

https://dspace.org/

Violence, betrayal, complicity: a study of apartheid perpetrator narratives

Bloch, Robyn Cassandra

2018

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/27379

Bloch, Robyn Cassandra (2018) Violence, betrayal, complicity :a study of apartheid perpetrator narratives, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, https://hdl.handle.net/10539/27379

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Violence, Betrayal, Complicity
A study of apartheid perpetrator narratives

Robyn Bloch

Supervisors: Professor Sarah Nuttall and Associate Professor Pamila Gupta

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Johannesburg, 26 October 2018

Abstract

This investigation considers the phenomenon of perpetration and its representation in contemporary South Africa. To uncover what is hidden or omitted in these narratives and to understand how writing about violence influences the text and the writer, I critically analyse five recently published books by or about apartheid perpetrators. My first chapter analyses Anemari Jansen's biography *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State* (2015) by tracking De Kock's shifting representation over the past 20 years. In my second chapter, which investigates *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle* (2014), I examine writer Jacob Dlamini's battle to confront black betrayers. Hugh Lewin's *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle* (2011) is the story of how Adrian Leftwich, a fellow anti-apartheid saboteur, stood state witness against Lewin. I analyse white betrayal as premised from a position of privilege. My fourth chapter looks into the autobiography of the apartheid spy Olivia Forsyth, *Agent 407: An Apartheid Spy Breaks her Silence* (2015). Forsyth absconds from responsibility by writing three contradictory narratives and training her focus on surfaces. Her depiction of black women shows that she plays into the power dynamics of a white madam. Finally, my fifth chapter examines Bridget Hilton-Barber's *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir* (2016). Hilton-Barber, I argue, conjures her past and relives it in the present. In doing so, she acts as a witness to her younger self. But her book reveals forms of privilege and whiteness, and thus enacts another kind of betrayal. I conclude that each text employs narrative devices to contend with this contentious material and that the violence of the material causes the writers' sense of self to fracture.

Key words

Apartheid; perpetrators; complicity; whiteness; privilege; betrayal; violence; apartheid agent; spy; informer; state witness; security branch; Eugene de Kock; Anemari Jansen; Glory Sedibe; Ephraim Mfalapitsa; Jacob Dlamini; Adrian Leftwich; Hugh Lewin; Olivia Forsyth; Bridget Hilton-Barber

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.



_____

Acknowledgements

A grant from the National Research Foundation and awards from the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust and the National Arts Council contributed to completion of this project. The financial assistance of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, in collaboration with the South African Humanities Deans Association towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NIHSS and SAHUDA. Without these generous endowments, this work would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Sarah Nuttall and Pamila Gupta, for their consistent support and guidance throughout this process. I am so grateful for the opportunity to write with openness. The Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, in which I wrote this PhD, constantly challenged me with its lively debates from across disciplines. The space shaped my work, as did my fellow PhD cohort, particularly the convener Hlonipha Mokoena, and Candice Jansen and Renee van der Wiel. Thank you also to Najibha Deshmukh. I would also like to thank my first supervisor, Michael Titlestad, for helping me craft this project and then letting it move in the direction it did. Thank you to my friends, especially Karl van Wyk and Kirby Mania, and to my family, who patiently listened to endless descriptions of this work. Finally, I would like to thank Ricky Hunt, my husband and reader. It is always you.

Dedicated to
the second of two birds

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction **1**

Perpetrators **4**
Complicity and betrayal **24**
Methodology **37**
Reading responsibly 37
Writing with emotion 44
Reflecting on emotion 48
Chapter breakdown 51

The Evil in Me is the Evil in You **55**
Anemari Jansen's *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State*

Making a boy of the man: Prime Evil De Kock and the child Eugene **61**
The boy 65
The new man 69

War made me do it **74**
To serve, protect and kill 85

Hunting men on farms **92**
Terror on the farm 94
The hunt 97

The missing **111**
Who is De Kock now? 115

The Apartheid Historian's Struggle: Black Betrayal and its Effects **122**
Jacob Dlamini's *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*

The historian's ghost **129**
Of trophies 138
The choice, or, loving the killer 145

The terrible mirror **153**
The walking man 156
After the askari 164
Tyranny is tyranny 169
The watchers 171
A dreaming, or, loving the writer 174

Archivist, Bomber, Storyteller: Writing the Circle **177**
Hugh Lewin's *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle*

Not I, he: loops and doubles **185**
Which lion, Lewin? 185
Which left, Leftwich? 192
My friend John Harris 200
Lloyd: The unforgiven 209

Storytelling as betrayal, or, what stories betray **211**
Reflection as reflexivity 211
In the beginning were the seeds 224

The Spy in the Kitchen **240**
Olivia Forsyth's *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks Her Silence*

Innocent superspy **246**
The life of a spy 246
The docile woman 252
Walking on air 258

The seven-eyed spy **263**
I spy 264
With my little eye 271
Madam 279
The spy I love not 293

The Unhomed and Other Women **298**
Bridget Hilton-Barber's *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir*

The bad good woman **306**

The good bad woman **309**
Politics at home 315
The time of the witness, and beyond 322
Me, the colour of the enemy 337

The other woman **348**

Epilogue **353**
Writing the perpetrator 353

Conclusion **366**

Bibliography **372**

Introduction

In this thesis I analyse perpetration in the South African context. I do this by considering recent key texts written by or about perpetrators. These texts are as follows: Anemari Jansen's *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State* (2015), Jacob Dlamini's *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle* (2014), Hugh Lewin's *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle* (2011), Olivia Forsyth's *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks Her Silence* (2015) and Bridget Hilton-Barber's *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir* (2016). These are, in order, a biography; a history, which the author calls a "story"; an autobiography and two memoirs. The aim of this study is to investigate how the figure of the perpetrator is represented in recent narratives. Attendant on that aim are questions of complicity, betrayal, race and gender. Each of these questions relate to violation and violence and their links to doubleness and self-deception. An analysis of these texts can contribute to understanding how perpetrators are depicted in South Africa today, and can thus establish a timeline to chart how their recent representations differ from their past portrayals. The study intends to illuminate what happens in and to narratives about violence, betrayal, complicity and perpetration to analyse how these complex factors shape and influence the writing and the writers. Textual form takes us closer to the phenomenon of perpetration in the formation of selfhood. These stories compel the reader to consider the moral implications of feeling empathy for those who commit violence, and invite them to consider their own capacities for violence, perpetration and complicity.

The outcomes of this work are two-fold. The first is that each book examined here uses a specific narrative device or set of devices, including textual omissions, built into its structure to navigate this contentious material for reasons and in a

manner I will examine closely. The second is that in working with notions of complicity, betrayal and perpetration, especially where there is violence, animalisation, torture and death – or where there are violently oppressive regimes – the "I" is shattered, split or doubled as the writer moves closer to and further away from the subject. I will consider this splitting across the chapters.

Eugene de Kock, who was the head of a death squad at a farm called Vlakplaas, was almost alone among the apartheid perpetrators to be criminally tried and imprisoned, though he contributed extensively to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). He was released in 2015, the year his biography – which represents him as new, a changed man – was published. Parts of Jacob Dlamini's *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*, which came out the year before, focus on Vlakplaas, where captured members of the armed wing of African National Congress (ANC), called Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), were tortured until they turned into apartheid government agents, or *askaris*. Dlamini's book, which insists on these collaborators' personal agency in making the choice to change sides, is the only study of the South African phenomenon of betrayal and the askari by a black writer of non-fiction. Hugh Lewin's memoir, on the other hand, is one of several written by white anti-apartheid activists during the 1960s. However, it is Lewin's best friend, Adrian Leftwich, who makes this book pertinent to the study of the representation of perpetrators. He betrays Lewin in court by turning state witness, and thus colludes with the apartheid government. *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks Her Silence* details the story of Olivia Forsyth, an undercover apartheid agent who infiltrated student movements and eventually parts of the ANC in exile, though the truth of this is in dispute. In fact, much of Forsyth's book, which contains several contradictory narratives, is dubious – this is unsurprising considering the layers of lies

involved in subterfuge and spying during the 1980s in South Africa. Bridget Hilton-Barber was prey to Forsyth's perpetration as a white activist in the same student movement. Her book *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir* contemplates Forsyth's betrayal, and thus is germane to the topic of perpetration. It attempts to liberate the past through a journey back to the places where Hilton-Barber was an activist, but this ends up taking on a different life as she relives her trauma. For Lewin and Hilton-Barber, both white anti-apartheid activists, understanding the privileges their race gave them under apartheid cannot fully mitigate the emergence of ongoing practices and assumptions related to whiteness in their texts.

Each of the writers examined here emerge from or were subject to apartheid's oppressive regime – some fought for apartheid, others against it, and all undertook acts of violence. In 1948, the National Party came to power in South Africa and formally introduced apartheid, a set of oppressive policies that promulgated the separate development of races. These policies curtailed black people's freedom of movement by sending them out of the white cities in which they worked to townships on the outskirts at night or 'home' to Bantustans. Schemes of racial classification also meant black people had to carry *dompasse*, which were identification papers that certified their race and where they could or could not go. This was policed viciously. Those who opposed the government faced imprisonment, torture or death by government security forces. White men were conscripted into the South African Defence Force (SADF) in an effort to man and protect the country's borders against the newly independent neighbouring countries' communism within the context of the Cold War. Soldiers in this Border War used guerrilla tactics against insurgents, with elite and specialist units gaining reputations for success and cruelty, including Koevoet, which was run by De Kock. From the late 1970s, soldiers were often used to

quell protests in the townships. As apartheid's repressive laws were increasingly policed, so liberation movements moved against them: conflicts escalated across the country, culminating in terrible violence. In 1994, apartheid came to end through a negotiated settlement. The TRC followed this, one part of which sought to untangle the stories of violent perpetrators.

Perpetrators

"To understand the source of evil is not to condone it," the first volume of the TRC's report states. "It is only by recognising the potential for evil in each one of us that we can take full responsibility for ensuring that such evil will never be repeated."[1] Similarly, in the preface to his groundbreaking book *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland,* historian Christopher Browning explains his study of soldiers fighting for the Nazis in the following terms: "Explaining is not excusing; understanding is not forgiving. Not trying to understand the perpetrators in human terms would make impossible ... any history of Holocaust perpetrators that sought to go beyond one-dimensional caricature."[2] It is testament to the riskiness of researching perpetrators that most studies open with similar sentiments, acknowledging the concern that attempts to understand the perpetrator may lead to condoning, justifying or mitigating their actions. These doubts also relate to obscuring the victims' experiences, which, if overlooked or replaced by the perpetrators', may collapse the two. Though it is beyond the scope of this project to

[1] *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Final Report Vol 1–Vol 5*, (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999), volume 1, chapter 5, paragraph 108, page 133.
[2] Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), xx.

focus on genre,[3] it is interesting to note how representations of subjects across most genres – especially fiction, but certainly in life writing – demand a degree of empathy from the reader and the author. Susan Rubin Suleiman suggests that this comes from any "extended representation of a character's subjectivity – not only actions but feelings, perceptions, opinions, and way of being in the world."[4] But, as Suleiman goes on to note, feeling an uncritical empathy for a perpetrator moves the reader into uncomfortable moral territory. If the structure and function of a narrative calls forth empathy, what is the risk in representing perpetrators? How can these stories both work as readable narratives and create enough distance between the reader and perpetrator, so that he or she is not acquitted, and so that their deeds are not mitigated or understood as excuses or justifications? If understanding leads to a possible identification with the perpetrator, it may lead to exculpation, even celebration. In the face of such possible dilemmas, any researcher in this field must be aware of and take careful responsibility for the work, finding, as I hope I do, a balance between making every effort to take seriously books by or about perpetrators while keeping the moral risks in mind. Jenni Adams puts it very well in her work on representing perpetrators: "[The] aim is to preserve a sense of the unease which surrounds this topic within a project committed to its broaching."[5] But, though fraught, the study is vital as it is just

[3] See: James Olney, ed., *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980); Breena Clarke and Glenda Dickerson, "Re/membering Aunt Jemima: Rescuing the Secret Voice," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 6, no. 1 (1993): 77–93; Jill Lepore, "Historians who Love too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 129–144; Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006); Judith Lutge Coullie, Stephan Meyer, Thengani H Ngwenya and Thomas Oliver, eds., *Selves in Question: Interviews in Southern African Auto/biography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006); Rachel Morley, "Fighting Feeling: Re-thinking Biographical Praxis," *Life Writing* 9, no. 1 (2012): 77–95.

[4] Susan Rubin Suleiman, "When the Perpetrator Becomes a Reliable Witness of the Holocaust: On Jonathan Littell's *Les Bienveillantes*," *New German Critique* 36, no.1 (Winter 2009): 2. Littell's book is a first-person novel about a Nazi perpetrator and has been at the heart of debates around the ethics of representing perpetrators, especially using the "I".

[5] Jenni Adams, "Introduction," in *Representing Perpetrators in Holocaust Literature And Film*, eds. Jenni Adams and Sue Vice (Oregon and Middlesex: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013), 4.

as dangerous to ignore the perpetrator or to ascribe to him or her unwarranted power to influence one's moral capacities, especially in the context of the rise of white supremacy to super visibility in Donald Trump's America and in the face of increasingly staunch nationalism in countries across the globe.[6] In the South African context, the study is even more urgent. In 2015, students started the #RhodesMustFall campaign at the University of Cape Town in protest against the statue of arch imperialist Cecil John Rhodes on the campus. The statue represented for black students the ongoing conservative elitism of the university, which, they argued, was still an emphatically white establishment that kept its black cohort both uncomfortable and outside of its inner workings. This movement created the momentum to start other movements at different universities, culminating in the country-wide #FeesMustFall protests, which objected to fee increases that barred black students from entry, but was also ultimately about continued apartheid-style systematic prejudice in universities and other institutions. What was it that made Rhodes a perpetrator *now*?[7] He has obviously always been one, but how did his villainy and its representation in his statue come to mean something so important now that it and other similar statues were pulled down across the country? The study of recent representations of perpetrators can tell us more about the contemporary political moment.

In the next few pages, I will cover some key ideas in South African perpetrator studies, focusing on the TRC, to outline the term, as I understand it. But the sheer number of people systematically murdered by the Nazi regime has meant that much of

[6] Kara Critchell, Susanne C Knittel, Emiliano Perra and Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Editors' Introduction," *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 1, no. 1 (2017): 2.
[7] There are links to other movements such as the #BlackLivesMatter movement in the United States, which began in 2013.

the early theory of perpetrators is connected to the Holocaust,[8] thus I will move through this theory before coming to the Rwandan genocide, among others, to frame the history of mass violence within racist science. Next I will go on to think about complicity as read through whiteness and blackness, before looking into betrayal as a function of intimacy and how it manifests in this work.

The position of perpetrators in South Africa is exceptionally complicated and vexed. The TRC in South Africa was established through the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995, and was specifically not the type of criminal proceedings seen at the Nuremberg, Eichmann or Tokyo trials held after World War II, which ended in perpetrators being punished with prison or death sentences.[9] The commission looked to restorative justice[10] towards nation building, suggested in the Interim Constitution of 1993, which stated the need for "understanding but not for

[8] Though the Holocaust remains a site of intense scholarship, over the past 10 years or so perpetrator research has expanded into new areas across the globe to such a degree that the conveners of the Perpetrator Studies Network (https://perpetratorstudies.sites.uu.nl/journal-of-perpetrator-research/) have launched the new *Journal of Perpetrator Research*.

[9] For commentary on the criminal trials in Nuremberg and Tokyo, see: Guénaël Mettraux, ed., *Perspectives on the Nuremberg Trial* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Neil Boister and Robert Cryer, *The Tokyo International Military Tribunal: A Reappraisal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Yuma Totani, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: The Pursuit of Justice in the Wake of World War II* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009). Eugene de Kock was criminally tried in 1995 and sentenced in 1996, the year the TRC began its work. After testifying for the TRC, De Kock was granted amnesty for the crimes he had committed for political reasons, but enough of his deeds remained unpardoned for South Africa's courts to still find him guilty on 89 charges. He was one of only three white men sent to prison for atrocities committed during apartheid. See: Antjie Krog, "Can an evil man change?: The repentance of Eugene de Kock," *The New York Times*, March 13, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/14/opinion/sunday/the-repentance-of-eugene-de-kock-apartheid-assassin.html.

[10] "The emphasis [of restorative justice] is on reintegrative measures that build or rebuild social bonds, as opposed to measures such as imprisonment and the death penalty that isolate and alienate the perpetrator from society. The idea of justice as restorative opens up the possibility of a rich contextual exploration of what, at a given juncture in the evolution of society, both victims and perpetrators need for equality to be established or re-established in light of the offences that have occurred." Jennifer J Llewellyn and Robert Howse, "Institutions for Restorative Justice: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 49, no. 3 (Summer, 1999): 357. But there are risks in undertaking this route: "A truth commission, severed from prosecutions … fails to create the potential closure afforded by criminal trials that end in punishment." M Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 127.

vengeance … reparation but not for retaliation … for *ubuntu* but not for victimisation."[11] The TRC offered the possibility of closure for victims by giving perpetrators amnesty only if they revealed the whole truth – this truth telling was to help victims heal. The commission dedicated 55 pages of its report to its mandate – which included trying to detangle and understand what constituted a victim and a perpetrator. Though the commission reported a sense of discomfort in its definitions, it wrote into its mandate the following: "the word 'perpetrator' … describe[s] all persons found by the Commission to have committed gross violations of human rights."[12] And "the person against whom that violation is committed can only be described as a victim."[13] It "made no distinction between the kinds of acts committed, the reasons why they were committed, their consequences or their context."[14] This meant that only those who had committed gross human rights violations were named perpetrators. But the TRC acknowledged the problem with this: "This focus on the outrageous has drawn the nation's attention away from the more commonplace violations," the report states. "The result is that ordinary South Africans do not see themselves as represented by those the Commission defines as perpetrators, failing to recognise the 'little perpetrator' in each one of us."[15] This relates to acts of small perpetration – complicity with the apartheid system in any way meant tacit support for it. Volume four of the TRC report details institutional hearings into certain sectors of state and civil society, including the media, business, prisons, the faith community,

---

[11] This was under the section "National Unity and Reconciliation". See: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, "Psychological Repair: The Intersubjective Dialogue of Remorse and Forgiveness in the Aftermath of Gross Human Rights Violations," *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 63, no. 6 (2015): 1086. *Ubuntu* means 'I am because we are', but is more precisely translated by Gobodo-Madikizela as, 'a person is a person through being witnessed by and engaging in reciprocal witnessing of other persons.'

[12] *TRC*, vol 1, chap 4, para 40, p 59.

[13] *TRC*, vol 1, chap 4, para 38, p 59.

[14] *TRC*, vol 1, chap 4, para 40, p 59.

[15] *TRC*, vol 1, chap 5, para 108, p 133. For work on the 'little perpetrator', see: Shannon Hengen, "'Little Perpetrators': The South African Voice of Antjie Krog," *Postcolonial Text* 6, no. 1 (2011): 1–19.

the legal system and the health sector, to measure how these sectors and those who ran them were complicit with the apartheid system. Though the little perpetrators fell out of the mandate for the TRC, I will include them in my study, which defines perpetration as part of a spectrum. One side of it is made up of the gross human rights violators and those who gave the orders, followed by those who performed duties on behalf of the apartheid government – including working in any way for it, particularly in exchange for some gain, monetary or otherwise. But it also includes, on its other far side, South Africans whose passivity allowed them to benefit from apartheid's oppression, and their children, who still benefit. This scale of perpetration does not mean that everyone is equally named a perpetrator, but rather that those on the spectrum perpetrate forms of violence that are both spectacular or outrageous, as the TRC report puts it, or small and common – from the TRC's little perpetrators – such as casual racism.[16] De Kock, the askaris studied by Dlamini and Forsyth all worked directly for the apartheid state and can be understood as grouped on one side of the perpetrator spectrum. But Lewin and Hilton-Barber are different. Both of their books are about people who worked for the state, Leftwich and Forsyth. Thus they are important texts to show us how activists represent perpetrators – in this case, friends who betrayed them. On closer inspection of these books, I found that part of what was happening in them was the disavowal of the activists' own forms of racism, thus the work is also important to show the ways in which everyone, even activists, are capable of becoming 'little perpetrators'.

Despite the TRC's acknowledgement of its narrowness, it still uses "simple moral binaries of 'victim' and 'perpetrator', [which are] associated with unambiguous

[16] There are debates around the usefulness of the word perpetrator, which, in some studies, is replaced with more neutral terms such as 'protagonist of violence'. See, for instance: Don Foster, Paul Haupt and Maresa de Beer, *The Theatre of Violence: Narratives of Protagonists in the South African Conflict* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005), 89–104.

judgements of right and wrong."[17] This risks moral levelling and simplification. In *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945*, Raul Hilberg defines a perpetrator as someone who "understood his function, and he ascribed it to his position and duties … He had been empowered or instructed to carry out his mission."[18] Though this description situates the perpetrator as cog within a larger bureaucratic machine when referencing his "duties", it is also careful not to divorce the orders from the person performing them – he "*understood* his function". This is in an effort not to exculpate perpetrators as simply victims of a larger system, and is vital. Thus the first distinction I wish to make is between the opposing sides under a violent regime in which one side perpetrates acts against another. Though "perpetrators can become victims; victims can become perpetrators; and bystanders or third parties can become either," the oppressor remains the aggressor, while the oppressed must fight for their lives.[19] The two must not be considered morally equal.[20] Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi, who famously wrote about the 'grey zone' between victim and perpetrator, is also very clear about this: "to confuse [the murderers] with their victims is a moral disease or an aesthetic affectation or a sinister sign of complicity; above all, it is a precious service rendered ... to the negators of truth."[21] Levi is sensitive to and acknowledges the trauma experienced by both perpetrators and victims – "both, faced by the indecency of the act which has been irrevocably

---

[17] Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson, eds., *Commissioning the Past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2002), 10.
[18] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (Michigan: HarperCollins, 1993), ix. Hilberg's use of the male pronoun is unsurprising as the study of violence often intersects with gendered assumptions in which the victim of mass violence is female while the perpetrator is figured as male. I will consider women perpetrators in another section of this introduction.
[19] Kara Critchell *et al*, "Editors' Introduction", 13.
[20] "The TRC clearly vindicated the moral worth of the battle against apartheid, while rebuking those forces for using, on occasion, reprehensible means." Richard Dale, "Review: The Politics of the Rainbow Nation: Truth, Legitimacy, and Memory in South Africa," *African Studies Review* 45, no. 3 (2002): 40.
[21] Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (London: Abacus, 1989), 32–33.

committed, need refuge and protection" – but he is careful not to flatten the difference between the two.[22] As Dominick LaCapra puts it, "Not everyone traumatised by events is a victim."[23]

However, in *The Drowned and the Saved*, Levi writes about the human need for distinct categories of good and evil, or 'us and them', and how "good must prevail, otherwise the world would be subverted."[24] A Nazi concentration camp seems as though it would be emblematic of that dichotomy – good and evil, victim and oppressor, separated by razor wire. But Levi's experience was different: "The world into which one was precipitated was terrible, yes, but also indecipherable: ... the enemy was all around but also inside, the 'we' lost its limits ... one could not discern a single frontier but rather many confused perhaps innumerable frontiers, which stretched between each of us."[25] This blurring of categories is part of why Hannah Arendt's study of Eichmann was criticised by various stakeholders and theorists.[26] In *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Arendt analyses the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi lieutenant colonel responsible for facilitating the Holocaust, but who Arendt found to be not a monster, as everyone wanted him to be, but a

---

[22] Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 13. Towards the end of this section I will consider the how racism strips the humanity of both parties, faced, as Levi notes, with the indecency of it.
[23] Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (Summer, 1999): 723.
[24] Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 23.
[25] Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 38. This blurring applies to the *sonderkammondo* in Auschwitz. These were Jews in the camp who helped with the arriving inmates, facilitated the gassing process and worked in the crematoriums. After *sonderkammondos* had served for a few months, the Nazis killed them because they carried the terrible secrets of the death camps. But the *sonderkammondo* also received larger rations of food and had a strange brotherhood with their oppressors, once even playing soccer with them. For an analysis of the *sonderkammondo* and complicity, see: Debarati Sanyal's chapter, "A Soccer Match in Auschwitz: Passing Trauma in Holocaust Studies," in her book, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).
[26] For instance, Jacob Robinson's *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight: The Eichmann Trial, the Jewish Catastrophe and Hannah Arendt's Narrative* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965) is a book-length rebuttal to Arendt's position on Eichmann, but it soon went out of print. Arendt has more recently come under fire from Bernard Wasserstein in his article, "Blame the victim. Hannah Arendt among the Nazis: the historian and her sources," *Times Literary Supplement*, October 9, 2009, 13–15; and Shlomo Avineri, "Where Hannah Arendt went wrong," *Haaretz.com*, March 3, 2010, https://www.haaretz.com/1.5036299.

clown.[27] It did not cast Eichmann as pure evil – an impulse very similar to South Africa's casting Eugene de Kock as Prime Evil – but rather as an inane, career-driven clerk capable of speaking only in clichés. When Arendt suggested that evil was banal, she was not being flippant or dismissive about it. In a letter to Gershom Scholem written in December 1964, she explains: "Evil … possesses neither depth nor any demonic dimension. It can overgrow and lay waste the whole world precisely because it spreads like a fungus on the surface. It is 'thought-defying', as I said, because thought tries to reach some depth, to go to the roots, and the moment it concerns itself with evil, it is frustrated because there is nothing. That is its 'banality'."[28] Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton describe white supremacy in the exact same way: "White supremacy is nothing more than what we perceive of it … The structure of its banality is the surface on which it operates … Its secret is that it has no depth."[29] I will return to whiteness shortly. Arendt suggests that what emerges as a *consequence* of the actions of wrongdoers is terrible and extreme, but the perpetrators themselves are generally not monstrous, as we would expect. They are devastatingly ordinary.

Christopher Browning's study of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland provides comprehensive empirical research into how ordinary people become killers. Made up of fewer than 500 men, the battalion was responsible – directly by shooting or indirectly by liquidating ghettos or facilitating transport to death camps – for the

---

[27] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 54.
[28] Hannah Arendt, *The Jewish Writings* eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H Feldman (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 471. Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis make similar arguments about evil, noting its widespread but superficial nature. See: *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); and the more recent, *Liquid Evil* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2016) in which Bauman and Donskis argue that evil is now more pervasive but less visible. For an excellent overview of evil as a concept across disciplines, see: Melissa Dearey, *Making Sense of Evil: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
[29] Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton, "The Avant-Garde of White Supremacy," *Social Identities* 9, no. 2 (2003): 181.

deaths of at least 83 000 Jews.[30] But these men were in no way an elite killer force. They were mostly middle-aged, working class people from Hamburg – truck drivers, waiters and dockworkers – who were in the army's drafted reserves.[31] He ascribes their deadliness to a combination of propaganda and racism, brutalisation, obedience to authority, peer pressure and totalitarianism.[32]

There are similarities between the ascriptions of this violence and that of apartheid perpetrators of gross human rights violations. Psychologist Robert Kraft analysed the amnesty testimony of perpetrators of state and anti-apartheid violence,[33] and found that individuals from both sides became violent in support of an ideology, and felt a sense of excitement when joining their respective organisations, but did not see obedience as a major factor – "Perpetrators did not speak of obedience so much as the necessity of participating in an organisation whose beliefs and rules they had already accepted."[34] They most frequently invoked the reason for participating in violence as *war*, and their repeated brutality was spurred on by the belief in the goodness of their actions. Thus apartheid perpetrators "took responsibility for their

[30] Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 142.
[31] Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 47.
[32] "Once the killing began," Browning writes, "the men became increasingly brutalised. As in combat, the horrors of the initial encounter eventually became routine, and the killing became progressively easier. In a sense, "*brutalisation was not the cause but the effect of these men's behaviour*." Browning, *Ordinary Men,* 161, my italics. Along with Browning, Levi emphasises the importance of the pressure exerted on individuals who find themselves trapped within a totalitarian system: "The pressure that a modern totalitarian state can exercise over the individual is frightful. Its weapons are substantially three: direct propaganda or propaganda camouflaged as upbringing, instruction and popular culture; the barrier erected against pluralism of information; and terror." Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 16.
[33] Though he is also careful to note: "These commonalities do not imply moral equivalence between those fighting for liberation and those defending deadly oppression." Robert Kraft, "The Good Intentions of Violent Perpetrators: A Qualitative Analysis of Testimony from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 21, no. 3 (2015): 364. See also his book on the same subject, *Violent Accounts: Understanding the Psychology of Perpetrators Through South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (New York: NYU Press, 2014). Algerian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon also conducted interviews with French Algerian soldiers to try to understand their violence and traumas. See: *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968).
[34] Kraft, "The Good Intentions", 367.

violence, which they believed promoted their causes."[35] Though each of these ascriptions does not map perfectly on to the literature, they generally follow the results of the Milgram authority experiment and the Stanford prison experiment, both psychological studies that showed how capable ordinary people are of becoming perpetrators in certain circumstances,[36] though this position remains difficult to accept.[37]

"The memory of the past will serve no purpose," historian Tzvetan Todorov comments, "if it is used to build an impassable wall between evil and us, identifying exclusively with irreproachable heroes or innocent victims and driving the agents of evil outside the confines of humankind."[38] Thus, if perpetrators are ordinary, as the literature suggests, one must begin to admit the possibility of oneself becoming one. Browning's opening description of working with perpetrators begins: "I must

---

[35] Kraft, "The Good Intentions", 368.

[36] Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (London: Tavistock, 1974). Milgram found that ordinary people would give innocent others lethal electric shocks if told to do so by someone in authority. The Stanford Prison experiment, in which students took up the roles of either jailer or prisoner, had to be stopped after six days because of the escalation of violence. The 'guards' became sadistic, humiliating and inflicting pain on the 'inmates', who, instead of leaving, obeyed this authority, becoming increasingly degraded and dehumanised. Phillip Zimbardo, Craig Haney, W Curtis Banks and David Jaffe, "The Mind is a Formidable Jailer: A Pirandellian Prison," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 8, 1973, 38–60. For a longer reflection on the experiment's results, see: Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil* (London: Rider, 2007). For more on the study of normal people becoming perpetrators, see: Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian W Szejnmann, eds., *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); and James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[37] A telling example of this is the popularity of Daniel Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997). In it, he promulgates the idea that the German people as a whole were already primed for killing by the time Hitler came into power in 1933, and were thus willing, even joyous, certainly zealous, executioners. His book has been roundly criticised. In fact, it caused a massive kerfuffle in the Holocaust and perpetrator scholars' community, with much vituperation exchanged. For a chapter-long explanation of Goldhagen's ordeal in a four-hour-long panel discussion in which various academics, including Raul Hilberg, took turns eviscerating him, see: Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of his Evil* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 337–368. What is interesting, however, is that the book was a bestseller, garnering acclaim not only in the US but also in Germany. See: Max Frankel, "Willing executioners?," *New York Times,* June 28, 1998, http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/06/28/reviews/980628.28fran.html. This suggests the continued need for simple answers – such as the unhistorical view that Germans were uniquely murderous – to questions that call up the possibility of one's own capacity for acts of perpetration.

[38] Tzvetan Todorov, *Memory as a Remedy for Evil* trans. Gila Walker (London: Seagull Books, 2010), 80.

recognise that in the same situation I could have been either a killer or an invader – both were human – if I want to understand and explain the behaviour as best I can."[39] It is from a sense of shared humanity that the TRC created a space for victims to be heard and for perpetrators to tell the truth, and in some instances, to show remorse and ask for forgiveness. Psychologist Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela has written extensively about the positive interactions between victims and perpetrators at the TRC.[40] Her book *A Human Being Died that Night: A Story of Forgiveness*, based on interviews with De Kock in prison, is a sustained treatise on the possibilities of forgiveness, empathy and human interaction with South African perpetrators.[41] Similarly, Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull* charts the TRC's moments of poignancy and connection, and its despair, as Krog, an Afrikaner, reflects on her own complicity – she dedicates her book to "every victim who had an Afrikaner surname on her lips."[42]

An engagement with perpetrators through forms of restorative justice also took place in Rwanda after the genocide in 1994, in which an estimated 10 000 to 15 000 Hutu and between 500 000 and a million Tutsis were killed by members of the Hutu majority in just 100 days.[43] Rwanda's *gacaca* courts, which ran alongside the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, was a system of traditional community

---

[39] Browning, *Ordinary Men*, xx.
[40] See: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, "Remorse, Forgiveness, and Rehumanization: Stories from South Africa," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 42, no. 1 (2002): 7–32; Gobodo-Madikizela, "Trauma, Forgiveness, and Witnessing Dance: Making Public Spaces Intimate," *The Journal of Analytical Psychology* 53, no. 2 (2008): 169–188; Gobodo-Madikizela, "Remembering the Past: Nostalgia, Traumatic Memory, and the Legacy of Apartheid," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 18, no. 3 (2012): 252–267; Gobodo-Madikizela, "Acting Out and Working through Traumatic Memory: Confronting the Past in the South African Context," in *Hurting Memories and Beneficial Forgetting: Posttraumatic Stress Disorders, Biographical Developments, and Social Conflicts*, eds. Michael Linden and Krzysztof Rutkowski (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2013); Gobodo-Madikizela, "Psychological Repair", 1085–1123.
[41] Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died that Night: A Story of Forgiveness* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2003).
[42] Antjie Krog, *Country of my Skull* (Cape Town: Vintage Publishers, 1998).
[43] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5.

justice practised to establish truth and seek reconciliation where possible.[44] Anthropologist and African Studies scholar Mahmood Mamdani describes various scholars' attempts to explain why friends, family members, co-workers, church goers and neighbours in Rwanda participated in the slaughter of those so close to them as two-fold: state-based explanations focus on Hutus' racism, whereas society-based ones focus on a tradition of obedience. Mamdani is uneasy with both, fearing a neat set of explanations for mass violence. Gobodo-Madikizela argues, in line with a general consensus in the literature, that "in order to torture, kill and maim, perpetrators must first exclude their victims from the moral obligations they feel towards the world in general."[45] With Mamdani's uneasiness in mind, one way this becomes possible is through dehumanisation. An element of the Rwandan genocide was the hate speech on the radio,[46] in which Tutsis were called, among other things, cockroaches (*inyenzi)*, suggesting one part of why average Rwandans were spurred on to murder was because the objects of their violence were named vermin.[47] Similarly, in Indonesia, a national radio broadcast in October 1965 advocated for the destruction of communists "down to the very roots," a propagandist sentiment that matched other words in common use such as "sweeping" and "extermination", again all part of a

---

[44] For more on these courts, see: Bert Ingelaere, *Inside Rwanda's Gacaca Courts: Seeking Justice After Genocide* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).
[45] Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being*, 128. The literature includes: Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[46] See, for example: Frank Chalk, "Hate Radio in Rwanda," in *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, eds. H Adelman and A Suhrke (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999); Christine Kellow and Leslie Steeves, "The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide," *Journal of Communication* 48, no. 3 (1998): 107–128. For an excellent documentary on Rwanda's radio propaganda, which documents a play that toured Rwanda in which a hate-filled broadcast was re-enacted, see: *Hate Radio,* directed by Milo Rau (Copenhagen: International Institute of Political Murder, 2014). In 2003, two Rwandan radio journalists were sentenced to 35 years in prison for fuelling the genocide. "Journalists jailed for inciting Rwandan genocide," *The Guardian*, December 4, 2003, https://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/dec/04/pressandpublishing.radio.
[47] Darryl Li, "Echoes of Violence: Considerations on Radio and Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 1 (2004): 12. In an echo of this inciting language, Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir described the leadership of South Sudan as 'insects' in a speech in 2012. Natasha Mitchell, "First we call them insects: the prelude to horror," *ABC News*, April 25, 2012, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-04-26/mitchell-first-we-call-them-insects/3969192.

language that justifies murder as cleansing.[48] As Comrade Dutch, a member of the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot in Cambodia, notes: "'S-21 [the prison where perceived political enemies were sent] was the end of the line. People who get sent there are already corpses. Human or animal? That's another subject.'"[49]

Animalisation, racist science and mass violence against a particular group, especially those targeted for racial extermination, is a phenomenon perfected in the colonies[50] – and it is to the colonies, and thus to a body of scholars from Africa, South America and Asia, among others, we must turn for work on perpetrators and perpetration.[51] During the genocide of the Herero people in then German South-West Africa (now Namibia) from 1904 to 1907, race scientist Eugen Fischer experimented on concentration camp victims there, and took his findings back to Germany's Kaiser

---

[48] Geoffrey Robinson, "'Down to the Very Roots': The Indonesian Army's Role in the Mass Killings of 1965–66," *Journal of Genocide Research* 19, no. 4 (2017): 475. In the mass violence that followed the broadcast, between 500 000 and a million people were killed. Yenni Kwok, "The memory of savage anticommunist killings still haunts Indonesia, 50 years on," *Time Indonesia*, September 30, 2015, http://time.com/4055185/indonesia-anticommunist-massacre-holocaust-killings-1965/. For a disturbing but important and award-winning documentary on Indonesian perpetrators, see: *The Act of Killing*, directed by Joshua Oppenheimer (Copenhagen: Final Cut for Real DK, 2012).

[49] Rithy Panh, *The Elimination: A Survivor of the Khmer Rouge Confronts his Past and the Commandant of the Killing Fields* trans. John Cullen (Paris: Éditions Grasset & Fasquelle, 2012), 1.

[50] "Two new devices for political organization and rule over foreign peoples were discovered during the first decades of imperialism," Arendt writes. "One was race as a principle of the body politic, and the other bureaucracy as a principle of foreign domination. … Both discoveries were actually made on the Dark Continent [sic]. Race was the emergency explanation of human beings whom no European or civilized man could understand and whose humanity so frightened and humiliated the immigrants that they no longer cared to belong to the same human species. … This … resulted in the most terrible massacres in recent history." Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London and New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1976), 185. Christa Kuljian comprehensively charts the search for humans' origins and its interconnection with racist science in *Darwin's Hunch: Science, Race and the Search for Human Origins* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2017).

[51] I make this point because much of the current work on perpetrators comes outside of the places in which the events occurred, and thus these studies potentially have an extractive, imperial logic to them: raw data is unproblematically mined from places such as Rwanda and then taken to powerful institutions in Europe or North America, where it is polished by white scholars and presented to other white scholars. These scholars reside in countries that potentially had a role in this violence, but without acknowledging this, a distanced reading of perpetrators *elsewhere* allows a sense of continued and unearned feelings of innocence. For a comprehensive overview of the West's complicity in global violence, see: Adam Jones, ed., *Genocide, War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004). There is plenty of work to be done on settler colonies and genocides in places such as Canada, Australia and America. Some of it has already begun. See, for example: Andrew Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto and Alexander Laban Hinton, eds., *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); and Colin Tatz, *Australia's Unthinkable Genocide* (Gordon, NSW: XLibris, 2017).

Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics, which produced the work that deemed the Jews 'subhuman'.[52] Philosopher Achille Mbembe notes that colonial sovereignty created a "seamless web" of violence, which could be explained by what "long constituted the *credo* of power in the colony … [Traditions] according a central place to an image of the colonized that made of the native the prototype of *animal*."[53]

In every chapter of this doctorate, there is a connection between the body and the human, the nonhuman, the subhuman and the animal – mostly read though race. These become apparent through acts of violence, mutilation, trophy-taking and desecration made possible via associations linking masculinity, war and hunting, especially on farms, which become formalised through racist science and emerge later in different contexts. In the first two books, much of the language used to describe the practises of De Kock, his Koevoet team and his death squad as well as the work of the *askaris* collates and thickens around the hunt and animalisation. During the Border War, members of Koevoet would tie bodies to their vehicles and drive through towns in Namibia to display them to the locals.[54] They also tortured insurgents for information[55] and mutilated their bodies, sometimes taking body parts for trophies or

[52] I am aware of the dangers of overshadowing the Namibian people's history to show its connection to the Holocaust, and thus to create some sort of hierarchy between them. For more on the Herero genocide, see: David Olusoga and Casper Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's forgotten Genocide* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011).
[53] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2001), 26.
[54] John Liebenberg, a photographer who managed to gain access to otherwise restricted military operations areas in Namibia, took pictures of some of Koevoet's deadly activities, including one of a combatant dead over a wheel of an armoured vehicle, and another of Koevoet members throwing just-slain soldiers into a mass grave. John Liebenberg and Patricia Hayes, *Bush of Ghosts: Life and War in Namibia 1986-90* (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2010), 47; 55. Artist Christo Doherty took some of Liebenberg's pictures and created miniature models of them to haunting effect. Christo Doherty, *Bos: Constructed Images and Memory of the South African Bush War*. Works first shown at Resolution Gallery, Johannesburg, January 15, 2011 – March 12, 2011.
[55] See: Sisingi Kamongo, *Shadows in the Sand: A Koevoet Tracker's Story of an Insurgency War* (Pinetown: 30 Degrees South Publishers, 2011).

souvenirs.[56] None of these violations are mentioned outright in *Assassin for the State*, but the language of hunting is used to describe Koevoet's actions: they would chase and track insurgents, trap them sometimes, and 'take them down'. These kills were recorded on a scoreboard for *kopgeld*, or head money.[57] De Kock continued the practise of hunting men while head of an apartheid death squad on a farm, Vlakplaas, where the askaris or tamed terrorists under De Kock's watch also hunted people. But, in both *Assassin for the State* and Jacob Dlamini's *Askari*, these men are described as a pack of animals themselves. Once insurgents were caught, they were either turned into askaris by torture and betrayal or they were killed and disposed of. These corpses were buried in shallow, unmarked graves or strapped to dynamite and blown up on farms used by covert operators:[58] "Then [members of the security branch] attached six mini limpet mines to Justice [Mbizana's] feet, hips and bloody head," writes lawyer Peter Harris. "Mines were also put under his hands to ensure no part was left that could later lead to the MK guerrilla's identification … The blast came loud and reverberated across the grasslands."[59] This "grassland" gives us the sense of the open but secret veld that made up the ground of these farms.[60] Of course, at the point De

[56] Ex-Koevoet member John Deegan testified about Koevoet to the TRC. In his TRC testimony, "John recalls how he had heard stories of a policeman who cut off the corpses' fingers with pliers to make for easier fingerprinting. The fingers were not disposed of, but thrown onto the roof of the barracks to be sun-dried and used as souvenirs. Similarly, a skull and a leg bone were removed and treated in the same way, apparently to make a standing ashtray. He also testified that many stories circulated about ears and testicle sacks being removed for souvenirs." Foster *et al*, *The Theatre of Violence*, 150, note 11.

[57] Jansen, *Assassin for the State*, 89.

[58] This sometimes happened near an old asbestos mine in Penge. De Wet Potgieter, *Gruesome: The Crimes and Criminals that Shook South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2015), 115. This is also the town the askari Glory Sedibe, the focus of *Askari,* came from.

[59] Peter Harris, *In a Different Time: The Inside Story of the Delmas Four* (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2008), 148. Harris was the lawyer for the ANC assassins known as the Delmas Four.

[60] "Based on the general ideology that the farm is an ancestral site [for Afrikaners] in which the wilderness was subdued through fortitude buttressed by a righteous Calvinism, these values celebrate … obligation to the land… an ethnically conceived patriotism and a sense of entitlement." Michael Titlestad and Mike Kissack, "Hospitality in Karel Shoeman's *Promised Land* and Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull*," *JLS/TSW* 24, no. 1 (2008): 62. For more on the violence that took place on farms, especially at Vlakplaas, see: Nicky Rousseau, "The Farm, the River and the Picnic Spot: Topographies of Terror," *African Studies* 68, no. 3 (2009): 351–369.

Kock and his team strap dynamite to an insurgent and light the fuse, the black person has already been imagined as an animal, has been hunted, perhaps mutilated: his or her body was given this indignity long before it was blown into pieces.

The act of hunting people is not at all new in South Africa. In fact, as soon as white settlers arrived in the Cape, black men and women were hunted. The Khoisan, whom the colonists called 'Bushmen', were the earliest targets. "East India Company administrators periodically authorised colonists to mount their own campaigns of reprisal [against the so-called 'Bushmen predations'], which turned into genocidal hunting parties."[61] This was the beginning of a long tradition of human hunting practices in the colonies.[62] The inhabitants of these places were sometimes shipped overseas as curiosities, and their bodies were used in the development of scientific racism, which asserted, through the study mostly of skulls, that white people were superior to all other people, especially black people.[63] It is not a far stretch from the animalised human to the possibility of taking body parts as trophies. In fact, according to social anthropologist Simon Harrison, "The history of this practice has been linked inseparably with the history of racism since the emergence of concepts of race in the second half of the eighteenth century."[64] He goes on:

---

[61] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 65.

[62] Though the dates are contested, hunters could apply for a licence to shoot these men and women until 1937 in Namibia and 1926 in South Africa. Sue Grant-Marshall, **"**A journey into the heart of bleakness," *Business Day*, June 23, 2013, http://www.bdlive.co.za/life/books/2013/06/25/a-journey-into-the-heart-of-bleakness.

[63] For a comprehensive overview of the development and use of racist science locally, see: Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). In his book, Dubow quotes Robert Knox, a writer who transcribes a comment from a newspaper in reaction to seeing black people on display in early 1800s London: "[They are] little above a monkey tribe, and scarcely better than the mere brutes of the field. They are sullen, silent and savage – mere animals in propensity, and worse than animals in appearance." Robert Knox, *History of the Bosjesmans, Or Bush People* (London: Chapman, Elcoate and Company, 1847), 36 in Dubow, *Scientific Racism*, 24. This racism and determinism formed the basis for some of apartheid's rationalisation for separate development and Bantu education.

[64] Simon Harrison, *Dark Trophies: Hunting and the Enemy Body in Modern War* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014), 4.

> Between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, military trophy-taking occurred most often in frontier warfare, and especially in contexts such as jungle warfare, where conditions were such that military operations lent themselves particularly readily to being experienced as a sort of hunting expedition or safari, with the enemy figuring as more like an animal than a human opponent. The history of this form of misconduct is entwined with the history of colonial warfare, against non-European others who could often be viewed as at or beyond the margins of the human.[65]

If the enemy is quarry, if they are animals, offering head money or the use of hunting language becomes commonplace and obvious. During the Mau Mau uprising in then British East Africa (now Kenya), a regiment's commanding officer offered his men money for their first kill during some operations, supposedly "to encourage rivalry between units when they were 'Mau Mau hunting'."[66] Hunting, animalisation and trophy-taking found a nexus in the colonial wars,[67] where "powerful and compelling cultural schemas associating masculinity [with] war and hunting"[68] made certain

[65] Harrison, *Dark Trophies*, 9–10.
[66] Harrison, *Dark Trophies*, 161.
[67] In *Relic State: St Francis Xavier and the Politics of Ritual in Portuguese India*, Pamila Gupta argues that the power of the corpse of Saint Francis Xavier in Goa was an anagram to the power of the colonial state, making a connection between the power of or in a souvenir and the control of the state. A relic gained official sanction on contact with the saint's body, just as the animate bodies upon which Saint Xavier's powers emerged are those who were miraculously cured or converted on contact with his corpse. The oppressed people of the apartheid state felt its power in contact with its security branch and police units through dismemberment, mutilation and murder, and a relic of that power was taken from that body – ears, noses, fingers – as proof of it. This relic was both metonymic of and controlled by the state – in as far as the state both denied that its policemen and soldiers took body parts *and* also gave tacit permission to them to do so by giving all such units unmitigated power. Pamila Gupta, *Relic State: St Francis Xavier and the Politics of Ritual in Portuguese India* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 175; 178–179.
[68] Simon Harrison, *Dark Trophies*, 9.

soldiers take enemy remains as souvenirs – things to prove their manhood and their nonanimality.[69]

What of this animalisation? "We need a group of humans to bound ourselves against," writes legal philosopher Martha Nussbaum, "who will come to exemplify the boundary line between the truly human and the basely animal. If these quasi-animals stand between us and our own animality, then we are one step further away from being animal and mortal selves."[70] This animality is not only base but also vulnerable and mortal, reminding us of our own fragility and impending death.[71] Thus the need to destroy the perceived animal – explode the evidence, perhaps literally. Sociologist Deborah Posel and anthropologist Pamila Gupta argue that "death practices", that is, the compulsion to restore dignity to the human corpse, is about "reclaiming our humanity as distinct from animals."[72] But "when a human corpse is defiled, dismembered or reduced to refuge, disposed of without ceremony in an unmarked grave, this becomes symbolically potent, as an … avowedly demeaning act."[73] These acts "dehumanise the enemy in the reduction of dismembered bodies to undignified hunks of flesh."[74]

---

[69] It is unsurprising in this context that manhood should be invoked through violent rites of passage such as hunting. As masculinities scholar Robert Morrell succinctly puts it: "Masculinity and violence have been yoked together in South African history." Robert Morrell, *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Durban: University of Natal Press, 2001), 12. For more on South African masculinities, see: Jacklyn Cock, *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Lisa A Lindsay and Stephen F Miescher, *Men and Masculinities in South Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003); Linda Richter and Robert Morrell, eds., *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006); Daniel Conway, *Masculinities, Militarisation and the End Conscription Campaign: War Resistance in Apartheid South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012); Kopano Ratele, *Liberating Masculinities* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2016).

[70] Martha C Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 107.

[71] Nussbaum uses the fear of our animal selves to make an argument for why feelings of disgust are so powerful. I will use this in my second chapter.

[72] Deborah Posel and Pamila Gupta, "The Life of the Corpse: Framing Reflections and Questions," *African Studies* 68, no. 3 (2009): 303.

[73] Posel and Gupta, "The Life of the Corpse", 301.

[74] Posel and Gupta, "The Life of the Corpse", 306–307.

In the next three chapters, the ground upon which the logic of human/animal or human/subhuman shifts to suburbs, universities and cities. But its traces are trackable nonetheless. That is why we find, for instance, Lewin's mother in the 1950s, saying pointedly that the "natives" *are human*, implying that other people think they are subhuman or animal. Similarly, in 1980s Johannesburg and Grahamstown, Hilton-Barber engages with this human/nonhuman ideology by seemly levelling her black domestic worker with her pets, and pronouncing the spy Forsyth part of a group she calls "not-people".[75] Forsyth's outright racism and erasure variously connect to animalisation, but it is in the domestic space that Forsyth's perpetration is most visible.

Nussbaum notes that the locus of "group-directed projective disgust is the female body," which is considered debased in "more or less all societies" for reasons that include giving birth being "closely linked to the continuity of animal life and the mortality of the body."[76] It is no wonder, then, that women supposedly need to be made safe, less disgusting, less animal by being *tamed* in the home. Once acceptably housed, domesticity creates reassuring bounds for women's animalism. Thus understanding women as passive victims and not violent perpetrators controls the overwhelming fear of the agentive women, a fear hooked into women's so-called animality – if that body, which has the power to give life, were also to have the power to give death, as men's do, she would be too dominant. "Women are, alongside children, essentially perceived in public discourse as outside archetypal gendered understandings of the perpetrator. As a result of deep-seated gender constructions, when women *do* participate in acts of atrocity they are often sensationalized and

[75] I am reminded of Fanon's line: "Only for the white man The Other is perceived on the level of the body image, absolutely as the not-self—that is, the unidentifiable, the inassimilable." Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008).
[76] Nassbaum, *Hiding from Humanity*, 111.

characterized as deviant aberrations of womanhood who have betrayed their supposedly innate nurturing instincts," meaning a woman who participates in violent political life is somehow always coerced into doing so or is unnatural.[77] Though there is much ground to be covered, there is a small but growing body of nuanced studies of women perpetrators.[78] In this work I am invested in exploring the production of woman perpetrators' subjectivity in and by the home, and I think carefully about what is at stake in how the domestic maps on to the private and the public, the victim and the perpetrator. The home is a space where power is staged, especially through the feminine and female friendships. But it is the figure of the black woman in the home, the domestic worker, who reveals the violence of these spaces.

Complicity and betrayal

Often in places where there were oppressive regimes, there is still violence embedded in the fabric of these societies. This creates an urgent need to attend to questions regarding perpetrators of physical and other forms of violence, quieter kinds, but sometimes no less deadly. In South Africa, like in Rwanda, perpetrators and victims often live in close proximity, and complicity in continued forms of systematic oppression play out visibly in South Africa today.

Debarati Sanyal suggests that the relative paucity of the theorisation of "complicity" is because of the term's capacious, slippery nature. She notes that it

---

[77] Crichell *et al*, "Editors' Introduction", 8.
[78] See, for instance: Clare Bielby, *Violent Women in Print: Representations in the West German Print Media of the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Camden House, 2012); Caron Gentry and Laura Sjoberg, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2013); Anthony Rowland, "Reading the Female Perpetrator," in *Representing Perpetrators in Holocaust Literature And Film*, eds. Jenni Adams and Sue Vice (Oregon and Middlesex: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013), 129–146. Alette Smeulers, "Female Perpetrators: Ordinary and Extra-Ordinary Women," *International Criminal Law Review* 15, no. 2 (2015): 1–26; Megan H Mackenzie, *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security and Post-Conflict Development* (New York: New York University Press, 2015); and Rachel Century, *Female Administrators of the Third Reich* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

means both being an accomplice in wrongdoing[79] and, in its archaic form, a state of being complex or involved; it means collaboration, but the French word for the term also denotes understanding or intimacy.[80] The root of complicity is the Latin for "folded together", something Mark Sanders makes much of in his book *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*, in which he theorises the "folded-together-ness… in human-being (or in being human)."[81] Assuming responsibility "with a will not to be complicit in an injustice" towards another human being acknowledges the foldedness of ourselves with those around us and the effects of our actions elsewhere.[82] We are all, as philosopher Peter Sloterdijk states, caught at the scene of the crime.[83] Sanyal notes that this "requires us to consider our sometimes contradictory position within the political fabric of a given moment, as victims, perpetrators, accomplices, bystanders, witnesses, or spectators," negotiating legacies of violence and loss.[84] In the South African context, recognising our contradictory positions means, "affirming one's complicity … to assume responsibility for what is done in one's name without simply distancing oneself from the deed."[85] This is especially relevant for white people in whose name apartheid undertook its brutality. Gobodo-Madikizela notes that "some of the most destructive acts of violence to the human soul are subtle, systematic acts that undermine the dignity and sense of worth of individuals … rather

[79] For a legal perspective, see: Christopher Kutz, *Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[80] Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 10.
[81] Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham: Duke University Press: 2002), 5.
[82] Sanders, *Complicities*, 4. Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre felt that simply living in Paris under German occupation was an act of complicity: "We could not take a step, eat or even breathe without colluding with the occupier." Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Aftermath of War* trans. Chris Turner (New York: Seagull Books, 2008), 32.
[83] Peter Sloterdijk, "The Time of the Crime of the Monstrous: On the Philosophical Justification of the Artificial," in *Sloterdijk Now*, ed. Stuart Elden, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 165. My work attempts to write and think from this scene.
[84] Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity*, 2.
[85] Sanders, *Complicities*, 4.

than from spectacular or ordinary violence."[86] It is the subtle violence of ongoing, everyday forms of humiliation and degradation and one's complicity with them that I wish to probe further.

Writer Njabulo Ndebele situates the "loss of humanity" in white South Africans at the nexus between "inherited, problematic privilege … and the blinding sterility at the centre of the 'heart of whiteness'."[87] Loss of humanity signals the moral emptiness at the heart of a people who did not only shape apartheid but who were shaped by it, yielding a universal sense of entitlement.[88] Part of this entitlement is the inviolability of the white body, which is, as Ndebele argues, in direct proportion to the global vulnerability of the black body, suggesting, "South African whiteness is a beneficiary of the protectiveness assured by international whiteness."[89]

Ndebele's essay identifies four nodes of whiteness: privilege, loss of humanity, entitlement, and its global nature. "Whiteness operates as the space of taken-for-granted privilege," scholar Melissa Steyn states, "allowing white people to be unconscious of their own racialisation and the unearned advantages they take as simple entitlement."[90] This baseline understanding of whiteness comes out of early

---

[86] Gobodo-Madikizela, "Psychological Repair", 1087.
[87] Njabulo Ndebele, "Iph'indlela?" in *Fine Lines from the Box: Further Thoughts About Our Country* (Johannesburg: Umuzi, 2007), 131.
[88] Ndebele, "Iph'indlela?", 130. Ndebele refers here to Afrikanerdom, but I would suggest that though the Afrikaners took up a particular helm within apartheid, other people deemed 'white' under that system were also shaped by it.
[89] Ndebele, "Iph'indlela?", 137.
[90] Melissa Steyn, "As the Postcolonial Moment Deepens: A Response to Green, Sonn, and Matsebula," *South African Journal of Psychology* 37, no. 3 (2007): 421. Steyn, Garth Stevens and Kopano Ratele all respond in this journal to an article that argues for a concentrated focus on whiteness studies. For a detailed overview of whiteness, see: Steyn, "Rehabilitating a Whiteness Disgraced: Afrikaner *White Talk* in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Communication Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 143–169. For Steyn's groundbreaking work on South African whiteness and its shifting identity, see: '*Whiteness Just Ain't What it Used to Be': White Identity in a Changing South Africa* (New York: State University of New York Press Albany, 2001).

scholarship, which focused on rendering this invisible whiteness visible.[91] Race and gender scholar Kopano Ratele notes: "What makes it hard to concentrate on whiteness as a ruling set of ideas is the fact that we have to shuttle between how it is at once unexceptional and enveloping, apparently non-threatening, and historically vicious."[92] But psychologist Garth Stevens cautions that "while multiple identity self-articulations can be found on whiteness, their functions have to be seen in the light of continuing normativity that has its historical roots in Social Darwinism, scientific racism, eugenics, bio-power, and so on, and the material, structural, and ideological privilege and dominance justified by and arising from it."[93] Focusing on whiteness and white identity could overshadow how it came to be that white became 'normative' and then invisible – obscuring systemic racism and its material outcomes. Later work shifted to particularising whiteness by paying attention to its manifestation in different countries and under different circumstances.[94] For instance, whereas whiteness and its attendant privileges might have been – and is still in many ways – invisible in places that have a majority white population, whiteness in South Africa has always been highly visible and thus carefully managed.[95] It is here that part of my

---

[91] See: Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Thomas K Nakayama and Robert L Krizek, "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81, no. 3 (1995): 291–310; David R Roediger, ed., *Black on White: Black Writers on What it Means to be White* (New York: Schocken Books, 1998); Raka Shome, "Whiteness and the Politics of Location: Postcolonial Reflections," in *Whiteness: The Communication of Social Identity*, eds. Thomas K Nakayama and Judith Martin (London: Sage, 2000). For an excellent contemporary collection of essays on whiteness's continued invisibility in the global North, see: Veronica Watson, Deirdre Howard-Wagner and Lisa Spanierman, eds., *Unveiling Whiteness in the Twenty-First Century: Global Manifestations, Transdisciplinary Interventions* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015). For a recent analysis of South African whiteness, see: Nicky Falkof, *The End of Whiteness: Satanism and Family Murder in Late Apartheid South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2016).
[92] Kopano Ratele, "Make Indigenes Unconscious of Whiteness: A Response to Green, Sonn, and Matsebula," *South African Journal of Psychology* 37, no. 3 (2007): 434.
[93] Garth Stevens, "Tactical Reversal or Re-centring Whiteness? A Response to Green, Sonn, and Matsebula," *South African Journal of Psychology* 37, no. 3 (2007): 428.
[94] Alastair Bonnett, *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives* (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2000); Melissa Steyn, "'White Talk': White South Africans and the Management of Diasporic Whiteness," in *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire*, ed. Alfred J Lopez (New York: SUNY Press, 2005).
[95] See: Sarah Nuttall, "Subjectivities of Whiteness," *African Studies Review* 44, no. 2 (2001): 115–140.

work intersects with whiteness studies. After apartheid, white power retreated from actually populating government bodies to exercising economic and bureaucratic influence behind the scenes, but did not disappear. This was anticipated by activist Steve Biko, who wrote: "no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin – his passport to privilege – will always put him miles ahead of the black man. Thus in the ultimate analysis no white person can escape being part of the oppressor camp."[96] It is this continued certainty, even now, that shapes white people's complicity with modes of entitlement and privilege, globally and here.[97] When writing about perpetrators – large and small – how can whiteness and its privilege be managed? What flows of white power are surfaced or omitted for these books to be published? I have identified a series of devices that, I argue, need to be in place to variously manage both the contentious nature of the work in these books and whiteness.

However, Stevens worries that "in attempting to decentre and depower white privilege [through whiteness studies], we in fact arrive at an end point that re-centres and reinscribes it."[98] Centralising whiteness, which is a dominant and thus already central modus, can erase blackness.[99] Ratele writes: "The oppressed have to free themselves from thinking about whiteness and white power, and remove themselves from its viewfinder," [100] suggesting we look to black people not only as on the receiving end of white brutality, but as individuals and communities in their own

---

[96] Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like: Steve Biko, A Selection of his Writings* ed. Aelred Stubbs (Oxford: Heinemann, 1987), 23.
[97] One way to manage whiteness, according to philosopher Samantha Vice, is to retreat from public life, stay silent and let black people lead. See: Samantha Vice, "How Do I Live in This Strange Place?," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no. 3 (2010): 323–342. Her article instigated renewed debates around race in South Africa. See the special report on whiteness in the *Mail & Guardian* at https://mg.co.za/specialreport/on-whiteness.
[98] Stevens, "Tactical Reversal or Re-centring Whiteness?", 426.
[99] I am aware and wary of reinscribing whiteness in calling attention to my own privilege as I move through this work.
[100] Ratele, "Make Indigenes", 435. He goes on: "Making whiteness unconscious is a better way through which fundamentally different friendships, loves, education, thoughts, and other facets of a beautiful, psychoculturally healthy life of the indigenous person can be carved out, less pained by the trauma of the long and brutal history of white and colonial regimes."

right. Ndebele calls for the same: "When we give to racism in Africa this kind of centrality of explanation, we confirm the status of the black body as a mere item of data … The inherent worth of the black body does not need to be affirmed by the mere proof of white racism against it."[101] The central thesis of whiteness in whiteness studies is that the world is racially organised. Whiteness scholars Vron Ware and Les Back are wary of what this assertion serves: "Many writers on whiteness have balked at the notion of doing away with all racial categories and have instead settled for the deceptively easier job of trying to remove the undesirable elements from whiteness without rocking the boat of raciology that keeps the whole concept in motion."[102] This, they caution, "reif[ies] the idea of race as a reliable index of human difference,"[103] which, as I have shown, turns on racist science as a marker for identity.

Sociologist and activist WEB Du Bois and later Algerian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon recognised the interrelation of black and white people as one of doubling. "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity," writes Du Bois. "One ever feels his two-ness."[104] Fanon describes the violence racism does to him: "I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other … and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea…"[105] Identity and subjectivity are rendered twice: once through one's own eyes, and again through another's: it is a look

[101] Ndebele, "Iph'indlela?", 131.
[102] Vron Ware and Les Back, *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 6.
[103] Many critical race thinkers would equally balk at the idea of rendering race obsolete, and certainly in the work I undertake here, race is a central feature. Overlooking it, as Watson, Howard-Wagner and Spanierman note, would serve "to ignore the continued exploitation of racialised people and to enable the persistence of colonial hierarchies around the globe." *Unveiling Whiteness*, xv. I note the risk, though, that a sole focus on whiteness in these books makes black people disappear from the scene.
[104] WEB du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.
[105] Fanon, *Black Skin*, 84.

that doubles Fanon and Du Bois. Both these thinkers note, along with James Baldwin, that racism damages both parties. Baldwin puts it thus: "In [the] debasement and definition of Black people, [white people] debased and defamed themselves. And have brought humanity to the edge of oblivion: because they think they are white."[106] This is how apartheid acted on white people, both emptying and disfiguring them and their humanity, making it possible to turn away from responsibility. When this lack of humanity turns to violence, another form of doubling takes place.

The use of the first person, the "I", breaks up as the writers of the narratives I study contend with their past violent selves, and slips into the second person, "you" or the third, "he" or "she". Part of this doubling is a function of autobiography or memoir, in which the narrator, whose temporal position gives him or her a feeling of self-knowledge, "stands invisible beside the experiencing, acting self he [sic] tells about."[107] Author JM Coetzee argues that in confession-style narratives there is a doubling back of thought in which the "integrity of the will to confess [has] behind it a will to deceive, and behind the detection of this second motive, a third (a wish to be admired for one's candour), and so on,"[108] suggesting that as soon as narrators recognise their desire to tell the truth – a moment of self-consciousness – they fall into this cycle of doubling. This syndrome only potentially stops in the impossible "instant … when the self is entirely present to the self and time ceases."[109] But the splitting or doubling of the "I" is also a mental and emotional function found in perpetrators. In his study of Nazi doctors, Robert Lifton noted that the self was divided into two

---

[106] James Baldwin, "On Being White and Other Lies," in *Black on White: Black Writers on What it Means to be White*, ed. David R Roediger (New York: Schocken Books. 1998), 180. Fanon notes: "The disaster of the man of color lies in the fact that he was enslaved. The disaster and the inhumanity of the white man lies in the fact that somewhere he has killed man." Fanon, *Black Skins*, 180.
[107] William C Spengemann, *The Forms of Autobiography: Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 15 in JM Coetzee, "Confession and Double Thoughts: Tolstoy, Rousseau, Dostoevsky," *Comparative Literature* 37, no. 3 (1985): 201.
[108] Coetzee, "Confession", 223.
[109] Coetzee, "Confession", 227.

functioning wholes, one of which did the dirty work, while the other, held apart, could maintain a moral consciousness.[110] Gobodo-Madikizela argues that this doubling, or splitting, confirms an inability to mourn, because "contradictory thoughts, feelings, or aspects of self (and the other) are kept apart."[111] This also affects those complicit in continued forms of oppression, when living both passively and comfortably while others suffer.[112] This, too, doubles and splits one's identity, as I argue in several of my chapters.

Complicity's sense of closeness, of folded-togetherness, is intertwined with intimacy. Intimacy, cultural scholars Sarah Nuttall and Kerry Bystrom suggest, is "a measure of closeness – sometimes uncomfortable closeness – that comes from the knowledge that lives (even the lives of strangers) are bound together by the very structures and closures of society."[113] Sociologist Georg Simmel describes the tension in intimacy as having "knowledge of the other, closeness, similarity and commonality alongside difference, strangeness and distance."[114] Being bound together does not always or only produce a sense of connectedness. "Intimacy can arouse hate as much as love, horror of the other as much as desire, working not as an either/or pendulum movement but simultaneously and at once."[115] Thus "intimacy is not the antithesis of

---

[110] Robert Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide 1933-1945* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 418–419.
[111] Gobodo-Madikizela, "Psychological Repair", 1096.
[112] Fanon, quoting philosopher Karl Jaspers, notes: "Somewhere in the heart of human relations an absolute command imposes itself: In case of criminal attack or of living conditions that threaten physical being, accept life only for all together, otherwise not at all." Fanon, *Black Skins*, 66, note 9.
[113] Sarah Nuttall and Kerry Bystrom, "Introduction: Private Lives and Public Cultures in South Africa," *Cultural Studies* 27, no. 3 (2013): 324. Nuttall's description of "entanglement" also has links to complicity's folded-togetherness. "Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness." Sarah Nuttall, *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), 1.
[114] Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of George Simmel* ed and trans. Kurt H Wolff (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950), 406 in David Deutsch and Niza Yanay, "The Politics of Intimacy: Nazi and Hutu Propaganda Case Studies," *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 1 (2016): 24.
[115] Deutsch and Yanay, "The Politics of Intimacy", 22.

fear but can be at its core."[116] In fact, "colonial rule, fascism, Nazism … and intergroup wars all manage, in some way or another, a politics of intimacy … through harsh violent means that operate as a violent intimacy that carries a dangerous genocidal impulse."[117] This was seen in Rwanda, where the Tutsis and Hutus lived entangled, intimate lives before exploding into violence. In the South African context, Ndebele calls this tension "fatal intimacy."[118] It is a sense of closeness and entanglement that might lie at the foundation of violence, anthropologists Sharika Thiranagama and Tobias Kelly argue. "Intimate violence is a perverse privatisation of politics,"[119] meaning the violence outside moves inside, into your home, into your private spaces and among your intimate friends, which creates the conditions for betrayal: "traitors … are not a distant 'other' but the enemy within."[120]

Dlamini's *Askari* is the most comprehensive study of betrayal and collaboration by mostly black men during apartheid. These men used intimacy as a weapon – being ex-MK cadres meant they could disguise themselves as genuine revolutionaries in every way, and use their access to various communities and people with whom they were intimate to kill, capture and torture. There is little work on betrayal in the South African context – *Askari* is the only major study of its kind.[121] One reason might be that government agents, spies, collaborators or informants were exempt from testifying at the TRC.[122] The exemption given to spies and collaborators

---

[116] Sharika Thiranagama and Tobias Kelly, *Traitors: Suspicion Intimacy and the Ethics of State-Building* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 2.
[117] Deutsch and Yanay, "The Politics of Intimacy", 32.
[118] Njabulo Ndebele, "Foreword," in *Categories of Persons: Thinking Ourselves and Others*, eds. Megan Jones and Jacob Dlamini (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2013), xi.
[119] Thiranagama and Kelly, *Traitors,* 15.
[120] Thiranagama and Kelly, *Traitors,* 2.
[121] It caused major tension, too. At the book launch at Wits University, former members of MK were horrified that *askaris* were not roundly denounced. See: Timothy Wright, "Justice, Silence, Complexity: Recent Forays into the Reconstitution of Apartheid Experience," *African Studies* 76, no. 1 (2017): 168.
[122] Despite this, a number of spies and askaris did testify, including Joe Mamasela and Almond Nofomela.

came about because, as Roelof du Plessis, lawyer for five former security policemen applying for amnesty, stated: "Many of the informers were high-profile members of the current government [the ANC] and the disclosure of their names would have serious repercussions for the government and for national reconciliation."[123] But this rule was not without major contention.[124]

Betrayal is linked to secrets and disguises. Both apartheid and anti-apartheid agents undertook covert actions, often in some sort of disguise – literally, in balaclavas, or by pretending to be a revolutionary while actually being an apartheid agent, as was the case with the askaris; or by acting like just another docile white youth, but in fact bombing pylons and train stations, which Lewin and the Park Station bomber John Harris did; or, like the apartheid spy Forsyth, dressing up in the clothing of a leftist activist to infiltrate the Rhodes anti-apartheid student movement. These people, from both sides, traded in secrets, revealing and hiding, telling and withholding, destroying evidence or becoming, as Lewin said of his friend Leftwich, archivist. Covert agents, such as De Kock, were shadowy people who strategically held paradoxes and moral tensions in their minds, constantly covering up. The apartheid agent undercover within the anti-apartheid movement looked like and acted in exactly the same way as a true activist, but was, in fact, that person's shadowy other – the double in a mask so seamless it could be believed for years at a time. Each of the main subjects of the books spends time in prison, and three of the five get there through acts of betrayal by people close to them: De Kock is betrayed by his

[123] "Truth judges rule against disclosure of informants' names," *Sapa*, March 3, 1997, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media%5C1997%5C9703/s970303e.htm.
[124] In several cases, family members of victims demanded that names be disclosed. In one case, involving the deaths of the 'KwaMashu Three', the proceedings were stopped as a family member of one of the deceased objected to the non-disclosure of the names of informants. The judge in that case, Justice Andrew Wilson, said that to "reveal the names of the informants would be to pronounce their death sentences." "Victims want informers' names, TRC proceedings in Durban halted," *Sapa*, November 13, 1998, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media%5C1998%5C9811/s981113d.htm.

fellow security branch agents who testified against him in exchange for immunity in his criminal case in 1996; Lewin's best friend Leftwich stands state witness against him and others, also for immunity, resulting in Lewin getting seven years in prison; and Hilton-Barber is betrayed by Forsyth, who provides information that sends her to detention. Thus, I carefully consider a series of questions, provocations and meanings that emerge out of the carceral space.[125]

One such provocation is hung on notions of personal agency and torture, which was widespread in detention and prisons all over the country. According to the TRC, "Over 2 900 people reported 5 002 instances of torture, the most common of which was by beating. More than 2 000 instances of deliberate methods of torture, such as being forced into painful postures, electric shocks, suffocation or mental torture were reported."[126] Dlamini suggests that being a victim of torture does not obviate one's moral responsibly for later actions – a balance he strikes when faced with the victim who becomes a perpetrator. But there remain questions of the extent to which the state of imprisonment and the loss of power over one's body in every way affect the ego, and thus one's capacity for responsibility.[127]

The possibilities and parameters of accepting the consequences of one's choices link to questions of justice and judicial processes. After De Kock spent 20 years in prison, parole was given in the interest of nation building.[128] The public's

---

[125] For political imprisonment, see: Kate Millett, *The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1994); and Melissa Dearey, *Radicalisation: The Life Writing of Political Prisoners* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2009).
[126] *TRC*, vol 3, chap 1, para 26, p 7.
[127] Further questions might include: does the length of time one is tortured relate to the possibility of having the requisite mental and emotional capacities to take responsibility? Is there a point at which one's ego is eroded enough to cancel later accountability? For a take on these questions and others, see: Ervand Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999).
[128] The minister of the department of justice and correctional services, Michael Masutha, told a news conference that De Kock would be released "in the interests of nation-building". "De Kock gets parole but Derby-Lewis' medical parole rejected," *Mail & Guardian*, January 30, 2015, https://mg.co.za/article/2015-01-30-de-kock-granted-parole-but-derby-lewis-medical-parole-rejected.

vociferous reaction to this prompted Antjie Krog to ask: "Why are so many, mostly white, people so angry that this prisoner has been freed?"[129] De Kock has served time; a judicial process has come to end, but is De Kock now 'free' to re-enter civil society? His first post-prison public appearance suggests not.[130] These and other questions of justice, amnesty and carceral time are instructive for the way in which it suggests that the criminal past refuses to pass into the past.[131]

Some detainees, however, have much at stake in not forgetting their criminal records. For those who were detained as anti-apartheid activists by the apartheid government, doing prison time – though always traumatising – became a legitimating criterion in post-apartheid South Africa. Being what Lewin calls a PG, a prison graduate,[132] means one has undeniable proof of the seriousness of one's political participation in the struggle.[133] After the conflict, for those who opposed it, the carceral space is infused with power; the incarcerated, far from being rejected from society, are respected and recognised.[134] Yet, white detainees under apartheid could never escape their inevitable privilege, even in prison, thus narrowing the potential moral high ground available to them when compared to their black counterparts. To

---

[129] Anjie Krog, "Rethinking Reconciliation and Forgiveness at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission," in *The Limits of Transition: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission 20 Years On*, eds. Mia Swart and Karin van Marle (Leiden: Brill | Nijhoff, 2017), 11.
[130] He attended part of the Franschhoek Literary Festival.
[131] Eric Doxtader, "The Quietude of Transitional Justice: Five Rhetorical Questions," *African Yearbook of Rhetoric* 6, no. 1 (2015): 25.
[132] Lewin, *Stones Against the Mirror*, 47.
[133] "Most apartheid prison narratives … largely adopted an unambiguously political frame in articulating the subject positions of characters. The personal was deliberately subsumed in what appeared to be an urgent political need to dismantle the oppressive apartheid system." Isaac Ndlovu, "Inside out: Gender, Individualism, and Representations of the Contemporary South African Prison," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (2017): abstract.
[134] The most obvious example of this change is in Nelson Mandela, imprisoned for treason, later the loved and respected president. See his autobiography: *A Long Walk to Freedom* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1994). There are many more examples of political prisoners' memoirs. For a recent one, see: Winnie Mandela, *491 Days: Prisoner Number 1323/69* (Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan, 2013). Under apartheid, these prisoners were called terrorists. Now they are rightly called freedom fighters. An acknowledgement of the change from terrorist to freedom fighter is crucial to the narrative strategies of some of the texts in this study, which highlight this new status but in content show this acceptance to be mostly superficial.

be a part of the powerful liberation story in the postapartheid era[135] – and to gain the opportunities in business and other areas that these credentials give one – ex-inmates write prison narratives that potentially whitewash this complexity.

Prison divides space: you are either inside or outside. However, as activist Raymond Suttner's word play in his prison memoir, *Inside Apartheid's Prison*, suggests, apartheid itself was a kind of prison.[136] To be outside of an apartheid-era prison was still inside the prison of apartheid, suggesting incremental forms of confinement.[137] Prison was simply the final expression of a restriction of movement already bound by the Group Areas Act (Act 41 of 1950), which curbed the movement of the black population, followed quickly by the Population Registration Act (Act 30 of 1950), which forced them to carry passbooks, a kind of internal passport: the *dompas*. Once a political prisoner was released, he or she often moved quickly into exile, but the security police moved in the opposite direction, from the outside in during covert, often illegal, operations, capturing activists in neighbouring countries and bringing them back to South Africa. These border crossings relate to the figuration of the Border War as an effort to keep the outside – the *rooi gevaar* (red danger) or the communists – out, and later, to the policing of townships, in which the peril, the *swart gevaar* (black danger), was inside the country.[138] But the brutal force and violence of the counterinsurgency police and the security branch created a

---

[135] "[This] official story – often told in black and white, washed clean of its complexities, speaks of an unremitting struggle, of untainted heroes and unvarnished hopes." John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, "Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa," *Law & Social Inquiry* 29, no. 3 (2004): 540.

[136] Raymond Suttner, *Inside Apartheid's Prison* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2017).

[137] Confinement undergirded the 'logic' of the Bantustans. See: Shireen Ally and Arianna Lissoni, eds., *New Histories of South Africa's Apartheid-Era Bantustans* (Oxon: Routledge, 2017).

[138] "The South African government adopted an ideology similar to that of the US [in Vietnam], one that essentially justified its conduct as necessary to contain the spread of international communism and uphold Western civilization," Border War scholar Gary Baines states. "It proved politically convenient to insist on the communist or 'red' threat rather than being seen to be defending white supremacy." Gary Baines, "Vietnam Analogies and Metaphors: The Cultural Codification of South Africa's Border War," *Safundi* 13, no. 1–2 (2012): 76.

slippage between the terror being outside/inside and black, and the terror as in fact outside/inside and white. "Accusations of treachery try to define who is inside and who is out," Thiranagama and Kelly note, "laying claim to moral and political certainty in the face of uncertainty"[139] – this uncertainty was keenly felt by the ANC and MK in exile as it discovered it was riddled with apartheid agents. Their answer was also a prison, Quatro in Angola.

Methodology

Reading responsibly

The figure of the perpetrator, and of his or her target, the victim, criss-crossed in my family, but unevenly: on the Jewish side, the sons of the man who had made it to South Africa and who lost his entire family in a forest in Lithuania near the beginning of the Holocaust served in the SADF in its racist war, as did the other side of my family, a cluster of Catholics. No one said a word about it, ever. Still, no one says a word about it. A brief survey of the white men around me showed the same results: all served. All were silent. I began this doctorate in the English department at Wits University with the idea of looking into white South African conscript narratives to see the shape of this blistering silence – what traces exist of what my father and uncles did in basics, in the Border War and in the townships? A quick investigation showed that in fact many men have written about their time in the SADF. Since 2006, with the publication of a book of vignettes of white conscripts experiences in basics and on the Border, conscript memoirs have become a genre unto themselves,

[139] Thiranagama and Kelly, *Traitors*, 2.

proliferating enormously.[140] My focus changed then to trying to understand how these narratives were manipulated to allow someone who fought for the apartheid government to represent himself in that capacity and still remain legitimate in postapartheid South Africa. I began the work, but three chapters in, I had answered my question: white conscripts take up the role of the victim early in their narratives.[141] This gives them licence to tell stories about the their actions in the SADF – the skirmishes and dead black people, the celebration and camaraderie at the bars, the men becoming men in war – and remain innocent, figuring themselves as targets of the apartheid government that conscripted them while writing a nostalgic story of a time when white men had power over the life and death of black men, women and children.

Still, questions of evil, of its cultural or social determination, of the unyielding truth in the face of moral relativism, of culpability and complicity, of the shooter and the shot kept circling. And it was the perpetrator who sat saw-toothed in the heart of the matter. I left the English department and moved to a multidisciplinary space, knowing the work would break the bounds of a pure literary reading, and started again. I opened with the apartheid's Ur perpetrator, Eugene de Kock.

