PART TWO

AFRICAN LITERARY, CULTURAL, INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS RESPONSES
In his 1990 address to the African National Congress (ANC), “Preparing Ourselves for Freedom,” Albie Sachs presented a controversial argument that precipitated a vigorous discussion of the future role of art in South Africa. Sachs questioned the continued validity of art that is constructed as a response to a specific situation. Since then, several other critics have echoed Sachs’s call for Afro-centred art by noting the need to develop a critical discourse that is informed by Africa rather than Europe. In Novel Histories: Past, Present and Future in South African Fiction, for instance, Michael Green questions whether we are “still too used to perceiving our literary history from a metropolitan perspective” and presents an argument for a more localised critical discourse. Yet, rather than exploring ways in which to establish such a localised critical discourse, Green filters his own discussion through the lenses of two metropolitan theorists, Michel Foucault and Frederic Jameson. Green is not alone in his call for a more localised discourse; nor is he the only one whose engagement with Euromerican critical discourse seems to be about proving that we have the ability to dance the metropolitan critical dances rather than exploring the possibilities embedded in what former President Thabo Mbeki termed an “African Renaissance.”

In his address to the Conference of the Association of African Universities in Cape Town on 22 February 2005, Mbeki remarked that such a “renaissance” implies, inter alia, finding ways to harness African thought “in the drive for the development of Indigenous Knowledge

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