

Afrikaans stories of Jackal and Hyena: Oral and written traditions

Jacomien van Niekerk

Jacomien van Niekerk is a lecturer in the Department of Afrikaans at the University of Pretoria.

Email: jacomien.vanniekerk@up.ac.za

Afrikaans stories of Jackal and Hyena: Oral and written traditions

This paper scrutinizes two wild relatives of dogs, namely jackals and hyenas, who feature prominently in Afrikaans children's literature by way of African oral tradition, specifically Khoi oral literature. The stories of *Jakkals* (Jackal) and *Wolf* (Hyena) illustrate the ways in which Khoi orature found its way into Afrikaans (children's) literature in a gradual process culminating in appropriation. The paper shows how Afrikaans literary scholars charted this process and what mechanisms they employed to diminish the role played by the original Khoi storytellers—a denial of the context in which the stories were created that persists until today. Apart from reference to a separate oral tradition of Jackal and Hyena stories that developed amongst white Afrikaans speakers, the specific focus of the paper is on the Afrikaans animal tales published by G. R. von Wielligh since all later publications by other authors draw on the Von Wielligh stories to an extent. The paper concludes with suggestions for further research that departs from outmoded approaches to African oral literature. **Keywords:** African oral literature; Afrikaans children's literature; authorship; jackals and hyenas.

Introduction

This paper scrutinizes two wild relatives of dogs, namely jackals and hyenas, who feature prominently in Afrikaans children's literature by way of African oral tradition, specifically Khoi (or Khoikhoin, or Khoekhoe) oral literature. The popular and ubiquitous *Jakkals en Wolf* (Jackal and Hyena) stories are exemplary of the ways in which African oral literature has been transposed to Afrikaans (children's) literature with varying degrees of appropriation, acknowledgement and denial taking place. I am not primarily interested in the jackals and hyenas as animals, although I touch on their visual representation in children's books, an aspect that inevitably has some relation to their nature and way of being in the wild.

In the nineteenth century, the Afrikaans writer and surveyor Gideon Retief von Wielligh collected a number of animal tales told to him by Khoi informants. These were published early in the twentieth century. Many of the stories in this collection feature *Jakkals* and *Wolf*: the jackal is the trickster who dupes the gullible hyena. Just as the leopard is called *tier* (tiger) in old Afrikaans texts, so the hyena is a “wolf.”¹ The illustrations of the early Von Wielligh texts clearly show a spotted hyena. Later in the twentieth century, these *Jakkals en Wolf* stories had reincarnations in various Afrikaans children’s books; in these versions, the original context of Khoi oral literature has mostly become obscured and there is a clear notion that these stories are part of Afrikaans children’s literature. This notion is confirmed by their simultaneous existence within an oral tradition among white Afrikaans speakers. The question of whether *Wolf* is a hyena or a wolf is also unclear in the later versions, pointing to a removal from the original context of the stories.

Less attention has been paid to Khoi orality than to the much-researched San oral culture (Wittenberg, “The boer and the jackal: satire and resistance in Khoi orature” 593). This paper highlights Von Wielligh’s contribution in this regard much as Helize van Vuuren (4, 72–4) has compared his *Boesmanstories* (Bushmen tales) from 1919/1920 with the far more famous /Xam tales recorded by Wilhelm Bleek in *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore*, published in 1911.

African oral literature is always in the first place something that is performed, “literature delivered by word of mouth before an audience” (Okpewho 70). The ways in which researchers transcribed and then published collections of tales in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often involved shortening narratives by removing repetitions (Okpewho 71), deleting songs (Finnegan 374) and obscuring the original performance element. The names of storytellers were most often omitted.² Despite many or all these practices being present in the process of transposing African oral literature to Afrikaans written literature, the hybrid convergence of orality and written text enriched Afrikaans literature in many instances, as Hein Willems (70) argues with regard to the San tales made famous as *Dwaalstories* (first published in 1927) by Eugène Marais. This paper will evaluate the older and newer incarnations of the Khoi animal tales in Afrikaans within the context of this convergence.

The texts that feature in my analysis are sometimes denoted as “fables” by authors such as Bleek, or “folktales”. The first term points towards the desire to classify African oral prose narratives according to existing categories (Finnegan 318); because of the similarities to Aesop, many animal tales were classified as “fables.” The second term points towards conceptions of African oral literature as being passed down from the distant past, so that in collections “the aspect of individual originality and authorship could be played down” (Finnegan 310). Since “[t]he hidden implications of the term ‘folktale’ lead one astray at the outset”, Ruth Finnegan finds there is “good reason for giving up this otherwise quite useful

word” (310). The author on whom I focus most, G. R. von Wielligh, called his collections “stories”, and I have also chosen to use that term, or alternatively “tales”, or Finnegan’s longer formulation, “oral prose narratives”.

Firstly, I describe the known transcription and compilation of Khoi tales of Jackal and Hyena by Wilhelm Bleek, Leonard Schultze and G. R. von Wielligh and others. The place of Khoi orality in (Afrikaans) literary criticism is traced. I then explore the afterlives of Von Wielligh’s collection in Afrikaans children’s books, and lastly, I briefly explore alternative ways of studying the *Jakkals en Wolf* stories in future.

