

Exploring Transnational Dimensions of Activism in Contemporary Book Culture: *Ons Klyntji* and Afrikaner Activism

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Résumé de l'article

L'afrikaans s'est développé en Afrique du Sud à partir d'une interaction entre différentes populations. Au début, l'afrikaans était considéré comme une langue parlée par les classes défavorisées, mais il s'est élevé de cette position inférieure pour devenir une langue officielle en 1925. Après que le Parti national a commencé à gouverner l'Afrique du Sud en 1948, l'afrikaans est devenu la langue de l'opresseur pendant l'apartheid. Après l'apartheid, les Afrikaners se sont interrogés sur leur identité, se sentant partagés entre la fierté et la honte.

Le magazine *Ons Klyntji* a été fondé en 1896 pour promouvoir la culture littéraire et façonner l'identité afrikaner, et il existe toujours aujourd'hui. Tout au long de son histoire, le magazine a été utilisé pour promouvoir des causes progressistes : d'abord la création d'une littérature en afrikaans, puis la protestation des Afrikaners contre l'apartheid. Ces deux causes sont nées de la nécessité de trouver une identité distincte parmi les Afrikaners. Les chercheurs affirment que la publication d'*Ons Klyntji* a contribué de manière positive au changement politique et social progressiste en ce qui concerne l'identité afrikaner, en particulier dans la période post-apartheid.





EXPLORING TRANSNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF ACTIVISM IN CONTEMPORARY BOOK CULTURE: *Ons Klyntji* and Afrikaner Activism

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ABSTRACT

Afrikaans developed in South Africa out of an interaction among a variety of peoples. In the beginning, Afrikaans was considered a language spoken by the lower classes, but it rose from this low position to become an official language in 1925. After the National Party started to govern South Africa in 1948, Afrikaans became the language of the oppressor during apartheid. Post-apartheid, Afrikaners questioned their identity, feeling conflicted between pride and shame.

The magazine *Ons Klyntji* was established in 1896 to foster a literary culture and shape Afrikaner identity, and still exists today. Throughout its publication history, the magazine was used to promote progressive causes: first in the creation of an Afrikaans literature, and then as a vehicle for protest by Afrikaners against apartheid. Both these causes developed out of a need to find a distinct identity amongst Afrikaners. The researchers argue that the publishing of *Ons Klyntji* has contributed positively to progressive political and social change with regards to Afrikaner identity, particularly in the post-apartheid period.

RÉSUMÉ

L'afrikaans s'est développé en Afrique du Sud à partir d'une interaction entre différentes populations. Au début, l'afrikaans était considéré comme une langue parlée par les classes défavorisées, mais il s'est élevé de cette position inférieure pour devenir une langue officielle en 1925. Après que le Parti national a commencé à gouverner l'Afrique du Sud en 1948, l'afrikaans est devenu la langue de l'opresseur

pendant l'apartheid. Après l'apartheid, les Afrikaners se sont interrogés sur leur identité, se sentant partagés entre la fierté et la honte.

Le magazine *Ons Klyntji* a été fondé en 1896 pour promouvoir la culture littéraire et façonner l'identité afrikaner, et il existe toujours aujourd'hui. Tout au long de son histoire, le magazine a été utilisé pour promouvoir des causes progressistes : d'abord la création d'une littérature en afrikaans, puis la protestation des Afrikaners contre l'apartheid. Ces deux causes sont nées de la nécessité de trouver une identité distincte parmi les Afrikaners. Les chercheurs affirment que la publication d'*Ons Klyntji* a contribué de manière positive au changement politique et social progressiste en ce qui concerne l'identité afrikaner, en particulier dans la période post-apartheid.

Keywords

Ons Klyntji, Afrikaner nationalism, Afrikaner identity and activism, protest zine

Mots-clés

Ons Klyntji, nationalisme afrikaner, identité afrikaner et activisme, zines de protestation

Introduction

Afrikaans developed in South Africa out of an interaction among a variety of peoples, although the strongest influence is Dutch.¹ In the beginning, Afrikaans was considered a language spoken by the lower classes (often referred to as “kitchen Dutch”), and was not a written language (Dutch was used in all official documents and in the courts).

At a meeting of the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* (GRA) (Society of True Afrikaners) in 1896, it was decided to start publishing a magazine called *Ons Klyntji* to encourage the writing and reading of Afrikaans, the “*moedertaal*” (mother language).² *Ons Klyntji*'s purpose was to foster a literary culture and shape Afrikaner identity, pushing back against the Anglicization of Afrikaners, particularly in the period following the Anglo-Boer War. It was published monthly for about ten years, and then after many years out of print and “a previous attempt to bring it back to life, it resurfaced in the 1990s as an anti-apartheid protest zine.”³ The magazine was published erratically in this spirit between 1996–2007, and again in 2011, and is now available in both hard copy and as an e-zine, *Klyntji.com*. (*Klyntji.com* was launched in 2014, with the editorial statement “*Klyntji* is an independent online journal, of diverse and

progressive arts and culture, published in Afrikaans.”⁴ However, the online and print versions identify as different items.)

The publishing of *Ons Klynjji* occurred during various contexts of repression, first during the repression of the Afrikaans language and later post-apartheid (since 1996) when Afrikaans was still perceived as an oppressive language due to its association with apartheid and a nationalistic ideology. In both contexts, however, the magazine was used to promote progressive causes: first in the creation of an Afrikaans literature, and then as a vehicle for protest by Afrikaners against apartheid. Both these causes triggered a need to find an identity amongst the Afrikaners and Afrikaans speakers of South Africa. We argue that the publishing of the magazine *Ons Klynjji* contributed to progressive political and social change with regards to Afrikaans as language and the Afrikaner identity, and, specifically in the post-apartheid period, that *Ons Klynjji* has campaigned for the redefinition of this national identity.

Methodology

This study follows a qualitative, explorative, and interpretivist research design. The aim is to determine feelings and attitudes regarding certain phenomena during a specific period.

In order to provide context for this study, important titles by Hermann Giliomee, J.C. Steyn, H.P. van Coller, C.F.J. Muller, and Abel Coetzee are used, providing invaluable information on the origins of the Afrikaans language and the publication of *Ons Klynjji*.⁵ Another important consideration for our study of Afrikaans language and literature is drawn by C.S. van der Waal from Pierre Bourdieu, who highlights

the political economy of language, especially with regard to writing and education, according to which language is a form of cultural capital and an instrument of power in symbolic exchanges, involving social stratification. The social relations and associated perceptions of language and communication become normalised into a stratified linguistic and social habitus, reflecting unequal relations between speakers of specific codes.⁶

Access to hard and soft copies of different editions of the magazine for analysis were provided by the libraries of the University of the North-West and the University of Pretoria, as well as by the current editor of *Ons Klyntji*. The study uses the Country of Origin (COO) framework described by Thomas Aichner as the basis for content analysis of the 21 editions of *Ons Klyntji* published from 1997–2019.⁷

The research looks at the original purpose of the magazine and how it evolved into its most influential form shortly after the end of apartheid. The period from 1997–2019 for *Ons Klyntji* was a period of questioning of Afrikaner identity and of being an activist for the language. Comments will also be made about the magazine's current purpose, although the analysis focuses on the years 1997–2019.

The COO framework refers to how text and visual cues or elements are used to build or convey the image of a country and its products. Jos Hornikx et al. describe the effect as follows:

When brands communicate their country of origin to consumers, they either refer to a country that is the consumers' home country or to a foreign country. If a positive COO effect occurs in the first case, this may appeal to ethnocentrism, with consumers preferring goods and services from their own country.⁸

“Country of origin” therefore relates directly to national identity and culture, and this proposed analysis is an approach to fusing visual analysis or content analysis with national identity. Hornikx et al.'s study used Aichner's framework to analyze COO elements in different editions of *Cosmopolitan* magazine appearing in the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK. One of the main COO markers identified in these various editions of *Cosmopolitan* was language. A motivation for using COO for the present investigation, therefore, is that Afrikaans as language, Afrikaner identity, and apartheid were concepts associated specifically with South Africa, while the Afrikaans language's origins are rooted in a variety of languages and cultures, and it is spoken across country borders, however limited in numbers of speakers.