As I read – for weeks, then months, then years – testimony from the TRC, I came to understand both the extent of what I did not know and how I was implicated in a history so damning and violent, it will take perhaps hundreds of years to unsalt

---

[140] See: Jacqui L Thompson, *An Unpopular War: From Afkak to Bosbefok* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006). The emergence of memoir and other narratives since 2006 is partly to do with the length of time since the end of the Border War in 1988. Feminist critic Kali Tal notes that she has not come across any trauma literature, including that pertaining to her focus areas of Vietnam veterans' experience or the accounts of rape and incest survivors, "that was *not* published at least ten years after the event," and that after the Holocaust it took at least 20 years for literature about it to appear. Kali Tal, *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1996), 268 in Christo Doherty, "Bosbefok: Constructed Images and the Memory of the South African 'Border War'," (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2014), 11, note 5.

[141] For a similar argument, see: Christo Doherty, "Trauma and the Conscript Memoirs of the South African 'Border War'," *English in Africa* 42 no. 2 (2015): 25–56.

this ground. As this project began to take shape, I became more and more aware of my place in South African history, in apartheid. This work has struck me dumb, has enraged me, has terrified me. This is not only for the obvious reasons of being confronted with the horror of murder and torture, but also because I had little knowledge of the extent of the cruelty of apartheid. My connection to a man like De Kock is as intimate as skin — and as we share that whiteness, I share too in some of his actions and their consequences. My complicity with apartheid as a benefactor of it – I write in my home peopled on Tuesdays and Wednesdays by a gardener and a domestic worker, on my expensive computer, well nourished in childhood, educated, sipping good coffee – meant that I had to think carefully about how to approach this topic ethically. How could I engage these texts while resisting the urge to distance myself from them and from their subjects, the urge to hold on to the comfort of imagining myself clear, acquitted, a mere child, blameless? *I was just a child*; *my parents never even voted NP; what does it have to do with me?*[142]

Moral philosopher Wilhelm Verwoerd in his brilliant article "On Our Moral Responsibility for Past Violations" argues for why both whites during apartheid *and* their children should take moral responsibility for the gross human rights violations of the past.[143] Verwoerd is the grandson of Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid. His designation for responsibility specifically calls for those whites who voted for the apartheid government and their children to be responsible. But his entire argument suggests this responsibility accrue to every white person who benefitted from the oppressive system. His narrowing of terms seems a pacifying compromise, which suggests the climate at the time in which he wrote the article, 2001, as one in which

[142] The National Party, which was voted into power in 1948 and disbanded in 1997 (in its form then; the National Party South Africa launched in 2008), was responsible for apartheid.
[143] Wilhelm Verwoerd, "On Our Moral Responsibility for Past Violations," *Alternation* 8 no. 1 (2001): 219–242.

white people were quick to dismiss notions of complicity with apartheid. My investigation shows that 17 years later this is partly still the case.

It is worth following Verwoerd's argument in full. Using philosopher Karl Jasper's work on German guilt, he divides guilt into three categories: legal, political and moral, arguing that moral guilt is always a matter of degrees – as opposed to a legally definable formulation that can be tried within the criminal justice system.[144] Verwoerd then notes that there is a difference between a justification and an excuse: the first does not admit any fault; the second admits it but insists on a mitigating defence of the action or inaction, thus refusing responsibility for it. The oft-used excuse *I did not know* is defined as a form of affected ignorance, which results in passive injustice. Moral guilt is thus connected to blindness, or a wilful looking away, dissolving the mitigating defence written into the excuse of not knowing. Verwoerd quotes philosopher Ronald Aronson, who suggests that like the manner in which members of German society were part of the "web of institutional functioning, ideological support, and political complicity" that culminated in the Holocaust, so too was there was a "web of complicity" in white South Africa under apartheid.[145] Living in these societies meant its members were marked by political guilt.

Verwoerd notes that moral life is collective in character and thus argues that shared responsibility means acknowledging a form of collective guilt, in which there is no separation between moral (personal) and political guilt. The benefactors of the actions of the apartheid state – which resulted in the systematic oppression of the black majority – must collectively account for their moral and political guilt via

[144] Verwoerd warns that criminal guilt is not always a sign of immoral behaviour, especially when the courts serve oppressive regimes.
[145] Ronald Aronson, *"Stay out of Politics": A Philosopher Views South Africa* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), 65 in Verwoerd, "Moral Responsibility", 233.

modes of responsibility.[146] These people's children, too, must take on this accounting because, as philosopher JR Lucas notes, "As we enter into the inheritance of our predecessors, we undertake some of the responsibility for what they did in the process of producing those good things we now enjoy."[147]

With this in mind, my question became: What if I were close? What if I allowed myself to be close to the perpetrators in the books, to not be filled with moral outrage, to keep in mind my passive family ignorant under the shine of the apartheid sky, who raised guns for that government, to know I share in their culpability? It became clear that I could not approach this topic with a cold academic lens or with theoretical edifices behind which I could remain unscolded, safe, unburnt, innocent. The use of a purely academic style – unaffected, authoritative but also somehow unauthored – would be irresponsible, even unethical. Language is key. Language is how I unlocked the books I study in this work. As such, it seemed impossible for me to engage in a language that would repeal my connection to the events and people in the books. This does not mean I do not engage with these texts theoretically. Rather, showing theoretical engagement without necessarily telling it, avoids a distanced, unethical reading while still employing any useful theoretical strategies necessary to that reading.[148]

Part of the practice of withholding moral outrage and reading with closeness was not to attempt to diagnose the wrongdoers in the books, or to diagnose their

[146] Verwoerd defines this responsibility as more than just remorse and tears, but as real actions that would serve to redress victims.
[147] JR Lucas, *Responsibility* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 77 in Verwoerd, "Moral Responsibility", 235.
[148] My theoretical work comes from the text itself – I did not go into the reading of a text with a theoretical premise in mind and mine for it. Rita Felski argues that theory goes wrong when it is "mechanistically 'applied' to literary works in order to bash them into the requisite shape." *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 28.

books, and thus to avoid an inherently moralising structure.[149] If I read De Kock only for psychic symptoms, for instance, I automatically imagine him different, ill even, and with this, I imagine there was an origin for his 'evil', some moment, disease, some ideology, issue with his mother, murderous hatred for his father that can solve him, *resolve* him, and his actions.[150] Rita Felski in *The Limits of Critique* worries that instead of becoming immersed in the text, "critics become immersed in techniques of deciphering and *diagnosing* a text, are enamoured of the very act of analysis."[151] Part of how I work carefully to avoid becoming overly tangled in analytical techniques – and thus overlooking the actual text by focusing on the act, mode or theory of analysis – is to read their surfaces. This "involves thinking of the surface not just as a frame or a template for reading; not simply as a discrete object that is secondary or derivative of some originary matrix or historical process against which it should be defined, but as a fundamentally *generative force* capable of producing effects of its own."[152] This "form … of analysis," according to literary scholar Heather Love, "describe[s] patterns of behavior and visible activity."[153] She calls this 'thin description', suggesting that surface reading is a useful way to approach texts without too much "traffic[king] in speculation about interiority, meaning, or depth"[154], foregrounding

[149] Another pitfall of this mode of reading potentially renders the perpetrator a victim, levelling the real victims with their murderers – as we encounter individuals, we cannot help but see humanity in their faces in the Levinasian sense, see their pasts and thus their manifold mitigating circumstances. But a balance must be sought that does not exonerate oppressors or too easily make victims of them while still allowing their complexity to come to light. For ethics and being face-to-face with a person, see: Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).
[150] Though, of course, each book demanded the use of different tools to enter it fully, including, in some instances, references to psychological or psychoanalytical premises, this was not the norm.
[151] Felski, *Limits*, 112-113, my italics.
[152] Sarah Nuttall, "Surface, Depth and the Autobiographical Act: Texts and Images," *Life Writing* 11, no. 2 (2014): 163.
[153] Heather Love, "Close Reading and Thin Description," *Public Culture* 25, no. 3 (2013): 404.
[154] Love, *Close Reading*, 404.

the sociological inquiry: "What is it that's going on here?"[155] This question helps me avoid what queer studies theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick terms "an anticipatory mimetic strategy": as feminists and queer theorists always scan for gender reification, a "certain stylised violence of sexual differentiation [is] always … presumed or self-assumed."[156] Or, as Felski puts it, "We uncover the guilt that we imputed at the very start."[157] Thus, one part of my method involves careful observation of what exactly *happens* in the story. For instance, I read for plot only to see *what is going on* and then look carefully at what descriptions, observations, comments and asides surround the plot to understand how they affect the telling.

But, and here I will seem to contradict myself, suspicion is a necessary part of investigating books that are full of secrets – these stories are about secret operators, on both sides, doing secret, often deadly, things. My use of the term 'investigate' as the one that best fits my interaction with these books is itself a term wrapped in detection and suspicion. Felski wonders why reading "must always be a matter of guilt and innocence, crime and complicity?"[158] But this reading is by its nature a matter of truths and lies, of hurt and harm, of gun and silence. The subject *is* crime, guilt, innocence, complicity. Thus, I read for secrets, lies and omissions – I read for what is not in the book, for what cannot be said, using the technique of close reading, which involves a critical analysis of language, form, style and content. It is a way to pay careful attention to text. When the language is passive, cold, or when sentences are awkward or filled with jargon, I am alert to something missing, covered over or

---

[155] Irving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 8 in Love, *Close Reading*, 424.
[156] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 133.
[157] Felski, *Limits*, 114.
[158] Felski, *Limits*, 113. Felski suggests the use of actor-network theory (ANT) as opposed to suspicious readings. ANT "directs our attention to the many actors with which literature is entangled and the specifics of their interactions." Felski, *Limits*, 189.

otherwise wrong. When I come across these, when I probe them – and thus read for depth and with suspicion – I often find nothing, a gap, an empty space. What is missing? Almost in every instance, I do find things, in archives, newspapers, other biographies and memoirs, reams and reams of testimony and websites. I find what the text does not say, or could not say without becoming impossible. Thus, I read the narratives carefully for what they contain on their surfaces *and* for what they do not contain in their depths, and then hold up documents and texts alongside the books to show these gaps, omissions, lies, to show the other story, the missing men and women, the murdered – literally, but also figuratively. I look for what the story cannot say, for what it withholds to maintain a certain 'truth', and then for how it exposes itself nonetheless.

Writing with emotion

In late 2016, the *b'wah!* of a stun grenade exploded me out of the singular rhythm of study and sent me ricocheting off buildings around the university. The #FeesMustFall protests, which I had had some taste of in 2015, came into force.

The year before, when it began at Wits University, I drove to campus on a Wednesday and walked out on foot late that afternoon. The protesters had barred all entrances and exits for vehicles, and I left just before they did the same for the pedestrian gates. They had shut down the campus completely. The following morning, I took my husband's car to the university and found myself again barred from entering. Suddenly, I became furious, uncontrollable; I couldn't think properly as I again walked on to campus. Only halfway up the hill did I realise I had left the car idling on the street. Part of my anger came from so stupidly revealing my privilege – not only one, but two cars. It was so gauche of me. I told the protestors the story they were trying to tell everyone – the few have too much. I felt implicated, and then

guilty. And that made me so angry. I had revealed myself. You curate yourself in these settings – carefully sketching out your just-so politics so that it reads well and clearly in front of witnesses, but also so that it makes no difference to you at all. I was embarrassed. I had misunderstood the situation, had acted without sensitivity, had not followed the lines of communication.

I felt later that I had been called and asked, Will you stand? and had refused to answer, or had mumbled, Let me think on it, or had shamefacedly said, It's complicated. That call was a moral crisis for me. I always assumed I would act courageously when faced with unequivocal moral ground. And this was just that. The poor, who are historically black and are the overwhelming majority of the country, cannot access education. This is wrong. But in this situation, what would courage mean? What would standing up when called in this crisis look like? Is it closely following the situation so you don't act obscenely in front of desperate people? Is it a genuine acknowledgement of solidarity? Or does it demand action? Would I remain a hypocrite, though, if I stood with them and yelled with them and sang with them in a language I don't understand and then got in my car parked on the street and went to meet friends for pizza? Would it be going through the motions – potentially to allay my personal guilt and the cognitive dissonance of living in this country comparatively rich? Even if I meant it, I risk nothing. I give nothing, and I give up nothing. Is that the call? Is that what the opposite of neutrality would be – to answer the moral crisis with something more than words or potentially self-serving deeds? Must you, to avoid lying, take public transport, work – bodily – in places that advocate for social and economic change? I thought on this, and then, when the protests intensified again in 2016, I followed them – literally, I walked behind the students as they marched

through campuses and on the streets – acting for a short time as an observer to monitor police brutality.

All the books I had read came to life. All the shattering glass, the tak-tak-tak of rubber bullets, the sounds of riot shields clattering to the ground, tear gas, Nyalas revving, all of it brought the page to the world. I came to understand, in a small but ferocious way, something of the complexity of the past with its nodes of complicity, radicalism, compromise and shifting alliances. The nature of struggle, I realised, is so chaotic, so contingent, ready, at a heart's drop, to burst into violence, and also so intoxicating, the mourning hum of a hundred voices singing and circling; the cry of a single woman's voice high above the rest; the stamp of a thousand feet and the flight of upraised fists on the piazza, a dancing, an unbearable whole, surrounded by armoured vehicles.

It took a long time to work again, knowing, as many of us did, the strangeness of turning back to serious study while the academy burned; the ground beneath our work was shifting, becoming something else amid calls for radical reform in curricula that reflected a decolonised attitude. My writing, I felt, needed to respond to the powerful call of the students and to the shifting register in the academic space. The demonstrative mood of the protest was brought about by long histories of privation and bodily rejection in spaces that used to be white places. "You have to die for you to live; you have to lose everything about yourself," said a student. "Most of us who have come out tops here, we have lost ourselves as a black child because … we [are] all trying to be white."[159] But emotions were not only a response to exhaustion and violence. They became a form of protest. Writing of black pain – something often

[159] Sandile Ndelu, Yingi Edwin, Musawenkosi Malabela, Marcia Vilakazi, Oliver Meth, Godfrey Maringira, Simbarashe Gukurume and Muneinazvo Kujeke, *#Hashtag: An Analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement at South African Universities* ed. Malose Langa (Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2017), 140.

articulated through the figure of the 'black child' – Anye Nyamnjoh states that "within a context of institutional racism where blacks argue that their emotions are controlled by others in the sense of being told how to feel, one's emotions, in their particularity, are a site of freedom."[160] Mbembe observed that during the protests, "raw affect, raw emotions and raw feelings [were] harnessed and recycled back into the political itself."[161]

With this in mind, I write with emotion as another way to approach my subject responsibly. In her book *An Emotional State: The Politics of Emotion in Postwar West German Culture*, Anna Parkinson suggests that certain emotions demand emotional responses. She is thinking about how Allied forces witnessed Germans seeing footage from the concentration camps for the first time. The act of witnessing, Parkinson argues, shaped the Germans' emotional responses. "Emotional intersubjectivity and emotional reflexivity (or affect responding to affect)," Parkinson writes, "become particularly important in situations of crisis that demand an ethical response."[162] Thus, to write emotionally, to not only allow myself to get close to the perpetrators in these

---

[160] Anye Nyamnjoh, "The Phenomenology of Rhodes Must Fall: Student Activism and the Experience of Alienation at the University Of Cape Town," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 39, no. 1 (2017): 267.

[161] Achille Mbembe, "Achille Mbembe on The State of South African Political Life," *Africa is a Country,* September 19, 2015, http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-african-politics/. Unlike Nyamnjoh, Mbembe is not positive about emotional intensity, arguing that emotion is disabling and undermines both the students' position and their ability to make real change happen. In the same article he continues: "Psychic bonds – in particular bonds of pain and bonds of suffering – more than lived material contradictions are becoming the real stuff of political inter-subjectivity. 'I am my pain' … 'I am my suffering' and this subjective experience is so incommensurable that 'unless you have gone through the same trial, you will never understand my condition' – the fusion of self and suffering in this astonishing age of solipsism and narcissism."

[162] Anna Parkinson, *An Emotional State: The Politics of Emotion in Postwar West German Culture* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 4. Parkinson advocates reading *for* emotion to get to overlooked affective structures. My methodology reads *with* emotion. For more on affect theory, see: Brian Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique* no. 31, The Politics of Systems and Environments, Part II (1995): 83–109; Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); and Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

books, but also to also *feel* with them (or against them), to allow the work to affect me emotionally, is another way to write ethically.

To do this, I let each book dictate to me its sense by looking at it carefully, approaching it, sidling up to it, noticing it, reading it lightly, tearing into it, slipping under it, dismantling it *and* I let the book work on me. Pushing me and grazing me at first, and then grating me, dashing me, slicing and scratching me till the book and I were revealed raw, bony, a vessel for blood, kin and for skin, and inevitably I found the perpetrators, the complicit, the privileged, the violent in those books, and I found myself the same as but different from, similar but not quite identical to, a throbbing just-born double of them. This was not to be a bemoaner of fate, a hateful spite, a grim-jawed victim. Nor was it to be a jelly of empathy, an outpourer of love, a filament of understanding. It was to be, at all times, myself, in this place.

Reflecting on emotion

I had a deep sense of empathy for De Kock as he owned up, showed remorse, did his time in prison, asked for forgiveness – and received it. I felt that the mothers and wives of his victims would know if he was lying about his guilt, shame, sorrow, regret. I was especially moved by his revealing and unguarded interaction with Gobodo-Madikizela as she interviewed him in prison following the TRC hearings. But, simultaneously, as I pored over hours of amnesty hearings, I felt horror. This man was cruel and brutal – he killed people with guns, with his hands, with bombs; he hurt people with spades, with pool cues, with rope; he tortured people with fists, with electricity, with pliers. It was through De Kock that I came to understand the barbarism of apartheid, and it is with De Kock that I shared a skin. Writing about his biography was felt in my body. I was both filled and emptied by the past.

But I wrote the chapter on De Kock fairly quickly. In contrast, it took me the better part of a year to write about Dlamini's book. I was moved by his work. I felt there was a kinship between us: we both worked with perpetrators, with the treacherous; we were both implicated in the work, hurt by it, complicit with it. And yet, Dlamini is a black historian who wrote about black apartheid agents – contentious ground for him, potentially impossible for me. I am a white woman. Could I presume to analyse this text? If I did, would I be enacting a white recentering? So much of what came from #FeesMustFall was a rejection of the ubiquitous white voice having its say, dominating and interrupting conversations about black people with black people. When I finally came to the writing, I felt an enormous temerity, but I also instinctually sought connection with Dlamini, a kind of confessor figure who dared write into the hot gaps in our history. I explore this emotional enmeshment by sketching it out in a short experimental section.

The chapter on Lewin's memoir was one of the most difficult and emotional of the work. In terms of literary merit, Lewin's book was the best of the lot, and I was just so grateful to have the pleasure of reading and studying his beautiful prose. He was also, after the terror of De Kock and the pain of the askaris, a struggle activist. He was a good man, finally. I admired him for his dedication, for his fortitude, for his ethics; he answered a moral crisis with action that led to his imprisonment; he did time for his beliefs. He was strangely familiar to me, like a grandfather I could feel proud of, like a family member, but this time who was alive to the context, who *did* something. I loved him, a little, and I wished I knew him. But when I began to work on his book, I found other things, dark things: his whiteness came out, his maleness. I was distraught. I had trusted him; he was the better version of my family, the innocent

version, immune. But he was anyway the same, slightly patriarchal, intrinsically white and thus inadvertently dominant. I felt betrayed by the man betrayed.

Then I came to the women, Forsyth and Hilton-Barber. The whole time I read Forsyth's so-called autobiography, I fumed. This woman was everything I hated – and, as I later learned, feared in myself. She despised women, used sex and sexuality to either beguile men or proclaim her innocence, wrote contradictory almost incoherent stories, and actively aided the apartheid government and its murderous security branch while constantly making excuses for or justifying her spying. I resented and resisted taking her work seriously. But something niggled, something I couldn't get to for months, something repugnant. Furiously pacing the garden one day, it came to me: I was like Forsyth. I was, like her, a white woman, and like her I told contradictory stories about myself to get through the day. I was a woman of the home, an appalled feminist, a wife, a scholar. It was indeed in the domestic space that I felt most keenly my connection to this spy, and through her, my connection to and potentially my enactment of the less impressive but nonetheless culpable passive white women under apartheid.

I explored this further in Hilton-Barber's book. Her narrative is the flip side of Forsyth's as she is a genuine activist, but it nonetheless left me ambiguous – Hilton-Barber was trying to change a system of oppression, but was also a woman orientated around the home and her fellow white women activists to the point of blindness. Unlike with Lewin, I felt no real affinity to Hilton-Barber, finding her to be a part of the 'lefties' community now – white anti-apartheid activists who use these credentials to mark out their moral high ground and then live happily in privilege because of it. All of this for me came to cohere around the domestic worker – the other woman, the black woman in the home. I have a black woman in my home, and we remain silent

strangers as she arrives and leaves wearing my old clothes. Here was the nexus of my continued complicity with apartheid as a benefactor: my home. Hilton-Barber was made and unmade in her home, too.

Chapter breakdown

Each chapter considers one book by or about perpetrators. In my first chapter, which considers *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State*, I track how De Kock has shifted in representation over the past 20 years from being deemed evil to human and forgivable, to once again being banished from society. I argue that biographer Anemari Jansen delays the revelation of De Kock's violence to about halfway through the book, so that by the time the reader gets to it, he or she has already built up considerable empathy for the murderer. She does this by first offering the reader an image of De Kock as a child, calling attention to the racist ideological inculcation he experienced as well as the brutality of his childhood. This is followed by a long section of his time in the Border War, in which he is both hardened and numbed. Then, when we eventually get to his violence, he is exculpated. I argue that this is possible only because Jansen leaves out key elements to make the book function – she omits black people and racism from the story altogether. These structural delay tactics and omissions formulate the narrative devices she uses to represent De Kock as a new man with a new identity now – no longer associated with murder, cruelty and death, he is, in the end, a human who should be, as Jansen seems to suggest, forgiven. But when De Kock attempts to re-enter society after serving 20 years in prison, he is barred, mostly by white people, who, I argue, may still need him to act as a scapegoat for the evils of apartheid.

De Kock's most heinous acts often took place on or were connected to the death squad headquarters Vlakplaas, the setting for much of the book I analyse in my

second chapter, *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*. In it, historian Jacob Dlamini asks why Glory Sedibe turned from being high up in MK to working for the apartheid government on Vlakplaas. *Askari* is about complicity and how we can think about the past along more complicated lines, including through personal moral agency. I argue that Dlamini's battle to confront black betrayers emerges in how he feels both protective of and disgusted by them, while announcing his difference to them. It is Dlamini and his struggle with the past that forms the centre of the book. But what *Askari* does not confront is the result of the black apartheid agent. I discover that the book has a mirror self that runs beneath it, a story that suggests the phenomenon of the askari undermines the ANC's noble liberation narrative. The omission of this 'ghost track' beneath the main story and Dlamini's moral distancing are narrative devices to respond to the book's contentious nature. Dlamini's topic is surveyed from different angles, each of which is covered by a chapter, using lenses that run from the historical to the philosophical via the psychological, sociological and autobiographical.

Conversely, Hugh Lewin's *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle* is formulated around a very complex narrative structure that opens up the possibilities of Lewin's complicity in betrayal and violence, while equally containing and withholding those possibilities, allowing Lewin to be both perpetrator, like his best friend who betrayed him, Leftwich, and hero. This narrative device is structured through a series of narrative loops that revolve and double, an accretive structure that slowly adds to and builds up the stories that make up the narrative. But these stories never quite come to fullness. I track what some of these circles do not include, especially through evidence from trial records, and argue that despite Lewin's remarkable courage as an anti-apartheid activist and his sense of

empathy, there is evidence of white male dominance – especially through the manner in which he depicts women. Lewin is aware of some of the hazards of telling these tales – not least because Leftwich told his story on the state witness stand, which partially resulted in Lewin doing seven years in prison. In the second section, I focus on Lewin's main metaphor in the book, that of a mirror that reflects and scatters, to argue that he uses this as a way to call attention to the artifice of his memoir, reminding readers that his narrative is just one side of an otherwise very complex story. Finally, I turn to a section on Lewin's childhood through which it is possible to trace his later feelings and actions in relation to women, men and the struggle.

Olivia Forsyth's *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks Her Silence* has, I argue, three completely contradictory narratives on top of one another. This is the narrative device she uses to manage the fact that she was spy for the apartheid government. In these narratives, she is a loved and decorated agent of espionage, a consummate professional, who provided vital information to the state and its security branch. She is also, at the same time, a submissive woman, duped by men who then try to take sexual advantage of her. In the third, she represents herself as a kind of anti-apartheid activist, in fact helping the struggle. In the second part of my argument, I study Forsyth's book through the thematic of the eye, considering how she represents herself and her world through a regime of seeing, looking and judging. This look skates along the surface of things or zooms in very closely, leaving readers without depth or context. Eventually, this superficial look divides the neat from the unkempt, situating Forsyth in the domestic scene within the skewed power dynamics of maid and madam.

In the final book, Bridget Hilton-Barber's *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir*, much is convened in and around a domestic space in which agentive political

women fight apartheid. Hilton-Barber yearns for the home she had as a young activist. On a road trip she takes to come to terms with her past, Hilton-Barber encounters again the places that were filled with both violence and the urgency of the anti-apartheid struggle. I argue that in her book, and from this journey, she splits into two, divided in time, as the older Hilton-Barber – the knowing self – stands witness to her younger self, who only has partial view of what took place in the increasingly violent Eastern Cape in 1980s apartheid. This is a narrative device that allows her to claim both innocence and knowledge of the extent of the violence and its effects on the black communities there, and claim her place in South Africa's anti-apartheid history. Part of how she describes herself and her fellow women activists as the opposite of apartheid's white women, whom Hilton-Barber aligns with Forsyth, her best-friend-cum-betrayer, whose information sends her and others to detention. In the end, it is another woman in the home, the domestic worker, who is overlooked to the point of erasure, yet nonetheless remains powerful.

Finally, in an epilogue to this work, I explore my own forms of perpetrator selfhood and complicity within the context of the #FeesMustFall protests at Wits University in 2016.

The Evil in Me is the Evil in You

Anemari Jansen's *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State*

Eugene de Kock keeps murdering people. Over and over he whacks Japie Maponya on the head with a spade. He keeps driving away from Maponya's shallow grave,

which keeps digging and undigging itself in every account I read of De Kock's actions as a policeman during apartheid. He keeps showing remorse, stretching out hands, being touched by empathetic women, hugging the mothers of the people he killed. I forgive you, they each say, over and over. People debate over that spade. Was Maponya already dead when he was hit? Did De Kock strike him first? As though it matters. I am filled up with De Kock's clear, unflinching descriptions of torture – "I preferred to tie a piece of cloth around a … prisoner's hands and pull him up until his toes were just touching the ground" – the smell of dying men, body fluids.[163] After a raid, De Kock arrives at the front door of General Johan Coetzee, the man who ordered it. The general shakes everyone's hands but De Kock's – too much blood on them, he comments. In my dreams it is me reaching out to shake the general's hand and being rejected. Sometimes in them I say to De Kock, Sorry, too much blood on those hands. My hands are clean, like De Klerk's.[164]

Yet De Kock seems also to be a figure of redemption. Though his confessions shocked the world, he appeared to fully embrace the very heart of what the TRC hoped to achieve in its amnesty hearings: full disclosure and real remorse. He was granted amnesty for some of his actions, but not for others. Before he faced the TRC, he was criminally tried for hundreds of misdeeds that spanned from murder to fraud – actions he undertook for the most part while the head of an apartheid death squad that targeted, tortured and killed anti-apartheid activists. He was found guilty and sentenced to two life sentences and 212 years in prison. In early 2015, after serving 20 years, De Kock was paroled. Much of the decision to release De Kock was based on his meetings with family members of victims to ask forgiveness, and for his work

[163] Anemari Jansen, *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2015), 153. All page numbers from the primary text will be quoted in-text. I will refer to the book with the shorthand *Assassin for the State* from now on.
[164] Former apartheid president FW de Klerk famously pronounced his hands clean after refusing to take part in the truth and reconciliation process.

with the Missing Persons Task Team to locate bodies. Critics suggested De Kock was playing a long game by showing remorse and asking for forgiveness; they intimated that he was emphatically cynical and working a system that prided itself on the Judeo-Christian cycle of confession, forgiveness and redemption to get himself out of prison sooner. Twenty years is indeed a long game, if he played it.

The spectre of a man who once sent someone explosive earphones he had first tested on a pig's head disclosing all he can about his actions, reaching out with what seems like true despair, guilt, remorse and responsibility to the people whose lives he tore apart, is fascinating. Three books based on interviews with De Kock have been written over nearly 20 years, and countless articles, thought pieces, book chapters and the like have mulled over his character, his actions, and his acts of remorse. These run the gamut of opinion, from the idea that he should rot in prison or should have been executed like Adolf Eichmann to looking on him with sympathy, even empathy.[165] These latter say over and over that he was a fall guy for the apartheid higher-ups who knew what was happening all along, that he confessed and showed remorse and was thus, in fact, a moral man – at least more moral than the generals, ministers and presidents who have neither disclosed nor taken responsibility for anything that happened during apartheid. As a figurehead for the evil of apartheid – in the media his moniker was Prime Evil – he was a divisive being, precipitating debate whenever anyone remembered he was alive and well in prison. All three of the books on him agree that he is a compelling man, though they are each very different.

The first book, *A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State*, appeared in 1998 and is an 'as told to' beat-by-beat description, in De Kock's words, of who he tortured, murdered and disappeared, and who gave him the orders to do so.

[165] As mentioned, Eichmann was one of the chief organisers in the Final Solution – which resulted in the Holocaust. He was tried, found guilty and hung in Jerusalem in 1962.

Journalist Jeremy Gordin put the book together after interviews with De Kock in prison. Gordin's stated aim in writing the book was that though De Kock certainly richly deserved his prison sentence, many others did too. Both Gordin and De Kock contend that it was unfair that so many of De Kock's fellow security branch operators and policemen were granted amnesty when they testified against De Kock and that so many of those who gave the orders were not brought to book. Gordin intervenes three times in the book – in the introduction, which describes the book's aim; an interlude, in which he describes his first visit to the prison; and an afterword, in which he sums up an argument that De Kock was a "product of the system in which he grew up",[166] which references social context theory, the argument that one's environment seriously and irrevocably influences later behaviour.[167] Other than that, the rest of the book is filled with De Kock's own unflinching accounts – one thing De Kock does not do is mince his words. Besides Gordin's framing, the text is a condensed, dry (and horrifying for being so dry) revelation of events and actions. It is similar in mode to the types of confessions made at the TRC, which was taking place over the same period the book was being written.

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died that Night: A Story of Forgiveness*, published in 2003, is a very different text. Gobodo-Madikizela, a psychologist, was involved in the TRC, working as a facilitator. She was struck, one

---

[166] Jeremy Gordin and Eugene de Kock, *A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State* (Johannesburg: Contra Press, 1998), 302.

[167] Social context theory is a model used "to identify societal structures and socialisation processes in a given prevailing social environment, as well as the associated patterns of social behaviour they facilitate, or inhibit, among individuals in society at any given period of time." Leon Earle and Tony Earle, "Social Context Theory: A Systems Model of Social Change Based on Social Needs and Social Issues," *South Pacific Journal of Psychology* 11, no. 2 (1999): 2. But new research into DNA and genes suggest that looking only into social contexts for behavioural answers is a limited mode of analysis. "The interplay between genes and environments is remarkably complex," writes psychiatrist Kristen Jacobson, and so "genetic studies of individual behaviors and traits will increase our understanding of both normal human variation and pathological disorder." Kristen Jacobson, "Considering Interactions between Genes, Environments, Biology, and Social Context," *Psychological Science Agenda*, April, 2009, http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2009/04/sci-brief.aspx.

day at the commission, by De Kock's unusual request to meet with the mothers and wives of the men he killed in what became known as the Motherwell incident.[168] After the meeting, Gobodo-Madikizela found out that the women all forgave De Kock: "I hope that when he sees our tears, he knows they are not only tears for our husbands, but for him as well … I would like to hold him by the hand, and show him that there is a future, and that he can still change."[169] Interested in the processes through which we interact with perpetrators – Gobodo-Madikizela's previous work had been on the men and women who had necklaced suspected apartheid collaborators in townships – she decided to interview De Kock. What she produced from this was a book of scathing intensity in which she investigates and contemplates why men and women do bad, even evil, things, the nature of confession and forgiveness, and her own complicity, sorrow and reactions to a man who symbolised a system that made her a stranger in her own country. Comparatively little of it directly quotes De Kock; her time and interactions with him as a black woman is its focus – a moment in which Gobodo-Madikizela spontaneously touches De Kock's 'trigger hand' in an act of empathy sends her into paroxysms of self-doubt, amazement and confusion about the possibility of truly facing another human being in pain, even though they might have caused untold pain themselves. *A Human Being Died that Night* reflects the language and emphasis of that time in South Africa: the possibility of renewal through forgiveness was fed through the image of Archbishop Desmond Tutu's rainbow nation to create a sense of higher mindedness in a non-racial future of great promise. This is not to say that the book in any way engages in fluff or double-speak. Rather, it

[168] Fearing three policemen knew too much about the murder of an activist by security police agent Gideon Nieuwoudt, the death squad, headed by De Kock, rigged their car to explode. A fourth man, an askari who was getting a lift with the policemen, also died in the explosion.
[169] Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being*, 15.

is to link the text to its political and social time, in which words like redemption and forgiveness had great cultural cache.

Now, however, those words hold little of their former power. Perhaps only reparation and restitution mean much to the South African public in a time when a steady economic slump and rampant unemployment have been coupled with outrageous corruption and in-fighting from an increasingly apathetic government. No one is interested in the dream of being 'proudly South African'. Now, race and identity rise up again, along with the supressed wounded past, with a sense of rage and urgency. This time, unlike during apartheid, the lines between good and evil, right and wrong, are not so easily made out. The surge of protests around the country, both for service delivery in townships and the many student demonstrations, is a discomforting, but very necessary, bellow of voices into a politics of silence practised for too long. It is at this increasingly frenetic time that Jansen's *Assassin for the State* has entered the scene. Because it is again interested in understanding and even forgiveness, the book is in many ways contrapuntal. Jansen, bored by her dull, pedestrian life, asks to go along with her friend, political scientist Piet Croucamp, to visit De Kock in prison. What De Kock tells her on this visit shatters her comfortable existence and forces her to face a past she lived through but never looked at. As an Afrikaner woman, Jansen hopes to piece together De Kock's past to try to understand her own. In tracking down and recounting De Kock's story, from childhood to parole, Jansen reveals aspects of what she – and thus perhaps some of what her white readers – needs apartheid's Ur-perpetrator De Kock to be: forgivable, and perhaps even finally forgiven, though this is certainly a simplification. Apartheid's monster is re-humanised in a way different to Gobodo-Madikizela's humanisation of De Kock. Where Gobodo-Madikizela sits in the liminal space between seeing before her both a

human in pain and a human who caused pain, a space that pushes her to the far limits of her humanity, Jansen seems to see De Kock as an exceptional man – exceptional because he is compelling and in the sense that he did things in the extreme. She finds a commonality, albeit an uneasy and disquieting one, with De Kock. Both being Afrikaans and white, this connection is not difficult to imagine. But, by taking on that similarity, Jansen is challenged by the possibility of all that violence in herself; though her misdeeds were no deeds at all, rather a wilful blindness, she is culpable. It is that culpability, its length and breadth, I believe she wishes to measure in interviewing De Kock and the scores of people who knew him. One of her stated aims was to "understand how certain things could have happened" (9) during apartheid. Her answers are many and multi-formed, and, of course, no one is really forgiven in the end. The book is made up of her versions of interviews with De Kock, and with his family, colleagues and friends; and De Kock's personal writing taken from his criminologist report in his 1996 court case, his several pleas for presidential pardon, his diaries in prison, and excerpts from an unpublished book he wrote about his time in the elite police unit Koevoet during the Border War.

Assassin for the State came out just after De Kock's release – it ends with Jansen buying him blue towels for the safe house to which he was moved – and is thus an important document with which to chart issues of culpability in terms of his incarceration and release. But, perhaps more importantly, it provides a contemporary text from which to gauge Jansen's relationship to the past, and from there, to speculate on how others might feel about it too. The manner in which De Kock is depicted now creates a marker from which to track his evolution from Gordin's scapegoat to Gobodo-Madikizela's inhumane human to the man reintroduced into South African society. Jansen asks over and over in her book, "Who is De Kock?" My

question is, who is De Kock *now*? How is he different to who he was for the public in the past? This feeds into my major interest in encountering texts by or about perpetrators: what narrative devices does Jansen employ, and to what end? That is, what mechanisms are at work in *Assassin for the State* that give us the contemporary man? Finally, what does representing a perpetrator tell us about both victims and perpetrators and how we imagine them outside of these terms' binary limitations?

I analyse *Assassin for the State* in four sections in this chapter. The first considers how Jansen sets up the reader to re-vision De Kock not as Prime Evil but as a child. She does this by dismantling parts of his now-infamous image, specifically his glasses. I go on to think about how much space in the book is dedicated to De Kock's time in the bush during the Border War to speculate that the violence he was exposed to is mobilised as a mitigating factor for his later barbarity. Next, I focus on his time at Vlakplaas, in which I follow the twisted logic of the connection between farms, hunting and morality and its extension in hunting men. Finally, after briefly detailing the second half of the book, I circle lacunae – who and what is missing – and then speculate on who De Kock is now.

Making a boy of the man: Prime Evil De Kock and the child Eugene

What takes place in the beginning of *Assassin for the State* is a systematic undoing of De Kock as the public would know him based on his image as Prime Evil in the media. This is done in three ways. First, De Kock is distanced from his old image by literally denuding him of that image's major signifier: De Kock's famous spectacles (or *brille*). That image is replaced by one of a child called Eugene, a soft boy caught up in a hard world. Second, Jansen, an ordinary Afrikaner woman, parallels her life with De Kock's, suggesting two opposing things: De Kock is ordinary like her and

thousands of other Afrikaners — who *were* innocent (because they were children) and who *are* innocent (because their upbringing meant they did not know) — *and* that his childhood was exceptional and ruined him. Lastly, all this is possible because De Kock's murderous activities are simply not mentioned. It is necessary to undertake this methodological infantilisation for readers to reimagine or renew their perception of De Kock so as to engender sympathy — even, perhaps, empathy — for him.

Since undertaking this study, I have looked at hundreds of pictures of De Kock: him in action as a soldier, in short shorts on top of armoured vehicles pointing; him, fatter, in *veldskoene* drinking a beer next to a braai on a tranquil-seeming farm; him pale with bags under his eyes and his lips pursed testifying at the TRC. Always he wears ubiquitous thick glasses, which, from the 1960s to the 1990s, seem to remain exactly the same. The pictures in each category seem equally similar – you never see him outside of these contexts, and you very seldom see him smile. Without his glasses and smiling, which I have seen from more recent pictures of him in prison, he looks like any other portly man in his sixties grinning awkwardly for the camera. I have studied the cover of *Assassin for the State*. His name in large capped green letters dominates it. Above this is a cropped side-on head-and-shoulders picture of De Kock smiling with spectacles on. Behind this picture is what looks like two teens, one of whom is smiling broadly, though the foreground picture cuts them off. Faded over them is the barrel of a weapon.

Readers looking at this book on the shelf will make a series of assumptions. One is that the name on the cover and the man on the cover are the same. If the reader has some context and cultural or historical knowledge of South African history, the dark glasses will confirm that assumption. The smile jars with the general image of De Kock, which is almost always sombre, and with what his name evoked during his

trial and the TRC: unbridled viciousness. Thus, readers recognise De Kock because of his glasses, certainly not because of his smile or even, I would suggest, his face, the top part of which is cut off in the picture anyway.

The first chapter is called "The Man without Spectacles", so immediately the assumptions made when looking at the cover are being undone. This is what takes place in the first few beats of the book. Social scientist Piet Croucamp, Jansen and journalist Karin Eloff are searched at the prison that houses De Kock, whom they are visiting. They wait for 30 minutes and are searched again. After getting into the visiting area of the prison, Jansen stares at all the prisoners leaning into their visitors. Then De Kock appears suddenly. He is not wearing glasses. He walks towards them, sits down and begins talking rapidly without pause.

Jansen's first description of De Kock in these opening moments is "the man with the spectacles" – his nickname at Vlakplaas was Spectacles. But she counters this by observing that on this visit he isn't wearing glasses, so he is not literally "the man with the spectacles" right then, or perhaps, any more. She notes that he now prefers contact lenses. This assumes an intimate knowledge of the man, anticipating what takes place in the book and her increasingly close relationship with De Kock. As he walks towards her, Jansen observes his gait is different to the other prisoners'. She describes this difference as "Purposeful. Resolute." (3) She notes that the third person with them, Karin, touches his arm. A touch on the arm would not otherwise be remarkable. She remarks on it, potentially, because of the setting – possibly physical contact is not allowed in the prison – or because of the man himself; Karin's touch is mentioned because it breaks a barrier between the unremarkable or normal person and

the abject or evil person.[170] In the car outside the prison, Jansen remembers De Kock's mouth tightening. At home, she thinks how much she was unaware of when De Kock spoke about South Africa's past at the prison visit. Her naivety surprises her.

Three things can be taken from this scene. De Kock is observed as both different to a recognisable image of himself in the past – he wears contacts now. He is also different to other prisoners in a positive way. This extends from the physical to possibly the moral – she describes him as "a tall, well-built, *upright* man" (3, my italics), who seems in his gait alone to be both purposeful and resolute in that purpose; it certainly distinguishes him from the other inmates. But he is different to a normal man, because to touch him is remarkable. His knowledge of the past (rather than his participation and even precipitation of it) makes Jansen reflect on the poverty of her awareness of it.

De Kock's change to contacts strips him of his identifying feature found on the cover. Contact lenses also suggest he is a modern man, up with the times and technology – not of the old days. They make him anonymous – he is no longer The Man With The Spectacles; he is now simply The Man. As The Man, he is different to other prisoners, better than them; and, because of a touch, he is both entirely human and more than human, perhaps by being *less than human*. Thus starts the work of remaking De Kock in the present.

The boy

The first picture inside the book, a black-and-white full-page photograph, shows De Kock as a young boy – maybe three or four – holding his baby brother, Vosloo de Kock, who seems to be yawning or crying. De Kock stares at the camera wide-eyed.

[170] This is like Gobodo-Madikizela's touch – an intimate, skin-to-skin connection made extraordinary because the hand she touched murdered others.

His mouth is slightly open, his eyebrows raised. He holds his brother, who is looking away, protectively. He demeanour is both vulnerable and defensive. The picture is surprising: it takes up an entire page, and it is not part of the glossy selection of photographs and pictures inserted into the first and third quarters of the book – the reader would have potentially shuffled through these before getting to the business of reading. So you come to this picture suddenly, and are beset by the softness of it. This boy's name is not De Kock but Eugene.

One function of this picture might be to create cognitive dissonance for the reader between De Kock as Prime Evil, the man who may or may not be that lowest rung of humanity on the cover picture, and a boy called Eugene, described by his grade 3 teacher as "a well-mannered, above-average learner, who offered ... peanut butter and banana sandwiches at break" (14), and by his aunt as "a sensitive and lovable little boy." (*Ibid*) The picture punctures through the gloss of the words and media headlines with which the reader comes to the book to *show* De Kock's innocence, his purity and vulnerability. Other factors contribute to this feeling. The picture is over the page from the beginning of chapter two, titled "Boy Soldier", though none of it is about his being a soldier. In it, Jansen describes meeting with Vosloo, the baby in the picture, and thus learning about De Kock's childhood. While it contains some notes on Vosloo's tales, and quotes from De Kock's relatives and teachers, the bulk of the chapter is taken from De Kock's handwritten report for criminologist Anne von der Hoven used as part of her evaluation for mitigation of sentence in his criminal trial. He details his extremely strict upbringing, some of the history of his family and harshness – even abuse – from his father, the development of his crippling stutter, and his confrontation with his father at the age of 35. Notions of masculinity contour De Kock's childhood: "Boys were taught to be men; they were

not allowed to cry and had to master activities like hunting. Afrikaner children … knew not to question [the] authority … of the patriarch," (16) Jansen notes. De Kock describes his father as "domineering" and "heartless": "There was never any praise or recognition for my or Vossie's [his brother] good work." (19) The title, Boy Soldier, makes sense in as far as it expresses the idea that becoming a soldier was inevitable for De Kock – it was always going to happen because of what shaped him in his childhood.[171] Boy soldier is like child soldier: both create the sense that forces completely out of children's control sweep over them. Their innocence is swallowed by history. The header thus suggests a trajectory providing the reader a lens through which to see De Kock's childhood as teleological. Events in De Kock's childhood set him up to become a dog of war and an assassin. Looking back, starting from his childhood, we can follow one event to the next till we come to the part of his inevitable life of violence.[172] This trajectory is like teleological history's straight line, which runs, like a juggernaut, from start to finish.

De Kock's later need for the acceptance and praise he never got from his father, Jansen notes, comes directly out of his childhood. After receiving awards from the government for the operations De Kock ran from Vlakplaas, Jansen writes: "How proud he must have been … when – at last – he received the recognition he had craved as a child." (161-162) Noting De Kock's need for recognition, without

[171] Literary scholar Michael André Bernstein calls this sense of inevitability "backshadowing", which is the act of looking at the past with the events that take place in the future in mind. Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 16. This retrospective knowledge makes us look at artefacts like photographs for clues and meaning that probably did not exist then. It also hopes to endow certain events with meanings that can be traced backwards from their outcomes – in De Kock's case, a picture of him vulnerable in childhood is directly related to his violence in adulthood, as though the two really were connected, instead of that picture being taken years ago, when his future was still unknown.

[172] Psychoanalysis also makes childhood central and symptomatic of the future self. See: Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (New York: Garden City Publishers, 1938).

mentioning the horror of receiving awards for murdering people, also suggests Jansen's extreme sympathy for De Kock.

The first page of this chapter is preceded by a quote from Judge Willem van der Merwe's sentencing proceedings in De Kock's criminal trial in October 1996. This quote focuses on Van der Merwe's injunction that we take note of De Kock's personal circumstances. The final sentence reads: "the court further reported that it was necessary to attempt to summarise the individual as a person." (11) Here the judge suggests encapsulating or capturing De Kock's essence – as an individual but, more importantly, as a person. The difference between an individual, defined as "distinct from a group", and a person – "a human being regarded as an individual" – is a matter of distance and closeness, the cog versus the human.[173] The judge wants to look beyond De Kock's part as an individual in a larger group to penetrate layers of 'evil' or disgust, and go beyond the distancing that takes place when one is only an individual in a larger mechanism, to see De Kock as a product of his childhood, culture and of history. This suggests something of the complexity with which the court was faced when sentencing De Kock – and perhaps its judiciousness. But in combination with the picture and the title of the chapter, it forms the first part of an argument inset into this opening section of the book: De Kock was innocent and then corrupted; he was swept up by forces out of his control; he is a product of his Afrikaner upbringing, apartheid, the Cold War, and patriarchal masculinity. Part of what this implies is a sense of passivity in his part in the later events.[174]

---

[173] 'Individual' in *Oxford Dictionaries* http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/individual?q=Individual; 'Person' in *Oxford Dictionaries* http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/person.

[174] This is certainly not to dismiss De Kock's individual psychology and the importance of his social context. Rather, it is to highlight how a focus on these factors may undercut De Kock's agency in his later actions and thus make it unnecessary, even impossible, for him and others like him to take responsibility.

In a book review of *Assassin for the State,* journalist Marianne Thamm suggests something similar: "Eugene de Kock did not emerge into the world fully formed. He was shaped, moulded and manipulated by a toxic brew of racial nationalism, religion, patriarchy, and a grand and fictitious historical narrative that held a nation – including Anemari Jansen – in its thrall. It was an ideology that cost the lives of thousands of South Africans, almost all of them black, who opposed the brutal system."[175] Thamm intimates that an ideology cost the lives of thousands of people – which, in a way, it did – but more certainly men with guns, knives, poison, bombs, ropes and the inner tubes of tyres did it.[176] Historian Ron Rosenbaum calls explanations of Hitler and his actions that focus on the inevitability of history Great Abstractions. These are "deeper 'inevitable' forces of history that make Hitler, that make us, nothing but particles borne forward on waves of powerful forces that make our power to act or choose on our own a virtual illusion. And absolve Hitler, absolve us, of responsibility for such illusionary choices."[177] In figuring De Kock's childhood as shaped by an unstoppable ideology and as fated, is Jansen absolving De Kock – and then perhaps herself and some of her readers – from the outset? Scholar and writer Michiel Heyns would certainly affirm this. Undertaking an overview of several white coming-of-age farm novels, Heyns suggests that the use of a child character as narrator implies "a kind of absolution of form … in its characteristic presupposition of the myth of prelapsarian innocence."[178] Though the child Eugene is not the narrator in

---

[175] Marianne Thamm, "One woman's extraordinary journey: 'Je suis Eugene de Kock'," *Daily Maverick*, May 4, 2015, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-05-04-one-womans-extraordinary-journey-je-suis-eugene-de-kock/#.Vrmww1OGPeQ.

[176] It really was mostly men who did the killing. Only 27 women applied for amnesty at the TRC hearings.

[177] Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, xli. I am in no way comparing De Kock with Hitler. Rather, I am looking at the manner in which various stakeholders need to represent individuals who are party to and commit heinous acts. This tells us something about how the writer wants to represent him or herself in relation to those crimes.

[178] Michiel Heyns, "The Whole Country's Truth: Confession and Narrative in Recent White South African Writing," *Modern Fiction Studies* 46, no. 1 (2000): 50.

Assassin for the State, he is certainly deemed innocent, and the corrupting factors that influence come from the outside, from his father and from the state. This is, of course, true, and it would be absurd to blame a child for being corrupted, thus there is "an implicit amnesty accorded the child-as-victim."[179] One of the effects of this is to "subsume individual agency in communal guilt and to efface the difference between unconscious complicity and deliberate collaboration."[180]

The new man

In a clipped series of passages, Jansen relates her life story from being a young girl up to the point at which she crosses paths with De Kock, which is depicted as a moment of schism. This condensed life story gives way to the fullness of De Kock's life story. She gives us her origins to premise her search for De Kock's origins. In her story, there are parallels to De Kock's that make his story seem 'normal' like hers, or typical for an Afrikaner at the time. Her father was a member of the racist secret organisation Broederbond. She did not know about it. De Kock's father was a member of the pro-German Ossewabrandwag, but resigned after he was arrested. He was also on the Broederbond's executive council, but also resigned from that post, supposedly because the organisation refused to acknowledge black people as human. Both were from Afrikaner nationalist homes dedicated to the Dutch Reformed Church. In significant ways, their early lives mirror each other. But, of course, De Kock becomes the embodiment of apartheid's evil, while Jansen gets bored in the suburbs.

Jansen calls herself a "child of apartheid" (9), who wants to "understand how certain things could have happened" (*Ibid*) by "reconstructing [De Kock's] history, piece by piece." (*Ibid*) She chooses another child of apartheid, De Kock, to

[179] Heyns, "The Whole Country's Truth", 53.
[180] Heyns, "The Whole Country's Truth", 53.

reconstruct or piece together, but to what end? To understand what exactly? How De Kock could have done it? How she did not know? De Kock's story as an assassin is one of the best known of the apartheid perpetrators in South Africa. Not only was he highly visible and vocal during his criminal trial in 1996 and in his various TRC testimonies, but there are also Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela's books on him. It seems unnecessary to piece him together – his story is out, though perhaps not in the kind of detail she goes into. How will understanding De Kock rescue her from being a child of apartheid?

Madeleine Fullard, the head of the Missing Person's Task Team, is quoted in an article saying that De Kock is "resigned to the fact that he'll never escape the Prime Evil identity."[181] Fullard and De Kock have been collaborating to locate bodies De Kock knows about. But assisting the Missing Person's Task Team, according to Jansen in the same article, is helping him "slowly but surely recreate his identity". Giving De Kock a new identity is, I believe, an aim of Jansen's in this book. And this is precisely why it makes sense for her to choose De Kock. Everyone knows him; there is so much coverage, so many transcripts, pictures, books to which to refer. The history is documented. He did those things. But now he is changed, different. Jansen "reconstructs [De Kock's] history" (9) – as opposed to say 'traces', 'follows' or 'uncovers' – to reconstruct his *relation* to the past: to uncouple him from it. This is possible only if she starts from the very beginning, his childhood, to reconstruct his story through a series of lenses that, if they do not absolve him, certainly complicate the easy connection between him and apartheid's evil. This trajectory is represented as inevitable and determined. In the next part of the book, which is on his time in the

[181] Justine van der Leun, "The odd couple: why an apartheid activist joined forces with a murderer," *The Guardian*, June 2, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/global/2015/jun/06/odd-couple-apartheid-activist-madeleine-fullard-convicted-policeman-eugene-de-kock.

bush, Jansen depicts De Kock as an ordinary policeman in terrible circumstances trying to do his job like everybody else *and* an exceptional man who slowly lost his mind on the border. I will detail this argument in the next section of the chapter.

A gentleness is felt in Jansen's relation to De Kock, which is picked up by the reader. Inserting her story and its parallels to his into the book helps this along, but a soft focus on De Kock – the work done by the baby picture to aid us in seeing him as vulnerable and innocent – is possible only because Jansen does not say what he did. The reader of *Assassin for the State* has to get through one-third of the book before getting the first intimation of any violence on De Kock's part. Before going to visit De Kock for the first time, Jansen describes him as "one of the founding members of the notorious police unit, Koevoet" (1), and the man who "ruled the infamous Vlakplaas unit with an iron fist." (*Ibid*) Beyond that, he remains a man she visits in jail as part of a "quest for greater comprehension." (9) The reason the man was in jail – as in, why Koevoet was "notorious" and his role in it – is revealed only on page 89, and his deeds on Vlakplaas are described over just three pages at about the halfway point of the book. She withholds his crimes until the last minute, focusing on his childhood and his slow brutalisation in the army and the police, so that when we come to his violence, we come to it with empathy.

This reconstruction makes babies of her readers, too. What if you did not know De Kock first, she seems to ask. What if he was Eugene? This imaginative leap demands an act of blanking. The reader must hold a sheet over her knowledge of his violence. While doing this, a baby Eugene is placed in front of her, the tabula rasa. But something else is taking place, too. Much later in the book, Jansen asks: "When and how did things start going wrong for Eugene? … What was the seed of his moral decline?" (190) A version of this is asked again and again. In the second chapter,

Jansen states: "To understand Eugene better, I first had to get an idea of his origins." (16) Why does she want this? Why do we search for origins? Are we looking for a marker, a clue to what went wrong when? As though, if this is identifiable, or identified, we can complete the story? Although Jansen shows empathy for De Kock, it is also possible to understand her project as one of distancing. Her life arc and his begin similarly but end very differently. In searching for De Kock's origins, Jansen imagines him contaminated by some seed that caused a decline. She imagines him as human, but one remarkable to touch – physically and, I would suggest, also with empathy. Though she admits she "carr[ies] the seed of evil, as we all do" (153), wanting to pinpoint the moment De Kock's seed took root is also to announce that hers did not. This speaks to Jansen's contention and representation of De Kock: he is both perfectly normal and absolutely exceptional. Again, this takes place in the war section of the book – the need to explain De Kock's actions is coupled with a sense of revulsion that makes her want to distance herself from his violence.

De Kock's bid for parole in early January 2015 was covered by newspaper editorials, and opinion and analysis pieces. Some, like the sister of one of De Kock's victims, were absolutely against his release, but more supported it. What was striking about these articles was that they were filled with the language of reconciliation framed by the TRC, which has become almost anathema today. Jacque Pauw, the journalist who broke the story on Vlakplaas and the death squads, finishes a newspaper article titled *To Forgive a Monster* by asking that the minister who was to parole him be "brave enough to embrace the Constitution's principle of forgiveness and compassion, and give De Kock a second chance."[182] Jansen's book came out just after De Kock's release. His freedom, and the release of this book, happened just at

[182] Jacques Pauw, "To forgive a monster," *News 24*, July 15, 2014, https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/To-forgive-a-monster-20150429.

the cusp of a time in South Africa in which we are suddenly immersed in the rage of youth who will not abide structural racism, poverty and oppression any longer. On 2 February 2016, an anti-racism action forum went to the Hillbrow police station in Johannesburg to lay 22 criminal charges against former president FW de Klerk and former law and order minister Adriaan Vlok. The charges were for alleged crimes for which the two men did not receive amnesty at the TRC hearings. The thrust of the student movement seems a violent unmasking of white privilege and a call to account for the past. None of the language is in any way reconciliatory. "Fuck whites" is spray painted on the stairs and walls of Wits University and other campuses. 'Second chances' and 'renewal' are not a part of this vocabulary. Is this book, then, telling an old story, even an old lie, to soothe its reader? Or is it making the reader remember again Spectacles, Prime Evil and his deeds, even though it works to bring us a child first? Jansen writes about meeting Croucamp and others at a cafe in Johannesburg. When the topic of De Kock comes up, Jansen says: "To be honest, like most of the people at the crowded table, I hadn't thought about Eugene de Kock for years." (1) Is this rise of De Kock back into the public consciousness not a coincidence but rather a symptom of a movement that is forcing the past into the open again? Imagine the scapegoat, who was years ago loaded with all the sin and evil of the town's people, returns, let back in by the people against whom he sinned.[183] How would those townspeople react? What story would they need to tell? How would they cope with the glaring reminder?

[183] The scapegoat is part of a ritual sacrifice for public atonement described in the Book of Leviticus (16: 5–22). A goat is symbolically loaded with the communities' sins and set into the wilderness, thus fulfilling an "expiatory function by 'taking away' guilt." Roger de Verteuil, "The Scapegoat Archetype," *Journal of Religion and Health* 5, no. 3 (1966): 210.

War made me do it

Jansen mobilises the effects of war as mitigating factors in De Kock's later violence. Brutalisation from childhood onward, and especially during the Border War, caused emotional numbing and blunting, which allowed De Kock to later undertake his vicious actions against those he imagined as enemies of the state. Friends, experts and the judge in his sentencing directly and repeatedly state this.[184] A large part of the book is dedicated to his time spent in Ovamboland. Much is at stake for De Kock in tracking not only his violence, but also his barbarity to its source in war. In his amnesty hearing for the attack on a transit house in Swaziland, De Kock was asked by the chairperson, Judge Ronnie Pillay: "I just thought about [Dirk Coetzee and his men drinking and braaing while bodies burned], and I was thinking, how could a human being do something like this? Would they have received training to be able to do this?" to which De Kock replied: "No, Mr Chairperson, you will find that most of the people who were there, including Dirk Coetzee, and I would say that probably 90% of the members of my unit, all received or went through service in the former Rhodesia, where, at that stage when we got there, things were already horrendous. [Y]ou become completely desensitised, your sense of values and of life, your own life, it starts to change."[185] If not for that, if not for the horrendousness of war, how would he explain the murder on 22 April 1990 of four members of the Chand family, Samsodien, Hajira

[184] For example: "Von der Hoven also maintained that Eugene's childhood experiences taught him to repress and hide his emotions. As a result he came across as emotionally cold. This also contributed to the relentlessness and determination he displayed when tracking down and killing the enemy. Working for such a long time in a war situation caused progressive emotional blunting." (236)

[185] *TRC Amnesty Hearings: Day 4, Eugene Alexander De Kock on the Attack on Transit House in Swaziland*, February 22, 2000, http://www.sabctrc.saha.org.za/documents/amntrans/pretoria/54052.htm?t=%2Bcoetzee+%2Bdj&tab=hearings. Coetzee admitted to the TRC that he and fellow operatives had a braai next to a pyre of a man being incinerated over seven hours to cover up the evidence of the murder. I will consider this further in the next section. De Kock goes on to make an inaccurate comparison between these 'braais' and the necklacing that took place in some townships in which members of the community burned to death with tyres men and women suspected of collaborating with the government: "If you burn that person with wood or burn with a tyre, it's the same thing," De Kock states.

and their two deaf children, Amina and Ridwan, along with an unnamed security guard and the family dog? If not for the terror of service, how else to justify the pre-emptive killing of would-be ANC activists by removing the timers on grenades and limpet mines?

The effect of war on De Kock is traced from his first deployment in Rhodesia in 1968 to his departure from Koevoet in 1981. De Kock, like every other white male between 1966 and 1993, was a conscript.[186] After a stint in the army, which did not suit him because the drill instructors were rude and used bad language, he chose to be a policeman to fight terrorism.[187] Directly after his time in the police academy, he was sent to work as a beat policeman in Benoni on Johannesburg's East Rand. De Kock describes the East Rand as "a hell of a rough place." (43) There he encountered "the barbarism of the whites – against fellow whites." (45) This shocked him.[188] Two incidents remained with him. One was finding two little blonde girls, two little boys and a husband and wife dead in a house a few days after Christmas. The father had done the killing. "I was barely 20 years old," (46) De Kock writes. The other was arriving at the scene of a motorbike accident and finding that the crash victim's brain and part of his skull was 10m from the body. A story he tells about a skirmish with South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) while in the bush almost exactly

[186] As conscripts, men had to become soldiers in the South African Defence Force (SADF) or policemen in the South African Police (SAP).
[187] According to De Kock, his goal was to "become involved in counter-terrorism." (62) In the cadence of the time, those who committed acts of terror were terrorists – not freedom fighters or struggle heroes, as we call them now. Thus, my use of the term 'terrorist' relates to how De Kock and his men referred to their enemies then.
[188] Though not to the degree that makes him see that whites were equally as violent as his black enemies. Even though he had witnessed white barbarity, the barbarian was always black. In the next section, I go into this further.

mirrors this one.[189] A mortar exploded a few metres from a man, who was hit by shrapnel, which "surgically removed a piece of his scalp and his skull. Although the hole in his skull was relatively small, there was nothing inside it. His head was hollow." (101) The brain was metres away. De Kock put it in a ration pack when the body was removed. Days later, an enemy was shot, "causing his brain to hang out of his head. It looked like oatmeal." (103) Crucially, De Kock writes: "On that day, as on the day of the motorbike accident in 1970, I knew nothing would be the same again." (*Ibid*) A brain slammed out by a crash, sucked out by the force of a mortar or shot out by a gun is abject, and the horror of this image repeated throughout De Kock's early career signals the levels of violence he encountered.

Between 1969 and 1974, De Kock completed nine periods of service for the Police Anti-Terrorism Unit (PATU). During this time, he witnessed extreme viciousness, with many colleagues being killed savagely – often unfairly, in De Kock's estimation, as his enemies did not follow the conventional and international rules of warfare. During this time, De Kock developed a strong sense of indignation at the way the war was being fought, eventually convincing himself it was necessary – and even morally justifiable – to do whatever possible to stop the enemy. "[T]he security forces were bound by law," De Kock writes. "You couldn't pick someone up and torture him until he told you the truth so that you could prevent another explosion. You had to leave him and wait until he planted his next bomb. The terrorists used the very laws that prevented you from harming them to help them cause even more

[189] Guerrilla warfare meant there were seldom battles. What took place was called a 'contact', which usually involved ambushing or being ambushed. A contact was quick and often deadly. I am reminded of Mary Louise Pratt's coinage "contact zone", which she uses to describe "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact … and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality and intractable conflict." She notes that the term comes from linguistics and is used to describe an improvised language between speakers who cannot communicate. In the Border War, a contact zone was indeed characterised by racial inequality and intractable violence. The improvised language was the sound of guns. Pratt, *Imperial* Eyes, 6.

harm." (74) In the next section of this chapter, I follow his logic in coming to the conviction that he too must play dirty – for instance, by torturing for the truth – to protect civilians and defeat the terrorists.

After his time in PATU, De Kock moved to the northern Namibian town of Ruacana to work at its police station. In his report for his criminal trial, De Kock writes that he had many pleasant memories of that police station because he worked hard and made a "difference in [the] small dynamic town." (71) But he has "less pleasant memories, linked to the actions of [SWAPO]." (*Ibid*) He describes the death of a former Angolan policeman who was blown up by a mine. De Kock writes: "This hardened my attitude to so-called freedom fighters even more and just convinced me further of their inhumanity." (*Ibid*) After this, he lists a series of incidents where SAP men, members of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola and fighters in SWAPO's military wing, People's Liberation Army of Namibia die in various contacts. He is moved to the security branch in Oshakati, another town in northern Namibia, and establishes the Ovambo Home Guard. Towards the end of the section, he complains about the ineffectiveness of the security branch and Ovambo Home Guard, blaming corruption and ignorance. He writes: "I needed to move on, alone." (73)

These descriptions have a distinct pattern to them. They begin with De Kock's action, usually put in a good light, like solving issues at PATU or being an effective sergeant at Ruacana. Then they describe the barbarity of what he sees – SAP members killed during a ceasefire, innocent men blown up – which further convinces him of the inhumanity of the guerrillas. Then there is an attempt to put plans in place, especially when he realises SWAPO is more effective than the SAP, but he faces resistance from the powers that be. We are being given a picture: a passionate young man, ambitious,

deeply moral in terms of his depth of feelings for justice (and justification) aims to fight terrorists.[190] He faces terrible atrocities, abject bodies – the trauma of which, in the end, we know, will make him a cold, heartless killer – but still he carries on doggedly. He does what needs to be done, which is to protect white people from the monster that is the terrorist. The main thing missing in all of this is, again, De Kock's violence. Though there are a number of descriptions of contacts with the enemy in this section, he is always either a witness, victim – he is shot at and chased for days in one incident – or, like after the skirmish in which he loses a number of his men, a regretful but stolid leader learning hard lessons. These stories are the build-up to De Kock's time in Koevoet, the unit responsible for the deaths of thousands of people and accused of, among other things, torture, mutilation and the murder of civilians, including women and children.

In the chapter "Zulu Delta", which deals with De Kock in Koevoet, Jansen does two things simultaneously: first she recuperates – reconstructs, in her words – De Kock both in and from his past. Recuperating him in the past means she retells his story in a particular way so as to shed, if not a better, then a more complex light on his history. To do this, she sometimes mediates and softens mentions of violence, and tells the stories from different perspectives to remind us of the things overlooked in his criminal trial and his profiles in the media: his professionalism, his natural leadership ability, and his drive and determination in the most trying of circumstances. She also seems compelled to rescue him somehow from the ugliness

[190] Fervour and conviction seem necessary elements in evading forms of responsibility. In *A Human Being Died that Night*, Gobodo-Madikizela quotes Eichmann in conversation with his Jewish jailer: "You must believe me," said Eichmann following his arrest, "I was always an idealist. Had I been born Jewish, I'd have been the most fervent Zionist!" (22) De Kock makes a similar comment about his father to Gobodo-Madikizela, saying that Afrikaner nationalism was the same as the ANC's liberation struggle, and that his father once said that had be been born black, he would have joined the ANC. Gobodo-Madikizela reads this as a perpetrator's trick – to make their actions understandable, they say "What my people have done, yours have done too." (22)

of his deeds, recuperating him from the past. She hopes to help us, and herself, understand him – and possibly even excuse him – by listing a set of factors, excuses and explanations. At the same time, she is determined to distance herself from the war, De Kock's actions in it, mercilessness, violence and corruption – both monetary and of the spirit. Clear examples of these two compulsions can be read in the vexed chapter in the book when we first learn of De Kock's involvement in the killing of members of SWAPO. Again, a pattern, which is repeated twice in this section, is discernable. There is twice a version of De Kock's involvement in violent events; a set of explanations, which both distance Jansen from the possibility of violence in herself – such as testosterone and biochemistry – *and* explain, excuse or exculpate; and De Kock is praised, something his father never did.

Jansen writes:

> In a report written for Professor Anne van der Hoven [the criminologist in De Kock's 1996 court case], [De Kock] says outright that the insurgents arrested by Koevoet never appeared in court. There were only two options for SWAPO prisoners: they could work for Koevoet, or they would be 'let go' (Koevoet members used the Afrikaans expression *'laat ry'*, a euphemism for being killed). (89)

Much of this book is made up of De Kock's original writing, which often comes and goes a few times per chapter. It is notable then that Jansen mediates this report written for Van der Hoven in her own voice. Could this be a way to stand between De Kock and his terrible deeds and us, the readers, to somehow soften the blow of this violence? Not only is this our introduction to the way Koevoet and its Zulu Delta section leader, De Kock, treated SWAPO prisoners, but it is also the first mention of De Kock's involvement in *any* killing.

The passage quoted above is followed by Jansen's question: "Was there a specific order to kill SWAPO members?" (89) to which De Kock seemingly replies, "Yes", but this reply is to Gordin years earlier, which Jansen gleans from his book *A Long Night's Damage*. This leap across texts and time allows us to imagine the answer coming from De Kock now to Jansen, not in 1998 to Gordin, and in answer to a question directly put to him. Rather, we understand the question is Jansen's as part of a rhetorical construct for the reader. It works immediately to explain and even exculpate De Kock for his violence by saying the orders came from above. From here, Jansen supplies three other quite different types of explanations for violence, which are interspersed with quotes from various colleagues who praise De Kock. Her explanations come one after the other, rapid-fire, which fills this chapter with a sense of desperation not found in De Kock's military history as she's been telling it so far.

Jansen describes De Kock's appearance while in Koevoet. "[I]n Oshakati he always wore just a T-shirt, black pt [physical training] shorts and *veldskoene* without socks." (92) Unlike the very strict codes of dress and conduct in the SADF, Koevoet members could grow beards and dress in civvies. This scruffiness is noted in Gordin's introduction to *A Long Night's Damage*, in which he writes, "Pictures of [De Kock] from [his Koevoet] days, unkempt and bearded, illustrate just how deeply he had been entangled in the madness of Ovamboland."[191] Though seemingly neutral, Jansen's description works in much the same way as Gordin's use of De Kock's unkempt appearance to illustrate the toll of the war on him. Later, the difference in dress will form part of an argument that Koevoet was wholly outside of the normal rules of both military and civilian life. Jansen writes: "The two have no touchpoints." (106) Members of Koevoet were not average soldiers, who wore uniforms and shaved, and

[191] Gordin and De Kock, *A Long Night's Damage*, 30.

they were not citizens, even though they wore civvies. Being just outside both worlds meant each world's respective rules of conduct did not apply. This goes some way in explaining the deadly ruthlessness of Koevoet and of De Kock, who executed many of the enemies he caught.

Jansen, rhetorically asking how an average policeman or soldier experienced Oshakati in the 1980s, uses evidence from Anthony Feinstein's *Battle Scarred: Hidden Costs of the Border War*, a book about the author's time as one of the base's psychiatrists. She sums up Feinstein's impression of the base then as: "Oshakati: unadulterated, testosterone-soaked world of men."[192] But anyone who has read Feinstein's book would balk at this extreme simplification – almost fabrication. Though Feinstein mentions testosterone and the conscripts' focus on sex, the book is about an endless queue of men and boys experiencing anything from full-blown psychosis to crippling anxiety. Suicides were common, as were the beating and murder of wives on the base. Out at a camp in the bush, he tells a story of a man who screams and screams all night, and in the day has no memory of it. "There is a world of sadness wrapped up in these walls," Feinstein writes.[193] Why has Jansen focused on testosterone as the detail she gleans from the book? I would suggest she does this for two reasons: one, because some of what took place in Oshakati can then be ascribed to boys being driven berserk by hormones. The other is so that she can define herself as outside of this world and its violence.[194] Being a woman, she is safe from enacting this violence, because it comes from a hormone of which she has little. Testosterone is the line in the sand that allows her to remain an observer.

---

[192] Anthony Feinstein, *Battle Scarred: Hidden Costs of the Border War* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2011), 92.
[193] Feinstein, *Battle Scarred*, 20.
[194] Her need to divorce herself could be more acute because she lived in Shinyungwe in the Caprivi Strip while her husband worked on the highway between Rundu and Katima Mulilo only four years after the war in Namibia ended. She had no political consciousness then.

Next, Jansen quotes writer and photographer Joe Hooper, who wrote a book about his experiences while observing Koevoet in 1987. Hooper tells Jansen that the most difficult thing to understand is "why certain men become addicted to warfare … These men share an above-average IQ and a specific biochemistry – a genetic disposition – for risk. It is particularly evident in those with an elongated DRD4 gene, which rewards near-death experiences with dopamine." (93) Here, the explanation is biological. Clever men, not thugs, are both addicted to war and the brain chemical dopamine – and thus suffer from the disease of addiction – and are biologically wired for it. Yet this turn to biology for explanations and exculpations uses the same logic as the racist theories of biology that propped up the whole apartheid edifice: black people were *biologically* inferior to white people, and this could be proved by means of so-called empirical science. Their inferiority was in their DNA, inescapable, unchangeable, and thus it was a part of their nature to be whatever racist epitaph – lazy, stupid, violent – was given to them. De Kock notes that his father "resigned from the [Broederbond] because they refused to acknowledge the black man as a person." (21) Jansen's use of biology to differentiate herself from men's violence does something similar to how the Broederbond defined black people as non-human. It also reflects De Kock's argument, which I will comment on later in the chapter, that he *learned* his violence from black people.

Jansen then cites Hooper describing De Kock as "one of the most impressive people he'd ever met … A brilliant tactician and strategist, a lateral thinker, mercilessly effective against the enemy, a loyal friend, enigmatic." (93)[195] An ex-Koevoet member then describes him as having "a certain magnetism" (*Ibid*). After a

[195] Note that De Kock is described as a tactician. In the introduction to this chapter, I wrote about critics arguing that De Kock's release from prison was part of a long game. Was his remorse a strategy, a tactic, to get his way in the end? Was he carefully and consciously playing into the tropes of the time – including asking for and getting forgiveness – to manipulate a system?

long section written by De Kock – including, for instance, "We … received six .38 revolvers with 600 soft-nosed bullets. For executions. Assassinations … night work" (94) – Jansen quotes former Koevoet member Rodney Bradley: "Gene was a fantastic leader … Look, he was explosive, but he was a wonderful leader." (103) Another former member, Dawid Hattingh, says: "He had a very short fuse" (*Ibid*), but then Jansen writes that, according to Hattingh, De Kock was "a charismatic dynamic leader who commanded huge respect." (104) Over and over, violence is mentioned, but then De Kock is quickly praised for something else.

Hattingh describes him getting into bar fights. Head of Koevoet Colonel Hans Dreyer would ask, "Gene, who won?", and when De Kock said the Koevoet men did, "Dreyer would … smile mischievously and say, 'Right, now, fuck off.'" (105) This description has a distinct boys-will-be-boys flavour to it. Yet Arn Durand, an ex-Koevoet member, details these fights as deadly and dirty, with men being severely injured. Usually they followed bouts of heavy drinking, and spoke of undirected and unstoppable rage. He writes of contemplating suicide, and how many members of Koevoet killed themselves.[196] The mischievous smile masks horror here. Later, another ex-Koevoet member, Willie Nortje, notes: "After hours in the canteen, fights with army troops often broke out. Sometimes Eugene initiated these fights." (110) Jansen details that Nortje says this with a twinkle in his eye. This type of language is used in the very beginning of the book. Jansen says that De Kock told his war and Vlakplaas stories with "a twinkle in his eye." (13) Is this akin to a wink? Is he being ironic? That twinkle seems similar to the mischievous smile; it masks horror.

Finally, Jansen describes De Kock as deadly, a loose canon. "Dreyer put up with a great deal – Eugene's temper, the cursing, the after-hour punch-ups." (105)

[196] See: Arn Durand, *Zulu Zulu Golf: Life and Death with Koevoet* (Zebra Press: Cape Town, 2011); and Arn Durand, *Zulu Zulu Foxtrot: To Hell and Back with Koevoet* (Zebra Press: Cape Town, 2012).

This is a turnaround from her more positive descriptions, but it serves a final explanation. De Kock cannot only be an effective, attractive leader beset with male chemicals. Much has been done to set him up as deeply affected by what was going on. He needs to be unravelling, too, which will explain his later viciousness. According to both Dreyer and De Kock, he was in fact out of control and dangerous, but Jansen's mention of it has an odd tacked-on feel. The chapter defines members of Koevoet as rogues, out of control with violence, pride and alcohol; helpless addicts; *and* eminent professionals. It ends with the fragment: "To be god" (106) on its own line. Though ambiguous, Jansen uses this to sum up a final move in her sets of explanations. The men had God complexes. Thus, her excuses run from the biological all the way to the philosophical.

"Zulu Delta" jumps from topic to topic, and thus seems the most jumbled chapter in the book. What is Jansen doing here? This is the reader's introduction to De Kock's violence in Koevoet – and his violence in general – so it is the point at which our empathy for the man potentially dries up. She seems invested in covering for De Kock. Each time his violence is mentioned, Jansen counters it with something good: 'Yes, but…'. She also seems to have something at stake in divorcing herself from this world – making it clear that she does not even have the physical ability to enact De Kock's type of merciless violence. Nowhere else in *Assassin for the State* is it more obvious that Jansen wants to explain and even understand De Kock, but the explanations she gives mean she can never personally do so – and from no fault of her own; it is her gender and her DNA. There is a push-pull here apparent in many parts of the book. Like her need to describe De Kock as both completely normal and completely exceptional in the first part, Jansen writes De Kock's violence as both

understandable and excusable – because some of her explanations are biological – and, in choosing reasons that would never apply to her, abhorrent.

To serve, protect and kill

'It was war' is a sentiment as powerful as it is well worn. In *Assassin for the State*, it works in two ways. The first is in the sense of an excuse. In South Africa, this is used extensively. Take Dr Wouter Basson, dubbed Doctor Death for his work in the apartheid chemical weapons programme. "I had nothing to do with apartheid … I was a soldier doing a job and was helping South Africa's defensive abilities," Basson told journalist Tanya Farber.[197] Later in the article, he says again, "What I did was for the good of the country, for things like crowd control. They said doctors shouldn't get involved, but I was a soldier doing a job like any other." Bizarrely, Basson says that critics should look at the 3 000 other doctors who did national service if they "want to attack me, or associate me with what happened in the army." Saying he was a soldier and then saying that associating him with what happened in the army would be an attack on him are mutually exclusive, but this seems not to worry the practising Cape Town cardiologist. A few things are happening here: Basson says twice he was a soldier doing his job. This is a rehash of the oft-used defence, 'I had no choice'. This is why being a soldier, especially a conscript, in a war is an important and often necessary role to take up, even if, as is the case with De Kock, who was a policeman, it is not completely true. It allows the exculpatory disclaimer: I was ordered to do it. For Basson, the work he did for the SADF while he was a soldier was a job like any other. Just doing your job is another way to avoid culpability. Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg describes how the hundreds of thousands of men and women who

[197] Tanya Farber, "'I was like a scientist working on a cure for Aids,' says Wouter Basson," *Sunday Times*, January 17, 2016, https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2016-01-17-i-was-like-a-scientist-working-on-a-cure-for-aids-says-wouter-basson/.

worked for the war machine – clerks, administrators, typists and so on – that decimated Europe's Jewish population avoided responsibility by imagining themselves as 'just doing their jobs'. They were mere cogs, whose part was so tiny it had no links whatsoever to the human ash that daily rained down on the obscure town of Oświęcim, or Auschwitz. Divorcing apartheid from his role as a soldier enacts a similar uncoupling: Basson refuses to make the link between being a soldier for the government that oppressed, and the act of that oppression, named apartheid, and its consequences. Basson's logic is so strained it is laughable, but this mode of thinking can be found across the board, from ex-SADF servicemen to apartheid goons and all the assassins in between. Far from its supposed connection to the very stuff of manliness, being a soldier is here at once mundane (it was just a job) and means one is powerless (I had no choice) while in the control of men better suited to the work of war (I was ordered to do it). The men who gave the orders should be blamed. And these men, as was the case in South Africa, reflect that culpability right back, saying the soldiers were rogue agents working outside of the specific orders of well-meaning generals and politicians.

A war is also containable. It has a start and an end. It has geography. It has scope – in the Border War's case, it was a hot war fought in the style of guerrilla warfare, considerably backed up on one side by the Soviet Union. When it ended, what happened during it – the human rights atrocities, the torture by welding machine, the mass graves – were left behind. The men went back home, the land recovered, years passed. Veterans were compelled to keep quiet and move on. Jansen experienced this when trying to communicate with former members of Koevoet, who said: "What happens in Oshakati stays in Oshakati." (128) A conspiracy of silence

allowed soldiers to imagine their actions as exceptions in a highly particular moment: 'I did what I felt was necessary to survive – it wasn't me, it was war.'