Khoi tales featuring Jackal and Hyena

Wilhelm Bleek’s collection of Khoi animal tales, *Reynard the Fox in South Africa: Hottentot Fables and Tales* from 1864 is a “major source of Khoi literature” (Wittenberg, “Notes towards a history of Khoi literature” 6). In trying to trace the corpus of Khoi literature, Wittenberg (“Notes” 7) states that *Reynard the Fox* is “[s]o singular [...] that other published instances of Khoi voice have had to rely on [Bleek’s] pioneering book”. The examples he gives range from extracts in Schapera’s *The Khoisan People of South Africa* to L. F. Maingard’s *Korana Folktales* from 1962. Wittenberg does not take cognisance, however, of the ways in which Khoi voices also speak from the pages of Afrikaans texts such as those of G. R. von Wielligh.

The title of Bleek’s collection implicitly establishes a link between the Khoi stories and the well-known figure of the trickster Reynard from Medieval French, German, English and Dutch literature, with probably even older oral origins. There are similarities for instance with content of the Latin *Ecbasis Captivi* from the 10th century. Reynard the fox as character first appears in the Latin epic *Ysengrimus* around 1150. In French there is *Le Roman de Renart* from 1170, the German *Reinhard Fuchs* in 1180, and the Middle-Dutch *Vanden Vos Reynaerde* in the middle of the 13th century (see Stander and Bosman). Finally, Chaucer used Reynard material in the *Canterbury tales* and the Middle-Dutch text was translated into English as *The Historie of Reynart the Foxe* in 1481. The title of Bleek’s collection is an abbreviated way of explaining that the stories exhibit similarities with the European stories in which Reynard is the wily trickster. Readers can thus expect animal stories in which some animals are the tricksters and others are the dupes. Bleek is assuming that his nineteenth century readers are familiar with Reynard and never dwells on the Reynard phenomenon in the introduction itself.

The oral sources of the stories in this collection were Khoi informants. Sometimes the language of original collection is specified as Damara or Nama. Notably, Bleek did not collect these tales himself, but edited and collated material provided to him by the English explorer Sir James E. Alexander (*Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa*), and the German missionaries Reverend G. Krönlein

and Reverend J. Rath, and Mr H. C. Knudsen. This differs substantially from his method in *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore*. The very first section in Bleek's collection, "Jackal Fables", consists of thirteen tales in which Jackal features in some way, most frequently as the trickster. The Hyena is present in six of the tales. Regarding the collection as a whole, Wittenberg finds that,

despite the significance [...] of the *Reynard* volume as a valuable and unique record of Khoi oral tradition, Bleek's approach to indigenous orature is however also emblematic of the "processes of exclusion, occlusion and effacement that have occurred in the construction of the cultural history of this country", as Duncan Brown has put it [...]. Bleek [...] suppressed the erotic and sexually explicit aspects of indigenous narration, trapping Khoi orature in an immature cultural space that could not admit any adult, mature content. ("Notes" 8)

The stories in *Reynard the Fox* are certainly extremely short in most cases and could be seen to be synopses rather than transcriptions. The work of Leonard Schultze stands in stark contrast to that of Bleek. From 1903 to 1905, Schultze collected "67 tales [...] during extended field trips in the Northern Cape and southern Namibia. While his scientific work became entangled with and tainted by his involvement in imperial Germany's notorious Herero and Nama wars of extermination [...] his fluency in Nama, and his exacting fieldwork methodology of transcription produced a qualitatively different body of narratives" (Wittenberg, "Boer" 597). *Aus Namaland und Kalahari* was published in 1907. Wittenberg writes that Schultze himself was dismissive of Bleek's Victorian sanitised tales, divorced from the original storytelling setting (Wittenberg, "Boer" 597). Regarding content, "Maingard's three Khoi stories and at least a third of Bleek's 42 'fables' have a close correlate in the Schultze corpus" (Wittenberg, "Notes" 11).³

Around the turn of the century, several animal tales from the Khoi and San appeared in the well-known magazine of the first Afrikaans language movement, *Ons Klyntji*, submitted by G. R. von Wielligh, M. H. Naser, and the well-known editor of *Ons Klyntji*, language activist and later published author S. J. du Toit, among others. In 1907 Von Wielligh was the first to publish his Khoi animal tales as a book as *Dire storiis, soos deur di Hottentots ferteld. Bymakaar gemaak deur G. R. von Wielligh* (Animal tales told by the Hottentots, collected by G. R. von Wielligh). Between 1917 and 1922 this collection was substantially expanded and published in four volumes that are still in print today. These later editions reflect the changes in Afrikaans spelling and orthography so that *Dire storiis* eventually becomes *Diere stories* and then *Dierestories*. The pejorative "Hottentot" (used for Khoi people just as "Bushman" referred to a San person) changed to "Hotnots" in the 1917 edition. The original subtitle that limits Von Wielligh's role to that of collector and editor was later dropped, and the subtitle that describes the Khoi as the original narrators of the stories was not retained in the 2008 edition. *Jakkals*

and *Wolf* are not the only characters in these stories, but they enjoy a position of prominence throughout all four volumes.