The COO concept was first articulated by R.D. Schooler in 1965 and further developed over the years; it currently includes the role of product types,

cultural orientation, national stereotypes, and other aspects relating to a country and its products.⁹ Although COO mainly considers how a specific country's image is portrayed internationally, it is important to understand that the original product still has to be created in its home country. The essence of the COO concept suffices as a tool to analyze a specific sample of a culture or part of a nation, in this case Afrikaners, living in South Africa. With relation to *Ons Klyntji*, we analyze the image of and re-establishment of the Afrikaner in a post-democratic, anti-apartheid identity, using Aichner's formulation of the COO framework.

South Africa is a multilingual, multicultural country, with various subcultures. Afrikaans is currently the third most spoken home language in South Africa.¹⁰ Language plays an important role in demarcating various cultures, distinguishing "the identity of persons insofar as it is constituted or co-constituted through language and language use."¹¹ Cultural identity can be defined as "a collective 'true self' which people with a shared history and genealogy have in common."¹² In this light, we would argue that the (white) Afrikaner, as a brand of cultural identity, used *Ons Klyntji* as an anti-apartheid, anti-establishment platform to redefine what it means to be Afrikaans. The magazine has showed how a new identity can be formed, loosening the tight grip of apartheid associations and embracing a South African rainbow culture inclusive of various cultural groups and post-apartheid ideologies.

Another important factor in a COO analysis, related to national and cultural identity, is the role of stereotypes. Stereotyping is the oversimplification of a reality or image of something like a country, product, or people. Stereotypes can be accurate or assumed, and are perpetuated by various forms of mass media.¹³ National stereotypes therefore refer to the characteristics associated with a nation and its people.¹⁴ From a general perspective, due to the prevalence of nationalistic ideology among Afrikaners dating from the mid-1800s, Afrikaners were encouraged to subscribe to the National Party government's ideals, which included following a Christian faith. Perpetuating this notion, Afrikaans literature was initially written from the ideological viewpoint of the Calvinist white male, with the resulting negative stereotyping of the "other." Gradually these stereotypes were nuanced, questioned, and undermined, outlining the rise and fall of an ideology as it took place in society and was reflected in its literature.¹⁵ While some critics suggest that ethnic

stereotyping in Afrikaans prose predicts the rise of apartheid before 1948, Afrikaans literature after 1948 increasingly questions and undermines previous stereotypes—it points prophetically to the dismantling of apartheid laws in the early nineties.¹⁶

Considering national and cultural identity, as well as stereotypes, Aichner's framework provides a suitable tool to identify elements used to establish Afrikaner identity in the specific editions of *Ons Klyntji* analyzed in this study. The eight COO strategies, either regulated or unregulated, implicit or explicit, to be used for analysis (slightly adapted here) are:

1. References to quality and “Made in” (regarding products and services)
2. Company names
3. Common attractions/landmarks
4. Words used in names and general application of the language
5. Country flag and symbols
6. Stereotypes
7. Reference to important or popular figures
8. Inclusion of labels¹⁷

A combination of inductive and deductive reasoning will be used to analyze the data. While analyzing the selected editions of *Ons Klyntji*, inferences will be drawn based on the patterns and themes that are observed (inductive reasoning).¹⁸ Deductive reasoning also applies, because during analysis new themes or categories for analysis may develop.

In order to examine the presence of COO elements in *Ons Klyntji*, specific content pieces of each edition will be analyzed. Aichner's criteria will be applied on every issue, ensuring consistent analysis and an improved credibility and validity of data.

1. Front cover and headlines: The front cover images denote themes and tones of specific issues, and carry symbolic meaning. The headlines will also be analyzed as indicative of what kind of content is included in the magazine, e.g. articles, opinion pieces, letters, etc.
2. Back cover: The back cover includes labels, as well as advertisements.

3. Editor's letter: The editor's note explains the positioning, focus, and editorial philosophy of the magazine, which can provide valuable information regarding Afrikaner activism.
4. Advertisements: Advertisements can reflect the consumption habits and interests of expected readers. Advertisements also indicate collaboration with or sponsorship from other organisations, which may imply support for the mission of *Ons Klyntji*.

Based on the data collected per issue, the presence of COO elements will be confirmed and triangulated to determine whether *Ons Klyntji* acted as a platform for Afrikaner activism in the post-apartheid period.

Afrikaans language development

Afrikaans developed in South Africa from a Dutch stem as a result of interaction between European colonists (who arrived in 1652), slaves imported from Africa and Asia, and indigenous Khoisan people.¹⁹ The language was not used in formal contexts, and by the 1860s was considered by the English-speaking part of the population as a “public language beneath contempt.”²⁰ However, even greater enemies of Afrikaans were those better-educated Afrikaners who considered Afrikaans to be an embarrassment. These Afrikaners tended to oppose the improvement of the language's status, although there were those who wanted to move away from Dutch (and later English) and become independent. The origins of Afrikaans as a language, however, has been contested by coloured Afrikaans-speakers, who emphasize the process of creolization and indicate disaffection with nationalist white imaginations.²¹ According to van der Waal, “many Afrikaner linguists and historians have before minimised the influence of people of colour on the emergence of Afrikaans.”²²

What is now Afrikaans had largely emerged by the end of the eighteenth century from its linguistic predecessor, Cape Dutch:

In the Western Cape the main variety of Afrikaans took root as the shared cultural creation, in countless small-scale localities, of Europeans and non-Europeans, whites and blacks, masters and slaves and servants . . . In the wake of a

great religious revival during the 1860s it was suggested that the Bible be translated into Afrikaans for the very poor, both white and colored people.²³

The non-standard forms spoken by the majority of (mostly coloured) Afrikaans-speakers in this period were dismissed as substandard and impure. At the end of the nineteenth century, there was a significant movement to appropriate Afrikaans from its creole context in the mixed population of the early Cape and to situate it as the core symbol for (white) Afrikaners. Imbued with nationalist imagery, Afrikaans was called a “white man’s language” by the language activist C.J. Langenhoven, and it became a unifying factor from the 1870s onwards in the Afrikaner drive for political empowerment.²⁴

In 1875 the *Genootskap van Ware Afrikaners* (initially known as *Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners*) [“Society of True Afrikaners”] was established under the leadership of S.J. du Toit, and linked Afrikaans as a language to the nationality of the Afrikaners.²⁵ From the beginning of its establishment, the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* (GRA) sought to foster ethnic solidarity among Cape Afrikaners and establish Afrikaans as a written medium.²⁶ It promoted the use and recognition of Afrikaans and advanced nationalistic ideals, although Du Toit largely focused on the white Afrikaans-speaking population.²⁷ The GRA also linked Afrikaans and Afrikaner nationalism with Christian faith and practice: “Du Toit was an early exponent of the Christian-nationalist education, which married the promotion of Afrikaans as a language to teaching the Reformed religion and the Afrikaners’ national history.”²⁸

In the Anglo-Boer War, today referred to as the South African War of 1899-1902, Britain crushed the two Boer republics and introduced English as the sole official language in the ex-republics. According to Elleke Boehmer, to the same degree as their humiliation at British hands honed and sharpened the Boers’ nationalist spirit, the war experience also contributed to transforming their language, a hybridised version of Dutch . . . into a supple new medium of nationalist self-expression, as Afrikaans poetry of the war’s aftermath testifies.²⁹

The South African War showed the aggressive face of British imperialism, shattering the political faith of the traditional Afrikaner elite in a liberal

Empire. Afrikaners began looking for a symbol of their desire to emancipate themselves from British economic and cultural domination. The disdain expressed after the War by so many English-speakers towards Afrikaans and, to a lesser extent, Dutch, fuelled this drive, and a second language movement arose in the aftermath of this War.³⁰

There was a renewed growth of Afrikaans in the early twentieth century, “part and parcel of the rise of a modern Afrikaner nationalism.”³¹ Afrikaans became the symbol of a modernized Afrikaner identity, and this growth also helped bridge intra-Afrikaner class divisions.³² It had an effect on racial divisions as well. In the 1920s coloured people were not normally called “Afrikaners,” although most spoke a form of Afrikaans; nevertheless, in election campaigns Afrikaner politicians were quick to extend the term to them for the sake of additional votes.³³

During the first four decades of the twentieth century many Afrikaners experienced acute poverty due to a variety of reasons: the collapse of subsistence farming after the closing of the frontier, the devastation of farms as a result of the scorched earth policies of the British forces in the South African War, the shortage of schools, and Afrikaners’ lack of skills for industrial jobs.³⁴ There was an increased demand that schools switch from Dutch to Afrikaans as medium of instruction because many believed that students struggled to understand Dutch and English, and that this was a root cause of increasing poverty.³⁵ At the same time, Afrikaners held great contempt for English speakers, from the turn of the century onwards.³⁶ Many South African men fought in World War I on the side of the British, and their loss of life worsened feelings towards the English.