But when the Border War was officially over, the white men who went in as heroes in the fight against communism returned as demons in the aid of a racist war. A mental shift had to take place for them, and quickly. So the conscript took up the role of victim; these men were forced by a coercive, brutal government to fight an enemy they did not hate in a war that was not theirs. This is the second thing war does. It makes the soldier a victim. What the soldier has to witness and often has to do scars him for life, in some cases, ruins him – certainly, emotional recovery is a long, sometimes unending, road. 'It was war' is a strong liquor for men trying to explain their actions.[198]

Being a soldier is important for De Kock's contention of himself, and this is certainly reflected in *Assassin for the State*. His childhood chapter, "Boy Soldier", is the beginning of a careful construction of him as a soldier and *not* a policeman. After "Boy Solider" comes "Hear the Mighty Rumbling", which is a translation of the first line of an Afrikaans song *Die Lied van Jong Suid Afrika (The Song of Young South Africa),* a patriotic call to arms. The following chapter is called "From Policeman to Soldier": it is not difficult to track the movement towards De Kock being embodied as a soldier. Why does he not want to be a policeman? What is the difference? Anthropologist Julia Hornberger suggests these roles became blurred in later apartheid. She charts how the police force took on a counter-insurgency role as many of South Africa's neighbouring countries began to fight for independence, becoming

[198] Being the victors, soldiers for Umkhonto we Sizwe did not need to take up the victim narrative to the degree white soldiers had to, but the same explanation, 'it was war', is used to describe their actions. Robert McBride, for instance, in his amnesty application for bombing a bar in Durban, expressed his sorrow for the part he had in several deaths, noting, "This is the tragedy of the civil war that South Africa experienced as a result of apartheid." Later, he states, "We were at war." *TRC Amnesty Hearings*: *Day 6, Robert McBride*, October 5, 1999, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/1999/9909271013_dbn_991005db.htm.

militarised. Hornberger describes this as "a usurpation of regular policing by a military stance, with military methods and equipment."[199] This also meant that, like in the military, the chain of command was top-down, making dissent difficult and punishable. "Consequently, those who are subject to this kind of policing become seen as enemies and can thus be easily dehumanised, which in turn permits excessive use of force."[200] These militarised police units also focused inwards as dissent flared up in townships around the country. They were often aided by the military. In fact, there was a "constant interchange of personnel between the military and the police."[201] Yet there is a definite investment in being a soldier and not a policeman, though the roles became all but interchangeable. I presented a version of this part of this chapter at a conference for Border War conscripts at Stellenbosch University in early 2016. Much of the paper focused on De Kock's time as a 'soldier' – even though he was technically not a soldier but a policeman.[202] During the discussion afterwards, many of the ex-servicemen in attendance were furious that I had called De Kock a soldier. He was a policeman, they said, part of a special unit that did ungodly things. De Kock and his cronies in Koevoet had nothing to do with normal servicemen, who saw few contacts and who were not involved in the violent actions of police anti-terrorist units. In naming him a soldier, I had levelled him with the veterans in the room, whom, I imagine, had much at stake in being soldiers – and conscripts at that – for some of the reasons listed above. Indeed, the police were roundly despised not only for their brutal

[199] Julia Hornberger, *Policing and Human Rights: The Meaning of Violence and Justice in the Everyday Policing of Johannesburg* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 25.
[200] Hornberger, *Policing*, 25
[201] Hornberger, *Policing*, 26.
[202] This really is a technicality. The South African police handled the early years of the war (1966 to 1973). According to Richard Dale, using police instead of the SADF meant that the "Pretoria regime could portray [the skirmishes] as between law and order types and criminal elements", and, at that point, the SADF was not well trained in the intelligence aspect of counter-insurgency warfare. Richard Dale, *The Namibian War of Independence, 1966-1989: Diplomatic, Economic and Military Campaigns* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2014), 93. But they were policemen in name only. They did the work of soldiers.

methods of quelling protests, but also because "apartheid policing systematically controlled black life and labour, and created and enforced racial and ethnic boundaries among the non-white population … [allowing] racially partisan policing to be presented as simply defending the law."[203] Police had legislated power and used it to prop up white supremacy. Thus to be a policeman was to mindlessly "serv[e] the interests of the government … Policing was *all* about politics."[204] Politics and pettiness was seemingly not a part of being a soldier. When the servicemen at the conference reminded themselves that Koevoet members, and arch-villains such as De Kock, were policemen and not soldiers, it allowed them to distance themselves from this cruelty and racism. In the first instance, it is because going into the police is a career – these men chose to be policemen – whereas the government that enlisted conscripted soldiers gave them few good choices outside of compliance. (That De Kock was also a conscript is never mentioned.) De Kock's murderousness as a policeman also comforts men who have been involved in violence because his became the benchmark, so a conscript could potentially think: 'I was bad, but never *that* bad.' Finally, a soldier's duty is to obey orders and kill; a policeman's is to serve and protect.[205] De Kock and other security branch operators perverted this. Unless they countenance themselves as soldiers, they are the very worst policemen. Jansen suggests that being militarised policemen meant they were "trained not in normal policing but in wiping out the enemy." (157) In a discussion at the end of the conference on who should be invited to the next year's event, the veterans unanimously voted against allowing policemen to participate.

[203] Hornberger, *Policing*, 25.
[204] Hornberger, *Policing*, 30.
[205] To counter its bad image, the SAP unveiled a new slogan, *Servamus et Servimus* – We serve and We Protect – in 1984.

A former Koevoet member and Vlakplaas operator, to whom Jansen gives the pseudonym Johnny, goes some way in explaining why being a soldier is important to how operators like him understood the viciousness of their actions:

> We [Koevoet] left Ovamboland with a certain mentality – we were losing the war there, but it had shifted, as we saw it, to South Africa. This, among other reasons, was why we acted so aggressively. We were soldiers, it was ingrained in us. Ordinary policemen did not have that mind-set – they had families and stable jobs, they were in comfort zones. So, we were used to do the dirty work that these ordinary policemen were not prepared to do. (157)

Johnny also told Jansen that he overheard De Kock once saying to a police officer: "We are not a butchery.[206] We can't just do your dirty work for you." (*Ibid*) But, of course, he and his unit did do the dirty work. Johnny states that because they were soldiers, aggression was ingrained in them. This contention is similar to the one made in saying 'It was war'. It imagines that because they were soldiers, they had no choice but to act with extreme violence. A sense of helplessness in something being ingrained also comes through. He shifts the war from the bush to inside South Africa's borders, making what they did acts of protection while also being acts of war, where violence is sanctioned, even encouraged. Saying ordinary policemen were not prepared to do the dirty work intimates that they were mindless cowards, and thus that the 'soldiers' doing the work had the courage to do what was necessary. Being a soldier then confers both honour and helplessness. Soldiers were brave victims or

[206] In the next part of this chapter, I look into some of the animalising language in the book and how it works inside a twisted moral universe. A 'butchery' makes animals of the men and women the security branch murdered.

pragmatic heroes. A resolute yet traumatised soldier is less culpable for his acts of violence than an average policeman.

Yet, the policeman's adage to 'serve and protect' meant something imaginatively for De Kock. Von der Hoven notes that "the police was more than simply a career for Eugene – it was a calling to defend his country and his people and also to protect them from communism … The SAP was seen as the personification of what was right and just; it had to protect the community at any cost." (236) This high-mindedness and sense of duty, coupled with everything that comes with also being a soldier, means the reader understands De Kock as something close to noble. This goes some way in carefully separating him from the average apartheid policeman, who grimly enacted everyday cruelty in demanding *dompasse*, routinely arresting men and women without charges, and walking the beat with batons swinging. In protecting *his* community at any cost, De Kock is certainly not the bureaucrat, mindlessly enforcing the often-petty rules of oppression, unwilling to take risks, without passion.

All of the excuses and explanations for violence supplied by Jansen, along with war's emotional toll and the work of both a good policeman and a brave soldier, make an argument, albeit a rather contradictory one, for why De Kock later acted so savagely in the depraved space of Vlakplaas. Being a soldier, he was emotionally blunted, ingrained with aggression and dangerous; being a policeman, he was duty bound to protect the white citizen with any and all means at his disposal. It was war. He was just doing his job.

Hunting men on farms

The heart of this book is the heart of the farm, Vlakplaas.[207] I mean this literally: the chapter "A Place Called Vlakplaas" is almost exactly in the middle of this 300-page book. And I also mean it figuratively: Vlakplaas was a farm, and thus retained within its perimeters the heft of myth that connected Afrikaners naturally to the land.[208] The 'vlak' of Vlakplaas — which in English sounds like a lisped 'fuck' and in Afrikaans is close to 'vok' — has become a dirty word because of what took place there. But it means level or flat: Flatfarm. For a moment, imagine it as that: no longer easily banished or only whispered about, but a farm like any other.

This defamiliarisation takes place for Jansen when she visits the farm. Something of this is also found in Gobodo-Madikizela's account of her visit to the farm.[209] Though their journeys are 14 years apart, their opening interactions with the space are remarkably similar. Both women get lost and have to ask for directions. Gobodo-Madikizela, who has a map drawn by De Kock that takes her in circles, asks a teller at a shop and is given directions. (She also asks an Indian couple, who live close to the farm. They claim they have never heard of it.) Jansen asks builders who say, "Dikoko's place? … It's that way." (143) For both women, the difficulty of finding the place added weight to its deadly secrecy. For Gobodo-Madikizela, Vlakplaas "was the ideal setting for the concealment of some of the more gruesome

[207] When Coetzee confessed his involvement in Vlakplaas to Pauw in 1989, he said that he was "in the heart of the whore". Pauw later used this as the title of his book on death squads. See: Jacques Pauw, *In the Heart of the Whore: The Story of Apartheid's Death Squads* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1991).
[208] JM Coetzee describes this as an "organic mode of consciousness belonging to a people [the Afrikaners], who, from toiling generation after generation on the family farm, have divested themselves of individuality and become embodiments of an enduring bloodline stretching back into the mythologized past." *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 6. This was vital in as far as it was necessary that the farm and white people's working it were imagined as natural, self-evident and ordained by God.
[209] Gobodo-Madikizela's description of the farm also sits at just over the halfway point of her book.

schemes that the apartheid government constructed."[210] When both women approach the gate, dogs run up to it and bark. The final difference, though, is that Gobodo-Madikizela is never able to enter the farm, while Jansen is. "Vlakplaas was as inscrutable, as impregnable," writes Gobodo-Madikizela, "as it had ever been in De Kock's time."[211] This is after being told by a white woman in the distance that she needs to make an appointment with the Department of Public Works. Jansen goes around the back and is let in.

I see both women with their hands meshed through a farm fence, both seeing the farmhouse and its surrounding buildings – which, for Jansen, 14 years later, are dilapidated. Both women comment on the strange, tranquil beauty of the place, though, for Gobodo-Madikizela, there is "something still haunting"[212] about it, while Jansen claims that "[t]he voices of the past no longer even whisper [at Vlakplaas]." (146) Crucially, Jansen, a white woman, can access the space, whereas Gobodo-Madikizela, a black woman, is turned away at the gate. Though there are a number of factors that might have affected the possibility of entry for either woman, not least the passing of more than a decade, access or the barring of access remains a symbol of the power relations effected and played out around the edges of a farm. These ripple out and can be read along other boundaries – perhaps most especially along the national border.

Vlakplaas, I would like to argue, enacts a twisted version, taken to its furthest extreme, of the logic that the act of farming and of protecting a farm's boundaries is natural and even moral. Though filled with much emotional tension, Jansen's description of Vlakplaas skips over both the 'vlak' of Vlakplaas – the dirty word, the

[210] Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being*, 104.
[211] Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being*, 107.
[212] Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being*, 107.

dirtiness of what took place – and the 'plaas' of it: in the end, she pronounces it inert, the voices of its past silent. Yet some of her comments snag on this bid for the ordinariness of this place, reminding us not of the light she is looking for, but of darkness.

Terror on the farm

"A Place Called Vlakplaas" marks the first real intimation of any ambivalence on Jansen's part for De Kock. "[T]here was the hard reality of my visits [to De Kock]: the knowledge that the man with the soft voice who sat opposite me had committed some of those murders with his own hands – those neatly groomed hands, resting in his lap." (153) It is also the moment De Kock's deadliness outside of his life at war is described in full. Finally, after 150 pages, the reader begins to understand why this man was in prison. The tone of the writing shifts here.

"Brothers in Arms", in which De Kock reconciles with the former head of Koevoet, Colonel Dreyer, after almost 30 years of estrangement, precedes the Vlakplaas chapter. This is the final chapter on De Kock's role as a soldier or military-style policeman in Koevoet. It follows the story of his undoing in Ovamboland, in which he fights with Dreyer and realises he is becoming mentally unstable. "Brothers in Arms" reflects on the brotherhood and friendships made in war, and the lack of truth in terms of what actually happened; details some overseas operations De Kock was involved in; and ends with De Kock and Dreyer embracing. To say the chapter is upbeat or joyful would miss its mournful tones. Jansen ends it with: "His eyes were empty, as if the wind blew through them." (141) But there is playfulness in it. Jansen brings a friend, Carina, with her to prison when De Kock meets Dreyer there. The Melville Koppies murderer, a one-eyed man described earlier in the book, helps Carina with her tray of food. She asks another prisoner to show her his tattoo, to

which she sighs, "A thing of beauty will always be beautiful." (139) Carina is then egged on by Jansen to show the prisoner her tattoo on her stomach. The lightness in this exchange adds to the sense of catharsis experienced by De Kock in his interaction with Dreyer. On this note, the chapter wraps up the section – which runs to almost half the book – of De Kock's time in the bush, at the border and in the army.

Then the tone changes. Looking through the fence of Vlakplaas in the opening beats of the following chapter, "the metallic taste of blood settled in [Jansen's] throat. [She] felt nauseous and dizzy." (143) The visceral nature of this description is matched only in her opening description of how South Africa's "blood-soaked past punched [her] in the stomach." (7) When leaving the farm, Jansen gets "behind the steering wheel with unsteady legs." (145) She realises that though she has read many books on it, "the violence of the apartheid past and the abuses of the security forces" (*Ibid*) still evade her. "I have to force myself over the edge of innocence into the abyss of inhumanity." (*Ibid*) After being told by De Kock about the smell people give off the moment before they die, Jansen writes: "That day, a door to understanding opened in my mind. At the same time, I felt something died in my soul." (154) This writing locates some of her interaction with this material, the space of the farm and De Kock himself, in her body. She is nauseous, dizzy, tastes blood. Her legs are unsteady. But it also causes her metaphysical distress. She is in the abyss of inhumanity, and part of her soul dies as a result. In no other part of the book is her language so charged. Nowhere else is she particularly reflexive about her bodily reactions or her sense of inner wounding. Here she is closest to Gobodo-Madikizela's unflinching self-reflexivity and honesty. Some of what she writes in this chapter – for instance, "I experienced terrible anger and powerlessness at the thought that apartheid had been maintained for so long, so cruelly, by the death squads and the defence

force" (154) – redeems the book from what was becoming an increasingly impersonal treatise on why De Kock is not fully to blame.

But, after gaining access to Vlakplaas from its back entrance, Jansen writes: "Suddenly it looked just like an ordinary, neglected farmstead." (145) As she ranges around, she is struck over and over by this ordinariness. I understand what Jansen is getting at here. Years ago, I visited Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp in Austria. Outside there is a quarry. On the edge of it, concentration camp inmates who could no longer work were lined up. Each would push the person in front over the edge. If they refused, they would be shot – or, the soldiers intimated, perhaps not. That tiniest slice of hope that maybe they would not go over meant that almost everyone pushed their fellow. When I heard this story, my mouth filled with saliva. I sat down. Slowly, as I calmed, I heard birdsong. When I looked up again, I saw the place as the birds did. Blank, empty. It was no longer charged with death, with the past. It was a quarry, and there was a birds' nest. But I remember that moment so clearly because it was so strange to see the world glimmering in two: the past scratched into the very sides of the quarry and the mundanity of birds. It is like holding your hand over one eye and then the other, the world moving in and out. Yet this wrenching the past out of the present does not seem to cause Jansen the cognitive dissonance you would expect from someone so viscerally involved. The place that a moment ago was so charged – the finger trembling on the trigger, the bullet a whistle away – is discharged. All is plain, just the familiar ground, the heat, the run-down farmstead. "We went to the rondavel that was Eugene's office, the farmhouse and the undercover entertainment area. It looked like a braai area you'd find on any other South African farm … I peered through the window, no sign of the pool tables [or] the bearded men." (146)

For her, the past did not remain on the farm.[213] But she is forgetting something crucial: South African farms, which all apparently have similar braai areas, hold their own charge – the very land, disputed, filled with myth, does too. And this charge and discharge of the land is like the charge and discharge of a gun: it is as violent and often as deadly.

The hunt

Scholar Andre Goodrich observes that hunting is intimately connected to farm life – it "was … a part of the rhythm of being [on a farm], an activity associated with that mode of living on the land."[214] Men hunted for the pot or to protect their cattle. It was natural, more natural now in fact than commercial hunting on game farms where animals are in a more 'natural' or wild environment. Hunting on farms had a purpose. It was not an "extraordinary activity or a leisure pursuit."[215] As one of Goodrich's interviewees noted: the result of hunting's integration into the farm's everyday rhythm was that "there was no contrast between everyday life and going hunting; the two blended into one another, especially in terms of the meat."[216] I wonder at this intersection – hunting and farming, the necessity and intimacy of the two for life on the land.

---

[213] The feeling that the trauma is not visible on this land is also expressed by journalist Paul Ash: "Perhaps, if you didn't know better, Vlakplaas would look no different to any other of the thousands of similar farmsteads that dot this country: the red tin roof, faded white walls, a braai area, various scattered outbuildings and willow trees along the river banks." "From Fafi to Vlakplaas," *Times Live*, September 23, 2011, http://www.timeslive.co.za/lifestyle/travel/2010/02/23/from-fafi-tovlakplaas; by artist Jo Ractliffe in her photo series *Vlakplaas: 2 June 1999 (drive-by shooting)*, who commented: "There was nothing but a seemingly innocuous farmhouse, surrounded by a country landscape, next to the Hennops River." (Stevenson Gallery, 1999); and by Merryn Singer, who painted detailed Vlakplaas landscapes in her blood. For more on this, see the fascinating photo-archive master's thesis project "The Farm" by Renzske Scholtz-Hofmeyr (available at OpenUCT, https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/11298). Scholtz-Hofmeyr's family owned Vlakplaas before it was sold to the government, and so his project details this exact dissonance photographically.
[214] Andre Goodrich, *Biltong Hunting as a Performance of Belonging in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 110.
[215] Goodrich, *Biltong Hunting*, 112.
[216] Goodrich, *Biltong Hunting*, 112.

Hunting animals comes up several times in the book, and is always coupled with something like queasiness. In the opening section, which describes his childhood, De Kock recalls killing a bird with a clod of soil. He writes: "I was scared stiff, but proud because I had hunted … I would say from that moment onwards I also felt like a hunter." (25) But, when he shows the dead bird to his mother, she looks at him "with a pained expression", which he thinks "may have been caused by what she realised was my loss of innocence." (*Ibid*) He is instructed to bury the bird. Earlier, he mentions killing and plucking chickens on his family's plot. "Despite my young age, it troubled me that meat and chicken came to the dinner table at a price." (19) He later describes a rooster on his plot at the police headquarters. The children, presumably his, named it Red, and when De Kock tells them they will one day eat Red, they make a fuss, and De Kock says: "It's okay, I'll go and buy a chicken for us." (64) Asked by Jansen if he ever hunts, De Kock replies he's probably shot a total of three buck in his life, which he did not eat. "You know," he says to Jansen, looking away, "once you've hunted people, shooting a buck is never the same again. It sounds bad – but that's how it is." (*Ibid*) What exactly is it that sounds bad in this sentence? Is De Kock levelling men and animals, or worse, elevating animals above men? Certainly, hunting has become twisted for De Kock, so the pleasure of it has shifted. But, as I will argue, this twist is not a break from the sense that hunting is simply part of life – and especially for De Kock, who, from a very young age, felt like a hunter. The book's final moments describe, in De Kock's words, what he'll do when he gets out of prison. It includes sitting quietly in nature, watching and listening. "Everything that made me a good hunter. Not of animals." (301) That is the last line. The act of hunting is then both embedded in De Kock's life – it seems to be a part of his personhood, a necessary self-descriptor – and disturbing for him.

The language of hunting fills *Assassin for the State*. Jansen states that members of Koevoet think of De Kock as "a consummate hunter of men." (140) Men, black men at least, are animalised, and white men, especially De Kock, hunt them. Vlakplaas was "accommodation for contaminated witnesses, also called '*makgemaakte terroriste'* (literally, terrorists who had been tamed)." (146) Describing an attempt to kill Zwelibanzi Nyanda (incidentally the human being from Gobodo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died that Night*), Jansen writes: "Eugene could not get Nyanda to go down. And he was an excellent shot." (149) After Glory Sedibe, the main askari in Dlamini's *Askari*, is hit in the face with a pistol; he too "went down". (179) Despite an articulated unease and discomfort with hunting, his entire narrative is steeped in it.

It also contains the language of hunting's result: trophies. Men received money, or *kopgeld,* for the number of terrorists they killed. There was a scoreboard in Koevoet numbering how many kills a unit got. It was a competition.[217] When De Kock, Rambo-like, finds himself "alone in central Ovamboland with as many as 80 fully armed, fully loaded mortar-aiming SWAPO members" (80) pursuing him, he comments: "SWAPO did their best to shoot a 'whitey' as a Roland Ward [sic] trophy." (*Ibid*) [218] The mention of race in this sentence is one of the very few in the book; I will go into further detail about this in the conclusion to this chapter. It seems inevitable that the language of hunting would fill a book like this because much of what De Kock did was hunt: he tracked people, snuck up on them, caught them off guard, shot them, and tallied them as part of a headcount.

---

[217] Jansen, quoting former Koevoet member Larry Hanton, puts it like this: "Lots of bodies (*koppe* literally 'heads') on their side, and fewer on your side, meant a contact was successful." (89) Also consider the rumours that some members of the elite unit took ears and noses for trophies.
[218] Rowland Ward was a British taxidermist who, in 1892, started a series of books recording the measurements of big game. The books endure today.

Hunting grounds the identity of Afrikaner masculinity. Like farming, it links one into a chain reaching as far back as the first settlers. In the late 1700s, a traveller into the interior of South Africa, John Barrow, came across Afrikaner settlements. He called them "African peasants".[219] Like other African communities, the Afrikaner hunted and gathered, as well as kept some herds. These traditions were carried north by the Voortrekkers – these courageous men who suffered but had the iron will to find and establish self-determination, tamed the land with guns and then worked the land with toil. The perimeter of that ground was patrolled and protected from the wild and uncivil outside of it, thus hunting is about both mastery over the land and an intimate connection with it. You hunt a predator the way a predator hunts you – with patience, stealth and deadly accuracy. To hunt well, you must be versed in bush lore: tracking, moving upwind or downwind, approaching in perfect silence. It is also an expression of supremacy, forming part of a rite of passage through which masculinity is imagined. Ruth Irwin Weidner, writing about hunting imagery and gender, states that it is "[t]hrough the act of hunting [that] the male affirms his own masculine identity."[220] She argues that this happens by bagging trophies of game to take back to the feminine domestic sphere as tokens or signs of his prowess as a provider. Similarly, sociologists Sine Anahita and Tamara Mix write: "hunting is intimately connected with issues of masculinity: the discourses surrounding natural rights, family provider, paternalist duty, instinct, traditional culture, route to authority, and sustaining traditional community life are all tightly woven with concepts of masculinity."[221]

---

[219] John Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (Britain, 1801) in Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 62.
[220] Ruth Irwin Weidner, "Gifts of Wild Game: Masculine and Feminine in Nineteenth Century Hunting Imagery," in *The Material Culture of Gender, The Gender of Material Culture*, eds. Katherine Martinez and Kenneth L Ames (Delaware: The Du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997), 341.
[221] Sine Anahita and Tamara Mix, "Retrofitting Frontier Masculinity for Alaska's War Against Wolves," *Gender and Society* 20, no. 3 (2006): 335.

For many Afrikaners, hunting is inherited, usually taught by the father at an early age at home on the farm, as De Kock was. Part of the lesson was the moral necessity of protecting the land, the farm, the stock, the women. Its connection to masculine prowess, supremacy, protection and morality is extended to soldiering, which enacts the same sets of relations, only on the larger scale of the national border. Soldiering, as an extension of the hunt, then also retains the sense that it is natural, and thus even possibly both good and right – moral – to be a hunter of men. It is, after all, not a great leap when the men are black and the ideology of the day constantly flirted with the racist science that black people were subhuman.

The connection between hunting, masculinity and morality is articulated by social scientists JA Mangan and Callum McKenzie, who look into the middle-class masculinity enacted by the Shikar Club via the romance and nobleness of big-game hunting in Africa.[222] "Big-game hunters represented the moral superiority of the male, chivalric tradition which comprised values crucial for social, political and moral leadership."[223] To be a man was to hunt, and to hunt was to be moral. But what is striking about the Shikar Club is the way in which this morality was bound up in notions of fair play. The club members advocated a "more romantic, moral and spiritual approach to hunting, which revelled in a love of forest, mountain and desert, and gloried in the acquired knowledge of the habitats of animals, in the strenuous pursuit of an active and dangerous quarry, in the instinct for a well-devised approach to a fair shooting distance."[224] Thus, along with a giving one a sense of the moral superiority of men, hunting was associated with a keen sense of justice.

---

[222] This was a hunting club established in 1909 to advocate the merits of the blood sport, especially in terms of big-game hunting.
[223] JA Mangan and Callum McKenzie, "Radical Conservatives: Middle-Class Masculinity, the Shikar Club and Big-Game Hunting," in *Reformers, Sport, Modernizers: Middle-Class Revolutionaries*, ed. JA Mangan (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2002), 197.
[224] Mangan and McKenzie, "Radical Conservatives", 190.

For De Kock, justice in the form of fair play was very important. This sounds patently untrue: De Kock was a master of dirty tricks. Yet in the book, one can track how this sense of fair play warped into murder and torture while continuing to claim a sense of justice. Early in his career in the bush as part of the counter-insurgency units in Rhodesia, De Kock encounters two incidents. The first, in which terrorists captured, tortured and killed five SAP members, "showed the cold-bloodedness and murderous intent of the enemy's actions." (50) De Kock comments that he "understood from the Rhodesian Police that no convention [here he is talking about the Geneva War Convention], of any kind, meant anything to these so-called freedom fighters." (51) The phrase 'so-called' comes up over and over. He calls them "so-called humanists" who were "not the democrats they claimed to be" (54), and repeats "so-called freedom fighters" (53) a few pages later. This obviously mocks the language used by the international community to refer to the efforts of the men and women fighting the Ian Smith government in then Rhodesia. It also implies that he has an inside edge, knows these so-called people better, understands their murderousness. Notice that he mentions the Geneva Convention: that set rules for conduct in war. The terrorists did not follow the rulebook; it was not fair.

The second incident he encountered shocked him and made him "realise [his police unit wasn't] dealing with human beings." (50-51) During a ceasefire in which peace negotiations between freedom fighters and the Rhodesian government were taking place, terrorists captured seven SAP members and, after humiliating them in front of the patrons of a nearby shop, shot most of them. De Kock wanted to launch a follow-up operation but could not on account of the truce. "Clearly the rules and legalities of warfare applied only to security forces and not to terrorists," (58) De Kock comments later. This event had an enormous impact on him. De Kock writes: "I

have thought so many times in my life about how our men had no chance. If this was the ideology we were up against, surely we were justified in resisting it with every fibre our being, using any means? ... I decided that day to fight against this scum, with every conceivable means at my disposal." (53-54) They were justified in resisting an enemy that did not play fair, and who were then immoral and ignoble – more, who were not human beings. Describing the enemy as terrorists and less than human, using "so-called" to mock their pretensions, and finally simply calling them scum would have helped De Kock divorce the Kantian notion of all humans having equal dignity from these particular men.[225] Here we find De Kock's attitude hardening and eventually becoming galvanised by what he thinks of as the unfair practices of the terrorist. For him, then, an equal Machiavellianism became morally right as the only possible action to take. In his afterword to *A Long Night's Damage*, Gordin comments that De Kock "appears to have had so highly a developed sense of morality, he killed for it."[226] But it is important to note that it is only after De Kock encounters the terrorists, those violent black men, that he justifies his use of any and all forms of violence. Thus, De Kock's sense of justice carries within it a link to the racist notion that black people are inherently violent, and so white men must become violent *like them* if they are to remain just and win. Despite De Kock's experience of white violence while he was a policeman in Benoni, he intimates that white people are violent because of black people.

[225] According to philosopher Lucy Allais, Kant does something similar. To bypass the obvious contradictions between his ethics and slavery, Kant published *On the Different Races of Man*, a founding document for scientific racism, which placed his identified four races – whites, blacks, kalmuck, and hindustanic – in a hierarchy. Lucy Allais, "Kant on Race and Kant's Racism," WiSER Seminars. WiSER seminar room, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. October 8, 2015. See also: Charles W Mills, "Kant and Race, Redux," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 35, no. 1/2 (2014): 125–157.
[226] Gordin, *A Long Night's Damage*, 293.

De Kock was primed for this attitude. He, like many other conscripts in the SADF and SAP, watched the racist shockumentary *Africa Addio (Farewell Africa)*, which purports to document the end of colonialism in Africa. De Kock was upset by the viewing and "decided that such savagery would never happen in our country – that white people would not be wiped out." (39) The section on his Rhodesian bush career ends with the following: "Looking back, I think my emotional blunting began with those early experiences as a young policeman in Rhodesia. The resolution with which I departed was that this kind of monster – that we had seen in action from Belgian Congo southwards – would never be allowed to take over South Africa." (61) Here is the intersection of the terror of savagery and violence met with the same savagery and violence – one party is the monster seen in action in Belgian Congo, the other is the policeman vanguard doing what he must to stop the incoming hordes from murdering innocent white people. It is a familiar image: good and evil facing off, the categorical distinction masking the fact that the policemen often cause equal or worse death and destruction.

Though this does not directly relate to links I wish to make between hunting and soldiering, and justice and morality, I would like to indulge in a tangent that complicates De Kock's decision to use the same dirty tricks as the enemy. De Kock, writing for the criminologist in his 1996 trial, constantly intervenes in the narrative to cast doubt over it. The savvy De Kock of the present in which he was writing breaks up the narrative of his early career to suggest that his younger self might have been hoodwinked by covert operations. He wonders if the incident of the break of ceasefire was not an attempt by the elite Rhodesian unit the Selous Scouts to scupper the peace negotiations. "Because I took part in so many covert operations later in life, I cannot exclude the possibility," (54) he writes. This is an important and strange turnaround,

which is not remarked upon. In light of it, we exchange the terrorists – always imagined as a black, unruly, ill-disciplined bunch – with a special force, driven and controlled by white men. Suddenly, the side De Kock was fighting for could have done the very things that made him justify the extremities of his future actions. The two sides no longer reflect each other's violence, but now they are the same side – the terrorist and the policeman are the same person.

Later, De Kock talks about the "so-called Rhodesian way" (58), which describes the torture and murder of civilians who defy the terrorists. The body is displayed as a "bush message to the local black community." (*Ibid*) Before describing in gory detail the victim of the Rhodesian way, De Kock wonders if other forces were at work.

> Was this part of the shadow war so few knew about? I know, now, that covert forces are a widespread phenomenon and that every army or police force involved in war denies their existence. In all wars there are forces that circumvent the constitution and rules of conventional warfare. Everything is admissible in these forces' unconventional operations. Their reasoning is: We show the enemy how the war against them will and must be fought – we give them a taste of their own medicine. (59)

If they show the enemy how the war *will and must* be fought, then it is surely they who are scum and not human beings? The terror of this cyclic logic does not dawn on De Kock; he yaws back and forth, speculating over and over whether violence came from terrorists or from covert operators. Directly after the above quote, he writes: "I stared at the viciously tortured body of another black man – undoubtedly a victim of the liberation forces. Or was he the victim of a pseudo-terrorist team, perhaps?" (*Ibid*) "Undoubtedly" becomes ironic here. De Kock leaves Rhodesia emotionally blunted

but resolved to stop the forces he has seen at work from entering South Africa. Again, he misses the incongruity here. He suspects that the terror attacks are inside jobs. Yet he remains convinced that the monster is the freedom fighter. The gap here between his vision of black terror and his other vision of white terror is not commented upon. He still imagines the threat as outside and black, even though he was part of the terror that was inside and white.

Commenting on this section, Jansen blithely remarks: "Good and bad. Right and wrong, us and them. In Rhodesia, Eugene was initiated; he transitioned from a boy to a man. Two things went almost unnoticed. On one side, his natural leadership came to the fore: Eugene the alpha male awakened. On the other, the principle of 'us versus them', 'me against the enemy', became ingrained." (62) The author makes obvious the connection between the police work in the bush – which evolved into hunting men in the same way the enemies hunted – and masculinity, especially as a rite of passage from boy to man. By focusing on the duality of us and them, she, like De Kock, misses the enemy within, imagining a comforting binary. This suggests De Kock had no hope of making better choices.

Hunting, and by extension hunting in the field of war as a form of soldiering, performs both a moral masculine duty and is convened around notions of fair play and justice. The hunting of men holds vestiges of this morally just connection, even though everything is now permitted in the face of an enemy who does not play by the rules. The farm, a space where hunting is natural and necessary to maintain life as farm dwellers know it, is the perfect ground to enact the logic of these overlaps. Vlakplaas was a working farm where the labour entailed the capture, turning by torture and training (or taming) of men and women. The fact that it took place on a

farm made this labour more cogent than it would have been, I suspect, in another setting. Heyns suggests part of the "horror of the revelation of the existence of the death squad at Vlakplaas and other similar farms was in the fact that these were farms, once productive agricultural units, that had come to be used exclusively for the business of killing and burying human beings."[227] In turn, historian Nicky Rousseau connects the South African farm, the agricultural unit, with violence. "Indeed, while the notion of 'farm' perhaps conjures a picture of rural quiet, this is certainly not the case of the South African farm … which is frequently the place of overt or underlying violence through coercive labour relations, hunting, animal slaughter and sometimes family violence … Thus [the place] for the operation [of covert murder and burial] is underwritten as much by its underlying violence and death as by its seclusion."[228]

Jansen dismisses the braai area as no longer haunted, but braaing is important for how the public perceived Vlakplaas. Meat burning became an expression of malice and callousness – especially as, over and over, Vlakplaas operatives described the *kuier*, or gathering, after a murder. To celebrate successful missions, men would convene at Vlakplaas to drink copiously and cook meat. De Kock states that the highest members of the military and state attended these braais – this is part of his contention that everyone knew what was going on at Vlakplaas. Newcomers to these events would be forced to drink *leeutande*, or lion's teeth, a mixture of liquor dregs and garlic. The canteen next to the entertainment area, which included a space with pool tables, was always well stocked. It was a boys' club, another lens through which masculinity and camaraderie were announced and solidified.[229] But this bar and braai area was set amid dark spaces of torture, corrective beatings and murder. This made it

[227] Heyns, "The Whole Country's Truth", 56.
[228] Rousseau, "The Farm, the River and the Picnic Spot", 362.
[229] This includes camaraderie with black operatives, which I will explore in more detail further on.

grotesque; what went on in this area was often equally dark. "Even the braai," suggests anthropologist Charmaine McEachern, "… associated with a light-hearted social event with friends and family, was rendered uncanny [at Vlakplaas]."[230]

One night, after a heavy drinking session, askari Moses Ntehelang told De Kock his service pistol had been stolen at a shebeen. This was after Ntehelang had been missing for days and was suspected of being a possible defector. What happened when Ntehelang approached De Kock was detailed in his 1999 TRC amnesty hearing: "I [De Kock] took the snooker cue that I was playing with and hit [Ntehelang] over the head three or four times reasonably hard and then with my right hand, I gave him a smashing blow which made him collapse."[231] Other men continued the beating when De Kock walked out of the area. They finally tubed Ntehelang to death.[232] De Kock and Ntehelang's murderers buried him in a shallow grave 260km from Vlakplaas. Jansen, writing about how some askaris were killed to protect information, states: "One such askari, Moses Ntehelang, was murdered at Vlakplaas itself. (In late December 2014, the Missing Persons Task Team … traced Ntehelang's remains with Eugene's help)." (169-170) Notice the slight misinformation – he was not murdered as a direct result of the operatives trying to protect information – and the total omission of De Kock's hand in the murder; her use of the passive voice, "was murdered", allows this. De Kock is mentioned only as having helped find the body. Breaking a pool cue over a man's head in a fit of rage makes De Kock seem irrational, out of control and deadly. Can Jansen face this? Can she dare put in those "neatly groomed hands" the pool cue, or the spade with which De Kock hit Japie Maponya

---

[230] Charmaine McEachern, "The Media Truth Commission: Brokering a Healing History," in *Advances in Communications and Media Research, Volume 4*, ed. William H. Miller (New York: Nova Science Publisher, 2006), 148.
[231] *TRC Amnesty Hearings*: *Day 1, Eugene Alexander De Kock on the Murder of Pumelo Moses Ntehelang*, September 6, 1999, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/documents/amntrans/pretoria/53674.htm.
[232] Tubing was a method of torture and murder in which the inner tube of a tyre was held tightly over the victim's mouth and nose from behind.

before burying him under some debris? Even in the section about De Kock's most rabid and violent phase in his career, violence is constantly and subtly masked.

To have a party after murdering people – or to murder a person while having a party – is cruel enough, but it is another form of burning meat, and a whole new level of brutal detachment that remains connected to Vlakplaas and its operatives. The murder of Sizwe Kondile was bungled. He was several times administered knockout drops, a chemical developed by police forensic laboratory head General Lothar Neethling. They did not work, so he was shot in the head. His body was then placed on a pile of wood and tyres and burned over seven hours to destroy the evidence. His bones were thrown into the Komati River. The operatives who murdered him, headed up by former head of Vlakplaas, Dirk Coetzee, had a braai next to his pyre, purportedly after the smell of Kondile's charring flesh made them crave braai meat. And then they did it twice more. The exact same thing: they bungled the murders of Peter Nkosinathi Dlamini and Vuyani Mavuso by giving them knockout drops that did not work. The two were eventually shot and burned while the operatives braaied. One of the mothers of the men told the TRC, "They braaied my son while they drank and laughed."[233]

Like the justification for hunting men on farms is a twisted enactment of the imaginary, mythic and psychic charge of farms in South Africa, so braaing becomes uncanny and twisted too: the normal made mad and dark. When Jansen asked about the allegation that an askari was burned to death while operatives braaied at

[233] Mandy de Waal, "Jacques Pauw on Vlakplaas' apartheid assassin, Dirk Coetzee," *Daily Maverick*, March 8, 2013, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-03-08-jacques-pauw-on-vlakplaas-apartheid-assassin-dirk-coetzee/#.VsMPIJOGPeQ. Also see: *TRC,* vol 2, chap 3, paras 436–443, p 270.

Vlakplaas, De Kock denied it. (168)[234] But the strangeness of the braai has another element to it, which complicates its resonances so far. It was a non-racial space.

In the "Askari" chapter of *Assassin for the State*, the reader comes across two black-and-white pictures. The first shows a group of askaris and their instructors in a group photo, some of whom are smiling. Below it is a picture of a white man and a black man leaning over a large braai. Both are turning boerewors. Askaris and operatives were certainly not equally empowered: this is not to ignore the security branch's rabid and evidential racism. But black men and white men shared a space of play and entertainment – albeit an entirely warped one. Around braais, they drank together and shared meat. They also trained together at Vlakplaas, forming the first black parachute unit.[235] This was founded as a team-building initiative. Jansen quotes a former Vlakplaas operative: "When people compete in dangerous sports or activities, group solidarity develops. This was primarily what we wanted to achieve." (172) Former Vlakplaas task force member Nick Vermeulen tells Jansen: "If you [the askaris] can jump with me, you can fight with me too." (*Ibid*) These efforts to build trust and solidarity between black and white Vlakplaas workers seem to undermine the farm's very pursuit. To maintain a world of segregation, black men and white men had to be team members. According to Jansen, "Eugene felt as responsible for [the askaris] as he did for his black fellow policemen in Koevoet" (170), which is to say, apparently a lot. "I [De Kock] encouraged the askaris to study and improve their

[234] I have been unable to find this allegation or talk of this in the TRC transcripts. Yet journalist Paul Ash, in an article about the strangeness of visiting Vlakplaas, writes: "[I]n that braai area, an askari who lost his service pistol was kicked to death by Vlakplaas commander Eugene de Kock and his men, and then cremated in the open fireplace next to the braai." Ash, "From Fafi", 2010. The remains of Ntehelang have been found, so this story is either untrue or a portmanteau of other stories and versions. This is not a far-fetched supposition: in the matter of the burning of Sizwe Kondile, about five versions of the story, including that Kondile enjoyed the braai with them before they killed him, were given to the TRC.

[235] Their training took place at Penge mine, one of the sites where murdered men where strapped to dynamite and exploded.

knowledge … There was a large framed copy of the ANC Freedom Charter in the lecture hall. I put it up myself in 1986 and said, 'Let's see what I can provide for them on this list.'" (*Ibid*) This is bizarre. The head of a death squad uses the charter of the enemy he is viciously fighting as a model for how to treat the men he has tortured to turn against the charter's writers. A radical revision of apartheid norms takes place in 1986 on a farm where murder is routine: it is non-racial and aspires to the high values of the progressive ANC document that spurred a resistance movement. This is obviously to overstate the point, but it shows another kind of twist in the farm and in its use of common areas. Here is an ironic reversal of the space of the farm in terms of its relation to a far right conservatism and its strict racial segregation.

Vlakplaas was a complex, often perverse place where the unspeakable happened while "[t]he Hennops River murmured in the back [and] [t]he wind played softly through the long grass and the trees." (143) Jansen's treatment of Vlakplaas and De Kock's deeds on it belies a point of disgust in herself and her relationship with De Kock, but it is the stories that are left out of the section that speak to a myopia in her writing. If these blank spots render the violence of farms, and of this farm in particular, inert, do they do the same for the man De Kock? Is he then a victim or a perpetrator for Jansen and for some of her readers? Indeed, in this book, De Kock seems to inhabit a space where these distinctions remain unclear.

The missing

The second half of the book details De Kock's downfall – his arrest, the systematic betrayal by his friends and colleagues in exchange for amnesty, his sentencing and his sense of guilt. He told the amnesty committee: "There are times when I wish I had never been born. I can't tell you how dirty I feel. I should never have joined the South

African police. We achieved nothing. We left only hatred behind … I sympathise with my victims as if they were my own children." (244) De Kock was moved into C-Max, where he remained in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day, exercised in a 1m by 5m cage and never saw the sun. He stayed there for 31 months. There he suggests he was emotionally abused. "I was told … the psychologists wanted to experiment on me." (255) A social worker there apparently confirmed this. Lights would be left on, doors banged, food tampered with. Sleep and sensory deprivation "emotionally broke" (256) De Kock. Later he was moved to Medium B, where he was treated as an ordinary prisoner. There he dreamed of good food and wrestled demons: "Then the dreams and nightmares start. You're too scared to go to sleep and when you wake up, you have sweated right through your mattress. And then you really are alone … and the load never gets any lighter." (263) Jansen describes her and others' visits with De Kock, his continual bids for presidential pardon, his work with the Missing Persons Task Team and finally his release. The last few pages are excerpts from his prison diaries, which detail with dull monotony his daily grind as a prisoner.

The second half of *Assassin for the State* is much less interesting than the first, which in itself is notable. This is the part of the story we do not know – his supposed abuse in prison, his bids for clemency, how prison affected him. But this section has no tension. All is seen through sympathetic eyes, either Jansen's or De Kock's supporters'. The part about his purported abuse as a psychological experiment is potentially engaging, but nothing more is said on it. Jansen does not attempt to confirm or deny it. Perhaps prison life is inherently dismal. But there is something else happening here, too. De Kock, locked up, making small salads and moaning about his skim milk, is pathetic – there is no longer a need to convince a reader of his humanity. His wild power, his distraught remorse, his shocking tales, they are all over

or old. De Kock keeps to himself in prison, and maintains he has the physical prowess to fight off attackers if needs be. But he is not attacked. Many of the people he knows – Croucamp, Gobodo-Madikizela, former members of Koevoet – support his bid for parole. It is almost as though his time in prison is a kind of release in the book. Here the reader sees him alone among his peers, taking responsibility for his actions, paying a physical debt. This balances out all the acts in the first half. The trajectory, which was inevitable, ends in justice: De Kock takes the pain. But, as the whole book has been building an argument for why De Kock is not wholly to blame, his punishment also carries with it a sense of sorrow. His diary entries talk about what kind of life he wants when he gets out: "I want to live simply and quietly and with as much dignity as possible." (298) In the end, we find a calm man who wants nothing more than to be in nature; he is someone gentle now, wise even. He is, finally, a human again. *Assassin for the State* closes with redemption. Jansen has made this possible by employing the narrative devices of delay and of omission. She first describes De Kock as different to who he was when he went to prison, then hands us an image of an innocent child. She tells the story of this child's brutalisation, first by his father, then in the police doing counter-insurgency work. Only halfway through does the audience, now filled with empathy, come to De Kock's actions at Vlakplaas. She also leaves out the worst of it; she omits De Kock's violence. Thus she manages her representation of De Kock and his perpetration, allowing him redemption in the end. But at what cost? And why does Jansen, and then perhaps some of her readers, too, need to imagine De Kock as both human again and finally redeemed?

Jansen answers the latter question near the end:

> This is one of the most important insights I've come to. By squarely facing the past, I've learnt how, as an Afrikaner woman, I can face the future

> without guilt but with a heightened sense of responsibility, insight and respect. It took this revisiting and reassessing of the past to become a whole person, a whole Afrikaner, again. (297)

So Jansen's aim, to understand herself as a child of apartheid by reconstructing De Kock, has been answered. In measuring the length and breadth of De Kock's culpability and complexity, she understands her own. She, too, as an Afrikaner woman, is redeemed, whole again. It is a good story with a neat ending. This ending suggests something more than another whitewash over responsibility and culpability. Certainly not many Afrikaners, at least publically, have been willing to undertake such a journey. Jansen has looked back – again something few white South Africans want to or are willing to do. In one way, this book about an Afrikaner facing a past in which she is complicit speaks to the current social moment, where, across the country, white people are being forced to see their comfortable lives through the eyes of the people oppressed for it. But we should always be wary of neatness. What else has been omitted to allow this grace, this elegant fullness? Or perhaps the question is better put: Who?

As is usually the case in South Africa, it is black people. What is missing from the book is apartheid's racial politics. Like De Kock's many victims, blackness is buried. De Kock announces that his father left the Broederbond because the organisation refused to acknowledge black people as human. This allowed him to affirm that his later viciousness was not racialised. It is vital that De Kock was not also a racist, because if he were he would never be redeemed or forgiven. But De Kock acted along racial lines: after watching a racist documentary during the war, he became convinced he would never let white people be wiped out. Even when he knew white people committed some of the barbarous activities he saw both on the East

Rand and the border, he always imagined the barbarians as black terrorists. He was fighting communism, but the face of communism was black. The book glosses over this. We are shown a man who cared deeply for his black operators in Koevoet and his askaris at Vlakplaas. But whether he did or not is not as relevant as the fact that De Kock worked for a racist government explicitly for its racists ends. Besides, De Kock's feelings for his operatives smack of a stubborn paternalism towards black people. All the complex light shed on De Kock, his actions and his past, does not illuminate his world – in which black people were systematically oppressed, and in which those who fought to overturn this oppression were murdered, often by De Kock himself. Even though this is a story about apartheid, race and racism is not in it.

Race's unmarked grave is nowhere more present for me than in the figure of Gobodo-Madikizela. Her intent in *A Human Being Died that Night,* to grasp the nature of forgiveness, takes her to painful places. She touches a man who was the face of her oppression with empathy and then calmly, in the book, works over that touch to understand herself as a black woman in front of a white man. But when Jansen explains, understands, excuses, even divorces herself from De Kock, she forgives herself. This is whiteness. From the inside of the farm, Jansen can pronounce it free of ghosts, while Gobodo-Madikizela looks in from the outside, barred from entry. Looking outwards, Jansen can announce, It's over – the haunting of Vlakplaas, the story of De Kock, her fragmentary state. It is finished now. She is whole, and De Kock is human. But the farm gate remains firmly shut, and it is still protected by white men with guns.

Who is De Kock now?

De Kock has an angry red sore on his chin in the picture of him taken at the Franschhoek Literary Festival in May 2016. The photograph was used in many of the

articles written about his attendance. In it, he stares at Jansen, whose eyes are languid; they seem to both steam and hiss. De Kock looks at her through his contact lenses – no glasses for this new man. He has huge bags under his eyes, but his eyebrows are raised in concentration, focusing intently on Jansen in red, holding a glass of wine. There is another woman in the picture, but she is light as a feather. She could equally not be there. The picture's content seems to live only between De Kock and Jansen. He wears an open collar. Somehow his clothes on his hulking body make him look vulnerable. His throat is exposed.

At the festival, writer Palesa Morudu found herself sitting next to De Kock at a panel discussion featuring *Assassin for the State*. De Kock and his team killed Morudu's brother, an MK operative, in 1987. During the discussion, both De Kock and Morudu cried. Afterwards, Morudu asked herself whether she should "talk to this murderer, a broken man?"[236] She does. He remembered Morudu's mother, who came to him for information about her missing son. "I'm glad I could help," he said. Morudu felt something like pity for De Kock, who, as Morudu wrote, took the proverbial bullet for the higher-ups in apartheid.[237] What struck her, though, was the moral outrage he elicited from the mostly white audience. "If you walk, talk and drink in the same space as Neil Barnaard [sic], FW de Klerk, Pik Botha and their ilk, add Eugene de Kock to your list," she noted. "You can't be morally outraged by De Kock and not … by the devastation apartheid brought to black South Africans."

Some of this outrage was articulated by writer Lauren Beukes, who chased De Kock from the event. "There were black writers and publishers who were visibly

---

[236] Palesa Morudu, "Eugene de Kock at the Franschhoek Literary Festival: Of screwed courage and a screwed country," *Daily Maverick*, May 16, 2016, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-05-16-eugene-de-kock-at-the-franschhoek-literary-festival-of-screwed-courage-and-a-screwed-country/#.V1AFsRWKTeR.

[237] See also: Azizzar Mosupi, "'I pitied Prime Evil'," *Times Live*, May 17, 2016, http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2016/05/17/I-pitied-Prime-Evil.

upset that he was there," she explained. "But I was angry that the writers [might] leave an event celebrating them. I walked over to [De Kock and] said, 'It's inappropriate that you are here. People are in tears that you are here and I think you should leave.' He said 'Thank you for telling me', and left."[238] But this did not bring about the intended sigh of relief for those who, like Jacana publisher Thabiso Mahlape, were shaken when they realised De Kock was present.[239] In an article titled *We don't need white liberals to speak for us*, Bongani Madondo suggested that by kicking De Kock out, the "white liberal crowd … assumed unearned moral high ground over him, [which] is a dishonest act aimed at expunging whiteness of its guilt."[240] By doing it, white people again usurped "the agency and urgency of black people to do things for themselves."

In one sense, the old story plays out: De Kock is once more reduced to Prime Evil and sent back out into the wilderness – or just out of sight; he disturbs the view in picturesque Franschhoek. Earlier in this chapter, I asked how the townspeople would react should their scapegoat return. Not well, it seems. Morudu's point is pertinent here: why would De Kock shock you and not, for instance, Wouter Basson, who was a chemical and biological warfare mastermind during apartheid and is now a sought-after doctor in Cape Town. You might run into him at your local supermarket. Her question is important because it points out the inherent hypocrisy in jailing one man for the crimes, directly, of thousands and, indirectly, of millions. But the massive psychic investment in De Kock as a symbol, or perhaps as some kind of carrier,

---

[238] Lauren Beukes and Thabiso Mahlape, "Not welcome: Thabiso Mahlape and Lauren Beukes on Eugene de Kock's presence at the Sunday Times Literary Awards shortlist event," *Sunday Times Books Live*, May 15, 2016, http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2016/05/15/not-welcome-thabiso-mahlape-and-lauren-beukes-on-eugene-de-kocks-presence-at-the-sunday-times-literary-awards-shortlist-event/.
[239] Beukes and Mahlape, "Not welcome". Mahlape states: "In my head he would go find a farm and live as far as possible from people."
[240] Bongani Madondo, "We don't need white liberals to speak for us," *Sunday Times Opinion and Analysis*, May 22, 2016, http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/opinion/2016/05/22/We-dont-need-white-liberals-to-speak-for-us.

makes him singular. If he is, as he was once thought of by most South Africans, some kind of embodiment of the evil of apartheid, then that body in the festival space, psychically at least, is like the whole of the blistering past, casual in denim, walking in.

Beyond the individual is the structural oppression of apartheid and its legacy that all South Africans, bar only a select few, play into and out of today. Madondo makes this link: "If De Kock is a beast, he is a white beast, a product of the beastly whiteness that protected and maintained the racial, economic and cultural privilege of all white people, including the liberals and white cosmopolites." De Kock's popping up in a space buoyed by mostly white wealth seems almost obvious. He is whiteness made solid: that collective wine-swilled guilt made manifest, an elephant in the room, shocking like a flasher, but horribly ordinary, too.

At a lecture at Wits University on non-violence, Judith Butler spoke about the phantasm of race.[241] She stated that it is so powerful that it overrides reality, so a black man running away from a white cop holding up his gun figuratively becomes a black man running *towards* that white cop, who then shoots; the killer becomes the one fearing for his life; the runner, dead. All the evidence in the world – shootings in the back, videos, testimonies – do not convince people, including juries and judges, otherwise.[242] De Kock is on the white side of this phantasmagoria. When we look at him, the phantasm of race arises, as meanings accrue on him like barnacles: parts of

---

[241] Judith Butler, *Interpreting Non-Violence*. Senate House, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. May 30, 2016.

[242] Butler was here referring to the shooting of Walter Scott by white North Charleston policeman Michael Slager. A video of the incident shows Scott running away from the officer as Slager shoots him in the back. Before the video was released, Slager had said he was certainly being threatened and felt his life was in danger, lying that Scott was running towards him when he shot. Slager was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but, as Alan Blinder of *The New York Times* comments, "The case against Slager is one of the few instances in which a police officer has been prosecuted for an on-duty shooting." Alan Blinder, "Michael Slager, officer in Walter Scott shooting gets 20-year sentence," *The New York Times Online*, December 7, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/us/michael-slager-sentence-walter-scott.html.

him kill, parts pay, parts are forgiven, parts are permanent scars, raised, ribbed, white and red. He is pocked. He must *be things* for certain people. But what is new in this contemporary scapegoat story is the definite marking of De Kock as a 'white beast'. If his beastliness is now articulated via his whiteness, he is no longer particular or singular – at least, not for the black people who wrote articles about the festival. Rather he is metonymic, a stand-in for something much larger, and this symbolic thrust has leaked outwards and across to everyone linked to what De Kock came to embody: the rot of apartheid. For the white people who, as Madondo suggests, take up an unearned moral high ground over De Kock, his beastliness and his whiteness must be banished lest it implicate them.

A fellow researcher told me this: at a Koevoet memorial ceremony in early 2016, he spoke to De Kock, who was selling copies of *Assassin for the State* there. The researcher wondered at De Kock's strange fame at the ceremony, to which De Kock replied: "I'm not famous; I'm a fucking criminal." But De Kock is famous. Walking into what journalist Rebecca Davis called "one of the least likely places in South Africa to try to show up incognito" created a spectacle.[243] We clamber to see this man infected, a death dealer, psychopath, assassin, mass murderer, like we slow down to see dead bodies on the road. We are attracted to the extraordinary. We want to see the condition of death, of murderousness, to confirm it is not us. I am not dead, like those on the road. I am not De Kock; that is De Kock, and this is me. This is the moral high ground of whiteness in South Africa. De Kock's fame does not only come from his past actions and how he lived (and clearly lives on) imaginatively for South Africans. There is an element to his fame that seems very self-conscious – De Kock

[243] Rebecca Davis, "Least stealthy assassin ever: Why was Eugene De Kock at the Franschhoek Literary Festival?," *Mail & Guardian*, May 20, 2016, https://mg.co.za/article/2016-05-20-00-why-did-de-kock-put-in-an-appearance-at-the-franschhoek-literary-festival.

has nurtured and curated it. Just as he was a brilliant strategist, he seems to be a brilliant businessman – *Assassin for the State* has done well, I think, because of the brouhaha he caused at the festival and because of exactly what he suggested to the researcher, his being a "fucking criminal". He has, as several of his colleagues suggest in the book, magnetism. This is part of why we still talk and write about him. In my notebooks, I write the reminder: "Eugene de Kock is a murderer." This is his effect on me. I have entered his salt-sown world, have tracked his rabidity, seen his eyes in pictures grow hard and clear and then old. Though I understand the mechanisms through which De Kock's magnetism works – he is still, even to me, mesmeric. "Eugene de Kock is a murderer" I paste on to a board in front of me, lest I forget. What is going on? Have I, like Jansen, fallen for the powerful and deadly yet vulnerable and remorseful prisoner? Or have her carefully coded acts of humanising De Kock worked?

Like the way Jansen depicted him in the opening section of her book, De Kock is also ordinary. He is not, as Madondo suggests in his article, a psychopath. That has been proved over and over. Madondo calling him one exposes a crack in his argument. If De Kock had a psychiatric disorder, he would have been put into a state facility and everyone would forget about him, like they did Dimitri Tsafendas.[244] If his actions are ascribed to a mental illness, which fits the 'rogue elements' argument made by generals and politicians during the TRC – De Klerk stated that "violations were conducted by a handful of 'bad apples' in renegade units" [245] – then power remains vertical, with blame still trickling only downwards in a trajectory that

[244] Tsafendas assassinated Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd with a dagger. He claimed a tapeworm inside him instructed him to do it. He was found not guilty for reasons of insanity and sent to a state mental facility, where he died in 1999. A documentary suggests that diagnosing Tsafendas as insane divested his action of all potential political motivation and thus of all its power. *A Question of Madness*, directed by Liza Key (Cape Town: Key Films, 1998).
[245] Audrey R Chapman and Hugo van der Merwe, eds., *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Did the TRC Deliver?* (Pennsylvania: Penn Press, 2008), 159.

implicates only certain individuals. Madondo's naming De Kock a psychopath taps into a deep fear the man instils in those who encounter him: he is normal, which potentially makes everyone else who is normal capable, under the right set of circumstances, of doing what he did. If he is this, and if we see him among us, helpless in love, his skin acting up and shabbily dressed, he is also terribly human.

It seems we are playing out different fantasies on his body. If the man who held all white people's sins is now the man who is forgiven, then perhaps we are, too. But his body is now indexed as a white beast, not a scapegoat. At first South Africans played out one fantasy on his body: he was the devil, Prime Evil. Then especially white people played out another: he became human. At the festival, he was back to being a beast – but this time living out a white phantasmagoria.

Who is De Kock now? He is a free man. He is famous. He is a fucking criminal. He is a pariah. He has ash in his hair. He is forgiven. He is a murderer. He is a calculating strategist. He loves. He is beastly. He is white.

The Apartheid Historian's Struggle: Black Betrayal and its Effects

Jacob Dlamini's *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*

Betrayal sits with me like a bead of mercury – profoundly dangerous, liquid, impossible to touch. Each time I try to capture that bead's centre, to point to some cohering force, it bursts away from me in all directions, and I am left with nothing under finger. Afterwards, I watch in fascinated horror as those dispersed beads move inexorably together, forming again that silvery whole. Betrayal is like this:

beguilingly simple, neat and fully formed. Someone is a turncoat, a defector, and all those around him or her are filled with disgust. Often all interactions with that person are rewritten after the revelation of their betrayal, and all moments are overlaid with a retrospective patina of suspicion. After a while, those betrayed announce that they always knew the betrayer was a coward. The whole business is put down to the betrayer's bad innards, their lack of courage, their inability to take pain, their weak personalities, their yielding loyalties. In short, says the betrayed: he was always a morally dubious man, and in the end, proved himself so.[246] Yet, the question remains: would you remain loyal and die? Or would you defect and live? And what if the question becomes even more complex? After being tortured for months, after your family is threatened, after you have been isolated and your sense of history and moral reasoning have been systematically undermined and pulled apart, fingernail by fingernail, what choice is it possible to make then? These questions burst apart an easy wholeness. As struggle activist Ray Lalla says: "We [in the ANC] believed that, as revolutionaries, it was do or die. But, when faced with the choice, we did not want to die." (125)

Often there is no need to go to such extremes. Rather, knowing these extremes are possible does the trick. You always imagine that you would hide a Jew in Nazi Germany, or would join the underground fight against apartheid, that you would have the courage to risk everything for what is right. But few actually did – and few would, I imagine, given the opportunity, despite what we hope for ourselves. Here is the other end of betrayal: passivity.

---

[246] Though there were women askaris, for the most part askaris were men. Little is known about women askaris, though I wonder if this is because they are particularly difficult to contact and interview (Dlamini interviewed only one woman) or because they defy the gendered norms of perpetrator and victim. Dlamini states: "The story of female askaris has yet to be told." Jacob Dlamini, *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle* (Johannesburg, Jacana Media: 2014), 199. All page numbers from the primary text will be quoted in-text.

For months I hacked away at the edges of Jacob Dlamini's *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*, reading memoirs from Stalinist Russia and uncovering conspiracy theories about the ANC in exile.[247] I read about death squads and intelligence agencies, contemplated James Bond and the notion of the glamorous spy alongside murderous defectors such as Joe Mamasela, who admitted to killing up to 35 anti-apartheid activists but now runs a training business for security personnel.[248] I trawled libraries and the internet, typing in search terms such as McCarthyism and Pinochet's Chile. I did everything, except focus on Dlamini's book. Why? What could I not face?

This: an investigation of betrayal in apartheid as an umbrella term for the spectrum from passive complicity to forthright collaboration implicates me as a white person. And this: my intimacy with both Dlamini and his subject, the betrayer Glory Sedibe, is one whose terms I cannot decipher. Do I dare? Do I presume to speak? Sedibe stares out in a mugshot, black and white, in the first of the sets of pictures in the book. Can I see malice? Anemari Jansen used Eugene de Kock to measure her own complicity; is Sedibe to be my measure? Or, stranger still, will it be Dlamini?

As a white woman, the project of tackling a book written by a black person about a black person and of countenancing its content's terrible relevance or at least resonance in my life had me either wildly punching blind or desperately backing away. Would I be enacting the ubiquitous 'authoritative' white voice, so recently and vociferously rejected by student protesters during #FeesMustFall? Finally, the parameters of what we deem right or moral constantly eluded me. Its bounds moved in and out from situation to circumstance, always dissolving in the immensity of the

[247] Shortened from here to *Askari*.
[248] See: Karyn Maughan, "Joe Mamasela, apartheid askari and remorseless killer," *Mail & Guardian*, April 22, 2016, https://mg.co.za/article/2016-04-21-joe-mamasela-apartheid-askari-and-remorseless-killer.

complex individual. As Dlamini puts it, "There is no truth with a definite article in the world of collaborators." (16)

Askari tracks the life of Sedibe, the former MK cadre-cum-askari, by asking: why did he switch sides? Why did he go from being a high-ranking MK operative to working feverishly for the apartheid government? The phenomenon of defection is complex, and *Askari* considers it by contemplating pro-Nazi Vichy France, the extreme violence of the South American juntas and the Stasi in the German Democratic Republic, among others, but never quite comes to any conclusions. Sedibe joined the ANC in exile in 1977 and gave the oath to become part of its military wing, MK. By 1983, he had been appointed head of military intelligence for the Transvaal. In 1986, he was captured by apartheid security branch operatives in an operation headed by De Kock, tortured for three months and turned into an askari: a government agent.[249] He played this role at Vlakplaas with what MK cadre Barry Gilder describes as a passion: "He would go out of his way to find us and hurt us." (98) Sedibe also testified against his erstwhile colleagues in court as Mr X1. He died in 1994 of suspected poisoning. Being captured and tortured makes Sedibe a victim, but the relish with which he took up his new role also makes him a perpetrator.[250] Dlamini's book is about this tension, articulated via moral agency – "to see [Sedibe] as only a 'victim' is to hide from historical view his agency and to diminish his capacity to act, regardless of his circumstances." (15) This articulation is also an attempt to situate Sedibe temporally and geographically, as in, to "understand where he came from" (140) within a

[249] 'Turned' was the euphemistic term used for defection from the ANC to the state.
[250] My use of the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' acknowledges their severe limitations, especially in fraught cases such as that of Sedibe, and indeed of almost all askaris.

particular social and economic trajectory, and then to apprehend this in the context of the apartheid regime.

But Dlamini has a big problem. While countenancing betrayal and complicity with oppressive regimes at large, and without falling into the moral relativism that insinuates everyone is somehow a victim, Dlamini must discover, reveal, uncover, expose or explore the askari Sedibe, and other black askaris, without becoming either judgemental or overly empathetic. The problem is finding this balance while immersed in something so politically, socially and ethically imbricated, emotionally vexing and dangerous. Just as he seems to feel close to, even protective, of his subjects, he becomes disgusted by them and, importantly, perhaps disgusted *by himself*, as I will go on to show in this chapter. It is for Dlamini, as he says of all political wars in South Africa, "an intimate affair" (10). All sorts of types and levels of intimacy are at the heart of this book; it is a "fatal intimacy" (2), as Dlamini puts it, using Njabulo Ndebele's formulation, that characterised apartheid. Dlamini comments: "Political conflict in South Africa has always been a racially promiscuous affair." (9) Again, he uses the term 'affair' to indicate intimacy, but the sexual overtone changes the timbre of this affair. Race in apartheid South Africa was never racial purity: as much as many agitated against the regime, some did not; some were even intimate with their oppressors, working for them to uphold the state with something like relish. Dlamini suggests that both sides' recollections "are tainted by fear and the desire to give apartheid secrets an afterlife in democratic South Africa." (3) Both fearing and desiring the exposure of these secrets, or, rather, the exposure of the fact of the secret, seems again to indicate an affair of sorts: there are secrets, but I will not say; I will both hide and reveal. Dlamini's relationship with Sedibe and the rest of the defectors seems to be one characterised by both fear and

desire. But he also uses the term "tainted" as in 'spoiled' or 'contaminated', indicating that this fear and desire negatively influences these men's intentions when recalling their actions. The slightly moralising tone attached to the word "tainted" suggests that apartheid secrets do not deserve to have an afterlife in democracy. Dlamini writes: "Instead of allowing for a full reckoning with the messy business of collaboration, South Africans have allowed the secrets of the past to gain an afterlife. Instead of the nation using the secrets of the past to come to grips with the pervasiveness of complicity, some are using these secrets to fight contemporary political battles." (250) Here he is referring to the mudslinging that involves accusing a political rival of being an apartheid agent.[251] But what does he mean about apartheid secrets gaining an afterlife? Do they continue to cause more damage? What characterises this afterlife? Dlamini seems uncertain himself, writing: "But does the messiness of life mean that we should let apartheid secrets go to the grave?" (250) This seems to suggest we *should not* let them "go to the grave", whereas Dlamini's previous statement suggested that giving them an afterlife was part of the fear and desire of those pundits of apartheid, on either side. Also, surely, as a historian, it is Dlamini's job is to give these secrets an afterlife? Part of the intimacy in the book lies in his difficult relationship with his role as historian and the manner in which he works with his material. Is he to be a cold historian, a warm human or a stern judge?

[251] There are two types of askaris in Dlamini's book: the named agent, such as Sedibe and Mamasela, and the unnamed agent, those whose status as one-time apartheid agents is not known by many. What is missing altogether from the book are the misnamed agents, those falsely accused of collaborating with the government and then punished or killed by the ANC. The unnamed askaris and other colluders who remain unidentified create opportunities for serious slander for upwardly mobile politicians, as seen with the fracas that erupted when Mathews Phosa accused David Mabuza of being an apartheid agent. These secrets do indeed live on. Bongani Nkosi, "David Mabuza believes he has been cleared of apartheid-era police spy allegations," *The Sowetan Live,* May 16, 2016, http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2016/05/16/david-mabuza-believes-he-has-been-cleared-of-apartheid-era-police-spy-allegations.

Amid all this, the askari in *Askari,* Sedibe, never quite surfaces. In my reading of the book, we hear his voice clearly only once, through the mouth of former MK cadre Thembi Nwedamutswu, the late former ANC treasurer and MEC of education in Limpopo. In 1994, Sedibe tried to return to the ANC, and Nwedamutswu was one of a group of ANC members he met to discuss this possibility. When asked why he turned, he reportedly said: "I wanted to save my life because these people [the security branch] were going to kill me." (224) This does not suggest a dearth of Sedibe in the book: he is everywhere, in court transcripts and in his police file, in the archive and in the words of other askaris. But this sentence seems to me the first instance he emerges simple and honest. Almost all of what he is supposed to have said before is tainted by various pressures put on him by his handlers, what was at stake for other askaris in talking about him, and the thin emptiness of the material on him. Sedibe is an apartheid secret given an afterlife by Dlamini, who can never quite find him. The askari is exactly this type of 'living dead', only half out the grave, haunting *Askari* and Dlamini, slipping behind his mugshot and all the names he named in his police file. The reader, like Dlamini, cannot find Sedibe either. It is not him, the ghost in the book, who is its central character, but Dlamini himself. By this, I do not mean that Dlamini writes egotistically; rather, he reveals himself throughout the text in a gradual striptease of slippages and paradoxes that speak a second layer of language beneath the written words. It is the reader's intimacy not with Sedibe but with Dlamini that makes *Askari* equally compelling and frustrating.

The first section of this chapter will examine Dlamini's various relationships – with his subjects in general, with Sedibe in particular, and with himself – to suggest he creates a moral structure through which to exclude himself from being part of the continuum of betrayal while safely creating a series of provocations. His fear and

desire around betrayal is illuminated by his oddly protective relationship with his askaris, which then morphs into disgust – but not quite for Sedibe, that spectral figure Dlamini never captures.

But there is also a different type of emptiness and intimacy in the book. *Askari* is about the nature of collaboration: what constitutes collaboration or complicity and how we can think along more complicated lines when we turn to narratives about the past. Its other major concern is about the point at which narratives of victimhood depart into narratives of the perpetrator alongside the notion of the individual's moral agency. What the book cannot think through, though, is the question: what is the result of the askari? What it cannot consider is the ANC's reactions to the phenomenon of betrayal. In fact, Dlamini generally does not go into much detail about the ANC in exile. I argue in the second part of this chapter that the book has a mirror self, a whole scene that eerily reflects the story of capture, torture and turning, this time from the ANC through their harsh camps and brutal prisons in exile.

The historian's ghost

Dlamini's introductory chapter includes two personal stories. The first of these starts with the line: "It is 1986 and I am a Standard Six pupil at Poneno Secondary School in Katlehong." (5) Dlamini has brought us into the present tense of his past. This makes the section feel more urgent and relevant, and, importantly, makes it feel as though these moments are still being produced, as though the events could still shift, and that the choices remain available, fresh and ongoing. The story describes how schools are under military occupation while the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) upholds a years-long campaign to boycott schools, which most students heed.

But, Dlamini says, "I don't believe in class boycotts. I defy the call, as do a handful of other students." (*Ibid*) Of the students who turn up at school, most don't wear uniforms, but Dlamini does: "My mother insists on it," (*Ibid*) he writes. He describes pointing out to two white soldiers stationed at his school the direction from which boycotting schoolchildren threw stones. Later, he is afraid and rushes home, but nothing happens to him. "[W]ere these the actions of a collaborator?" (6) Dlamini asks. The change in tense indicates that we are in the present of the book, and this voice is Dlamini looking at back at his past to ask what constitutes betrayal, and how we participate in oppression. The story suggests the author is placing himself somewhere along the spectrum of complicity to allude to the uneasy complexity of betrayal. Dlamini writes: "I relate these experiences because, in a modest way, they suggest a need to think critically about collaboration and complicity in South African history." (8) Being a part of a continuum – with willing defectors on one end, and any one of those who lived passively under apartheid – Dlamini's risk in telling a story of his own small collaboration makes the reader trust his evaluation of other potential traitors. He, too, could have been one. But, in various ways, Dlamini risks little. When he says he does not believe in the boycotts, he presents a boy already engaged in national politics, and one who has formulated a belief – presumably he believes in education and *not* in the boycotts. Saying that he defied the call to boycott suggests not that he participated in a government-run institution that, for those in Cosas certainly and for many others, was an abiding symbol of structural oppression. Rather, by *defying* the call, it seems as though he had the courage to stick to his convictions, knowingly putting himself in danger from the boycotting schoolchildren. To defy a call also indicates a definite choice was made; the boy Dlamini was agentive. But this is overturned when he remarks that it was his mother who insisted he wear a uniform.

The comment implies that he acquiesced to his mother's authority on the matter – presumably because he had no choice in this particular decision. But it also indicates a shift in power and, subtly, in blame. It was not only him involved in this scenario's choices; it was also his mother. He *chose* to defy a call but was *forced* to wear that defiance's mark. Incidentally, this puts him in double danger, but he braves it out. Thus the child has been carefully formulated before he answers those soldiers. The story raises some questions: Does the boy generally bow to authority figures? Is it really him who does not believe in boycotts, or is it his mother? What retrospective work might have gone into this story to present the child Dlamini in particular ways, and to what end? These questions do not undermine the gist of the tale: it remains a powerful window into the intricacies of betrayal. But they do twist the certainty that Dlamini is willing to align himself, even in a small way, with askaris or other traitors. Later, he says more directly: "In my defence, let me say that I was not collaborating with the soldiers who occupied my school," (7) putting paid to any possibility of blame or responsibility on his side – and perhaps rightly so.

Something similar happens in his second story. It is also in present tense, set in the following year at the same school. When older boys, whom Dlamini describes as lazy, disruptive "activists" (6), tell the teacher she did not alert the class about an upcoming test, the boy Dlamini puts up his hand and says she did. He is the only one to do this. "No one remembers [the class being told about the test], not even my deskmate and friend Elias," (7) Dlamini says. He writes the test after receiving threats from the big boys, including calling him a sellout. He states: "I am scared. But I cannot turn back now." (*Ibid*) After again asking if the "episode makes [him] a collaborator" (*Ibid*), Dlamini writes: "I was certainly not taking sides by writing that Biblical Studies exam. I simply believed it was the right thing to do." (8) Again, any

suggestion that Dlamini might be a sellout is wiped out by the *simple* – "I simply believed" – notion of right and wrong. He believed it was right to defend the teacher, and that, it seems, is that. In fact, he is himself the victim of betrayal by his friend Elias. Though he was afraid, he again remained stoic – not turning back on his choices. Here, rather than opening up the possibility of personal responsibility in collaboration, the way in which the story is told firmly shuts it down. Vitally, both scenarios are explained via notions of moral correctness – wrong and right – and show Dlamini to be, to use a phrase often used in *Askari*, a (righteous) moral agent.

Far from the stories' seeming intentions – to ask risky questions that expose the writer to criticism and open up the taboo subject of helping the oppressor – they begin the work of building a strict moral structure that carefully unstitches Dlamini from the fabric of complicity, and that finds completion and solidification by the end of the text. As the above analysis of Dlamini's personal stories indicates, it is in the use of language that much of this moralising becomes discernable. Dlamini constantly asserts that although askaris were turned under often-terrible circumstances, they remained moral agents. Over and over, especially in the second half of the book, he ends the chapters with this assertion. This mantra gets Dlamini out of trouble when considering the more devastating effects of, say, torture on the human body and psyche. But moral agency is never defined. It acts as a cover-all caveat, absconding and absolving Dlamini from making any of the risky statements he sets out to or seems to make in writing a book about black perpetrators. This notion, and the whole undefined but very alive moral structure that lives just behind it, allows Dlamini to suggest certain provocative things while removing any responsibility for them. Importantly, this moral structure is not applied uniformly. What applies to certain groups does not apply to others. In the book, certain people and groups become

themselves taboo, or, if not totally taboo, above scrutiny. Much of this can be seen in the language used to describe certain acts.

In *Askari*'s introduction, Mr X1, Sedibe, is called a "defector" (1). His moving from MK to the SAP is called "defection" and then "conversion", while his "collaboration" turns him into a "notorious turncoat" (*Ibid*). Several orders of things are happening in this use of language. Superficially, Dlamini's use of different words that connote betrayal might be simply an editorial choice – a way not to repeat the same word in a short space of writing. But the words each hold a particular charge, and, I would argue, often because of what they insinuate or suggest, they also conceal as much as they reveal. To defect is to abandon a cause for its opposing one. Its Latin root comes from the word for "failed".[252] Defection, and to be a defector, is thus to fall short, to fail. Conversion is either neutral, as in converting one thing into another, or suggests something religious. Collaboration, like conversion, can be understood neutrally, but, again, collaboration turns Mr X1 into a turncoat, which is certainly not a neutral term but one used often in the book. The word has contested origins, but is defined as: "One who changes his principles or party; a renegade; an apostate."[253]

Each term also potentially hides something. The term 'conversion' is a powerful example. If not taken neutrally, and there is much to suggest that it is full rather than empty of meaning, conversion connotes an action and a choice. Someone is converted from one thing to another by something – usually a tract, doctrine or ideology – or someone. One is reminded of the scales falling from Saul's eyes in one

[252] 'Defect' in *Oxford Dictionaries*, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/defect.
[253] 'Turncoat' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/207680?rskey=Jv3Xtr&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid.

of Christianity's most famous conversion stories.[254] The word finds its obverse in a term such as 'turncoat', which denotes, among other things, spiritual decrepitude. But the act of converting someone and that person's choice to be converted is seldom simple. In the context of the book, the term suggests the euphemism used by the apartheid police whenever they captured and converted insurgents – 'turned'. But what terms such as 'turned' and 'converted' obscure is what compelled the action. In many instances, askaris were "'turned' through torture"(4). The 'choice' to convert was often the choice between life and death.[255]

Dlamini is not unaware of the possibilities of concealment, and certainly not in terms of bodies of information. When looking at the archive from which he sourced many of the book's facts, he is careful to note that the "primary source materials on which the book relies [cannot] be trusted." (2) In a later chapter, Dlamini details how police records and the like give a timeline of cold facts, each of them shorn of motives and pressures – what compelled the action is missing – personal and political perspectives, detailed interactions: in short, they provide only a "skeleton of facts" (17). Dlamini also states that *Askari* has no reliable narrators. Sedibe constantly lied, his colleagues, both in MK and at Vlakplaas, are "tainted by … fear and desire" (3), and Dlamini himself "cannot say [he has] not judged [Sedibe]." (2)

---

[254] Saul, a man who zealously persecuted Christians, heard the voice of God while on his way to Damascus and was stuck blind. For three days he could not see and neither ate nor drank. Then a Christian laid his hands on Saul and the scales fell from his eyes. He could see again. He was baptised into the church as Paul; later he became St Paul.

[255] And even this is putting it too simply. Torture and its consequences are difficult to assess in general because of what Elaine Scarry suggests is pain's unspeakability: "When one is suddenly put in pain … language not only disappears, but you can actually chart its disappearance across the sudden reaching for monosyllables or for the kinds of cries and whispers that one made before one learned language." Elizabeth Irene Smith, "'The Body in Pain': An Interview with Elaine Scarry," *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 32, no. 2 (September 2006): 224. The shattering effect of torture on the ego is important in *Askari* in representing Sedibe as a moral agent. Dlamini touches on some of these effects, but never seriously considers them in his argument. Lecturer in social anthropology at North-West University Gcobani Qambela goes so far as to suggest that claiming Sedibe remained a moral agent after torture "is a form of violent erasure." Gcobani Qambela, "Torture removed any 'choice' from askari betrayals," *Mail & Guardian,* February 13, 2015, https://mg.co.za/article/2015-02-12-torture-removed-any-choice-from-askari-betrayals.

Further, Dlamini acknowledges the historian's constant lateness and thus the impossibility of capturing exactly what happened.[256] He adds that representing the story's uncertainty should be done "without assuming a position of innocence or objectivity." (5)

In the introduction, Dlamini never uses the word askari, foregrounding, rather, a set of terms to denote betrayal. The word askari is Swahili for policeman, and refers to the use of Kenyans loyal to the British in the Mau Mau insurgency. According to Dlamini, in the apartheid context, askari "referred to the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) members, who, through voluntary defection or torture, had switched sides to fight against their former comrades as part of a domestic counterinsurgency campaign." (37) Askaris were different to the lowly informers or the high-up double agents, though they played those roles, too.[257] They were also different to policemen, although many askaris graduated to this position.[258] According to De Kock, an askari "was a traitor" (40); certainly they were people of "dubious loyalties" (41), and almost all of them were "serious drunkards." (42) The word carried with it a moral taint. An askari who became a policeman avoided some of this moral taint – which is why Butana Almond Nofomela, the man who exposed the police death squads,[259] and

[256] Dlamini references Hungarian scholar István Rév for these ideas.
[257] According to Dlamini, "Askaris always did more than track their former comrades. They served as agents provocateurs, assassins, bounty hunters, double agents, informers, intelligence analysts, spies and, of course, state witnesses." (39)
[258] The police were mostly men. Dlamini puts the number of woman Vlakplaas askaris at five. (199)
[259] While on death row for crimes committed outside of his duties as an askari, Nofomela spoke to journalist Jacque Pauw, exposing the death squads in exchange for his life.