The fact that Jackal and Hyena “steal the show” is demonstrated by the fact that Von Wielligh’s collections were followed by others in which Jackal is often or exclusively the trickster: the Vaughns’ *Ou Hendrik z’n stories* (Old Hendrik’s stories) in 1910; J. M. Friedenthal’s *Ondank is die wêreld se loon* (Ingratitude is the world’s punishment) and *Nukkebol Reinaerd* (Pesky Reinaerd) in 1931 and 1936 and C. J. Grové’s *Jakkals se strooptogte* (Jackal’s forays) in 1932. All of these publications display similarities with Bleek’s collection and/or that of Von Wielligh. The providence of the Vaughns’ tales is not clear; Friedenthal creates an imaginary “slave”, Arnolus, who is the creator of the stories, and Grové stated that his tales were not the product of an imaginary person, but of a “real outa Abram” (a black labourer called Abram) who lived on his childhood farm for many years (Nienaber and Nienaber 12).

Of all these texts, only Von Wielligh provides contextualising remarks about the providence and nature of the tales. In the 1917 foreword to his *Dire Storiis, soos deur Hotnots fertel*, Von Wielligh starts by describing the Khoi as the original “owners and *base* [bosses]” of South Africa, though they had become disenfranchised by the twentieth century. He then proceeds, however, to criticize them for being so uncivilized that they did not leave behind a written record of their history. But, he writes, with regard to their folklore the situation is different since “fables and stories” are told around the fireside at night. Von Wielligh then describes how he listened to many tales told in this setting, with a preference for older narrators (2). In 1870, Von Wielligh encountered indigenous storytellers on an extended journey through Namaqualand and neighbouring areas with his father. Then, from 1880 to 1883 he worked as a surveyor in the Calvinia district of South Africa; during his sojourns he recorded stories from both San and Khoi storytellers (Lombard 273).

Von Wielligh’s preface is followed by an exposition of “Hoe die Hotnots stories vertel” (How the Hottentots tell stories). This was changed to “How the Khoi-Khoi tell stories” in the 2008 edition. Von Wielligh sketches the situation where an elderly Khoi man working on the farm of white people is the storyteller to the white children. In the day during the performance of shared tasks, or at night, before the children’s bedtime, the “outa” (a pejorative term for a black man) entertains the children from his treasure trove of stories. This is encouraged by the children’s own grandfather who sees the value in their imagination being stimulated (10). The entire section is told from the perspective of the white children (but with the adult author clearly audible). The storytelling is argued to be mutually beneficial: “If it is a source of pleasure for us to listen to the thrilling events, it gives even more joy in the heart of the old goat herder, who must monotonously spend his days in the *veld* with the livestock. He finds pleasure in this, too, that no

earthly treasures can provide” (12, my translation). Von Wielligh praises the abilities of the Khoi man, saying that no-one can tell a story as well as he (9); he ends this piece by lamenting the scarcity of these kinds of gifted storytellers and asks whether such narrators will still exist a hundred years from the time of writing (12). This recalls many similar utterances made by Western collectors of folklore over the years, who strongly felt that without their efforts the oral traditions they were transcribing were in imminent danger of dying out. There is some tension, in other words, between Von Wielligh’s praise of the Khoi man and his paternalistic efforts to demonstrate that the underpaid, isolated labourer is made happy by being at the imaginative disposal of other people’s children. His belief that his own endeavours are vital for the preservation of the Khoi oral tradition does not seem to account for the fact that white people such as himself were in the first place responsible for the systematic eradication of the Khoi.

The situation sketched by Von Wielligh, in which white Afrikaans children grew up on farms and were introduced to African oral literature by way of black labourers is one that was common in South Africa, arguably until more than half-way into the twentieth century. The gradual rise of apartheid ideology after 1948 eventually discouraged such close interaction between white and black people.

The foreword of the 1926 edition of Part One comments on the transcription of the oral Khoi tales. Von Wielligh states that it is “popular” to insert the “Hot-tentot narrator” into the story and to then regularly interrupt him with questions in the course of the narrative (6). This can be seen, for instance, in the Vaughns’ *Ou Hendrik z’n stories*, where the stories are set within the frame of the children’s interaction with the labourer Hendrik. Such an approach arguably demonstrates the embeddedness of the oral prose narrative in a context of oral performance. However, Von Wielligh explains that he chose not to follow this method because it would have taken up too much space. He decided, rather, to write down the stories “just like *outa* told them”—but “with better use of language, omission of repetitions and improper expressions, and having fully omitted stories that exceed the boundaries of propriety” (Von Wielligh 6, my translation). Clearly, in Von Wielligh’s versions, the traces of different storytellers were erased, sanitisation of the stories took place, and we will never know how many different kinds of repetition and parallelism were deleted or what constituted “better language use” for Von Wielligh.