There was very little in terms of written Afrikaans during this period, and little to no reading culture among Afrikaners, partly due to the poverty they experienced.³⁷ The energies of Afrikaans writers therefore went into producing a counter-movement of Afrikaner nationalism as a rival to British colonialism.³⁸ There was much campaigning by a number of Afrikaners and Afrikaans culture organisations, such as the *Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (established in 1909 to build and preserve Afrikaans through literature, art, history, and archaeology), the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK) (established in 1929 under the umbrella of the

SAAWK to protect their cultural property) and the *Afrikaans taal, kultuur, kennis en kreatiwiteit Suid-Afrika* (ATKV, or *Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereniging*) (established in 1930 to cultivate and preserve Afrikaans heritage through cultural activities).

The 1920s was an important decade of growth for Afrikaner nationalism, which stood for everything that was “good and noble,” and many young Afrikaners desired to serve their country and their language.³⁹ In 1925 Afrikaans was recognised in lieu of Dutch as the second official language (alongside English) of the Union of South Africa. The GRA continued its efforts to foster a nationalism among white Cape Dutch-speakers: Afrikaans became their linguistic vehicle and “Afrikaners” their label.⁴⁰ According to Achmat Davids, the GRA was interested in the unification of the white Afrikaners as a nation, and aware that language differences created a cultural distance between classes. While white Afrikaners in the Orange Free State were trying to “put Afrikaans in their sitting rooms,” it was already acknowledged as the language of the coloured people. The “Afrikaner volk” [“Afrikaner people”] needed a cementing issue which would cut across cultural distance, and the Afrikaans language was the most convenient tool.⁴¹ In 1925, the National Party’s official policy was that the coloured people should be integrated with white people economically and politically, but not socially.⁴² Sources show that there were shifts between different social classes and races regarding the Afrikaans language; Afrikaans-speaking people of colour were used to get votes, but were still marginalised. According to van der Waal, throughout the twentieth century,

Afrikaans was used to mobilise Afrikaners around an anti-English and white ethno-nationalist identity—it became the main symbol of being an Afrikaner socially, culturally and politically . . . The myth of Afrikaans as a white language, in association with the political mobilisation of white Afrikaans-speakers, was strengthened by the institutionalisation of Afrikaans in various organisations that were given the role to protect and standardise the language.⁴³

The 1930s and 1940s saw a continued rise of Afrikaner nationalism, accompanied by the growth of some large publishing houses, which showed

that Afrikaans literature was in demand.⁴⁴ During WWII, however, a paper shortage severely affected the production of some publications.⁴⁵ In addition, there was a prohibition on the establishment of new publishers. After WWII, the demand for Afrikaans books decreased because British and American books could be imported again.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, with wartime prohibitions lifted, there was an increase in new publishers and especially magazines were created by the dozen.⁴⁷

The National Party (NP) won power in 1948, and it rigidly applied the language accord of 1909 which required civil servants to be bilingual before they could be promoted. The predominance of English-speakers in the higher ranks of the civil service continued for a decade, and it was only by 1960—50 years after Union—that people in these ranks reflected the white population composition.⁴⁸ According to Willemse, “the period 1948- 76 is arguably the most significant in Afrikaans literature, a time that coincided with greater social privileges, better education and the rapid urbanisation of white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.”⁴⁹ Afrikaans became a way for the government to exert power and support the Afrikaans language, while at the same time it was used to marginalize people of colour. In 1953, the NP government passed a controversial law called the *Wet op Bantoe-ondewys* (Bantu Education Act), which meant the state had control over the education of black children; in 1963, the Publications Act (*Wet op Publikasies en Vermaaklikhede*) gave state control of publications’ production and distribution if found to be “undesirable,” enforced by strict fines and even time in prison.⁵⁰ This law made it difficult for both authors and publishers to operate, particularly if they wanted to touch on political (or other undesirable) content. Louise Viljoen notes that Afrikaans literature increasingly registered the opposition of the Afrikaans-speakers of different races against the apartheid regime.⁵¹ Additionally, cooperation and opposition show Afrikaans writers’ awareness of their links to and resistance against the colonizer status and the Apartheid role of Afrikaans.⁵²

The Sestigters, named after a group of Afrikaans writers associated with the short-lived journal *Sestiger* (Sixtyer, 1963- 5) became the signature Afrikaans grouping of the period after 1961. Writers such as Brink and Leroux, Breytenbach, Van Niekerk, Rabie, Abraham H. de Vries, Bartho Smit, Chris Barnard and Hennie Aucamp contributed to the journal.⁵³ These writers

strongly opposed apartheid while continuing to write in Afrikaans, demonstrating loyalty to the language combined with disagreement with the government.

Despite pockets of resistance like that of the Sestigers, by the 1970s Afrikaans, the Afrikaner policy of apartheid, and the Afrikaner-controlled state had become inseparably linked. Afrikaans had become the language of the oppressor while also benefitting from the support given by the apartheid government.⁵⁴ At the same time, political blunders and unfavourable demographic trends weakened the language.⁵⁵ While the 1960s saw increased censorship and repression as well as an increase in dissent and protest literature, the 1980s were years of upheaval, described by Elize Botha and P.H. Roodt as “characterized by border wars, escalating political unrest and a state of emergency; in the literary world borders and barriers were being breached—between genres, in post-modern fashion, between old and new, in the writings of older and younger authors.”⁵⁶ Viljoen suggests that resistance to Afrikaner nationalism and related constructions of power was one of the strongest themes in Afrikaans literature in the period from 1976 (the year of the Soweto uprising) to 1990.⁵⁷

Some have concluded that although Afrikaans was spoken as a first language by only 15 percent of the population in 1994, the dawn of the South African democracy, it was the strongest language in South Africa in the way it was used formally and informally.⁵⁸ In 1994 Afrikaans was the third biggest speech community, while English was the undisputed lingua franca of the literate part of the population. However, despite the apparent influence held by Afrikaans, “Afrikaans as the main symbolic expression of Afrikaner nationalism was vulnerable the moment South Africa moved toward an inclusive democracy. The shrinking of the proportion of whites that necessitated the transition also profoundly affected Afrikaans.”⁵⁹ Many Afrikaners questioned their identity; their language was the language of the oppressor, but it was also their language that they had fought so hard to establish. Was it still possible to be proud of the language, and the culture? Did apartheid not go against their Christianity, which was so ingrained in their identity? An era of questioning, reconciliation, and reforming followed. The South African Constitution of 1996 named Afrikaans as one out of 11 official languages, each of which was to be treated equally in all areas of South African life. The Nationalist ideology that had

been enforced and encouraged in so many ways during apartheid was no longer tenable after the advent of democracy in 1994, and Afrikaners once again found themselves searching for identity and seeking to re-establish themselves in a new political dispensation.

