and informal learning situations and, best of all, for a total cost of R5,00. I did rather wonder if, like some items of clothing supposed to fit many sizes, the end product would not really suit anyone.

On first study the *We Care!* materials are attractive and easy to read and one is left in no doubt as to the affiliations of the developers of the materials and the sponsors. The colour coding, used also by other projects for their resource materials, makes for easy access to the materials for teachers and pupils. The activities are usefully grouped into themes. The activities range from quite open-ended to fairly structured. I did wonder why one is given free reign to get to know any animal, vertebrate or invertebrate, but for plants one is restricted to flowering plants. Of course the flexibility of the materials would allow the teacher or youth leader to adapt the activity in question for non-flowering plants. I do think that it is a limitation of the materials that the animals examples used in a number of cases are wild animals or 'game reserve animals' and not examples, equally indigenous, likely to be encountered in more urban environments.

In trying to meet the needs of pupils over a five

year age range one must question the appropriateness of worksheets with cartoon ants for 15 year old pupils.

The environmentally aware teacher, youth leader and child will certainly be delighted with the flexibility of the activities and will develop the ideas offered. However, I think it must be noted that the above-mentioned teachers will probably have encountered similar teaching ideas in journals such as *Science and Children*, *Junior Education* and *Teaching Science* to name a few. Whilst environmentally aware teachers and youth leaders are not actually an endangered species, they are still rare. So the question must be asked - to which teachers and youth leaders is the project directed?

No doubt the sponsors' preferred response would be - the total range of teachers and youth leaders! More seriously, if this is the case, then it is perhaps inexcusable that the developers of the materials have not taken note of the work being done by R. D'Donoghue and the paper by P. Moodie that appeared in Vol. 4 of this Journal (March 1987). Moodie reviews the literature that provides adequate evidence that the uptake of resource materials into classroom activities is very limited when there is no associated in-service work and not much more effective when the in-service courses are restricted to instruction on how to use the materials. What is required is a much more active participation on the part of the teachers and youth leaders in the development and extension of the materials.

Much as some of us would like it to be otherwise, many teachers in South Africa feel that they are bound by syllabuses and work schemes and for them there is not sufficient indication of where the various activities of the *We Care!* project fit in with the syllabuses. The first reaction of many of those teachers to these activities could well be that they do not have time in an already full curriculum to put in extras.

Another important issue relates to the range of environmental education that is being projected by

these materials. Is environmental education to be relegated to activities considered to be 'extras' in the curriculum and out-of-school activities or is it not time that environmental education should be seen as an approach to be integrated into the total curriculum?

Gill Bolttt

ORIGINS OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE OF THE JOHANNESBURG AREA by Revil Mason, illustrated by Tass Hesom. Published by Skotaville Educational Division, Johannesburg 1987. Maps, photographs. R11,50 softcover.

This is a much needed book for the classroom and the home. I read it to my seven year old, but it can be enjoyed by all people who wish to learn more about the people of our land. Revil Mason, as Director of the Archaeological Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand, has chosen to guide our discovery of the origins of the African people primarily with drawings, maps and photographs. The text is sparse but relevant.

We are given fascinating insights into the lifestyles of the many people of the area, concentrating on what can be learnt from archaeological diggings. I appreciated the comment "Some of the modern South African history books discuss events in the Southern African interior during the last 2 000 years, but even these omit the information we present in this book. This is because the books were written by historians not archaeologists."

The book deals mainly with the BaTswana but also includes the San, BaKwena, Sotho, BaHurutshe and the first White settlers. Tass Hesom's drawings of

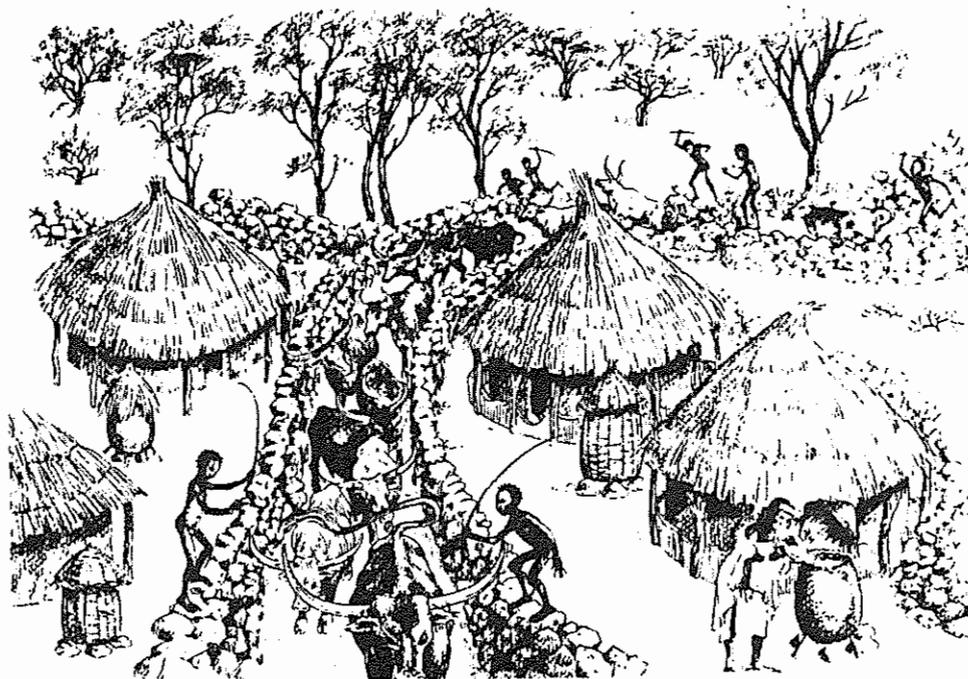


Fig 45

An illustration from *Origins of the African People of the Johannesburg Area*.