Oral tales: authorship and scholarship

Despite being framed as children’s literature from the start, Von Wielligh’s methods place his collection within the same context as those of Bleek and Schultze as described above.⁴ Within such a context of scientific enquiry and anthropological exploration, it was of utmost importance that the Khoi are the authors of the oral

tales in the various collections. These collections would then stand next to other collections of orature from other “ethnic groups”, such as Von Wielligh’s own collection of Swazi stories published as *Langs die Lebombo* in 1923. The performance situation sketched by Von Wielligh and the Khoi authorship of the Jackal and Hyena tales was initially not seriously questioned in Afrikaans criticism, though Bleek had already raised questions about authorship and

[...] the originality of these Fables. Whether they are indeed the real offspring of the desert, and can be considered as indigenous Native literature, or whether they have been either purloined from the superior white race, or at least brought into existence by the stimulus which contact with the latter gave to the Native mind [...] may be matters of dispute for some time to come. (xii-xiii)

Despite this wariness, in his introduction Bleek also states that while he believes certain stories to be of European origin, “[o]ther, however, have strong claims to be regarded not merely as products of the Hottentot mind, but even as portions of a traditional Native literature, anterior in its origin to the advent of Europeans (Bleek xxiv). The dispute foreshadowed by Bleek took place in Afrikaans literary circles in the 1940s and onwards as scholars with Afrikaner nationalist sentiments such as Abel Coetzee felt the need to deny “contamination” of the Afrikaans heritage they were in the process of describing. Coetzee casts doubt on Von Wielligh’s assertion that the origin of animal tales in Afrikaans lies with the Khoi and San. He insists that the origin of the Afrikaans animal tale is European—and that this European-ness assures its value (Willemse 64).⁵

In *Die Afrikaanse dierverhaal. Die dier-tema in die Afrikaanse prosaletterkunde*, a theoretical exposition and anthology sketching the modest phenomenon of “The animal tale in Afrikaans” published in 1962, the authors (brothers P. J. Nienaber and G. S. Nienaber) are faced with a dilemma on what should be included. At one stage, they question whether the tales recorded by Von Wielligh and others from the San and Khoi can be properly reckoned as belonging to “Afrikaans literature”—are they not mere translations? (Nienaber and Nienaber 10). However, perhaps because this approach would decimate their already small corpus, they then proceed to argue that because these stories were told to Afrikaans authors in Afrikaans (because Afrikaans was the *lingua franca* of the Khoi) they *should* be recognised as Afrikaans literature (12). They conclude their argument by stating that research has “conclusively proven that the Khoi animal tales are of Germanic origin” (11, own translation).

The research the Nienabers and Coetzee before them are referring to rests on the thesis that European tales travelled to Africa and were retold and reshaped by the indigenous storytellers. Other guardians of Afrikaans culture such as Eitemal and F. I. J. van Rensburg confidently sketch the route by which European tales were heard and adopted by indigenous storytellers, to be then told to Afrikaans children in the nursery (qtd. in Stander and Bosman).⁶ Some South African

scholars went so far as to declare indebtedness to indigenous storytellers, such as F. Th. Schonken who states in 1911 that the *medewerking* (co-operation) of these storytellers was essential for the preservation of “Germanic content” (qtd. in Grobbelaar 522).

It is particularly the presence of the Jackal in these tales that activates the debate about “originality” or authenticity, since the Jackal is not a pan-African trickster such as the hare or the tortoise. The hyena is also not usually the dupe; it is the pan-African unsuccessful trickster (Canonici 91). Earlier scholars were subsumed with the question of where the Jackal in these tales “came from”. Apart from the theories involving Reynard the Fox, Bleek refers to the so-called Hamitic hypothesis, “in which the jackal was the typical trickster among the so-called ‘Hamites’ (supposed to cover Hottentots as well as certain North Africans)”, but this theory was eventually disproven “and the significance of the jackal in the north may have been exaggerated to fit the theory” (Finnegan 336). With specific reference to Afrikaans *Jakkals en Wolf* stories, researchers like Stander and Bosman regard the influence of the Middle-Dutch *Vanden Vos Reynaerde* in which Reinaert, the jackal, cruelly tricks Isengrijn, the wolf (amongst other animals), to have been particularly strong, even definitive. Stander and Bosman do concede that there are few similarities between Von Wielligh and *Vanden Vos Reynaerde*.

Theories about “origin” or “influence” can be broadly placed within the framework of the diffusionist approaches of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that have been “most specifically expressed in the Scandinavian or ‘historical-geographical’ school of folklore, which for much of [the twentieth century] has been trying to discover the ‘life history’ of stories of various kinds, by means of systematic classification and an elaborate indexing of comparative references” (Finnegan 41). Particularly prominent are Stith Thompson’s *Motif-index of Folk-literature* from 1955 and *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* by Thompson and Antti Aarne (second, revised edition published in 1973).

In the time of Afrikaans nationalism, diffusion was seized on by Afrikaans critics to diminish the “Africanness” of stories that came to Afrikaans via the Khoi, San and Bantu people of southern Africa. Abel Coetzee (34), for instance, points out that the tale in which King Lion is ill and Jackal suggests that only Hyena’s skin will cure him (“The Lion’s illness” in Bleek 19–20 and “Leeu se kind is siek” in Von Wielligh 31–4) is very similar to a story in the *Ecbasis Captivi* from the tenth century. In 1944, S. C. Hattingh published his influential *Sprokiesvorsing*, in which he, somewhat in the manner of the Scandinavian diffusionists, endeavoured to demonstrate the existence of “fairy tale cycles” to which certain Afrikaans stories belong. Hattingh and later researchers who continued his methods employed diffusionist theories as an ideological tool. If they could indicate that a particular set of motifs or an entire story originated in India or Europe, that shows that little of value developed on the African continent and nothing was truly “borrowed”

from Africa—a treasury of prose narratives was properly “inherited” from Europe (Willemse 64).