Today, rather than viewing Afrikaans through a single lens, it is acknowledged as an amalgam consisting of a variety of expressions, speakers and histories.⁶⁰ In addition,

the white-speaker bias of its [Afrikaans] media products and dominant institutions remain under constant discussion, and we still have to recognise the multi-faceted nature of the Afrikaans-speaking community, the numerical dominance of its black speakers, and the need to advance Afrikaans in a multilingual, all-inclusive, antiracist environment, as an example and as part of the development and intellectualisation of African languages. We also have to recognise that Afrikaans is at the core of many fellow South Africans' sense of identity, and that they are not necessarily white.⁶¹

Afrikaner identity

Andrew van der Vlies claims that “‘South Africa’ has long meant different things to different people,” and Afrikaner identity is particularly complex.⁶² With the development of the language and tumultuous events in South Africa’s history, what it means to be an Afrikaner is different for different people—people of different races, as well as different classes within the same race.

The creation of Afrikaans literature was an important strategy by which early Afrikaners sought to differentiate themselves from other languages and show that they were a worthy people. “Nationalism and nation-building are often closely linked to the publishing industry, with some countries actively seeking to develop their national identity through the construction of ‘national literatures’ or a ‘national heritage’ of written works.”⁶³ A publication like *Ons Klynjji* provides a historical snapshot of changing societies and an activism for Afrikaans, including the questioning of who the “Afrikaner” is. “The

relationship of language to nationalism [is] particularly important in the case of Afrikaans,” as Ampie Coetzee observes, “where language was a determining factor in the creation of a ‘volk’ (people or nation), and where the empowerment of language encouraged the creation of literature.”⁶⁴ Afrikaner identity is closely linked with nationalism, and the way nationalism has been formed, is multipart:

Historically, Afrikaner identity has drawn heavily on Afrikaner nationalism, which depended on several tightly interwoven discourses. These centred on themes of religious, racial, and cultural purity, superiority, calling, and the struggle for autonomy against oppression—which included the struggle for an independent language.⁶⁵

In the early twentieth century, the heart of the Afrikaners’ nationalist struggle was an attempt to imagine a new political community with its own name and a language enjoying parity of esteem with English in the public sphere. Only then would their sense of being marginalized be overcome.⁶⁶

In 1948 the Afrikaans-speaking (white) population gained political control, and, directly following this event, the use and power of Afrikaans increased dramatically. This had predictable consequences, producing language-internal tension and ultimately causing a rift between formal Standard Afrikaans and its other varieties, a fact that was educationally, economically, culturally, and politically detrimental to all the speakers of the language.⁶⁷ In many ways Afrikaans is a victim of its own successes:

Afrikaans developed as the symbol of an Afrikaner identity deeply wounded by the South African War (1899–1902) and the cultural arrogance of a much wealthier English-speaking community. Afrikaners used the language to establish a national literature and a national school of history. Afrikaans was used to mobilize Afrikaner support for the effort to establish Afrikaner enterprises . . . Afrikaans mother-tongue education was instrumental in the rehabilitation of the large proportion of Afrikaners who were considered poor whites. Poverty had virtually disappeared in Afrikaner ranks. Afrikaans was the very symbol of the successes of the Afrikaner nationalist movement of the twentieth century. The defeat of apartheid

in the 1990s deprived Afrikaans of the protection of the state and undermined the cohesiveness the Afrikaner community on the language issue.⁶⁸

Vic Webb and Mariana Kriel argue that Afrikaner nationalism is a case of ethnic nationalism because stereotypical Afrikaners share attributes of an ethnic community: a collective proper name, shared historical memories, and an association with a specific homeland.⁶⁹ In addition, “nationalism is primarily a political ideology” and can thus be an instrument of political mobilization; if language is one of the “objective characteristics” of the ethnic group, “the odds are that the language will be manipulated for political gain and that the nationalism will be, at least in part, a linguistic nationalism.”⁷⁰ This is exactly what happened during apartheid South Africa:

Such was the significance of language in the minds of the ruling Afrikaner nationalists: it was a central criterion not only for ethnonational self-definition, but also for the ethnonational classification of others. This explains, at least in part, why language has become such a highly politicized issue in South Africa . . . under National Party rule, Afrikaner nationalism reached its heyday, with Afrikaans as one of its major symbols.⁷¹

For the sixty years following the legislation of the early 1930s, the coloured community faced a political whirlwind: disfranchisement, enforced residential segregation, race classification, and a ban on sexual relations with whites. With overwhelming majorities, successive generations of Afrikaners had endorsed these policies as being necessary for Afrikaners to control the state and for “coloureds” to discover and develop their own distinct identity. At the same time, however, apartheid failed to stamp out the idea of white and brown Afrikaans-speakers sharing the same identity and interests.⁷²

According to Webb and Kriel, the end of apartheid in 1994 and the transition to democracy in South Africa introduced changes with radical repercussions for Afrikaans and Afrikaner nationalism: the (white) Afrikaner lost political control, a significant number of atrocities were acknowledged during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings as committed by Afrikaans-speaking persons, and Afrikaans and its speakers have lost the state-level support they enjoyed before 1994.⁷³ Afrikaans seems still to be an

object of resistance in the continuing struggle for control by black South Africans, while (white) Afrikaners continue the process of redefinition in a democratic South Africa. There have been “intense emotions associated with the diminishing status of Afrikaans since 1990,” some of which have been harnessed for Afrikaans activism: “the strongly worded interventions by the respected struggle activist and Afrikaans poet Breyten Breytenbach gave some credibility to the language activism of the mainly white group that was mobilised after 1999.”⁷⁴ However, many leading activists for Afrikaans were “strongly negative about the use of code-switching between English and Afrikaans by young people.”⁷⁵ They did not see its use as a socio-political protest. “Code-switching was also a standard practice for the *Kaapse* Afrikaans of the coloured population where it had a function of expressing social belonging, based on membership in both English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking social orders.”⁷⁶ “Sixty years ago there were large numbers of destitute and poorly educated Afrikaners and coloureds who were in direct competition with each other. By the early 1990s . . . the Afrikaner and larger white community now eagerly welcomed as allies the coloureds whose embourgeoisement was well underway.”⁷⁷ There have been continued debates, discussions and changes with regards to the Afrikaans language regarding inclusivity, literature, and identity after the dawn of the new democracy.

Today, 13.5% of South Africa’s population speaks Afrikaans. Over three-quarters of the coloured population speaks Afrikaans as a home language. Afrikaans is first language of 3.4-million coloured South Africans. More than half (50.2%) of Afrikaans speakers are coloured, 40% are white, 9% black and just 1% Indian.⁷⁸ This is a figure that will by all indications increase significantly in the next decade.⁷⁹

As this cultural-historical survey makes clear, Afrikaans and the Afrikaner identity tied to the language has been a contested site in South African society and politics since the 1800s. One way to map and analyze such a history is by examining cultural print objects such as *Ons Klyntji*. In addition, books and magazines like *Ons Klyntji* can show how a language and an identity can be used to promote certain progressive causes.

Case study: *Ons Klyntji*

This research investigates the history of *Ons Klyntji*. Two periods are particularly significant in demonstrating Afrikaner activism: the establishment of the magazine (1896–1905) and its rebirth in the nineties, in the post-apartheid phase (1997–2019). The discussion begins with the origin story of *Ons Klyntji* and the editorial philosophy of the magazine in its first years, to set up comparative conclusions and highlight the magazine’s commitment to Afrikaner activism across its iterations.

The media landscape in South Africa has undergone dramatic change over the course of *Ons Klyntji*’s history. During the colonial period in South Africa, when the magazine was founded, due to local censorship most other magazines found at the time were from the UK and Europe. Examples include *The South African Journal* and a Calvinist cultural Dutch magazine, *Het Nederduitsch Zuid-Afrikaansch Tijdschrift* [The Dutch South African magazine] (both from 1824), while local magazines included *De Gereformeerde Kerkbode* [The Reformed Church Messenger] (the official magazine of the Dutch Reformed Church), *Die Brandwag* [“The Guard”] (from 1910), and the *Cape Argus* (an English magazine established in 1857). The *Nasionale Pers* [“The National Press”] was established in 1914 with clear nationalist ideologies, and some of their first newspapers included *Die Burger* [“The Citizen”] and *Die Volksblad* [“The People’s Paper”].⁸⁰ After 1948, when the National Party came to power, tightening censorship laws and sanctions imposed by other countries in response to apartheid created conditions for the local publishing industry to grow, particularly the Afrikaans industry. Due to government restrictions, television broadcasting did not arrive until 1976, meaning that print media was spared competition for an unusual amount of time.⁸¹ It was not until the end of apartheid that the media enjoyed freedom of speech, and a number of changes to the South African media industry followed, with wide-ranging effects on book publishers, magazines, newspapers, television, and music.