Sedibe both insisted on being called policemen.[260] Along with being a teacher, like Ephraim Sedibe, Glory Sedibe's father, becoming a policeman was one of the few good jobs a black person could get under apartheid, though both mostly meant working for the state. Hornberger suggests that during apartheid, it was a real achievement to get into the police, though this does not explain why "black people [would] voluntarily submit to a system that systematically discriminated against them."[261]

But the term askari will not settle on a neat definition, vying wildly in Dlamini's book from connoting evil to meaning someone very capable, the cream of the betrayal crop. In the book's second chapter, "The Askari", Dlamini writes: "But Sedibe was more than a turncoat. He became an *askari*." (36) Here, the author ascribes a particular value to a turncoat versus an askari, with a turncoat being something inferior in the way one would say *merely* a turncoat, implying that to be an askari was to be better than a turncoat by being worse in general. A turncoat seems to be someone like state witness Bruno Mtolo, also a Mr X and the man who testified in the Rivonia Trial against Nelson Mandela and others. Mtolo said he did it because he did not want to "'[die] for a stupid cause'" (36).[262] Etymologically, the term turncoat came from the act of turning a coat inside out to change sides in a battle. It is linked to both a political act of changing allegiance and to a religious act of moral

[260] While acting as state witness against his former MK comrades, Sedibe explained his defection simply: "I am now a policeman." (22) A person who defected and then became a policeman is certainly different to someone who simply became a policeman, so for my purposes, I will refer to those who defected to the apartheid state as 'askaris', keeping in mind the subtle differences between an askari and a policeman within this category. It is interesting to note how askari policemen put a lot of stock into being named police officers as opposed to soldiers, which most of them were before turning – soldiers in MK. This is an opposite inclination to the one I found in *Assassin for the State*. In that book, there was a lot at stake in aligning oneself with being a soldier who was given orders and thus had no choice as opposed to being a policeman, who supposedly did.

[261] Hornberger, *Policing and Human Rights*, 33. She goes on to think about the nostalgia felt by former apartheid policemen for the terms of absolute masculinity, power and even violence.

[262] Bruno Mtolo, *Umkonto We Sizwe: The Road to the Left* [sic], (Durban: Drakensberg Press, 1966), 130.

abandonment. It, and its related terms, including 'renegade' and 'apostate', are indeed damning, casting the person who has won this name to the far edges of what is considered morally, socially and politically permissible. This is a traitor to every form of faith, to every cause, especially, in its early use, to Christianity, but also to kith, kin and country. Certainly, in Dlamini's superficial use of the term, it seems to suggest a low dog indeed, an informer, lower than any other betrayer. But I wonder at the notion of 'turning' held in the word – to turn, or to be turned (from one side to the other), being the way in which the act of defection is described in the book and generally by those involved in it. The ANC called the act of defecting back to the party after having been a government agent to "re-turn" (119), suggesting as complex an act as turning in the first place. Thus, turncoat holds a series of meanings that extend beyond swapping sides for personal gain or because of an opinion, like Mtolo, but also contains the act of turning, that moment in which the choice was made. This moment holds *Askari*'s central question, of choice in turning – remaining a moral agent no matter what the conditions. Does this moral overlay in 'turning' then loop back to its foundations in the term turncoat – to be morally defunct? Is being a turncoat to be morally deaf? Or is being a turncoat being a moral agent who makes a choice to turn despite the obvious decrepitude it shows? And thus, is being an askari, which is considered better than being a turncoat, to have a hold on what is right? Dlamini's use of the term to show what an askari is not in any way simple, but intimates a whole web of associations, especially the moral implications that come to signify in 'turncoat'.

In an explanation of the use in law of evidence rendered by an accomplice against a principle 'criminal', the author refers to the "rehabilitated terrorist" (36), the term used for Sedibe as Mr X1. It is used first in Italian then South African law to

indicate to a person who has repented for and rejected his or her old life. British state witnesses are called 'converted terrorists' and are deemed cowards, giving evidence to avoid prosecution. The implication is that those who are *only* state witnesses, like informers in Britain, called supergrasses, are one type of turncoat: treacherous, the scum of the betrayal world, apostates, renegades; whereas to be an askari seems to suggest at least an active commitment to the work of terror.[263] Dlamini states: "At first askaris were treated as informers and paid about R200 … [but by] the end of January 1982, the Security branch changed the askaris' status from informers to police officers … at salaries ranging … from R600 to R700 a month." (37) Again, informers are ranked lower than the higher-paid askari police officers.[264] All this seems to imply that there are classes or hierarchies of defectors, and on the bottom are turncoats or informers. By not being either of the above, askaris take on a series of values by comparison or by elimination. These are ascribed and curated by Dlamini. But why, and to what end?

Of trophies

The book's strange and only glaring factual error – all the other facts in the book are referenced – might provide a clue. It comes right after the descriptions above. Nofomela is quoted describing the intense and very deadly weapons and operations training he underwent at Vlakplaas. To drive home the violence inherent in this training and at Vlakplaas, Dlamini recounts the murder of lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, who was "butchered" (39) by Nofomela, Mamasela and others: "Using knives to

[263] For more on the term and the use of 'supergrasses' in law, especially in Northern Ireland, see: Paddy Hillyard and Janie Percy-Smith, "Converting Terrorists: The Use of Supergrasses in Northern Ireland," *Journal of Law and Society* 11, no. 3 (1984): 335–355.

[264] But Dlamini still has a strong disdain for these men and women, as is seen in the line: "After defecting from the liberation movements, many had attended the segregated Hammanskraal Police College for conversion to 'proper' police officers." (37) Notice Dlamini highlights the segregated nature of the police college and puts quotation marks around 'proper'.

make the killing look like a robbery, they almost severed Mxenge's head. They then stole his car, wristwatch and leather jacket *for trophies*." (*Ibid*, my italics) The change in tone in these sentences is striking. From a string of facts and state witness voices – some of the chapter is set in the disconnected space of the courtroom, where testimony and the gallows remain far apart, and much of its content contains numbers of askaris, how much they were paid, dates and so on – suddenly a butchering takes place. Knives flash in the night. Mxenge's severed head rolls into view, and the reader is slammed out of the lull of information.

Mxenge was butchered that night. His face was cut till it was unrecognisable. But the killers did not take trophies off him. In the proceedings held on 5 November 1996 for one-time Vlakplaas commander Dirk Coetzee's amnesty application, Coetzee states: "Well, as I said, [Mxenge] should be killed with knives, and … his belongings should be sort of taken to make it look like a robbery."[265] He goes on to relate what happened to these belongings: "[Officers Paul van Dyk, Braam du Preez and Coetzee] returned to the Golela River, and … next to the river, we turned into a small little road, where Mr Mxenge's jacket and wallet was burned, and his watch and the number plates of the vehicle was thrown into the reeds next to the river." Later in the testimony, Coetzee describes Mxenge's Audi being burned in a plantation near the Swaziland border by himself, Van Dyk and operative Koos Vermeulen. Perhaps Dlamini was referring to the actions of Mamasela, who put on Mxenge's jacket and watch at a pub after the operation (as Coetzee relates in the abovementioned testimony). But these items were handed over soon after. It is clear that Mxenge's things were not taken as trophies. In fact, it is very unlikely this would ever happen. These operations were covert and illegal. They could be investigated; there was

[265] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Part 1, The Killing Of Griffiths Mxenge by D Coetzee, B Nofomela, N Tshikalanga*, November 5, 1996, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans%5Cdurban/coetzee1.htm.

significant risk in leaving any kind of evidence. As Coetzee puts it, in the same amnesty hearing: "the 11th commandment [for security police was], 'Don't get caught', so you always had to prepare the mission that you were on in such a way that tracks were not at all left for the CID [criminal investigation department] – to force them, kind of, to finding out."

This factual error could have been a simple oversight, but the rigour of the rest of the book's references suggests otherwise. So why did Dlamini say these askaris took trophies when easily accessible information contradicts him? The violence of the murder shows readers the nature of these men's actions, but taking trophies shows us the brutality of these men's natures. To take a trophy shows a triumphant numbness at best, or a total disregard for life at worst. Either way, it is reprehensible, inhuman, despicable. If Dlamini is setting up a hierarchy of betrayal, with perfidious informers on one end, then these killers are on the other. Yet we know that Dlamini's turncoats are not simply venal stoolpigeons, and neither are these men simply heartless killers. It does not seem to make sense for Dlamini to state that askaris are 'better' than turncoats (those moral bottom feeders), but when we find them in action in the book, they are shown to be the very worst kind of human, beyond the pale, ruined even. What is going on here?

To understand this, we must ask, who takes trophies? And what does it connote? The most obvious association with trophy taking is with animal trophies and hunting. *Askari*, like *Assassin for the State*, contains animal imagery. Dlamini describes askaris as "hunt[ing] in packs" (58) while at Vlakplaas. He quotes the ANC pamphlet on state torture, which asserts that government operatives are "racist sadists who converge on the captive like vultures on carrion." (70) When askari Oscar Linda Moni was asked how long he withheld facts from his keepers at Vlakplaas, he replied:

"Well, I would say until I became tamed." (168) This was during a state trial in which Moni took the stand against activists Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, Mandla Maseko and Simon Dladla. Later, he clarified: "I got tamed when I entered a witness box." (*Ibid*) To be an askari was to be an animal that hunted; to be an insurgent was to be the hunted, the captured, the carrion upon whom vulturous men descended. Moni's statements are interesting, too. To be an askari, and thus to hunt in packs, one had to first be "tamed", and this act of taming was final when the askari testified against a group of men sitting right in front of him in court.[266] Dlamini suggests that 'breaking' under torture relates to the act of "'breaking' animals as a way of domesticating them." (*Ibid*) The racist implications are clear. Dlamini states that exchanges such as the one Moni had with cross-examiner Kessie Naidu "underscores the role of language in the business of collaboration." (*Ibid*) But he goes further into it, associating askaris with animal imagery and its related language. We cannot forget that in this scenario humans are being hunted, and something needs to take place for this to be permissible. The human must become the animal; he or she must be subhuman.

An example of this took place in the Pacific in World War II, in which American troops sent home parts of dead Japanese soldiers as mementos. This ghoulish trophy taking came about in no small part because of the mass media drive that depicted the Japanese as vermin, dogs or snakes to be eradicated. Americans even issued fake hunting licences pronouncing it open season with no limit. "In the minds of many American soldiers, combat against Japanese troops assumed the character of a hunt, the object of which was the killing of cunning but distinctly inhuman

[266] Dlamini speculates that testifying against their former comrades in court is the moment most askaris identify as their final 'turning', or as their act of total treachery. Everything else, all the names given and the photos identified, do not equal the betrayal of men to their faces. This moment is also the most traumatic. Askari Judas Mpho Tladi recalled wanting to say to his cross-examiner: "If you only knew how I got here." (164)

creatures."[267] Some of this logic comes through for De Kock in *Assassin for the State* when he begins to see insurgents as barbaric terrorists, not human, and thus killable. In butchering Mxenge, did Nofomela, Mamasela and others see the activist lawyer as an animal, killable? Certainly, Dlamini's use of the term 'butchered' suggests this. But, being animals themselves – the pack that hunts other animals, the insurgents – it seems less likely that askaris could take animal trophies in this sense. That is left to their masters, like De Kock. Besides, taking trophies *off of* a dead man, as opposed to the dead man or parts of him being the trophies, suggests something different to your average stuffed and mounted kudu head, literal or figurative. It holds that same sense of conquest, but also contains a kind of malevolence. This is not to rob a body, which spells a biting practicality. This is intimate. A skull or a letter opener made from an arm bone speaks more directly: this is raw power, man over animal, something to be whistled at and admired, or something to shake a fist at and be appalled.[268] A watch or jacket is wearable, personal. It is not itself an obvious memento; it means something only to the butcher. You can get into the skin of the person you killed by getting under their accoutrements. Serial killers take these types of trophies.[269]

By setting up Nofomela and Mamasela as not only betrayers but also trophy takers, Dlamini seems to be delineating the very extreme end of the spectrum of traitors; here the collaborator falls off the scale of 'human' altogether, to something like psychopathic. To do this is to create a sense of comfort, strangely. These men are mentally ill; they are sick. This excludes Dlamini, and us – not ill, not crazy – from

---

[267] James Weingartner, "Trophies of War: U.S. Troops and the Mutilation of Japanese War Dead, 1941-1945," *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 1 (1992): 55.

[268] According to Weingartner, a column in *The New York Times* in 1944 describes "the presentation to President Franklin D Roosevelt by Pennsylvania congressman Francis Walter of a letter-opener purportedly fashioned from an arm bone of a Japanese soldier." Weingartner, "Trophies of War", 60–61.

[269] See, for instance: Zelda G Knight, "Some Thoughts on the Psychological Roots of the Behavior of Serial Killers as Narcissists: An Object Relations Perspective," *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal* 34, no. 10 (February 2006): 1189–1206.

ever being like those men. The worst possibility is that we are all capable, maybe even just one electric shock or under-foot beating away, from being Nofomela or Mamasela. But Dlamini, with this odd factual error, has frogmarched these men into oblivion; they are not seen with any empathy; they are not forgivable. De Kock is quoted in *Askari*: "There's always been some universal emotion of and loathing reserved for traitors, no matter whose traitors they are." (176) In making these men out to be monsters of sorts, it seems Dlamini feels something like disgust. Craig Higson-Smith, director of research at the Centre for Victims of Torture, suggested in a conversation with me that the feeling of disgust, that physical nausea we feel, is about stopping ourselves from being poisoned – or tainted. There's an absolute disgust for betrayers, he noted, that enables the kinds of cruelty reserved for people labelled as such.[270] Indeed, disgust "evolved to help our omnivorous species decide what to eat in a world full of parasites", but became "an emotion of social rejection."[271] Importantly, disgust is a *moral* emotion – "feelings of disgust … tell us about boundaries that we should not cross."[272] By showing disgust for these askaris – deeming them inhuman, a cruelty perhaps like the type suggested by Higson-Smith reserved for betrayers – Dlamini judges them as tainted. He delineates again what is right and what is wrong, and by finding Nofomela and Mamasela disgusting, he finds them morally wanting and outside the parameters of acceptable society. Here, again, we find the moral structure set up early in the book; here, again, Dlamini defines himself as totally outside the continuum of betrayal by being nothing like these men – because he is not ill, and because he stands in judgement of them. Nofomela and Mamasela are social contaminants, physically rejected out of the body of the morally acceptable. Law

[270] Personal interview, May 18, 2016.
[271] Simone Schnall, Jonathan Haidt, Gerald L Clore and Alexander H Jordan, "Disgust as Embodied Moral Judgment," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34, no. 8 (2008): 1097.
[272] Schnall *et al*, "Disgust", 1096.

scholar Martha Nussbaum suggests disgust has an element specifically related to our animal selves. "Because disgust embodies a shrinking from contamination that is associated with the human desire to be nonanimal, it is frequently hooked up with various forms of shady social practice, in which the discomfort people feel over the fact of having an animal body is projected outwards onto vulnerable people and groups."[273] Dlamini's disgust relates to the askaris' practices of cruelty, so the link is not necessarily direct, but it is interesting to note that, as mentioned, askaris are referred to as animals, who hunt in packs and who are tamed. Could these feelings of disgust extend to this embodiment?

When Dlamini asks whether his actions make him a collaborator, he asks if they are "proof of [his] own taint" (7), meaning proof of moral poison, a deep, even unforgivable, corruption of the spirit, impossible to return from. Being on the side of the morally outraged or disgusted, Dlamini's answer is firmly no – he is not tainted like these men.[274] Thus, we find the full moral spectrum of collaborators while we see the full moral spectrum of Dlamini's feelings towards them. He pulls closer to the askaris, rescuing them from the ignominy of being the moral delinquent that is the turncoat, but flies away again, ejecting them from polite society, turning his back altogether by intimating that they take trophies. This, I would argue, is his fear and desire.

Yet Dlamini seems to reserve some of this judgement when it comes to Sedibe, becoming almost protective of him. Here is an example: the askari given the pseudonym Judas Mpho Tladi was openly hostile towards Sedibe when Dlamini interviewed him, accusing Sedibe of assassinating ANC members with something like

[273] Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity*, 74.
[274] Indeed, Nussbaum goes so far as to suggest that feelings of disgust are "a device we employ to deny our own capacities for evil." Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity*, 74.

glee. Tladi (translated from isiZulu in the book): "I would look at the expression on his face as he said this and ask myself how a man could talk about killing another human being like that." (128-129) He was, in Tladi's words, "a terrible person" (128). But after this description, Dlamini states: "There is no way to determine whether Tladi's account is truthful," (129) noting that he is the only askari to say Sedibe killed ANC members and the only one who seemed to hate the man. According to Dlamini, Tladi said life was terrible at Vlakplaas, but "despite these sentiments, there seemed to be a faint hint of longing for the place." (*Ibid*) This is a condemning statement. To yearn for your place of oppression where you also nonetheless claimed power as an askari – including the power over life and death – smacks of being disturbed, immediately casting Tladi's previous statements into doubt. It would be horrifying indeed if Dlamini found the man he was looking for were a monster. Dlamini feels for Sedibe, but if he were as bad as Tladi makes out, that empathy would be an indictment on the author. But I don't think Dlamini is saving face when he casts doubt over Tladi's comments. I think he is protecting Sedibe, a dead man with whom he is deeply intimate – he responds to slander on Sedibe's behalf. His relationship with Sedibe is complex. Like his relationship with the other askaris, he pulls close to and then rejects him over and over, becoming increasingly frustrated at the empty air he grasps around Sedibe's ghost.

The choice, or, loving the killer

Early in the book, Dlamini states: "individuals could still act, choose and take moral stands. They could refuse to collaborate." (12) But this 'choice' becomes more complex the longer you look at it. After mentioning that the TRC considered Sedibe only a victim, Dlamini claims: "But to see Mr X1 as only a victim is to hide from a historical view of his agency and to diminish his capacity to act regardless of his

circumstances. Being a victim of torture might help explain Mr X1's choices. It did not absolve him of moral responsibility for his subsequent actions." (15) When talking about Sedibe's history, Dlamini hopes to: "understand … Sedibe as a historical actor who did not come fully formed into the world as a traitor, but as a subject who emerged through a series of actions and choices." (20) Dlamini relates why Sedibe joined the MK in exile. His older brother, Kaborone Sedibe, studied law at Turfloop (the University of Limpopo) where he became conscientised. After leading a rally that became a mass movement, Kaborone and eight others were charged with terrorism. He received a five-year sentence on Robben Island. Dlamini asserts that Kaborone's prison sentence left a lasting impression on Sedibe. "[He] recalled that the five-year sentence against his brother, the first person in the family to go to university, left him 'heart sore'." (25) Sedibe visited his brother in prison. Dlamini writes: "Kaborone recalled, 'He spoke to me about leaving [South Africa]. He told me he would leave the first chance he got. He told me there was no alternative.'" (*Ibid*) Here, Sedibe says he has no alternative, which suggests he has *no choice* but to go into exile. Dlamini highlights the intimacy at the heart of "Sedibe's decision, fresh from the sentencing of his brother, to forsake his family and go into exile." (26) Notice the strong language here in 'forsake'. To forsake is to abandon or renounce.[275] But Sedibe's relationship with his family is not represented as carrying this kind of emotional or practical weight. He was not a breadwinner, nor did it seem as though his family particularly relied on him for anything, though he was loved. With the word 'forsake', Dlamini highlights the choice or decision Sedibe made, filling it with meaning and feeling: care, or, as he puts it, intimacy or his love for his

[275] 'Forsake' in *Oxford Dictionaries* http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/forsake.

brother in prison, compelled Sedibe to go into exile – a choice for which he had no alternative.

Similarly, when Sedibe was turned by torture, Nofomela states: "'He had no alternative … the boers … those guys know how to assault a person'" (74); and again: "'He betrayed them on the point of torture. He had no alternative.'" (75) The phrase 'no alternative' is repeated twice here to talk about Sedibe's betrayal under torture, but it also mirrors Sedibe's use of the term in having no alternative but to go into exile. This mirrored language suggests that neither choice was actually available, but was somehow a historical, familial (intimate) or physical compulsion.

Something complicates this straightforward explanation. "Sedibe left South Africa in the hope of furthering his studies" (28) and became an insurgent only because he heard a rousing speech by Jacob Zuma. Here, the clearness of his choice, to go because his brother was jailed, which suggests a clean-cut political decision, became muddy. He wanted to study. Does this suggest a personal motive? Dlamini seems to take this up later in the book. He states that Sedibe wanted to pursue a bachelor of administration degree, which could be used to work for the Lebowa Bantustan – all that stopped him was a lack of funds. (144) Four years later, in 1977 at the age of 24, Sedibe went into exile to pursue his education, as Dlamini suggests – although, I assume, of a different sort.[276]

[276] There is something at stake with the assertion that Sedibe wanted to be educated in terms of how Dlamini represents the ANC camps. He writes: "The ANC tried to turn the camps into havens for intellectual exchange, complete with news monitoring services and libraries." (29) He then quotes a number of books one camp commander sent away for. "MK member Sam Mtileni said Sedibe liked to read," (*Ibid*) he adds. Dlamini then explains Sedibe's specialised training in East Germany. Those chosen for this were "considered the cream of MK." (30) A picture of Sedibe is emerging. He craves education – and, importantly, he *finds* education in those camps and in his specialised training. Dlamini states: "Life in MK camps was difficult but filled with purpose. The thousands of recruits that streamed into camp believed they were changing the world." (29) But a note suggests something more sinister: "The camps in Angola were also places of tremendous brutality and violence." (265, note 40) Dlamini does not elaborate.

When Sedibe is tortured, Dlamini writes: "But even that knowledge [from a manual dispersed by the ANC describing state torture] could not have prepared Sedibe for the blows and the pain, the brutality and humiliation. He could not prepare himself for the loss of control over bodily functions. He could not have known beforehand how long it would take to 'break'." (70) There is a definite change in tone and style in this sentence. The chapter "The Farm" opens with a brief history of Vlakplaas before detailing a theory of collaboration through its history in British colonialism, and includes some stories of people under other regimes confessing under torture. Here, there is a glimpse of empathy. The sentence slows down the pace of the chapter, while the repeat of "could not" speaks to Sedibe's deep vulnerability. Dlamini goes on to defend Sedibe from the accusations of cowardice from comrades, colleagues and writers, saying: "There is no acknowledgement [by these critics] of the role of torture in Sedibe's 'choice' to turn, even though it was a widely known fact … that the SAP were among the world's leading torturers." (76) By putting choice in inverted commas, Dlamini suggests that this was no choice at all, or that to call it a choice was to hide the fact of torture. His empathy extends to Sedibe in this chapter one last time, towards the end: "Sedibe 'decided' on that lonely farm to become a collaborator." (*Ibid*) Again, decided is in inverted commas and emotive language is used: the lonely farm, highlighting again Sedibe's vulnerability, and the essential loneliness and isolation of torture. But Dlamini warns us at the end of this section: "We cannot pretend Sedibe was only a victim of police violence and not a perpetrator of violence himself." (*Ibid*) This turnaround marks the major tension in the text, but even here, subtly, Dlamini remains on Sedibe's side. To be a perpetrator of violence is not necessarily to perpetrate that violence for one political cause over another. Betrayal is not written into this warning. This is the first use of the term 'perpetrator',

which has a legal trace that could create a sense of distance between an act of violence and its implications, especially in terms of the possibilities for amnesty in the TRC.

When talking about Sedibe being held under section 29 of the Internal Security Act of 1982 and being asked by an inspector how he was being treated, Dlamini remarks: "Sedibe could do nothing but play his part and say, 'No complaints'." (78) Again, the language here suggests Sedibe was helpless in these circumstances, and implies that he had *no choice* but to say he had no complaints.

The next four chapters in *Askari* go into detail about Sedibe's various acts of betrayal and their consequences. Dlamini states:

> Sedibe … was a moral agent who made informed choices along the way. He decided to become an insurgent. The structure of apartheid society did not decide that for him, even though it shaped the conditions under which he took that decision. He was forced, at the risk of death, to become a counterinsurgent. But he persisted with that 'choice' and took it up with apparent relish. (152)

Here, Dlamini seems to contradict his careful word choices earlier in the text by stating that Sedibe did, in fact, have choices – and not "no alternatives". He made decisions. This marks a turnaround in the text in terms of Dlamini's feelings towards his subject. Via the moral structure of personal agency, which, up until this point, is shown to be contingent at best, Dlamini's relationship with Sedibe is changed. Why? I believe it is the tension between the siren call of the storyteller and the authority and responsibility of the historian.

Dlamini writes: "My attempt to deal with the ethical implications of this book without 'illegitimate moralising' included asking a few of those named in Sedibe's file for permission to quote his claims about them." (122) The phrase 'illegitimate

moralising' comes from historian István Rév's essay "The Man in the White Raincoat", but Dlamini does not go into further detail about it, skipping over its complex argument about the role of the historian. In the essay, Rév talks about the accusation of illegitimate moralising levelled against the historian who judges his subject, suggesting that "the historian is not entitled to moral judgment since he is not in possession of all the relevant facts; some things always remain hidden from sight."[277] But Rév argues that this "emphasis on the specificities of particular – and never fully knowable – historical facts serves as a general blank acquittal from possible historical responsibility: the (unknown, undisclosed, unattainable, perished, destroyed) particular facts would shed a different light on the historical act, the (moral) consequences of which would be essentially different if all the facts could have properly been taken into consideration."[278] He warns, though, that "the historian cannot usurp the role of judge."[279] Yet Rév states that, in our ordinary lives, we do not know all the facts but are still able to "form reasonable, usable opinions about incidents in the lives of others; despite the fact that those others are different from us, have a different gender, a different past, come with a different tradition, were raised in a different environment, have different reflexes, react in a different way."[280] Thus Rév highlights the contingent position of the historian faced with what Dlamini calls "controversial archives" (122), suggesting only that the historian foreground uncertainty in historical reconstructions. This argument demonstrates the difficulty Dlamini faces in this book, as he calls into focus his performance as a historian: he must use the archive, but it is always unreliable and incomplete. He must not judge,

[277] István Rév, "The Man in the White Raincoat," in *Past for the Eyes East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989*, eds. Oksana Sarkisova and Péter Apor (Central University Press, Budapest: 2008), 27.
[278] Rév, "White Raincoat", 28.
[279] Rév, "White Raincoat", 28.
[280] Rév, "White Raincoat", 28.

nor must he fall into blank amnesties and moral relativism.[281] "The Archive", chapter 11 of *Askari,* could have contemplated some of the vexed issues around the use of information, who gets to use it and how, along with questions of ascribing moral responsibility while not judging based on uncertain and incomplete sets of evidence. But it fails to be reflexive: Dlamini does not contemplate further his interaction with his material.

As a storyteller, Dlamini is moved by Sedibe's tale; he is compelled by its complexity; he is filled with horror seeing Sedibe in that small room being tortured while his wife and child stay hidden in a whites-only hotel organised by his torturer De Kock; he burns for the killer Sedibe became, white hot then ice cold – understanding him, loving him even, rejecting him, too. As a historian, Sedibe, that vivid man much alive for the storyteller, fades down into scraps of paper and rumours, thin facts trying to be verified by years-old memories and dusty archives. This man, the historian, responsible, capable, must hold Sedibe to task, shout back to the storyteller: but what about moral agency? What about *responsibility*? In the second half of the book, almost every chapter ends with the question of moral agency – the book's 'Yes, but…'. The question is never answered.

Chapter 6, "The File", opens with writer Mark Behr's confession that he worked for the apartheid government while he was a student. He asserts that although he gave the government information, none of his activities led to direct harm.[282] But Dlamini strongly refutes the assumption that there is such a thing as *only* spying or giving trivial information, using the Stasi's 62 500 tonnes of personal files as an example:

[281] To say he dealt with the possibility of illegitimate moralising by asking permission is to avoid the complexity of this point, to bypass the hard stuff of Rév's essay by making a legal rather than philosophical point.
[282] Olivia Forsyth makes a similar point in her tell-all memoir.

"The trivia about people's affairs, drinking problems and other minutiae that informers fed into the Stasi system mattered." (115) He uses this to foreground the dangerousness of the seeming triviality of the details in Sedibe's police file, a stack of papers saved from what scholars Terry Bell and Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza call South Africa's paper Auschwitz, in which 44 tonnes of files were destroyed in 1993. "All evidence of the nightmare memories of the tortured and the living dead … the venal … the secret whisperers … the betrayers were turned to ashes."[283] Following the trail of Sedibe's file, Dlamini suggests it might have survived because someone held it for insurance – "to keep Sedibe revealing what he knew" (119), as in who in the ANC worked for the apartheid government. This was because the ANC had "re-turned" some collaborators, and was trying to "win back" (*Ibid*) others. MK cadre Gilder confirms that some askaris were re-turned, but others were "eliminated, executed … and [Sedibe] was a target for that." (120) Dlamini is quick to say: "This did not mean the ANC was averse to winning Sedibe back." (*Ibid*) He then returns to the file.

In writing about it, Dlamini notes the "file's attempt at exhaustiveness means that no detail is too insignificant, no biography too small." (124) But he also maintains, as mentioned earlier, the file gives only a "skeleton of facts" (17), shorn of reasons, showing only movement, names, addresses in a vacuum. Sedibe is not in the police file, Dlamini insists. But neither is he, I think, in this text. Is this book, then, Dlamini's 'file' on Sedibe and the other black askaris, not exhaustive but suggestive, never fully coming to one thing or another? Is *Askari*, filled with and generated from trial records, this (empty) police file, interviews and stories, yet again, not more than another skeleton of facts, based on a skeletal man, fleeting?

[283] Terry Bell and Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid, and Truth* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), 9.

Where is Sedibe? He is not in his police file, filled with intricate detail, pored over by Dlamini, who tries to write out of this strange object, faced, as a historian, with ill-gained fact. He is not in the trivial detail. Almost all the book's chapters are similarly rendered: complicating factors are foregrounded and commented upon, but the subject is seldom there. Sedibe slips away behind these things.

Besides hearing Sedibe once, his voice ringing out, announcing he defected because he was going to be killed (answering, then, Dlamini's original question: why did Mr X1 turn?), I glimpsed him only once in the book. He and his family moved to Verwoerdburg, a former whites-only town named after the architect of apartheid.[284] They could afford the house there because, in 1990, Sedibe began working for military intelligence – a job with a polite name in which dirty deeds continued as though Vlakplaas had never been closed down. He died in that town, "depressed but in middle-class comfort." (193) I see him there in his neat home, nothing like the chaos inside him, his address telling on him, showing something hidden, his Judas exchange, or just his success at work. In an earlier house, in the township Letlhabile, Sedibe also "attained a semblance of … 'normal' life." (192) He raised his daughters, started to study. But it is another address, a post box near Piet Retief, where I believe Sedibe always really lived. It was to this post box that handlers sent the creeping missives for his missions: names, addresses, instructions to kill. That post box, that tiny grave, hidden, that is where I see him. Dlamini disagrees: "It is in our persons," he writes, "that the secrets of the past have found a home." (255)

The terrible mirror

[Askari] Mfalapitsa: 'You are mutilating my history.'

[284] Now Centurion.

[TRC Advocate] Gcabashe: 'It's my job to do that.' (215)

"We all know so-and-so did it," said a man to Grace Musila at the launch of her book *A Death Retold in Truth and Rumour: Kenya, Britain and the Julie Ward Murder*.[285] He actually used the phrase "so-and-so". Musila had said she could not name certain names – that of the alleged murderer – in her book for legal reasons and because she risked being murdered herself. Though, she added ruefully, the name's connection with the murder was a matter of public record. The two were discussing someone they clearly both understood to be the culprit; there was no hesitation, no searching pause to wonder if the speaker had the same man in mind as the author. Simultaneously, most members of the audience were on their phones or laptops, no doubt googling the name *not* being bandied about. Soon, it seemed, everyone was in on this secret, everyone knew the name not named, this so-and-so. Yet his name remained unsaid.

Afterwards, one of my colleagues came up to me and another staff member. "I've worked out who it is," he said. "Who?" I asked – I hadn't managed to google him. "*So-and-so,*" he whispered, saying the name. "Wow," I said. "Everyone knows that," said the staff member.

What was going on? Could there be spies in this pre-lunchtime audience of academics in a cold building in Johannesburg who would report the use of the name back to its owner? "Perhaps unwitting spies," said a colleague when I posed the question to her. "Sometimes you're being used as a spy and you don't even know it." I tried to imagine a scenario like that. Perhaps it would be a matter of passing on information without full knowledge of what was at stake in sharing it and thinking it was for a different context than the one in which it would eventually be used. "Or

[285] Grace Musila, *A Death Retold in Truth and Rumour: Kenya, Britain and the Julie Ward Murder* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2015).

someone could post something about it on Facebook," she added. Then, in a few seconds or minutes or days, that author would be perceived as a possible threat – and, in a paranoid regime, whether a threat is real or not does not really matter. That is the risk.

Why haven't I used his name now? Here the murderer remains, tantalisingly unnamed, and that gap, held open with placeholders like so-and-so or covered over with my obscuring *so-and-so*, begins to take on a life of its own. It has power. Anthropologist Michael Taussig calls this unnaming but knowing a public secret, "that which is generally known but cannot be spoken", describing it as a "heterogeneity of knowledge … with its knowing what not to know, its strategic absences, its resort to riddle and tone."[286] The public secret, he argues, holds an intense, strange and enormous energy. Dlamini contemplates something of this power in *Askari* when he writes about rumours of who in the ANC now might have been apartheid collaborators. These hushed accusations are "used in post-apartheid South Africa to silence political rivals … render[ing] them morally suspect and politically unreliable in democracy … [T]hose subjected to such whispers and claims are victims of secrets that refuse to be revealed." (250) In this case, the secrets can never be revealed because much of the documentation that would have proved someone an agent is lost or burned. The collaborators alive today, who could number in the hundreds, according to Dlamini, will remain unnamed unless there is a hidden archive somewhere, or the collaborators' handlers are tracked down and willing to talk, something General Herman Stadler, former head of special branch intelligence, unequivocally stated would be impossible.[287] Without evidence, only the threat

[286] Michael Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 50.
[287] In *Unfinished Business*, directed by Kevin Harris (Johannesburg: Kevin Harris Productions, 1998).

remains. Dlamini suggests "the power of secrets they [the accusers] were purporting to share resided, not in the content of the secrets themselves, but in the mere hint that there were secrets." (250) Here, the name behind the placeholder or mask doesn't exist. All that remains is the possibility of a name. And when the placeholder reads "apartheid agent", that possibility spells a threat. In this case, the 'everyone knows' of the previous scenario changes to 'no one knows', or perhaps 'it could be anyone'. That thing obscuring the name of the alleged murderer at the book launch becomes itself the threat, the terror – the placeholder itself and not what it stands in for or obfuscates becomes the threat. The moral stain of collaboration constitutes that threat.

That people could betray the cause – of liberation and an end to oppression – profoundly affected the ANC and its strategies in exile. Now, a named apartheid agent is morally dubious, disloyal, stained. Then, an apartheid agent was the architect of death and destruction. In turn, if possible, that agent was hunted down and assassinated by the security arm of the ANC.[288] But it is, as Dlamini suggests, taboo to bring this up because the askari or traitor tears up the ANC's narrative of the past, reminding us that the past was not so simple and clean as is claimed.

The walking man

Tlhomedi Ephraim Mfalapitsa is a minor askari in the book. But when you look at him carefully, he reflects the silent places in *Askari*. Mfalapitsa grew up with the Musi family, who lived near him in Krugersdorp. He and the elder brothers of that family went into exile together. When Mfalapitsa became a government agent after re-entering the country, the younger Musi brother, 18 at the time, asked if Mfalapitsa

[288] One of the ways in which Dlamini brushes over the subjects of perpetrators in the ANC is to use different words for the same act. The ANC killers of apartheid agents are always called assassins, whereas, for instance, the apartheid death squads were part of a "campaign of murder and mayhem". (219)

would help him and three friends to go into exile. This is what he said in his amnesty hearing:

> I thought maybe because … I … just recently arrived at Vlakplaas and somebody [had] a suspicion that I was [a double agent for the ANC], and I thought perhaps Musi, he's sent by the South African Police to trap me and if I don't report the incident or my meeting with him, and the contents of our meeting … then [it could] work against me and I end up being assassinated.[289]

He reported the incident to his superiors, who came up with a plan. Mfalapitsa told the boys exile was too dangerous just then, but that he would provide weapons training. He and Mamasela took them to a mine on the West Rand and into a pump house rigged with explosives. Mfalapitsa showed the boys some grenades in the room, said he had to get more weapons, and left, locking the door. The explosives were detonated. Only Musi survived. The boys became known as the Cosas 4.

Dlamini first mentions Mfalapitsa in the second chapter, "The Askari". When Mfalapitsa "became an askari in January 1982, a month after defecting from the ANC," writes Dlamini, "the Security Branch gave him new clothes, food rations and 'some few hundred rands' as a stipend." (37) In this early chapter, Dlamini uses Mfalapitsa's story mostly to show how intimacy or trust was used in acts of betrayal. It allows him to extend his argument that this intimacy went beyond the bounds of interpersonal relationships and came through "fictions of racial solidarity" (42), which were "assumptions founded on the myth that because every black person was formally a victim of apartheid, every black person was by definition opposed to apartheid." (*Ibid*) The intimacy here is of race: how could a black man help the savage white oppressor of black men and women like him? Mfalapitsa's personal intimacy with his

[289] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Day 2, the "Cosas Four" WF Schoon and Others,* May 4, 1999, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/1999/99050321_jhb_990504jh.htm.

victims is used to show the social intimacy he and other askaris shared with the black activists they harmed or killed. Dlamini describes askaris as "a breed apart" (*Ibid*) because "as former freedom fighters they were fluent in the rhetoric of revolution." (*Ibid*) This made it difficult to distinguish between an actual activist and a former activist-turned-government agent: they looked and sounded exactly the same, just as the agent Mfalapitsa seemed exactly the same as the activist Mfalapitsa, beguiling people he knew intimately and who trusted him.

For Dlamini, this *racial* traitor had a number of possible consequences. He uses Tobias Kelly and Sharika Thiranagama's provocative question to detail its magnitude: "What if the accusation of treachery reveals not the presence of the venal traitor but the absence of any concrete basis for the people?" (13)[290] That traitors exist suggests that 'the people' are no longer or perhaps never were cohered; it shows that a mass movement and its individuals are never equal to each other. "The ANC itself was aware that there might not be a clearly defined people with an identifiable set of characteristics and interests that bind them together. The organisation understood that the imagined community in whose name it was fighting was in fact more imagined than community," (*Ibid*) writes Dlamini. What binds us? Not race, apparently. Collaborators announce: nothing. We are all free-floating entities, individuals with massively varied pressures and circumstances making a series of choices. This unravelling causes things that looked solid to dissolve. In this estimation, the ANC is emptied of its centre, divested of its fullness. Dlamini writes: "Sedibe's defection destroyed his comrades' shared sense of struggle." (97) But the ANC needs these "fictions of racial solidarity", this shared sense of struggle, for both its narrative unity and narratives of unity. The ANC has a particular struggle narrative that is at pains to

[290] Kelly and Thiranagama, *Traitors*, 11.

depict all black people as a homogenous unit who suffered and fought, and white people as the sole actors in apartheid's oppression. Of course, books such as Dlamini's suggest that black people in no way experienced apartheid the same.[291] Nor did they all have the same reaction to oppression. The ANC's narrative of unity is constitutive of its narrative of purity – of democracy, a Freedom Charter for the people, a Constitution unrivalled, honourable, discursive, equal. But it is this very unity that black askaris used to their favour. Askari Gregory Sibisiso Radebe suggests askaris were "ordinary South Africans like you see every day ... There were guys of notable intelligence. It was your overall mix of South Africans, and that probably is what made that unit [the askari unit at Vlakplaas] the spearhead in the Security Branch's fight against the ANC. I think it was the unit that could blend in anywhere in the country and bring information in the shortest time possible." (41) They could do this because they were *the same* as everyone else because they could talk revolution, which members of the ANC had taught them. They were the same, a mirror image, but twisted, made perverse.

Much later in *Askari*, Dlamini again refers to Mfalapitsa, this time to look at parts of his exchange with Advocate Gcabashe at his amnesty hearing for the Cosas 4, some of which can be found verbatim from the trial transcript. He does this ostensibly to "provide insight into the post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] that seems to have been the hallmark of the askari experience." (213) But far from taking seriously this consideration – by looking into the symptoms of PTSD, for example – a few sentences later, Dlamini states that Mfalapitsa "cast himself as a helpless and alienated victim of circumstances." (213) Then he states the askari's exchange with Advocate Gcabashe is "a window into the tortured and tormented world of askaris. It

[291] Dlamini's first book contemplates the contentious subject of black people fondly remembering South Africa's past. Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2009).

gives us insight into how askaris 'lived' with themselves." (*Ibid*) Two orders of things seem to be happening here: first empathy, then judgement. Reading Mfalapitsa's interactions during his amnesty trial as symptomatic of PTSD suggests empathy, but stating unequivocally that Mfalapitsa purposefully – "casts himself" – takes up the position of victim overturns this. Again, in seeing the askari's interaction with the advocate as a window into a tormented world, Dlamini reads this exchange with empathy. But by putting 'living' in quotation marks, that empathy becomes something closer to disgust. Part of his observation is not untoward. Many perpetrators figure themselves as victims for various ends, not least, perhaps, to get through the day. His use of 'living' denotes that what a perpetrator can hope for is not any sort of *real* life, but rather a contingent, ghostly existence. They are the living dead of our history, the ghouls. That Dlamini's feelings towards them yaw from empathy to disgust twice in the space of a few sentences shows again his struggle with these paradoxical complicities.

Mfalapitsa says, in the parts of the trial quoted in the book, "[T]his history we didn't invent it … in the back yard of my mother." (215) I imagined history being invented in a back yard and had a sense that the idea behind the image was sound. Though Mfalapitsa was trying to argue that history is a bigger thing altogether, that the larger *politics* of the day swept him up – thus making him a victim – history is also invented in the back yards of our mothers, in intimate, personal spaces. This is also perhaps Dlamini's point in *Askari*: that moral agency means understanding history both as small and familiar as your back yard at home, and as large and strange as a country such as South Africa. Mfalapitsa says: "I'm setting straight a history which was my part, which began as political and which [went] terribly wrong. There are many people in South Africa who have this *historical problem with their past*."

(*Ibid*, my italics) The idea that people might have a historical problem with their pasts rings: the problem with the past is history, or how forms of history can be used both as a way to argue for innocence because of the individual's incapacity in the face of a country's politics *and* as a way to argue for personal agency, the individual as part of a series of small choices for which he or she is responsible. If you look at history as a large thing, then few, if anyone, can be truly responsible as everyone is a victim of time and circumstance. "I was inspired by all forces taken together," states Mfalapitsa when defending himself against the charge of self-preservation. "I was one person. I was one person with fear." (216) This makes single men handless, headless, incapable of doing anything against the forces 'inspiring' them; it fills them with fear. But these men had good reason to fear, because a place such as Vlakplaas was "not a moral democracy in which the occasional attack of conscience was allowed." (46) You did as you were told. Yet this does not absolve the man who killed three teenagers and tried to kill another, Musi, a member of a family who trusted him completely.[292] Notice, again, the impasse: being an askari was not to be a free man who could make good choices – you were under the thrall of authority. But Mfalapitsa killed or tried to kill people almost kin to him, a deeply intimate act, something, certainly, made in the back yard of his mother.

Mfalapitsa is not mentioned again in *Askari*. The trouble is, Musi was not the first close friend he attempted to kill; he attended another amnesty trial for other crimes and he did not defect in the same way other askaris did, as Dlamini seems to intimate. While working in the operations department of the ANC under Joe Modise, Keith Mokoape and Charles (a mononymous commander using a travelling or code

[292] Mfalapitsa said: "I was like a member of the family of Musi." (43) Also see: *TRC Amnesty Application Decision for Applicants Jan Carel Coetzee, Willem Frederick Schoon, Abraham Grobbelaar, Christiaan Siebert Rorich and Tlhomedi Ephraim Mfalapitsa*, 2001, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions%5C2001/ac21198.htm. Mfalapitsa and his co-accused, his handlers at Vlakplaas, were all denied amnesty for these killings.

name), Mfalapitsa lured his friend Dladla to a place where he was arrested on suspicion of being an agent.[293] Dladla was tortured and killed. According to his amnesty application for acts perpetrated while in the ANC – a mirror to his other trial detailed above – Mfalapitsa participated in the torture of at least five suspected agents (later on in the trial he mentions another name, Ace):

> Mr Mfalapitsa: Should I have named names?
>
> [Leader of evidence Zuko] Mapoma: Yes, you must tell the committee the assault of whom must the committee grant you amnesty for.
>
> Mr Mfalapitsa: That is Disco, that is Dladla, that is Dumisang, that is ...
>
> (intervention)
>
> Judge [Chris] de Jager: Sorry, the last name mentioned?
>
> Mapoma: Dumisang.
>
> Judge De Jager: Dumisang.
>
> Mr Mfalapitsa: Yes. That is Wellington, Oshkosh.[294]

He also murdered another, Shorty. The only clue that Mfalapitsa was different to other askaris comes through when Dlamini writes: "Mfalapitsa … defected to the SAP in November 1981 after participating in ANC torture of a man suspected of being an apartheid agent in Lusaka." (43) Notice the slight misinformation about torturing only one man. Dlamini does not go into it further. This intrigued me. What ANC torture did he participate in exactly, and why would that make him defect to the SAP? It must

---

[293] Mfalapitsa puts it this way in his amnesty trial: "I don't think I ever said I did anything to ... [indistinct] the unrest, but I was used to arrest certain members like Dladla. Dladla was my closest friend, but I was instructed by Joe Modise to go and tell him that we have a mission to go and take food to Angola, because normally we should transport food to Angola to the camps, so I was instructed again to take him under the pretext that we are taking food to Angola with trucks and he came with me as a friend, but suddenly he was arrested, so we used to arrest people ... [indistinct] operation department, under the instructions of either Joe Modise or Keith." *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Day 5, Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa Murder of Thembisile Tuku,* July 25, 2000, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200725pt.htm.

[294] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa*.

have been severe for a person to go over to the other side after having committed that violence. But even this assumption, that Mfalapitsa defected, is not quite true. In his amnesty hearing, he elaborates on what took place:

> I told the South African Police that I am not interested in joining either side of the conflict. I wanted them to debrief me and set me free because there was nowhere else to go and this is my country. And it was my experience and my arrest in Botswana. I saw many people who were stateless, who had no place to go … And then, they refused me. They said they could not let me, after having been in military structure in which Joe Modise is the chief of the armed forces of the MK. So I helped, and I was forced to join the South African Police.[295]

In fact, he did not simply defect to the other side, but rather wished to leave the fray altogether. Historian Thula Simpson describes how he left exile. At a meeting of the MK operations department chaired by Modise and attended by Mfalapitsa, among others, it is decided that bases need to be set up on the Botswana border to provide launch points for missions into South Africa. Modise instructs Mfalapitsa, then a member of that department, to accompany a group of specially trained cadres to do reconnaissance and begin establishing bases. A series of mishaps occur in which Mfalapitsa loses his group several times. While wandering around trying to find his comrades, he begins to think about the torture he was involved in. Suddenly "he starts to walk purposefully in the direction of Derdepoort … and [at the border] surrenders to the security police. He says he has come to South

[295] *TRC* vol 6, sec 3, chap 1, para 117, p 221.

Africa because it is the land of his birth, but he is not interested in joining either side of the conflict. He wants to go home."[296]

I see a walking man, one day wandering out of a life, striding through dense bush, beating his way away from what he has done: arrested men, once arrested a friend, held him down while he was tortured.

Mfalapitsa: ... with [a golf stick] until he bled under his feet.[297]

I see a walking man, home again in his country of birth, grasped by the other side, becoming that agent he helped beat out of men in that other bush at that other time. Becoming a torturer again, for Vlakplaas, becoming a killer – a killer of friend and kin. Again. Mfalapitsa is both: a torturer and killer for one side and for the other. He is a mirror, showing how betrayal shoots through, turns and re-turns. Showing how betrayal works *both ways*. Mfalapitsa did not defect in the way Sedibe and many others did, which is by being caught and tortured or in other ways coerced by the security branch. He also did not defect because he was tired of exile, as many askaris stated as state witnesses in their trials (truly or otherwise). Mfalapitsa left the ANC because of what its members were doing in camps and prisons in exile. He left it disillusioned, even perhaps in disgust. He says: "The objective of freedom and what happened that time [the torture of suspected MK cadres] contradicted one another."[298] When asked if this sort of assault was completely contrary to the regulations of the ANC's discipline, Mfalapitsa agreed.

After the askari

How did it happen that members of the ANC came to be torturers?

---

[296] Thula Simpson, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2016), 238.
[297] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa*.
[298] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa*.

After the 1976 student uprising in Soweto, thousands of youths across the country joined MK in exile to be trained to fight apartheid. Stadler, former head of the special branch intelligence, put the number of people who fled across borders at about 6 000, stating that a large number of them were apartheid agents.[299] The ANC routinely used biographies to vet people joining the struggle in exile. The idea was that a candidate would write their life story – their biography – sometimes over and over. This was to see if they would begin making mistakes, alerting the ANC in exile that this candidate might be a spy for the apartheid government. But the massive influx of new recruits made it almost impossible for the ANC to vet everyone. In 1981, the ANC's intelligence and security organ uncovered a large network of spies, which comprised camp commanders and heads of security, including men named Elliot "Piper" Mazibuko, Oshkosh – one of the men Mfalapitsa helped assault – and Kenneth "Chief" Mahamba.[300] This discovery brought about a strong sense of paranoia. "The ANC [was] convinced that there [was] a much wider spy network within its ranks"[301] — which provoked a "suspicion so general as to cast doubt on the loyalty of any ANC soldier."[302] This blanket mistrust was so pervasive that, according to TRC senior researcher Zwelinzima Khoisan, "at one stage, 50% of the people in

[299] In Harris, *Unfinished Business*, 1998.
[300] Stephen Ellis and Tsepho Sechaba, *Comrades against apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992), 116. Mahamba's real name was Timothy Seremane, brother to Joe Seremane, the former chief land claims commissioner and now retired federal chairperson for the Democratic Alliance. Joe Seremane tried for years to find out the exact circumstances of his brother's death in Quatro Prison where he was being held on suspicion of being an agent. He wanted to appeal to Timothy's killer to come forward and show Joe where is brother's bones were buried so he could rebury them at home. Gabrial Mthembu, commander at Quatro, admitted to torturing Timothy till his face was unrecognisable. Timothy was dragged out back and shot in a ravine close to the prison. Joe was never allowed to access his brother's remains. He is adamant that his brother was not a spy. See: Harris, *Unfinished Business,* 1998; "Seremane 'torturer' to co-operate with TRC," *Mail & Guardian*, July 28, 1997, http://mg.co.za/article/1997-07-28-seremane-torturer-to-co-operate-with-trc; and Charlene Smith, "'Sorry I killed your brother'," *Mail & Guardian*, November 13, 1998, http://mg.co.za/article/1998-11-13-sorry-i-killed-your-brother.
[301] Simpson, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, 280.
[302] Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, 118.

[MK military training camp] Quibaxe were suspects."[303] Though this seems absurd, it is important to keep in mind that the apartheid government's security branch had a massive network of informants, and sent thousands into exile to "send out information, as far as the ANC's strategy, tactics and movements were concerned."[304] It is perhaps unlikely that half the people in a single camp would be government spies, but it is not impossible. Comrades began to watch other comrades for anything that might seem suspicious. "We're dealing with quite a volatile situation," Khoisan suggests, "when people are being constantly monitored by other people." Any kind of ill discipline or other types of acting out was seen with suspicion.[305] This is how the ANC described agents in exile in its second submission to the TRC:

> Some agents were tasked not only with passing on information … but also with carrying out acts such as poisoning and sabotage of essential equipment. Others were trained in the psychological warfare field; their work aimed at destroying the ANC from within, and they usually took on the role of agent provocateur. They sought to damage MK and the ANC in general through stirring up dissent, tribalism or other forms of factionalism, spreading false rumours, encouraging general demoralisation, creating suspicion within structures, damaging relationships, and instigating or encouraging acts of indiscipline.[306]

---

[303] Harris, *Unfinished Business*, 1998.
[304] Stadler in Harris, *Unfinished Business*, 1998.
[305] At the ANC's Dakawa Development Centre in Tanzania, a school of sorts, "it was necessary to screen new arrivals, since there were undoubtedly spies and agents provocateurs for Pretoria amongst those arriving in Tanzania. However, this could lead to a kind of paranoia where 'indisciplined' people seen as 'very rude against the administration' were assumed to be spies." Sean Morrow, "Dakawa Development Centre: An African National Congress Settlement in Tanzania, 1982-1992," *African Affairs* 97, no. 389 (1998): 503.
[306] African National Congress, *Further Submissions and Responses by the African National Congress to Questions Raised by the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation*. (Johannesburg: African National Congress, Department of Information and Publicity, 12 May, 1997) http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/submit/anc2.htm.

The camps themselves were not easy places to be, often without enough food, water and activity[307] – though Dlamini quotes James Ngculu, one of the founding members of MK military intelligence: "The camaraderie among recruits more than made up for their deprivations." (28)[308] The main difficulty the ANC faced was "large numbers of radicalised young people, in flight from repression and bantu education, eager to fight against the regime, but unorganised, untrained, and, though eager, sometimes politically naive."[309] Dlamini agrees. "In truth," he writes, "the ANC's biggest problem was not much the enemy infiltration as it was how to integrate the thousands of young members, such as Sedibe, who joined in the wake of the 1976 uprising." (156) Put through training course after training course, these young activists became restless to fight in South Africa and no longer wanted to participate in Angola's civil war while in that country. This, coupled with complaints of abuses perpetrated by the ANC's military intelligence arm, called Mbokodo (the grindstone), led to a strong call for ANC leaders to hold a meeting in which cadres could air their grievances.[310] According to Mfalapitsa: "After this general meeting, arrests of different cadres took place ... I witnessed the arrest and the torture."[311] The situation considerably worsened over the next 10 years as waves of mutinies hit the camps, with cadres agitating against corrupt commanders, bad conditions and harsh punishments meted out by Mbokodo. People under investigation were tied to trees, where they slept for the

---

[307] African National Congress, *Stuart Commission Report on Commission of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People's Republic of Angola* (Lusaka: African National Congress, Department of Information and Publicity, 14 March, 1984), "Camp conditions" and "Welfare". http://www.anc.org.za/content/stuart-commission-report.

[308] Gabriel Mthembu, first commander of the prison camp Quatro, stated: "It's difficult to describe the conditions we were exposed to. The conditions were extreme, in a word I would say inhuman, because of deprivation ... most of us were affected and are still affected." "The execution of a camp commander," *Mail & Guardian*, October 30, 1998, http://mg.co.za/article/1998-10-30-the-execution-of-a-camp-commander. This seems at odds with Ngculu's statement, as well as in general with Dlamini's description of the camps as places of education.

[309] Morrow, "Dakawa", 499.

[310] "There is a general abuse of authority on the part of most members of the administration in the camps." ANC, *Stuart Commission Report*, "Administration".

[311] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa*.

duration of the inquiry, while others disappeared altogether or were sent to detention centres.[312] Several men were summarily executed for the mutinies.

What story does this tell? It is primarily one of fear, I think. A worse fear than being at war: of apartheid prisons, of death. It is the thought that each man and woman in the camps, in MK, in the ANC, was a potential turncoat, his or her skin showing nothing, hiding everything. It is the fear of the self, the same turned inside out, twisted, identical, doubled. As racial traitors swell the ranks, the unity of the struggle is sundered; the knot is cut; it's true then, they think, nothing binds us. Suddenly unbound, loosed, men and women free float. Panic sets in. If nothing binds, they must *be* bound – to trees if necessary. Unity is replaced with *uniformity*, where complaint is always potential provocation or dissidence. The people, so contingent already, become the loyalists or the suspected. Everyone begins watching everyone else. Files are kept by Mbokodo: men are taught the art of spying and intelligence gathering by those master watchers, East Germany's Stasi. They look ever inward. Dlamini picks up on this only obliquely by quoting a character in Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story*, who suggests that apartheid worked "by making [the ANC] insecure about our own members … we remain suspicious, incriminate the innocent, and do terrible things to our own people." (138)[313]

Those suspected of being apartheid agents, and other dissidents and mutineers, were put in detention centres and prisons across Southern and Central Africa.[314] The official name for Quatro Prison in Angola was first Camp 32, but later it was renamed

[312] "The execution of a camp commander."
[313] Zoë Wicomb, *David's Story* (New York: Feminist Press at City University of New York, 2000), 196.
[314] An ANC prison in Angola called Quatro by those who feared it took its name from the Old Fort on what is now Constitution Hill in Johannesburg. Otherwise a whites-only prison, the Old Fort had a section called Number Four, which was reserved for black men. It was notorious for its violent treatment of prisoners.

the Morris Seabello Rehabilitation Centre.[315] The human rights abuses that took place while the ANC was in exile are well documented.[316] But I found in the use of the term "rehabilitation centre" a mirror, a sample of twisted sameness. There is another place that called itself a rehabilitation centre: Vlakplaas.[317] What took place at the Morris Seabello Rehabilitation Centre and at the Vlakplaas Rehabilitation Centre was remarkably similar – mostly MK cadres were kidnapped, imprisoned without trial, tortured and sometimes killed. And often the result of this process – at least, before death – was exactly the same: the creation of an enemy agent.[318]

Tyranny is tyranny

In two letters written to Nelson Mandela in March and April of 1991 and published in *Searchlight South Africa*, Olefile Samuel Mngqibisa, a former MK cadre, explains his decision to resign from the ANC. It came about, he explained, after he was imprisoned several times by the "security hooligans" in the ANC for speaking about problems cadres faced, including a lack of food and medical attention.[319] "We were labelled enemy agents because of our talking too much." His statement to Mandela

---

[315] This renaming took place after Seabello, an MK cadre, was killed in the Maseru raid in Lesotho. See: *TRC*, vol 2, chap 2, para 428, p 146.

[316] The ANC produced three reports from commissions into these abuses: The Stuart Commission Report, 1984; the Skweyiya Commission Report, 1992; and Motsuenyane Commission Report, 1993. In the Skweyiya Commission Report, see especially: "Section F: Conditions of Detention"; "Section E: The Evidence"; "Section G: Physical Conditions of Detention"; and "Section K: Forced Confessions". African National Congress, *Skweyiya Commission Report on Commission of Enquiry into Complaints by Former African National Congress Prisoners and Detainees* (Johannesburg: African National Congress, Department of Information and Publicity, 1992), http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=95.

[317] Dlamini notes: "The security branch referred to Vlakplaas as a rehabilitation centre for former terrorists." (38) This is confirmed in the TRC report: "The purpose of Vlakplaas … was ostensibly as a place to rehabilitate 'turned terrorists' or, as they were called, askaris." *TRC*, vol 2, chap 3, para 17, p 317.

[318] It is important to note, though, that although these two places, uprooted from their contexts and held side by side, form a perverse mirror of each other, they are not morally the same. Or, more accurately, the bodies that governed them are not. I belabour this point because when looking up Quatro online, over and over I stumbled upon excerpts, mostly on racist and right wing websites, describing the dire conditions of the prison and the human rights abuses that took place there.

[319] Olefile Samuel Mngqibisa, "Documents of the Exile," *Searchlight South Africa* 2, no. 4 (January 1992): 27. One of the people Mngqibisa mentions as another so-called dissident was Ace – possibly the same man Mfalapitsa admitted to torturing.

was simple: "Tyranny is tyranny."[320] As much as we cannot morally equate the two sides at war, the liberation movement against the apartheid government, the oppressed against the oppressor, we also cannot also take lightly the acts perpetrated by members of the ANC in exile, deemed by the TRC to be gross human rights violations. Here the question so often asked by Dlamini in *Askari* is again pertinent: what about moral agency? Does the ANC torturer, like the apartheid agent who tortures, still *choose* to do it? And, if so, is he morally any different from a torturer for the apartheid government? Mfalapitsa, who was both, is interesting here. This is what he says in his TRC amnesty application:

> I assume that my humanity is something I can't suspend. When I go into war, there is a personal morality that partakes in conflict and death should be just [indistinct]. So I thought when I was Mngqibisa going to war, all procedures of war will be maintained, but whenever something happened to another person, I thought what if it could happen to me … which means I'm partaking in something that doesn't secure my safety. So in that sense [orders to help torture suspected agents] contradicted my objective and demoralised me … [I would carry out] legitimate orders … but arresting a person, after arresting him inflicting another pain upon the person [indistinct], for me constituted the problem.[321]

Mfalapitsa insists he morally engaged with his situation and finds he cannot reconcile his orders with his moral agency. How different to this is his state amnesty application, in which he says to Musi, then present: "I'm a black man. You're a black man. And I do appreciate that you are, you are intensely and profoundly aggrieved by what subsequently aspired from my involvement in the struggle of the past and my

[320] Mngqibisa, "Documents of the Exile", 27.
[321] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa*.

involvement in the situation in South Africa. But I would like to appeal that you look at this from a broader context and from the point of view of the situation in which I was at that point." (45) Mfalapitsa moves from being morally responsible in the first instance to being a victim of the broader context in the second, in which his humanity seems to be absolutely suspended. Note also his somewhat ironic appeal to racial solidarity – suggesting they *are the same* – when it was that very intimacy along with the family-like bond that constituted his act of betrayal. Of course, in both instances, Mfalapitsa is assuming a set of guises: in the first he is the high-minded comrade who was against it all along, and in the second is the low-minded askari who was trapped by history and the barrel of De Kock and other handlers' guns. Each description served different ends in his bid for amnesty. Also, in the first instance, although Mfalapitsa mentions his humanity, he does not take responsibility for his actions. Mfalapitsa: "In an objective situation where the structure of the movement was surpassing every other feeling or ... [indistinct] I ought to carry out the order" – meaning, he followed orders.[322] Thus, in both instances, Mfalapitsa relinquishes responsibility, but for different reasons: the first is because of a cause he fought for morally, the ANC. This is the history he made in the back yard of his mother. This is intimate and close, and he exists here as an individual with humanity. The second is because of South Africa's history, where the individual is dissolved along with his humanity. These gradients of truth and lies, moral capacity and responsibility, seem to shade here into ever stranger and more contingent zones.

More broadly, however, we can ask, what did the fact of the askari *do*? To meddle with the ANC's complex past in exile is to muddle the ANC's role as a champion of human rights; it reminds one of the prisons in exile; it makes us wonder

[322] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa*.

about spies now, about the suppression of information; it makes narratives crumble; it makes cadres quake. The power of the unnamed, then, of the suspected but not proven, the wolf in your midst, and the power of the ANC's answer, Mbokodo, the grindstone, reaches out from the paranoia. This long arm stretches all the way from the German Democratic Republic to Tanzania, Zambia, Ethiopia and South Africa, and on, into the future, now, where it remains hazy, a matter of suspicion for years, before rising again in Luthuli House.

The watchers

A well-connected journalist told me that the late ANC stalwart Phyllis Naidoo kept a very tight schedule. She would always wake early at the same time each day, and would work in the morning. One day, he said, she woke up at 11am feeling groggy and found her computer was stolen. Apparently it was the ANC that stole the computer because Naidoo was about to expose some of what she knew about the movement in exile, its camps, and possibly about its deputy head of security at that time, Jacob Zuma. How Naidoo and others figured she had been gassed remained unclear. After some research I found that in his obituary for Naidoo, friend and fellow anti-apartheid activist Michael Neocosmos mentioned that Naidoo's flat was robbed twice: "More ominous was the second burglary, during which only computer equipment was taken. She was convinced that the culprit was the 'public' rather than the 'private' sector, so to speak, as someone in power was unhappy with the fact that she knew about his talking under torture and wanted the evidence removed. Of course, we will never know for sure now, but the paranoia of power is notorious and

the break-in was clearly a professional job, not an attempt by the 'lumpen-proletariat' to increase its chances of survival. This led her to rethink the previous break-in."[323]

An article in *Africa Confidential,* "Night of the Generals", also suggests that many senior ANC members complained that their phones were bugged, connecting Zuma's focus on surveillance to his time as deputy head of intelligence during the struggle: "The training and assistance ANC intelligence operatives received from East Germany's state security ministry … commonly known as the Stasi, instilled a lasting ethic."[324] This ethic is about intelligence gathering through various forms of spying: bugging phones, hacking computers, raiding flats and offices, and it seems it is indeed lasting. Ronnie Kasrils, a founding member of MK and former minister of intelligence (2004 to 2008), said in an article in 2014: "The intelligence service has become a tool for Luthuli House and the president [Zuma]."[325] And, in another, "My experience as intelligence minister was that the security and intelligence community were hopelessly politicised. This was made worse by a culture of secrecy, paranoia, conspiracy theory and authoritarianism."[326] In 2014, the ANC set up Project Veritas, which was tasked with investigating ministerial candidates, on the 11th floor of Luthuli House. Each candidate had to fill in a 23-page form that included the disclosure of bank accounts, tenders won and various political connections. This screening process was conceived as an attempt by the ANC to rid itself of corrupt characters. But the form also gathered very personal information, such as whether the

---

[323] Michael Neocosmos, "Remembering Phyllis Naidoo," *Daily Maverick*, February 20, 2013, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2013-02-20-remembering-phyllis-naidoo/#.V5HndZNWneQ.

[324] "Night of the Generals," *Africa Confidential* 57, no. 7 (2016) http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11606/Night_of_the_generals.

[325] Genevieve Quintal, "Intelligence service an ANC tool: Kasrils," *IOL News*, April 15, 2015, http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/intelligence-service-an-anc-tool-kasrils-1676525#.U4idGeKDrc.

[326] Ronnie Kastrils, "The politics of disorder and pressures on the judiciary," *SA Monitor,* 2014, http://sa-monitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SAM3-Rule-of-law.pdf. (This article is the fourth chapter of the South African Monitor Year-End Report of 2014. The complete report can be read or downloaded from www.sa-monitor.com).

candidates or any of their family members were seeing or had ever seen a psychologist, whether the candidates had or have lovers, whether they had gambling or drug addictions, any surgeries that kept them out of work, or any fights with fellow comrades. One minister described this as deep intelligence screening, and wondered what would happen should it land in enemy hands.[327] The *Mail & Guardian* confirmed that former members of Mbokodo, who, in the article, are referred to as "spooks" or spies, were running Project Veritas.[328] All this spying and internal intrigue, the torture and the assassinations, tell us about how the ANC responded and continues to respond to the phenomenon of the apartheid agent through its ethic of secrecy.

Thus, this is the result of the askari: the destruction of what the ANC hoped for itself and still dreams itself to be. Its human rights narrative is torn up, screwed up, trod upon. The betrayal has re-turned, shot backwards through the liberation narrative, and eviscerated it. The fatal break in intimacy was not clean; it was gory with torture, shaking with fear. Dlamini's taint contaminates absolutely. Our groundwater is poisoned. And we are none of us exempt.

A dreaming, or, loving the writer

Betrayal is impossible to capture, arrest, interrogate, take to court, judge, pass sentence on and hang. This is what lies between the reader and Dlamini, this ghost body turning and turning in the gallows.

---

[327] "Inside the ANC MP vetting questionnaire," *Mail & Guardian*, March 8, 2014, http://mg.co.za/article/2014-03-08-inside-the-anc-mp-vetting-questionaire.
[328] Matuma Letsoalo and Mmanaledi Mataboge, "Spooks vet ANC candidates," *Mail & Guardian*, March 28, 2014, http://mg.co.za/article/2014-03-27-spooks-vet-anc-candidates/.

A wave throws items up on a beach where everyone has been shipwrecked, and then another wave pulls that thing out of sight again, even as you rush into the sea after it. There is Dlamini. There is the reader looking at Dlamini looking at Sedibe, seeing Dlamini finding himself in Sedibe and rejecting that self, disgusted. Falling, running always towards stories that never existed in the first place. The reader sees Dlamini and sees herself and sees Dlamini searching for Sedibe, scrambling around, digging in this part of the beach and in another, finding only fragments, a belt buckle, a shoelace. Something pulled up and dusted off and laid on to a white sheet, pored over, deciphered, evaluated. Look: here is a hair; here is a fingerprint. But Sedibe is massive, a large and ever-moving self, a person, a universe, impossible to capture, not only because his bones are all we have, but also because the magnitude of the human being is always beyond reach. Here is Dlamini and his thin bones before him. This is the man, he says to the reader; this, picking up an arm bone, is the betrayer; this, picking up a leg bone, is the victim; this, picking up his pelvis, is the perpetrator. He lays everything back neatly. He tried, he tells us in the book, to put flesh on those bones, but all the flesh never made him live again. Rather, it is Dlamini who lives. It is he who takes up the burden of Sedibe, who remains a ghost who lives in all the small places in the book. There he is, you yell, the reader, thinking you've spotted him, thinking you might know just a part of Sedibe, but it was nothing, just a shadow. He slips and slides, haunts, runs up against the words, the bones, the reader and Dlamini, who is also looking for Sedibe. We are all there. I watch Dlamini watching for Sedibe. I watch Dlamini watching for himself. Picking up Sedibe's habits – this happens when you live with someone – as he begins to skid and skate, running himself behind words, hiding as he reveals. This is what Sedibe did.

Sedibe hid as much as he revealed. De Kock says Sedibe told him (see Sedibe disappear now behind De Kock, who invokes his voice but not its timbre, not its tone. See De Kock disappear behind Dlamini) that he told Vlakplaas and the government only about 10% of what he knew. There. He gets to keep his secrets. He gets to hold something outside the light. Perhaps Sedibe, too, had in front of him a canvas sheet on which he placed, like archaeological finds, water-soaked books, coded letters with seven names scrambled, a lock from a safe house. A piece of rope. The inner tube of a tyre. At least, he might have thought, I never told them that, or this, touching that, then this on his clean white sheet. The betrayer hides and reveals, trading pain for goods. Pain for books and letters and names. Holding back and giving out. Nonetheless, even though Sedibe says he gave only 10%, he destroyed MK's Swaziland network. People died. Many people died. He cannot undo this, no matter how much information he has shored up, laid out for himself only, touchstones to help him wake up in the morning. Let the pain stop. Only that. Let the pain stop. Sedibe, the ghost man, slides away again from me, from Dlamini, from any reader.

Writers comb the beach, looking for something, archiving. How can we face ourselves? How can I face myself while facing Dlamini? How can Dlamini face himself while facing Sedibe? Sedibe glimmering in and out of the light. The not man. Sedibe in pictures. Sedibe's voice on the tongues of others. And then on yours, Dlamini. That is what the beachcomber gets. The hard and soft; the shell and its innards. It's always too late. And so many terrible things happened. Look: the dead in a haze of red. The dead in a puff of smoke, a pall of ash, the stink in a ditch. The dead hanging between Dlamini and I, and Dlamini looks at Sedibe looking back at him. Snap, click. Capture that. Those two frozen, fatally intimate.

Archivist, Bomber, Storyteller: Writing the Circle

Hugh Lewin's *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle*

I resisted, for months, almost a year, taking apart Hugh Lewin's 2011 book, *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle*.[329] I wanted to leave it whole, a desire I will explain over the course of this chapter. But when I broke it down and it began to reveal itself to me, I found it was a series of circles: like dancers from above, the spheres spin in their own tight orbs while circling a larger axis. The structure of *Stones Against the Mirror* is as complex and beautiful as a solar system or as raindrops in a pond. At each turn, the circles thicken and criss-cross, so stories emerge slowly, building accretive speed and substance, until they are complete, though never full. We know the whole main story by the end of the first page and a half. In the early 1960s, Lewin was involved in the African Resistance Movement (ARM), a splinter group of the Liberal Party. As opposed to the Liberal Party's stern stance of non-violence, members of ARM chose violent protest sabotage of non-human targets to try to shake the white electorate into seeing the injustice of the apartheid system. Over three years, they blew up mostly pylons and train signals in Johannesburg and Cape Town. In 1964, the South African security branch captured and tortured Lewin after his best friend, Adrian Leftwich, gave them his name.[330] This same friend betrayed him further by standing state witness against him in the State versus Baruch Hirson, Hugh Lewin and Raymond Eisenstein. Lewin was sentenced to

[329] Hugh Lewin, *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle* (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2011). From here shortened to *Stones Against the Mirror*. All references to the primary text will be made in-text.

[330] The security branch drew a chalk circle around Lewin and, while screaming at him, made him stand in it all night. Later they beat him so badly he thought he would die.

seven years in prison, while Leftwich was given immunity and went to England.[331] This was followed by 40 years of silence between the men. In the book, Lewin is on his way to heal this schism. In 2005, he travels to England to encounter Leftwich again.[332]

A few pages later, we know the secondary story. After Leftwich 'gave the names'[333] and most ARM members were detained, John Harris, a man Lewin recruited into the sabotage group, placed a bomb in the concourse of the central train station in Johannesburg, Park Station. Though he called several newspapers and the police telling them to clear the area, no one made any announcements, and the bomb went off during peak hour at 4.33pm, severely injuring 22 people and killing one, the grandmother of a 12-year-old girl. The girl was burned all over her body. The rest of the book centres on the stories of betrayal and the bomb, adding more and more detail. In each episode, tiny circles mirror the larger structure. Round fractals make stories into geometry as Lewin structures his book with a Spirograph. This structure allows for doubleness, even severalness, to emerge as Lewin spins the stories of himself and his many others, his doppelgangers. It permits him to get close to the perpetrator-betrayer-friend and move further out again over and over, loop in, loop out. The first few pages open the main artery of the book: betrayal, culpability, responsibility as hung on the could-have-been-me double, the evil twin, the good twin, the betrayer and the betrayed, the free and the imprisoned; and then, in later years, the literally free and the metaphorically imprisoned, a structural and corporeal

[331] Lewin wrote a book about his time in prison first published in 1974, and then again in 2002. The latter version includes information Lewin could not put in the original book for fear of reprisals against the activists still serving time. Hugh Lewin, *Bandiet: Seven Years in a South African Prison* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974); *Bandiet: Out of Jail* (Johannesburg: Random House, 2002). The quoted material is from the 2002 book.
[332] In 2013, Leftwich died of cancer in England.
[333] This references the title of Leftwich's confession article. Adrian Leftwich, "I Gave the Names," *Granta* 78, Bad Company (2002): 11–31.

pairing and duplication found again and again. Finally it allows him to take up the role of victim, even while contemplating his culpability. But a savage puncturing tears open his circles, letting out all the magic that formulates a corona and revealing, finally, its true shape: a straight line. Lewin emerges, in the end, privileged, male and white.

As a man of moral courage, Lewin marshals the complexity of this structure to test his culpability, creating, in these circles and through the doubling, ways to enter and exit the skin of the betrayer, the state witness, the station bomber. Lewin wonders what he would have done had he been asked to stand state witness in exchange for indemnity, or if he had been, like Harris, one of only two members of ARM left out of detention. Would he have chosen different paths, the route of exile and escape or of deadly violence in a last attempt to show the government that they had not won, that the struggle was not over? Each time he answers with his seven years in prison in the first instance, and his non-involvement in the station bomb in the second. Nonetheless, his willingness to wonder shows his huge capacity for empathy.

But this is by no means a clean, easy process. Apartheid's signal tenet – that black and white people should live separately – meant that many white people living in the regime had good, comfortable lives, and remained unmoved by the bloody repression of the black populace that allowed them these lives. Lewin and his fellow activists recognise the injustice in South Africa in the 1960s, and also how he as a white person benefits from others' oppression. He undertakes the great risk of protest by sabotage to try to contribute to the anti-apartheid movement. "There were endless debates those days about non-violent versus violent protest," Lewin remarks, "always against the background of a repressive government and a docile white electorate … ARM chose the minimal route of 'protest sabotage'… [to try to] shake the foundation

of the … stone-hearted regime." (45) But in choosing to protest, and more precisely to use violent protest, Lewin enters a murky, compromised world that risks what violence brings: death, destruction. As a result of his participation in ARM's violent sabotage – he recruits Harris – a bomb is placed in Park Station and people are harmed. Is moral innocence possible in a world besmirched by violence? As Lewin tries to piece together his past and make sense of it in *Stones against the Mirror*, he must find a way to negotiate actions that are simultaneously good *and* bad, always. In any engagement against a violent regime, the activist is pulled into the muck of that world, and does not emerge clean, even if he or she is on the side of good.

Thus the central tension in the book is between Lewin as hero-victim and Lewin as privileged perpetrator. I will argue that he organises this tension through his complex structure so he can negotiate these binaries through his doubles and ghost doubles, twins and mirrors. This formulates a narrative device built into the book's structure to contend with the slipperiness of betrayal. Part of what doubleness does is allow him subtly to shift blame for his choices, which are themselves doubles – both good *and* bad – instances of doubling seem to hinge on this revolving door. In fact, much of what Lewin attempts in his work reminds me of some of the features of books by or about apartheid perpetrators – most starkly through his search for origins. This ultimately tells us something about what it means to be any actor in the struggle involving a violent regime. All actions are sullied, nothing is clear, there are no binaries. All action makes you complicit; all nonaction makes you complicit. Of course, Lewin fought on the side of moral righteousness – I am not in any way making a direct comparison, but I do hope to point out that the textual similarities show us how men and women are broken in conflict.

Lewin writes:

> [Protesting against the apartheid regime] was the only way we could escape our whiteness. Apartheid had crippled us. We had grown up in a world of privilege, arbitrarily bestowed on us by the colour of our skin. However much we tried to break the barriers, the simple daily mechanisms of living were dominated by laws which separated the races … We were white and therefore protected. However much we tried to ignore it, we were wrapped in our magic cloaks of whiteness. (45-46)

Part of protesting was a way to navigate the unfairness of what his whiteness inevitably gave him in apartheid South Africa. How do you shake off privilege? Lewin learns much later at the TRC that whiteness is inescapable. Being white is to be complicit no matter how long you spend in jail. This is a defining disappointment for Lewin, who, I argue, wants to atone for what his whiteness gives him. Atonement, and its attendant terms – confession, forgiveness, reconciliation – is linked to what the TRC offered but also to how Lewin was raised: his father was an Anglican priest. What Lewin finds is that whiteness is a spiritual disease from which it is impossible to recover. Over and over, he attempts to show his reparation, his struggle, his expiation for his skin. But part of being white was to learn that no matter what, no matter how many sacrifices were made, he always had it better than black people, including in prison. He will never escape the complicity and compromise of whiteness, that all-devouring thing. But it must nonetheless also always be carefully mediated. How does he find a balance, knowing, as he does, that whiteness gives him power and protection? He is always circling in his dissent: privilege must be fought with dissension, but it is inescapable because you are protected.

Though Lewin writes about his cloak of whiteness, and part of the story is about privilege and the choice to mitigate it with protest, Lewin inevitably displays

and plays out the more hidden but no less hideous forms of whiteness – forms of dominance and power, which also cohere around maleness. Primarily, this concerns the manner in which he relates to women. Over and over he disembodies and effaces women, does not see them, does not recognise them in their fullness. This is especially prevalent with black women, who are described collectively as victims. Black women feature only in the space of the TRC where they talk about their brothers, husbands and fathers. Lewin cannot face them, and so faces only inwards, seeing himself. Black men are marshalled in the text as bodies on which to hook the recognition of white efforts. Lewin brings out a cast of black men to show his non-racialism, but in the end he to recentres whiteness as these men exist only in relation to Lewin and his efforts. Women and black men emerge in *Stones Against the Mirror* as inadvertent symbols of Lewin's inescapable whiteness, which, even in his complex book, show us his unshakable dominance as a white man.