One of the collectors of Khoi stories of Jackal and Hyena, S. J. du Toit, realised how little of value is added to the enterprise of recording and studying oral literature by asking diffusionist questions. When he was told that the stories he was publishing originated in Europe, he stated in an 1897 edition of the magazine that he was well aware of it but that his interest lay in preserving the particular forms these stories took among the Khoi: “Myn doel is juis om te bewaar hoe ons oue Hotnots di storiis fertel” (Coetzee 34–5).⁷ Du Toit can thus be said to have been interested in the particularities of oral performance to which I briefly allude below.

It is interesting to note the procédé of one of the most prolific contributors to the store of Khoi oral literature, the famous German folklorist, Sigrig Schmidt. She has done extensive fieldwork in Namibia, collecting stories from Nama and Damara respondents since the 1960s. Her collections are firmly rooted in a diffusionist approach, with a great deal of attention paid to identifying Aarne-Thompson motifs and otherwise classifying the stories according to European models.

Theories on African oral literature, particularly those of the San and Khoi, were also suffused by evolutionist approaches (Finnegan 38) to oral literature. Bleek places the Khoi on a higher level of Darwinian development than “any of the black races from Africa” (xiv), and also has the theory that animal tales would be rare or non-existent among Bantu people because their language does not denote sex (Bleek xx–xi).⁸ Afrikaans scholars like Grobbelaar (501–6) argue, on the other hand, that the San (Bushmen) are on the very lowest rung of the human species, followed by the Khoi and then the Bantu groups. The function of these remarks seems to be to provide motivation for the virulent distancing from these indigenuous sources that takes place when they turn to diffusion as discussed above.

Jackal and Hyena after Von Wielligh

Pieter W. Grobbelaar’s doctoral thesis from 1981 on Afrikaans folklore is a long, encyclopaedic study that rests on both diffusion and evolutionism. It does, however, record valuable information about the formal publication of Afrikaans stories as well as oral recollections of several Afrikaans authors and thinkers. From these examples it emerges that the circumstances in which Von Wielligh heard animal tales as a child persisted well into the twentieth century, i.e. stories that were told to white children by indigenous people working for a white family (517–23). However, Grobbelaar’s research shows that “Jakkals en Wolf” stories were also told by Afrikaans grandfathers to their Afrikaans grandchildren—for instance, the poet W. E. G. Louw (Grobbelaar 521), signalling the transfer of these animal tales into the collective storybank of white Afrikaners.

How entrenched they became is evident from the example of T. O. Honiball. In 1940 Honiball was approached by Truida Pohl (later the wife of the famous poet N. P. van Wyk Louw) to create a comic strip for children for *Die Jongspan* (The Young Ones) a supplement for children to the famous *Huisgenoot* periodical. The strip was eventually published for several decades, from 1942 to 1986. Pohl suggested that Honiball use *Jakkals* and *Wolf* as characters for the comic strip, because Afrikaans children *were so familiar with these characters* (Verster and Burden 181, my translation and my emphasis). Apparently, the very first comic strips were based on stories told to Honiball by his nanny, but quickly he created his own cartoon stories based on the premise of the jackal as trickster and the wolf as the dupe (Verster and Burden 184). Honiball's animals are a European jackal or fox and a European wolf. Apparently, Honiball was not familiar with the published versions of Von Wielligh's *Diere stories* in which the illustrations clearly show *Wolf* to be a brown or spotted hyena. Despite originally drawing from stories told to him by an African narrator as mentioned above, Honiball also seems to have had no awareness of the Khoi origin of *Jakkals en Wolf*. What remained was the phrase "Jakkals en Wolf" and the basic premise.

In other words, the trope of Jackal and Hyena became so well established in the realm of Afrikaans children's literature that parents and grandparents freely created their own "Jakkals en Wolf" stories at bedtime, and authors like Honiball also freely created their own stories.

In the 1980s, Ans Niehaus, wrote a series of "Wolf en Jakkals" stories that were then recorded on LPs by her husband, Dana Niehaus, who subsequently received most of the credit for the popular recordings in which he addresses an audience of small children. The recordings were re-issued in 2011 by the artist's son, Danie Niehaus, a popular Afrikaans singer. The artwork on the CD shows a European fox and wolf such as with Honiball, even though at least 50% of the content of the Niehaus recordings shows similarities with the Von Wielligh *Dierestories*, though Von Wielligh and the Khoi are never mentioned. The same is the case with regard to the illustrations of the 1988 *Jakkals en Wolf in Namakwaland* (Jackal and Wolf in Namaqualand) by Glaudien Kotzé whose stories are mostly original in content but are not wholly free of traces of Von Wielligh. As recently as 2016, the author Wendy Maartens has published slim volumes of retellings of Von Wielligh for young readers where the illustrations also show a European wolf.

A plausible explanation for the transformation of the hyena into a wolf is the fact that Afrikaans readers (like T. O. Honiball) also grew up with European fairy tales such as those of Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimm Brothers. Moreover, most readers did not belong to the small community of speakers who persisted in referring to the leopard as a *tier* (tiger) and a hyena as a wolf (Raidt 182). Consequently, the word "wolf" conjured up images of a European wolf in

European fairy tales. This explanation does not account, however, for the fact that the content of the stories often amounts to plagiarism of Von Wielligh.