***Ons Klyntji* (1896–1905)**

During a GRA meeting in January 1896, P. Scholts and Prof. Cachet expressed the need for a monthly Afrikaans magazine. A small committee was

tasked to realise this goal, and the resulting magazine, regarded as the “little brother” of the Afrikaans newspaper *Di Patriot*, was named *Ons Klyntji* (“Our Little One”), and given the tagline *Klyn Begin—Anbou Win* (“Small Beginnings—Keep on Winning”).⁸² “Ons Klyntji” referred to the Afrikaans language as an infant, still growing and developing its own identity.⁸³ It was also clear from the name chosen that the magazine and Afrikaans language still had ties with the Netherlands.

The magazine’s mission was to promote Afrikaans literature and to cultivate a love for the language. Dr. S.J. du Toit, a pastor and political leader who had been instrumental in securing recognition for Afrikaans as an official language, was appointed as the editor of *Ons Klyntji*. In his first editorial, Du Toit declared that “my goal is to cultivate a love for our mother tongue. I can only speak as I was taught, and that is Afrikaans.”⁸⁴ The first edition was published in March 1896, and within its first year of publication the magazine accumulated 3000 subscribers.⁸⁵ However, despite the magazine’s readership, the second South African War of 1899 interrupted distribution entirely so that no subscription fees could be collected. Furthermore, Du Toit came under political scrutiny, and the consistent lack of funds eventually brought the publication of *Ons Klyntji* to an end in 1905. An effort was made by *Ons Taal* to save *Ons Klyntji*, but due to a lack of interest and funds it was unsuccessful, and it would not be until the 1990s that *Ons Klyntji* was revived.

Purpose and editorial philosophy

Du Toit’s first editorial established a firm focus on quality writing in Afrikaans from the outset: “*Ons Klyntji* has to teach many to write well . . . for this reason *Ons Klyntji* will focus on style and language, as well as content.”⁸⁶ No translations were accepted, as the editor steered clear from European influences.⁸⁷ It was important that the magazine encouraged the publication of original Afrikaans writings. A wide variety of genres was accepted within this requirement, including campfire-like stories, humorous stories, medical hacks and tips, and romance and adventure stories that reflected a nation-specific personality (“*volkskundige geaardheid*”). The editor requested native stories, true to Afrikaner culture about their own lives and frame of reference.⁸⁸ Prose, short stories, and serials were published, giving aspiring writers an opportunity to publish in their mother tongue.⁸⁹

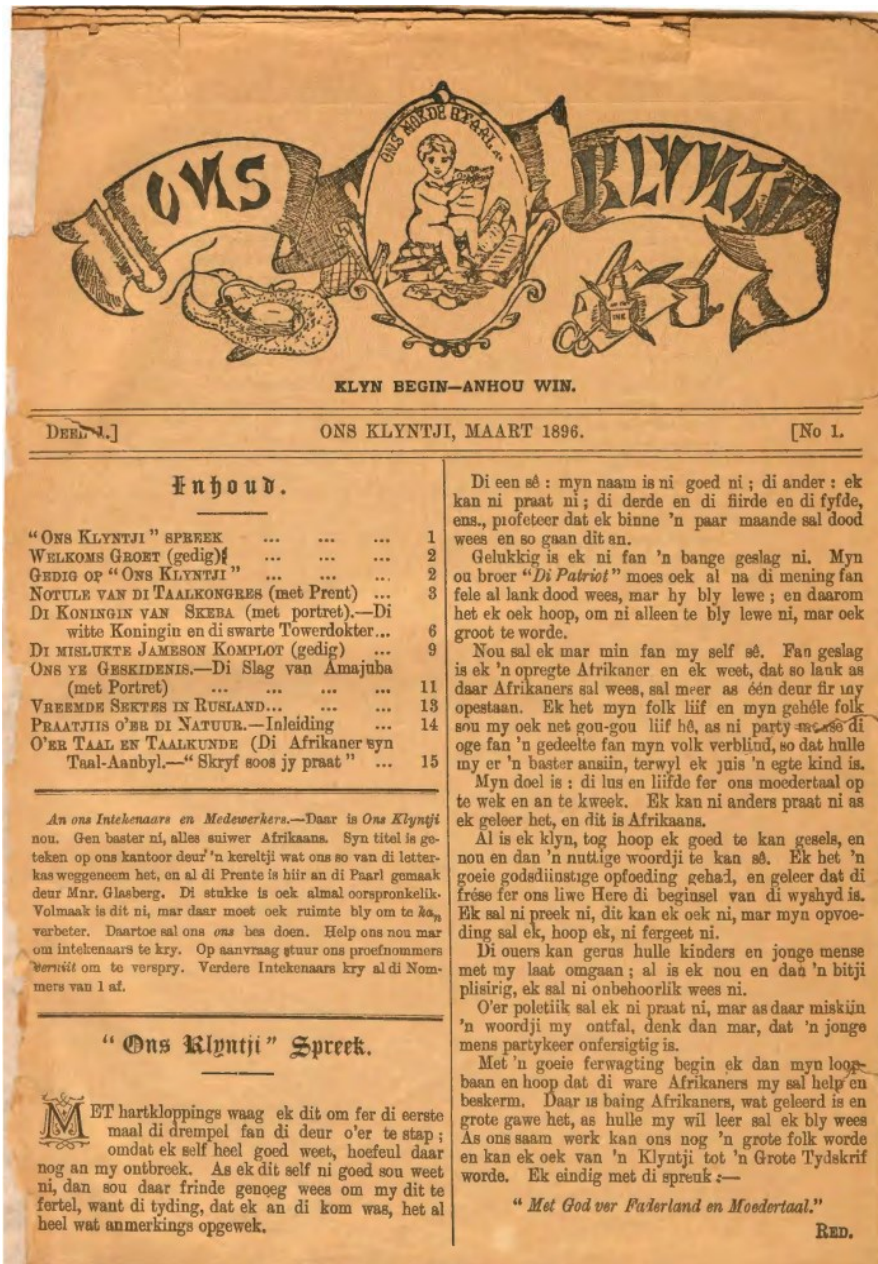


Figure 1. *Ons Klyntji* first edition (1896).

The design, positioning and content of the magazine was developed with a certain reader and target audience in mind. An important distinction made with regards to the Afrikaner culture was between highbrow and lowbrow culture, referred to as upper class (“*opperlaag/kultuur*”) and lower class (“*onderlaag/volkskultuur*”). “Upper class” typically meant wealthy, educated individuals living in the Boland region (Western Cape, Stellenbosch, Bloemfontein, and Pretoria). The upper class resonated with international

cultural forms, and encouraged the use of Dutch as language of education, schooling, and religion. The second language movement was developed with this upper class in mind.⁹⁰ “Lower class” referred to people on farms outside cities (“*ondervelders*”) in the Transvaal (now Gauteng) and Free State provinces. This group was homogenous, less individualistic, and the target audience for the first language movement.⁹¹ A different set of standards were seen to apply with the lower class, who were the primary readers and contributors/writers of *Ons Klyntji*, as the magazine published stories that reflected the nation’s interests and culture.⁹² It seemed to some extent that high-brow Afrikaans speaking people would rather side with their European counterparts, than the local Afrikaans speaking people.

