prince, waged by an heroic tinker. What upsets this reading is that Christian states his allegiance to a King. Christian, still imperfectly assured of his election, is wounded in his “conversation” i.e. his conversion. He is rescued by a favourable biblical text. Indeed, the intertext is most specifically the extremely well-known Pauline passage towards the end of Ephesians about the armour of spiritual struggle against, note well, unearthly foes, and not oppressive earthy rules. While the text that pops into Christian’s mind (just as texts popped into Bunyan’s mind, as he records in the autobiography) is from elsewhere in St. Paul, the whole framework of allusion in the Apol- lonyon episode is most certainly the Ephesians passage. The conflict is very much an internal one, although there might be sociologi- cal undertones. That there are such elsewhere is true: Mr Worldly-Wiseman is a patronising social superior, probably an Anglican Latitudinarian; Giant Despair is a landowner who locks up trespassers; the judges at Vanity Fair are a vengeful, re- stored royalist magistracy. The broad tradi- tion of Bunyan criticism has always been well aware of these dimensions.

Let us finish nearer home, with Tiyo Soga and the Lovedale Mission. Isabel Hof- meyar is far more charitable than was Leon de Kock in his Civilizing Barbarians, although she acknowledges in passing, the case against missionary activity. Her information is most fascinating, starting with the early activity of van der Kemp with possible consequences in the Cattle-Killing, and with the indigenisation of Greatheart into Sifuba-Sibanzi, a folk hero. (Dare we whisper that “Bunyan’s” Greatheart is the kind of pastor able to encourage pilgrims doubtful of the validity of their election?) Moving further north, we are told that Chief Albert Luthuli’s father was John Bunyan Luthuli. Isabel Hofmeyr indicates that the great Zulu leader of the ANC seemed to be more secularised, but his autobiography, Let My Peo- ple Go, is that of a devout man coming from a devout tradition. The Lovedale Mission gave birth to Fort Hare. Doubtless there were faults, even missionaries are fallen creatures, and usually creatures of their times, but the benefits were incalculable. We are the heirs of John Bunyan. Even if more inquiry is called for (and no book ever says it all) we are greatly indebted to Isabel Hofmeyr for her book.

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ISBN 1919931554.

Although the cover of this interesting collection describes it as “A selection from the 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing”, this applies to only five of its fourteen stories. The bulk of the tales are, in fact, “Stories from the African Writers’ Workshop 2003” – by authors who were invited to a workshop held near Cape Town because their entries had been shortlisted for the Caine competition. The authors of this second group are referred to as “youngsters” although stories by the two facilitators (Veronique Tadjo and Peter Merrington) are also included here. The last page of the text use- fully explains the rules for participation in the next Caine Prize competition.

The winning story is a heart-warming but by no means naive account culminating in a huge family reunion: “In two days, we feel like a family. In French, Swahili, English, Kikuyu, Kinyarwanda, Kizanda and Ndebele, we sing one song, a multi-
tude of passports in our luggage” (26). This is the title story of the collection, but it is remarkable how appropriate this title is to most of the other stories in this collection – even to the second story, whose protagonist is a young Nigerian woman who won an American green card in a competition. This poignant, complex story shows the protagonist’s uncomfortable, baffled but undeniable feeling that in her relationship with a kind and generous white American there is nevertheless an inescapable flaw – “Your worlds were wrong” (34).

A brilliant story, translated from French, is Florent Congo-Zotti’s “Small Hells on Street Corners”, in which the huge city market is itself a ‘character’, the sphere in which orphaned “man-children, culprit-children” (48) stand no chance of survival.

Rory Kilalea’s “Zimbabwe Boy” is streetwise and poignant in taking on the issue of cross-race homosexuality in Zimbabwe – it depicts a fragile if somewhat unlikely encounter between a white farmer and a young black man who survives by “cruising”. The only South African story among the Caine Prize group is by Allan Kolski Horwitz; ironically titled “Courageous and Steadfast”, it examines the “post-liberation blues” of a small group gathered in Durban for an NGO conference: “Nomsa laughs (…) The minute you opened your mouth, I knew you were another of those disillusioned but still loyal Nkrumah types” (73).

The sadness of postcolonial poverty and vulnerability runs like a refrain through most of the stories. A vivid detail in “Lagos, Lagos” (the first of the Workshop tales) refers to the sort of pushy Nigerian mothers “who husband-hunted for their daughters (…)强迫] them to marry rich ugly traders who spoke poor English and pulled their trousers up to their chests” (79) – a comic detail in a story of disillusioned hope. The surreal after-life story by Mbongisi Dyanti, “The Witch of the Land”, actually takes a strongly feminist, worldly stand; this is a South African story containing many brilliant, biting satirical moments and taking a sardonic position on the question “What is a witch?” (108).

Helen Habila’s “My Uncle Hezekiel” tenderly and ironically recollects a ne’er-do-well: the exploitative, irresponsible and hopelessly alcoholic, yet lovable and humane Uncle. Rory Kilalea’s story (in the second section) is spiced with juicy Kaaps (non-standard Afrikaans) and set in Zimbabwe. It is pungently titled “Colours”: both the dead ‘listener’ and the surviving (but dying) woman narrator were/are ‘coloured’.

Horwitz’s second story is called “The Adjournment” – this is a long and somewhat laboured account of a white lawyer who unexpectedly finds himself in jail, in the same vulnerable position as accused clients (from whom he is normally distanced). The central African civil wars and their attendant brutalities feature in “Do You Remember?” by Goretti Kjomuhende. A strange tale is Zachariah Rapool’s; I am not sure that its surrealism succeeds, however – the story fades out on a note of bafflement that seems intended to resonate. A “mysterious” woman evoked by a male writer/narrator features in this and the next story, “After Time”; here she is the narrator’s own, dying mother – nursing her is both a terrible and a tenderly soothing experience: “I was (…) ridiculously happy. I couldn’t wait for her to die” (199). This is an accomplished piece.

I like the sardonic final story in the collection, Binyavanga Wainaina’s “Ships in High Transit”, which describes some tourists’ “African encounter” from the indigenous perspective: “Ngugi is only recommended to those who came to Kenya to self-flagellate (…) because their cause and their self-esteem are one creature” (227-228).
Finally, the stories by established writers featured in this collection range from Peter Merrington’s rollicking Tarrantino-meets-the-Cohen-brothers, a very American (tall!) tale, to Veronique Tadjo’s and Shimmer Chinodya’s stories of unfulfilling love – unfortunately the latter are both rather disappointing pieces. But as the old man in Mbongisi Dyantyi’s story warns, “The wisdom hidden in a story is for kings to discover; a fool sleeps for lack of understanding” (112).

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Die onsigbares.


Die roman handel oor die lewens van vier egpare, maar senteer veral om die ervarings van die vroue wie se mans in die huidige geweldige postapartheid Suid-Afrika, in die jaar 2003 (54), in die polisiediens is. Op realistiese wyse word die destructiewe fisiese sowel as psigiese gevolge van dié gevaarlike beroep op die gesinsverhoudinge en op individuele gesinslede uitgebeeld.

Die titel verwys in die eerste plek na die vrouens, wat nie slegs vir hulle afgetrokke en oorspanne mans “onsigbaar” word nie, maar ook vir die gemeenskap wat onbewus skyn te wees van die uitwerking van dié beroep op die gesinslewe (77 en 111). Wan-