Von Wielligh's *Dierestories* were republished in 2008 by Protea Boekhuis. The original four volumes have been retained though the spelling was modernised, and certain archaic words have been replaced or explained. The original section on how the Khoi tell stories was kept as mentioned above, but no contemporary introductory remarks were written to contextualise the stories apart from the recognition of the Khoi (and San) on the book flaps. The books were beautifully printed in colour on glossy paper and the illustrations by Dale Blankenaer are nothing if not distinct. However, they show a European fox and wolf (though even this is difficult to ascertain) in a thoroughly anthropomorphised way; almost no illustration is set in nature, even when the events in the story explicitly refer to nature. The illustrations are especially confusing since there is more than one etiological story in the volumes where the hyena's appearance is explained.

Apart from his academic endeavours, Pieter W. Grobbelaar has been a prolific compiler of Afrikaans folklore for six decades. In his collection of the "best Afrikaans fairy tales" (*Die mooiste Afrikaanse sprokies*) that was first published in 1968 and republished as recently as 2003, Grobbelaar reworks many of Von Wielligh's tales (without mentioning Von Wielligh), rather bizarrely classifying some as "Hottentot stories", others as "Bushman stories", still others as "Coloured" (*bruin*) stories. In this volume, Grobbelaar was preoccupied with classification and a degree of diffusionism.

Von Wielligh is also not mentioned in the preface to the 2011 collection titled *Jakkals en Wolf* by Grobbelaar—though the illustrations feature a spotted hyena. Despite the title of the collection, these stories, which include many retellings of Von Wielligh, are not limited to the Jackal and Hyena stories. In the preface, Grobbelaar refers to the "ever-beloved" status of the Jakkals and Wolf stories, and then proceeds to point out the "long, long history" of the stories, naming one text: the Middle-Dutch *Van den Vos Reynaerde*. Grobbelaar now seems less interested in classification and even diffusionism, apart from attempting to make a seamless leap back to Reynard the Fox, completely omitting any reference to the Khoi storytellers.

Leon Rousseau thoroughly acknowledges Von Wielligh in the epilogue to his 2009 publication: *Die kaskenades van Jakkals en Wolf. Oorvertel en bygewerk deur Leon Rousseau* (The antics of Jackal and Hyena. Retold and expanded by Leon Rousseau). He states that his publication involves retellings of Von Wielligh's tales, with the exception of one original story by himself in which Wolf triumphs and Jackal is punished (Rousseau 90–100). Regrettably, Rousseau underplays the original context of Von Wielligh's collection; he uses the anachronistic pejorative "Hottentot" and never uses the word Khoi. In speculating about the possible "origin" of the tales, Rousseau effectively denies originality or authorship to the

Khoi. He quotes S. C. Hattingh's *Sprokiesvorsing* (Rousseau 102), thereby once again reverting to theories of diffusion in order to diminish the African nature of the stories and eradicating the performance context in which Von Wielligh's stories were first heard. He also posits his own theory of diffusion, namely that there are greater similarities between Von Wielligh and *Uncle Remus* by Joel Chandler Harris dating from 1881 than between Von Wielligh and European fairy tales. He speculates that Uncle Remus had been read in the Cape of Good Hope because of a thriving interest in the American South (103) and that the stories travelled inland and to Namibia from there.

Furthermore, despite dwelling on the matter of the "wolf" / "hyena" and referring explicitly to the illustrations of Von Wielligh's *Diere stories*, Rousseau still elected for the illustrator to draw "Wolf" as a European wolf for his 2009 publication. He wonders whether the decision to draw a spotted hyena was not "overly literal" and states that as a "fantasy character", the Wolf could also have contained characteristics of the brown hyena and the European wolf "for the storytellers". It is not clear which "storytellers" Rousseau has in mind here (Rousseau 103, my translations).

Potential new approaches to *Jakkals en Wolf*

It is interesting to note that from all the trickster animal tales in southern Africa, it was the stories about jackals and hyenas, *Jakkals en Wolf*, that became deeply entrenched in the white Afrikaans consciousness, and not for instance stories where the hare or the tortoise or a number of other animals are the tricksters. This is due to the popularity of the stories published by Von Wielligh (in which Jakkals and Wolf are the implicit main characters), those published by lesser known authors, and the interaction between these published volumes and a culture of oral storytelling. The generations who grew up with stories told them by black farm labourers and/or nannies and those who only knew white Afrikaans storytellers were all situated in the wider discourses in which the African origin of the stories was systematically denied while a European origin was put forth, over and above the "contribution" made by indigenous storytellers such as the Khoi.

The most glaring problem with the continued existence of *Jakkals en Wolf* stories in Afrikaans is the lack of recognition of the original Khoi storytellers. The fact that even recent compilations have all but obscured the context in which the stories were heard and recorded points to an omission that needs to be corrected in future editions. Quite simply, a continued insistence on the importance of Reynard the Fox etc. implies an ideological preference for the supremacy of European literary traditions over African ones and a lack of appreciation for African oral literature in its complexity.