***Ons Klyntji* (1997—current)**

After decades out of print, *Ons Klyntji* was revived by folk Afrikaans singer Koos Kombuis in 1996.⁹³ Koos Kombuis formed part of an anti-apartheid musical movement called the *Voëlry* (“Free Like a Bird”) movement. The *Voëlry* movement was established during the 1980s, a revolutionary decade in South Africa for various art forms, including mass media newspapers, music, and literature. Max du Preez, founding editor of the Afrikaans weekly newspaper *Vrye Weekblad* (which ran 1988–1994), recalled that “we had no respect for authority, and we saw it as our duty to make fun of the Fathers of the Volk. We had a general fuck-you attitude, and didn’t believe the 1980s was a time for subtlety and good manners. We were labelled ‘alternative Afrikaners.’”⁹⁴ The *Voëlry* movement consisted of a loose grouping of musicians expressing an anti-establishment stance, taking specific aim at nationalist ideology and rebelling against the ruling middle- and upper-class value system.

Ons Klyntji was an expression of the movement’s aim to an alternative Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa.⁹⁵ The magazine was published haphazardly in the decade 1997–2007, with varying formats, page count, and content categories, but a consistent common focus on expressing the voice of anti-apartheid Afrikaners. From the informal style, design, cut-and-paste imagery, and varying formats it was clear that this magazine had an *avant garde* standpoint. The magazine was distributed at music and arts festivals and included prose, poetry, and opinion pieces on various

anti-apartheid, anti-establishment topics. The distribution strategy of the magazine was strategically planned to target the alternative Afrikaans audience, and the revised version of *Ons Klyntji*'s slant was satirical, rife with social and political commentary.

In 2007 *Ons Klyntji* came under new editorship, and although the focus of the magazine continued unchanged, it started to follow a consistent design, format, and content structure. As recounted on *Klyntji.com*, “its oppositional nature remained intact, albeit much more progressive in its approach. The humorous and light-hearted zine lobbied for equal rights across different races, genders and sexual orientations.”⁹⁶ It could be argued that this increasingly progressive approach was an attempt to include Afrikaans speakers of different races, and thus mimicked the evolution of South Africa as a country and its people. (In subsequent editions, for example, pieces ran asking why musicians of colour like Brasse van die Kaap and David Kramer were not included in mainstream music and art events.⁹⁷) *Ons Klyntji* distributed at the alternative music festival Oppikoppi, continuing its association with music and arts festivals. In its current pocket-sized, 144 page black and white printed format, *Ons Klyntji* is published annually and is available for sale at specific bookstores in South Africa. Current editors include Toast Coetzer, Erns Grundling, Alice Inggs, and Joe Botha, all well-known journalists, editors, and authors in both Afrikaans and English.

The target audience for *Ons Klyntji* since 1996 has been predominantly young people, who the editors celebrate for their aesthetic sensibilities: “It is ‘befok’ [“crazy cool”] that young people of today—as in the ’80s, still perceive their experience of reality via a creative stance/lens.”⁹⁸ One would assume the demographic of fans of the *Voëlwy* movement and the alternative Afrikaans culture would read *Ons Klyntji*, and it was also the younger generation that was (and is still) in search of a new identity post-apartheid.

Whereas the original and 1997–2007 editions focussed on predominantly Afrikaans, the new 2011—current editions are more inclusive of languages and themes in their content offering. The *Klyntji.com* website states that a new generation is now speaking “to a South African identity, not only about Afrikaans but making the circle bigger.”⁹⁹

Content analysis and findings

The data of the selected 21 printed editions of *Ons Klyntji* were collected and recorded in a table format. Based on the criteria of COO elements present, symbols, celebrity and authority figures, and country flags were identified across 21 issues. Language and words are the main COO markers used to express attitudes, opinions, and feelings towards the traditional/nationalistic system of values and images propagated by the previous political dispensation. A few visual and textual examples are included in the discussion that follows.

“Little magazines,” alternative presses, and new music (Alternative Afrikaans music, *Voëlry beweging*) developed together, collectively advocating the new Afrikaner’s identity through artistic expression. Literary material appears in many issues of *Ons Klyntji*, such as advertisements for events like the University of Stellenbosch’s *Woordfees* [“Words festival”] (*Ons Klyntji* 2016, 2017, 2019) and *Tuin van Digters* [“Garden of poets”] (*Ons Klyntji* 2018), or references to books by popular authors like crime novelist Deon Meyer and poet Barend J. Toerien (featured on the covers of *Ons Klyntji* 1999, 2002), together with prose and poetry published in every edition. Advertisements for the annual Oppikoppi music festival appeared regularly in *Ons Klyntji* (2016-2019), and Oppikoppi sponsored the printing of several magazine issues. Every issue included reviews of CDs or concerts, and occasionally promoted more-or-less well-known musicians (e.g. Valiant Swart, Piet Botha, Anton Goosen); Koos Kombuis, who revived *Ons Klyntji* in the 1990s, appeared on the April 2001 cover.

Since 2011, the representation of bands has been more inclusive of different styles, races, and cultures, suggesting an appeal to a more modern and broadly representative South African readership. Several interviews with new and upcoming alternative bands are featured in the magazine from 2011–2019.

Through analysing the editions and identifying specific COO elements, the following themes were identified.

The Afrikaans language as COO marker

Staying true to the original ideals of *Ons Klyntji*, the revived issues of 1997-2011 promoted the publishing of original Afrikaans content. However, the initial emphasis on standard or “pure” Afrikaans was not retained. Instead, writers’ individual interpretation of Afrikaans was encouraged. The main goal, expressed across multiple issues, was that people would continue speaking, writing, and supporting Afrikaans in all its forms:

Afrikaners really don’t have to be ashamed of who you are
or what what people think of you!¹⁰⁰

Our magazine for Afrikaans speakers/speaking people.¹⁰¹

The momentum is here, and this time the government or
the f.a.k. or whoever, not will stop/hamper the massive
stream of creativity under the young Afrikaans people.

Viva!!!¹⁰²

Resisting any sense of “pure” Afrikaans, the ironic use of words and language was creatively applied to express a point or mindset. Afrikaans was sometimes mixed with English, especially in letters from the editors, a pattern of code-switching common for the Kaapse Afrikaans coloured population and the younger generation, which could show an attempt to attract not only white speakers of Afrikaans.¹⁰³

Although the editors explicitly state that they do not participate in any language debates, and do not want to be seen as advocates for the language, they do express their awareness of the language’s sustainability.¹⁰⁴ In one of the 1999 editions, the editor distinguished two groups of Afrikaans speakers: the “paranoid group” that complains about the lot of Afrikaans and its people, and who are upset with the use of foul language or any impure version of Afrikaans (highbrow); and the “apathetic” second group, which is too busy promoting the informal culture of Afrikaans to be bothered by language debates, and includes musicians, publishers, poets, and record companies supporting these ideals (lowbrow). The editors applauded contributions from “all this people, and many others, struggled together to make Afrikaans a beautiful place, but firstly, to even make Afrikaans a place: before the first and second language movements it was never even considered that Afrikaans would become a proper dialect, and language.”¹⁰⁵

Several references were made to searching for or re-establishing a new identity for the post-apartheid Afrikaans speaker: “The Afrikaner you think you are” (1999), “Afrikaans in the new millennium” (1999), “Afrikaans for the twenty first century” (March 2006). Questions regarding what will happen to Afrikaans, whether people still write in Afrikaans, and whether it is possible to separate “Afrikaans” from “Afrikaner” were frequently asked.

One of the covers depicted an image of a Dutch-style house in the background with a barbeque in the front yard melting marshmallows, illustrating how Afrikaners are still connected to their Dutch heritage (colonialization), however, still building their own identity (symbol of barbeque/“braainleis”) in a multilingual South Africa (*Ons Klyntji* 2018).



Figure 2. *Ons Klyntji* cover illustrating Dutch heritage (2018).