In the first section of this chapter, I will delineate and tease out Lewin's various doubles to see how he manages these complexities. The double is himself, as he splits into two and then implicates the reader when writing about his violent actions. Leftwich, his best friend turned betrayer, is his next and most frequently used double – his twin, his doppelganger. Lewin has much at stake in describing his friendship – which is mostly played out in letters – as one characterised by deep devotion and closeness, making more miraculous Lewin's forgiveness in the end. John Harris's station bomb and its destruction threaten Lewin's moral unassailability as Lewin attempts to come to terms with his violent murderous double, the bomber. Finally, it is another man, John Lloyd (the other John), Lewin's flatmate, who emerges in the book as the true betrayer, the man who first gave the names and first stood state witness – the man Lewin cannot forgive. Lloyd exposes the dark arc

behind the main story in *Stones Against the Mirror* – a story of friendship, betrayal and forgiveness between Lewin and Leftwich. In this story, Lewin emerges as a hero figure who choses the path of reconciliation – a good story South Africans recognise. But its dark double is a story of revenge, rejection and bitterness. Lewin, in this story, does not forgive. In each of these four sections, Lewin, Leftwich, Harris and Lloyd, I unpick moments of shifted blame, misapprehension of the extent of privilege, male dominance and female effacement. I also look into what is not in included in the book – mostly parts of Lewin's trial – that expose things that need to remain hidden for Lewin's story of himself as hero-victim to emerge.

Lewin is a writer of great power, conscious of what it means to script the past. He uses a mirror metaphor to call the act of writing to the fore – a major feature of the book is its constant reflexivity about what it means to pen these stories. In the second section of this chapter, which considers storytelling, I argue that Lewin is well aware of the ways in which he is manipulating the story, and thus the audience. Over and over, he warns us that this book is an act of artifice, that it is filled with the stuff of self-deception and that we should not take it as truth. His reluctance springs from, first, how telling stories that are not all his – the book necessarily includes the stories of others – is an act of trespassing on the memories of someone else. It is also an act of betrayal as the story can never be total or full, but will always, no matter how many times Lewin turns on it, adding and adding to it, be partial, biased and incomplete. Lewin must negotiate the tricky terrain of storytelling or book writing when telling stories is so closely connected to acts of betrayal – Leftwich told Lewin's story on the witness stand. Telling stories or sharing secrets under the pressure of an authoritarian regime also lays the ground for personal and political betrayals. Keeping silent was often then an act of love, a way not to betray someone. Lewin, therefore, risks much

in telling this story. In the end, he tells his readers to think of the book as fiction, freeing himself from any responsibility to archival or factual truth in exchange for an essential or moral truth.

Finally, I will carefully study Lewin's story about his origins. In three consecutive chapters, Lewin describes his parents and home, his Jewish heritage and his time in boarding school. These chapters are the most coherent in the book, forming a mostly singular arc that does not loop out into other sections or double too many times. In studying his origins, much of the book is illuminated – his complicated relationships with women and his connections to men, his quiet powerful masculinity as connected to an Anglican manhood, his connection to black people, fairness and justice. In these three chapters, Lewin defines himself as different to other privileged white boys; he is a justice-loving fighter willing to sacrifice, take punishment, atone. But the story also shows us his victimhood, his brutal childhood, and how, from it, he came to be a small-time hero of the struggle.

In *Stones Against the Mirror*, four bombs go off: one explodes a pylon, which, legs broken and twisted, topples; tensioned wires strain then snap, ping, whip away, flail in the air with a shower of hot sparks, then land in the cold veld, dead, like snakes, like men at the end of ropes. The other explodes a railway station, women, like witches, fly, burn. A third explodes in Lewin's mother's brain, electricity spurting into skin, like the electric fence on the perimeter wall of my house set to almost lethal, clicking and humming, stretched and taut, blue and arching to explode into a person. Electric fences, like pylons, keeping the electorate in TVs and sleep. The fourth is the bomb in Lewin's heart. Alongside exploring the aspects just listed, I will inspect the blast radius of the first two bombs in the first section, and the second two in the second.

Not I, he: loops and doubles

Which lion, Lewin?

"You decide to blow up an electricity pylon," (13) opens the third chapter, "Pylons". The change in tone and pronoun from the first two chapters, which are rendered in the first person and the past tense, does several things. It immediately implicates the reader. It was not Lewin who decided; it was you. This is part of a schema that shifts the reader into the space of possible culpability, allowing us to occupy, for a moment, the body of the transgressor. But, of course, the transgressor here, the bomber, is also the activist, the moral man fighting in the struggle. The formulation, "You decide to blow up a pylon", as opposed to the more elegant, "You blow up a pylon" underlines agency and its connection to responsibility: make a conscious choice, face the consequences. This shift – the complicity of the reader – comes up again when Lewin writes about the act of writing and reading this book: "We are together, reader and writer on the same page. The guardian and the guarded. Conspirators. Interrogators and captors." (40) This doubling – the reader-writer and the transgressor-activist – articulated directly or implied through the use of the second-person pronoun, "you", instates the founding dissonance: how do you live with choices that have terrible consequences even if your intentions were good and moral? Who is to blame? More: how do you write without lying? How do you read without being lulled? What stories do we tell about all this, and which do we agree to forget? Lewin is in two here, both writing and anticipating the reader of his book, bombing and not quite bombing the pylon.

But, while implicating the reader, the use of "you" shifts Lewin away from the decision. It does not read, "I decide", a mark of personal agency and responsibility. The "you" here also refers to both the collective "you" as in "you all" and to Lewin

himself. “There are three of you: the maths lecturer (he’s driving the car), you (the twenty-three-year-old journalist) and a young mother (the leader of your cell, whom you rather fancy).” (14) So Lewin is split: there is Lewin the writer, the “I” in the previous two chapters, who reflects on his past in the past tense. And there is the “you” who decides to blow up a pylon, and whose experiences are written in the present tense. The writer Lewin writes the self who decides, referring to that part of himself as “you”. Does Lewin not only write the “you”, but writes *to* the you? The second-person pronoun is used in letters – you, the addressee, is such an intimate interlocutor. The fragmentation of the “I” into the “you” suggests a type of schizophrenic divide: Lewin is his own double, and this double does the thing for which he is eventually charged, put on trial and sent to prison. The present tense makes the scene live, it fills the saboteurs’ actions with drama, as we both witness and inhabit the “you” in the chapter who blows up that pylon. But it also suggests something of the centrality of the choice and of the action; it is an epicentre from which pain will vibrate outwards like waves all the way to 40 years later, always turning back into the present, a seismic loop in time and tremor.[334]

Lewin lived a double life: a newspaperman by day and a saboteur by night. When he sabotages the pylon, he mentions wearing a balaclava “as much as a protection against the freezing Transvaal winter nights as against identification.” (82) Was this his mask, his other face for his other life? I think of Olivia Forsyth and Eugene de Kock living their double lives – Forsyth lived many lives, as a double then triple agent; she was her own mask. De Kock did covert work in the dark; his mask

[334] Accounts of traumatic moments often shift into the present tense because trauma iterates as though it were happening in the present. See: Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1950).

was the police, the government. He murdered, killed. He caused mayhem, violence. Others wore balaclavas, too: the *izimpimpi* or informers in the township, the traitors or askaris. Their masks were to hide their identities, too. Lewin was, of course, diametrically different to these men and women in that he worked against the government while they worked for it. But all lived in two. What does this type of living do? Is Lewin's "I" his by-day self, someone upstanding, known and liked, while his "you" breathes white clouds out of a balaclava, itchy from the Highveld grass and stomping his feet in the dark, waiting for his ride back to the city, the bomb tick-ticking behind him? Does the "I" (now? then?) marvel at that night man and think: *Who are you?*

Sixty-one pages after "Pylon", in a page-and-a-half-long chapter, "Cells and Sweets", Lewin describes the same scene but in the first person: "We sit cross legged on the tutor's living room floor," (74) and learn about plastic explosives and timers. Four paragraphs in, the writing slips into the second person – "You're not sure … that you want anything to do with any of this" (75) – and quickly back to the first. The chapter ends again in the second person. "You nod to each other … and drive home. The streetlights stare down." (75) The swift back-and-forth use of the second- and first-person pronouns suggests just how unstable this moment is for Lewin. Even on the second loop of this scene, on its fuller, explanatory loop, the moment fights to move out of the realm of personal responsibility: though most of the scene is rewritten in the first person, not once does Lewin use the personal pronoun "I".

In "Cells and Sweets", Lewin expresses doubt as to whether he actually wants anything to do with violent sabotage. Elsewhere he does the same. "At heart, I mistrusted the use of violence. It was against my nature. From the earliest days – going back to those distant times of bullying at school – I had questioned the use of

force." (85) It was not him who did it; it was *you*. That's not me, Lewin cries out at that violent man. He pushes blame outwards and consolidates doubts. It is not my fault. They made me do it. I always had my misgivings, he insists, from the beginning, from my *childhood*. So it was not me, you, him. This internal split articulates Lewin's yearning to remain human while faced with the possibility of having to take responsibility for actions that eventually led to profound harm and death. But amid all this twisting and turning, leaping and lapping, Lewin reveals in himself two things: his privilege, which he is trying to escape, and his white maleness.

"Pylon" opens and closes with a drive. When members of the cell scout for likely pylons, Lewin writes that it was "as if [they were on] a meandering Sunday afternoon drive." (13) Once the dynamite and timers have been set on the legs of the pylon, the group drives away, "late-night revellers on their way home." (16) In the car on both drives, they are automatically innocent because they are white – Sunday drivers, partiers. "All of you are white, so you're unlikely to be searched at a roadblock." (14) Lewin reminds us of the advantage of being white in apartheid South Africa and of how that privilege allows you uninterrupted freedom of movement. He uses that privilege against itself; knowing they won't be stopped, they transport the dynamite in the boot of the car. The members of ARM use their whiteness – what Lewin calls their "magic cloaks of whiteness" (46) – as a cover for their illegal activities. Lewin mistakes it, though, for a shield, which is part of why he says he chose sabotage, the innocence of youth and his consequence-free white life. He never thought he could be imprisoned. He never thought any of them would die by state hanging. But there is another element of privilege that Lewin does not call to the fore here: the dynamite. Because these white men and women were not the only ones sabotaging power lines. As a youth, ANC veteran Andrew Masondo resorted to

sawing down electricity poles. "One of the obstacles we faced was a lack of explosives," he explains.[335] Without dynamite, they attacked the wooden power poles with the tools they had at hand. "We sawed the pole, and then pushed it. When the cables broke the air was electrified and we fell. We woke up and started running."[336] Masondo got 12 years on Robben Island for sawing down that electricity pole. Less glamorous, certainly, sawing down a pole, as opposed to the great satisfaction of an explosion (the white saboteurs were never near enough to ever hear or see the explosion – and thus were safe, never electrocuted, never chased – but the thought of all that heat and bang must have run a thrill through the bombers). Access to dynamite – transported in cars driven by people always assumed innocent, free to move anywhere at any time – and thus to grand political gestures that served to help undo your whiteness, was a privilege, too.

Lewin recognises his whiteness and, in blowing up pylons, both manipulates its privileges and assuages his guilt. But he slips into another form of dominance: maleness. This chapter gives us the first taste of women. There were only men in the previous two: Lewin, Leftwich, a "houseboy" (later named Billy Modise), Harris. In the description of the three saboteurs in "Pylon", the two men are defined by their work: a maths lecturer and a journalist. The woman is described by her status as a young mother. The bracketed sentence after her descriptor notes she is the leader of the cell, thus, more senior than the two men. But this is immediately undercut by the comment that Lewin rather fancies her. Later we find out that the two become lovers, so the comment is not totally facile, but it does the work of eroticising the cell leader,

[335] Andrew Masondo, "Sawing Electric Pylons," *Dawn: Journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe* Souvenir Issue (1986): 21.
[336] Masondo, "Sawing Electric Pylons", 23.

who is then both a mother and a potential sexual partner. This empties her importance as leader as the focus quickens around her womb and vagina.

Something very similar happens again in another chapter, "Cloaks of Immunity". Lewin learns that his time in prison does not in fact make him invulnerable to criticism. "It is October 1996," he begins, by way of explaining the loss of his cloak. "I am a panellist on the Human Rights Violations Committee of the … TRC." (41) Again, the story moves into the present tense, but this time remains in the first person. Does this indicate that though this affected Lewin, it did not force a dissociative doubling or splitting? "The witnesses at the hearing are mostly mothers. They talk about their families, telling the stories not of themselves but of their husbands and children." (*Ibid*) Lewin leads Margaret Madlana, who tells the story of the murder of her child Bongani by police. He describes her speaking "quietly at first, then with mounting passion" till finally her "fury spills over … She is spitting fire." (42) "The struggle started at Wits University where white students threw away their books," Madlana cries, "and not even one of them was … killed … But when black children started fighting for their liberation they were shot with guns … These dogs and baboons who work for them [whites], who bath their children, cook for their children, but they are still content to kill them." (43) Afterwards, she points at Lewin and says she will not forgive any of it. "I feel lost in the face of her fury," Lewin writes. "I feel the weight of my whiteness bearing down on me … There is no escape, no consolation even in being a small-time Struggle hero." (43) Here is a woman spitting fire, clear, clean fire, burning almost blue, but Lewin cannot contemplate her – even while facing her and hearing her, he is lost, or, more accurately, *she* is lost. There she is, "tall and eloquent" (42), her finger extended long and outwards, her arm lifted in the accursed accusation, pointing, pointing at Lewin and *exploding*. Her

mourning is a blast that singes eyebrows and arm hair. But Lewin seems to feel none of this heat, none of her. He finds himself lost in his inescapable whiteness. And his whiteness – and maleness – is indeed proving inescapable: Lewin damps down the woman on fire right in front of him, taking up all her air, swallowing her flame in a great gulping sigh. Lewin's disconsolation? Though he is a hero, he cannot escape his privilege.

A moment of supposed triumph in the book is instructive. Near the end of the book, in the chapter "Ghosts", Lewin tells the story of meeting his torturer 34 years after being interrogated. The special branch man, Viktor, was also the officer who kicked Harris in the face, breaking his jaw. It is during the TRC hearings. "Now *he* [Viktor] was being interrogated. The tables were turned. Or were they? He seemed to still have a special power over me. Why?" (166) To undo this power, Lewin confronts him during a break. But before he does, he describes some of what Viktor says to the TRC panel: "'Look, man, we had to suppress violence with violence. All very simple and straightforward.'" (167) As opposed to the catharsis Lewin thought he would get out of confronting Viktor, he is left with a limp feeling. The two end up almost reminiscing, with Viktor chuckling to his lawyer, "Hell, man, we gave these people a hard time." (170) Viktor and Lewin shake hands when they part. But at the end of the chapter, he writes, "He no longer had control. Now, down the prison corridors of my memories, we were quits. Well, sort of quits." (171) Lewin tries to claim the moment for victory, as a personal triumph, but recognises – apparent in "Well, sort of…" – that moments of absolute conquest are the stuff of children's stories. In reality, these meetings are always messy, and never without some form of compromise. Nonetheless, the scene functions on the binary Lewin-hero / Viktor-villain. But, there is something else lurking here that potentially bursts open this antithesis. The special

branch officer says to the panel that he had no choice but to fight violence with violence. Is this is not *exactly* what Lewin does, for the other side? Have no choice but to confront violent oppression with violence? He says that they undertook "violent protest against state violence." (112) He, under the pressure of the regime, acted like his enemy, Viktor. He chose violence, too, and in doing so, risked his humanity. How will he negotiate a story so sullied?

Which left, Leftwich?

Stones Against the Mirror opens and closes with Lewin's friendship with Leftwich. The meat of the book describes Leftwich's betrayal of Lewin by both giving his name to the security branch and then, much worse in Lewin's eyes, standing state witness in exchange for freedom and indemnity. In that trial, the state also made much use of evidence collected at Leftwich's house – including a list of members of ARM and a tract from revolutionary Che Guevara – even though it was Leftwich who forbade the keeping of documents or any records whatsoever in ARM. Lewin accuses Leftwich of "becoming archivist".[337] The whole of *Stones Against the Mirror* takes place with Lewin on the train to finally meet a contrite Leftwich again after 40 years apart, to forgive him, reconcile and become friends again.

"My closest friend was Adrian…" opens the first chapter, "A Friend". "We never lived in the same town but we worked together as activists … I grew to think of him as my twin brother." (9) Lewin's betrayer quickly goes from being his closest friend to being his brother – but not any brother, a twin, a mirror brother: a shared womb, a shared genesis, a forming, a mingling of blood and fluids, an amniotic floating. But they spent most of their friendship in different cities; they never lived with each other; they never shared space, only time – "four, maybe five precarious

[337] Lewin, *Bandiet*, 11.

years" (*Ibid*) – and letters. What connected them was their forcefulness, their ethic of righteousness, their sense of justice, of political urgency and, for a time, their seemingly unbreakable commitment to each other and to the cause.

"That was more than forty years ago," writes Lewin in the next line. "My dearest friend, he said of me. Like twins, I said. But that was before my trial and the bomb at Park Station, Johannesburg." (*Ibid*) The opening line of this short paragraph locates us in the time of the writing of the book. "Now, I am arriving at another railway station, in another country," (10) Lewin writes two paragraphs later. Forty years after Lewin's trial and the bomb at Park Station, he arrives in York, England, where Leftwich is waiting for him on the platform – but we will not meet him there yet. The men reconcile only at the end of the book. Most of the book takes place between the time the train slows down and the time it arrives at the station, making this story the book's biggest loop. York Station is a double – *another* station in *another* country – of Park Station. The next chapter, "Stations", describes the significance of railway stations in general and for Lewin personally, and again, mentions Harris's station bomb. Between the time, 40 years later; and the place, Park Station and another station; that is to say, between betrayal and forgiveness, in the belly of the paragraph, is friendship.

In the book's opening four-line paragraph, Lewin writes that he thought of Leftwich as a twin brother. In the second paragraph, described above, he repeats this twinning in a different form. Notice also the thrice-repeated word 'friend', including the header. "My dearest friend, he said of me" and "Like twins, I said" moves the sentiment from Lewin's private thought – "I grew to think of him as my twin brother" – to an expressed one between him and Leftwich. This slight change in expression articulates the exact same thing he wrote not three lines before, but with more weight

to it: we feel, in these lines, the intimacy shared by twins. This is the power of the structure of loops and doubles.

In the second part of the book, titled "Undergrounders", Lewin rehashes in more detail Leftwich's betrayal. The section opens and closes with the courtroom scene in which "Adrian told the whole story … giving detail after detail … it was doubly painful," Lewin notes, "to hear him describe in open court so many private details." (49-50) It is the detail with which Leftwich spoke that bothers Lewin the most: "We had changed our pleas to guilty, following the testimony of another friend," (50) he writes, so Leftwich needn't have added so much to the story. "My dearest friend, he said of me. I would have said the same of him, before that day in court." (*Ibid*) This formulation is a direct repetition of the one that opened the book and is the heart of Leftwich's betrayal of Lewin, a betrayal of intimacy and friendship. Much is at stake in highlighting the closeness between the men, as the story centres on the heinousness of the betrayal that splits them asunder and then Lewin's generosity in finally forgiving Leftwich.

"I felt cold, as if my heart were dead," (101) Lewin writes at the end of the second section "Undergrounders" of seeing Leftwich testify against him in court. "He had killed our friendship … as publically as possible." (*Ibid*) The scene then jumps in time 40 years later, with Lewin piecing together events. "That is why I was sitting on the train from London to York in the summer of 2005, watching the … countryside rush past, along with four decades of separation." (102) This loops us back to the first opening beats with Lewin on the train to York.

Seventy pages later, in a section titled "Arrival", Lewin completes this train journey. "It is 2005 and I have left Park Station in Johannesburg, flown the length of Africa … to London … I am on the … train to York." (172) The section describes

briefly Lewin's time in prison, his exile to England then Zimbabwe and finally, in 1994, his return to South Africa. "I wanted to discover," Lewin writes, "how to stop hating. I also wanted to know why things had happened the way they had. We had been so close for so long, Adrian and me." (177) Lewin finally meets Leftwich at that station and they talk about the past and about their lives. The section – in fact, the whole book – ends: "We have met again and found that we are what we were before. Friends." (186) This completes the loop opened on the first page of the book. It is a fine, familiar story with a strong arc: a story of friendship, betrayal and forgiveness, which aligns with other South African TRC stories cohered around reconciliation. The book itself, the memoir, enacts the instruction given to apartheid victims: speak, heal; and to apartheid perpetrators: speak, get amnesty, or, be forgiven.

Leftwich is Lewin's foil, showing cowardice where Lewin shows courage, making him the bad man for Lewin's good man, or, put another way, a perpetrator for Lewin as victim. But, again, there is a tear in this foil that makes it no longer quite so reflective, bowing, by degrees, the main story's perfect arc. Lewin's accusation against Leftwich is three-fold: he ratted on Lewin to the security branch, turned archivist by not destroying records, and stood state witness. In the first instance, Lewin cannot believe that Leftwich cracked *so quickly* under police interrogation – not that he cracked at all – and that he intimated that Lewin had more information than he did: Leftwich made Lewin's interrogation "doubly difficult" by, as Lewin notes, "suggesting that only I knew information which I knew he knew too." (98) This meant his torturers interrogated him for much longer than they would have. But "long before the detentions began," Lewin writes, "we had discussed the realities of detention and had accepted the reality of breaking as the inevitable outcome." (96) He describes hoping it would not happen to him, but then writes, "all of us who were

detained … eventually made statements of varying length and disclosure." (*Ibid*) So Leftwich's first betrayal was something to which every one of them eventually succumbed, even Lewin. "It was the worst moment of my life," Lewin writes. "I knew we all would eventually do what Adrian did." (98) Leftwich's real betrayal here, according to Lewin, was that he "was playing *their* [the apartheid's] game, writing *their* script." (*Ibid*) Leftwich certainly did this, but so did Lewin.

In a box tucked away in the basement of a library, I found the original records for the trial the State versus Baruch Hirson, Hugh Lewin and Raymond Eisenstein held in November 1964. When talking of sabotage as political protest, BY THE COURT, which is how the judge is designated in the records, exclaims: "That is such a silly policy!" "My Lord, that may be…" David Soggot, the accused's lawyer, tries to get a word in, but the court interrupts. "You can hardly credit intelligent, educated human beings subscribing to such a policy…" "MR. SOGGOT: My Lord when one looks at this whole history in retrospect one asks oneself how much intelligence or reasoning was there."[338] Before this, the men had been charged with idealism, extreme enthusiasm and losing perspective. Here, Soggot makes Lewin and his fellows out to be naive and unintelligent. Making them seem young is part of a strategy to discourage the court from giving out long sentences. This is a ploy, a game plan. I imagine Lewin, Hirson and Eisenstein sitting in their friendly dock, listening, all their moral courage stripped down to so much silliness.

Futile, Soggot announces, and stupid, over and over. "You have a group of intellectuals, my Lord, who in their forlorn and rather futile way commits these

[338] *The State versus Baruch Hirson, Hugh Lewin and Raymond Eisenstein*. November 18, 1964. South African Institute of Race Relations, Security Trials, Court Records 1958-1978. Supreme Court of South Africa (Transvaal Provincial Division), Incomplete Evidence and Sentencing, AD1901 28.1. Historical Papers Research Archive, Johannesburg: Cullen Library, 9.

acts."[339] "[This] clearly in retrospect is stupid, but this was their thinking, my Lord."[340] "This handful, my Lord, of futile individuals…"[341] Futile and stupid: Hirson, in his statement from the dock, agrees, "I wish to say what I did was absurd and futile."[342] "What we were doing was futile," says Lewin, in his. "What we did was in itself futile and stupid,"[343] Leftwich says while giving evidence in Cape Town. "I realised that in fact what we had done, looked at objectively as I could, was futile and stupid." Leftwich repeats a sentence later: "I realised my futility and stupidity by the very fact that I was involved in this organisation."[344] Everyone in that court played an apartheid game, used apartheid language while writing apartheid's script through its sham legal processes.

Lewin's second accusation against Leftwich is that he, against his own policies, had kept documents. In a chapter called "Letters", Lewin transcribes letters he received from Leftwich, dated from April to October 1960. Leftwich's letters are mostly about politics, interspersed with personal titbits. Most striking in them are the moments of intimacy. One is addressed: "Dear Huhg … No, Ughh, Ugh, Hue … Ah, Christ, Huggins, Huckleberry. I'm too terribly happy we will be able to work … together." (54) Another refers to their unbreakable friendship, which will "get lines, like an old face." (55) "Remembering this," Lewin remarks, "I look in the mirror and trace lines with my fingers." (*Ibid*) Lewin and Leftwich never lived in the same city. The times in which they were physically with each other were limited to student

---

[339] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 11.
[340] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 13.
[341] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 14.
[342] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, accused no. 1 (Baruch Hirson) statement from the dock, 1.
[343] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, accused no. 2 (Hugh Lewin) statement from the dock, 4.
[344] *The State versus Edward Joseph Daniels and David Guy De Keller*. November 17, 1964. South African Institute of Race Relations, Security Trials, Court Records 1958-1978. Supreme Court of South Africa (Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division) Incomplete evidence and sentencing (pp 9–64 missing), AD1901 25. Historical Papers Research Archive, Johannesburg: Cullen Library, 196.

conferences and the like. The medium of the letter, then, is the only real 'space' they shared, a space where stories start on the page then run off it into the world, as they refer to something shared only between the two correspondents. They create an intimate space, but also a fantastical one, where you can be variously a lover, a vanguard, a hero. They provide a space of imagination. "My dearest friend, Adrian said of me" (9): a space for deep devotion, love, even.[345] They describe a shared commitment to each other and to the cause. They are love letters to a man, and to politics; love letters to himself. And like most people do with love letters, Lewin kept them. *Stones Against the Mirror* was published in 2011, meaning Lewin kept these letters for 51 years, and possibly still has them. He did not destroy them, even when he was raided, even when Leftwich betrayed him. The letters almost certainly contained information the security branch could have used as evidence in court. So, it turns out that Lewin was also an archivist of a sort.[346]

The other betrayal, the worst one, was that he stood state witness. Again Lewin contemplates: "It could have happened to any of us. Perhaps it would have happened to me if they'd decided differently who it was they wanted as witness. I like to think not." (99) But Lewin is also stern about this: "There is a moment when the witness finally comes face to face with the accused in open court, when the witness can say, No, I will not testify against my comrades." (99)[347] This tells us that, despite wondering how things might have been different, Lewin would not have done it. This doubling back – contemplating possible violation and then immediately announcing

[345] Notice that Leftwich says this *of* Lewin, not *to* Lewin. This suggests that the sentiment came from a letter or was said to someone else.
[346] There are other love letters, ghost letters between Harris and his wife Anne, that don't quite emerge in the book but that don't quite disappear, either. The two corresponded while Harris was on death row right up until the day before the state hanged him. These letters, so earnest, so full of love and fervour, punctuate journalist David Beresford's wonderful book *Truth is a Strange Fruit: A Personal Journey through the Apartheid War* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2010), to which Lewin refers on page 104.
[347] Recall in *Askari* how those men felt the moment they were truly 'tamed' was they moment they testified against their colleagues and friends.

his innocence, loyalty and so on – is a loop in miniature found all through the book. It allows him to both imagine his own possible culpability but always end back at the point of innocence or heroism. He answers his contemplation of his own possible vulnerability with what he would have done: show courage. But this capacity for empathy – imagining himself as the corrupted other, even though he steps out of these shoes quickly again – shows a sophistication of spirit sometimes missing in people involved in national conflicts.

Lewin is interrogated many times, but mainly twice: when he is first caught and made to stand in a circle all night, and after the station bomb explodes. In the latter incident, before beating Lewin senseless, a security branch officer states, "'Tonight you're dead.'" (110) What is it that Lewin does when he breaks? He gives a name, John Harris. "'We've got him,'" (111) Viktor says, pointing to the area above Lewin from which noises of beating emanate. "They had John's name from John Lloyd, then from me," (*Ibid*) Lewin insists. Thus, though Lewin, like Leftwich, gave a name, someone else, Lloyd, had already given it, and Lewin knew it. Harris was already caught. The deed was done. His confession made no discernable difference.

This is exactly what happened to Leftwich. Lloyd testified before Leftwich. "Lloyd stood in the witness box and began telling our story in full." (133) On the weight of Lloyd's evidence, the accused changed their plea to guilty. It is only *after* this that Leftwich stands witness. Of course, this does not mean that Leftwich caused no damage – the details he gave severely affected the case, which was now being argued in mitigation of sentence. But, like Lewin giving Harris's name, it did not make the major difference. It was Lloyd, a relatively unknown man in the story of ARM and Lewin's betrayal, who told the offending story first.

My friend John Harris

Lewin's attempts to come to terms with Harris and the station bomb by "[mapping] John's footsteps" (104) in a clinical, beat-by-beat list of events: the suitcase in the concourse, the phone calls – "Listen carefully," Harris spoke into a payphone, "This is the African Resistance Movement" – the explosion; his capture, trial and death by hanging.

Lewin writes about the Park Station bomb: "It is the final nightmare, the unanswered accusation." (17) Against the tenets of ARM's honourable cause, which chose a target that would "cause no human harm" (*Ibid*), people are harmed. "One of our group planted it," (*Ibid*) Lewin notes, linking himself to Harris and thus to some of the responsibility. He describes the casualties – one dead and 22 hurt – then restates, "My friend John Harris was executed eight months later." (*Ibid*) At the end of "Stations", he writes something very similar, repeating exactly the formulation "my friend John Harris". Does he use the full name twice because it is a famous one, recognisable to South African ears and eyes neither as John nor as Harris, but as John Harris, the bomber, the white terrorist?[348] For the conservative white population in 1964, that name was linked to the worst kind of perpetration – targeting civilians – and the swift backlash, which mostly lashed the backs of the black population, and catalysed the dissolution of the Liberal Party, was welcomed. This is not surprising. What is surprising is that the name John Harris and his bomb also represented for the white left an unforgivable act of violence. Alan Paton apparently wrote: "John Harris's act did incomparable harm. I cannot think of his deed with anything but revulsion. In my judgement Harris had done a wicked and totally futile deed. I was

[348] There are two Johns in the book, both of whom play important roles. Perhaps rendering the full name is an editorial decision to avoid later confusion.

never able to forgive him."[349] Despite this, Lewin twice styles Harris as "my friend". They were friends, but the appellation, on second use, feels like a mantra. He was my friend, Lewin repeats, my friend, my friend. Harris betrayed Lewin, just like his other friend, Leftwich, though perhaps in a worse way. He blasted away the only thing that served to soothe Lewin's conscience when committing acts of violence: we will not hurt anyone; this is symbolic. Harris made the symbol burning flesh, and made Lewin the accused in a moral trial he will not escape: this is the still unanswered accusation. How thin, then, is line between the violence done to things as a symbol to the government and to the complacent white population, and the violence done to people, as a symbol for the same?

In the chapter "They've Got Him", Lewin twice describes his last encounter with Harris before he bombs the station. Leftwich by now has been detained and has started to give names. Lewin and another member of ARM go to Harris to warn him that they might be detained soon, "leaving him and John Lloyd as the only operatives around." (91) "Our message to Harris was clear: there was nothing more to be done but sit tight … and lie very low. Nothing more to be done … Keep your head down and don't do anything … Stay low." (*Ibid*) At the end of the chapter, Lewin repeats: "I found John [Harris] and his wife feeding the baby … Nothing left for us to do but to wait and see what happened. Nothing more to do. Nothing." (95) In the next section, "Bomb", Lewin repeats himself again: "[Harris and Lloyd] were the only remaining cell members … They would need to lie with their heads very low indeed" (104); and again: "[we] warned him to lie low, very low" (107); and again: "The morning before my detention [I told Harris to] sit tight, do nothing." (137) Like calling Harris his friend over and over, Lewin consoles himself by incessantly

[349] Alan Paton quoted by Graham Dick, "John Harris: Hardly a martyr," *News 24*, April 15, 2010, http://www.news24.com/Archives/Witness/John-Harris-Hardly-a-martyr-20150430.

echoing his last words to Harris: lie low, meaning, it was not me, it was him. Of course, it was Harris who did it. Lewin's agonised contemplation of his own responsibility for what took place is again an example of his fine-tuned sense of duty. He can see that ARM's violence, the sabotage of non-human targets, and Harris's bomb were linked: "Built into our initial decision to accept violent protest against state violence … was a possible – and fatal – momentum." (112) Nonetheless, the repetition of what Lewin said to Harris primes us for his later contemplation of guilt: we know already that he is not guilty (even while he wonders if he is) precisely because he has told us over and over that Harris went against his wishes. This is a swift turn and turnabout, a cyclic story: I did not do anything, he announces. And then asks: Did I do anything?

Besides the place where Harris exploded his bomb, and thus the place where Lewin went from righteously innocent to culpable, railway stations are important in two other ways. It is a train that takes him to his reconciliation with his friend, takes him to his triumph and the pinnacle of the story. It is also the space that inscribes his restricted movement, hinting at his prison time and aligning him with those whose movement was also restricted: the black population.

"Railway stations are meeting points of loss and delight," (11) Lewin writes in the opening line of the second chapter. The rest of the chapter encircles this line, allowing its fullness to bloom, as though it were the centre of a flower, and the loss and delight hot fuchsia petals ready to be plucked. Loss: the security branch confiscates Lewin's passport, which he calls "mean dompasse of privilege." (*Ibid*) He watches as people leave for or arrive from cross-border destinations on trains he can no longer take. Delight: Lewin describes his happiness when arriving at the station from his boarding school. Loss: this is closely followed by a description of the train

that will return him. Loss and delight, or, delight and loss: "Once, we waved farewell to a black friend wrapped in a blanket like a houseboy, stealing away from the home that had become, without his dompas, a place of imprisonment. His first ride to freedom, he called it. He had to wait another 40 years to come back." (11) This man had to wait 40 years for his return. Lewin had to wait 40 years for his redemption, by forgiving Leftwich, and his subsequent return to the hope and lightness of a life reconciled. Subtly, Lewin and his black friend are linked. The most prominent double here is the *dompas*. Without his *dompas* – his passport – Lewin has to stay; without his *dompas* – his passbook, which defines where he might move – his black friend has to leave. The meeting point is the train station. Loss for Lewin; delight for the black man who leaves to freedom – *and* loss as he is exiled for 40 years. Through the image of the two *dompasse*, Lewin further connects himself to the plight of his friend. Because of these documents, or their lack, both men's movements are restricted. For the black man, the country is a prison he must escape; for Lewin, it is a prison he cannot and does not escape. Indeed, this restriction of movement is the first in a series that leads to the ultimate form of it, imprisonment. Lewin acknowledges his privilege while establishing his likeness to the black man dressed as a "houseboy". This double reflects difference – Lewin doubled and reflected as a black man, through a black man, intimately connecting him to the black condition.

The second loop of this scene, starting on page 59, describes Lewin and his fellow activists' failed efforts to stop a campus becoming segregated for only isiXhosa students.[350] They worked with student leaders there, one of whom, Billy Modise, is "wrapped in a blanket like a mine worker [and] put … on a train from Johannesburg to Gaborone, into forty years of exile." (59) This completes the story of

[350] This moment at Fort Hare, a formative one, has been mapped out 14 pages earlier.

the black friend on the train: the houseboy becomes a mineworker and takes on a name. Again, the double becomes slightly different, now no longer like a houseboy but like a mineworker: one in a faceless horde, poor, anonymous, except here is his name, Billy Modise: boy, worker, man. Soon after this, Lewin describes in detail how a security policeman named Sweetman confiscated his passport, his "dompas of privilege". After it happens, he is "secretly pleased: it was … recognition that I could share the discomforts of those who were not white in the apartheid state." (59) When Lewin is recruited into ARM, he writes again about recognition: "I was actually quite pleased … It was … a form of recognition." (68) What Lewin's skin gives him, freedom of movement, a comfortable, risk-free life, is connected directly to the repression of other people and thus to the dehumanising disease of privilege, which Lewin is born into. The loss of his passport and restricted movement makes him less like your average white man and more like a black person during apartheid. In prison, when Lewin's movement is totally and violently restricted, he will learn about labour and privation: "Being white," he writes in *Bandiet*, "it was a useful lesson to find out what it is like – in a South African context – to be black. It showed how the endless and inescapable drudgery of menial and mindless tasks could produce resentment."[351] Two things are important here: recognition from black people of anti-apartheid activism and being like a black person by experiencing what they experience. If he can do this, if he somehow take up or take on black pain, he can perhaps work his way out of whiteness, or, at least, atone for it. But there is a problem.

The final chapter in the first section, titled "Struggle Heroes", is rendered in the first-person present tense: "It is 1965. I am trudging around the exercise yard of Pretoria Local Prison with the other white politics." (44) Lewin writes of how black

[351] Lewin, *Bandiet*, 100.

male political prisoners remain on Robben Island – "authorities … [don't] respond when we request them to move us [the white politics] to the Island, so that we … can join our black comrades." (44) Lewin and the rest of them do their time in Local, as they call it. "Take a look and see who's in the exercise yard," (*Ibid*) Lewin encourages. He describes the men as "white, middle-class, professional, intelligent and interested members of society." (*Ibid*) Lewin has located us in time, 1965, and in space, the prison yard for white political prisoners, where those men circling and circling that yard were "the blacks of Central [that prison's] society."[352] But, "however grim our conditions, we had been daily reminded of the fact that we were white and therefore, inevitably, privileged."[353] No matter what happened to Lewin and his fellow activists, black people, and especially black political prisoners, had it worse. Lewin cannot ever shake his privilege. Even when he loses his freedom, his movement becoming ultimately restricted in prison, his loss and delight, his whiteness follows him, clings to his skin like ticks – he can neither imprison it nor escape it. It burns, it itches, it *explodes*, but it never dissipates.

Lewin wonders why he does not leave or go into hiding when he finds out that Leftwich is talking, knowing he would almost certainly be detained, too. He mentions his friend telling him to drop his "Christian conscience" (94). In the end, Lewin puts it down to naivety and exhaustion. Did he stay to atone, to pay the debt of guilt, to be recognised as someone willing to go all the way? In the end, when he finds that not even his time in prison is enough, that even there he cannot escape what his skin gives him, he comes to the crisis: a betrayal of the promise of reprieve, of a cycle from which forgiveness and reconciliation can assuage you, from which you can emerge clean, renewed, your sins prayed, your debts paid. The same cycle the TRC offered.

---

[352] Lewin, *Bandiet*, 99.
[353] Lewin, *Bandiet*, 99.

The ultimate betrayal is his father's, who, as an Anglican priest, promised, with his loving actions, his silent courage, that Lewin could free himself from the bog of complicity. But he could not.

Lewin thinks of ARM as a failure because black people do not acknowledge its work. "Most crucial for us, there had been no indication that what we, as a largely white group, were doing had been recognised in any way by any black groups." (85) This is the other circle around his sabotage: it was not only to "rock the foundation of the … stone-hearted regime." (45) It was also for their own ends, their needs. He links himself to black people and black pain over and over to try to access a point of departure for himself, from his white skin and all the benefits that come from it – and all the pain it causes – but in so doing, he recentres whiteness, and uses the black experience to assuage his own pain, a usurpation that acts out the very privilege of which he seeks to rid himself.

What Lewin does not include here is that in court, the black men Lewin embodied to expel his whiteness were denied. One of Soggot's major issues is a propaganda document produced by ARM that was found in flat of the archivist, Leftwich. In it, ARM threatens violence against people – and not only 'safe' targets such as pylons – if something does not change. It is a devastating piece of evidence. But Soggot has a plan: "I will attempt to prove to your Lordship [that the document] is full of make believe…"[354] "'We cannot forget,'" Mr Soggot quotes from the propaganda document, "'the decades of violence, torture, starving and brutality against us.'"[355] He goes on: "Who, my Lord, one may ask is 'us'. They [the accused], my Lord are pretending something here. They are pretending to be African people."[356]

[354] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 13.
[355] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 14.
[356] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 14.

In 1960s South Africa, after the new repressive laws passed following the massacre at Sharpeville, pretending to be black would have been looked on as nothing short of mad. In a society, that, at least for its members on its extreme end, considered black people subhuman, to make oneself out to be black would seem an impossible reversal. Yet, in this document, the members of ARM do this. What kind of force of imagination, sense of justice, capacity for empathy, would you need to "become black" then, being white and having lived in privilege?[357]

This is how Soggot's argument goes:

> They talk of the decades and starvation and violence against 'us'. My Lord this is a bald faced untruth, it is a representation that is totally out of reality and my Lord one can understand again when you consider the people who did it, my Lord, intellectuals who are remote from reality, who feel these things, their imagination carried them away and you have a drafting of a document which is intended to inflate them into lions.[358]

Soggot is going for something like the insanity plea. These men are out of and remote from reality, intellectuals who feel and who think too much and too wildly, even going so far as pretending to be black people. In the end, you find a group inflating themselves "into lions". Futile, Soggot shakes his head, and stupid, Lewin reiterates.

Elsewhere in *Stones Against the Mirror*, there is another winding descent, a bone for a dead man, for the black women, for Lewin. "The testimonies of women … dominate my memories of those [TRC] years," (177) Lewin writes, as he is entering that other station in that other country to forgive his betrayer.

---

[357] Antjie Krog takes up some of this question in the post-apartheid context in *Begging to be Black* (Johannesburg: Random House Struik, 2009).
[358] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 15.

> Staunch and proud they told their stories, talking not of themselves, but of their husbands and sons and fathers. The women who had borne the brunt of the oppression and who now came to tell of the pain of others. They made only one demand: that the bones of their loved ones should be brought home.
>
> ‘Bring back the bones so that we know where they are.’
>
> What about revenge … justice?
>
> ‘There’s no point in seeking revenge.’ (177)

This is the second in a loop opened in the first section, in which Lewin describes the loss of his cloak of unassailability. There, as here, these women spoke only of men, their pain, their bones. A third time, he iterates: “What do you want from the commission? Give us back the bones, so we can know.” (183) The other bone in the book is the one in Harris’s mouth: according to Lewin, Harris was “a dog with a bone” (114). Later, he repeats, “[Harris] was … like a dog after a bone” (137). As Lewin contemplates Leftwich, coming to the end of his good, strong story, the one in which he is reconciled, the one his father always intimated was possible, he writes: “I wanted to discover what happened to both of us. Give me back the bones.” (183) There is Lewin, holding someone else’s skull, thighbone, someone else’s feet, hands. Bones, that’s what he wants. All his whiteness comes blinking back, a moon, or a skull, while he holds on to things that are *not his to take*. And in that light he is exposed, like Adam, a man: who takes up a voice that is feminine, that is a woman’s and speaks over her, using her words, her feelings, her needs, wrests them from her, allowing himself, for a moment, the comfort of her shadow before stepping in front of her, overshadowing her. Behind his bulk, she disappears. What bones, exactly? What bones does he want back? They all lived. Well, almost all of them. Except Harris, the hanging man, the dog, the dog with a bone. Is that the bone? But Harris was cremated,

his ashes kept in the prison, then buried there, then disinterred and reburied at Freedom Park. His epitaph: A True Patriot.

Lloyd: The unforgiven

Lewin, unlike those TRC women, takes his revenge. It was never Leftwich who was the perpetrator, the *real* betrayer. Leftwich's betrayal stands in front of the darker story, which has no good arc and ends without reconciliation. Leftwich is the man Lewin can forgive; but he is the mask, the balaclava that hides the face of the actual perpetrator: John Lloyd, the unforgiven.

Lloyd is first mentioned properly in the chapter "Balancing Act", in which Lewin describes his own life as a divorced bachelor, journalist, saboteur and lover (Dianne, the woman who first recruits him, and he have a brief affair). "By then I was sharing a flat with John Lloyd, who would eventually become one of the 'two Johns'," (81) Lewin comments, describing him as a fellow journalist. It is with Lloyd that Lewin lives, not his best friend, Leftwich. He and Lloyd share a physical space, a home. There are three homes in this book: his parents' – and linked to that his boarding school; his home with his wife, Tina; and this one, with Lloyd. Lewin says they were never close friends. "Yet I recruited him into our ARM cell, albeit in a minor role, which suggests a considerable level of trust." (130) This is an odd sentence. It reminds me of his earlier split into "I" / "you". Lewin seems to be writing from his "I" now to another man, that "you" in the past, who obviously had enough faith in a man to recruit him. Lewin now can't fathom (or remember?) that trust.

In detention, while awaiting trial, Lewin gets a message from Lloyd's girlfriend that Lloyd will not testify against him. Lewin is relieved, and then, just like with Leftwich, aghast when Lloyd betrays him, forcing him and his co-accused to change their plea to guilty. Later, Lloyd's version of what took place is printed in a

British newspaper: "Hugh Lewin betrayed me. I betrayed Hugh Lewin." (134-135) Lewin firmly denies this: "I had not betrayed John Lloyd. I did not give his name." (135) "Yes," Lewin persists, "I had recruited him … Yes, I had introduced him to John Harris … But … I had managed to keep both their names out of my [early] statements." (135) Lloyd goes to England, Lewin to prison, Harris to death row. Harris's lawyer tried three times to get Lloyd to plead for clemency for Harris, whom he had also testified against. He never did. He even ignored a telegram from Anne, Harris's wife. "I plead for his life," (139) she wrote.

But Lewin got his revenge. When Lloyd, much to Lewin and others' disgust, stood as a Labour Party candidate in England, Lewin, who wonders how Lloyd could not have expected an outcry, gets Lloyd de-listed for the post.[359] Later, Lloyd's daughter approaches Lewin, wanting to find out who de-listed her father and why. Lewin writes, smugly, "[The answer] to that one was easy enough." (142) But when she asks why Lewin cannot forgive her father if he can forgive Leftwich, Lewin is stumped. In the end, Lewin never reconciles with Lloyd; in fact, he goes out of his way to make sure Lloyd fails in his political ambitions. He certainly never forgives him: the man who gave Harris's name *first*, the man who testified against him *first*, the man who refused to save his friend Harris from the rope. The man he lived with, the man he (must have, surely?) trusted and recruited. The man who exposed Lewin to the impossible question: if I recruited him, and he betrayed Harris, betrayed all of us, am I to blame? Yes, I did this, Lewin insists, in a count-on-fingers list that, compared to the rest of the book's contemplative turn, is churlish. Yes, I did that. But I did *not* tell, I did not turn, I did not sing like a canary, at least not then. *I* am the wronged

[359] Lewin apparently told *The Independent* that Lloyd was "a Judas Iscariot" who should "have the decency to piss off out of politics." Paul Routledge and Ian MacKinnon, "Bombs and betrayal haunt would-be MP," *The Independent*, October 29, 1995, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bombs-and-betrayal-haunt-would-be-mp-1579969.html.

party. Lloyd is flung outside the circle of confession, forgiveness, reconciliation. He remains the betrayer, Lewin the betrayed: there is only darkness for him.

Storytelling as betrayal, or, what stories betray

Reflection as reflexivity

"Let me … open my heart, or it will burst," (40) Lewin writes. "I fear the explosion." (*Ibid*) What happens when Lewin's heart bomb goes off? He will not erupt outwards; he will not spurt out of his skin. He will implode; he will blow inwards, and collapse, and fall like a building. His heart bomb is his secret self, the one he must neutralise each day, but each night it is set to blow again, three hours hence, just in time for his morning coffee. When he wakes, his ticker tick ticks, and he must work quickly to defuse it, to press the button, stop the timer, to cut the wire, so he will not fall into panic, his heart blooming blood, his insides bleeding, his outside blurring, bleeding too, no longer definite, no longer sure. I did the right thing, tick tick tick, I did, I did, I did the right thing, tick, I did not kill that woman at the station, burn that child, I did not kill Harris at the prison, my friend, he was my friend, my friend, tick. I did the right thing, with those bombs, with the seven years inside; I met violence with the only thing with which you can meet it: bombs. And I paid, remember, you paid. Listen to me: you have paid that debt. You're in the black. Now, relax. Each morning, he must defuse a bomb that each night is set to blow again. Perhaps one morning he thought, if I write it down it will be true. Then I can defuse my heart for good. Perhaps one morning he sat down to write a book.

Lewin's use of the mirror as an extended metaphor is repeated often in *Stones Against the Mirror*, slightly shifting each time. It appears first in the book in the fourth chapter, "Survivor", which opens: "Throw a clatter of memories at the mirror

of your life and watch the pieces scatter on the ground. There is no pattern." (17) The first sentence is beautiful: clatter rhymes with scatter and the alliterative 'm' of memories and mirror give it lyricism, something found in these moments of reflection in the book. The collective noun "clatter of" speaks to how Lewin sees, or rather, *hears* his memories; clatter meaning the noise made when hard objects hit each other. Memories are like objects, things, entirely unto themselves. The second-person "you", used here again but in a slightly different sense, refers to the rememberer. This is again a part of Lewin, but not Lewin living out the present of his past as in the "Pylon" chapter. It is Lewin in the present of his writing; Lewin 40 years later. This "you" is the rememberer, the man who reflects, separated, again, from the "I". It is also, as with the previous chapter, you, the reader. You throw these memory-objects at the mirror of your life. As a physical gesture, "throw" shows a felt interaction between you and the memories.[360] The mirror of your life, or your life mirrored, is not the memories of your life: these are objects thrown at the mirror. Does the mirror break? "Scatter" as opposed to the equally rhyming 'shatter' suggests that the memories bounce off the mirror and land, jumbled, on the ground. So memories don't break the mirror, but the mirror does not order them. The mirror of your life is, then, a reflection of your life, not your true life, but its verisimilitude. *Stones Against the Mirror*'s epigraph, taken from a book by Brian Keenan reads: "Stories should be a mirror held up to life. Sometimes these mirrors are cracked or opaque."[361] Lewin warns us that this mirror is also potentially distorted or distorting. Warped mirrors reflect imperfectly, as do minds. He plays on the dual meaning of reflect – to double

[360] Twenty-two pages later, "throw" is rewritten using the stronger word "hurl": "I stand in front of the mirror and hurl rocks of recollection at it." (40) Again, the mirror "scatters" but this time Lewin warns that if not collected carefully, the pieces could cut you – "the shards will be smudged with your blood." (*Ibid*) Though the mirror does not shatter, it still potentially wounds.

[361] The quote continues: "Only those who look into it will truly know. You the reader will decide." Brian Keenan, *An Evil Cradling* (London: Vintage, 1992), 12.

and to ponder. The reflection of your life is not your memories: reflection is interpretation. It is not remembering but meaning-making: to mull, muse and consider, to contemplate. Throwing memories at this reflection makes sense because deliberation needs material. The mirror is an *act* of making meaning out of memories, of bringing coherence to memories scattered without discernable pattern.

Including these mirror images brings to the fore the act of writing – itself an act of making meaning. Lewin is careful to assert, over and over as these mirrors flash and turn, that the book is a form of magic, a story woven and spun, constructed, made, storied by him, the rememberer. He acknowledges that others could remember more, differently or better, and that in writing this story, he risks a terrible betrayal: that he will use stories not his own to make a narrative filled with his own self-deception, a world that cannot, does not and never will reflect anything close to the fullness of the past.[362] He risks the half story, the one-sided tale; worse, he risks becoming a witness, like that other witness, Leftwich.

"Survivor" is about Glynnis Burleigh, who, at age 12, was terribly burned by the Park Station bomb – she had to move to Britain because the South African sun was too harsh for her burnt skin. Once there, she told a journalist, she could work only in back rooms because of her disfigured face. The bomb killed her grandmother. Lewin contemplates responsibility. "I share [in Harris's] responsibility [for the bomb]," Lewin writes. "I helped create the child's battered body … I stare at the mirror and try to find the words to conjure up the reality of her life. I cannot picture it, but equally I cannot escape it." (18) Lewin thinks about apologising to her, but, he writes, "I shudder at the thought of facing her." (*Ibid*) Which mirror does he mean – the metaphorical mirror of reflection or an actual mirror in which he sees his face,

[362] In his *Granta* article, Leftwich notes: "We are all capable of self-deceit, especially when seeking to tell the truth." "I Gave the Names", 23.

which cannot face Burleigh's disfigured face? (Face as in look and as in coming up against something, seeing it, and bearing it.) The mirror could equally mean the reflexive mechanism that drives the book. When this mirror is given the memory of Burleigh, it does not work; Lewin cannot conjure the words to make her life seem real, let alone contemplate it. "Conjure" is also interesting. It invokes a sense of magic. Words, then, are a type of spell, a magical way to see or picture something – to make something appear. Words are parsing turned to seeing. If they fail, the reality of Burleigh's life fails, too, for Lewin, collapses, but not into nothing. He cannot evoke the burnt woman's life, but he also cannot escape it. His inability to think about her life is not total; he feels the edges of "the pain of her existence, [and] the strength of her survival." (18) Equally, Lewin "cannot imagine trying to explain the inexplicable circumstances that created the link between us. My non-involvement to the bomb, but my closeness to it." (*Ibid*) The failure of imagination here is also a failure to launch. It must be at the very least imaginable. It must be possible in terms of the scope of one's mental possibilities. If it is impossible to write and see a memory or a person's life, no action can take place.

But this inability to imagine Burleigh – her life, her face – is a failure of greater proportions than only imagination. Lewin continues to describe the memories thrown at the mirror in the beginning of the chapter: "They glint in the shadows, demanding inspection, as you hesitate to choose which one you'll pick up first. Some pieces choose themselves, however much you try to avoid them." (17) You don't choose memories, and memories don't choose you; they choose *themselves*. Thus they have selves that they choose, as in, they have being, they have life. In this formulation, memories have agency. That Lewin enters the lives of memories as an observer is an idea that reappears throughout the book. Memories are spread across

several people: all those who participated in the event or moment being remembered, those who witnessed it, those who heard about it first hand, and then those who heard about it second hand. The actual moment remains hard and fast in the past, irretrievable. But the memory of it acquires a life of its own. It is fluid, moves, melds, manoeuvres, is one thing and then another, is several things for the several people who remember. Part of this aliveness is taken up by Lewin's metaphor of the mirror of memory. But, that the memory of the harm caused by the station bomb chooses to be remembered, no matter how hard Lewin wants to avoid it, suggests passivity on his part. This echoes his inability to give flesh to the burnt woman, who remains obscure – another type of passivity, especially considering Lewin's huge capacity as a writer, which would usually suggest an equally rich imagination. "Sometimes the meetings we seek to avoid come seeking us," (17) Lewin continues, after stating his inability to imagine explaining himself to Burleigh. Again, he is passive. The meeting sought him, another instance of magic, like the memory that chose itself. Magic is a kind of shield: if he cannot conjure her, she can remain insubstantial, her hurt no longer a wild flag flapping, bursting and snapping in Lewin's heart. As evidence, as hard proof of the consequences of the choice made by ARM to sabotage with explosives, Burleigh is Lewin's guilt, his culpability, his responsibility made flesh, and he cannot face her. His cousin meets her by chance, tells her about her relation to Lewin and his connection to the bomb, and passes on this message: that Burleigh's disfigurement gives her the certainty that all her many friends like her for who she is and not for how she looks.

But, again, Lewin turns away. "I stare at my cousin's words in the email on the computer screen. I read them and I read them and I read them. The screen has become a Perspex window of the visiting room in prison. I can't hear any meaning.

The words exist in a different world. I cannot reach them." (19) It is not a coincidence that Lewin calls the prison into the metaphor here. We are reminded, gently but firmly, that he was imprisoned, that he suffered too. And Burleigh? She remains a shadow, ephemeral, almost imaginary, just a shape more felt than seen through scratched Perspex, an outsider in Lewin's mind. She has no body. She has no face, no life, no reality. As Lewin undoes her, denies her, even as she stands in front of him on that screen, does he not commit upon her another kind of violence?

"How to arrest the past?" (40) Lewin wonders, after writing about his childhood. Of course, arrest here has a double meaning: police arrest and arrest as in stop, hold down, pin down the past. Pin it, secure it, trap it in words, be a warder of words, walk the corridors, baton in hand. Lewin knows the stakes in this. "I trespass on the stories of others." (*Ibid*) As soon as a memory is written, is given solidity and singularity – as in, as soon as it emerges as one thing and not another – it is a betrayal of the very nature of memory, fluid and several, almost always a shared thing. Lewin worries he is creating a prison for memories, thoughts and ideas not his own. He is aware that parts of the story he is telling are not his own, that the memories he reflects upon (or which reflect upon themselves) are the memories of others. Is this a form of betrayal on his part? A betrayal of his friends, of the people who would better remember or remember differently?

In doing this, using memories, pinning them down, Lewin warns that he is "building a prison of sentences whose corridors echo with voices not [his] own." (40) "I play judge," he goes on. "I pass sentence." (*Ibid*) This last neat little pun, which plays on writing a sentence and passing sentences or sentencing people (or memories) to prison time, is, like his opening one, a warning. What is he saying? "We are in this

together, reader and writer … Conspirators … We are warders of the Struggle, scanning each word to make sure it is polished and shiny … [But] none of us is immune to deception." (*Ibid*) His book is a jail, each sentence part of a penitentiary place that contains, controls, holds – or is a placeholder over something impermissible, imparsable, impossible, taboo. Narratives, he seems to be intimating, are collective acts of agreement. Together, the reader and the writer spin a luminous story, one that we can both face and stomach, one that mirrors not ourselves exactly, but versions of us. In South Africa, this narrative, as it was conceived through the TRC, was called nation building. We are co-conspirators, Lewin reminds us. Together we are creating a hopeful tale, packed with heroes and villains, victims and perpetrators. But it's not true, Lewin implies. I am deceiving you. We read on, though, and do not heed the warning. We all love a good yarn.

This uneasiness about the act of storytelling is inherent in the title of this chapter, "The Telling of Stories". This has a double meaning, storytelling or telling stories, lying. Who gets to tell stories? What are the stakes in telling stories? Leftwich told stories on the witness stand, that most lonely place.[363] He told Lewin's story in great detail. It is stories and their telling that contain betrayal. They are the substance of betrayal.

"Adrian was always the storyteller," Lewin states, and goes on to describe Leftwich as a "large-mouthed, dark-faced Yiddishe boykie." (50) Interesting here is that Leftwich is characterised as a 'boykie' – a usually loud and popular younger man among other men – of specifically the Jewish community, with a caricatured, even stereotypical, appearance. Lewin also carefully notes that it was Leftwich who insisted he join the tumult of student politics. "I wasn't much good at the public part

[363] So lonely in fact, Lewin calls the witness box "a coffin" (176), because it has place only for one.

of it," Lewin writes, in contrast to Leftwich, who "took up the arguments [at debates] and played with them, spinning stories. I was happy with Adrian on the public stage, me in the background." (51) Later, he describes himself as "Adrian's sidekick." (57) Leftwich is loud, comfortable on stage, *performing*, telling stories. Lewin is quiet, silent in the background, someone convinced to go into politics, a companion of sorts to Leftwich's authority. The balancing act here is that Lewin must own his personal convictions, his moral convictions and his alertness to justice, which compelled him into the anti-apartheid struggle. This allows him his later heroism and cloak of unassailability, which, in fact, gives him his firm *difference* to Leftwich. But to retain his sense of innocence, he must also shift, subtly, some of the blame for the later consequences of his acts on to other people.

Lewin writes about his decision to join ARM: "It was clear to me that Tina [his wife] was already seriously involved in something clandestine. Better that I was too. So I said yes." (69) Notice the passivity on his part in this decision. If Lewin follows her lead in choosing to join ARM, the responsibility for the outcomes of this choice subtly shift to Tina. Later, when Lewin starts to doubt the effectiveness of the sabotage campaign, it is Leftwich who convinces him to stay. "'We need you in Jo'burg,' said Adrian. That was good to hear … it reaffirmed our closeness." (86) So, because of Leftwich this time, he does not leave South Africa or ARM.

Leftwich is the raconteur, the master storyteller. But, because we know that Leftwich stands on another stage – in court, in the witness box – and tells other stories, his ability takes on a taint; the stories he and Lewin share will be their ruin. It is important to remember, though, that Lewin, who has characterised himself as retiring and as almost beguiled into being involved in politics by Leftwich, is himself weaving and spinning a story of incredible complexity. This hints at why Lewin is so

intent on reflecting on his act of writing: he and Leftwich are the same, both capable narrators, even fabulists, each entering into the act of storytelling, and thus into the act of betrayal. When Lewin states, firmly, "I am the storyteller," (40) he shows us he understands the irony in connecting betrayal with telling stories – but, in doing so, he pulls us, the reader, into the cycle of blame. I am the storyteller, says Lewin, *but so are you*. The reader and Lewin are together, creating worlds, agreeing on what is acceptable to write about and what is not – and it is the reader, in the end, who will judge the mirror Lewin has created.

But Lewin's anxiety about storytelling also has other roots. "It was a cascading, seductive time of intense relationships," (46) Lewin notes of his burgeoning activist career in university. "You had to trust each other absolutely … there could be no secrets between friends. We were comrades and lovers together." (46) It was a time of "intense friendships and passionate affairs" (47) that "were full of hurt because they so often involved personal betrayal." (*Ibid*) This is the hurt of Leftwich's betrayal when he stood state witness: he told secrets shared between friends – "there was much we did discuss [about underground activities and members of the organisation]," Lewin writes, "and, with hindsight, should not have." (77) This communion extends beyond the realm of friendship into passionate affairs, comrades and lovers: "Tina and I were obsessed with each other," Lewin writes, "and, as the political merged naturally into what was personal, we could not think of being separated." (61) Relationships in the anti-apartheid struggle were impossibly entangled in secret political activity: they played out at the extreme end of trust while always under the immense pressure of an authoritarian state that spied, tortured, turned people, imprisoned them, hanged them. Such were the marshy grounds, making them all susceptible to betrayal. When writing about how members

of ARM "succumbed to the pressures and … gave evidence for the state," (99) Lewin comments that this was "a whole line of induced betrayals, especially by those closest to us." (*Ibid*) Everyone knew something and, in the end, everyone gave names, retold night-time stories, stories meant for the dark; stories *about* the dark were brought into the light of the cell. Of course, as mentioned, for Lewin, breaking in detention and while under interrogation was something that happened to everyone; it was inevitable. Standing as state witness, however, was the moment at which telling stories became betrayal. Lewin insists that one can always choose *not to talk* in court, remain silent.

Thus, equally, *not* sharing what you were up to in general and especially with your partner was a way to protect yourself and them. Your silence meant your friend or lover truly did not know anything and could say so to the security police. Thus, personal and political intimacy functioned through a cycle of telling *and* withholding secrets from each other. To talk and to be silent were equally acts of immense love and intimacy: "Everybody was involved in many things that were best kept quiet, even among friends." (65) Frank B Wilderson III, an Afro-pessimism scholar, lived in South Africa in the 1990s and did covert work with the ANC. He contends: "Clandestine intimacy is its own beast, because [it] is also kind of an anathema to intimacy. Intimacy is all about saying openly what's on your mind – sharing your thoughts and feelings. Clandestine activity is everybody keeping a little bit of the puzzle to themselves."[364] What happens to a relationship when intimacy must remain silent to maintain love? Or must speak, but risk so much in the telling?

The four chapters Lewin allots to his relationship with Tina, a woman he meets, marries and divorces in quick succession, open with another reflexive moment.

[364] Shannon Walsh, "Afro-Pessimism and Friendship in South Africa: An Interview with Frank B Wilderson III," in *Ties that Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa*, eds. Jon Soske and Shannon Walsh (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016), 98.

"Memories come in snatches … flint-like images. Chip them and they spark. Mind they don't burn." (56) Memories are the stones that, when banged together, can start a fire. That the mirror image loses coherence here is telling: Tina *burns* Lewin, she shakes him to his very metaphor. The downfall of their relationship hinges on silence. Though the silence between them is made of more than the stuff of political secrets, their intimacy, so total and unbreakable at first, withers in the quiet of their unshared lives, and goes out not with the gavel bang of spectacular political betrayal, but with the click of a softly closed door.

Tina is "outspoken and independent", "a modern woman", "quick-witted and mercurial", "tense and energetic" (56). "It was like living with a firecracker," (*Ibid*) Lewin comments. He makes it clear that Tina chose him out of several suitors – experiencing the singular pleasure of smiting one's enemies by getting the girl while also holding on to passivity in the relationship: it was she, not he who actively pursued it. Leftwich and Tina did not get on well. "But," Lewin writes, "the three of us – 'the happy threesome', as Adrian ironically put it – were too engrossed in political activity for personal differences to intrude." (58) He suspects, though, that the focus on the struggle was a way to avoid "the growing resentment between Adrian and Tina." (*Ibid*) Was this resentment connected to Lewin, the man they both loved? Was Leftwich something more than a friend, resenting, as he does, Lewin's relationship with Tina? This is not necessarily an indication of a homosexual relationship. From early on, Lewin's affections and relationships, where he has had them, have orientated around men, hence his closeness to Leftwich. Lewin later confirms: "It was as if the possibility of Tina disappearing strengthened my bond with [Leftwich]. I felt almost … a sense of relief that he and I could now, without interruption, concentrate on our main task." (76)

After university, Tina and Lewin go to Pietermaritzburg where Lewin has a teaching post. “Tina would get a job as an admin assistant,” (61) Lewin comments. The two marry in July of that year. Leftwich is Lewin’s best man. At the end of that year, Lewin, unhappy in his job, gets another one as a subeditor at a newspaper in Port Elizabeth. “We decided to move,” (63) Lewin notes. Both throw themselves into political activities. One day, an unusual one because they have some time to themselves, Lewin tells Tina he loves her, and Tina replies, “What … if I said I didn’t?” (63) Lewin is shocked. Tina admits to having an affair with someone they both know. After she ends it, Lewin writes, “I stayed silent.” (64). Then, again, Lewin is offered a job, this time in Johannesburg. “Tina got a job as an assistant in a ‘Christmas Club’ [a front operation for the Communist Party].” (65) And again, when Tina asks that they stop sharing a bed, Lewin is shocked, having not noticed anything wrong between them. “Soon afterwards,” Lewin writes, “I discovered a love-letter in Tina’s handwriting addressed to a friend who had been staying with us … Again, silence seemed the best way to handle the situation.” (66) Several chapters later, Lewin describes how Tina tells Harris, a new friend then, how their marriage is failing. Harris tells Lewin. “The world crumbled,” (79) Lewin writes. They divorce after nearly a year of being married. Superficially, the trend is obvious: Tina cheats on Lewin at least twice, both times with mutual friends. She betrays him. Yet, Lewin’s perpetual astonishment at Tina’s unhappiness tells another story. Three times she moves with Lewin for his work over a few months, finding any job she can. Every time Tina and Lewin discuss their relationship, Lewin responds with silence. Silence here is different to other types of silence soon to be encountered: not the silence of just action, not the silence of bravery, not the silence of vulnerability, but the silence of ignorance. Part of this reaction – to keep quiet – is obviously traceable from his

childhood: silence ruled that household, so it makes sense that it would rule his household as an adult. But there is another element to this silence: if he knew nothing about the trouble in their relationship, if he kept quiet about it enough to be surprised each time it came up, he could not be blamed for it. This dynamic destroys intimacy. It is not only the forced silence induced by the violent, militarised state that annihilates closeness, but also the silence of some men that does it: good, mild men.

In times of political turmoil, secrecy and silence are often all that stands between you and a cell, or a rope. The one who tells, the intimacy breaker, note taker, archivist, *author*, is the enemy – thus Lewin's reluctance. So much is risked in breaking silence, and so much depends upon the story with which he will break it. How can he tell it all? How can he hope to conjure its fullness, to include all its characters, to get it right, to get to nothing less than *truth*? He tries, with his structure, looping and cycling, trying at every turn to complete the story, to shade in its nuances. But he never succeeds. What can he do, knowing what he knows, knowing that stories are the stuff of betrayal, and that he betrays everyone in this story by never quite getting to the centre, by always beguiling, deceiving, even?

In response to the possibility that people involved in the events described in *Stones Against the Mirror* could accuse Lewin of embellishing, omitting or otherwise being betrayed by his memory, Lewin writes: "Well, Dear Reader, treat it as fiction. That is what I would advise." (187) Part of what Lewin is circumventing in doing this is the claim that he has some kind of special access to the truth. If his book is fiction, it is released from that claim; it is something else altogether, a dreaming or a nightmare – *nagmerrie*, Lewin writes – following contours that are no longer strictly and necessarily true in a factual or empirical sense, or representative, but that can get

to something true nonetheless, and perhaps even to the heart of things. "'Remember the piece of surrealist sculpture at the Constitutional Court complex?'" Lewin's friend Harold Strachan writes to him. "'It says more about Apartheid than the many 'true' symbols standing about.'" (188)

This is his mirror, his refrain. Careful, careful, like a mantra. Look, he says with the mirror metaphors that puncture the text, I am distorting, I am warping. Lewin betrays the trust his friends put in him by telling their stories here, and he betrays the story by spit and polishing it, shimmying it with his sleeve till it shines, till it *reflects*. He pins down memory, arrests the past, tells a single story. This story looks honest, full, but it is not. Certainly not. But he is not trying to hoodwink us, though we are winked, every one of us. Because we want to be. We want his story, his reflectiveness, his beautiful book. Like a salve, his words are balmy. In the end, Lewin goes so far as to make the story out to be fiction. He tells us a good story, but warns us that it is a construct: "None of us is immune to deception." (40) This book is a figuration of his mind, sculpted by his pen, a work of fiction of the highest order, reaching, as it does, for something essentially true.

All the things left out and living in oblivion off the page cannot haunt him if this is *just* fiction. Surely?

In the beginning were the seeds

"That's what I've been writing about," (10) Lewin notes on the book's second page, as his train begins to slow down as it reaches York Station. "Trying to describe where we came from, how we got involved." (*Ibid*) It is a book of origins, a search for something to explain later events. Outside of all his reflexivity, what story does he actually tell, and what does the story tell us? In his childhood, we find some of what rises from the dark in Lewin's book – women, black men, white men and privilege. In

the beginning, we find the seeds of courage and justice, but also the seeds of silence, betrayal, of stories becoming strange and schools becoming prisons, of men becoming women becoming men again.

The first chapter on his childhood is titled "Parson's Son", but begins, "My mother came as a missionary nurse to Africa in the late 1920s." (20) Much of the chapter will be dedicated to his father, the parson, but more of it centres on his mother, and much of its power hangs on her mental illness, her twisting strangeness and lonely death. Something to which Lewin returns often in the chapter is his mother's lioness story: a lioness stalks his mother, a nurse in Tanganyika, on her way home to a mission station, where she will eventually meet Lewin's father, a missionary priest. While the lioness walks alongside her, his mother pushes her bicycle and rings its bell till she is found. "It was her story," Lewin notes, "and she would repeat it time and time again, never embellishing it and never saying more about her emotions than that, of course, she had been 'scared stiff'." (21) Lewin writes his mother's story, opening with the following: "One late afternoon, she would tell, she was returning to the mission station after a visit to the village outpost … She was late, having spent longer than she should tending the sick and lame at the outpost. That was her mission." (20) The language in "tending the sick and lame" is both biblical and laced with a kind of Victorian rectitude; she served as nurse, bringing medicine and succour to an obscure "village outpost" (outpost for whom?), while her soon-to-husband brought Christ to Tanganyika. But it is unlikely that she would characterise herself in this way. This is a clue that tells us that the story Lewin is telling is perhaps not at all what "she would tell". Later Lewin writes of his mother: "'I trained at Tommies,' she would say proudly, with that not-to-be-denied ring of a Florence Nightingale nurse from St Thomas's, London. No less. She never let anyone

forget it." (22) Is Lewin mocking her here, for her pride and for her colonial leanings? The standalone line, "That was her mission", has elements of these, and includes a touch of bitterness: if tending the sick and lame was her mission, could she tend to Lewin and his brother? Lewin goes on: "She got off her bicycle and began pushing it, ringing her bell in the growing darkness. It seemed somehow better than to ride, pushing and ringing, her heart in her mouth, watching the lioness walk beside her, always there, not coming near but not going away." (20) Far from the slightly mocking lines that open the story, here Lewin enters it, enters his mother's thoughts and feelings. It was *somehow* better to push her bicycle than to ride it, "somehow" intimating a mysterious but real inner feeling translated into action. When he writes that her heart was in her mouth, he means perhaps that she was "scared stiff", but the image of the heart is more lyrical than his mother's line. Finally, in rendering the lioness "always there" walking beside her, "not coming near but not going away", Lewin creates a liminal thing, seemingly no longer an actual animal but a figurative one, something that stalks his mother, that will always be there. This long, punctuated line signals the move the story has made from being his mother's, to being his. The lioness tale was his mother's signal story, the one she told parishioners "around the ever-tinkling cups of afternoon tea" (22), her strong story of courage and adventure, a story with a little lesson on the end – "That was what one had to do in times like this … Just ring your bell!" (21) – something treasured by her. In rewriting the story, with peaks and troughs of bitterness, lyricism and emotion, Lewin embellishes his mother's plain tale, imagining it differently, imagining *her* differently – her heart in her mouth, attuned to things mysterious and part of a larger psychic world, wherein the lioness stalks right out of her story and into Lewin's, becoming a *symbol*. Lewin lets it accrue meaning. The memory becomes a metaphor, morphing from a story of

courage and British calm to a symbol of silence and her coming decline. The lioness growls and grows into his mother's mental illness, her unemotional self walking and ringing her bell, wracked by something deeply emotional that is animal and terrifying, and that stalks her throughout her life.

Later, the lioness re-enters the chapter. Lewin's father signs consent for his mother to have electric shock therapy. (28) Lewin notes that his father is "as culpable as any for giving permission for her to have shock treatment." (26) This is another bomb that goes off in the book, the one that explodes in her brain, as sanctioned by his father: "a detonation exploding her memory, bringing permanent oblivion." (28) "For me, the growing teenager to whom nothing was explained," Lewin writes, "it became increasingly embarrassing as she twisted her fingers … and gasped in silent agony." (*Ibid*) Finally, she would be sent to Tara, "the loony bin in Johannesburg" (*Ibid*), where she would sit, unusually calm. "Sometimes she wouldn't know me," (*Ibid*) Lewin notes. "But into this diminished world her lioness returned." (*Ibid*) Three betrayals take place: in consenting to the treatment, his father betrays his mother, though there seemed to have been few other choices. Lewin's embarrassment as a teenager is another form of betrayal towards her – though his family's general silence about all things emotional meant he never understood. Lewin's mother betrays him in not recognising him when he visits, though she is certainly not culpable for this. Her breakdowns started when Lewin was seven years old. Perhaps when he was much older he would have understood her memory loss, but as a boy and a teenager it would have seemed a great abandonment. Her lioness story, which she remembers, while forgetting her own son, is, for Lewin, a mark of this. In later retellings, after her bouts of shock therapy, the lioness story would run from beginning to end "without a change in emphasis or pace." (21) Thus the story is discharged of what little power it

had – to rattle teacups, to teach a lesson – becoming something that both highlighted her broken mind and a mechanism not to talk about it. "It mattered not that her audience had heard it umpteen times … they'd nod and gasp and be amazed." (*Ibid*) Though the story showed those around her that something was very definitely wrong, this audience, like the polite parishioners they were, pretended it was normal; they maintained their silence, preferring to play a part than having to face or to speak about mental illness. When she told these later versions, Lewin would "find an excuse to leave the room" (28), again embarrassed, or perhaps unable to witness both the story unfolding in monotone rote and the audiences' conspiratorial nods and gasps. (Perhaps his rewriting is, then, not only a betrayal, but also a gift to her, a way to call the story from its ugly uses and redeem it?) "My father would endure the lioness yet again … I longed to talk to him about her illness." (*Ibid*) Towards the end of page 28, the book's layout coincidently aligns the words "lioness" and "illness" one beneath the other. At first glance, I mistook the second line to read, *I longed to talk to him about her lioness*.

A final line completes the sets of betrayals orientated around his mother. "My father died by the time permission was sought for her final shock, a lobotomy in 1964, the year I went to prison." (27) Lewin does not directly state who gave this permission, but it would have had to be him and his brother. His mother lives out her days in old-age homes Lewin tries to visit periodically. "My mother was abandoned," Lewin observes. "Firstly by my brother … then by me." (31) This is how she ends: "Tired, confused, and no doubt lonely." (31)

Does Lewin fear that his book, his story, will become like his mother's story, will both develop into a metaphor that could betray him, name his decline, somehow, and become stilted, eventually allowing no deviation, emptied of emotion, no other

perspective possible? Lewin worries that he is trespassing, moving outside of acceptable bounds into something else, and in doing so, he is making memories, even perhaps *history*, knowable, translatable, retellable, traceable. His stories take on a shape and can thus be retold over and over in the same exact way. Lewin betrays something in the telling of stories, and he betrays stories in the telling of lives. He pins them down; he trespasses on others' stories, on their memories, on his mother's memory, using and crafting them till his book pulses with lives not his own.

There are three other lions in Lewin's broader story. His mother writes to the bishop in Cape Town to say that Hugh has "the courage of a lion" (31). In the next chapter, "Jew", Lewin describes the origin of his name as from the Old English *leo-wyn*, meaning lion wine: a lion is inscribed in his name. The final lion is in the one from the archive, in which Soggot comments: "You have a drafting of a document which is intended to inflate them into lions."[365] This is the great deflation in the story, the air whistling out of courage and out of lions. Lewin's mother's lioness came to define her; his courage seemed to define him. Yet both lions, real at first, become increasingly surreal – hers a cardboard thing trapped in her exploded brain, all emphasis struck from the record, his plastic and punctured. This is the central thing the story refuses to reveal: the smallness in the end, the apartheid-style pettiness in court; between the bomb and prison, there was a deep and shattering humiliation as men and women who fought for the anti-apartheid movement sat by while their work was systematically deflated.

Lewin's father is described as gentle, fair, a music lover, a man who knew the value of compassion and love. Wildly different from Lewin's memory of his mother, his

[365] *The State versus Hirson, Lewin and Eisenstein*, 15.

father is written in gold morning light slanting through a routine of sunshine. “Each weekday morning, in the years before I went to boarding school, aged eight, my father and I would go to the village shop, me perched on the bar of his bicycle clutching the bag of groceries.” (22) Here is another bicycle, but this time he gets to ride on it; it is a bicycle he can relate to, of his context; a bicycle not wheeling a path that moves further and further from him. The daily rounds taken by him and his father in the village were as much to see people as to shop. These included a seeing a woman “working off a hangover” (23), then the wife of a National Party MP; and Jan Smuts, then prime minister, who also lived in Irene and was “quite human … one of his habits was to a light a match behind the bum of anyone who farted in the living room.” (*Ibid*) After nodding to the police sergeant, Lewin’s father chatted with the postmistress, then the butcher, then the greengrocer, then to a Jewish storeowner, all the while being greeted: Good morning, padre. “I toddled along behind,” Lewin writes, “my shopping bag filled with groceries and gossip.” (24) Two other people were met on these rounds: the stationmaster, an “Afrikaans speaking non-parishioner”, and the cobbler, “wizened and near toothless, who spoke Zulu.” (*Ibid*) Lewin’s father and this cobbler would laugh and slap knees “to the consternation of any white customers.” (*Ibid*) When they got home with their “spoils” (25), Lewin’s father would conspiratorially reply to Lewin’s mother’s questions about where they were with a wink and a nod, “‘We had quite a busy time of it, didn’t we, old boy?’” (*Ibid*)

Foremost, Lewin’s father is fair: he greets or chats with everyone. “It was through him that I learnt … that there was no valid distinction between races,” Lewin writes of his father. “He never pulled me aside to make any political point. They [a black priest in the diocese and the cobbler] were his friends and I could draw my own

conclusions." (29) What is valued? Equality, calm, joy, silence – or the silence of action over speech; the conclusions Lewin draws also show us something about the value of not overstating things, connecting stoic silence to action and courage.

Silence and courage are linked for him at an early age. His mother, the nurse, tended to Lewin through all his childhood illnesses – though perhaps not to any of his emotional needs. "The rule of Tommies dominated our home." (22) When Lewin gets metal clips removed after an operation, he bears the pain in silence, because, as his mother says, he was "'old enough to be a brave boy.'" (*Ibid*) Bravery was thus connected to quietly enduring hardship. "I took it as natural, this silent gulf between us, to be endured without complaint or question," (26) writes Lewin. But this reticence stung Lewin, too: "If only we could have talked," (27) he thinks. Later, he writes: "For me [remaining silent] was a part of growing up, like never discussing such things with my elder brother." (29) Lewin also never tells his parents about his time in boarding school. The other 'rule' was to be "sternly fair". (*Ibid*) These tenets, fairness and quiet courage, learned in childhood, are the building blocks of Lewin's later political fervour. But they were not without their ironies, to which Lewin was attuned. The family had a Malawian servant, who lived in the "'boy's room'" (29) and who was not paid much. When Lewin describes his mother's fairness, he uses the following example: "'Don't be nasty to the natives,' she'd say, 'they're human like you.' And off she'd go to give orders for lunch to our Malawian servant." (22) Note the obverse here of the father: she says something then acts in a way contradictory to it. Note also that fairness here means acknowledging *black people as human* (and thus not inhuman, animals). "'Never mind old boy…" Lewin's father would say, "She knows what's best, you know." (22). At the post office, when Lewin suggests they move to the empty non-whites counter on a day, Lewin's father answers: "'Can't

really do that.'" (*Ibid*) Lewin understands that though his father and mother taught bravery and fairness, they "largely accepted the social system" (*Ibid*) of apartheid.