The comment by Bleek regarding Khoi orality, namely that there are tales that “have strong claims to be regarded not merely as products of the Hottentot mind, but even as portions of a traditionary Native literature [...]” has not been followed up in the Afrikaans scholarship on *Jakkals en Wolf* and related texts by Von Wielligh and others. Few attempts have been made to place Khoi and San oral literature within the broader context of African oral literature. As alluded to above, stories in which the jackal is the trickster and the hyena is the dupe are somewhat unusual in the oral traditions of the Bantu groups (Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga and Venda). However, they do exist. Edouard Jacottet argued that the presence of jackals in Nguni and Sotho oral prose narratives is due to European influence, whereas Alice Werner believed the jackal to be a sign of Khoi influence (Lotz 40). Whatever the reason for finding these pairings of jackals and hyenas in the non-Khoi or San cultures of South Africa, the tales clearly draw from the stock of trickster stories from across the African continent.

An example of a story featuring Jackal and Hyena is a Northern Sotho (Sepedi) story where Hyena asks Jackal to look after her six children when the latter goes hunting (Phokwane qtd. in Rafapa 12). While Hyena is away hunting, Jackal eats one of Hyena’s children. Upon Hyena’s return, Jackal brings the first child twice to suckle in order to reach the count of six and fool Hyena. The challenge comes on the fifth day when only one child is left. Jackal eats the last child and smears his mouth with blood. At the usual breastfeeding time, Jackal lies to Hyena that during the day baboons took away all the children and ate them and assaulted him brutally when he tried to resist. This is a story that is well known in other parts of South Africa; in Zulu, for instance, the trickster is the mongoose, Chakijana and the dupe is often Lion, but the deception and the children being eaten is the same.

One possible way of re-reading the Von Wielligh collections and those of his contemporaries would be to compare these stories with written corpora of animal tales in Bantu oral literature. With such a comparative approach, a fuller picture would emerge of the often-undervalued animal tale in African oral literature.

Evolutionist and diffusionist approaches such as those that have been prominent in Afrikaans criticism neglect many aspects of oral prose narratives, notably performance (Finnegan 311–3). Due to the deficiencies inherent in the written versions of the stories collected by Von Wielligh and many others, a worthwhile endeavour would be to reassess Von Wielligh’s collections in the light of oral corpora of tales featuring *Jakkals* and *Wolf*, such as was done by Van der Vyver using an oral corpus of Hans du Plessis from the 1980s. Regrettably, her focus is mainly on the level of content and apart from tracing similarities and differences between narrators she does not analyse performance elements in detail. Contemporary performances can and should be recorded among the descendants of the Khoi.

Conclusion

This article has investigated a few aspects of the intersection of Afrikaans literature and African oral literature by focusing on the phenomenon of animal tales involving *Jakkals en Wolf* (Jackal and Hyena). Special attention was paid to the Khoi animal stories collected by G. R. von Wielligh in the first decades of the twentieth century. The re-issue of Von Wielligh's *Dierestories* and the subsequent retellings of Von Wielligh by other authors are testament to the lasting popularity and readability of his stories in contrast with those of his contemporaries.

What is of interest with regard to and beyond Von Wielligh are the processes culminating in the fact that the Khoi tales became regarded as belonging to white people, and the conception of white Afrikaans speakers that certain animal tales, particularly the ones featuring "Jackal" and "Hyena", are quintessential Afrikaans stories. These processes involve not only the appropriation of a living oral literature tradition among Khoi speakers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also the very active denial of the importance of these storytellers. In this sense the continued existence of Jackal and Hyena in Afrikaans is something to be celebrated but also problematised.

NOTES

1. *Die Afrikaanse Kinderensiklopedie* (The Afrikaans Children's Encyclopaedia) from 1954 (Albertyn 2526) explains that calling a *luiperd* (leopard) a *tier* (tiger) is "an old folk habit" that Afrikaans speakers were saddled with, so to speak. He points out that scientists do not have much sympathy with such folk habits and are insistent that the spotted great cats be designated "panthers" and "leopards" (Albertyn 2526). Raidt (182) categorises the use of *tier* for leopard and *wolf* for hyena as remnants of Dutch with a shift in meaning having taken place; she identifies this (in 1991) as a limited phenomenon restricted to certain older speakers of Afrikaans.
2. Contemporary research has focused on "best practice"; it is now widely recognized that a transcription of an oral performance should preferably be accompanied by a video or audio recording; the time and date of the performance must be carefully noted; the name of the storyteller must be prominently acknowledged.
3. "Some examples of stories which can be regarded as closely related, or even, in some cases, almost identical are as follows: 'Hunt of the Lion and Jackal' (Bleek 3) and 'The Lion and Jackal' (Schulze 489); 'The White Man and the Snake' (Bleek 11) and 'The Snake which was rolled over by a Stone' (Schultze 491); 'Fish Stealing' (Bleek 1) and 'The Jackal who lies next to the wagon' (Schultze 464); 'Cloud Eating' (Bleek 14) and 'The Hyena and Jackal jump up to the Clouds' (Schulze 460); 'The Cock' (Bleek 23) and 'The Jackal who tricked the Flamingo and the Hen' (Schultze 483); 'The Zebra Stallion' (Bleek 39) and 'The Zebra Mares and the Baboon' (Schultze 535)" (Wittenberg, "Notes" 11).
4. Von Wielligh acknowledged the similarities between his work and that of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd (Lombard 274).
5. Willemse shows how in a similar way critics after 1940 denied the presence and role of the San or Khoi man named Hendrik who narrated the *Dwaalstories* published by Eugène N. Marais in 1927 despite the original overt credit given to Hendrik by Marais. They went to great lengths to show that Hendrik's contribution was negligible or non-existent (Willemse 67).