One of the main reasons for the anti-establishment Afrikaner movement visible in the revived *Ons Klyntji* was due to protest against the apartheid regime and the consequences thereof. Emotive phrases like “[die wonde van Afrikaans]” (“the wounds of Afrikaans” [*Ons Klyntji* 2000]) are used, referring to Afrikaans as the nationalist party’s “official organ.”¹⁰⁶ Mock-imagery of various well-known politicians were included in the magazine, such as Louis Luyt, Piet Koornhof, state president F.W. de Klerk (from 1989–1994), and

Nelson Mandela. The editors were self-conscious of their relationship to the political history of Afrikaans: “The second language movement removed the language from the kitchen. The third language movement aimed to put the language back in the kitchen after the National Party tried to lock the kitchen and permanently place the language in a showcase in the lounge.”¹⁰⁷

Even though this progressive publication was anti-establishment and anti-apartheid, the alternative *Afrikaner* was still unsure what it meant to be part of a new “rainbow nation” (*Ons Klyntji* 1998) or where and how they would fit in, now that democracy existed in a new South Africa. The November 2016 cover featured the original 1896 *Ons Klyntji* masthead, including both a white and black baby, an inclusive symbol of the new South Africa.



Figure 3. Masthead of *Ons Klyntji*, November 2016.

One of the 1999 covers of the magazine depicted the face of the infamous nurse Daisy De Melker (who murdered her husband, among others) positioned onto the new national democratic flag, with the headline “*o, moedertaal*” [“Oh mother tongue”]—clearly asking whether there can be a place for Afrikaans language and people in democratic South Africa, while acknowledging an association with a violent past. Ironically although the “*volksmoeder*” (mother of the people) would traditionally be perceived as nurturing, the new political dispensation hints at the decline or death of Afrikaans.

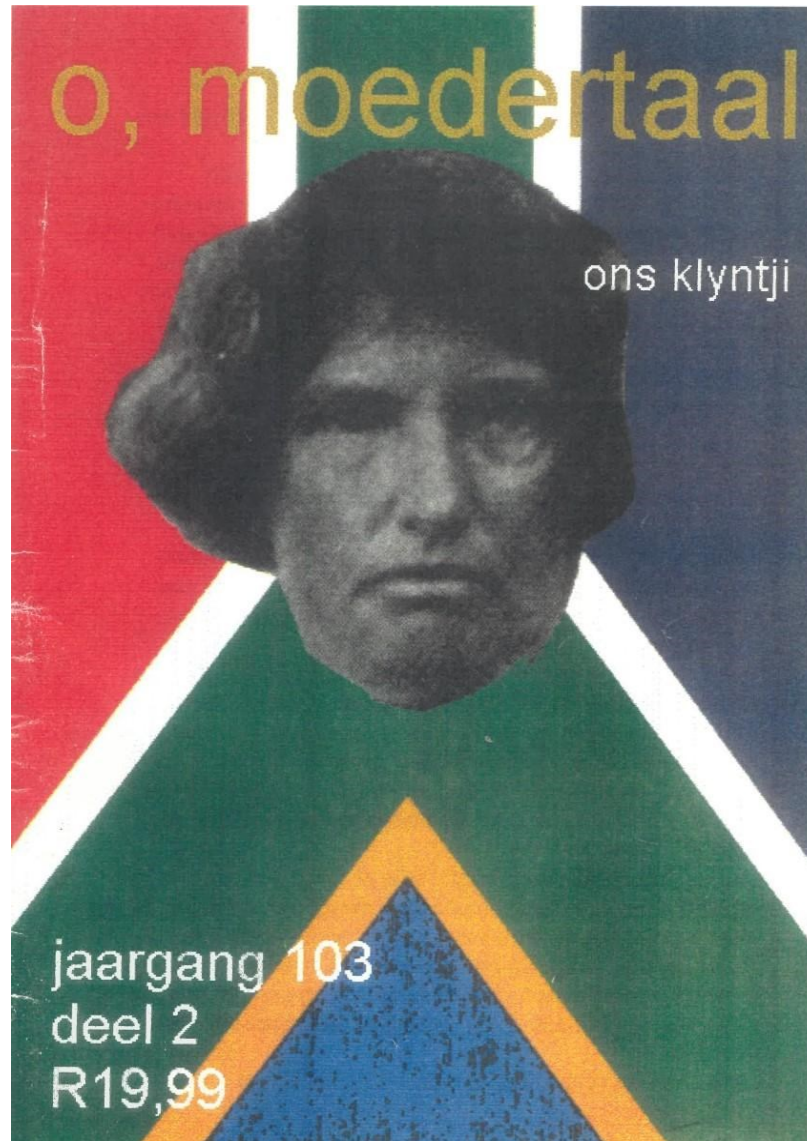


Figure 4. Flag and symbolism in *Ons Klyntji* (1999).

Another common theme in the magazine is the appearance of a stereotype of the traditional Afrikaner as a farmer (*boer*) who is passionate about sports, politics, religion, and fighting for their country. References to popular sport stars (e.g. Chester Williams, Hansie Cronje and Graeme Smith) and rugby and cricket jargon were included in various editions, though these references are not serious or sincere. Rather, humorous sports references are used to generate ideas and opinions, and to confirm the Afrikaner as a lover of sports.

The editors jokingly referred to themselves as being patriotic and transparent, declaring that “here at Ons Klyntji we are true patriots.”¹⁰⁸ Examples of the

patriotic ideals of a “real” Afrikaner man include taking up arms if need be, as illustrated on the cover of one of the 2006 edition, with the phrase “Voorwaarts Krygers!” (“March Soldiers!”). This same creed was used in an earlier edition, in an editor’s letter, and could also be referring to the South African War, which has significance for the Afrikaans males.¹⁰⁹

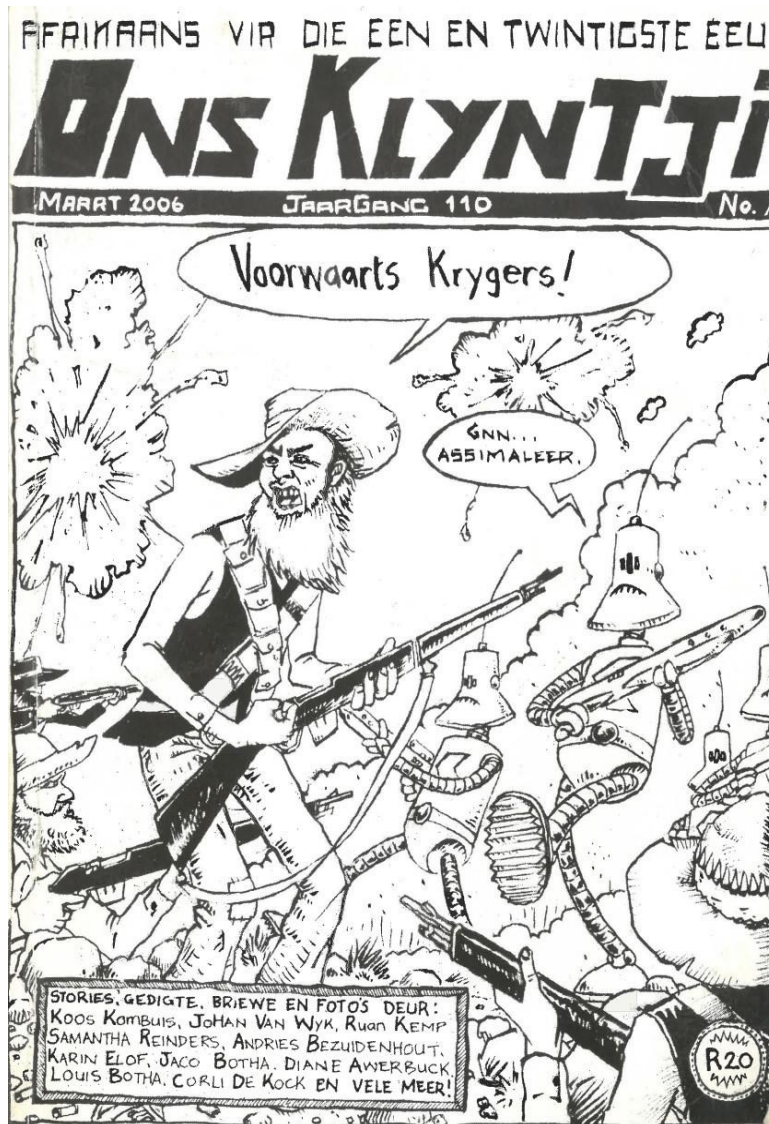


Figure 5. Symbolism of Boer patriotism (*Ons Klyntji* 2006).