But Lewin does not. At the end of the three chapters that describe his childhood, Lewin explains his political awakening through visits to Sophiatown, which "bustled with life … and was a unique place, especially for a white schoolboy." (39) This is in the mid-1950s, when the people of the suburb were being forcibly removed to "a barren new area … called Meadowlands." (*Ibid*) He writes, with a sniff, that Sophiatown has now become drenched in nostalgia, but that as a boy he experienced it authentically. "So, yes, I remember going with Helen Gama to her house down the road, and it's the first house of a black family I have visited." (*Ibid*) Here he uses the vaguely aggressive, "So, yes". Later in the book, he uses, "Yes, I…" when writing about Lloyd. It is a defensive formulation that seems to dare someone to contradict it. Also note the change in tense from the past progressive to the present – as though the action were happening from the past into an ever present: Lewin is always going to Gama's house, experiencing a visit to his first black household, experiencing the moments that will later become the stuff of nostalgic musicals and walking tours. He also mentions becoming friends with Cyprian Moloi, before going back to a school "where nobody … has even heard of Meadowlands." (39) But here, Moloi and Gama are like a cast of characters for a scene, trotted out, name dropped – like the other black person, Billy Modise – then shuffled back into the wings: flashed, like badges, for legitimacy.

"'You're a fucking Jew,' a security policeman screamed at me during the first bout of interrogation." (32) This sentence opens the page-long chapter "Jew". Though he doesn't know it when he is being accused of being Jewish – and thus of being part of

a group of "agitators, schemers, shit-stirrers" (*Ibid*) – Lewin learns later that his grandmother, his mother's mother, was an immigrant from Warsaw. This makes him Jewish down the matrilineal line. He wonders when his mother's double life began, when she began to pretend to be Anglican, and then married an Anglican priest. He never finds out. Two things happen in this short chapter. An ironic turnaround – being accused of being Jewish and being punished for it, even though Lewin is an Anglican, and then it turning out that he was Jewish all along – matches the cyclic structure of the book's logic in both form and in content. It opens with a fucking Jew and closes with a foundling Jew, another double. The security branch was right all along, even though they were so wrong about everything else: he was actually a Jew. But, from the outset, he was anyway *like* a Jew, as the security branch perceived them: a "shit-stirrer" and proud of it, an agitator. His pre-emptive punishment for it was deserved. This is not only a Jewish formulation of guilt and penalty, but also an Anglican or Catholic way of viewing punishment: you probably deserve it for some sin, even if that sin is in the future. It is a constant turn to atonement. These circles of punishment, religion and righteousness cross and intersect, building up to and then claiming victimhood: not only a victim of state torture or mistaken identity, but also history's victim, over and over: a Jew. His mother made him this, as she lived her double life. This is an indication of a split, of her doubleness. Her breakdowns broke her; she was a mother but also a mad woman; she was devious, tricking Lewin's father into believing she was Anglican; she was a Jew in hiding, a hidden second self is suddenly revealed. She is a mirrored woman, and a betrayer, again.

The next chapter, "Boarding School", opens on his newfound Jewishness: "Being Jewish would not have gone down well at boarding school … or, if [any Jews] did [enter St John's school], they had to become instant Christians, forced to attend all

the Anglican rituals. No Jews, no girls." (33) Here Lewin indicates how St John's was narrow minded and exclusionary, but is this not exactly what happened to his mother? She was Jewish and had to become an instant Christian and attend Anglican rituals with his parson father. Was she not also excluded from the 'boys only' relationship between Lewin and his father, who, like pirates, brought home "spoils", and who kept her out of their daily lives by nodding and winking to each other, making an exclusive group? No girls, no Jews.

By the time we get to his experiences at boarding school, we have been well primed. This is an example of the cyclic, accretive logic in the book. Before we get to chapter 7, he mentions the horror of boarding school four times. In his second chapter, "Stations", Lewin writes: "I remember the railway stations of my childhood, coming home from the barricaded life of boarding school in Johannesburg. The train doors opened, shuddering with relief as you leapt out … You knew the train would return … and the doors would clang shut, sealing you in a cell of farewell." (11) "Barricaded" and "shuddering with relief" tells us exactly how Lewin felt about boarding school. "Clang shut" and "seal you in a cell" call to mind images of prison and, as this is on a train and later we find out that Lewin is Jewish, images of cattle cars and concentration camps. In "Parson's Son", Lewin mentions boarding school three times. "I went to boarding school, vanishing into another reality, far from home. I didn't ever tell my parents about the horrors of dormitory existence." (26) He writes about an awkward incident he has with his father, then writes: "If only we could have talked, like when they first sent me to that boarding school … If only they'd tried to tell me a little about what happened there, what happens inside all-boy environments." (27) "But I never did [talk to my father]," Lewin intones. "[It was like] never admitting or suggesting that I wasn't up to it at boarding school, nor having a ripping

time." (29) In "Jew", he is set up as a double victim – of the state and of his mother's betrayal. Then we get to "Boarding School", in which he describes his torment there over several pages. Each time he mentions boarding school, he is adding another turn.

He describes the school as a place where white boys were taught to be "tight-arsed and righteous", ignoring the "unjust society outside". (33) "Just play up, lads, play the game … You're tomorrow's leaders, chaps, so play up, play up, and play the game." (*Ibid*) The words "lads" and "chaps", like "old boy", have a distinct Englishness about them, as do "play up" and "play the game" – but they are edged with malice. Lewin lists the punishments you could get at boarding school. These ranged from doing lines to "caning: that was the most serious [punishment], this side of expulsion," (34) Lewin asserts in the opening line of a paragraph. These were lashes given by prefects, called 'bras' because "they keep the tits in order" (*Ibid*), or by the housemaster. (Boys are women; women reduced to unwieldy breasts.) "Worst of all was the lashing from the headmaster, a punishment just this side of expulsion." (*Ibid*) This ends the paragraph. Though Lewin uses repetition throughout the text, he repeats something verbatim only twice: here and when writing about Harris as a dog with a bone. Rather than part of a skilful mastering of the accretive structure and style, direct repetition suggests something more like a snag. It is jarring to read the same line about expulsion twice in so short a time. It certainly does not fit with the rest of the meticulously edited book. What is it, then, about caning and punishment that exerts Lewin into this repetition? This whole chapter reads slightly differently from the rest. In it, two timescapes and places meld together: boarding school and prison. Each place not only mirrors the other, but also *becomes* the other. "I still have nightmares. *Nagmerries*," Lewin writes, "Populated by warders and prefects who look like Faan Jonker [head warder at Pretoria Local Prison]. School

buildings with long corridors, cell doors and clanging bells." (35) Lewin earlier noted: "Boarding school is a good introduction to prison." (33)[366] And already the comparison has been made with the barricaded cell on the train. A *merrie*, from the word *nagmerrie*, was a "tall triangular-shaped contraption to which offenders were strapped to receive the lashes ordained by court as punishment." (34) It is as though the caning in school has found its pure form in prison with that *merrie*. Two types of institutionalised punishment, surveillance, confinement and violence become overlaid here till they make one long, unbroken scene of unending closed doors and bloodied bodies. Fear, real fear, the kind you can smell, is what is in this chapter – school as prison, country as prison, prison as prison, not six years after high school. This is the thing Lewin withholds in this book, the thing he masks: fear, the nightmare. With Harris, the fear is of a different kind, but it is nonetheless a form of terror: the repetition is a stylistic slip, a formal quaking.

Lewin describes getting lines for "being disrespectful to a mean-minded teacher who was being disrespectful to the class." (33) He also gets six lashes three times: once for being out of bounds, another for insubordination and a third for "swearing at a lesser bra who was brutalising some juniors." (34) He writes about the violence of the "non-bra thugs", and how he would be included in the retribution should he or anyone else "defend weaker friends" (35) against them. Lewin also asserts his difference to other students directly: "My brother and I were different from the rest." (36) They were scholarship boys, and thus poor compared to the other students' general affluence. Asserting his difference to the other boys here is key. He is not like those "tight-arsed" white boys who ignored injustice and were the future

[366] Raymond Suttner, a lawyer and political prisoner in the 1970s, observes: "Most school principals would be horrified at the suggestion that their hostels are like prisons. Yet most of the unpleasant things that I have experienced here [in prison], I recognise from school. There is a similar structure of authority and power." *Inside Apartheid's Prison,* 68.

captains of industry and state. He is different, *not* racist, *not* cruel. He is bold, a path maker, a rule breaker, thumbing his nose at authority (he goes out of bounds, is insubordinate); he is also someone moved to justice (twice he steps in when someone is being unjust). But he is not weak – rather, he is the defender of the weak, and, importantly, he takes the punishment for his defence of the weak. This is what plays out in his sabotage and imprisonment, just in miniature. For justice, for the weak, for the black people of the country, he blows up pylons. He is punished for this by an unjust, authoritarian system. Here is an internal circular logic. He takes the rap for his friend – as in, he takes his friend's punishment. Leftwich turns state witness in exchange for immunity: he gets to escape the consequences of what he did in the name of justice. But Lewin doesn't. Lewin takes the punishment, takes *the pain*. Lewin atones.

He learns to hide his feelings of inadequacy. "I could not discuss it at school … Nor at home: my brother was so much older and he never complained. "'Be brave' was the message I got at home: you don't complain, so I didn't." (*Ibid*) Again, silence is connected to bravery – don't talk, don't tell, don't complain – but also to the conspiracy: don't expose your feelings; don't discuss anguish. Later, Lewin rebels at school. He starts to smoke and makes friends with an older boy. They sneak out of their dorm at night and smoke out below the playing fields. One night they are caught, though not in the act. His friend is caught trying to wake him but manages to escape. Though no actual crime had been committed, Lewin gets "six of the best [lashes]." (37) But the strangeness of his friendship with older boy fuelled rumours, and Lewin was left to "fend off the advances of one, no two, of the … prefects." (*Ibid*) He states: "Today I'd call it attempted rape." (*Ibid*) Silence and bravery have been woven together here, just as they have in the chapter on his

childhood. Silence is courage. Courage is silent. He keeps quiet about this attempted rape – repeatedly he tells us how he never spoke to his parents. He also mentions the abnormality of all-boy environments, and hints at sexual violence. What this silence amounts to, in the end, is rape, or almost rape, in a culture of rape and violence instilled in the boys at that school and then in prison.[367] Lewin is a victim in this all-boy world: he is almost raped, like a woman. He stays silent, which is associated with courage and bravery for him – and in general for men – but is also associated with the crime of rape and the silence of women in the book. Is Lewin like a woman here? Almost raped, silent? Is he taking up that position? A woman's position? Perhaps not, though the coordinates of rape and silence are almost always located on the bodies of women. He is a victim here, certainly, but at the same time, he still has his masculine silence and courage: he defends the weak; he takes their punishment. Silence, as it relates to courage and men, works in a cycle with how it relates to women and bodily vulnerability – weakness and silence are connected to fear, being alone, exposed. He has a silence that reads both ways: he suffers and is a victim, but he equally takes action against prejudice by quietly defending the weak, and is a hero.

Lewin's origins tell a story of bravery and stoicism, fatherly love, forgiveness, atonement, possibility, kindness, stern fairness, but mostly courage. The courage of lions, of good men and women, who chose to struggle, who committed their bodies to bombs and prison, to rope. Who suffered, and who served. Who, sunk in muck, wrote the mire, described it swamp and stick. Who, nerves shot, dreams sliced through with clang and bang, have memories that burn and cut, memories that betray. But in

[367] In *Bandiet*, Lewin notes that boarding school taught him to accept mindless routine, cherish privacy, expect arbitrary pettiness, and it "also prevented me from being surprised by the fact that men put together in close proximity for many months, might find sexual satisfaction with other men, whether they are homosexual or not." (118) In Local Prison, he has much difficulty fending off a man named Hennie who asks him "to move into married quarters with him." (119)

Lewin's beginnings, we also find darkness: a mad mother, wives whisked away, ignored, the violence of men, of silence, *merries*, and screaming pain, screaming men. Soon Lewin will stand all night in a chalk circle while men scream and punch. In it he will undo himself, and then make himself up again.

The Spy in the Kitchen

Olivia Forsyth's *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks Her Silence*

After reading Olivia Forsyth's self-declared 'act of contrition', a recently published book titled *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks Her Silence*, I got up, walked to the kitchen and threw the book in the dustbin.[368]

In this personal narrative about her time as a spy for the apartheid government in 1980s South Africa, Forsyth lies; she indulges in fantasy; she leaves out whole races, eras and continents when it suits her; she denies responsibility; she is proud of what she did; she shows no remorse; she never says what she perpetrated (so the book reads like a compendium of her good or professional works). She dedicates the book to anti-apartheid heroes Chris Hani and Ronnie Kasrils in what could politely be described as very bad taste; she cries 'Comrade!' and shouts 'Amandla!'.[369] She is the

[368] Olivia Forsyth, *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks her Silence* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publications, 2015). Shortened to *Agent 407* from here. Further references will be given in-text.
[369] 'Amandla' is an Nguni word meaning power. During anti-apartheid protests, the response to the call 'amandla' was 'awethu' (to us), as in the full phrase, 'power to the people'.

shill and the sufferer; she is cowed, innocent, afloat; she is arrogant, worldly, in control. She is mad, surely? She is cold and reasonable. In short, she and her stories made me so cross-eyed and furious, I threw her book away.

But *Agent 407*'s horror lingered. I wanted to dissect it like a frog: to find, there, yes, if you apply these jolts of electricity its heart beats, or, in this case, to find no heart at all. But, to do this work of dissection properly, to get to the middle of things, as with many books, meant I could not take up only the role of surgeon. Rather, I had to be the frog next to the frog open on the table, watching, willing to work through my insides, knowing it could happen to me, too. I also had to be something closer altogether, the knife. Outside, I could snap off the bloodied gloves and toss them aside. My hands would be fresh and white as ever. But, we know this is not possible – a bloodlessness in this type of work – especially as I am a white South African woman, like Forsyth. The surgeon is also her knife; her knife not only a sharp thing that gouges, but an instrument that is most intimate, a sliding thing, moving through a body.

Part of this work has been trying to enter difficult books to read what they contain, but also, more importantly, what they do not or cannot contain. When I came to Forsyth's book, I found it contained nothing at all. Everything was outside it; everything was pointedly not said. It is a non-fiction book that is pure fantasy, and that is so contradictory as to be impossible. To even begin taking this story seriously, I needed to suspend the moral outrage in me that it had sparked; the instinct that made me reject it entirely. I also had to approach it as you would a Eugène Ionesco play: ignoring reality itself, allowing the stink on me, the lie, for a moment, believed, not credulously in reality, but suspended in fiction. This is part of what I found: Forsyth creates a story that, without irony or reflection, contains three contradictory

narratives, one on top of the other, sometimes in the same sentence. In the first two, she is at once a superspy for the apartheid government *and* a passive woman, even a victim. Both narratives are coded via her gender. Forsyth's agentive power oscillates – and she manipulates it in turn – according to what is considered deviant or appropriate for a woman. In the third, Forsyth represents herself as something like an activist for the anti-apartheid struggle.

I will first focus first on Forsyth's spy narrative, which shows her to be powerful and agentive, the protagonist in a thriller. But, as three men's comments on Forsyth demonstrate, being a powerful woman is more threatening than being a powerful spy. Two of the men knew her while she was working undercover for the apartheid government and the other reviewed *Agent 407*. Each of their comments deny Forsyth agency by eroticising her. Intimating that she is promiscuous disarms the danger she poses as an active political woman. Next, I will focus on her victim narrative. If she represents herself as having agency, Forsyth is in the compromising position of having undertaken action, in full knowledge, for the regime. This makes her a perpetrator, and thus could force her to share in the responsibility for the horrors of apartheid. I will carefully read the story she tells to counteract this, that of the passive woman victim. But, as with her spy narrative, though the other way around, her role as woman-victim becomes strange as she takes up positions of power while insisting on her passivity. Despite these nodes of complication in each, the narratives remain contradictory: it is impossible for Forsyth to be at once powerful and passive. The final contradictory narrative is a story of how Forsyth in fact helped the anti-apartheid struggle. To make this possible, she engages a set of moral codes, including the religious and political, which, I will argue, are themselves contradictory. Her autobiography is thus a thoroughly unreliable narrative, with the contradiction

running through her narrative marshalled as a device to negotiate the terms in which she can emerge as a professional, a victim, and as religiously and politically sanctioned as opposed to a perpetrator.

In the second half of this chapter, I will use the thematic of eying, of the state eye, as a prevailing image to thread through the identities Forsyth takes on as a spy. In the first part, this will take us through the various ways Forsyth excludes, hints at or does not remember (but does not forget) information. I will speculate on the consequences of this kind of handling of information, characterised as a type of persistent mis-seeing. Next, I will look at how she looks and sees: how she sees African landscapes, how she sees in a vacuum, without context. It will also consider the manner in which her look focuses on the surface of things and passes judgment based on this. Part of this is a look that will not see, a look that disappears. This is not only in the sense that what Forsyth sees, and the information she passes on, results in people disappearing – the security branch was notorious for abducting people who were never seen again. But her look also disappears people by stubbornly *not seeing* them. This is especially relevant when she writes about black people. Race scholar Kathleen Connellan calls this "whiteness's strategic blindness of black people but not of race."[370] A black person in front of you, a woman, for instance, who works in your home, is invisible, her life a total mystery, but her race is not: she and so many others like her are black, and are thus one thing, no longer complex. This is the look that decimates. Drawing on a brief interlude in which I consider the ways in which Forsyth takes up and takes on maleness, I will argue that despite her scorn towards women, Forsyth's regimes of neatness and the unkempt – the eye that judges and

[370] Kathleen Connellan, "White Skins, White Surfaces: The Politics of Domesticity in South African Homes From 1920–1950," in *Taking up the Challenge: Critical Race and Whiteness Studies in a Postcolonising Nation*, ed. Damien W Riggs (Belair: Crawford House, 2007), 251.

divides – place her firmly in the violent role of white madam to black domestic workers in the kitchen.

Fully engaging with personal perpetrator narratives, however distorted or ridiculous they seem, might help us think about *how* perpetrators are unreliable with their stories, why they are so and what is significant about this. But a peril in reading her book this way, among many, is the possibility of moral masking: a perpetrator narrative taken as fiction might be read lightly, which would itself be an act of violence, a wounding, when so many people were ruined, mutilated, destroyed. Further, in taking seriously this book, in reading it closely and carefully, in spending time with it, I am interacting with the writer-perpetrator with something like empathy. Could a reading like this silence the call for responsibility, justice and redress in a muddle of moral relativism? Towards the end of this chapter, I try to consider more fully what is at stake in undertaking the reading this way, which was possible only while suspending my moral outrage. This question becomes particularly knotty when the researcher is herself within a continuum of complicity with apartheid and its perpetrators. Could these types of interactions – contingent, discomforting and risky – mean we need to extend our definitions of empathy, to include, as I argue, something negative, like hate? Before I begin, let me highlight a real danger in looking at Forsyth's book this way. Studying these narratives through a literary lens can risk masking the difference between *stories* about what happened and what actually happened. Before moving on, then, let me foreground what Forsyth did in reality.

Forsyth's handler, Alfred Oosthuizen, or Oosie, sent her to spy on activists at Rhodes University in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape in 1982. After her success there, Forsyth was sent to infiltrate the ANC in exile. Once there, Forsyth told the

ANC she was an apartheid spy.[371] Members of that banned organisation suspected she was trying to infiltrate it and put her in an ANC prison in Angola. Later, apparently on instructions from Kasrils and Hani, Forsyth was placed in a safe house in Luanda to be used in a prisoner exchange with the apartheid government. She betrayed the ANC and escaped to the British embassy in Angola before going back to South Africa in late 1988.

Spies and informants were exempt from the TRC, so agents such as Forsyth were never officially named perpetrators. But she is just that: an apartheid perpetrator. Forsyth states: "It is a small consolation to me that, to the best of my knowledge, no one was ever killed or seriously hurt as a result of my actions." (131) But to be a spy was to be violent. All information supplied to the apartheid security branch was used to harm, torture, harass and kill anti-apartheid activists. Forsyth's first handler, notorious spy and later security branch officer Craig Williamson, stated at his amnesty hearing for the TRC: "Any information whatsoever could be of use in planning cross-border actions against the African National Congress."[372] Recall Dlamini writing about police files filled with seemingly irrelevant detail supplied by spies, which were then used by the security branch for murder and mayhem.[373]

Forsyth's information definitely led to the sometimes long-term prison detention of the people she betrayed, possibly contributed to the torture and murder of the Cradock Four in 1985,[374] and has been connected to Anton Lubowski's

---

[371] In *Agent 407*, Forsyth insists that she defected to the ANC on moral grounds. Whether she genuinely did or only pretended she did to infiltrate the organisation remains her secret.
[372] *TRC Amnesty Hearing: Day 11, Craig Williamson*, September 22, 1998, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/hearing.php?id=52844&t=craig+williamson+amnesty&tab=hearings.
[373] Dlamini, *Askari*, 113–131.
[374] Activists Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Sicelo Mhlauli. A death squad tortured and murdered them near the town of Cradock in the Eastern Cape.

assassination in 1989[375] and the firebombing of Chris Mbekela's home, which resulted in the death of his girlfriend Miseka Ntonyeno in 1985.[376] The list, I imagine, is much longer. Who can quantify the damage she caused after infiltrating the anti-apartheid groups the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), the End Conscription Campaign and the United Democratic Front? What about the pain of the attacks on and harassment of individuals and groups based on her information, and the general privation under apartheid's systematic oppression, which she actively helped support?

In various ways, Forsyth also commits terrible violence in writing *Agent 407,* the most obvious of which is the book's racism. It depicts black men and women as bloated, gun-totting fools (26), faceless labourers (236) or bulge-eyed prisoners (174).[377] Or else – and this might be more violent than the stereotypes – she does not represent black people at all; she just blanks them out of the world. Another form of violence is the way she frames the book as an act of contrition – a now stale buzzword from the TRC, and which, once used, in turn potentially demands forgiveness. But nothing in her book is contrite.

Innocent superspy

The life of a spy

Towards the end of the book, Forsyth describes the security branch's propaganda campaign when the government had to limit the public relations damage of her defection to the ANC and her detention in its prison. The propaganda maintained that, as part of what the apartheid state called Operation Yurchenko, Forsyth was instructed

[375] David Jones, "ANC Objecting to Apartheid: The History of the End Conscription Campaign," (Unpublished masters thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2013), 133.
[376] *TRC Hearings: Day 2, The Human Rights Violations of Chris Mbekela*, April 8, 1997, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Cgtown/mbekela.htm.
[377] Each of these instances will be covered in full in this chapter.

by her security branch handlers to pretend to defect to the ANC.[378] Part of this meant "a lengthy version of [Forsyth's] police career was put together and then carefully edited to tell the story of South Africa's most successful agent." (269) Forsyth calls the propaganda campaign "complete nonsense". (271) Yet, reading over the section on propaganda, one cannot help but feel that it is eerily like the story you have just read – a story about a superspy. This spy thriller also links up with a fantasy of hers: "I would be," Forsyth muses early in the book, "one of the best double agents in the history of the business." (7) Is she convinced by her own propaganda campaign, which makes her out to be the most successful spy ever? It seems Forsyth has written her spy story along the lines of both her fictional, propaganda spy story – the essence of the successful superspy Forsyth, though with a slightly different plot – and along the lines of spy novels, especially those by John le Carré, which frame many of the romantic fantasies she has about herself. The influence of the spy novel comes through in the title of the chapter in which she supposedly defects: "Spymasters: Game of Mirrors". This highly crafted title conforms to a formula for the title of a spy novel: it is epic and implies elaborate, high-stakes games and intrigue in which the truth will be difficult to discern. Other chapter titles evoke something similar: "The Waiting Game" and "Coming in from the Heat". They create the sense of a fictional thriller plot, and thus a stylised narrative.

This is the spy story Forsyth creates. As part of her first moves to infiltrate the left wing on Rhodes campus, Forsyth begins to attend meetings and give reports to Oosie, who, along with his security branch colleagues, was "amazed at [Forsyth's] ability to report speeches practically verbatim." (84) Notice how in the story she

[378] The operation name is a reference to Soviet double agent Vitaly Sergeyevich Yurchenko. After her time in the prison, Forsyth accused the ANC of torture, and the security branch opened a criminal case. It is unclear whether this was part of the operation or whether Forsyth was, in fact, tortured.

imbues herself with remarkable characteristics, making her especially appropriate for the job, already a master of espionage with no need for recording gadgets. The infiltration process also necessitated social infiltration, at which she was "instinctively adept". (85) Forsyth writes: "Friendships are the key to being a good agent … getting close to people made all the difference." (96) For this, she needs to look the part. Engaging her "powers of infiltration" (91) – for which she is celebrated by the security branch – Forsyth's image changes: she leaves razors and make-up behind. She puts on a disguise. In the story, this camouflage is convincing enough to dupe her targets and thus allows her to move freely among them without suspicion, the hallmark of a good spy.

She also starts to be active in the student community by joining the campus newspaper, which she transforms, making her indispensible; her disguise becomes more complex. To "enhance [her] credibility" (109) and as part of her cover, Forsyth also writes and sings protest songs, her home is raided, and she is thrown in jail for a few days. This shows her dedication to her role, to her masters at the security branch and, importantly, to the nation in peril for which she was ultimately working.

Later, she infiltrates the End Conscription Campaign, a movement that would have serious clout in the coming years. Then the activists select Forsyth as the candidate for head of the Student Representative Council at Rhodes. She wins. At this point, the anti-apartheid community at Rhodes is rife with divisions, which Forsyth reports on, and which the security branch use to sow discord. As a direct result of her intelligence, the left was disrupted, proving, through action, the efficacy of her spying. After her first year at Rhodes, Forsyth is promoted to warrant officer. Over several months, she heads up a meeting about spies on campus, lives with a number of activists, and makes her way to Harare, Zimbabwe, and then Luanda, Angola.

As a spy, Forsyth has agency. She infiltrates, manipulates, puts on disguises, befriends important activists and ingratiates herself into the higher echelons of the anti-apartheid movement. She makes herself indispensible and is creative, forceful and quick on her feet. Her effectiveness and professionalism earn her a promotion. In this story, she is a superspy: arrogant, but for good reason; daring; single-minded.

Spies are strange and powerful figures, not least because of the ways in which they reflect social and national anxieties. According to John Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg, spies suggest that "national identity is under threat and that, in order to maintain the status quo, clandestine activities normally considered illegal or invasive must be endorsed."[379] Forsyth was a spy in the 1980s, a time of great tumult in South Africa when black people were being subjected to increasingly brutal violence. Black 'unrest', as it was termed, continued to threaten what the apartheid government deemed an acceptable national identity – a patriarchal, conservative Christian identity that functioned in terms meted out by the phrase 'separate but equal'. By becoming a spy, Forsyth is bound up with the nation, answers to it, is dedicated to preserving its identity. But as a woman spy who has agency, she instantly undermines that nation's patriarchal status quo that she is sent out to uphold. In looking at spy narratives, Rosie White states: "Although women spies in fiction, film and television often appear to follow the most conformist agendas – mimicking their male counterparts in serving the nation – their activities as women lend them a queer inflection."[380] Thus, being a woman spy is to be an ambiguous, even perhaps deviant figure, as "representations of women spies make explicit the continuing contradiction between femininity and

[379] John Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg, *The Spy Story* (Chicago, Ill and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 2.
[380] Rosie White, *Violent Femmes: Women as Spies in Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 10.

agency."[381] Women spies play a role that at once works to support apartheid's conservative patriarchal social paradigms that figure women as passive and homebound, while being an agent for the nation, an otherwise male, agentive role bound up in the 'feminine' arts of disguise and deceit. These women disturb both the domestics: the home and the nation. This dynamic role destabilises "unitary formulations of gender identity in favour of a more mobile subjectivity."[382] In her spy story, Forsyth is, to some degree, then, a deviant, queering figure, powerfully woman and man at once. This is threatening for the nation for which she spies, but the threat also extends to those on whom she spied, the male activists. For men writing about and commenting on Forsyth and her book, the menace she embodied as a powerful woman and a deviant figure overshadows the peril she embodied as a spy and agent, as I will go on to discuss.

The Cold War, which manifested as a full-blown hot war in Southern Africa, gave the apartheid government a legitimising language for its racist project: the fight against the communists. In the United States, the Cold War was waged along the battlements of the home: the bastion of capitalism. According to Elaine Tyler May, much was at stake during that time in containing and making obedient men and women in the home: "Deviations from the norms of appropriate sexual and familial behaviour might lead to social disorder and national vulnerability."[383] Much of this was grounded in gender: "Foreign policy itself rested on well-articulated assumptions about masculine power – a power drawn from sexual potency as well as the moral strength to resist temptation."[384] This temptation came about when irresponsible, unmarried men, who were thus not in healthy sexual relationships, were "duped by

[381] White, *Violent Femmes*, 10.
[382] White, *Violent Femmes*, 2.
[383] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,* 20th Anniversary edition (New York: Basic books, 2008), 12.
[384] May, *Homeward Bound*, 94–95.

seductive women who worked for the communists."[385] These overly sexual women could enter the sanctity of the home, disrupt it, *spy* on it, and thus pull down the nation itself. The woman spy is then doubly dangerous: she is active outside her designated roles, and her sexuality threatens to overturn the world.

Though the South African context is different to the US one, something similar plays out here. According to certain male commentators, Forsyth, a powerful women spy, is threatening not because she worked for the apartheid state and was thus against a just nation, but rather because she was a *sexual* threat. A *Mail & Guardian* book review of Forsyth's book, written by Phillip de Wet and titled "Scant sauce in 'honeypot' memoir", reads:[386]

> In the second half of 1988 there was at least an imaginary badge of honour bestowed on some in leftist circles at Rhodes University, reading: 'I did not sleep with Olivia Forsyth.' … Seemingly everyone involved in activist politics … had been taken in by the woman who had been integral to various protest campaigns even while she was an officer of the apartheid regime's brutal Security branch police unit.[387]

A 2003 piece about Forsyth, written by journalist and activist Tony Weaver, echoes parts of De Wet's article.

> Soon after Olivia Forsyth was unmasked as a security police spy … the most popular badge in town was one that read 'I didn't sleep with Olivia Forsyth'. Legend has it that very few men … dared to wear the badge. I can happily … state that I never met Olivia Forsyth, let alone slept with her.[388]

---

[385] May, *Homeward Bound*, 91.
[386] A honeypot is an informer who has sex with targets and reports information she gleans.
[387] Phillip de Wet, "Scant sauce in 'honeypot memoir'," *Mail & Guardian,* July 31, 2015, https://mg.co.za/article/2015-07-30-scant-sauce-in-olivia-forsyths-honeypot-spy-memoir.
[388] Tony Weaver, "Forgive apartheid spies? Brereton cannot claim she did not know the results of her actions," *Cape Times*, October 24, 2003, http://www.armsdeal-vpo.co.za/articles05/forgive.html.

Also in 2003, in an interview with apartheid archivist Padraig O'Malley, ANC stalwart Mac Maharaj states:

> [Forsyth] was an amazing operator. I never met her … but her personality was very, very attractive to people, and the guards who were guarding her in Lusaka were now sleeping with her … then they find she was doing the same thing at home. She … was sleeping around with everybody. Oh! What to do? Ship her out to Luanda, put her in detention there. They put her in detention there, she started sleeping around with the guards there.[389]

The focus of these pieces reduces Forsyth's career as a spy to one of a sex maniac. That De Wet and Weaver wear badges for *not* having sex with her does little to the outcome: Forsyth is made into a sexual object. She is stripped of agency and dismissed as a mere honeypot. This mythmaking achieves two things: it makes Forsyth not dangerous because she was a professional spy for a violent regime who successfully infiltrated activist circles, but dangerous because of her monstrous sexuality. At the same time, it tames Forsyth, and the danger her sexuality poses, allowing the power to move back into the hands of the men involved by making her into an object of fun, a game or legend. Notice also that the two men who were there – Weaver in Grahamstown at the same time as Forsyth, and Maharaj when she was in exile – make a point of stating that they had never met her, thus precluding themselves from ever having possibly had sex with her and thus being weak men duped by a seductive spy.

Feminist scholars Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry find that connecting women who have political agency – especially those who are violent, directly or

---

[389] Padraig O'Malley, *Interview with Mac Maharaj*, January 15, 2003, https://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/cis/omalley/OMalleyWeb/03lv03445/04lv03689/05lv03751/06lv03756.htm.

indirectly – to erotomania is not uncommon; in fact, "the trend to sexualize and minimize women's political violence is an ancient and ongoing trend."[390] They suggest "women who commit violence interrupt gender stereotypes [and thus these women's] stories are marginalized within whore narratives couched in terms that deny women's agency."[391] Belinda Morrissey, who focuses on women who kill, states that violent women can only "gain humanity under one circumstance – when they can be represented as politically neutered victims."[392] Thus, to gain humanity, Forsyth has to become a passive woman victim. But something is doubly at stake here: Forsyth must take up the position of victim not only to mitigate her agency as a woman, but also to absolve herself for being an apartheid perpetrator.

The docile woman

Towards the end of her prologue, Forsyth writes: "I wish it were an heroic tale … But it is just a story of one white South African woman who found herself on the wrong side." (ix) "Just a story" insinuates that her book is simply another tale among many, stripping it of any inherent power. Describing it as only "one white … woman's story" makes it about a specific person, who has humanity and thus deserves empathy. This both normalises her actions and uncouples them and herself from the political context. Though this contradicts her earlier assertion that this is *just* a story, focusing on the individual makes Forsyth seem unique, as though she were not one among many tawdry paid spies. She also specifies that she is a *white* woman, as though this gives her story a particular weight over that of a black woman or man. In having "found" herself on the wrong side, Forsyth splits herself in two: it is as though a

[390] Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry, "Reduced to Bad Sex: Narratives of Violent Women from the Bible to the War on Terror," *International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2008): 9.
[391] Sjoberg and Gentry, "Reduced to Bad Sex", 7.
[392] Belinda Morrissey, *When Women Kill: Questions of Agency and Subjectivity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 17.

woman had just woken, bewildered to be suddenly surrounded by apartheid thugs. But who exactly finds whom? If she *passively* finds herself somewhere, then she did not actively work to get there. The split allows her to exculpate herself from any wrongdoing. A similar denial is found in the first line in her opening chapter, which reads: "Not for the first time, my life has a strangely fictional quality, as if it doesn't belong to me." (1) She mentions this fictional quality again later when undergoing her spy training. (70) Again, there is a split between Forsyth as an active being and Forsyth as some kind of fictional character who has no power over her story. Her total rejection of responsibility here is finalised through the use of the phrase, "the wrong side of history", which separates apartheid from its moral horror. The phrase suggests that wrong and right are matters of something like luck or at least popular opinion, as sides are adjudicated arbitrarily. This wrong side, Forsyth seems to imply, viewed from a different time and perspective, could have been the right side of history.

When useful, she represents herself as innocent and naive. Forsyth is told to change into a uniform "resembling the garb of a kitchen boy" (11) in front of an ANC prison commander, who is filled with "malicious delight" (*Ibid*) at watching her strip. Leaving aside the racism of the title "kitchen boy", I wonder whether getting into the clothes of a male might be a way to gain some masculine agency, mirroring her deviant queering as a spy. At this point, Forsyth realises she is going to prison and not to an elite training site. She writes: "My naïveté, for one thing, is astonishing." (13) Forsyth characterises herself as a victim three times here: she is a victim of sexual abuse by the commander; she must change into clothes made for lowly male servants; and she is innocent of the causal circumstances that brought her there. Later she states she is in prison because of a "simple twist of fate" (204) – and not because she worked with the security branch. When meeting Williamson, Forsyth does not suspect

him of being capable of atrocities, stating rather that her attraction to him was "probably [because I was] desperate for a hero." (60) This links closely with her contention that she was caught up in the romance of spying – "Craig became my George Smiley [hero spy of many Le Carré novels]." (*Ibid*) Williamson, who has among his victims a six-year-old girl, is a romanticised figure filtered through her fantasy, which situates him as the archetypal hero and her as the swooning woman.

Forsyth states: "The honeypot role was reserved for sources who were not actual members of the force, but paid informants." (60) But sex plays a part in *Agent 407*. Two strikingly similar incidences with her handlers give us insight into how Forsyth genders power and thus absconds from responsibility by taking up the role of woman victim. In the first incident, Forsyth is in a hotel room in Grahamstown about to meet her handler Oosie for the first time. She hears a knock on the door: "Two firm knocks, neither too hard nor too soft, like a good handshake," (73) she muses. Earlier in the story, when shaking Williamson's hand, Forsyth writes: "Ten points for the firm handshake, a good start." (58) Later, her abusive husband is characterised as having a "limp handshake". (283) Masculinity is defined and conferred by a handshake, which must be firm. Oosie briefs her on the work. "I became totally engrossed as Oosie talked," Forsyth writes. "Then, out of the blue, as we shook hands to say goodnight, Oosie tried to kiss me … I pulled away, repulsed." (76) The attempted kiss takes place at the moment of the handshake, which has been invested with masculine qualities. At the moment Forsyth shakes Oosie's hand, she is like a man, an agent, who has been briefed and who will now begin the professional work of spying. This handshake becomes a kiss, making Forsyth not an agent but a woman victim. While De Wet and Weaver eroticise and thus neutralise her, as discussed above, Forsyth's rejection of this sexual advance, and even revulsion to it,

"suggest a desexualised, unthreatening femininity."[393] She is no longer the sexual monster but a demure maiden, a passive victim. Crucially, this also undermines the moment she becomes a spy. Part of the power exchange inferred here is the denial of personal agency in becoming a spy, even, perhaps, the denial of becoming a spy *at all*.

Later, this scenario plays out again in almost exactly the same fashion. Forsyth gets a new handler, alias Mike. When they first meet, she feels confident everything is going well and then, "without warning, he tried to kiss [her]." (114) She feels that same sense of revulsion: she is "nauseated and push[es] him away in disgust." (*Ibid*) Again, the moment she will become a spy, she becomes an innocent and desexualised woman victim. But something else might be happening in these two incidents. Spies are figures of mystery: they wear disguises, use gadgets and have secrets. But spies also have handlers who give them assignments and collect, disseminate and act on the spies' information. They are the spy's active arm, the ones who do violence. They make the game real by connecting the spy to the outcome of that spy's information – the murder, imprisonment or harassment of those on whom she spied. By representing both her handlers as something like incompetent, sex-crazed men (in an inversion of how she is represented by men outside the book), she makes them both inert and distances herself from their roles while taking up her more appropriately feminine, passive one.

Later, Forsyth writes about Oosie:

[393] Sarah Colvin, "Witch, Amazon, or Joan of Arc? Ulrike Meinhof's Defenders, or How to Legitimize a Violent Women," in *Women and Death 2: Warlike Women in the German Literary and Cultural Imagination since 1500*, eds. Sarah Colvin and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (New York: Camden Home, 2009), 256. Colvin argues that agentive women must be depicted as virgins, such as Joan of Arc, or as wives, so as to imply a sexual purity that makes them more appropriately feminine and hence less threatening.

> Our relationship did not take particularly long to become intimate, despite my initial revulsion. I suppose it was intimacy borne of mutual dependence or, if I'm brutally frank, my dependence on him. Perhaps I was just lonely. Perhaps one kind of secret meeting easily begets another. (113)

The phrasing in these sentences opens up a moment in which the spy Forsyth is at the same time the victim Forsyth: a total contradiction. Saying the sexual relationship did not take "particularly long" suggests an inevitability, as though it was always going to happen. This fatedness finds feet in her comment that it happened "despite" her first impression of him, which was one of repugnance, as though her feelings were never a part of the schema in which she would always in the end be in this sexual relationship. "I suppose" suggests both flippancy and a resignation about the affair, while her dependency on Oosie and her loneliness make her disempowered, even pathetic. All of this points to Forsyth being a woman victim. But the line about secret meetings undercuts this. Being a spy is to meet secretly, but also to find out secrets, which requires a kind of intimacy – to get to a secret, if it is an important one, the spy must be trusted. In a moment of deep intimacy, the secret is revealed. That secret is in turn revealed, in another intimate moment, between the handler and the spy, intimate in space and time – usually in dark, hidden spaces with borrowed time. This type of powerful secret life, Forsyth suggests, leads to another secret life. Her authority, her agency, lies in her capacity to create intimacy – to infiltrate. Her sexual intimacy with Oosie is another kind of secret and secret exchange. It speaks not to her weakness, but to the very heart of her power as a woman spy.

This idea is bolstered by Forsyth's comment that every now and then she "spared a thought for Oosie's wife, a good Afrikaner *vroutjie* at home looking after his two daughters." (113) *Vroutjie* literally means 'little wife'; using the Afrikaans

suffix '*tjie*', which makes nouns diminutive, Forsyth belittles Oosie's wife. Here she is not a weak woman. Rather, she is a powerful sexual being, the lover, even the Cold War *femme fatale*: the opposite of a little wife. Forsyth now has sexual power over Oosie, and from this position, she thinks with scorn about his pallid life with his helpless wife. This completes a circle of her making in the narrative, which suggests she is both innocent and a victim, even passive, under the thrall of romantic, heroic men; *and* she is a powerful woman who rejects the roles meted out to her by these men. Forsyth manipulates her stories by taking up certain roles, but the tension in being a sexually empowered woman while gaining humanity by playing a more typically passive feminine role makes strange these figurations, stretching them until they snap, making them ironic or undercutting them altogether.

Forsyth uses both the active woman spy narrative and the passive woman victim narrative to massage how she emerges in the book: a cool spy who is not responsible for what happened. But this is an impossible story. Its layered narratives forever short-circuit one another. Reading this book carefully exposes the manner in which Forsyth engages contradiction for her own exculpatory ends. Towards the end of this chapter, I will consider the larger significance of the use of contradictory narratives. For now, I will move on to the third contradiction.

Walking on air

Forsyth's other story, that she was actually an anti-apartheid activist, is the third of her contradictory narratives. This narrative, itself a contradiction to the story of Forsyth as superspy for the apartheid government, functions on a set of internal moral contradictions. I will briefly describe this third layer, but I would like this not to lead me only to the conclusions I have already come to, as described above. Rather, I want to extract its basic elements: who is mostly involved in this cycle of contradiction,

what does the style of the telling show us, and what is left out. Forsyth accesses three moral landscapes for her own ends. The first is religious, through words such as 'contrition' and 'blessing'. The second is political, through the use of anti-apartheid figures and stories of activism. But beneath these two is a pronouncement that empties both, the third: she portrays herself as innocent and as someone who caused little or no real harm; she is morally unassailable. This suggests she needs no act of contrition as there is no sin, and, because her work for the apartheid government was benign, she does not need heavyweight struggle stalwarts punching for her. Here lies the moral contradiction in her work.

Forsyth takes up the activist role while an agent at Rhodes. This is part of her cover, but Forsyth represents her actions as though she were really part of the anti-apartheid movement, and not a spy for it. While working at the Rhodes student newspaper, Forsyth writes: "This was one of the instances where I was certain that my involvement actually helped," (98) commenting that her presence stopped police raids and thus helped the anti-apartheid cause. All she did was "[supply] the police with copies." (*Ibid*) What she does not seem to understand is that *she was the raid*. Earlier, while enthusing about the political work she does, she states: "I like to think that [writing and singing struggle songs] was one small way in which I did some good." (91) She goes on to quote, in full, a song she writes for Neil Aggett, afterwards writing: "The song still makes me cry." (*Ibid*)[394] Is it her poetic rendition or Aggett's death that makes her cry? Forsyth later relates meeting "two amazing women activists, Shirley Gunn and June Esau," (102) and listening to a third, Cheryl Carolus. "I remember being blown away by [Carolus]," Forsyth states. "Here was a woman who could lead the new South Africa." (*Ibid*) Carolus goes on to occupy leadership

[394] Neil Aggett was a trade unionist and anti-apartheid dissident who died in police custody in Johannesburg in 1982.

roles, but only after fighting those who actively worked against this new South Africa. Towards the end of her story of student infiltration, Forsyth states that it was easy for her to be useful to the left. "It was part of my cover anyway: I helped to further the aims of the struggle … As part of being in the leadership and inner circles … I was privy to information about the whereabouts and movements of important people … All I did was delay that reporting as far as possible." (131) This is in regards to activist Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota, whom she comments could have shared the fate of the Cradock Four had she not waited before sending her report. But this does not have the effect she was looking for – that she helped the anti-apartheid cause. Rather it comes out as threatening, a way to show her power over, not alignment with, activists.

At the very beginning and the very end of *Agent 407*, Forsyth calls her book "an act of contrition" (1; 321). An act of contrition is a short prayer given by the penitent showing remorse for their sins. It includes an expression of sorrow, an acknowledgement of wrongdoing and the will to make amends. In Catholicism, this prayer is given after confession but before absolution. Thus, something named an act of contrition must include a confession, sorrow and remorse, and responsibility. These must be undertaken before absolution or forgiveness is possible. Using the term "contrition" frames the work within a religious edifice, which gives it a certain weight and seriousness. Crucially, the phrase also taps into the lexicon and ideology of the TRC, which asked perpetrators for a full confession of wrongdoing before amnesty could be granted. The use of the word is a device to frame the book within a hefty ideal that promises something like absolution in the end. But, equally, by calling it an act of contrition, she is also naming herself a perpetrator in terms of the TRC. Apartheid victims or activists were given a platform to tell their stories. Perpetrators confessed. Having to be contrite admits guilt, but it also gives her access to the other

things that were supposed to come with the TRC's promised Judeo-Christian cycle: redemption. The phrase gives her book a moral patina, suggesting her act of writing it is first a *moral* act.

But, from the outset, Forsyth's act of contrition is muddied and twisted. *Agent 407*'s dedication page reads: "For Comrade Chris Hani, who was the hero I could never be, and for Comrade Ronnie Kasrils, both of whom believed in me." Naming Hani the hero she could not be assumes that the opportunity for heroism was available to Forsyth but that she did not take it. It also reveals what Forsyth is concerned with: the appearance or glamour of heroism, which she wants for herself. The line creates an equivalency and familiarity between her and Hani, making it seem as though Forsyth was personally close to him. But not, if you look closely, so much with Kasrils – who is alive and can confirm or deny this intimacy. Kasrils gets the dedication, but no personal appraisal like Hani. Rather, it ends with the idea that they both believed in Forsyth. If you look at the pronouns in the dedication in each sentence, they read: Hani-I, Kasrils-me. She makes a clear connection between these men and herself. The phrase "believed in me" assumes trust, intimacy, privacy. Everything in this dedication implies a heartfelt connection to the anti-apartheid cause from two of its major leaders. This dedication gives Forsyth legitimacy, creating political and social capital by suggesting she was trusted by anti-apartheid stalwarts. Forsyth is moving towards another moral landscape, the politically just, via the credibility she earns from co-opting these names. But Kasrils rejects the dedication. "Olivia F[orsyth] has used my and Chris Hani's name for credibility. I do not condone that."[395] Elsewhere, he states: "I never trusted her nor could forgive her role as enemy

[395] Ronnie Kasrils, personal email, February 21, 2017.

agent and the harm she caused."[396] These are the things she does not say in her dedication, what must be masked for the world of her book to function.[397] The main players in Forsyth's long game for legitimacy? Two men, Hani and Kasrils.

In the first chapter, set in the ministerial residential complex in Cape Town in December 2000, Forsyth states she cannot write the book until she gets "sanction" (1). This is from the person to whom, she states, she "owes [her] life." (*Ibid*) She wants to tell him the truth and ask his forgiveness. "There have been two such people in my life, but one was brutally gunned down and murdered. Now there is only one. Ronnie Kasrils. Comrade Ronnie Kasrils." (*Ibid*) Notice the drama being produced in withholding Hani's name altogether, and in holding back Kasrils' till the last moment and then repeating it with the honorific 'comrade'. This has two connotations: he was in the ANC during the struggle, and he was a comrade to her, as in, a friend in arms. Putting the meaning of something before naming it creates dramatic tension. This plays into a kind of recognisable theatrics, sometimes performed in the worst moments of the TRC. More simply, it indicates that the book will work for the dramatic edge, and is thus highly constructed and *stylised*. In short, the truth will be secondary to the telling. This becomes important as her writerly self emerges later in the book.

Later in this first chapter, Forsyth states that she "does not want to undertake [the writing of her book] without [Kasrils'] blessing," (5) which she says she duly receives. Again, a religious term is used. Here, Kasrils is a priest-like figure who can confer upon Forsyth a blessing to sanctify her book. This language is similar in tone to her characterising her book as an "act of contrition". But the impression that the

[396] Ronnie Kasrils, letter to the editor, August 2, 2015, in response to "Scant sauce".
[397] The second half of the dedication goes to her family "who stuck by me though all the lunacy." *The* lunacy, not *her* lunacy, implies the madness was not her doing but came from the outside – it happened to her and not because of her. This shows us something, too: she will not take responsibility.

book is somehow sanctified does not emerge from a judicial body, such as the TRC, nor from what backs that body, legal systems with a heavy dose of Christianity. The politically sanctified, those who fought and suffered, those who can legitimately live on the moral high ground of South African politics, offered the blessing this time. "I think you will write a good book," (5) Kasrils apparently comments. Starting the book with the moment in which Kasrils gives her his blessing in 2000 announces and frames the text as politically approved.

In the second chapter the book jumps back to 1986 in Luanda. Forsyth believes the ANC has sent her for training in counter-intelligence. She muses about how she will be "one of the best double agents in the history of the business" while "fighting on the right side at last." (7) "I was on the moral high ground," she announces, "and it felt great. I was walking on air." (5) Again, placing this incident at the beginning of the book works to show us that she defected to the ANC after coming to political consciousness. Thus she is penitent, someone who mends the error of her ways.

But, as quoted earlier, Forsyth states simply: "It is a small consolation to me that, to the best of my knowledge, no one was ever killed or seriously hurt as a result of my actions." (131) This completes the loop of her contradictions. An act of contrition demands at minimum a confession of wrongdoing. Here, Forsyth goes so far as to say she *did not do anything too bad*. This is also worth noting for how it plays out later. The book depicts her as going from being a perpetrator confessing, with a right to forgiveness and absolution, to something like a comrade in her defection, and by helping the cause, almost, she intimates, an activist. If she were indeed an activist, she surely cannot take up the moral framework of confession and

forgiveness; if she were innocent, she has nothing to confess, and thus nothing for which to be contrite. For what, then, is she responsible?

This final set of contradictions exposes the manner in which she uses various mechanisms – religious language, struggle stalwarts and activism, and denial – to again abscond from accountability. Besides her exculpatory contradictions here, I want to draw out three points that will be developed in the next section: the main players in this ploy, especially in relation to its political aspect, are men; the style of the section suggests something about how Forsyth writes her story, principally in terms of how the telling relates to (or does not relate to) the truth or her memory of what is true; and that, in the end, Forsyth does not include, only hints at or blanks out (but does not *forget*), the things that did real harm.

The seven-eyed spy

Olivia Forsyth has seven eyes for seven selves. They are named: Olivia Forsyth, Agent 407, codename Lara, Solid Olive at Rhodes, the ANC's Helen Bronson, Thandeka in prison, alias Christine Smith outside it. The first eye is blind, the other only half an eye, the third forgets. The fourth empties while the fifth narrows. The sixth sees only the surface, and the seventh, the final eye, judges – it is the eye that divides. To spy divides, him from her, the threatening from the meek, the clean in the eyes of the republic, and the dirty. But it is also divided, several; like a hydra, she is polycephalic, a many-headed creature. Being a spy is to violently eye, to survey for the state, to watch from within, in homes and bars, at schools and clubs. To spy is to be a panopticon, a glassy reflective thing – nobody knows who is watching and when, only that they could see all, all the time. To spy is to look with malice; it is a look that slaughters. All is shaped and framed by that roundness, a pupil or a gun sight. In

South Africa, like in so many other repressive societies, eyes and ears were always watching, always listening. And though the state used professional spies such as Forsyth, in many ways its eyes numbered in the millions – a million pestilential eyes sprouting out the sides and back and front of the state – because most white people were spies of a kind. Watching each other, watching the other. Reporting. The white eye decimates. And white is the colour of all seven of Forsyth's eyes.

I spy

Different ways of seeing and being seen articulate the content of the book – the manner in which Forsyth includes and excludes information, how she sees various people, describes them, judges and categorises them. So much of how she looks and sees (and is looked at and seen, or, at least, how she imagines others perceive her) make up the meat of the book. It is stuffed full of detail. But the minutiae is mostly irrelevant or superficial: the colour schemes of offices, the lipstick her colleagues wore, what food was served at parties – pineapple pudding at her Rhodes farewell; asparagus at her first dinner at the British embassy in Angola – music she danced to, books she read. In some moments, though, Forsyth announces she cannot remember certain details. Critically, these moments or details are not forgotten; they are remembered via her pronouncement that she cannot remember them – and details around these blank spots make them extra visible. These lacunae are curious when considering Forsyth's supposed capacity for recall. Other content is altogether missing; it is left out, though again certainly not forgotten – not in the way you can forget where you left your keys or what your childhood bedroom looked like. Of course, as journalist Jonathan Ancer puts it in relation to the TRC, "One doesn't know

what one doesn't know."[398] But in a radio interview, Forsyth explains: "I haven't written about the stuff that really hurt people because why rehash it again?" [399] "Hurt" here is ambiguous: does she mean emotionally hurt or physically? From this comment, we know unequivocally that what she did, the worst things, those toothy things that caused harm, have simply been left out – because, as she blithely intones, why bring it up again? This is her blind eye. But we are by now well versed in Forsyth's exculpatory artistry. What exactly did this superspy actually do for the apartheid state? According to the book, almost nothing. She mentions stealing keys, which were then duplicated by the security branch and used to bug houses and cars, and she admits that her information was used to detain her so-called friends. But nothing else is directly admitted to.

Besides the stories of the real pain she caused, yowling, open-jawed tales left snapping and rabid outside the bounds of this book, there are strange twists in it, too, clues like bloody footprints that suggest a larger and darker story. The more obvious ones relate to what happened to Forsyth in exile: when at Quatro, Forsyth is asked by the ANC to write her life story, her biography, over and over. She writes about the "intricacies of family relationships", but then cryptically notes in brackets that these were "details which I considered harmless in the circumstances and a miscalculation I later came most sorrowfully to regret." (188) Notice the strangeness in language with use of "and" instead of the more appropriate comma. There is nothing in the book to indicate why exactly she came to regret this. When Forsyth makes it back to South Africa after her stint at Quatro, she writes about going to the dentist: "Many years later my father told me that the dentist informed him, confidentially, that my jaw had

[398] Jonathan Ancer, *Spy: Uncovering Craig Williamson* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2017), 220.
[399] "The former apartheid spy on her memoir and contrition," *The John Robbie Show*, Radio 702, August 31, 2015, http://www.702.co.za/articles/4894/the-former-spy-olivia-forsyth.

been broken in two places. The [security branch] had already begun to prepare a case that I had been tortured." (267) Why would the dentist inform her father and not her? She would most certainly know her jaw had been broken at some point, or at least have suspected it. Yet she makes no mention of beatings or accidents at Quatro or elsewhere at any point in her career. It seems a salacious detail Forsyth would certainly add to this tell-all. Why has she left it out? Again, she has not exactly left it out, but mentioned it while leaving it blank, a hint that tells and redacts at once, a half eye. By mentioning the broken jaw and the security branch's case of torture against the ANC together, Forsyth is making a claim to being tortured while still remaining ambiguous about it. She states she was tortured in her report as part of the Operation Yurchenko cover-up, but this is the same report that places Forsyth at the centre of the horror of the apartheid machine in the 80s. She must rubbish the entire propaganda project – which she does, calling it nonsense – to get the credibility of having, finally, made the choice for the winning side. Yet here is this strange insert, this clandestine and patriarchal dentist whispering to her father, the jaw with two and three jagged sawlines floating on an x-ray.

To add to this, just after mentioning her broken jaw, Forsyth, for only the second time in the book, admits she does not remember something. Forsyth describes the meeting she has with Oosie in which he tells her that some people in the security branch know about her defection to the ANC, and that, to avoid being killed by these colleagues, she must participate in the propaganda campaign. "I felt trapped," writes Forsyth, "This, then, was my final act of betrayal." (268) This act would include her writing a damning 12-page press release, providing sketches of the prison and releasing personal letters to the papers. But she notes: "Strangely, I have no recollection of my debriefing … I just draw a blank." (268-269) It is strange indeed

that she draws a blank here, but it is also ultimately unsurprising. This is part of the moment in which Forsyth becomes another thing again, no longer a (potentially fake) defector but a (fake) superspy. She is dissolving, slipping into skins and skins, thoroughly filled up with delusion and propaganda. What is even stranger here is not that she draws a blank, but that the outcome of that debriefing is so readily available. The archive remembers: I have a copy of her full press statement and have seen versions of her story splashed across newspapers from several countries. I can deduce, quite accurately, I imagine, what was said at that debriefing; I have its fruits. This gap in her memory potentially suggests something other than a pernicious omission – as with those stories of the real hurt she caused – or a genuine or normal form of forgetting. This debriefing, which amounts to what she must do for the apartheid state before she stops being a spy, is, she writes, a final act of betrayal. The first time Forsyth specifically notes that she cannot remember something is when she first meets Oosie – the moment, as I argued earlier, she becomes a spy. I will go into this moment in more detail later, but for now it is interesting that these two moments of not remembering are those that bookend her career as a spy.

In her prologue, Forsyth writes: "I owe it to many people, and to myself, to set the record straight. There have been many versions of parts of the story … many lies overlaid with truths and truths overlaid with lies. Much of the truth is just a palimpsest, an echo that changes even in the act of repeating it, but this is my story." (ix) Forsyth wants to set the record straight. This means, as she indicates, that the recorded version of her story is not true, or is only half true – overlaid with lies – and that she will add a document, this book, to the record, or archive, that will be her true story. She goes on to contradict this by saying truth is written and rewritten, changing each time, forming a palimpsest. The sentence concludes: This is my story.

Her story, then, is indeed a palimpsest of truth and lies, a form of layering and interweaving, lying and believing, so complex and contradictory that everything but a straight record emerges. Blanks in memory complicate her claim to truth further, and is indicative of two things: lack of accountability and excess. Her drawing a blank at her debriefing is convenient: the things you cannot remember – even if the archive does – are things you cannot be blamed for, surely? In terms of excess, journalist David Beresford quips: "As any intelligent intelligence agent can testify, if they were stupid enough to do so, too much truth can just as easily blow circuits as set one free."[400] He is talking facetiously about the adage 'the truth will set you free', but there is something in his throwaway line that relates to Forsyth and her problem with *too much* truth.

While the apartheid state propaganda paints Forsyth as a hugely successful spy, Kasrils, in his report to the ANC and the press, paints another picture entirely. He titles his report "Olivia Forsyth: The Story of a Mission Failed", writing, "Her mission to infiltrate the ANC was a pathetic flop."[401] Forsyth "was unmasked by the ANC in February 1985 in Harare'" where, "cracking under the pressure of [an ANC's representative's] questions confessed to being a security police lieutenant on an undercover mission to infiltrate our organisation."[402] But Forsyth claims she first flew to Harare on 11 October 1985. (153) Kasrils writes that Forsyth later "claimed that she could no longer reconcile herself to working for the racist regime", but no one fell for this "conversion" story.[403] The ANC sent her back to her handlers to gather information, but when she failed to provide it on her return, was sent to Quatro. In Forsyth's press release, she claims she was tortured: "I was constantly beaten … [The

[400] Beresford, *Truth Is a Strange Fruit*, 170.
[401] Ronnie Kasrils, *Olivia Forsyth: The Story of a Mission Failed*. N.d. Ronald Kasrils Papers, A3345, B1.4. Johannesburg: Cullen Library, 1.
[402] Kasrils, *Olivia Forsyth*, 1.
[403] Kasrils, *Olivia Forsyth*, 1.

ANC at Quatro] relied on physical abuse to obtain information … I was very fortunate only to sustain superficial injuries such as heavy bruising and damage to my mouth and teeth."[404] Kasrils writes that when Forsyth's story broke in Britain, papers there suggested she was tortured by the ANC. This happened while she was still at the British embassy in Angola (and thus before the debriefing and propaganda campaign by the security branch). According to Kasrils, Forsyth wrote to these papers and stated she was not tortured. I could not find these articles, but I did find one on the front page of the *Cape Times* on 2 August 1988, which would have also been while she was still holed up at the British embassy in Angola. According to the article, Forsyth "told embassy officials she … had been beaten during interrogations."[405] But "despite claims that she was severely tortured by the ANC … Ms Forsyth did not need medical treatment on her arrival at the embassy … 'Her health is fine,' said [First Secretary] Mr Davies."[406] Everything is, as Kasrils says of Forsyth's allegations of ANC brutality, "a tissue of lies."[407] Yet the spectre of that double broken jaw looms – at least, in her book. Part of what this tells us is that the truth is no longer possible, or perhaps that the very excess of these truths and truths, stories, written and rewritten, short-circuits the whole business. Its very excess makes it so impossible to decipher that it may as well be a blank, a gap, a hole in memory, not forgotten but remembered too often in too many guises and for too many ends.

Before Forsyth tells the story of her first meeting with Oosie, she describes the hotel room in which it takes place: "Twin beds, dresser, rack for suitcase, minibar – at least I like to think there must have been a minibar, but I don't remember; it would have made his mundane hotel room more interesting." (72-73) Why would she *like* to

[404] Olivia Forsyth, *Press Release by Lt Olivia Forsyth (Pretoria Feb 3 SAPA),* 1988, 7 in Ronald Kasrils Papers, A3345, B1.4. Johannesburg: Cullen Library.
[405] "Forsyth escaped twice from the ANC," *Cape Times*, August 2, 1988, 1.
[406] "Forsyth escaped twice from the ANC", 3.
[407] Kasrils, *Olivia Forsyth*, 4.

think there was a minibar? Why does she say she specifically doesn't remember whether there was a minibar or not? Nowhere in the following scene is alcohol served or drunk. What a strange and seemingly irrelevant detail to *not* add, or to not be able to add definitively. The clue is in the next sentence, that the minibar would have spiced up the otherwise dull room. We are inside the conjurer's head; she brings to the world of her book a hotel room in which she will stage a scene. Here is a slip, a way to show us that she makes the world to her own liking, that her act of creation almost precedes actual events. She would *like* there to be a minibar because that would make the room more interesting, presumably to her and her readers. She is travelling in time; her writing self stands back and inspects the canvas, a minibar, yes, a minibar would bring life to the upcoming scene. Up till now, readers have had few if any insights into the writer's mind. Rather, we know only what the writer writes about: a young woman named Olivia Forsyth sashaying into the glamorous world of the spy, all written in the first person. I did this, writes Forsyth, I did that. Suddenly, we are thrown out. The writer does not remember. The place we were so naturally in, sitting there next to young Forsyth on the bed, the room making itself up before our eyes, the twin beds, the dresser, dismantles itself. I don't remember, Forsyth intones, and we are split from that woman in the room. She writes: "I wonder what I was expecting. Something momentous, certainly." (73) The first "I" in "I wonder" is not the same as the second one in "what I was expecting". One "I" forgets. They are broken up by a distance of something like 30 years, and we, the readers, yawn away with the writer, land in the now, look back on that woman, the second "I", who is possibly expecting something significant to happen. In the room, we have a minibar that is both there and not there, a Schrödinger's cat, and a woman split in two over time. And we have the writer Forsyth, who looks down into her creation, her own memory, and wonders

about that woman in it, the I that is not exactly the I. This scene is not my scene, says the writer Forsyth, as the minibar flicks in and out of existence. That is not me; I don't know her very well, the woman in that room. Why does Forsyth abandon that young self in the hotel room? Why does she need to wonder about or speculate on what *she* was expecting? The scene can be partially understood in terms of my earlier comments about this being the moment she becomes a spy, crosses over from herself to something else, a creature that will be made up of smooth surfaces, reflective, all on top. This dissociative moment in the scene, like her power play with Oosie later on in it, could be a kind of zooming away from all the culpability and all the consequences of what will begin in that moment 30 years before. Her final betrayal is also not remembered, though not forgotten either, in limbo, a solid blank over the total terror. Perhaps. But, equally, the detail, the not-remembered minibar, is a zeroing in on surface (zooming not away, but in), a way to specifically *not look*. Like the work of a magician, it is a device to distract so the real tricks – the dirty tricks – can be played out of sight, at least out of sight of the reader, by happening outside the pages of the book.

With my little eye

Now for the final four eyes: the ones that empty, narrow, see only surfaces and divide. When talking about her colleague Rina going with her boss to Cape Town, she writes: "Their accommodation was in an oddly institutional parliamentary compound on the unfriendly, windswept Cape Flats, a bland assortment of uninteresting face-brick apartments and townhouses surrounded by barbed-wire fence in the middle of nowhere." (50) I imagine this building, squat and stout, alone on the Cape Flats, a single outpost, exposed, among the incessant sand, nothing around it for as far as the eye can see. But the Cape Flats was not empty. Apartheid's Group Areas Act of 1950

forcibly removed people deemed 'non-white' to the Cape Flats, an area designated as a feeder township for labour in whites-only Cape Town. "By 1980," writes urban researcher Peter Wilkinson, "Greater Cape Town's population had increased to almost 1.9 million people", most of whom lived in settlements in the Cape Flats.[408] What barbarity it is, then, to sweep away entire communities. Gone, with a flick of the wrist, in a single sentence. This geographic violence, which shakes maps till they are inhabited only by acacia trees, is part of the brutality of the emptying gaze, which sees and contains or makes disappear, and which, as is apparent in *Agent 407*, persists.

Chapter 2 is titled "The Dark Heart". It is part of the story of her journey in Angola. Forsyth describes the scene: "The sky is almost dark blue, with an intensity that seems reserved only for the heart of Africa" (6); "shadows are long, as if the convoy is driving into the heart of darkness." (10) This blue formulates Africa's heart, but this heart is also always wild and dark. Before her journey, Forsyth describes the flat in which she stays in Luanda as "a real post-colonial third world mess". (7) "Luandans told me, and certainly the government put it out, that the source of Luanda's woes was the Portuguese, who had sabotaged everything … buildings dotted the post-apocalyptic Luanda skyline like alien skeletons." (8) Anything specific – and not just a monolithic, stereotyped 'Africa', which very empty and very beautiful – was a mess: post-apocalyptic, alien, dead. Though Forsyth mentions the destruction wrought by the fleeing Portuguese, there is in the sentence a sniff of the racist rhetoric that suggests these so-called 'third world' countries always blame their "woes" on the whites, the colonisers – proposing that if they just did some work, their world could be first, not third, with skylines that look as though they came after the

[408] Peter Wilkinson, "City Profile: Cape Town," *Cities* 17, no. 3 (2000): 197.

colony, not after the apocalypse. The inadvertent connection she is making between colonialism and the apocalypse, especially in Luanda's case, fairly crackles.

Chapter 4 is titled "A Farm in Africa".[409] To be precise, the farm to which Forsyth is referring in this chapter was in Zambia, and to get there, as she describes it, one had to face cattle and elephants while driving on impossibly bad roads, belligerent border post guards drunk and waving AK47s, and the goonish antics of ill-prepared ferry drivers, all the while appreciating the "sunset in the way that only an African sun can." (30)[410] For whom, I wondered, while all these African suns set spectacularly, is Forsyth writing? The book is not for most South Africans – or citizens of other African countries – who would certainly balk at this racist mythological Africa with its cartoonish characters, tropes and images. It seems, then, that the book is for a conservative white South African audience, and, perhaps, an American or European audience who might recognise this 'Africa' from old Tintin comics or their own dinner table histories, told and retold.[411] As such, Forsyth is reminiscing with that audience about this Africa, of which she claims intimate knowledge. Wild, blue, clear light at dawn, darkened by dusk into the unspeakable night, whole unto itself, an object, still and observable, empty but for the trees, seen, and taken. Forsyth is making that familiar 'Africa' appear through an understandable and comforting lexicon. Specific places, though, such as a farm in Zambia and the city Luanda, which are undeniably inhabited, disrupt this stylised geography. They must be described as

[409] "A farm in Africa" is part of the opening line of the book *Out of Africa* by Baroness Karen von Blixen-Finecke (1937), a Dutch farmer in Kenya. This was later made into a popular romance film in 1985 starring Robert Redford and Meryl Streep.
[410] This intimates Forsyth saw an AK47 in childhood. She also mentions witnessing a military salute using AK47s as part of the funeral for the Cradock Four (139). Twenty-nine pages after writing about the AK47 salute, she claims to have never seen or come across this weapon until she is trained to take it apart and put it together "in 30 seconds" (168) while supposedly in the ANC.
[411] There is further evidence that the book is also targeted at overseas readers when Forsyth explains that a bakkie is "a pick up" (68), a sangoma is "a traditional healer" (201) and gumboots are "wellingtons" (202).

peopled by the bloated, the clownish, the incompetent, which works to make them ridiculous, ignorable, even invisible, sweeping them off her Africa, so neatly unfurled and smoothed out on the table.

Part of this violence is a careful narrowing of vision, an art perfected by most South African white people who passively lived through apartheid. It is a remembering that drives slowly and carefully down a misty mountain road, focusing entirely on the width of that road and its immediate surrounds while leaving a thick, white blank over the rest of that world – its vast, terrible valleys. This slit seeing is slightly different to the look that decimates entire townships, makes ridiculous all black Africans. It simply does not see or will not make appear. It is personal, so it brooks less argument – 'Well, that is how *I* remember it.' It also functions only by consent; everyone must buy into the blanks for the story to remain coherent. Otherwise, when the hazy or the missing bits are probed, the story begins to slip and skid, threatening inconsistency and incoherence, oblivion off that winding road.

When Forsyth begins her work for the Department of Foreign Affairs, she describes the Union Buildings as: "colonial grandeur at its zenith" and the place of the "lying in state of Nelson Mandela's body." (49) Imagining colonial architecture as grand while making a reference to Mandela, South Africa's political miracle, especially for white people, demonstrates just such a narrowing. The blank is over the entire period of apartheid. We go from the zenith of the colony and its style to the rainbow nation. In this blanking out Forsyth again focuses on colonial Africa – but she does not mention that the colony was a site of systematic oppression and the forerunner for apartheid – rather, she looks to the surface, to how it appears, what was

its style. In this moment, it materialises as a beautiful building.[412] Then she jumps to the cultural cachet of Mandela, implying the building has some kind of political and social sanctity. Forsyth, however, "always felt an air of faint disappointment on entering the building … the inside [was] gloomy and threadbare." (49-50) For the next three pages, she goes on to describe in detail the metal filing cabinets, the various halls and tatty rooms, her colleagues – "Elmarie was a large, raucous brunette with a bright scarlet slash of lipstick" (50); "[Gawie] was tall and good-looking in a rakish, baby-faced way" (51) – and how she felt about each of them. It also includes some of her ambitions – "These people were so *ordinary*. And I had always felt that my life was destined to be *extraordinary*." (53) Readers are comforted. This is familiar; it's workplace gossip, and it's the heart song of an office worker in dreary surrounds hoping for brighter things. In 1981, though, when Forsyth entered this building, it was the seat of apartheid's power, and the place from which that power pulsed across the backs of black people the country over. Everyone in that building had a direct hand in the operation of that violence. Forsyth skips over the entire period of which she is writing, creating an inside without an outside: see the innards of that building out of time and place, its interiors a humdrum of workers, shuffling papers, endlessly talking about who is secretly drinking or having affairs, while its context, the political moment, and what is on those papers being signed and moved out, does not exist. What appears, then, is a thin imagining hiding behind a remembering, carefully redacted: in short, a fantasy. That Forsyth is a fantasist is not in doubt.

So here we have a different type of looking and seeing that streams outwards and inwards – she decides what is seen, what appears and what disappears, but she is also concerned with how she is seen. The look goes out and in, the eyes divide, just as

[412] Not surprisingly, Forsyth has a taste for this era's architecture, calling the buildings at Rhodes "impressively colonial." (78)

her self divides, the writing self, taking difficult corners carefully, leaving out, adding; and then the self in the book, the fantasy self, seeing, being seen, and constantly being disappointed by reality – as though it were an offence against this fantasy. An example of this comes through in her description of Daisy Farm. "Around a bend, a modern bungalow, almost new, squatted on the hillside like an interloper, its tiled roof and steel-framed windows cheating me out of the old farm house I had anticipated in such a rural area." (65) Things do not fit her vision, as though the world was made first by her, and when this reality comes to meet it, it is not quite up to the standards of her fiction. "The front door [was] one of those standard, modern wooden doors with bevelled squares in the woodwork and a brass knob. Definitely not to my taste." (*Ibid*) Again, she goes on to describe in detail the inside of the farm house, using descriptors such as "cheap", "impersonal", "kitsch", "ghastly", "odd". (65-66) She describes her fellow trainee in the same manner: "She was a strange creature: curly mid-blonde hair that verged on frizzy, wide blue eyes which seemed naïve … and a wide mouth which she insisted on plastering with lipstick. She had a strong accent … a Malmesbury *brei* particular to the Boland area [in the Cape]." (66) There is so much visual and auditory detail, most of which contains some kind of personal judgement. She seems to skate across the tops of things, sorting them into good or bad, kitsch or tasteful, no matter if these surfaces are people or things. This type of seeing is superficial, but not in the sense that an immature attempt at depth is superficial; rather it is an intense and trained focus on the surface, on the way things or people *look*, and how she looks in turn, both in the sense of seeing and judging and in the sense of being seen and judged.

This superficial seeing does not only relate to how Forsyth might be vain, judgmental or snobby. It also speaks to a seeing that seeks the surface so as to

carefully avoid what that surface signifies: Daisy Farm was the training ground for spies for a violent regime – and this is just the official version of what the farm was used for. Instead of taking cognisance of the consequences of the work that took place on that farm and in that house, Forsyth focuses on its decor. There is also evidence that the area was used for more than just instruction. Forsyth notices a room beneath the house "with a metal door and a serious bolt and padlock outside." (65) Later she catches "a glimpse of the door standing ajar, revealing what could not be mistaken for anything but a cell." (*Ibid*) She comments: "I pondered on what other functions the farm served." (*Ibid*) In 1999, Daisy Farm was the subject of investigation at the TRC. "Apparently the room I had seen below the house had been earmarked as the 'Slovo Suite' in preparation for the imprisonment there of … Joe Slovo," (*Ibid*) writes Forsyth. Though this consideration would suggest that she does go deeper into what Daisy Farm actually is, I would argue that it's just another instance of superficiality, a kind of neutral observing that leads to no conclusions. Forsyth notices a room she later learns is a cell, which makes her wonder what else the farm might be used for. But this "pondering" goes no further. She does not profess to any worry or concern about who might be housed in that cell; she is not ill at ease or uncomfortable. This is, of course, part of her obfuscating responsibility: I never did quite join the dots, she seems to intimate. This is confirmed when she jets out of the narrative to 1999, which she cites as the first moment she worked out that Daisy Farm was the *notorious* Daisy Farm and that the cell was for Slovo. In doing this, in hopping out of time, she concretises the notion that she did not know, and thus cannot be blamed. So this is one thing her superficial look does: it denies responsibility. It sees only detail and never the brutal world in which those details swirl and amass, become pixelated, become overfull. In pulling in too close to things, to objects and people, until all you can see is

a nose or an eyebrow, a cup or a door handle, you stop being able to imagine beyond, you cannot locate context. The book is also so obvious, so filled with lists, dull, rhythmic details trotted out, over and over in scene after scene, that you are like a stone skipping along the top of water, aware of only the splash of the surface, almost oblivious to the liquid world beneath.

What does Forsyth do with these details? She sees, judges, discards; or, she sees, judges, files. This is a kind of neatness – all things categorised, evacuated. The house is kitsch: it has been filed and can be discarded in terms of her schema of looking but not seeing. The house is kitsch; it's not a death house (though, of course, death houses can be kitsch). What happens in the house, what people do, matters less than what the house is like and how people look. When Forsyth is in the Department of Foreign Affairs, she describes her Afrikaans colleagues as at least being "world-wise with a veneer of culture and sophistication." (56) This is in comparison to the people who populated Pretoria whom Forsyth despises, calling them "little grey people in little grey suits." (*Ibid*) These people are judged and discarded; the others, her colleagues, are judged and filed, acceptable only because they have a *veneer* of something she judges good. Later, when she meets and hopes to marry a man in Luanda while under house arrest, she fantasises that they will have children who would be "perfect little light brown symbols of the new South Africa" (221), as though race were literally skin deep, as though, if everyone could only appear the same, we would *be* the same. This is all Forsyth is interested in: a veneer, the surface, the look of the thing. This is like her disguise: it is thin, this lefty disguise, this activism; it's all surface. To spy is to look the part so seamlessly, so perfectly, that you are not detected. It's the look of the thing, not the thing itself.

She is in her fantasy – creating rooms with or without minibars, being disappointed by houses that do not fit her vision – and her fantasy is herself. She is a figure of fancy, imaginary in many ways, imaginary to her friends who believe in her as a friend and activist. Then, one day, poof!, that imaginary friend disappears and is replaced with a huge juicy eye, lidless and bloodshot, the eye of the state itself. The friend becomes 90 days in detention, torture, beatings; this eye that spies is spied, is seen but never known. So her friends learn, too, that the surface is not seamless, that what they saw was not true, that how it looked was not how it was. Spies make you suspicious, make you a spy yourself, a snoop, digging around for missteps and mistakes, things that reveal, looking for things that hide, too. Forsyth, in writing this book, is a retired spy in search of her story, in search of the revelation of herself – some final story to reveal, the guise is ripped off, the audience gasps. But she is too thinly reflective, too shot through with looks and sees, with I's and spies, too full of excess truths. She pulls off guise after guise but never comes to ground, never exposes anything real. She is all surface, only surface; her disguises go all the way down.

Madam

The surface is connected to notions of moral judgments of the virtues of beauty and neatness, which pepper the book from beginning to end – especially, and rather peculiarly, in relation to hair. In the Jeep on the way to Quatro, Forsyth comments that the other passengers have "sullen faces, some of them dodgy – almost tsotsi-looking – with unkempt hair." (10) Here these people's supposed criminality – "tsotsi" is a Sesotho slang word for thug or robber – is apparent in their unclean or messy hair. At Wits University, Forsyth is put off studying art because the students are all "wearing the same lefty 'uniform' – long, unkempt hair, T-shirts, midi-skirts and leather sandals." (42) This "lefty" dress code is the reason she gives for not joining the so-

called “marginal” (43) student anti-apartheid movement at Wits. She only goes to the Student’s Union, a place to gather, which she names “the centre for lefty students”, “once or twice” because she “felt uncomfortable at the glances [she] received, by not being dressed appropriately.” (*Ibid*) Here people look at her and judge her on her appearance, which makes her leave. Is she uncomfortable because she has been seen, spotted as one of the enemy, the passive white apartheid-law-abiding citizenry, her clothes giving her away?[413]

This neatness relates to her job, too, in terms of ideas of dirty and clean work. “An even more sinister aspect of the police activities in the township [near Grahamstown] was the number of balaclava-clad *izimpimpi* or informers who were known to travel … with the police, pointing out activists and sometimes doing some of the dirty work for the police.” (134) Forsyth has stated before that she was not a *mere* informer when denying she was a honeypot, yet her activities and those of these despised *izimpimpi* are not very different materially. The informers point out activists who are then caught, jailed and often kept in detention for 90 days. Forsyth pointed out and gathered information and evidence on her friends, some of whom were then caught, jailed and detained for 90 days. Part of why Forsyth does not make the connection between her work and that of the *izimpimpi* is that these black men are dirty, perhaps, as she perceives them, literally dirty, but also in the sense of being lowly, morally slovenly informers, doing dirty work, wearing balaclavas.[414] Of course, she, too, is in disguise, though hers is not as rude as theirs. Beyond this, she does not do dirty work – she is not directly violent. There is no actual blood on her hands. Her work is clean. “The white woman has been made magical through her absolution from

[413] Neatness also features in Bridget Hilton-Barber’s book, the focus of my next chapter.
[414] This is not to overlook the more wretched but certain possibility: she cannot make the connection because she cannot compare herself with black people and especially black men, whom, as her perpetual racism attests, she figures as ridiculous, ignorable, ignoble.

material toil," sociologist Shireen Ally comments, suggesting that there is a "dependence of white cleanliness (which is freedom from dirty manual labour) on black dirtiness."[415] That Forsyth imagines herself clean and these men dirty is part of a wider psychic regime where "whiteness is by definition antithetical to manual labour – the dirty, the debased labour of hands, of black hands."[416] These hands, the dirty hands of the *izimpimpi,* allow Forsyth to characterise hers as clean. Except those hands are the bloody extensions of the work of the security branch, and so are also the dripping double of her hands, their dark echo. Ally calls this a doubling of self in which "labour is assigned to the abjected part herself – the black servant."[417] These sinister mere informers doing dirty work are in fact Forsyth's death-dealing doubles. When Forsyth first meets Williamson, who would be her mentor at the security branch, he explains that "information gathering [is] the security branch's main function." (59) This she holds close as she denies causing any real harm or violence, focusing only on what is right in front of her, her clean, white hands. Her work, according to her limited imagination of it, entailed a series of neatly written or typed reports – information gathering (which is not informing?) – handed to Oosie in dark cars and corners. Or she takes and returns keys.