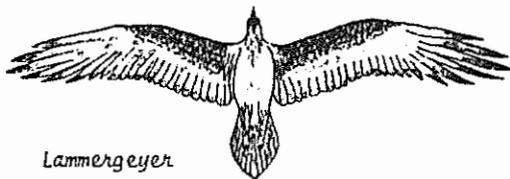
Tswana life in all its richness are delightful. There are scenes of a typical village on the slopes of Northcliff, the smelting and forging of iron, making spears, pegging a skin, preparing a meal, driving cattle home, stringing beads, burial ceremonies and many more. The spontaneity of the drawings is quite captivating. I enjoyed poring over the pictures, finding little cameos of life such as the girls dancing, a young man taunting a bull, a baby escaping from its mother, a man leaning idly against a wall, baboons picking their way through ruins, two lovers behind a hut. Many drawings show sequences of events in the history of areas like Lonehill and Klipriviersberg during the last 1 000 years. Particularly fascinating are the "archaeological time machines" where half the page shows, for example, a BaTswana burial in 1800 and the other half shows the archaeologists digging it up in 1985.

There are many photographs of pottery, iron tools and digs. One of the most interesting shows the skeleton of a young Motswana girl complete with copper earrings and iron anklet. The aerial photographs with accompanying line diagrams of different villages are extremely helpful in understanding the layout of villages of the different people in the area and in interpreting ruins such as those at Klipriviersberg. Of the two maps only one was of any use. The author has included two examples of how teachers have used archaeological digs to heighten awareness of the study of man. Directions are given to two of the sites that may easily be visited by schools in the greater Witwatersrand area. Every effort has been made to show how easy and stimulating an archaeological study can be to pupils.

I missed having a table of contents and an index - both of which my seven year old has been taught to use. A glossary would have been useful. I would also have liked to have had a better, more detailed map to refer to, preferably showing all the places referred to, like Olifantspoort, Magaliesberg valley and Suikerbosrand. I think that the book needed stricter editing. There are many punctuation mistakes and typographical errors. Two drawings have gross inaccuracies in animal anatomy although possibly only evident to zoologists like me. The layout is a little confusing as the reader goes from one locality to another and then back again. A contents list and numbered chapters may have clarified the author's intention regarding the sequence of presentation. The captions to different pictures on the same page are often irritatingly identical. Some of the photographs are not numbered and their captions badly placed.

Despite these few minor problems this book is extremely readable, enlightening and amusing. I laughed aloud at the expression of the woman going to fetch yet more beer for the BaKwena men lolling about in their beer drinking building! The book is highly recommended, not only for historians and budding archaeologists, although it presents a tantalising introduction to the science of archaeology, but also for all educators, students and pupils who wish to have a better understanding of man's place in our local environment.

Betsy Kee



Lammergeyer

Continued from p. 20

Australia. Kuqala sathi sanxumelana necandelo lwamahlathi sifuna ukuqonda ukuba singanakho na ukuyityala kwimimandla yasePeninsula. Basiphendula ngelithi sinakho kuba kwathi kanti luhlobo olulungeleyo ukulinywa kumhlaba oyintlabathi kwaye lufuna nokuba linkcenceshelwe rhoqo. Utitshalakazi wakhuthazwa ukuba aze athi akufika esikolweni axelele abantwana ngokubaluleka kolondolozo ukuba kufuneka silondolozo, sikhusele, siphathe kakuhle nobume bemeko yendawo esihlala kuzo. La maqela athi axoxa ngen-dlela ezahlukeneyo zokwenza idolophu ibe ntle noku-gcina indawo esihlala kuzo zintle njengezi: kutyalwe imithi, ingca, iintyatyambo, nezakhiwo zipeyintwe ngemibala eqaqambileyo.

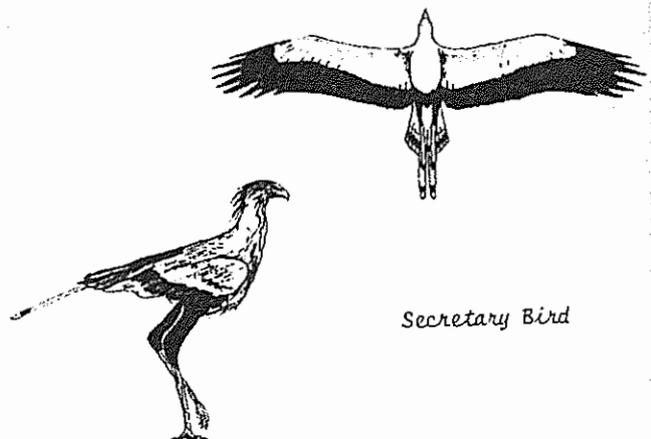
Noni Sipuye has also prepared an English version of this article. Copies are available free of charge from The Editor, Southern African Journal of Environmental Education, Box 972, Grahamstown 6140.

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we, as teachers, are to take seriously the present moral values that could seriously affect the very future of this earth we live on we should bring the children we teach into the outdoor classroom not just occasionally, but daily.

REFERENCES

- RDSZAK T. 1972: *Where the Wasteland Ends*. Doubleday & Co. Inc. New York.
- SMUTS J.C. 1926 rep 1987: *Holism and Evolution*. N & S Press. Cape Town.



Secretary Bird