An advertisement for a comic titled “Brein” [“Brain”] in the 1998 edition includes a four-frame comic visualising the end result of following government orders (see Figure 6), satirically commenting on Boer ideology.



Figure 6. "Brein" comic strip (*Ons Klyntji* 1998).

Identities: language, religion and politics

Historically, the National Party encouraged following the Christian faith, and the revived *Ons Klyntji* included many references to religion, including to pastors/preachers, church practices, prayer rituals, Bible verses (see *Ons Klyntji* 1997, 1998, 1999, March 2005, March 2006), and Christian symbols, such as a youth holding the Bible and crucifix on the November 2006 issue cover. Proving the magazine's anti-establishment ideals, published articles refer to demonic and satanic practices and the antichrist, and promote sexual promiscuity and vulgarity with the use of foul language, photography, and comic strips. None of the religious references were sincere, but function to mock the Nationalist ideology's Christian faith.

Whereas the 1997–2007 issues of *Ons Klyntji* were more aggressive in their cause, with a strong post-modernist approach, the later issues (2011–2019) reflected a more generic, inclusive platform, where the youth could express their making sense of a broken world via various forms of art, including writing, photography, and artwork. Potentially this is also a reflection of South African society, where a decade after the adoption of democracy, people are more comfortable with their own identities and with a multicultural society, and could even be an indication of metamodernism:

The discourse surrounding metamodernism engages with the resurgence of sincerity, hope, romanticism, affect, and the potential for grand narratives and universal truths, whilst not forfeiting all that we've learnt from postmodernism.¹¹⁰

Editors embrace the idea of being South African, rather than an Afrikaner *per se*: “Jy is Afrikaans, you are English, you are Setswana, you are all the languages of the world you can't speak yet. Go forth and be meaningful”¹¹¹; “we believe this little book celebrates something about South Africa, and Africa, and the people who make it special—like you.”¹¹²

In summary, symbols, popular figures, country flags, stereotypes, and most significantly words and language were used as COO markers to communicate a young generation's social angst and search for new identity in a post-apartheid South. Through prose, poetry, music and book reviews, *Ons Klyntji* expressed their ideals, questions, and dreams, all in a humorous and satirical tone that re-affirmed their anti-apartheid ideals. Frequent references to Boers, Afrikaners, and related questions about identity were included in the 1997–2011 editions of the magazine, along with recurring engagement with issues of religion, politics, and language, without reaching a definitive conclusion about identity—the conclusion remains that “A typical Afrikaner does not exist.”¹¹³ The more recent editions of *Ons Klyntji* (2011-current) have evolved into a more inclusive platform for fellow South Africans, and reflected a more representative young South African culture.

Conclusion

The Afrikaans language and Afrikaners have struggled through various stages of development, separately and together. Colonial, political, and various socio-economic factors influenced the character, sustainability, and

expression of the language. Due to its association with apartheid, Afrikaans enjoyed a privileged position and was used as an instrument of power, oppression, and influence during a certain period.¹¹⁴ The institution of democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought a turn to inclusivity amongst the multilingual and multicultural peoples of South Africa, celebrated as a new “rainbow nation.” Although Afrikaans lost many of its privileges, the consumption and use of Afrikaans products and art forms were still supported. With change also came the need for redefinition of who and what the “Afrikaner” is post-apartheid. It was unsure what the end of Nationalist rule would mean for the Afrikaans language and the culture associated with it, and various forms of artistic expression (music, art and literature) have been used to explore these questions.

Ons Klyntji was initially (1896–1905) established to promote the use of Afrikaans and to improve the image of the Afrikaner. The editor wanted to move away from international influence and establish the Afrikaans language and its people as a *volk* on its own, with a unique identity and culture. The revived iteration of *Ons Klyntji* (1996–2019) was instrumental in providing a voice for those who required a new identity. After analysing 21 issues of *Ons Klyntji* based on Aichner’s COO elements, it is evident that language and symbolism was used in satirical and creative commentary on themes including politics, religion, and the character of “highbrow” Afrikaans, and establish this magazine as an Afrikaans sub-culture mouthpiece. While an in-depth analysis of all visual causes was beyond the scope of this article, *Ons Klyntji* certainly offers opportunity for future research.

Since *Ons Klyntji*’s origins, different language movements like the first and second language movement, the *Sestigers*, and the *Tagtigers* have all facilitated social change, complex influences which resulted in resistance, expression, and highly creative literature and music in an evolving Afrikaner culture. Today, *Ons Klyntji* does not further a political cause or promote the exclusive use of Afrikaans, but reflects the democratic rainbow culture of an ever-evolving South African youth. This study’s discussion of Afrikaner identity and *Ons Klyntji* magazine focused on the context of South Africa, but while boycotts and sanctions against South Africa had an isolating effect during the apartheid years, one could ask whether Afrikaans, its associations, and its culture have stayed exclusively within South African borders.

Anthropologists have increasingly noted that immigrants live their lives across borders, and maintain their ties to home even when their countries of origin and settlement are geographically distant. To describe this new way of life, some social scientists have begun to use the term “transnational.”¹¹⁵ Like several other South African languages, “Afrikaans is a cross-border language spanning sizable communities of speakers in Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. In South Africa Afrikaans is spoken across all social indices, by the poor and the rich, by rural and urban people, by the undereducated and the educated.”¹¹⁶ Although our analysis of *Ons Klyntji* took place largely within a national context, the language by nature is transnational, with a variety of influences, and the identity of the Afrikaner, which *Ons Klyntji* tries to represent, is complex.

The construction of language as “an international language”, or “a tribal language”, or “a language of love”, or “a language of the oppressor”, has little to do with the language itself. It says more about the social environment where language serves as a metaphor for a variety of ideas, images, aspirations, emotions, orientations, and economic, political and social power.¹¹⁷

Ons Klyntji follows the history of Afrikaans and its complexities, and today aims to reach anyone who might identify as an Afrikaner, whether in South Africa, across borders, white or brown, speaking standard or non-standard Afrikaans.

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Notes

¹ Hermann Giliomee, “The Rise and Possible Demise of Afrikaans as Public Language,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10, no. 1 (2004): 25.

² J.C. Steyn, *Ons Gaan 'n Taal Maak: Afrikaans Sedert Die Patriot-Jare* (Pretoria: Kraal Uitgewers, 2014), 39.

³ “About,” Klyntji.com, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://klyntji.com/about>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Hermann Giliomee, “The Rise and Possible Demise of Afrikaans as Public Language”; J.C. Steyn, *Ons Gaan 'n Taal Maak: Afrikaans Sedert Die Patriot-Jare*; H.P. van Coller, *Perspektief en profiel: 'n Afrikaanse literatuurgeskiedenis*; C.F.J. Muller, *Sonop in die Suid: geboorte en groei van die Nasionale Pers 1915-1948*; and Abel Coetzee, *Die verhaalskat van Ons Klyntji (1896-1905)*.

⁶ C.S. van der Waal, “Creolisation and Purity: Afrikaans Language Politics in Post-Apartheid Times,” *African Studies* 71, no. 3 (2012): 447.

⁷ Thomas Aichner, “Country-of-Origin Marketing: A List of Typical Strategies with Examples,” *Journal of Brand Management* 21 (2014): 81–93.

⁸ Jos Hornikx et al., “How Brands Highlight Country of Origin in Magazine Advertising: A Content Analysis,” *Journal of Global Marketing* 33, no. 1 (2020): 37.

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- ⁸⁵ Abel Coetzee, *Die verhaalskat van Ons Klyntji (1896-1905)* (Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers, 1940).
- ⁸⁶ [All translations of quotations from *Ons Klyntji* are provided by the authors.] “[“Ons Klyntji moet tiintalle leer om goed te skrywe. Daarom sal ons op taal en styl net so goed gelet worde as op di inhoud.”” Du Toit, “Editorial,” March 1896, 1–2.
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