Afrikaans stories of Jackal and Hyena: Oral and written traditions

6. Sigrid Schmidt, who has extensively collected Khoi oral literature explains how European fairy tales that had travelled to the Cape by the 1700s and 1800s was further distributed to Namibia via “mixed race people” such as the Rehoboth settlers (Schmidt 299).
7. In August 1900 Du Toit states that he collected many animal tales, “probably more than anyone else” (qtd. in Coetzee 33). However, it has not been established whether Du Toit published these stories in *Ons Klyntji* or elsewhere, or whether these stories include stories about Jackal and Hyena. Even though he noted that it would be worthwhile to publish all the stories together in one book (qtd. in Coetzee 33) he never followed Von Wielligh’s example in publishing such a volume, making his contribution effectively lost to researchers. None of Du Toit’s stories are included by Coetzee in his 1940 anthology of stories published in *Ons Klyntji*.
8. I use “Bantu” here in the linguistic sense, denoting a sub-section of the Niger-Congo languages. The Bantu languages include Swahili and Kinyarwanda, and the southern African languages from the Nguni group (Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele), the Sotho group (Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho (Sepedi) and Tswana), Tsonga and Venda.

WORKS CITED

- Albertyn, C. F., ed. *Die Afrikaanse kinderensiklopedie*. Nasionale Boekhandel, 1943–54.
- Bleek, W. H. I. *Reynard the Fox in South Africa, or, Hottentot Fables and Tales*. London: Trübner & Co., 1864.
- Canonici, Noverino N. *Zulu Oral Traditions*. U of Natal, 1996.
- Coetzee, Abel. *Die Verhaalskat van Ons Klyntji*. Voortrekkerpers, 1940.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Second edition. Open Book, 2012.
- Grobbelaar, Pieter W. “Die volksvertelling as kultuuruiting met besondere verwysing na Afrikaans.” Diss. U of Stellenbosch, 1981.
- Lombard, Jean. “Kwessies van mite en moraliteit by G. R. von Wielligh se Boesman-optekeninge.” *LitNet Akademies* vol. 11, no. 1, 2014, pp. 270–91.
- Lotz, Jan Daniel Naudé. “Die dierverhaal in Zoeloe.” M.A. Thesis, U of Pretoria, 1959.
- Nienaber, Petrus Johannes & Nienaber, Gabriel Stefanus. *Die Afrikaanse dierverhaal. Die Dier-Tema in die Afrikaanse Prosaletterkunde*. Nasionale Boekhandel, 1962.
- Okpewho, Isidore. *African Oral Literature—Backgrounds, Characters, and Continuity*. Indiana U P, 1992.
- Rafapa, Lesibana. “South African Khoisan Literature in the Context of World Literary Discourse.” ATINER’S Conference Paper Series, No: HUM2016–1884.
- Raidt, Edith. *Afrikaans en sy Europese verlede*. Third edition Nasou, 1991.
- Rousseau, Leon. *Die kaskenades van Jakkals en Wolf*. Lapa, 2011.
- Schmidt, Sigrid. “Europäische Sagen bei den Nama und Dama in Südwestafrika/Namibia.” *Fabula* vol. 26. no. 3, 1985, pp. 298–316.
- Stander, Jan & Nerina Bosman. “Reinaert die Vos se erflating in Suid-Afrika”. Unpublished conference paper. Conference of the South African Society for Dutch Studies (SAVN), 28 June to 1 July 2017.
- Van der Vyver, Corné. *Patroonmatighe in die struktuur en algemene inhoud van Afrikaanse Jakkals-en-Wolf-trieksterverhale*. M.A. thesis. North-West U, 2013.
- Van Vuuren, Helize. *A necklace of springbok ears: /Xam orality and South African literature*. African Sun Media, 2016.
- Verster, Francois & Burden, Matilda. “Strokies vir kinders: *Jakkals en Wolf* en ander reekse deur T. O. Honiball”. *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Kultuurgeskiedenis* vol 20, no. 1, 2006, pp. 182–200.

Afrikaans stories of Jackal and Hyena: Oral and written traditions

Von Wielligh, G. R. *Diere stories, soos deur Hotnots fertel*. J. L van Schaik, 1917.

Willemse, Hein. "Tokkelossie, 'n Boesman, outa Hendrik' en ontkennde *close readings*." *Literator* vol. 29, no. 3, 2008, pp. 57–73.

Wittenberg, Hermann. "Notes towards a history of Khoi literature." *English Academy Review* vol. 28, no. 1, 2011, pp. 5–22.

_____. "The boer and the jackal: satire and resistance in Khoi orature." *Critical Arts* vol. 28, no. 4, 2014, pp. 593–609.