To be unkempt or dirty is an affront to the sensibilities; it forms a hard link to something negative, whereas neatness is held up as a virtue. While working in the Department of Foreign Affairs, Forsyth writes that of her friend Rina's many admirable qualities, her best being that she was "impeccably organised". (50) "Everything was always in its place." (*Ibid*) Rina also "knew who she was, what she wanted and where she was going" (51), suggesting a neatness of purpose for which

[415] Shireen Ally, "'Ooh, eh eh ... Just One Small Cap is Enough!' Servants, Detergents, and their Prosthetic Significance," *African Studies* 72, no. 3 (2013): 344; 345.
[416] Ally, "Ooh, eh eh", 345.
[417] Ally, "Ooh, eh eh", 344.

Forsyth yearns. When describing her youth, Forsyth lists herself as good and loved because she was orderly and precise: "My exercise books … were immaculate, my handwriting neat … I was my mother's pride and joy." (21)[418] She describes adapting well to boarding school with its neatly folded clothes in lockers and beds that had to be made with "hospital corners". (34) This is also linked to her hair, which her father used to untangle "with a silver comb" while telling stories, and her mother "braided … into plaits which lay neatly on [her] shoulders". (20) "I was a good girl," (*Ibid*) Forsyth notes. And good girls, it seems, have tidy, braided hair.

In Quatro, all the black women's heads were shaved. Forsyth dreads hers being shaved, describing it as the "ultimate humiliation". (183) "We agreed," writes Forsyth, "…that as an *umlungu* – a white person – I would probably look worse bald than anyone else." (*Ibid*) Note here that it is how others perceive her, in this instance as 'ugly', and more importantly as an *ugly white woman*, someone without hair to braid or to lay neatly over shoulders, that is the highest form of shame. In the end, her head is not shaved, and the others' are not shaved again. No reason is given for this. When the hair of one of her fellow bald prisoners grows back, Forsyth describes it as "grey, with soft curls", noting that the woman now "resembled someone's granny … She seemed so unlike an enemy of the people." (*Ibid*) What does the "enemy of the people" look like? Again, she discerns people based on how they look. When women warders are introduced at the prison, Forsyth is flummoxed by how a woman who was "skinny [and] sour-faced … with a shock of hair" and whom she then "pegged … as cruel" was kind, while another, whose "hair was braided and … looked friendly and amiable", was, in fact, abusive. (193)

[418] I imagine her reports, like her homework books, were also scrupulously neat and subject to the same type of praise by her security branch handlers as by her doting mother or loving father.

In Forsyth's vision of social order, neat or unkempt, clean or dirty, are directly linked to the moral orders of good or bad. "Cleanliness," writes Kathleen Connellan, "[formulates the] connection between the imperial civilising narrative and the domestic (the clean, cleansing, whitening)", which is coded in both the moral and the racial.[419] I would extend cleanliness to include neatness or being groomed. This is connected to how the "potent entanglements of race and dirt [relate to] soap and civilisation."[420] The basic imperial civilising narrative thus went: to be clean is to be civil and therefore morally good; to be civil is to be white or to at least to enter into the possibility of whiteness. To be dirty, or have unclean, unbraided hair, for instance, is to blacken whiteness, to do bad to the good, the clean. This soapy salvation was linked to the domestic via white surfaces and walls – imagine a clean, white kitchen in a clean, white space.[421] Forsyth's surface paranoia, her obsessive superficial looking and its constant link to neatness, conflates white aesthetics – the clean, neat and white – with white race ideology – a clean, neat white. Each, Connellan argues, are "intent on spatial dominance."[422] But "white is only as strong as the thickness of its surface, which is very thin and in constant need of touching up."[423] As Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton argue, as mentioned earlier, white supremacy is all on the surface: "Its secret is that it has no depth."[424] This is like Forsyth's seventh eye: judging from appearances via codas of the civil-uncivil, good-bad, black-white is a form of banality that has no depth and runs only along the empty surfaces of whiteness and white

[419] Connellan, "White Skins", 248.
[420] Ally, "Oh, eh eh", 322.
[421] "White skin and white walls," Connellan argues, "share the same surface paranoia and are equally fragile." Connellan, "White Skins", 248.
[422] Connellan, "White Skins", 248.
[423] Kathleen Connellan, "White Spaces," *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association* 2, no. 1 (2006): 5.
[424] Martinot and Sexton, "The Avant-Garde of White Supremacy", 181.

supremacy. There is nothing more to Forsyth's superficiality; like paint on a wall, she is thin, fragile, all on top, and in constant need of touching up.

A seemingly unimportant sentence nestled in the heart of Forsyth's exploits in exile kept coming back to me. While in a safe house in Luanda, after her stint at Quatro, Forsyth writes: "I settled into a routine which consisted, oddly, of a lot of chores traditionally regarded as women's work." (212) What is odd about a woman doing traditionally women's work? Infuriating, maybe, but not odd. Perhaps, I thought, it was a matter of tone, the "oddly" a failed attempt at sarcasm, meaning something closer to the word 'obviously', announced with an embattled sigh? But that explanation was ill fitting; the sentence continued to abrade. I have argued that Forsyth is a contradiction, and that much of that contradiction is articulated or entangled by gender. If Forsyth were a man, it would indeed be odd for her to be doing traditionally women's work. The scarcity, almost omission of women in the book seems to indicate that she rejects them, even despises them – and in some aspects of spying, rejects the feminine in herself; she becomes an honorary man.

While training at Daisy Farm, Forsyth battles to identify various cars, a skill she needs for surveillance. "I cursed my female upbringing – my brothers would have done this so much more easily." (69) After mastering this and other skills, Forsyth feels "part of an elite group, a band of brothers." (*Ibid*) Despite her hopelessly feminine childhood, she manages to break into the band her brothers would have joined with apparent ease. While undercover, Forsyth is raided along with her other activist housemates. The contents of her room become the butt of jokes among the security branch men, which she has to "laugh … off with the on-the-shoulder machismo expected of a fellow officer." (110) To be a fellow officer means to be

male and to play into machismo, or else fear rejection or relegation back to being a mere woman. Workplace scholars Melissa Carr and Elizabeth Kelan define three genders in that space: "men, mothers and honorary men (women without apparent domestic/caring responsibilities)."[425] Without domestic responsibilities, Forsyth takes on the role of honorary man, which is also available to "*selected* [successful military] women [who] are no longer automatically defined as polluting, as a slut or bitch, but have been accorded the status of men."[426] As Forsyth so often intimates, being a police officer is like being a soldier. The other role given to military women, the slut, pollutant, bitch, reminds me of how Forsyth was labelled and then discarded as an erotomaniac. When Forsyth joins the band of brothers, when she participates in shoulder-slapping machismo, she takes on that third gender. But, although she seems to crave this acceptance, it does not sit with her easily. In fact, Forsyth writes about her teasing in the office: "I did not appreciate these comments" (110) but, of course, she has to pretend she did not mind – pretend to be macho to become a man for men. Becoming an honorary man could be just another disguise, another skin to slip into, but there is more to it, too. If you are a man, you are not a dull woman, a woman in a kitchen, a mother with "domestic or caring responsibilities", for whom Forsyth feels only contempt. For a talent show at Quatro, Forsyth writes a poem:

> O do not look for me in Sandton supermarkets and Houghton house; / Nor will you find me pushing a pram in a quiet suburb / … You will find me in the trenches with my AK and my comrades. (203)[427]

[425] Melissa Carr and Elizabeth Kelan, "Femininities at work: How women support other women in the workplace", 12. Proceedings of British Academy of Management (BAM2016) Conference: *Thriving in Turbulent Times*, 6-8 September 2016, Newcastle, UK.
[426] Anthony King, "The Female Combat Soldier," *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2015): 124.
[427] The poem goes on, bizarrely: "I am Ruth First, I am Marion Sparg / And so you may well find me / Pushing a pram in a quiet suburb."

Forsyth is not a mother, shopping, quiet; she is a soldier, a comrade (gender neutral) with a gun, almost a man. Forsyth gets into men's clothes when she puts on the "garb of a kitchen boy." (11) She was expecting combat fatigues. Here, she is an honorary man still, but a lowly one, a servant, demoted.

Does her dedication to Hani and Kasrils also attempt validation for her as an honorary man? Certainly part of what Hani and Kasrils do is proof Forsyth against accusations of racism. But the use of the term "kitchen boy", among other things, exposes her racism, and, despite her venom towards women, especially domestic women and mothers, and despite being an honorary man in some spaces, Forsyth is a racist *woman*. "The pervasive whiteness that exists in the skin of the 'madam' in South African homes, the sheen of the white … appliances, the brightness of the white walls, the bleach of the linen, all signify the sterility of a world primarily concerned with surfaces."[428] So much of her racism is tied to notions of neatness and cleanliness, to the home and domestic work, to black women who clean, and unclean black men. Even if Forsyth is dressed in a male servant's clothes, she is still this madam in the kitchen. Perhaps the answer to why it is odd that she should do traditionally women's work is not only that she is an honorary man, but also that cleaning is "traditionally regarded as [*black*] women's work." (212)

At that talent show Forsyth is "delighted to spot Ronnie Kasrils in the audience" (203). She goes on: "I swear I saw Comrade Ronnie looking particularly pleased and proud when I performed my poem." (*Ibid*) It is as though Kasrils were her father and Forsyth were a child again, performing with all her might. This father figuration relates to Forsyth's George Smileys: Williamson, Oosie and Kasrils – the

[428] Connellan, "White Skins", 250.

heroes for whom she constantly searches, a fantasy man imminently replaceable, faceless, just the mask, just the Smiley face. Forsyth searches for heroes with whom she can be a swooning woman. But what of her search for a father?

Forsyth calls her stepfather "a gentle giant, a prince of a man" (23), and goes on to describe the language he and Forsyth's mother used at home: "[Black people were] Afs, munts, niggers, kaffirs, and houts." (28) When working with his farm labourers, Forsyth stepfather would fill his sentences with "the most uncharacteristic swearing." (29)[429] A few pages later, Forsyth relates a bizarre story: a farm worker brings the family a baby monkey, which they then cage and tame. The monkey, Jacko, grows up and is, she says, teased by the workers until he "became … vicious" (33). Her father then sets Jacko free. "I swear [my stepfather] had a tear in his eye when he told the story of how he took Jacko to the park, holding his hand as he was wont to do when they went for walks on the farm," (*Ibid*) writes Forsyth. Pets make these men cry, daughters, too, perhaps, when thinking back on hair made neat with silver combs.

Later, the Zambian government forces Forsyth's stepfather to sell his farm at "a fraction of its value" (38). Notice here the whiff of bitterness. He tries his luck in South Africa but ends up being a farm adviser to the Lebowa government. Then we jump to 1997 at the death of Forsyth's stepfather. "We found a bible next to his bed: he would read it every day … He had lived humbly, had always done right by other people. He had been loving and forgiving, had taught his children the right values." (39) Forsyth cannot see the disconnect between her decision to work for an oppressive regime and this child who was taught right values. Immediately after this, Forsyth relates how she had a party and was stripped of her prefect badge at school:

[429] She goes on to say, "Curiously the workers didn't bat an eyelid, seeming to treat this as normal behaviour." (29) Keeping in mind this is an adult writing about her childhood, this sentence gauged for me the level of Forsyth's ignorance and lack of capacity for empathy, understanding and reflection.

"Being demoted was the ultimate disgrace," (*Ibid*) she opines. The real crisis, the decisive disgrace, then, is not to have a stepfather who, despite being a rabid racist and working for a Bantustan, is still judged as good and bible abiding. Rather, it is being demoted. The implication seems to be that being a racist is fine, but losing your position in society is unforgivable.

Forsyth's stepfather has one last role to play. Before getting the job at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Forsyth spends some time in Cape Town motorcycling and eating curry before becoming unhappy. 'Why don't you apply for a job in the diplomatic service?' her stepfather suggests. And so she goes to Pretoria to work for the Department of Foreign Affairs before becoming a security branch agent. It is Forsyth's stepfather, then, who is the catalyst for her betrayal, her leached information dripping into the ears of the security branch. It is this farmer prince, dead with his bible, screaming at his workers in *fanagalo*, who lurks in Forsyth's shadows.[430]

The kitchen boy, whose clothes Forsyth dons in prison, is there, too, that standstill man. House boy in pants that end at the knee and tie at the waist, a rough loose top, sleeves just below the elbow, neither cool nor warm, bare feet on floor, or, shoes, no socks. Is this what a kitchen boy wears? A man who cleans (but not a clean man) named "Matches, Saucepan, Sixpence" – named Aga, Firestick, Knife? – because he is a commodity.[431] "[It was an] escape route from labor in the mine compounds … 'Kitchen boys', relatively untrained and with only the most rudimentary of skills, met, with a great deal of dissatisfaction and grumbling, the

[430] Fanagalo is a pidgin language made up of isiZulu, English and Afrikaans, first used on the mines.
[431] Charles van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914. Volume II: New Ninevah* (Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1982), 39 in Connellan, "White Skin", 251.

needs of their White male employers."[432] "The kitchen-boy was a fine specimen of Zulu manhood, six feet two or three in height, and muscular and broad-shouldered in proportion … The [farm] manager's wife, a slightly built, short woman … [returned] with a huge sjambok, [and] laid about the cheeky savage right and left in heroic style."[433]

Forsyth writes on entering her prison cell in Quatro: "The first thing I saw as I entered the room … was four shocked faces staring up at me. I knew they were shocked because the whites of their eyes were visible; perhaps it had something to do with the gloominess of the room." (174) Forsyth describes a room where four black people are invisible – presumably because the room is dark – but for their bulging eyes. Four lines later – she first wonders about a naked light bulb's placement on the ceiling – she writes: "The shocked faces belonged to women who were sitting on two sides of the cell." (*Ibid*) For those four lines, we are left standing in a prison cell with four disembodied faces, or perhaps only eyes, floating like pale fish in the dark, before they are given gendered bodies and place. This act of discombobulation is in itself violent, but that violence mushrooms with the racist stereotyping – see here the bulging eyes, and presumably, if we stretch this common canvas a little, the too-wide mouth bristling with white teeth, also, I think, visible, like the eyes, in the dark.[434] These are recognisable images, ways to code black people in representation. Writing about Hollywood film, James Snead and Colin MacCabe suggest that certain roles

---

[432] Charles van Onselen, Frederick Johnstone and Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, "The World the Mineowners Made: Social Themes in the Economic Transformation of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914 [with comments and discussion]. The Incorporation of Southern Africa into the World-Economy, 1800-1940," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 3, no. 2 (1979): 293–294.

[433] AW Baker, 'Natalian' in *A South African Boy: Schoolboy Life in Natal* (London, 1897), 53 in Simon Dagut, "'Strangely hard natures were bred in the South Africa of that day': Rural Settler Childhood, 1850s-1880s," *African Studies* 58, no. 1 (1999): 47–48.

[434] Writing about film, Toni Pressley-Sanon states: "The bulging eyes along with big lips, feet and ears, were commonly associated with the 'coon' character." Toni Pressley-Sanon, "Addressing the 'Negro Problem': Rethinking the Coon and the Mammy in *King of the Zombies* and *Revenge of the Zombies*," *Black Camera* 8, no. 1 (2016): 53, endnote 38.

were meted out to black actors such as chauffeurs or domestics, and that these were marked by "black/white codings".[435] They state that articles of clothing "and even white teeth and eyes are all signifiers of a certain coding of race … and that audiences soon come to recognise."[436] The reader – the white reader certainly – is being offered a punched out shape; in this instance, it will be filled with these four black women. But it really could be anyone black. In fact, it *is* anyone black – if you are an outline, a recognisable code, a shape, a set of floating eyes, you are interchangeable. Before these women exist in this book, they are disappeared thoroughly.

Forsyth and her cellmates must clean themselves, their own clothes, their shared toilet tin and the cell each day. They must also clean the commanders' clothes on certain days. But Forsyth "lack[s] laundry skills" (185), though she proudly notes that she cleaned her underwear in boarding school and occasionally washed her clothes in the bath while at university. The other women in her cell teach her how to clean clothes properly and then how to wring them out to dry – "one skill I did master," (186) she writes. On two occasions, she refers to her daily chores – excluding the men's washing – as mundane tasks, but towards the end of the chapter, she writes:

> There was something strangely satisfying about completing a menial physical task well … and yet all of these seemingly domestic things only served to add to my feeling of being an outsider. Although the women were

[435] James Snead and Colin MacCabe, *White Screens, Black Images: Hollywood from the Dark Side* (New York: Psychology Press, 1994), 6.
[436] Snead and MacCabe, *White Screens*, 6.

> lovely … [they shared with each other] details of their lives that they did not share with me … I was a white woman. (186)[437]

Calling basic chores – cleaning the floor of your living space (in her case, a cell), cleaning your clothes – "menial", and saying that domestic things make her an outsider *because she is white*, cracks open again that fault line in the world that runs backwards 300 years and forwards until today, and reads: white women do not do menial domestic tasks. Black women do. This simple equation engulfs houses and townhouses, flats and semis and duplexes in every sunny suburb in every city and town in South Africa. These "domestic things", so menial, so mundane, turn out to be nothing less than tectonic – it articulates most starkly and intimately (it happens at home) both today's continuation of apartheid, with its unfair labour practices and leering supremacy, and your personal (dirty) hand in that continuation. The white employer sips coffee in the kitchen while the black woman irons. The sipping woman suffers an unfelt but vital internal failure that allows her never to have to imagine life for those who work for her.

When Forsyth makes her escape to the British embassy, she writes: "I felt as if I had stepped into a parallel universe, from dusty chaotic heat into cool tranquillity. The atmosphere was calm, devoid of raised voices … everything happened at set times." (235) "Rosemary and I would have morning tea here, brought up to us on a tray, with buttered teacake, baked by the cook, and biscuits. It was very civilised." (236)[438] Who brought the morning tea? In this world, things arrive, are

---

[437] In one instance, Forsyth notes: "the ritual of our mundane daily tasks went some way in helping us deal with the indefinite detention." (185) When she is given this sentence, she calls it "torture". (177) But she showed no pity nor called it torture when she helped most of her friends at Rhodes get sentences of indefinite length under the notorious section 29. This law allowed for detention without trial for up to 90 days. When this time was up, the detainee would be allowed to take one step out of the facility and then would be arrested and detained again for another 90 days. This could go on for months or even years.

[438] Note here, as argued before, being served is connected to the civil.

brought, are taken away, in the passive voice. The sentence structure itself is an act of erasure of the person behind the action.[439] But it is also an act, again, of discombobulation – a tray is "brought up": if this were a movie scene, the shot would be tight on a pair of white-gloved hands beneath a tray of delicate food (made by a mostly theoretical cook who works out of sight). The act of serving would be shown, but not the actor server; just his or her hands would be visible, like clean tools, like floating eyes.[440] This taking of tea is categorised as "very civilised". In fact, Forsyth mentions all sorts of markers of the civilised – all working in comparison, even when the comparison is not directly made, with Luanda: outside it is frenzied, unclean, without structure, especially in terms of so-called African time – in short, uncivilised, compared to the interior of this building.[441] Like with the parliamentary apartments in the Cape Flats and the Union Buildings, the inside and the out are, as Forsyth inadvertently writes, parallel places. Here, the outside is exploded into scenes of hot, squalid Africa, ineffectual, while the inside has "*air conditioning*" (235). Importantly, markers of the civilised are contingent on the servers, cleaners, cooks, and the hands behind the "freshly laundered white linen" (*Ibid*) in which Forsyth luxuriates. By moving into, through, about and out the building, these people bridge the inside and the outside, linking it to its context. But at heart, they are tasked with decontextualising the space as much as possible – removing the dust and thus the chaos of the outside, creating a barrier, even while their very bodies, a foot out and a

[439] Jacklyn Cock notes: "The almost one million black women employed as domestic workers in South Africa … experience a special form of this 'servitude' and continue to be largely invisible." Jacklyn Cock, "Challenging the Invisibility of Domestic Workers," *South African Review of Sociology* 42, no. 2 (2011): 132–133. See also Cock's classic work on the subject, *Maids & Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press: 1980).

[440] Following her assertion that the dirty black hands that labour are the uncanny double of clean white hands that don't, Ally suggests that the domestic worker is a "prosthetic supplement", an extension that is represented as an "estranged limb". Ally, "Oh, eh eh", 345; 346.

[441] Forsyth mentions this earlier. Tio Mario, who helps her escape to the British embassy, says he will pick her up "tomorrow". When he does not come, Forsyth opines that tomorrow "had meant 'some time soon', a much more African concept of time … [In my] anxiety [I had taken it] literally, in a Eurocentric mindset." (230)

foot in, always already make the barrier permeable.[442] This contradiction makes them incredibly dangerous. Given a voice, a body, a mind, given solidity, they could let the (cold) air out of the fantasy on the inside.

So much of South African domestic life is cracked through with these tectonic women, cleaning, cooking, caring. There but not there; seen but always also unseen; a series of discombobulated limbs; a solid someone, letting all your secrets out. A solid someone who makes "memories, objects, and rooms of the household … the site of ambiguous and unsettling intimacies."[443] They give away, a woman whose weekly entry into and exit from your house unmasks you, makes clear your hypocrisy, your severalness. The domestic self, the woman at home, the white woman at home, and the ethical self: mutually exclusive. Being domestic in South Africa is being violent; it is to enter the violent heart of inequality. It is the shame-facing side of your home that disputes and refutes, without words, with only the shuffling of brooms, all the words possible, all possible words that formulate fairness, justice, equality.

The spy I love not

The kitchen brings us back to the larger significance of the use of contradiction in *Agent 407*. How is the use of superimposed mutually exclusive stories relevant beyond this book? The nature of the narrative strategy Forsyth uses in *Agent 407* – its incongruous stories and unreliability – is an obtuse, convex version of the strategies we employ, acutely, in our everyday lives. That is to say that everyone uses similarly contradictory narrative strategies in their lives to get through the day; they allow us to

[442] Connellan puts it succinctly: "Hygiene and neatness are middle class domestic preoccupations [that] manifest the struggle to keep the interior from the exterior and the perceived chaos of nature." Connellan, "White Skins", 5.
[443] Gabeba Baderoon, "The Ghost in the House: Women, Race, and Domesticity in South Africa," *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 1, no. 2 (2014): 179.

imagine ourselves good, for example, while walking sternly past a beggar.[444] But in South Africa, these strategies are tied to a history of black oppression and white privilege. This means that many of the contradictory stories we tell ourselves are linked to race: almost all beggars in this country are black. These stories include what we choose *not* to say and what we say instead – that is, what we include and what remains outside our personal narratives for us to imagine ourselves as good, to exculpate, explain or excuse.

Forsyth's narrative strategies have particular resonance for me as a white woman because of the disturbing nexus of the domestic space in South Africa. Suburban homes all across the country are contemporary markers of power and apartheid. The capacity to buy a house is still firmly linked to those who benefitted from apartheid – white people still hold much of South Africa's wealth. The home is the site of the so-called 'natural woman', the place where women are unthreatening and passive. The white woman in the home, however, takes on dynamics of power when another woman enters: the black domestic worker. Something old and rotten plays out as black women clean – often for less than a living wage – white houses they will never afford to own, and are thus made doubly passive. What contradictory, shifting, unreliable stories must we tell about ourselves as self-identified liberal, even radical, feminist white women in South Africa while in these lopsided and sometimes monstrous relationships?[445]

---

[444] This strategy has been termed cognitive dissonance: the capacity to hold opposing ideas, or narratives, in the mind at once. See: Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957). There is a poor person at almost every traffic light in Johannesburg. The beggar's pain and the discomfort of the commuter are daily, lived experiences. For a moral reading of this discomfort and of begging in South Africa, see Lucy Allais, "What Properly Belongs to Me: Kant on Giving to Beggars," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 11, no. 4 (2014): 754–771.

[445] The nature of South Africa's superstructures of inequality mean that refusing – for any reason, including moral ones – a woman who comes to your door asking for domestic work is refusing her and her family food. Employing these black women to clean houses and flats is a luxury most middle- and upper-class people can afford.

Taking this book seriously involved suspending moral outrage. Assuming that the perpetrator's sweaty narrative appeals have no relationship to your life is a form of moral delinquency that sees books inside dustbins. It is far more dangerous to slice open the beast and see yourself, perhaps, writ small, just a glimmer, in those innards. But, according to *Shoah* filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, suspending this outrage is also potentially an immoral act of the highest order. In his book on Hitler, journalist Ron Rosenbaum described the response Lanzmann gave to his question about researchers using Hitler's baby pictures as an explanatory tool when representing the dictator. Lanzmann insisted that no finite number of explanatory facts – psychological traumas, patterns of bad parenting, political deformations, personal dysfunctions – can add up to the magnitude of the evil Hitler came to embody and enact. The difference between baby Hitler and what he later did is, Lanzmann announces, "not just a gap … it is an *abyss*."[446] In taking seriously the perpetrator story, do I risk what Lanzmann suggests, entering this abyss, and thus rendering what Primo Levi calls "a precious service … to the negators of truth"?[447] Would I be doing worse than blurring the line between perpetrator and victim in reality by feeling something like empathy, not for the real victims who suffered under apartheid, but for the perpetrators who worked for it and benefitted from it? But empathy, I suspect, especially for perpetrators, is more complicated than we think.

Psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen in *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty,* gives, among others, this explanation of empathy: "Empathy is our ability to identify what someone else is thinking or feeling and to respond to their

[446] Cited in Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, xviii.
[447] Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 32–33.

thoughts and feelings with an appropriate emotion."[448] The first part of this description, the ability to identify, we can equate to cognitive empathy, which allows us to understand another perspective. This is linked to theory of mind; what Baron-Cohen calls "the recognition element of empathy".[449] The second half relates to what is brought forth through this understanding and recognition: appropriate feeling, an emotional reaction that is related to the moral implications of intimate understanding – *I suffer with,* says the empathiser, and thus feel. Most of the time, this appropriate feeling is one of sympathy, even love. Thus, empathy is seen as an automatic good. But, like empathy critic Paul Bloom, I am sceptical.[450] Is empathy always the same, no matter the person with whom we empathise? Or does empathy's nature change – or must it change – when we engage in it with perpetrators? I understand Forsyth: I have taken note of her childhood as she explains it in her book; I have taken seriously her explanations of her actions later in life. I have thus indulged in the cognitive side of empathy for her. But what of the feeling side? I must have, according to Baron-Cohen, an "appropriate" feeling in relation to my understanding and recognition. In this instance, the only appropriate feeling I can have is negative, something like hate. I understand her actions and have recognised elements of her strategy in myself. I have taken her and her life seriously. But I love her not. We imagine the person with whom we are called to empathise will be, deep inside, good, and that recognising that good will then be a salve for dehumanisation. But Forsyth is a perpetrator who refuses

[448] Simon Baron-Cohen, *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 16. 'Empathy' is a translation of the German term '*Einfühlung*' ('feeling into'), which was theorised by Theodore Lipps in 1903 (See: Gustav Jahoda, "Theodor Lipps and the Shift from 'Sympathy' to 'Empathy'," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 41, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 151–163). This later influenced Sigmund Freud's thinking as a way to understand others by putting ourselves in their place. See: George W Pigman, "Freud and the History of Empathy," *International Journal of Psychology* 76, no. 2 (April 1995): 237–256.
[455] Baron-Cohen, *The Science of Evil*, 16.
[450] My suspicions about empathy diverge from Bloom's, who advocates for a focus on the cognitive side of empathy. To feel with, thus, is something he is against. See: Paul Bloom, *Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion* (London: The Bodley Head, 2016).

to take responsibility for her actions, who lies, who makes light of death, who, through her terrible acts – both in reality and in her book – appropriately elicits hate.[451] Why does empathy always have to evoke only good feelings? What if it evoked bad ones? And could this 'hatred' be useful in calling up notions of justice? When you understand, say, someone's racism, track where it comes from in their past, even recognise it in yourself, why would you feel anything but disdain for them for being racist, as is appropriate? Surely feeling *only* love for a perpetrator as human would be childish, a fantasist's moral relativism that makes limp any possibility for justice?

If empathy is an act of understanding and feeling, I showed empathy to the perpetrator Forsyth by undertaking a study of her work, and felt hatred for her. But, to do this work, I had to force myself to suspend a moral outrage that would preclude feeling *anything* for her, because she would be tipped off the edge of the moral spectrum.[452] As readers, we potentially find ourselves in Forsyth's narrative strategies, in her contradictions, in her unreliability – we understand her – *and* we feel what these are: muddy, morally relative and hateful.

---

[451] Hate is a slippery concept. For a reading of its complexity, see: Thomas Brudholm, "Hatred as an Attitude," *Philosophical Papers* 39, no. 3 (2010): 289–313. Brudholm also connects hate to resentment in his book, *Resentment's Virtue: Jean Améry and the Refusal to Forgive* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008). For hate and forgiveness, see: Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[452] This risks her becoming something like evil. Baron-Cohen's book is based on advances in neuron imaging, which can help scientists 'see' how the brain responds empathetically "to urge people not to be satisfied with the concept of 'evil' as an explanatory tool" and to move the debate out of "the domain of religion and into the social and biological sciences." Baron-Cohen, *The Science of Evil*, 148. See also: Jean Decety and William Ickes, *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2011).

The Unhomed and Other Women

Bridget Hilton-Barber's *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir*

Bridget Hilton-Barber is not home. Seen through the bright skein of material she has pegged to a kirsch rail at her window, her face is stained and bruised in wild purples and pinks and sea greens. Her shape is there, too, her wild curls, her odd clothing. Though she lives in that house, she is not home. No longer an anti-apartheid activist, a lover, a sister of a sisterhood, a woman who felt, who fought, who was loved, and then betrayed, she now billows in and out of her life. She now, bright with flashbacks, temporally dilates, travels and arrives at home always in the past, in the 1980s of her activism, her future thrumming with violence, with truths too terrible to tell but told nonetheless. Afterwards, when it is all over, the struggle and the TRC, she is undone in time. She is set adrift. She, a woman unruly, ungoverned, is unmade by a past for which she yearns but never finds, and outside of which she is housed but never home.

In Hilton-Barber's *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir* (2016) there is a photograph: a group of young black and white women dressed mostly in khaki and red. They are all smiling or laughing, sitting cross-legged on the ground. Sporting a black beret, Forsyth sits in the front centre, flanked by two women, one of whose knees she holds. She leans back on to another woman. A bushy-haired blonde, Bridget Hilton-Barber crouches to the left of Forsyth, who is in the centre with two others. The picture is startling: teeth flash in delight, all faces open as palms.

This photograph is also in Forsyth's *Agent 407*. Both texts are about apartheid – activism against it, and spying for it, both of which are threaded with fear. But the image holds none of that fear, which makes it somewhat unnerving. In it, there is a trace of the excitement of participating in the politics against apartheid's repressive

regime. This is something with which Hilton-Barber's book bubbles: the joy of resistance, even amid violence. Or, perhaps, that thrill was only the preserve of the white comrades, whose skin protected their bodies from the worst of it.

But the manner in which the images are captioned breaks up the coherence of the moment. Forsyth's caption reads: "Getting ready at 77 Rochester Road for a UDF [United Democratic Front] rally in Cape Town, 1983, with Bridget Hilton-Barber (second from left), June Esau (fourth from left) and others." Hilton-Barber's reads: "Olivia (centre) decided we should have a revolutionary dress-up party, Observatory, Cape Town, end 1982." It is telling that Forsyth would caption the image as though it were a real moment before an actual rally, whereas Hilton-Barber suggests it was fake, merely a dress-up party, in which the women were playing at being firebrands. The images are also ascribed different dates. In another picture, which looks as if it was taken on the same day, Forsyth, still in her beret, smiles beneath a spray-painted slogan, 'Go well, throw shell', which Hilton-Barber describes as "a revolutionary play on a current ad campaign, referring to the throwing of Molotov cocktails."[453] The slogan gets Forsyth into trouble with NUSAS, which berates her for calling unnecessary attention to the house where the activists were staying. "But," writes Hilton-Barber, "it was a *jol* doing it, we all secretly agree." (36) Hilton-Barber's caption directly assigns the idea for the party as Forsyth's. *She* wanted to play; Hilton-Barber and her crew were just playing along. Is Hilton-Barber stung now by Forsyth's grin in the picture, knowing she was already dressed up as an activist before the party even began?

[453] Bridget Hilton-Barber, *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir* (Johannesburg: Zebra Press, 2016), 36. From here shortened to *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy*. All references to this book will be indicated in-text.

The image has power as it slides across the two books, each holding a vestige of the counterfeit, of an act, of the putting on of disguises. When you hold them together, the replicated images form a moment of superimposition. It is an overlap that speaks to the fantastical: part Forsyth's fantasy world, where she is seamlessly in disguise; and part an actual fantasy, where women appear in a clothing that theatricalises their activism. But, within this haze of play and appearance, there is something clear about the image. In it, the women are bunched together tightly. Forsyth touches a knee and is touched, almost cradled, by Esau. Each woman is somehow linked to the next. They are, in this moment, deeply intimate, a solid, strong group of women, laughing in the face of the camera. So, finally, it is a guide that makes real, if nothing else, the physicality of the women involved in Forsyth's ruse and in Hilton-Barber's activism. There is a joyful, youthful fleshiness about the photo, a lightness that suggests fragility, too: the moment an instant, and in an instant gone.

Then there is the betrayal. Hilton-Barber and other activists were sent to detention based on information Forsyth obtained. They were at first given indefinite sentences, meaning they could be held for months or years.[454] In the end, Hilton-Barber served just more than 90 days; some of this time was spent in solitary, some with her activist friends and some among women criminals. Those 90 days haunt Hilton-Barber, as does Forsyth's betrayal, but these do not form the heart of the book. Rather *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy* is about the tumult of student activism and that past's continued effect on the present. The book is set in 1980s Eastern Cape, one of the most violent places and times during apartheid. The TRC recounts some of the gross human rights violations in that region from the 1960s: "violations committed during the Pondoland Revolt of the 1960s; armed attacks on civilians carried out by

[454] Recall that Forsyth was given an indefinite sentence at Quatro, something she called torture.

Poqo, the armed wing of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the accompanying torture and executions of Poqo members; deaths in detention including that of black consciousness movement activist, Steve Biko; and widespread torture in detention."[455] I will focus on Biko's death later in this chapter. More violence followed, including: "Resistance to homeland rule and the related violent conflicts between traditional chiefs on the one hand and supporters of the ANC and the United Democratic Front (UDF) on the other; clashes between ANC-aligned groups and the Ciskei government and its allies during the 1990s; shootings by security forces at marches, funerals and protests; and assassinations such as the 1985 killing of the Cradock Four."[456] These murders had a huge effect on Hilton-Barber, the rest of the activists, the community and eventually the entire country. Inter-organisational violence such as that between the UDF and the Azanian People's Organisation in the mid-1980s, and between the newly unbanned PAC and ANC during the 1990s, caused much bloodshed, too. Indeed, "the use by UDF supporters of the 'necklacing' method of killing opponents such as community councillors, police and those perceived to be collaborating with the government; violations committed during clashes between different security forces and homeland rulers, for example during coup attempts; and attacks on security forces and 'soft targets' by the Azanian People's Liberation Army in the 1990s," made living in the Eastern Cape a daily hell.[457] In fact, the region "has generally been regarded as the heartland of the ANC … [which is why] battles for control over this [area] often made it a key area of conflict in the country."[458]

It is in relation to these moments of terror and brutality that Hilton-Barber's book emerges. The narrative of her journey to remember her past, which takes her on

[455] *TRC* vol 3, chap 2, sec 1, para 5, p 35.
[456] *TRC* vol 3, chap 2, sec 1, para 5, p 35.
[457] *TRC* vol 3, chap 2, sec 1, para 5, p 36.
[458] *TRC* vol 3, chap 2, sec 1, para 4, p 35.

a road trip across the Eastern Cape, frames *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy*. The book is broken into three parts. The prologue opens on the N10 to Cradock. This is the start of the book, but it is a scene towards the end of Hilton-Barber's drive. "Burning Woman", the first section, recounts in detail Hilton-Barber's university days at Rhodes in the early 1980s, where she and other young people, including Forsyth, are student anti-apartheid activists. Hilton-Barber and her fellow women activists live together and come to be known as 'the sisterhood'. During this time, the security branch firebombs fellow activist Chris Mbekela's house. His girlfriend, Miseka Ntonyena, is badly burned – she is the burning woman in the first section's title. Mbekela calls Forsyth, thinking she is a genuine activist, for help. Forsyth rushes Ntonyena to hospital in her car, but Ntonyena dies of her burns at the hospital. The story becomes tenser as the apartheid regime declares states of emergency and brutally quells protests throughout the Eastern Cape. Hilton-Barber is eventually detained and then sent to prison, along with some of her fellow activists. The second section, "Transitions", continues from the point of Hilton-Barber's release, after which she finds out Forsyth was a spy for the apartheid government. This section moves more quickly through her university career in Grahamstown, a long trip overseas – throughout which she is followed by her "black dogs" (147), her anxiety and depression – and past the TRC. Events speed up even more from here. In a single sentence, for instance, Hilton-Barber "get[s] married and divorced." (165) The section ends on her briefly making contact with Forsyth, but after a tragedy in Forsyth's family, "grief closes the door to any further communication." (169) "The Road of Broken Memory", the third section, begins with a car crash in 2015, presumably a significant jump in time from Hilton-Barber's last contact with Forsyth. The sight and smell of the crash causes her to experience a flashback to the moment she saw the

remnants of Ntonyena's burnt body in Forsyth's car. Soon after this, Forsyth calls. She has also had a flashback. The second chapter of "The Road of Broken Memory", called "Liberating the Ghosts", begins: "Like many journeys, mine begins with the opening of a trunk." (181) This trunk, which contains pictures, letters and the like from her past, precipitates Hilton-Barber's idea to drive "some of [the Eastern Cape's] roads again, to reframe its landscape, to open curtains, open cupboards, liberate some ghosts." (182) Hilton-Barber starts her road trip with a flight to East London, and drives to Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, ending in Cradock. The afterword details how Forsyth and Hilton-Barber speak on a radio programme about Forsyth's book *Agent 407*, and ends with Hilton-Barber not forgiving Forsyth.

Hilton-Barber's book is about women and their homes, about where and when a woman is at home, and how these homes shape women – what is possible in them and what is impossible. Black people experienced a much more powerful, often physical denial of home than white people during apartheid. Some went into exile, remaining very literally outside the possibility of going home. Others were forcibly removed from their dwellings, which were then destroyed, or, by being constantly harassed and brutalised, were made to feel like transients or intruders. Njabulo Ndebele puts it well when he writes about not being able to find his family home when he arrives back from exile in 1991, noting that there are "relatively few South Africans who can still point to a home that they associate with rootedness", which creates a "sense of home as homelessness."[459] With this in mind, I will argue that there are three women in this book, each of whom emerges or disappears in the home. The first is the bad good woman, symbolised by Forsyth, whom Hilton-Barber is at pains to describe as neat, clean and homey. These signify passive women in

[459] Njabulo Ndebele, "A home for intimacy," *Mail & Guardian*, April 26, 1996, https://mg.co.za/article/1996-04-26-a-home-for-intimacy.

comfortable apartheid homes, articulating the will of the state by playing out so-called women's roles. They studiously ignore their context – they dress, work, decoupage, and have intimate gatherings while the world burns. The *other woman*, the domestic worker, who is the third of the three women in the home, performs her duties in the background of these homes. Thus this type of domestic space formulates a universe in miniature of the power and repression of apartheid. The domestic worker's presence as a woman on the cusp of visibility, in sight only at the very end of the vanishing point, signals the complicity of passive white women during apartheid. But domestic workers equally form and participate in their own flows of connection and solidity. Hilton-Barber, the second woman, is a good bad woman, who works hard to pronounce herself the opposite of these madams, offering the reader an ungovernable woman, badly dressed and the friend of freaks, frankly odd, certainly messy, unclean even. But this rejection does not mean she wholly rejects the domestic. Rather, Hilton-Barber and her fellow woman activists are part of a close-knit group of radical politically powerful woman, who can exist in the home, can knit, serve and take tea, make food and clean – be domestic without being domesticated or passive in these spaces. This is the home Hilton-Barber attends and is part of in her youth, when and where she is needed, loved, at home.

The first section is written in the present and future tense. I will argue that this future-tense voice is the older writer Hilton-Barber providing her younger self with the fullness of the scene, acting as a witness whose testimony illuminates the story. After the narrative passes the TRC, though, the future disappears, and time loses coherence as Hilton-Barber is set adrift, without a home, outside time. Thus I will also argue that Hilton-Barber's journey in the third part of the book is not a journey to reconcile with her past, but a way for her to *come home* to places where she can be

again that radical woman surrounded by her sisters. Hilton-Barber uses time signatures as a device to negotiate a place (and time) for herself in which she can both hold on to her identity as white woman and emerge as a struggle activist.

The difficulties of the political space – the strangeness of being white and on the left, being an activist for the people but not of the people, being the colour of the enemy – comprises a major part of the struggle in the book. Whiteness chaffs, confuses and frustrates her throughout as she negotiates her own pain and trauma while contextualising black people's pain as infinitely worse. Through a series of self-defining announcements, Hilton-Barber first delineates herself through who she is not via dissociation and distance. After this system collapses, she begins to call herself into being through the phrase 'I am', moving through iterations that allow her to emerge white without the stain of complicity. But, despite the personal demarcation, Hilton-Barber's book inadvertently plays out modes of whiteness, the most potent of which is the potential erasure of black people, especially through the figure of the other women in the home, the domestic worker.

I, too, feel keenly home's perpetration. My mother told me she once saw, out of the window of her house in the 1980s, smoke rising in the distance from the township Vosloorus. The townships are burning, they said, in posters, newspapers. What did my mother think? The story moves and melds for me, becomes unhinged. Perhaps she thought, like many other women in those Boksburg suburbs: Good, let them burn each other and not us. Years later, maybe, while washing dishes and staring idly out the window, my mother and those other women would remember the pall smudging the view, and remember the thought they'd had. They could never undo that thought, could never unknit it to their pasts. It is stitched in, a line the colour of smoke along

the length of their lives. It was the thread that sutured their backs to the growling horizon, so that they faced only carpeted rooms and rooms. I see them all, and I see myself, soapy hands dripping, suspended and still above sinks, opening mouths to form a howl, there in those ticking afternoon kitchens. But the howl never comes.

The bad good woman

A woman walks into the bedroom of another woman who is writing, surrounded by papers, on the floor. The room is "airy and spacious" with "Indian clothes and pictures … a small Victorian fireplace … [and] an enclosed porch," which contains a desk sporting a "'50s appliance-green typewriter." (28) The resident of this room notices the visitor's outfit: "She is wearing a pale-blue blouse and a mid-calf skirt – what we derisively call a Foschini skirt – and … officey shoes. She's still got the same shitty sunglasses." (27) The resident remembers seeing her in a different outfit: "black leather … with a shiny black [motorcycle] helmet. Large teardrop sunglasses, cop-style." (*Ibid*) The women chat. Soon they move to the kitchen. The kitchen is "grimy, high-ceilinged" (30). "Domesticity is not a strong point among any of the residents," (*Ibid*) comments the woman resident. "'We're all so bad at this stuff,' [she] chuckle[s], 'kids without their nannies for the first time. Actually, we do get by, but we're debating whether or not to get a domestic worker – that's the politically correct term, I think.'" (*Ibid*) "Ja," says the other woman, "this place could do with a good scrubbing" (*Ibid*). The first woman suddenly feels irritated by the visitor's outfit.

The resident, Hilton-Barber, describes her bedroom as bohemian (the Indian clothes), folksy (the old typewriter) and charming (the Victorian fireplace). Her bare-bones description of the kitchen makes it out to be dirty and coldly voluminous – the adjective "high-ceilinged", which comes directly after "grimy", creates the impression

that high ceilings in this instance are negative. There is a marked difference in the tone and length of the descriptions of each room, indicating that Hilton-Barber does not much like the kitchen. She also uses the clunky "domesticity", as opposed to saying something like 'keeping house' or 'cleaning up', to articulate the housemates' failure to wipe down surfaces, dust and so on. The mass noun breaks up the otherwise casual colloquial language of the scene. The other noun form, "domestic", follows this, and is used to describe someone whose labour relates to the home. But naming the noun as possibly ("I think") the "politically correct" term makes it both formal and formulaic, an alien term used not to name someone with respect but to participate in a regime of naming that demands certain conventions for entry into correctness. Finally, Hilton-Barber negatively connects Forsyth, the visitor, and her clothing with her comment about cleaning the space. Something is certainly afoot in this kitchen.

Good women under apartheid become socially and politically apparent in skirts in kitchens. Cleaning and clothing connect Forsyth to the regime and thus to the perpetrators of violence. Hilton-Barber articulates Forsyth's perpetration, her violence and betrayal of herself and her fellow activists, as a betrayal that began in the kitchen, that began in her very display of this form of womanhood. In fact, throughout the book, clues to Forsyth's eventual exposure as an apartheid spy relate to cleaning, cleanliness and clothing. Betrayal and violence comes from and out of these vicious kitchens. Hilton-Barber must constantly and carefully reject in herself any and all of these symbols of that type of perpetration.

One other small incident takes place in this space. Hilton-Barber tells Forsyth stories that involve her housemates, one of whom is Roland White, her boyfriend. After one such anecdote about him, Hilton-Barber writes: "I don't know if Olivia knows I am bedding Roland. I don't say anything. We sit chatting in the

kitchen." (30) Another element, sex, enters into the relation between these women in this space. In bedding Roland, Hilton-Barber draws a line: this is *my* house. This power flickers and flares just out of sight between the two women as they chat in the kitchen because Hilton-Barber remains silent about it. This sharpens the power of her role, as secrets hold "the spectral radiance of the unsaid", and with them, an intensity always on the knife's edge between knowing and not knowing.[460] In staying silent, Hilton-Barber hovers in this liminal space, between being the owner of the home, the domesticated woman *and* a kind of sexual and thus male figure, and being outside of it altogether, dismissive. Forsyth, of course, knows none of this.

It was cleaning, or an attempt to clean, that retrospectively gave Forsyth away. Mbekela calls Forsyth for help after his home is firebombed and his girlfriend is badly burned and needs immediate medical attention. In *Agent 407*, Forsyth describes the scene as she arrives at the hospital: "Lady, if she's black you'll have to drive around to the back entrance," a doctor tells her.[461] Forsyth is suitably annoyed and equally unable to connect her own deeds to this instance of petty apartheid. Hilton-Barber describes the following day, when Forsyth, wearing teardrop sunglasses, picks Hilton-Barber and a friend up in her car. She describes the back seat: "I see the grey fabric coated in a chalky powder that almost – but not quite – hides a seeping brown stain. And around it, burnt flesh, curled at the edges, like scattered cornflakes." (76-77) Hilton-Barber is horrified by the sight, but Forsyth "starts fucking humming." (77) Later, White describes the scene at the hospital; he went with Mbekela. He describes Ntonyeno's skin sliding off. Hilton-Barber notices that "Olivia gets up and starts to arrange stuff on the tables and starts fiddling with the light tables" (78) as White cries. After Hilton-Barber finds out Forsyth was a spy, she remembers the back seat of the

[460] Taussig, *Defacement*, 6.
[461] Forsyth, *Agent 407*, 135.

car. “Why did we never wonder where that white stuff [the chalky powder] came from?” (177) Retrospectively, so many things give Forsyth away. She is wearing those sunglasses again, associated with cops. She seems nonchalant – she hums. But most interesting in Hilton-Barber’s description is how Forsyth’s cleaning habits shape the scene. Using the white powder that absorbs blood and arranging things on the tables are the same types of acts: they clean; they neaten. But it goes deeper. The entire first half of her book is called “Burning Woman”, which culminates in a chapter of the same name in which the above scene takes place. It is a defining moment in Hilton-Barber’s struggle, but also in her relationship with Forsyth, a defining betrayal: someone dies. That burning woman, Ntonyeno, burnt in a backseat, bleeding and shedding skin, is seen for Hilton-Barber only through the aftermath, the brown stains, the flakes, the white powder. She is seen only through attempts to clean her death up, to get it out of sight, to leave no marks or stains, to make a surface neat again. What appear are white flakes; what does not appear is Forsyth’s hand in Ntonyeno’s death. Thus violence and death materialise, hellishly, only in the neat surface: perpetration, especially women’s perpetration, inheres in these unbroken lengths of shiny kitchen counters, in unscuffed floors, in clean back seats, which, by precisely not showing dirt, hint at the bloody horror just beneath. Much is at stake, then, in Hilton-Barber’s unclean kitchen.

The good bad woman

It is in being a bad woman, the opposite of the state-sanctioned delineation of a good woman, that Hilton-Barber can manage the fact that she is a woman in a home, worse, a white woman in a home. Indeed, it is the attempt to define her whiteness and her womanhood – a potentially treacherous, deadly combination – that drives parts of her

book. During Hilton-Barber's activism, black activists had asked the white left not to interfere with black organisations. This came out of Black Consciousness (BC), which had a clear mission: for all black people to defy apartheid's repression. "The message … BC sent to white liberals was that Africans were ready to take complete control of those political activities which affected their lot and their future."[462] The leader of the BC movement, Steve Biko, was wary of white people. "It is still a known fact that white people simply don't know black people, and in most cases do not have the interests of black people at heart."[463] He was also aware of the damage produced by feelings of inferiority: "An example of this," Biko notes, "was … during the old days of [NUSAS], where [white] students would be something that you as a Black man experienced in your day-to-day life, but your powers of articulation are not as good as theirs … You are forced into a subservient role … talking about what you have experienced, which they have not experienced … [which] inculcates also in numerous students a sense of inadequacy."[464] To avoid these and other pitfalls, he and other proponents of BC preferred their white allies to work among themselves to help end apartheid. This goes some way in explaining why *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy* is so concerned with internal, mostly white spaces of activism, and why black people in general seem, at times, to slip out of the book altogether.

Biko was arrested at a roadblock near Grahamstown in 1977. According to his biographer, Xolela Mangcu, Biko was kept manacled and naked in a police station for 20 days before being transferred to the head quarters of the Eastern Cape security branch in Port Elizabeth. There he sustained the massive brain injuries that killed

---

[462] Mabel Raisibe Maimela, "Black Consciousness and White Liberals in South Africa: Paradoxical Anti-Apartheid Politics," (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of South Africa, 1999), 2.
[463] Biko, "I Write What I Like", 57.
[464] Millard W Arnold, ed., *The Testimony of Steve Biko* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1979), 23.

him.[465] "This leads us to the memory of what must be one of the most imagined events in South African history," writes Ndebele, "imagined, because only four men witnessed it [Biko's beating and subsequent death]. Yet, the rest of us, who were deeply affected by the horror of the situation, the outrage it evoked, and the bonds of solidarity and empathy that it strengthened, can still see it vividly in our minds, almost as if we were there."[466] The TRC found that "there was no proof that the death was brought about by an act or omission involving an offence by any person", and all who applied for amnesty for Biko's death were granted it.[467]

"Fucking white people," (7) writes Hilton-Barber in the opening few pages of the book. This comes after a story of her father performing a citizen's arrest on a hit-and-run driver who knocked over a black man on a bicycle. The statement assumes that white people are typical in ways Hilton-Barber can sneeringly identify. It also announces that she and her family are not these "fucking white people", though they are white. Rather, her family is "liberal and bohemian … [and] opposed to apartheid." (*Ibid*) Part of the way Hilton-Barber articulates this difference is staged on a railway platform just before she leaves for Rhodes. She takes a stroll to see the engine with her "fashionable and striking" mother who "brings her glass of wine, and walks imperiously", and who is met with disapproving looks from "a homey mom or two" (*Ibid*). Her mother is *not* homey, which seems to be linked to lacking something essential and "glamorous" (8), some sophistication allocated to the sartorial English mother Hilton-Barber calls Tana throughout the text. This is the first instance in which Hilton-Barber spells out her attitude towards the home and homeliness – in the senses of threat and appearance. Homey here is like homely, in this instance, a two-

[465] "How Steve Biko died: An excerpt from Xolela Mangcu's *Biko – A Biography*," *News 24*, September 20, 2012, https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/How-Steve-Biko-died-20120919?cpid=2.
[466] Ndebele, "Iph'indlela?", 129.
[467] *TRC* vol 3, chap 2, sec 1, para 120, p 66.

sided insult: as in, the euphemism for plain or unattractive women; and as in a cosy comforting domestic space. This second implication seems to refer to the homes of average middle-class white South Africans in the 1980s, ensconced in polite suburbs with ever-inward-looking white women at the domestic helm. These homey women play out in miniature what the country played out in full, a careful and often vicious containment via a prescribed blindness. Thus the home, where women appear as good women and good citizens, and where they perform their womenness, is also a performance of white privilege, solipsism, and all the accrued, slow violence of white kitchens cleaned by black women. Hilton-Barber announces through these white people – homey moms, immoral hit-and-run drivers, and the entire "white nation … rife with racism" (8) – that she is not *that type* of white person. Thus, in this opening scene, Hilton-Barber indirectly links the home and a homely appearance to apartheid and its forms of oppression.[468]

Forsyth appears in this book as a violent woman inscribed by the evidence of her cleanliness and neatness, both in what she wears and how she cleans up. In comparison, this is how Hilton-Barber appears: "My blonde hair is long and curly, ungovernable, and I generally wear hippie-style Indian dresses." (5) She "can't bear the thought of teddy bears on lacy pillows … frilly nighties, all that pink girly kitch [sic]" (*Ibid*), presumably the style of the conservative women at Rhodes. On the train, she is told that students "on the lunatic fringe – rebellious liberal-minded students with an alternative subculture" (11) – are despised by the mainstream conservative students who call them Bungees. In turn, Hilton-Barber learns the conservative male students – "highly indoctrinated, fully into rugby" (12) are dubbed Buggers. At

[468] She also mentions her mother's dislike for Afrikaners. Again, this distances her from the real peddlers of horror, the Afrikaners, though she misses the violence inherent in her mother's "colonial upbringing". (7)

Rhodes, Hilton-Barber, who has chosen to study journalism, finds a group of badly dressed hippies and reggae freaks, and feels "*completely at home*" (15, my italics), a definite contrast to her rejection of certain types of home and homeliness. At her first NUSAS meeting, she is startled by the sheer assortment of the weird, an "awkwardness of oddsters … nerds, geeks and misfits" who all "desperately want to belong" to a "society that is not mean-spirited and Calvinistic." (22) An obvious outline is taking shape. From clothing and culture to politics and religion, Hilton-Barber wants to position herself firmly within a radical nonconformist community of people who actively defy the norms defined by a repressive government. The reasons for doing this are equally obvious. Through every facet of her life, and especially as a woman political activist, Hilton-Barber is *not like those fucking white people*.

In one incident, Hilton-Barber, now a consummate political dissident, and her fellow activists are forced to pay a fine for some illegal protest action. As a form of resistance, the students pay it all in coins, walking the money to the courts in a wheelbarrow. There "a posse of legal women has formed … women with neat hairdos and black robes, like murder of crows." (70) Again, notice how neatness in hair and clothes is connected to those who uphold and promulgate the law of the land at that time. Notice also that women, well groomed and in robes, and not men, form a "murder of crows". This vision sits in direct contrast to how she represents herself and her fellows: "With our long hair and T-shirts with slogans, our dungarees and our African-print clothing, our sandals and boots and takkies and multi-coloured scarves, we sit and wait." (71) This motley crew, wild and colourful, is unkempt in a way that sees them safely outside the confines of what the regime deems acceptable for women and, indeed, for men. After much fuss, the magistrate instructs the activists to return the money to the bank. The boy who pulled the prank describes how the teller, who

had sent away to Port Elizabeth for the coins, burst into tears when he returned them. "'Ag shame, she's just a tannie [older woman] with a blue rinse,' he says. 'She didn't know it was political until one of the tellers told her.'" (71) All the listeners burst out laughing.

"Later that night," writes Hilton-Barber, "I picture the teller sitting on her stoep [veranda], having a little brandy and Coke with her husband, explaining her tears … And I picture the magistrate at dinner with his wife … [After his wife questions him, the magistrate] sets down the cutlery and pushes his plate away … 'Dammit,' his wife hears him say." (*Ibid*)[469] In both imagined scenarios, the protagonist is somehow disempowered, or reveals some chink or weakness, as with the magistrate. It is no coincidence that these take place in homes and in relation to spouses. There is something gleeful in how she relates to the 'blue-rinse' *tannie* crying. It is about power: look what a group of activists can do – look how the home, the *stoep* and the ritual of an evening drink, the dinner table, can be disturbed. Through Hilton-Barber's picturing, the political prank gains a power beyond the silly act, breaking and entering homes, those markers of apartheid complicity and even perpetration, letting the outside into these enclaves. But Hilton-Barber's act of power here becomes dislocating, too. Her almost-but-not-quite hired domestic worker mentioned in the scene with Forsyth in the kitchen is the phantom that could enact parts of the depravity of apartheid and thereby mark Hilton-Barber's home as a site of perpetration, despite her efforts. Thus Hilton-Barber's insistent acts of location: locating violence in the average apartheid home, and locating herself and her fellows as outside of that violence or immune to it via their dirtiness and raggedy appearance.

[469] This is an odd interlude in the context of a book written in the present tense. This 'picturing' jumps in time from the continuous now to later and from the literal or the experiential to the envisioned, the twilight of the mind. Who is picturing here? Is it Hilton-Barber the young activist then, or the older writer of this book? The flow of the ever-forward-marching plot – something automatic in present-tense stories – is interrupted to insert intimate imagined access into these people's homes.

Politics at home

Cultural studies scholar Kerry Bystrom argues that the home is both a physical space and a figuration – it is both an address and a space that *does* things, and these run along the lines, which are completely blurred, of the private and the public. This makes home a space that is risky but inhabitable, and the realm of the home an aesthetic that "can draw attention to … moments of contact with the outside and otherness."[470] But Bystrom is referring to average homes. Hilton-Barber's homes in the 1980s, in which perhaps hundreds of political meetings were held, became public spaces, where the outside came inside, into the private, as a rule. Thus these home exemplify the intensity and the riskiness of the contact between private and public in the realm of the personal and the political.

In a house called the Fruit Basket, Hilton-Barber lives with Forsyth, a "fey redhead" (38) called Lindy Harris and Sue Lund, along with two or three men. The house is characterised as "redolent with lunacy" (37), where "nothing is symmetrical". (38) Note how this is how Hilton-Barber identifies herself: asymmetrical, fruity. The Fruit Basket is certainly not a typical home. "It is," writes Hilton-Barber, "a political and sexual rabbit warren." (*Ibid*) The house is a "political *and* sexual" place – animalised as a "rabbit warren", making it wild and fetid – which speaks to the kind of intimacy repression produces, a world of high stakes and secrecy. Where the activists slept (and slept with each other) is where the political was produced via a "constant stream of visitors … meetings … [and] loud discussion." (38) Political spaces overlapped with private spaces, becoming mixed and mixed up, creating a strange combination of the very serious, the playful and fun, intimacy that sometimes ticked over to sexual intimacy and friendships in zeal, a kind

[470] Kerry Bystrom, *Democracy at Home in South Africa: Family Fictions and Transitional Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2016), 14.

of magnification of feeling brought about by the urgency and pressure of the political moment. "We are like a tribe," (64) Hilton-Barber states.

The "Darling Sisterhood" (42), as Hilton-Barber calls them, are "a bunch of feisty young women" (40) who form an intimate friendship. Feminist Sharon Monteith defines sisterhood as a kinship term that came into wider feminist use in the 1960s and 1970s, but which already had an established history in black cultures in America.[471] The notion of sisterhood had a strong resonance for some South Africans, forming the basis for early white women's movements such as the Black Sash, members of which considered themselves a "silent sisterhood" whose strategies included "'blacksashing' – or the wearing of a black sash during silent protest vigils."[472] Certainly, these and other feminist theories smuggled into South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s would have influenced Hilton-Barber. But white women's use of the term to designate friendship between women of different races is also looked upon with suspicion. Feminist Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí critiques sisterhood as a model for interracial relations, noting "the dishonesty of white feminists in advocating … solidarity amongst all women, even as they exercised their race and class privileges on the backs of non-white women."[473] Despite this, Hilton-Barber's darling sisterhood is vital in how she understands herself in relation to other women, including black women, to political resistance and to the past. When her boyfriend breaks up with her,

---

[471] Sharon Monteith, *Advancing Sisterhood?: Interracial Friendships in Contemporary Southern Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 5.
[472] Marianne Thamm, "'The conscience of white South Africa': Celebrating the Black Sash, 60 years later," *Daily Maverick*, May 14, 2015, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-05-14-the-conscience-of-white-south-africa-celebrating-the-black-sash-60-years-later/#.WqDwBb8kDeQ. In the 1980s, the various advice offices the Black Sash ran across the country were staffed by volunteers and became crucial points of resistance for the black majority in terms of challenging apartheid legislation, mass arrests, access to information, and sometimes simply to enable the provision of food and other emergencies.
[473] Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 4.

Hilton-Barber describes the "sympathetic patter of feet up and down the stairs to [her] room" (54) from the sisterhood, who bear "tea and wine and tissues [and] healthy doses of 'fuck men and their stupid cocks'." (*Ibid*) Forsyth lingers longer than the others and Hilton-Barber begins to share a particular closeness with her. But this is not just trust between two people; it is between two women who have had to carve out a space for themselves, "to talk to each other as *women*." (40) This is intimacy and trust beyond the norm; it is about both a careful sense of belonging and a sculpting and refining of identity as women with women and not only in relation to men. Hilton-Barber describes a journey she takes with Forsyth: "We chat and gossip, share stories, and smoke like crazy … We are young comrades and journalists out in the field, covering the Struggle … freezing our tits and arses off in this little car with no heating." (81) There is a sense of jubilation here that comes from the lightness of the friendship between the women and in naming themselves and their actions, "We are…" anchoring them in something important, articulating the drive and focus of that time. Later, she notes of her time in prison: "We are a group of warm, unique women helping one another to get through our 'unfortunate incarceration' as we will one day call it." (113) She is part of a group, not only of like-minded people, but also of women who help one another. Notice the future tense: "as we will one day call it". The feeling is of shared pain that will be overcome and reminisced about one day, though whether that pain is truly overcome is ambiguous, as her book shows.

Part of what Hilton-Barber does with this work of locating herself in houses amid women is transform these domestic spaces, filling them with the possibility of comfort, support and belonging, making them places to gather and to share. Hilton-Barber does not wholly reject the domestic scene as such, but rather rejects the good women in these spaces who are oriented around men, and thus patriarchy and

ultimately the state. In her home, bad women can do womanly things without being undermined – this is how, for instance, knitting is rescued from the doldrums of the inhibited woman. Sue knits *while* practising radical politics, and so the incongruity is solved and accepted. This is about women participating in a mass political movement as themselves, a place where women are not pacified but are radicalised, and are filled with agency. It is for this home that Hilton-Barber later yearns.

Amid all of this fierceness, tea is served. There is something about the inanity of tea, its quiet domesticity, especially as it figures around the *other* woman in the house – the domestic worker – that clashes spectacularly with the swish and burn of anti-apartheid politics, that antiracist, firebrand thing.[474] Imagine, in freeze frame, an image of an activist mid-scream, fists balled and raised, at a podium, a suggestion of a thousand people beyond, screaming too, singing. But to prepare for that fisted scream, meetings were held at which sweet, milky tea was incessantly sipped. This is the domestic side of the political, the gathering in homes, the small, undocumented moments washed down with a hot drink. Tea and other drinks – coffee (with Cremora or long-life milk bought at the corner store), wine (Chateau Libertas and Tassies), Old Brown Sherry and whisky – accompany almost every description of a political meeting, get-together or visit of any kind in *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy*. These assemblages make up the meat of the book. When Hilton-Barber flees twice to the home of a woman friend on Cuyler Street, she is met with an "endless stream of visitors [and] tea." (*Ibid*) Tea regulates lives, cohering spaces and the people in them. The ritual of taking tea shows that beneath Hilton-Barber's ungovernability, beneath her oddball homemade clothes and her rejection of the house-proud domesticated woman, she is, in fact, a woman whose life is centred on and in homes, whose

[474] There are no domestic workers serving tea in the descriptions of her student days at Rhodes, but there is one at her family home. I will explore this later.

domesticity is stained with love and tea, whose sensibility finds coherence around a kettle or a bottle, surrounded by those with whom she shares these drinks – especially women, who gather and disperse, gather and disperse.

When activist Matthew Goniwe visits, they serve tea. "Olivia and I make tea. We have a tray of assorted cups and mugs, mostly chipped and stained, but there's always tea and long-life milk from the little shop around the corner, and white sugar. Struggle fuel." (67) The dirty cups signal that the taking of tea is not at all a genteel experience, but rather part of the political-at-home; in fact, it is what politics runs on. Soon after this tea is served, Goniwe, along with Sparrow Mkonto, Fort Calata and Sicelo Mhlauli go missing. These men later became known as the Cradock Four. As anti-apartheid activists, they fought for and succeeded in lowering the rental charged in Lingelihle, the township linked to Cradock, through residents and youth associations. They were involved in the local branch of the UDF and were instrumental in organising the 1984 "Black Christmas", in which the community did not buy liquor or food from white-owned shops. On 27 June 1985, the four men were abducted on a road near Grahamstown. The security police beat, stabbed, shot and mutilated them. They were then doused with acid and petrol, and burnt. Dog bites were found on their bodies, too. The case of the Cradock Four was the first one heard at the TRC, and Nomonde Calata, Fort's wife, inaugurated the moment with a scream that haunts all who heard it.[475] At the hearing, Mrs Mhlauli specifically requested the return of her husband's hand, which was cut off in the attack and was "believed to

[475] Krog notes her cry as a sound that will forever stay with those who heard it. *Country of My Skull*, 64. The recording of Calata's scream is played in Phillip Miller's chilling *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape, and Testimony* (2006).

have been kept in a jar by the security police at Louis le Grange Square in Port Elizabeth."[476]

Their deaths sparked a national outcry at the time, as Hilton-Barber notes: "Schools are burning, classrooms are empty, leaders are on the run, yet the people are invincible … There are barricades and burning tyres, and angry graffiti." (87) Hilton-Barber and her fellow activists, along with thousands of others, attend the men's funeral. Among others, Griffiths Mxenge gives a rousing speech. It is Mxenge's head, almost totally cut off by askaris Almond Nofomela and Joe Mamasela, which rolls into view in Dlamini's *Askari*. Death fills his future, though he did not know it then. Death filled the future of many of the people at that funeral, I imagine. Afterwards, the government announced a partial state of emergency in the Eastern Cape and immediately detained most of the local UDF, many of whom were then tortured while in detention.[477] By December, the state of emergency was national.

Amid this violence, the sisterhood becomes a delicate thing: like the home in which it lives, these friendships are precarious – a tautness in the high-wire of being a white woman in a home and being a political woman needs to be maintained. In Hilton-Barber's descriptions of friendships, there is a slight slip. At one point, she describes how she pretends to be sick to avoid going to another funeral, which she can no longer face. Instead of being able to share with her sisterhood her state of exhaustion, Hilton-Barber must lie to her friends to get out of doing political work. Thus, there is another kind of policing between women here: a policing of the left. You may never run out of energy for the cause; you may not feel personal pain. This is an important point, which I will pursue further. Although it is usually possible for personal pain to find expression at home, in your private space, when your private

[476] *TRC* vol 3, chap 2, sec 1, para 297, p 117.
[477] *TRC* vol 3, chap 2, sec 1, para 230, p 98.

space is also a political stage, when the nation-in-pain just about lives with you in your room, personal anguish, exhaustion and anxiety must at all cost not be shown, lest it reveal your privilege, your girlish broken heart. These homes were not only spaces of support and comfort; the practise of feminism within the political realm meant disciplining personal feeling. These women, then, are, like Forsyth, also made in the home – to be active, radical political subjects and agentive women, they had to perform and conform to a set of characteristics that gave them entry into those roles.

For Hilton-Barber, home and with it sisterhood ends with a table. The activists have a party for a Rhodes lawyer who has helped defend detainees. "He is presented with a beautiful yellowwood desk, and I feel a stab of resentment at his settled life in this pretty little house with pretty things, and I get drunk and angry and cry." (147) The day after this, Hilton-Barber buys a ticket to go overseas. This table, which sets Hilton-Barber trembling and tumbling out of her life in Grahamstown, finds its double in the table given to Forsyth as a reward for good service. "A stinkwood coffee table and a beautiful antique Danish silver candelabrum are lasting reminders I supped with the devil."[478] Forsyth's table and the lawyer's table, both rewards for opposite dealings, both elements of the home, anchor them, pinpoint them. Hilton-Barber resents this solidity. Later, she expresses something similar. "All I have for a curtain [is] a cloth and a peg, and I'm fifty years old, and the spy who betrayed me is drinking Chablis and moving to Tuscany with her Dearly Beloved." (188) Will Hilton-Barber, in later life, no longer evade the vicious kitchens in women or the vicious women in kitchens? Certainly, she seems to feel keenly the unfairness of Forsyth's settled domestic life in comparison to her own, which is deemed a failure because she does not have proper curtains. After all her efforts to reject the apartheid home, to link

[478] Forsyth, *Agent 407*, 321.

cleanliness not to godliness but to the enemy, those well-scrubbed murderers and their wives making them packed lunches, after all of it, will she covet their homes? Her home life is compared to that of Forsyth – the ultimate bad good woman, who drinks wine, travels and has a husband – and is found wanting. Tableless, Hilton-Barber formulates the sorrow of the unhomed. But I would argue that her sorrow is not because she has no husband in her curtainless home, or good wine or travel, but that she no longer has a sisterhood with whom she can both be political and recover. All that love and tea ended years before the writing of this book. Thus Hilton-Barber's yearning for a home does not only pivot in the domestic space, but also in time.

The time of the witness, and beyond

Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy opens on the N10 to Cradock, near the end of Hilton-Barber's road trip through the haunts of her past. The N10 passes the farm Post Chalmers, now an abattoir, but in the 1980s it was used in much the same way as Vlakplaas – to torture and kill black activists. Their bodies were mutilated and mostly thrown into the sewage tanks beneath the farm, though this was not the fate of the men known as the PEBCO three. On 8 May 1985, three members of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO), Sipho Hashe, Champion Galela and Qaqawuli Godolozi, disappeared.[479] Twelve years later, on 11 November 1997, former security police officer Gideon Nieuwoudt confessed to participating in the beating, robbery and murder of these men. Until then, no one knew what had become of them. The security police lured them to the airport through an informer, abducted them and took them to Post Chalmers. There, the three were systematically beaten to death. Their bodies were burned on pyres and then thrown into the Fish River.

[479] Just over a month later, the Cradock Four were abducted and killed.

The book has four beginnings – the road to Cradock, the train to Grahamstown, the 2015 crash and the opening of the trunk – and three endings. The first is her journey home after visiting Cradock. The afterword signals another kind of end. "I never get to meet Olivia again," (215) Hilton-Barber announces. I wonder how she knows this? This is an omniscient narrator's sentence, a pronouncement made by a narrator who can see an entire lifespan, who has a bird's-eye view. In the last sentence in the book, the third and final ending, Hilton-Barber states that she will not forgive Forsyth for betraying her and her fellow activists.

Each of the four beginnings is written in the present tense. The book, especially in the first section, almost never moves into past tense to tell a story about a time before the present tense moment.[480] For instance, the opening of the chapter "Fruit Basket", reads: "Bang bang bang, open up, open up, it's the police! It's 3am and we're all asleep, and as the front door is kicked open, Lloyd Edwards, feared security policeman who prays on lefty students, bursts in, and he and his cronies fan out and barge into each room." (37)[481] The reader is in the now of that moment, and the moment moves from beginning to end. Almost all of the first section runs chronologically in this manner; the audience experiences the events at the same time as the people in the book. There is a stable, linear coherence in this present tense timespan that deals in days, weeks and, sometimes, months. But interjected into this is the future tense. In the first section, the future tense is used 31 times. The future to which these tenses refer relates to revelations of truth, the moment just experienced in the present tense is made full by some disclosure – some of these revelations come directly out of the TRC, but all are in the mode of the TRC: a terrible truth is revealed.

[480] The past tense is used a few times, but only for small leaps in time. For example, one chapter opens on Forsyth's going away party, then relates in the past tense some of the events leading up to the party, but these events happened only weeks or days before the party.
[481] Incidentally, this is the moment the security branch raids Forsyth's room, for which she is mocked.

In contrast, the second section uses the future tense three times, and the third section, only once: "In the end, the spy who loved me will never say much more to me than: 'I thought I was going for military training.'" (178) The future in this book, at least in terms of the use of future tense, ends with the chapter "Truth and Reconciliation", early in the second section, "Transitions". To study timescapes, I will consider the narrative that spans the first section, "Burning Woman", up till the TRC chapter in "Transitions", focusing on the revelatory future and on how Hilton-Barber centres and locates herself in her past via these futures. After the TRC, the story of Hilton-Barber as an anti-apartheid activist is complete. As soon as the narrative moves past the TRC, time becomes strange, things begin to repeat, language slips and eventually breaks down. I will next consider this timescape, focusing mainly on the third section, "The Road of Broken Memory".

Hilton-Barber visits Mbekela after his girlfriend has died. In the scene the present tense jumps first to the short-term future, then to the longer-term future through a TRC revelation. It includes a proclamation of innocence:

> I see Chris … He is a ghost, a shadow, he can barely speak …
>
> 'How is Miseka's family?' I ask.
>
> He just shrugs ... Chris too will end up being detained. He will spend nearly three years in detention without trial.
>
> Many years later, twelve or thirteen in fact, I will hang my head when I hear Chris Mbekela's submission …
>
> You cannot forgive without knowing who to forgive [Chris says in his TRC submission] … But, of course, I knew none of this at the time. I was simply a

> horrified 21-year-old white girl from the suburbs staring at the back seat of a car which was covered with burnt bits of human flesh. (78-79)

Note that in the statement of innocence attached to the end of this scene, we go back to her *then* in the past tense: I *was* simply a horrified 21-year-old white girl. That she states her age and race is pertinent and comes up often. But what is interesting here is that the writing "I" emerges. In a chapter titled "Spyker", which I will analyse in detail in the next section of this chapter, Hilton-Barber meets with the prison warder Spyker at Fort Glamorgan in East London. While she sits in his office, the scene cuts to the TRC five times. In each glimpse into the future, Spyker and other prison warders are shown to have been involved in attempted rape, torture and beatings. These revelations are still to come, but the scene is heavy with violence – perhaps even violence happening at the same time as when Hilton Barber was at that prison, though it never happened to her nor did she ever directly witness it. The fullness, or, in TRC terms, the truth of what took place in that prison will be later revealed in testimonies, which means that the *history* of that scene will be written in the future. In its present tense, without any of these future revelations, the scene remains ambiguous. There is a sense of threat, of unheard screams that nonetheless echo those halls and cells, of gnashing and biting, the flash of metal instruments, bare backs, tremors in the dark, made more terrible by the silence, a horror felt but not seen. Or perhaps *not* felt. What if Hilton-Barber felt none of it, did not know, remained naive and innocent? Only later, in the future, at the TRC, is she able to see it, the moment growing gory as she zooms out of the scene of a white girl in an office and sees the monstrousness of her surroundings.[482] Innocence is often coupled with the future tense: "I also hold the hands of Coletane, a coloured woman from Johannesburg",

[482] This is the opposite instinct to Forsyth zooming into a scene.

writes Hilton-Barber, "as … she comes out of the closet … In twenty years' time she will be murdered in her driveway, but now we are pained innocents, exploring boundaries." (64) This glimpse into the future, where violent death awaits this woman, is the obverse in time to the TRC's glimpse into the past, where violent death is wrought upon people. But the scene retreats from the death in the future to the innocence of that present. Then, Hilton-Barber is happily ignorant; in the future, her knowledge will taint this innocence, her time with Coletane will be rewritten with her death in it.

Along with being coupled with statements of innocence, the future tense is also often followed by a statement that locates Hilton-Barber at the centre of the struggle. A few paragraphs before the scene in which Hilton-Barber visits Mbekela, it reads: "This [seeing the flakes of Ntonyena's skin and knowing she is dead] is my first direct encounter with an apartheid atrocity. Not that we name it yet. I am just a twenty-one-year-old honours student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, in the eye of the political storm that is gripping the country." (78) There is the atrocity that cannot yet be named – this will happen in the future – and then the innocence of *just* being a 21-year-old student, which is at the centre of the most important political moment in South Africa. "'The most intense and sustained struggle between the mass democratic movement and the apartheid state occurred between 1984 and 1986,' the history books will later say. We didn't quite realise it, but we were part of the tide of history." (61) Similarly: "Perhaps it is because of my youth, or naivety, but although I know I'm part of a turning point in South Africa's history, I do not entirely grasp the consequences," Hilton-Barber states. "We are middle-class students and journalists and academics all involved in the struggle against apartheid. And we are doing it with zeal." (46) This activist role will reveal itself to be of

enormous importance, as her language suggests – "eye of the political storm", "turning point in South Africa's history", "tide of history" – though she does not know it at the time she lives it.

Early in the TRC report, chairperson Bishop Desmond Tutu, states: "We hope that many South Africans and friends of South Africa will become engaged in the process of helping our nation to come to terms with its past and, in so doing, reach out to a new future."[483] The TRC had one eye on a future that could take place only if the other eye looked at the past – and did not look away. But its orientation was always forward facing: "We have tried, in whatever way we could, to weave into this truth about our past some essential lessons for the future of the people of this country," Tutu continues. "Because the future, too, is another country."[484] The past was to be dealt with for a reconciliatory future, which was "explicitly tied to the project of nation-building, 'imagining' a new form of national community based on a 'collective memory'."[485] But what happens when time is reversed? When the past is present and the future is filled only with the fullness of the horror of that past, the site of an oncoming deluge of truth that paints every moment red with murder? For nation building, for a new imagined community to form, the future must be freed from the weight of the past. But Hilton-Barber's present *is* the past in this section; her future is heavy with dread. And beyond the TRC? Nothing. The future tense of this part of the book never sees further into the future. There is only a wretched blank as the future sinks and disappears.

The Hilton-Barber who knows the future, who writes that in time – in a month or in 20 years – this *will* happen, is not the same Hilton-Barber in the present tense of

[483] *TRC*, vol 1, chap 1, para 6, p 2.
[484] *TRC*, vol 1, chap 1, para 19, p 4.
[485] Deborah Posel, "The TRC Report: What Kind of History? What Kind of Truth?: A Preliminary Exploration," 4. Paper presented at the conference, *The TRC: Commissioning the Past*, June 11, 1999, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

the past, that innocent girl, so blind to the ferocity of her moment. The future Hilton-Barber is much closer to the writing "I" than the youthful one, whom she is depicting. They are the same person, but split in time. Who are these two women?

Giorgio Agamben identifies two meanings for the term 'witness': "the person who, in a trial or a lawsuit between two rival parties, is in the position of a third party. [The word also] designates a person who has lived through something, who has experienced an event from beginning to end and can therefore bear witness to it."[486] Thus there is a 'bystander' witness, who can see the full scene, and a witness who experiences the event. Each give testimony, but of differing orders. The TRC recognises "four notions of truth: factual or forensic truth; personal or narrative truth; social or 'dialogue' truth … and healing and restorative truth."[487] The first two – factual and narrative truth – relate to the bystander witness and the witness who experienced an event, respectively; though, of course, either could end up with a testimony containing a combination of the two. These two truths are the ones found primarily in Hilton-Barber's book. When the future Hilton-Barber proclaims the truth of a scene, she widens that lens to show us, the reader, but also to show herself, the innocent in that past, what that moment *actually* meant. The bystander witness, the one who sees the fullness of the scene, looks back on her younger self, at her naivety and both mourns and celebrates it, while the younger "I" in the present tense tells her story, relates her truth as she experiences it. It makes sense that the experiences of this "I" would be rendered in the present, not only because, according to Sigmund Freud and later Cathy Caruth, the past's trauma is always experienced in the present, which is valid in itself, but also because the time signatures are reversed. The trauma of the past is being experienced in the present of the narrative: it is happening moment to

[486] Giorgio Agamben, *The Remnants of Auschwitz* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 17.
[487] *TRC*, vol 1, chap 5, para 30, p 110.

moment in a coherent linear time signature. The future intervenes not to call that past into the now of the writing, but to call the future into that past, to lend it an eye, *a witness,* who can see that unfolding present more clearly and fully.

But the young Hilton-Barber's incessant blindness chaffs the older Hilton-Barber. How could she not know? Which indeed is really the question, how could *I* not know? This frustration culminates in a moment in which the future "I", the bystander witness, intervenes in the narrative of the past "I", the experiential witness, and rewrites a scene as though she did indeed know what was happening. This type of foreknowledge splits away from logic and coherence, and becomes witchy as Hilton-Barber morphs into a soothsayer, providing an index for tragedy, and knowing, *foretelling*, death and disaster. The evocation comes through in her description of the murder of the Cradock Four. Hilton-Barber describes meeting Goniwe, whom she calls "the people's hero [for] so many of us." (82) Then we cut to a "bitterly cold night in the depths of winter, just before 10pm." (*Ibid*) In bed, she tosses and turns in an "ever-anxious sleep" (*Ibid*) while "six Port Elizabeth security policemen are waiting in two cars on the Olifantskop Pass." (*Ibid*) The trap is set, as Hilton-Barber attempts to sleep. Then we jump in time to the TRC for a sentence-long sound bite that starts: "Years later, the TRC hearings will…" and reveals the conspiratorial nature of the "appalling plan" (*Ibid*). Seemingly, the young Hilton-Barber – though this is assuredly the older one entering her skin – describes, in present tense, the four activists driving and eventually realising they are being followed. "Get out, get out, God Almighty!" (83) the older Hilton-Barber exclaims, diving into her rendering of the story of the men's capture and trying to warn them from the present of her writing. But it does not work: "They have been nailed … and driven into the night." (*Ibid*) "Am I lying awake and anxious at this point?" asks Hilton-Barber. "Am I in a trough

of brief sleep? I do not know what is happening out there, but I somehow sense danger, animal-like." (*Ibid*) The story of the Cradock Four is inevitable, what happens to these men cannot be undone; they were not rescued, and thus must remain forever imperilled. In the present in which Hilton-Barber writes her book, she cries out to the men whose death she is rendering in the present tense of the past. She makes their deaths live again. She captures them, sets dogs on them, again, as she retells the story based on evidence from the TRC hearings, but also based on her horrified imagination. "I see it clearly," she writes, "a haunting vision." (*Ibid*) This is not only the tale retold – it is the tale imagined, fleshed out with details she could not know: that the dogs' teeth flashed in the night, that Sicelo stood up and fought the dogs before being overpowered, that Sparrow coughed blood twice before dying. Here, the older Hilton-Barber is shading in the past, adding to it, making the story full. She, retching, screams to these men while they still have flesh on their bones as she writes them: Look out! Your deaths await you. Is this her pain or theirs? Is she equally crying out to her younger self? Her yowl cuts into the scene, punctures, pierces it. But she cannot stop it, and must continue the work of writing what exists in time, in history, and what she evokes again in her present and in the present tense of her younger self, making the time between now and then no time at all, as though those dead men are being stabbed, doused with acid and burnt away, doused with petrol and set alight, fingers and hands cut off, bodies now husks; and then, suddenly, they are back in the car on the road to the pass, are fleshy and speak, and they never know, with the enactment of each loop, their fates. But the older Hilton-Barber knows. She knows because it happened. She knows because of the TRC. But she wants to know in another way, too. She wants her younger self to have known, an animal self, who sensed the danger, the death rising like the smoke coming from that "burnt-out car

wreck and [the] charred bodies" (84) "Perhaps … I have woken by the time the security police get to work on Matthew. Perhaps I am getting up at dawn … perhaps I am shivering as I put the kettle on for tea." (84) The yearning is for her younger self to have had the prescience her older self brings to the narrative, to be an oracle. She wants to have had some knowledge, some feeling about what was happening, as if Goniwe's torture had woken her, driven her out of bed. The writer now writes herself then, begs herself to have got up, to have had that instinct. Her animal-like sense of danger insures her against that pit of darkness in which you go about your business, content, sleep well, wake, make breakfast, and all the while death is wrought upon those you care for, those upon whom you pin your hope. How can you let it happen again, your ignorance, your daily life made silly in retrospect? No. You would have had to have known something, something in your bones, in your body, the older Hilton-Barber insists. Thus she remakes and rewrites the story. This rewriting melds together the TRC's 'narrative truth', which is being experienced by the younger "I", with the yearning of the future "I", with hope for a past that did not happen, but that can be rewritten as though it had.

The other truth – factual or forensic – also appears in *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy,* which does a lot of designating and listing: houses and people are meticulously depicted. In fact, much of the early part of the book is made up of inventories of men and women involved in anti-apartheid activism. It is this cataloguing and indexing, collecting and listing that make this book an insider's text, aimed at those involved in student activism in the 1980s. Nic Borain, a member of a prominent struggle family and one-time activist, comments: "It perfectly recreates the zany idealism of university students in the mid-1980s."[488] The people listed in Hilton-

[488] As found on the book's cover.

Barber's pages get that thrill of recognition. This is the work of remembering. But these names can also be verified, and, as such, they lend the narrative a sense of truth. The people listed in the book can testify to the truth of the tale. Equally, Hilton-Barber anchors herself over and over in geographic locations. She provides either street addresses or names for every house or establishment she lived in, and there were many, including, for example: 83 Bathurst Street; the Fruit Basket; her home in Johannesburg, 12 Northumberland Ave, to which she returns during the holidays; 2 Currie Street; Cuyler Street; Somerset Street; 6 Beadle Street; and Cock House. I went on to Google Maps and looked at her family home at 12 Northumberland Ave using street view: thatch house, brown wooden gate, grey walls. Why has she provided the exact address? It is the same with Grahamstown: I find Beadle and Bathurst easily, but take a while to come across Currie and Cuyler. Inadvertently, as I search, my eyes walk the streets she did: Prince Albert and African, High and Hurley. I spot Settler's Monument and Settler's Hospital. Is this what Hilton-Barber intended with these addresses, a kind of uncontained geographic intimacy to take you there in space, coupled with a tense that calls you to then in time, making you a witness, making all readers witnesses?

Witnessing of both kinds – the experiential and the bystander – requires a third person, a listener, or several people, an audience. This role is vital, and carries with it some of the burden of bearing witness. "The testimony to the trauma … includes its hearer," writes psychologist Dori Laub, "who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time."[489] Laub argues that trauma precludes its registration because "the observing and recording mechanisms of the

[489] Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* eds. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 57.

human mind are temporarily knocked out, malfunction."[490] Thus, in bearing witness, in telling the story of what happened to a listener or audience, the story takes a stable shape for the first time. The listener "comes to be a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event."[491] Thus, there is a triangle: bystander witness, actual witness and listener. As a kind of witness herself, the reader is called into this vector.

A broad overview of the action in the first section looks like this: Hilton-Barber flees the Fruit Basket to Currie Street: "As the country explodes, I seek safety by moving into 2 Currie Street" (63). Then: "I flee Currie Street and move into Tammin's place in Cuyler Street, seeking warmth and safety. I just can't handle Currie Street any more. The burglaries, the intensity of it all, the terror." (89) And again: "I have decided to move into Olivia's room at Somerset Street … [which] feels safe and comforting." (100) In these houses, the safety Hilton-Barber seeks materialises in offerings of tea and other drinks.

A broad overview of the action in the third section, "The Road of Broken Memory", looks like this. After a car accident precipitates a flashback – now the past intervenes in her present – Hilton-Barber begins a journey. She flies to East London and drives to Grahamstown, where time loses all coherence – I will detail this shortly – and Hilton-Barber mentally breaks down. She drives from Grahamstown to Port Elizabeth, where "Shelley Can We Borrow Your Car Again is waiting for [Hilton-Barber] with a bottle of whisky and two glasses." (205) After much whisky and weeping, Hilton-Barber "stumble[s] out of Shelley's compassion" (207) and spends some time with her woman cousin. "We sit late into the night talking and talking, and

[490] Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness", 57.
[491] Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness", 58. Both Agamben and Laub's work focuses on the Holocaust. I am aware of the dangers of flattening this into other forms of repression, such as apartheid.

the bloody whisky level drops steadily." (*Ibid*) Then Hilton-Barber reaches Cradock, and while thinking back on the Cradock Four, experiences terrible pain. Afterwards, she "falls into the arms of Chris and Julie, who ply [her] with food and wine and regale [her] with tales of country life." (209) Hilton-Barber moves into the spaces of her past, experiences breakdown and terror and then flees to the homes of friends, mostly women, who invite her in, offer her warmth and comfort, and serve whisky and wine.

Thus Hilton-Barber *relives* her past, replays it, experiences pain and trauma in order to *come home*: to sisters, to friendship, to tea – or tea's replacement in her adulthood, alcohol. Thus, the second of the three endings makes sense (in the first one, she drives home). Her omniscience in knowing she won't see Forsyth again is probably true because she will refuse to. Hilton-Barber does not forgive Forsyth in the end, not only because Forsyth never asked for it and was never contrite, but also because forgiving is an act of clarity; it finishes the past, blows away resentment; it is ultimately a present- and future-oriented act. Hilton-Barber's collection of photos and letters, which she leaves on the side of the road on her way home, are objects offered in an attempt at ritualised cleansing. But she calls that collection a shrine, which is a place of veneration, not a pyre. Perhaps, in the end, though, it is the right word: her little collection an altar, her act an enshrinement. Hilton-Barber needs the past; it is where and when she is most coherent, most relevant, most loved. It is also where the damage was done, where the horror took place. Nonetheless, it is where she is homed; where the sisterhood resides. She relives her past as though it were present, wrenching it into the now, attempting to zip her skin into that of her younger self, not to remember but to conjure. But like any reanimation, this ends up being ghoulish, distempered, out of time.

The chapter "Aloes in the Cold" shows most clearly Hilton-Barber's breakdown as she visits Grahamstown again. The title is our first clue that this chapter will be fraught; throughout the book, aloes, the cold and mountains the colour of burnt toast formulate a pathetic fallacy for death, terror and pain. In the opening scene, in which Hilton-Barber is on the road to Cradock, she describes the mountains as "the colour of burnt toast", and later on the page repeats, "…the burnt-toast mountains" (1). She also mentions how the "flaming-orange roadside aloes hurt [her] bleary, hungover eyes." (*Ibid*) Similarly, in her opening descriptions of Grahamstown, she comments that the "aloes blaze brilliant in the freezing winter." (17) Though burning aloes and burnt mountains do not explicitly accompany the description of the firebomb and the burning woman, they index that fire, which itself echoes the coming fire that will engulf the bodies of the Cradock Four. (Ntonyena's skin on the backseat is cornflakes, the mountains that mirror the various fires are burnt toast – why all this breakfast food to describe such horror? Is this the domestic made mad and strange by the extremities of the political moment?) In her past, on a trip to Cradock, young Hilton-Barber and Forsyth freeze and gossip in the car as they pass "burnt-toast mountains [and] roadside aloes with their … strident orange-red flowers." (81) Later in the same chapter, after the Cradock Four have been murdered, Hilton-Barber describes smoke rising "from a burnt-out car wreck and charred bodies" (84) – note the connection between the flaming aloes on the burnt-toast mountains and the burnt-out car with the charred bodies – and continues: "the aloes blaze orange against the bitter cold." (*Ibid*) In another mention, the aloes accompany a figurative (and also indeed literal) fire: "aloes blaze and the country burns." (102) Aloes make a final appearance on the last page before the afterword: "I leave for home the following

morning in a Cradock dawn that cuts through winter skies, and behind me are … bitter blazing aloes." (213)

If aloes mean fire, then the chapter titled "Aloes in the Cold" signals a move into the heart of the flame. On the way to Grahamstown, time takes on a palimpsestic turn, as though the past were pressing up from beneath the present, making its contours known in the now, even starting to break through and make the older Hilton-Barber react as though it were happening now: "I drive from East London, a surreal road of memory and wheeling, random images … Sex and the Struggle … Oh god, and the endless driving, the roadblocks and the pigs, the boers and the Branch … I catch myself looking nervously in the rear-view mirror." (191) This rising past finds completion when Hilton-Barber arrives in Grahamstown. She is struck by its dreariness: "Everything looks washed out in the winter sun, all fucked up and stressed out by endless Frontier Wars and horrible winters, and the only relief is the beautiful aloes. In my memory Grahamstown is always winter – where orange aloes blaze brilliant in the cold." (191) Several things are apparent in these two sentences. First, notice she uses the word 'winter' three times and also mentions the cold. She comments on the aloes twice in quick succession. And she swears, describing Grahamstown as "all fucked up". This triple, perhaps quadruple, winter tells us about time: Grahamstown is quite literally frozen in a perpetual winter in Hilton-Barber's mind. Time is inscribed by that season, which never seems to change. The double aloes also tell us about time: like the winter, aloes are perpetual, and they perpetually accompany the fire and horror of the Eastern Cape. It is as though the winter Hilton-Barber is in when she visits Grahamstown in the recent past is the *same* winter as the ones she experienced there as a youth, which are themselves the same winters that

town has lived through since the Frontier Wars and beyond.[492] Time is both standing quite still and thickening here, forming a stack of winters punctuated by aloes: there is Hilton-Barber in the winter of her youth and here is Hilton-Barber in the winter of her later years – but for some aging, they could be identical. With the swearword, a jarring jag in language, these doubles, triples and quadruples also signal Hilton-Barber's breakdown: she both cracks along the lines of these winters and inheres in them as her past and present become one and the same. A grotesque re-enactment takes place as Hilton-Barber plays out in miniature, and on fast-forward, her youth in this place.

Me, the colour of the enemy

Amid these journeys through landscapes pocked with aloes and bristling with terror, Hilton-Barber must manage her whiteness. Being white under apartheid meant she was privileged, could move easily through spaces, had access to all amenities and was afforded human rights – none of which was on offer to her black counterparts. The paradox of the power of her skin and the role of anti-apartheid activist is one she attempts to negotiate through regimes of pain, or its repression, and by announcing her status as white women in connection with what could make this identity legitimate – contributing to the struggle and jail time.

An early chapter, "Heartbreak in the Time of the Struggle", recounts Hilton-Barber's break-up with White, who takes up with another activist. From the top of a hill in Grahamstown, sipping wine and weeping, Hilton-Barber contemplates her pain:

> It was from this koppie that Makana, Xhosa prophet, sangoma and fabled warrior, launched his attack on British settlers, sparking the fifth of the

[492] The Frontier or Xhosa Wars were a series of nine wars from 1779 to 1879 between Xhosa tribes and European settlers in the Eastern Cape.

> Frontier Wars. The oldest townships, Fingo and Tantyi, are below Makanaskop, to the left; to the right of it is the old Municipal location, and below that, Ndancame and Vukani tumble down the valley. (53)

Here Hilton-Barber recounts Xhosa history – as opposed to British history – in terms of how the first sentence is phrased from the position of Makana. Then she describes the townships that can be seen from this hill. But the chapter is about personal heartbreak; why does she open it with some local black history and a description of the townships in relation to the hill? Quickly after this, we move into the main part of the chapter with descriptions of Hilton-Barber's "mad-sad mood" (53) – she smashes her fist through a window and gets stitches; she accidently cuts her thigh and gets more; she believes the security branch is calling her late at night and breathing into the phone, which makes her scared; she is anxious and heartbroken; and she is driven crazy by the church bells that sound all over Grahamstown. But before we enter into the nitty-gritty of her personal pain, the opening on the *koppie* frames it as part of a larger scene, gives it a larger sense of history, traceable from the grandness of a war to the tawdriness of the tumbledown townships.[493] Hilton-Barber pulses out her place in this world historically and geographically, but also racially – in relation to whiteness and blackness.

"Who can weep selfishly over a mere man [Roland] when other women, *their* men, the *people*, are suffering?" (56) Hilton-Barber asks. Her italics emphasise the suffering of other women, other women's men, and the people. The *people* are 'the People', a phrase that taps into a something formidable and romantic, suggesting a cohesive and coherent collective, an inevitable swell.[494] Those belonging to the group

[493] This is a similar instinct to her self-intervening to widen the scope of the scene.
[494] Though, as mentioned, Kelly and Thiranagama also understand 'the People' to be a vulnerable group, subject to breaking up into a mass of individuals. Kelly and Thiranagama, *Traitors*, 11.

have an automatic legitimacy. Hilton-Barber figures herself outside of this collective – she, who is weeping over a mere man, while the people suffer. She continues: "I contain my own personal pain, but cannot escape the paradox. We are the colour of the enemy, yet we are on the side of the people and despised by our own people." (56-57) Presumably Hilton-Barber's own people are white people. Whites, *her* people, hate her for being on the side of black people. But, for those for whom she fights, her skin makes her indistinguishable from the enemy. Subtly, Hilton-Barber is describing a sense of not belonging anywhere. Even though she represses her own pain, understanding how piffling it is compared to the pain of millions of others under apartheid, she nonetheless does not gain entry into that group or the pain of the people in it. At the same time, her efforts as an activist mean her people reject her. When Hilton-Barber first meets Forsyth, she tells her about a forced removal of people who were "offloaded from trucks onto the harsh Eastern Cape veld." (29) She watches the "white military, our military" (*Ibid*) stand guard. Hilton-Barber's acknowledgement of her people and "our" military is flecked with the confusion and guilt of seeing *her* people do such harm – especially men in the military: Hilton-Barber knows many of them, and her brother Steve soon receives his call-up papers. By dint of her skin colour, is she complicit, even when these people despise her?

She connects the paradox of being white and being an anti-apartheid activist to the "uncomfortable role of the *verraaier* – the traitor." (57) "We white women lefties inhabit a most peculiar place in this mad world," she writes, "we are women, but we do not comply with society's wishes, as good women should." (57) Hilton-Barber is here the traitor, the betrayer, not only of whiteness but also of womanhood. But if being an activist against apartheid and thus for moral justice is a betrayal, what does

that say about the people she is betraying – the people she calls her people? In these few sentences, Hilton-Barber attempts to mark out the intersection between women, politics and whiteness, and whiteness and blackness, which is characterised by suffering. She understands herself to be the colour of the oppressors – "*my* people, the oppressors" (131) – and so must negotiate a way to divorce herself from that lot.

Right at the end of the book, Hilton-Barber describes a photo of Forsyth she has included in her shrine, announcing: "It was *her* people who did the killing, *her* people, my *not-people*." (212) Forsyth's people, who are not people, are a final category of people in the book. This group allows Hilton-Barber to align herself with the human race, while Forsyth and her ilk are declared non-people. This last act of self-definition is deductive. I am not her, Hilton-Barber announces. I am not part of her people, who are *my* not-people.[495] Hilton-Barber makes a similar move when describing herself as both "me" and "I". After seeing the military forcibly remove people in the Eastern Cape, she writes: "Me – the colour of the enemy, and appalled by what I was witnessing." (*Ibid*) This statement will be echoed later when she writes about the paradox of her skin, but in that version it is not "me" who is the colour of the enemy but "we". The doubling in this formulation, "me" / "I" shows an attempt at self-definition – Me? I am this – but here it also shows a split. Me, in the skin of the oppressors, and thus racially attached, matched, indistinguishable from apartheid's white might, but "I", the inside person, possibly the *real* Hilton-Barber, appalled; "I", not "me". Or "I" and "me", a paradox of pronouns. Writing about Ruth First's prison memoir, *117 Days: An Account of Confinement and Interrogation under the South African Ninety-Day Detention Law*, Sarah Nuttall argues that the many qualifying clauses First uses when referring to herself "function both as an acknowledgment and

[495] Note the subhuman signification.

as a dissociation", and show "the deliberateness of the process of distancing herself from a culture of whiteness in apartheid South Africa."[496] When Hilton-Barber divides herself into the white woman, "me", and the other woman, "I", who is appalled, she acknowledges her whiteness and quickly dissociates herself from it. But her whiteness in this scenario is a skin colour, not a culture, as with First's process of distancing. Is it perhaps only skin deep? The "me" / "I" formulation comes up twice more.

At a NUSAS congress in Cape Town, Hilton-Barber hangs out with people considered troublemakers: "Being me, I seek out the naughtier ones, the Tendencies." (34) Here "*being* me, I" is an even stronger marker of self-definition, meaning, being who "I" am – which, we learn immediately, is someone who is attracted to rule breakers and risk takers – "I" seek them out. Notice that 'being', as in, having consciousness, adds another 'I', making the formulation "I … me … I". As the use of the "me" / "I" is an act of distancing, Hilton-Barber does not want to be associated with seriousness and the average here. She seems heavily invested in constructing herself as naughty, unruly, ungovernable, like her hair. This fits with her need to associate herself with the oddballs, the freaks. Hilton-Barber observes: "While much of the Grahamstown Left pales in comparison to the leaders of the bigger campuses, our united oddness, tightness and sheer determination make us unstoppable." (46) She is wild, exceptional, out of the ordinary, and part of group of equally odd people, and thus *not* normal, the average white woman, who is homey, and thus perpetrates. But, again, this is superficial; their cohering force is spun from clothing.

Lastly, she writes, while in prison: "I instinctively know that I cannot give in to claustrophobia – me, a farm girl, a space freak – because that will be the

[496] Sarah Nuttall, "Subjectivities of Whiteness," *African Studies Review* 44, no. 2 Ways of Seeing: Beyond the New Nativism (2001): 119; 120.

psychological death of me, so I shrink myself." (121) Loss of space will be the death of *me*, who is apparently a farm girl and space freak – though she has never characterised herself as an outdoors person – so *I*, shrink myself. The "I" shrinks the "me". But as the "I" and the "me" change proportion, dissociation and distancing signal her breakdown. The "I" and "me" are distorted, huge and tiny, and Hilton-Barber's self-definition implodes: again, her "I", her selfhood, breaks up here, not in time, but in space. "I am a tiny speck in a cage," (125) she announces, showing her total loss of humanity, consciousness. "I am a Lilliputian." (128)

When Hilton-Barber first enters her cell, she writes: "Here I am, alone, a white woman detainee in police cells." (107) "Here I am" is an indication of place but also of the self: I am, meaning, I exist. Where? Here. But her existence has shifted. She is not "me, I" or a speck or character from a book – which she will become later. She is something else: a white woman detainee. She is a prisoner, still white and still a woman, but incarcerated. Notice that white and woman are modifiers for the noun "detainee". They do not function purely as nouns themselves. What is the condition of this existence? It is lonely. This double locator, "I am" and "here", is solid. This is who and where she is. No longer double dealing with "I" and "me", incarceration allows her to be a white woman. As a detainee, someone radical enough for the state to confine, she has legitimacy, and this allows her an identity: a white woman.

Hilton-Barber directly names herself a white woman twice more, and once imagines someone else seeing her as a white woman. When Forsyth calls Hilton-Barber after her flashback to tell her that she has also had one, Hilton-Barber writes: "I am dumbfounded by the sheer absurdity of two fifty-something white women sharing memories of traumatic flashbacks to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, across continents, 30 years later." (176) In this small moment, Forsyth and

Hilton-Barber are the same: both in their 50s, both white women, and both traumatised enough to be slammed back in time by a smell or a movie. This connection spans time and space, 30 years and two continents. Of course, in the end, Forsyth is not forgiven, is even banished from the realm of the human altogether, creating for Hilton-Barber a line, a body, a symbol for who she *is not*. In this moment, though, they are utterly benign, even fragile, white women sharing something. Like her visits to the lost members of the sisterhood, it is in togetherness and in sharing that Hilton-Barber can occupy, even for just a moment, a space as herself.

"I am a lone middle-aged white woman who once worked for the Struggle. That's all," (212) writes Hilton-Barber. Notice that she is a lone woman, and not alone, making her someone unhomed but nonetheless fierce in her independence. She announces herself as a white woman in connection with the struggle, meaning, like being a detainee, her identity as white woman may emerge only under certain circumstances. That's all, she adds, meaning 'nothing more' or 'no big deal' – perhaps she means both. But Hilton-Barber cannot outwardly display her struggle credentials, and this leaves her ambiguous about how others perceive her identity.

On the plane to East London, Hilton-Barber, who is sitting near a group of young people, thinks, "somewhat bitterly, that the Born Frees will never know that wail [Nomonde Calata's scream] … I am half-envious, half-resentful. To them I'm just a middle-aged whitey. I hope at least they think I'm trendily dressed." (189) What does she want to be? Young, clean, trendy – not a 'whitey', not after what she did for the struggle. But as Hilton-Barber's whiteness unconsciously plays out in the text, her identity as a white woman takes on a shadow side, quickening with the violence of usurpation and unconscious privilege.

In the chapter "Spyker", Hilton-Barber is sent from her cell to meet Spyker van Wyk, the prison warden. Though at first she does not know why she is sent, it becomes clear that it is about her request for knitting needles and wool. Going insane with boredom, Hilton-Barber had one day decided to "campaign for knitting rights" (125), convinced that they would be granted: "It is surely hard to deny such a womanly request – knitting needles and a ball of wool?" (*Ibid*) The request complies with ideas of the good woman – who uses her spare time in docile labours related to her role as mother and wife. Knitting needles are the tools of this role; knitting makes women's leisure time safe.

Before entering Spyker's office, Hilton-Barber describes the moment she takes to compose myself: "I rearrange my ungovernable hair." (127) As we have seen, Hilton-Barber's hair forms a strong part of her contention of herself. It helps her imagine and represent her body and her womanhood as outside the confines of what society demands good women to be: neat. In prison, in which her body is held and is governed by the state, her hair remains ungovernable. It escapes; it is not compliant. Before meeting the man in charge, she tries to rearrange it, or to arrange it, to create a semblance of governability – to show that all parts of the individual are imprisoned lest he catch her hair being free, outside of state confines, unreachable. As she walks into the office, she sees "a freshly scrubbed psychopath". (*Ibid*) Again, cleanliness is associated with horror. She goes on to quote Zackie Achmat from the TRC: "A little Fuhrer's moustache, dark greasy hair with a central parting. A pathological sadist, the ideal-type interrogator of a totalitarian regime." (*Ibid*) Note that Achmat perceives him as dirty – or at least as having greasy hair, showing that Hilton-Barber's impression of him as clean is coloured by her perceptions of what cleanliness denotes, and not, perhaps, by any reality. Hilton-Barber describes how Spyker features in

many horrifying TRC reports and tells us "he was given the name 'Spyker' after nailing a detainee's penis to a desk." (*Ibid*) Of course, in the office then, she knows none of this yet. But she still feels terrified. For several beats, Spyker does not speak to Hilton-Barber. He just stares at her with "eyes … like blowtorches" (128) until she starts to "feel like an animal caught in a trap" (*Ibid*), shaking and wondering what he makes of "this young white girl whom he can crush like a butterfly with one brutal gesture." (*Ibid*)

Then she describes how activist Zubeida Jaffer was beaten and threatened with rape by this man. Hilton-Barber writes: "Now, here in Fort Glamorgon, Female Whites Section, office number four, sitting under the gaze of Van Wyk, and I feel like an insect on a pin." (129) Then she relates the TRC testimony of Christmas Tinto, whom Spyker tortured by electric shock and by squeezing his penis with pliers. On the following page, she repeats the above quote, without the last clause. "Now, here in Fort Glamorgon, Female Whites Section, office number four, sitting under the gaze of Van Wyk" (130). The warder then says yes to her request and leaves, slamming the door.

If we look at the action in the scene without the other stories, this is what takes place: Hilton-Barber walks into a room with a man behind a desk. He stares at her for some time, and then asks what she wants. She tells him; he grants her the request and leaves. In fact, nothing at all happens to Hilton-Barber in her encounter with Spyker besides him allowing her to have knitting needles and wool. Meeting Spyker, especially in prison, means she is similar to the people who also met him – except she is white. The other men and the woman she calls up and who form the future of this scene, those who gave testimony about Spyker, were all black, and thus at much greater risk than Hilton-Barber. Their bodies were subject to beating, rape. Hilton-

Barber uses their testimony to give heft to what was in fact a docile encounter with someone who will turn out to be a violent man. These other stories allow her to participate in, belong to or be a part of a group who experienced massive trauma, and who thus gained credibility as fighters in the cause. But it is not her trauma. She has usurped the pain of others to do it – this is whiteness. More practically, she might also be doing it for dramatic tension in the book. Though she repeats her recognition of her race in this chapter, she does not quickly connect it to the safety it automatically gave her – or to its privilege. Not only was she not tortured, beaten or raped, she was even given something, a gift to stave off her boredom. The worst thing that happened to her in her encounter with this so-called psychopath was that he slammed the door.[497]

Hilton-Barber does acknowledge what whiteness gives her a few pages later: "We are the luckiest detainees, white women who don't fear beatings or torture" (133), but she goes on: "though they have been known to happen in one or two cases, Stephanie Kemp being the first, hit in the face and beaten for her activism in the 60s. And now here we are, twenty years later. We sit and we sit and we sit." (*Ibid*) This is a similar set-up to the "Spyker" chapter. Nothing happens to them, who sit, but it did happen to someone else where they were – and who was like them in race. Unlike in the "Spyker" chapter, which looks forward in time, this scenario looks back. This has happened. The rest will still happen in the future, and in the very far future it will be spoken about during the TRC, which the older Hilton-Barber will render in the future tense. Here, she evokes ghosts who are not yet ghosts, stories that are not yet stories – except they are true. It did happen, or, it will happen. It is not just stories. The ghosts she conjures, and their haunting pain, exist, or existed, outside of

[497] This is not to belittle what could have been a scary moment, nor to ignore its context: an apartheid prison where she was a political prisoner held without trial 'indefinitely'. Rather, it is to call attention to the ways in which the scene's drama functions.

their narratives of trauma, and outside of Hilton-Barber's narrative. They were or are people, not objects to ventriloquise personal pain.

Her whiteness also emerges when she travels. She describes the senior leadership of the anti-apartheid activists protesting her decision to leave for London, and writes: "Their objections strike me as absurd – don't I come from way up in the north, from those faraway mountains?" (*Ibid*) Here she suddenly claims ancestry in the "north", to England, presumably, though that country is not generally known for its mountains. "I bust out from behind the boerewors curtain," Hilton-Barber goes on, "and it is liberating to the extreme." (*Ibid*)[498] By using the phrase "boerewors curtain", Hilton-Barber renders a place she took so seriously in a political moment she was a part of with such urgency as parochial, common, uncultured; a place from which escape seems an obvious choice. In marking the country as backwards and in suddenly claiming overseas heritage, Hilton-Barber plays out a common form of white privilege: the possibility of leaving. Besides generally having money to travel, being white, and thus at some point in your history having a family member who held a passport from elsewhere, Europe mostly, means white people can access other countries more easily than black people, who mostly do not have this option. Thus being white means that you *can leave* – and, at the extreme end, you can *emigrate* – you can, on the one hand claim this country as your own, live on the land and call yourself a son or daughter of the soil, and on the other, use your ancestry to run. It is a way to live without consequences, which contains some of the same logic as hiring a

[498] In Hilton-Barber's use, moving beyond the boerewors curtain, derived from a play on the Iron Curtain and a sausage traditionally made by Afrikaners, means leaving the whole of South Africa. Now the phrase refers to the imaginary lines that separate predominantly English-speaking suburbs from Afrikaans ones characterised as 'common', aggressive or racist. There is one between Johannesburg city and the East Rand; another between Johannesburg and Pretoria; and in Cape Town, there is one between the poorer northern suburbs and the richer, city-bound southern suburbs.

domestic worker: you make a mess then leave home while someone else – someone black – cleans it up for minimum wage.

But this is something Hilton-Barber seems not to grasp, what whiteness gives, what it takes away. She cannot grasp those Born Frees, whom she says would describe her as a whitey – but, of course, that very language serves to show her anachronism. When Hilton-Barber first arrives at Rhodes, she notes: "Campus characters fall into the following categories: Liberals, Lefties, Buggers, Right-wingers, Rhodies, Surfers, Charras (Indians) and Darkies [sic]." (17) Born Frees would not call her a whitey, just as they would not call themselves the pejorative terms whiteys, darkies or charras. But it is these she sees, the great unwashed hordes gathering in towns and cities. She is barred from the present, where she is an interloper filled with resentment for those young and supposedly free. She is a creature of the past, ill suited to now and its complications, a refugee in time and space, anchored by nothing, a little bitter, hurt. When she uses the present tense in the past, is it a way to avoid the actual present, with its new relations, language and politics in which she has no place, no sense of belonging, no home, as her life lives itself always in the past?

The other woman

There is another woman in the home – not the bad good woman and not the good bad woman, but a background woman, the domestic worker, she who is the matriarch's long arm, her, 'Please, come in, come in, can I make you some tea?' And it is, indeed, tea, again, that reveals this otherwise invisible woman. Specifically sugary tea appears after Hilton-Barber's brother, Steven, receives his call-up papers for the SADF. Steven, who had the previous day been caned six times for possession of dagga (he

passed out after the first two lashings, and left with a bloodied back and buttocks), loses his temper and begins kicking doors and screaming. "Melea Letsoalo, our domestic, hurries off to make some sugary tea," Hilton-Barber notes, "…to try to calm him." (48) As argued, tea, here sweet tea, is both a remedy for malady and a support vessel, a way to show love and concern. It is the domestic worker in Hilton-Barber's family home who makes the tea, sugary and hot, that will soothe and settle Steven. Melea pops up in the book several times, but mostly is a figure in the background of the drama of family life. Yet she is not entirely unseen. A next-door neighbour hears about Steven's caning "through his domestic worker" (49) and comes over to commiserate. After Hilton-Barber, Steven and the neighbour smoke weed and laugh about it, "Melea makes [them] all tea and brings [them] biscuits." (*Ibid*) A domestic worker, a woman who is likely much older than them, is serving tea and snacks to stoned youths in the garden. This description, egregious in its content, is in the active voice, an improvement on passive constructions of the same act (as found in Forsyth's book), as in: 'tea and biscuits were served', a sentence that erases the maker and bringer. But that Melea is named and not obliterated from the story should not distract from what her serving tea to the revellers tells us – in this household, Melea is positioned below her employer's children. Later, in the prison Fort Glamorgan, Hilton-Barber gets homesick. "In the morning, the black female section sings Xhosa gospel songs and tears slide down my face and I think of Melea and home and the dogs and cats." (133-134) Home, that sad signifier, here comprises Melea and the pets – not her mother, father or brothers. Is Melea's position below the children and just slightly above or perhaps only on a par with the animals, then? Melea's shadow, which stretches the length of the manicured lawn, contains other shadows of other women across time and space: the perpetual maids that peopled and

served the overly warm colonialists sweating, swearing and civilising with canes; and the woman who washes my dishes, now, today, in my home in Johannesburg. The active sentence might read: 'Zanele cleans my dirty underpants.'

One other episode mentions domestic workers serving tea to late adolescents. At Rhodes, students who lived off campus could enjoy tea on the lawns twice a day. "The tea is served in big silver urns," Hilton-Barber writes, "brought out by maids wearing aprons." (21) Again, she peoples the action, but again, these women formulate the background, becoming part of a description that includes porcelain teacups, spoons chained to tables and, in the foreground, an assortment of fascinating characters, some of whom are "gentle boys with salty smiles and an endless capacity for tea." (21) I wonder how endless their capacity would be if they had to brew it themselves?

When Hilton-Barber goes to the township to record stories of what takes place there, the "young comrades", who are, she carefully notes, unusually on time, make her and her partner there, Shepi, "milky over-sugared tea in big mugs". (103) During apartheid (and probably still now), domestic workers and gardeners were traditionally given milky, sugary tea in enamel mugs and thick-cut white bread on tin plates. That is what lives in that sentence, hardened by the sniff about perpetual lateness. A world unfolds, hollow with the thwack of big tin mugs on tin plates kept hidden under the sink. (Now, quaint tea-and-rusk places or hip beer-and-pap places serve dishes on chipped enamel tableware. What was a symbol for a separation so complete crockery could not be shared, even in type, is now an aesthetic: township-chic.)

But Melea is not entirely a woman of service – her world enters and intersects with the world of Hilton-Barber's family, too. "My mother tells me that Melea has hired a sangoma to put a spell on [law and order minister Louis] Le Grange," writes

Hilton-Barber, "they took her one of my dresses from Grahamstown, a long black and yellow dress with a garish beehive design. The dress has been doused and … it is hanging on the front gate at my home, at 12 Northumberland Avenue." (133) Later, the sangoma "gets rather drunk" (142) at Hilton-Barber's homecoming party, and her brother swears "he sees him going straight through a locked gate, like a spirit." (*Ibid*) The display of the dress on the gate, with its flapping, loud colours, whispers the intimacy of what it intimates, the undressed woman, and, more, what it means – power outside the realm of the chirping suburb with its tsk, tsk, tsk of sprinklers, the clap of a broom against a carpet slung on the washing line, the light clear, but, with the dress, infused with the menace of the incongruous. If the sangoma's ability to move through a locked gate is a matter of laughter, that laughter is not without a jagged end.

Melea is equally not a lone black woman victim to be pitied and ultimately ignored. She is enumerated by at least one other domestic worker. The neighbour's visit to the Hilton-Barber's house was precipitated by news passed on by that neighbour's domestic worker, intimating that there is a network of women workers across this suburb communicating with one another.[499] So the background that this domestic worker inhabits begins to fill – Melea is part of a group of chatty but also potentially supportive women: the singular becomes solid with others.

The book includes two pictures of Melea, both taken after Hilton-Barber's release from detention. In the first, Melea's arm, adorned with a thin gold bangle, is

[499] M Neelika Jayawardane argues that this network served only the madams, who would collect "gossip about the neighbours (via the maid's networks with other domestics in the neighbourhood)", suggesting that these domestic workers lived purely solitary lives. "'Friend of the Family': Maids, Madams, and Domestic Cartographies of Power in South African Art," in *Ties that Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa*, eds. Shannon Walsh and Jon Soske (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016), 220. Though it is certainly true that domestic work is a lonely business, the 'maid's network' intimates some connection in which an admittedly small but nonetheless possible power outside of the grip of the madam could flow.

outstretched, fingers splayed open, as though signalling to stop or ready to wave, a pursed smile on her face. She is in a blue domestic-worker smock, shapeless with a large pocket, and wears a white *doek* or headwrap. Next to her is Tana, Hilton-Barber's mother. She also has her arm up but her clenched fist formulates the black power salute. She is in a pink top and well-fitted, high-waist pink trousers. She's holding what looks like a glass of wine, though that part of the picture is blown out with a slash of light. The fist of Tana's right hand is weighed against the possibility of a wine glass in her left, a pendulum of power: power to the people, yes, but the power also to be served, by the woman beside her, Melea, who forms her echo but without the fist. Her left arm, cut out of the picture altogether, can hold nothing. Like Hilton-Barber's beehive dress, their clothes also rustle with unspoken power – Tana's tight, matched, just so; Melea's a uniform, baggy, utilitarian. Both are women, but only one is womanly.[500]

In the second picture, Melea is in the background, framed by Tana, whose head is flicked back and hands are raised in mid-dance, and Brett, Hilton-Barber's other brother, who is also dancing. According to the caption, Melea is with the neighbour's domestic worker – she is given no name, her descriptor defines her only via her employer and her work – but she smiles broadly in a zip-up jacket and beret. Melea is in a domestic worker's uniform (the picture is in black and white, but I am sure that its colour would be blue) and a *doek*. Both women are about to clap, there in the background, arms raised, ready, the thwack of their collective hands a future sound, a bang, a blast, a crack, tectonic. Their hands will call mountains into being.

[500] "A uniform does two kinds of work," Gabeba Baderoon notes, "it signals that the woman is capable of and ready to do domestic labor, but also that she has fully entered the persona of a domestic worker, as though there is nothing other than this surface." Gabeba Baderoon, "The Ghost in the House: Women, Race, and Domesticity in South Africa," *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 1, no. 2 (2014): 187.

Epilogue

Who is the violating self? How might we understand betrayal or complicity in contemporary South Africa? How do we think and write about violence now? This epilogue is a runover, a leftover, a *supplement* to my other writing throughout this doctorate, which sought to test closeness by asking: how might I also perpetrate? And: what happens to writing about perpetrators without moral outrage? The following is an exploration of the hopeful but nonetheless complicit and thus perpetrating self in the context of the Wits University 2016 #FeesMustFall protests.

Writing the perpetrator

I dream my mouth is too full to swallow. I choke and chew, choke and chew, but I cannot masticate fast enough. I will overflow, my mouth huge and blown up, swollen. Bloody, too, perhaps, like the priest's. Full of teeth. Dreams peopled by accusers, fire, flash and stun grenade — on the observers' WhatsApp group, a group armed with phones and feet, to see and to say, it reads:

>Police moving onto piazza.

>Protesters breaking up paving stones

>Protesters singing now. Water cannon moving to face the group.

>Very tense. Violence is inevitable

>Be safe everyone!

>Observer safety is key. Move back if necessary. K, is anyone currently at men's res

>Students moving

Stun<

>Stun and bullets

>Stub

Protesters running towards matrix b<

>Stun

Rubber bullets at protesters on lawn. Pot shts<

>Water cannon moving towatds OLS

>Students running\

Running, running and water filled Central Block last night, flowed out of taps left open. A flood. A fire in Hofmeyer House. A pic of the glaring flames, slightly blurred. Plonk! Plink! Bah! Stones thrown at me. I duck, amazed. Why are they throwing stones at me? I hide behind a small wall. A message from management: classes went well yesterday, with better attendance than on Monday. There was some criminal activity from protesters. Three students were arrested. Four fires were discovered by campus security and put out last night. All university activities will take place tomorrow. Please report any criminal action to campus security on 011 717 — .

Pic of students, flesh gouged out on face, chest, back. Rubber bullets shot at point blank range in residences. >Comrades, we cannot let this stand #NeverSurrender! ~emoji of a black fist raised~

I drink heavily. I stop kidding myself and buy a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. I hide. First behind a small wall, then behind a door. I weep. A student 10 years my junior hugs me. Breathe, girl, she says, breathe. You're going to pass out. She moves forward, slowly looks around the door. Runs without another word.

>Very tense. Violence is inevitable.

>Be safe everyone!

>Rocks

>Rocks at police on GH stairs

>Rocxs

BUllets and stun<

Stun

>stub

Rocks: buildings unmade. Plonk! Plink! Bah! Bah! They hit the clear riot shields of security personnel and police guarding the Great Hall, Corinthian columns framed by jacaranda trees. Three, two, one: students lob, throw, catapult, pitch rocks at the building, wave on wave of them, till the air is saturated with stone.

Where do they get them? That's my question.

They're breaking the paving stones near the library and outside Life Sciences.

I heard they're destroying the buildings.

Oh, really?

A series of rock arcs amass in the air. Geometry abounds. Trajectory loops. Circles in the making. An unarchitecture in the sky: bits of building meet building. Everything shivers and shatters. All bastions, stone-faced, shudder and shake. Moving buttresses in pieces fly up and de-form, come round to collide with the classic orders readable in fluted cement. Lines and lines, in rows, stones straddle the air to unmake. Future circles, had they not been stopped by that shield, head, pillar.

>I've left. I can't take it guys. Sorry

>Thx

I see a women covered in sweat, shaking so much the two people on either side of her can barely keep her upright. She has been hit on the head with a rock. Her lips twiddle out a long low moan. She has been hit on the head by a bullet. Her eyes are wild and unfocused. Tears stream down like sweat. The medics will help. The student medics. Those willing.

>We need medics at Trinity as soo

Medics

Quiet at the res. Two police vans, three security in sight. I'm going to circle up and round to GH<

>~emoji of a large green tick = noted~

>Student got rubber bullet in the face. Need help

>I'm calling the medic now. Try move the student outside the protest area

Medic!

>We need to better coordinate, especially in terms of injury and trauma support.

>There will be injuries if tonight goes the way it looks like it is.

Medic! Medic!

In a video, the medic's hands are up in the air in front of a Nyala crammed with police. It roves, pot shooting anyone on the street. Medic! he screams, as the vehicle skids up all diesel engine and several tons of it, choking smoke, gun barrels out small holes in the sides bristle. The medic's shirt has a hastily painted red cross on it. He is probably not yet 25. In one upraised hand is a small first aid kit, like the one I keep

under the seat in my car. In it: gauze (one roll), safety pins (three), plasters (two large, three medium, five small), one-way valve for mouth-to-mouth (one), disinfectant (25ml), scissors (one, kiddy-sized, round-nosed, bright yellow).

Don't shoot. Please.

I'm a medic!

Pic of an SABC mobile van on fire. Retweet.

Voice message on another group:

>"Guys, if you value your lives you will not come in tomorrow"

Overheard:

"Dude I can't go to class. They burned the lecture hall. Check it."

"So but will you go to your psych one."

"Ja, I reckon."

From 13 floors up I watch a Nyala like a toy drive at speed up to a priest in white. He stands, arms outstretched, Christ the Redeemer in Braamfontein, protecting the entrance to his church and the students behind him there. Over and over the Nyala revs and screeches to a halt, closer and closer to that standing man, till his robes sway against the front of it. Then, the vehicle reverses, goes up the road, swings around, drives the wrong way down the road, slows at the entrance. A gun emerges from a hole in its side, and someone shoots that priest in the mouth.

Point blank shot rubber bullet

We can't let these hooligans rule the roost like this.

Yes, but Robyn, why do they break things? It's the destruction I can't stand.

Fucking, arrest them all. Throw them in jail and throw away the key.

I mean who is going to pay for the damage? The taxpayer, that's who.

What they are 'protesting' for is impossible anyway.

let them get what they want when they decide, oh, we want somethi

I'm also going to demand free shit, like right now. #restaurantbillsmustfall

re criminals they must be dealt with with the full force of the law, otherw

They're lazy

They're going to fail anyway

This is not about money

gh schools were better then there would be a better pass ra

What can the university do anyway?

Standards

will

fall

They don't deserve education

A firecracker goes off in a metal dustbin. T says his ears are still ringing. I notice the whites of his eyes.

Overheard: "I feel naked when I shave my legs. Haha."

A boy dies, out there, beyond the university. T cries. I leave. It's all connected, says L, this and that violence. The inside and the outside violence. The country, like skin, crawls. I feel with my fingers the end of me, beyond this, only things that will touch

back with such acid I will dissolve. I leave. The workers are protesting, I say, quickly zipping up my bag. Water cannons. M is crying now too. I leave. Worker cannons on the piazza, I say, zipping up my bag. I mean, wtr cannons on the piazza. I leave. On the WhatsApp observers group I write:

Workers singing on stairs to gh. Quiet<

Later:

Workers moving back to matrix<

I hide behind the door. A student 10 years my junior hugs me. In her face I see something solid and blank. Smooth. This is not very new for her. The gulf between her and I cleaves open, wide as the lecture hall behind us. She runs without another word. Now, all the quiet things are made loud.

Breathe

I, tear tracked, red faced, peek around the door — are there cops? Protesters? Are there bullets? Rocks? — and sneak out of the building. I get in my car and leave.

Girl

Signing the mother fuck out, I write on the WhatsApp group. How dare I

On the phone, I omit to my husband: Just wanted to let you know, I got into a bit of a bad position today, so I'm coming home. Later I tell him: I was caught among the protesters and had to run a bit. I omit. But he knows. He asks constantly, Why are you doing this? I don't know. I can't say, exactly. Just that it feels right – and home is

worse. Just that it feels right – and staying at home in my quiet suburb among trees is worse. How can you endanger yourself? How can you put your body there? He demands. I'm not in danger.

I'm not in danger.

And though I ran, I am not in danger. And though I ducked behind a wall, (Plink, Plonk, Bah! Bah!) I hardly ever am.

My cousin, a student doctor at Wits, is outraged at a braai, Windhoek in hand, earnest in his way, young, too. Robyn, you know what they said? They said a white person has to die before management will care. How can I support something that wants to kill me? Is it untrue, I ask. Is it untrue that things would look very different if these were white people? Don't threaten me, he half shouts. My uncle weaves up just then. I hear you support the students? Beer in hand, braai, gentle sway. It's not quite that simp… How could you support a bunch of hooligans? Can't let hooligans rule the roost like this.

Fucking, throw them in jail and thro

Lazy

trying to get out of writing exams because they're going fail anyway

You know, Robyn break things?

Is it untrue that things would be very different if the bodies being hit with water cannons and rubber bullets, if the lungs breathing diesel from ever-idling armoured vehicles and tear gas, were white? It is so easy, a friend comments, to make of black bodies hooligans and thus declare them both worthless and subject to the most severe

policing. While white bodies stay away, side-eye and pass, move on.

Move on, for god's sake, it was so long ago.

I hear from someone that someone else said when the water cannons, blue, purple with dye to mark the protestors, when they hit the breasts of the old black women who stood in front of it, their bare low breasts, unbound, she had to leave. She said it was too sore to see, too sore to look at those women, to observe.

>Leaving, can't take it anymore ~unhappy face~

>Thx

Someone said that someone saw the workers, the cleaners mostly, many of them, on the piazza as stun grenades went off !BAH! and the police flew in, low, to their bodies, hitting, shooting, shouting. The women, they took off their clothes. Stop! Their breasts an arch, a pendulum, slow, the missing bottom of a circle. Look, and the men, the police looked away. Mother? But the cannon,

Water cannon on the<

worker,

blasted them in blue and purple anyway, wild hues, the colour of bruises.

My palette aches. A feel a hard lump in the middle of it. I tongue it and tongue it. P, pink-eyed, says, "I smelled smoke, the alarm went off, we ran out. They sealed the building. Sent in the security guards. To catch the people who started the fire." I smell books burning. What books, how many, oh no! not the books.

What are they going to burn next, the library? The university would disappear, I'm serious; a university is nothing without books. Gaze, quiet, sip, coffee.

P is a heartline running beneath the library, a thousand books above her, running through students who tug and spool out her line into the world in their words and in their writing, a spider scribble, a thousand books in the making. They've locked the doors. P does not look at the doors. There are security people in there. Her face is a mass of broken lines.

Oh no, not the books.

Doors are chained shut all over the campus, padlocks at odd angles on huge chains. Bodies slam against the doors – they hold closed, they creak and scream, they let in a crack of light.

>Bolt cutters in Arts fyi

>You may not use this platform to promulgate illegal and damaging activities

>Okay, but yesterday the students were being crushed against a locked gate. We cut the chain to avaoid massive injury

>*Avoid

What books are burning? Locked the doors. How many? On which floor? Let it not be the third floor, security people, where all my books are, history of nostalgia, they are looking for the arsonists, postcolonial reader, do you mean students might still be in there, on the form and nature of the book.

On Facebook: "It is there, where they burn books, that eventually they burn people." ~unhappy face; angry face~ 54 likes

The lump on my palette grows. It is a tooth, I know. A new bone in my mouth, growing out all wrong. I chew and chew, bloated, blubber mouth. Will there be more? Will teeth slice through, fill my mouth with blood and so many incisors I cannot say, Of course I don't advocate for the burning of books. So many canines, I cannot say, Maybe we should just burn it all to the ground. Start fresh. So many molars, I cannot say, Enough. I've had my protest. Can I go home now?

No, least of all that.

Plink! Plonk! Bah! Bah! I duck under a low wall, chest on fire, crouch run, stop.

Stones thrown at me. Hiding.<

>Police headed back to piazza. Water cannon

>You okay?

Oh fuck. They're coming. The stone throwers. To get me. Run up stairs, up again, trapped. Two girls crouching too stare at me. A boy runs up. The girls scream. He ducks too. Hiding? Hiding. Sellouts! the stone throwers yell. Sellouts! Not to me, to the girls, crouching. Not me, I was just there, half in the way, half out. Looking at the boys with stones looking at the girls on the stairs. Sellouts! The rocks stop. The girls look at each other, burst out laughing, squeal as they run away. The boy stands up, plods, slouches away.

Pause.

How dare I get

I must get out of here. I creep down the stairs. Police shoot from above. Tak, tak. Tak. I must move across the lawn and out. Walk, not run. Students run. I am a witness. See

my phone, 15% battery, text itching thumbs? I am an observer, see, not a student, black nor poor, see? Head down, I must not run. A stun grenade goes off at the piazza. No one screams.

I walk fast; I am almost through, almost out. Then a student sprints past me, flash! down as I cross. Then another. Then five or six. Fast, silent. Ta, ta, ta, ta, foot falls down. I stop short. Ta, ta, ta. Policeman shoots past, crouches, shoots. Tak! No one falls. More students run. I step left, right, back, two steps. I could gauged out skin on face, back, point blank rubber bullets in the res, priest. More, ta, ta, ta, ta

Ta. Ta. Ta

I run then, tatata, with the students. Fast, one two girls boys me disperse, hide, slip away, everyone melting into doorways and up stairs. Wild, hand out for the wood of one of the double doors, curl around, I whirl my body behind.

My mouth slack with copper, snot, my whole body convulsing, crying in hics, moormoremorreeeroooo, I bubbler, hands a violent flutter, moreermooorroooroo, I croon, face red, wet, hic, spit from my mouth. Breathe, girl, she whispers.

Signing the fuck out, I write on the WhatsApp group. A ripple runs through me: How dare I get

attacked?

I get in my car and drive to my four-bedroom house pretty under trees.

>What happened, Robyn?

>Safe space in WSOA, if you can get across campus

> ~ Big red throbbing heart, pulses pulses ~

Conclusion

My investigation of perpetrators and how they represented themselves or are represented by others presents a rich seam for further study. The difference in Eugene de Kock being called Prime Evil by the media during his criminal trial and at the TRC and being what journalist Bongani Madonda called "a white beast" now is the difference between the individual perpetrator and a group's more general perpetration. Some white South Africans still reject De Kock as a bad or evil *individual* so as not to be a part of the evil he represents. Some black South Africans dismiss this rejection as taking up an unearned moral high ground and regard De Kock as a metonym for the rot of apartheid and white people's complicity in its continued forms. Yet Anemari Jansen's book carefully shapes the reader's interaction with De Kock so that she is left ambiguous and partially with feelings of empathy, possible only by hiding race and racism. But is this the same for every reader, across nationalities and races? One avenue to pursue here and in perpetrator studies of this kind in general would be to do a study of the publication of these books, including analysing data related to its target audiences and consumption in South Africa and abroad. This goes for all the books in this work, especially, for instance, Olivia Forsyth's book, which clearly has a white reader in mind. What might a study of black readers' reactions to these books contribute to our understanding of contemporary representations of perpetrators?

Hugh Lewin filled in his story in loops and doubles to test his own complicity while remaining safely outside blame. He is wary, rightly, of story and its consequences. Lewin understands what telling a story does: arrests it, makes the partial look full, makes the essentially fictive look real and complete. Writing a story makes that narrative possible. Making something potentially impossible to fully understand or capture readable on the page is thus a betrayal of the shifting nature of

story, especially of stories of privation and violence. Here a fuller study of the genre of life writing and narrative form in relation to representations of violence and perpetration would be pertinent.

As Jacob Dlamini noted, the story of women perpetrators is yet to be told. Though Forsyth's book gives us a glimpse into such a story, there is still much to be done. A research project of this type would include archival work and conducting interviews to gather primary information about these women. They would include women askaris, especially black women askaris, of which little is known: women involved in or in instigating acts of violence such as necklacing, honeypots – the women informers who used sex to gather information that Forsyth mentioned – and other spies and soldiers. As I have shown with Bridget Hilton-Barber, this work can also extend to the murkier spectrums of women's complicity. The study of violent women is a gap in perpetrator studies that exists in and outside of the South African context and so is a crucial area of study.

Forsyth creates layers of fantasy to manage her position as perpetrator, making herself professional, innocent, contrite and politically sanctioned. But she equally takes on positions of racist power in relation to black women. Her narrative devices allow her to take up positions of power and innocence simultaneously so as to make her self-representation or autobiography possible – if she did not describe herself as weak and innocent as well as powerful and professional, she would have to admit to being responsible for her acts, and would thus need to show some kind of remorse. This would be an expectation in terms of a social contract built into negotiated democracy in 1994 and described through and in the TRC. Yet her book comes very close to a total rejection of responsibility. Though there are studies of this kind in both philosophy and psychology, a further look into remorse and responsibility is

necessary – not only as key terms in the ways in which South Africans might encounter one another morally, but also via a new turn in the possibilities in these feelings, especially in light of the negative ways in which many white people responded to the student protests and other protests by those who remain victims of poverty and exclusion in this country.

Without self-reflexivity, we cannot see ourselves. This is important for white writers, and white people at large, because a lack of self-reflexivity risks us inadvertently playing out inevitable privileges and ignoring what this means and does to others, especially black people. Being incapable of reflecting on privilege characterises the bullish violence that runs from the insensitive to the white supremacist here in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. My epilogue was an attempt to try to write into perpetration and privilege in contemporary South Africa – in a moment of intense urgency – to try to understand the borders and contours of complicity and taking action, and how these remain entirely blurred throughout. But a focus on the white self and its privileges enacts the very erasure the self-reflexivity attempts to mitigate: whiteness is centred as blackness falls out of view. In the chapter on De Kock, black people were visible: they were being hunted, captured, tortured, murdered; or they hunted and tortured, braaied or were put to flame. Jansen's representation of De Kock carefully worked to remove or lessen the blame for these actions, but the actions filled the frame: the apartheid fight between and with white and black people, the bones and muscle, bombs and knives. Dlamini's book was similar in this regard: black people occupied his book in every way; they were the centre of his study, the focus of his questions about loyalty, betrayal, violence and agency. Both books are about the viciousness of apartheid and racism, despite attempts at the omission of race or of troubled sites of violence, such as the violence

of the ANC in exile. The black people in peril exist; the fight grows bloody. By contrast black people in Forsyth's book are cartoonish figures made bright and silly by her obvious racism, as individuals are subsumed into her fantastical universe, which spits them out as goons and maids. Her racism is readable, and readable for what it is: ridiculous, superficial – though this is not to diminish racism's unspeakable harm: as Hannah Ardent notes, evil itself is all surface. But Lewin and Hilton-Barber's books were different. In them, black people hardly feature, partly because of the black consciousness movement's imperative to organise separately. White people feature: white people fighting apartheid; white people betraying other white people. Both Lewin and Hilton-Barber were anti-apartheid activists whose bravery, contrary to most other white people in apartheid, must be acknowledged. But their reflexivity about their whiteness all but erases blackness. Further, my diagnosis of this, and my own incessant reflexivity in writing this work possibly *does the same thing*. Is this erasure more pernicious than the violence against black people in the books about De Kock and the askaris? The bind here is not new. Biko found white liberals more dangerous than the most pugnacious racists, because with the latter the hatred and violence was at least not hidden behind a layer of self-righteousness. But it remains a bind: a 'choice' or selection of erasures of racial privilege and/or of the people harmed by that privilege.

But how do we avoid self-reflexivity and the focus on the individual and her psyche? How do we stop imagining the self, or at least the white self? If whiteness is a kind of medium of thought and being, how do we write outside of that medium? This question is like the other questions facing any kind of representation now in the world: as we face environmental demise and the end of the species, how do we write beyond the small, individual life? Put another way: if the world is run on fossil fuel,

what would a world look like run on renewable energy? What different flows and stoppages would emerge? I do not necessarily want to carry across the same moral weighting between fossil fuel and renewable energy as between white and black writing. Rather I want to think about what writing outside the medium of whiteness – with its potential double erasure – would entail. What would it look like? How would the individual appear or disappear? What would replace reflexivity? More precisely, how could we imagine or reimagine South African history now?

At a conference I attended on South African liberation and struggle narratives in northern Limpopo in 2017 so much of the work was still tied to a clean and neat history of South Africa's struggle featuring unfettered heroes and villains. Part of this is perhaps necessary – have the black men and women who fought and died for the struggle been monumentalised enough? This is a different study, but the question remains important in this country where so many suffered, and still suffer, and remain unsung. But no further study can be undertaken without an archive of black people's struggle stories told in complex ways, which include the possibilities of perpetration, complicity and betrayal – each of which, as I have shown, are part of a time of violence for both sides (though, again, let me make it clear that I am not morally levelling the sides here). Dlamini's book is unique in this, even if there were parts of it he did not or could not include. Where are these stories? Perhaps they reside in spoken narratives, in stories told in whispers but, because of a continued culture of secrecy, are never written down. Or is it not time yet? Is it too painful to contemplate what violence does to those who undertake it for good? For those who suffered, who really felt the pain of racism and privation under apartheid, are these stories taboo, even unspeakable in the sense that philosopher Theodor Adorno noted after Auschwitz? Perhaps the question is: must art break through? Does this level of

pressure and pain exert new forms that show us something only seeable on the very periphery, beyond or even outside of narrative altogether?

Bibliography

"De Kock gets parole but Derby-Lewis' medical parole rejected." *Mail & Guardian*, January 30, 2015, https://mg.co.za/article/2015-01-30-de-kock-granted-parole-but-derby-lewis-medical-parole-rejected.

"How Steve Biko died: an excerpt from Xolela Mangcu's *Biko – A Biography*." *News 24*, September 20, 2012, https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/How-Steve-Biko-died-20120919?cpid=2.

"Inside the ANC MP vetting questionnaire." *Mail & Guardian*, March 8, 2014, http://mg.co.za/article/2014-03-08-inside-the-anc-mp-vetting-questionaire.

"Journalists jailed for inciting Rwandan genocide." *The Guardian*, December 4, 2003, https://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/dec/04/pressandpublishing.radio.

"Night of the generals." *Africa Confidential* 57, no. 7, April 1, 2016, http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/11606/Night_of_the_generals.

"Seremane 'torturer' to co-operate with TRC." *Mail & Guardian*, July 28, 1997, http://mg.co.za/article/1997-07-28-seremane-torturer-to-co-operate-with-trc.

"The execution of a camp commander." *Mail & Guardian*, October 30, 1998, http://mg.co.za/article/1998-10-30-the-execution-of-a-camp-commander.

"The former apartheid spy on her memoir and contrition." *The John Robbie Show on Radio 702*, August 31, 2015, http://www.702.co.za/articles/4894/the-former-spy-olivia-forsyth.

"Truth judges rule against disclosure of informants' names." *Sapa*, March 3, 1997, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media%5C1997%5C9703/s970303e.htm.

"Victims want informers' names, TRC proceedings in Durban halted." *Sapa*, November 13, 1998, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media%5C1998%5C9811/s981113d.htm.

Abrahamian, Ervand. *Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1999.

Adams, Jenni and Sue Vice, eds. *Representing Perpetrators in Holocaust Literature and Film*. Oregon and Middlesex: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013.

African National Congress. *Stuart Commission Report on Commission of Inquiry into Recent Developments in the People's Republic of Angola*. Lusaka: African National Congress, Department of Information and Publicity, March 14, 1984, http://www.anc.org.za/content/stuart-commission-report.

African National Congress. *Skweyiya Commission Report on Commission of Enquiry into Complaints by Former African National Congress Prisoners and Detainees*. Johannesburg: African National Congress, Department of Information and Publicity, N.d., 1992, http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=95.

African National Congress. *Further Submissions and Responses by the African National Congress to Questions Raised by the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation*. Johannesburg: African National Congress, Department of Information and Publicity, May 12, 1997, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/submit/anc2.htm.

Agamben, Giorgio. *The Remnants of Auschwitz*. New York: Zone Books, 2008.

Allais, Lucy. "Kant on Race and Kant's Racism." WiSER Seminars. WiSER Seminar Room, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, October 8, 2015.

Allais, Lucy. "What Properly Belongs to Me: Kant on Giving to Beggars." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 11, no. 4 (2014): 754–771.

Ally, Shireen and Arianna Lissoni, eds. *New Histories of South Africa's Apartheid-Era Bantustans*. Oxon: Routledge, 2017.

Ally, Shireen and Eric Worby. "The Disappointment of Nostalgia: Conceptualising Cultures of Memory in Contemporary South Africa." *Social Dynamics* 39, no. 3, (2013): 457–480.

Ally, Shireen. "'Ooh, eh eh ... Just One Small Cap is Enough!' Servants, Detergents, and their Prosthetic Significance." *African Studies* 72, no. 3 (2013): 321–352.

Anahita, Sine and Tamara L Mix. "Retrofitting Frontier Masculinity for Alaska's War Against Wolves." *Gender and Society* 20, no. 3 (2006): 332–353.

Ancer, Jonathan. *Spy: Uncovering Craig Williamson*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2017.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. London and New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1976.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Jewish Writings*. Edited by Jerome Kohn and Ron H Feldman. New York: Schocken Books, 2007.

Arnold, Millard W, ed. *The Testimony of Steve Biko*. Ann Arbor: Michigan Univeristy Press, 1979.

Aronson, Ronald. *"Stay out of Politics": A Philosopher Views South Africa*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990.

Ash, Paul. "From Fafi to Vlakplaas." *Times Live*, September 23, 2011, http://www.timeslive.co.za/lifestyle/travel/2010/02/23/from-fafi-tovlakplaas.

Avineri, Shlomo. "Where Hannah Arendt went wrong." *Haaretz.com*, March 3, 2010, https://www.haaretz.com/1.5036299.

Baderoon, Gabeba. "The Ghost in the House: Women, Race, and Domesticity in South Africa." *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 1, no. 2 (2014): 173–188.

Baderoon, Gabeba. *A Hundred Silences*. Plumstead: Kwela Books/Snailpress, 2006.

Baines, Gary. "Vietnam Analogies and Metaphors: The Cultural Codification of South Africa's Border War." *Safundi* 13, no. 1-2 (2012): 73–90.

Baron-Cohen, Simon. *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Bauman, Zygmunt and Leonidas Donskis. *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

Bauman, Zygmunt and Leonidas Donskis. *Liquid Evil*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2016.

Bell, Terry and Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza. *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid, and Truth*. London and New York: Verso, 2003.

Beresford, David. *Truth is a Strange Fruit: A Personal Journey through the Apartheid War*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2010.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London, Penguin: 1972.

Bernstein, Michael Andre. *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Beukes, Lauren and Thabiso Mahlape. "Not welcome: Thabiso Mahlape and Lauren Beukes on Eugene de Kock's presence at the Sunday Times Literary Awards shortlist event." *Sunday Times Books Live*, May 15, 2016, http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2016/05/15/not-welcome-thabiso-mahlape-and-lauren-beukes-on-eugene-de-kocks-presence-at-the-sunday-times-literary-awards-shortlist-event/.

Bielby, Clare. *Violent Women in Print: Representations in the West German Print Media of the 1960s and 1970s*. New York: Camden House, 2012.

Biko, Steve. "I Write What I Like." In *Steve Biko, A Selection of his Writings*, edited by Aelred Stubbs. Oxford: Heinemann, 1987.

Blinder, Alan. "Michael Slager, officer in Walter Scott shooting gets 20-year sentence." *The New York Times Online*, December 7, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/us/michael-slager-sentence-walter-scott.html.

Boister, Neil and Robert Cryer. *The Tokyo International Military Tribunal: A Reappraisal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Bonnett, Alastair. *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives*. Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2000.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Book, 2001.

Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. London: Penguin Books, 1993.

Brudholm, Thomas. *Resentment's Virtue*: *Jean Améry and the Refusal to Forgive*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.

Brudholm, Thomas. "Hatred as an Attitude." *Philosophical Papers* 39, no. 3 (2010): 289–313.

Butler, Judith. *Interpreting Non-Violence*. Senate House (now Solomon Mahlangu House), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, May 30, 2016.

Bystrom, Kerry. *Democracy at Home in South Africa: Family Fictions and Transitional Culture*. London: Pan Macmillan, 2016.

Carr, Melissa and Elizabeth Kelan. "Femininities at Work: How Women Support Other Women in the Workplace." *Thriving in Turbulent Times,* Newcastle, September 6-8, 2016.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Cawelti, John G and Bruce A Rosenberg. *The Spy Story*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Century, Rachel. *Female Administrators of the Third Reich*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Chalk, Frank. "Hate Radio in Rwanda." In *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, edited by Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999.

Chapman, Audrey R and Hugo van der Merwe, eds. *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Did the TRC Deliver?* Pennsylvania: Penn Press, 2008.

Clarke, Breena and Glenda Dickerson. "Re/membering Aunt Jemima: Rescuing the Secret Voice." *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 6, no. 1 (1993): 77–94.

Cock, Jacklyn. *Maids & Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation*. Johannesburg, Ravan Press: 1980.

Cock, Jacklyn. *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Cock, Jacklyn. "Challenging the Invisibility of Domestic Workers." *South African Review of Sociology* 42, no. 2 (2011): 132-133.

Coetzee, JM. "Confession and Double Thoughts: Tolstoy, Rousseau, Dostoevsky." *Comparative Literature* 37, no. 3 (1985): 193–232.

Coetzee, JM. *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

Colvin, Sarah. "Witch, Amazon, or Joan of Arc? Ulrike Meinhof's Defenders, or How to Legitimize a Violent Women." In *Women and Death 2: Warlike Women in the German Literary and Cultural Imagination since 1500*, edited by Sarah Colvin and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly. New York: Camden Home, 2009.

Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff. "Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa." *Law & Social Inquiry* 29, no. 3 (2004): 513–545.

Connellan, Kathleen. "White Skins, White Surfaces: The Politics of Domesticity in South African Homes From 1920–1950." In *Taking Up the Challenge: Critical Race and Whiteness Studies in a Postcolonising Nation*, edited by Damien W Riggs. Belair: Crawford House, 2007.

Connellan, Kathleen. "White Spaces." *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association* 2, no. 1 (2006): 1–9.

Conway, Daniel. *Masculinities, Militarisation and the End Conscription Campaign: War Resistance in Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012.

Coullie, Judith Lutge, Stephan Meyer, Thengani H Ngwenya and Thomas Oliver, eds. *Selves in Question: Interviews in Southern African Auto/biography*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Critchell, Kara, Susanne C Knittel, Emiliano Perra and Uğur Ümit Üngör. "Editors' Introduction." *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1–27.

Dagut, Simon. "'Strangely Hard Natures were Bred in the South Africans of that Day': Rural Settler Childhood, 1850s-1880s." *African Studies* 58, no. 1 (1999): 33–53.

Dale, Richard. "Review: The Politics of the Rainbow Nation: Truth, Legitimacy, and Memory in South Africa." *African Studies Review* 45, no. 3 (2002): 39–44.

Dale, Richard. *The Namibian War of Independence, 1966-1989: Diplomatic, Economic and Military Campaigns*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2014.

Davis, Rebecca. "Least stealthy assassin ever: Why was Eugene De Kock at the Franschhoek Literary Festival?" *Mail & Guardian*, May 20, 2016, https://mg.co.za/article/2016-05-20-00-why-did-de-kock-put-in-an-appearance-at-the-franschhoek-literary-festival.

De Verteuil, Roger. "The Scapegoat Archetype." *Journal of Religion and Health* 5, no. 3 (1966): 209–225.

De Waal, Mandy. "Jacques Pauw on Vlakplaas apartheid assassin, Dirk Coetzee." *Daily Maverick*, March 8, 2013, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-03-08-jacques-pauw-on-vlakplaas-apartheid-assassin-dirk-coetzee/#.VsMPIJOGPeQ.

De Wet, Phillip. "Scant sauce in 'honeypot' memoir." *Mail & Guardian,* July 31, 2015, https://mg.co.za/article/2015-07-30-scant-sauce-in-olivia-forsyths-honeypot-spy-memoir.

De Wet, Potgieter. *Gruesome: The Crimes and Criminals that Shook South Africa*. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2015.

Dearey, Melissa. *Radicalisation: The Life Writing of Political Prisoners*. Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2009.

Dearey, Melissa. *Making Sense of Evil: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Decety, Jean and William Ickes. *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2011.

Deutsch, David and Niza Yanay. "The Politics of Intimacy: Nazi and Hutu Propaganda Case Studies." *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 1 (2016): 21–39.

Dlamini, Jacob. *Native Nostalgia*. Johannesburg: Jacana, 2009.

Dlamini, Jacob. *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*. Johannesburg: Jacana, 2015.

Doherty, Christo. "Trauma and the Conscript Memoirs of the South African 'Border War'." *English in Africa* 42, no. 2 (2015): 25–56.

Doherty, Christo. *Bos: Constructed Images and Memory of the South African Bush War*. Resolution Gallery, Johannesburg, January 15–March 12, 2011.

Doherty, Christo. “Bosbefok: Constructed Images and the Memory of the South African ‘Border War’.” Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2014.

Dolar, Mladen. *A Voice and Nothing More*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006.

Doxtader, Eric. “The Quietude of Transitional Justice: Five Rhetorical Questions.” *African Yearbook of Rhetoric* 6, no. 1 (2015): 23–38.

Draft ANC Freedom Charter: Federation of South African Women 1954-1963. N.d. AD1137. Historical Papers Research Archive, Johannesburg: William Cullen Library.

Du Bois, WEB. *The Souls of Black Folks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Dubow, Saul. *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Durand, Arn. *Zulu Zulu Golf: Life and Death with Koevoet*. Zebra Press: Cape Town, 2011.

Durand, Arn. *Zulu Zulu Foxtrot: To Hell and Back with Koevoet*. Zebra Press: Cape Town, 2012.

Earle, Leon and Tony Earle. “Social Context Theory: A Systems Model of Social Change Based on Social Needs and Social Issues.” *South Pacific Journal of Psychology* 11, no. 2 (1999): 1–12.

Ellis, Stephen and Tsepho Sechaba. *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile*. London: James Currey, 1992.

Falkof, Nicky. *The End of Whiteness: Satanism and Family Murder in Late Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana, 2016.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1968.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

Farber, Tanya. “‘I was like a scientist working on a cure for Aids,’ says Wouter Basson.” *Sunday Times*, January 17, 2016, https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2016-01-17-i-was-like-a-scientist-working-on-a-cure-for-aids-says-wouter-basson/.

Feinstein, Anthony. *Battle Scarred: Hidden Costs of the Border War*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2011.

Felski, Rita. *The Limits of Critique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Festinger, Leon. *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957.

Forsyth, Olivia. *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks her Silence*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2015.

Foster, Don, Paul Haupt and Maresa de Beer. *The Theatre of Violence: Narratives of Protagonists in the South African Conflict*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005.

Frankel, Max. "Willing Executioners?" *New York Times,* June 28, 1998, http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/06/28/reviews/980628.28fran.html.

Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Translated by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1950.

Gentry, Caron and Laura Sjoberg. *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics*. London: Zed Books, 2013.

Giliomee, Hermann. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003.

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. "Remorse, Forgiveness, and Rehumanization: Stories from South Africa." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 42, no. 1 (2002): 7–32.

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. *A Human Being Died that Night: A Story of Forgiveness*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2003.

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. "Trauma, Forgiveness, and Witnessing Dance: Making Public Spaces Intimate." *The Journal of Analytical Psychology* 53, no. 2 (2008): 169–188.

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. "Remembering the Past: Nostalgia, Traumatic Memory, and the Legacy of Apartheid." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 18, no. 3 (2012): 252–267.

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. "Acting Out and Working through Traumatic Memory: Confronting the Past in the South African Context." In *Hurting Memories and Beneficial Forgetting: Posttraumatic Stress Disorders, Biographical Developments, and Social Conflicts*, edited by Michael Linden and Krzysztof Rutkowski. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2013.

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. "Psychological Repair: The Intersubjective Dialogue of Remorse and Forgiveness in the Aftermath of Gross Human Rights Violations." *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 63, no. 6 (2015): 1085–1123.

Goffman, Irving. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986.

Goldhagen, Daniel. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

Goodrich, Andre. *Biltong Hunting as a Performance of Belonging in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015.

Gordin, Jeremy and Eugene de Kock. *A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State*. Johannesburg: Contra Press, 1998.

Grant-Marshall, Sue. "A journey into the heart of bleakness." *Business Day*, June 23, 2013, http://www.bdlive.co.za/life/books/2013/06/25/a-journey-into-the-heart-of-bleakness.

Gupta, Pamila. *Relic State: St Francis Xavier and the Politics of Ritual in Portuguese India*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2014.

Harris, Peter. *In a Different Time: The Inside Story of the Delmas Four*. Cape Town, Umuzi: 2008.

Harrison, Simon. *Dark Trophies: Hunting and the Enemy Body in Modern War*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014.

Hate Radio. Directed by Milo Rau. Berlin and Zürich: International Institute of Political Murder, 2014.

Hengen, Shannon. "'Little Perpetrators': The South African Voice of Antjie Krog." *Postcolonial Text* 6, no. 1 (2011): 1–19.

Heyns, Michiel. "The Whole Country's Truth: Confession and Narrative in Recent White South African Writing." *Modern Fiction Studies* 46, no. 1 (2000): 42–66.

Hilberg, Raul. *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945*. Michigan: HarperCollins, 1993.

Hillyard, Paddy and Janie Percy-Smith. "Converting Terrorists: The Use of Supergrasses in Northern Ireland." *Journal of Law and Society* 11, no. 3 (1984): 335–355.

Hilton-Barber, Bridget. *Student, Comrade, Prisoner, Spy: A Memoir*. Johannesburg: Zebra Press, 2016.

Hornberger, Julia. *Policing and Human Rights: The Meaning of Violence and Justice in the Everyday Policing of Johannesburg*. Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011.

Ingelaere, Bert. *Inside Rwanda's Gacaca Courts: Seeking Justice After Genocide*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016.

Jacobson, Kristen. "Considering Interactions between Genes, Environments, Biology, and Social Context." *Psychological Science Agenda*, April, 2009, http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2009/04/sci-brief.aspx.

Jahoda, Gustav. "Theodor Lipps and the Shift from 'Sympathy' to 'Empathy'." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 41 no. 2 (Spring 2005): 151–163.

Jansen, Anemari. *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2015.

Jayawardane, M. Neelika. "'Friend of the family': Maids, Madams, and Domestic Cartogroahpies of Power in South African Art." In *Ties that Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa*, edited by Shannon Walsh and Jon Soske. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016.

Jensen, Olaf and Claus-Christian W Szejnmann, eds. *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Jones, Adam, ed. *Genocide, War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity*. London and New York: Zed Books, 2004.

Jones, David. "ANC Objecting to Apartheid: The History of the End Conscription Campaign." Unpublished masters thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2013.

Kamongo, Sisingi. *Shadows in the Sand: A Koevoet Tracker's Story of an Insurgency War*. Pinetown: 30 Degrees South Publishers, 2011.

Kasrils, Ronnie. *Olivia Forsyth: The Story of a Mission Failed*. N.d. Ronald Kasrils Papers, A3345, B1.4. Historical Papers Research Archive, Johannesburg: William Cullen Library.

Kasrils, Ronnie. "The politics of disorder and pressures on the judiciary." *SA Monitor,* 2014, http://sa-monitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/SAM3-Rule-of-law.pdf.

Keenan, Brian. *An Evil Cradling*. London: Vintage, 1992.

Kellow, Christine and Leslie Steeves. "The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide." *Journal of Communication* 48, no. 3 (1998): 107–128.

King, Anthony. "The Female Combat Soldier." *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2015): 122–143.

Knight, Zelda G. "Some Thoughts on the Psychological Roots of the Behavior of Serial Killers as Narcissists: An Object Relations Perspective." *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal* 34, no. 10 (2006): 1189–1206.

Kraft, Robert. "The Good Intentions of Violent Perpetrators: A Qualitative Analysis of Testimony from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 21, no. 3 (2015): 359–377.

Kraft, Robert. *Violent Accounts: Understanding the Psychology of Perpetrators Through South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. New York: New York

University Press, 2014.

Krog, Antjie. *Country of my Skull*. Cape Town: Vintage Publishers, 1998.

Krog, Antjie. *Begging to be Black*. Johannesburg: Random House Struik, 2009.

Krog, Antjie. "Rethinking Reconciliation and Forgiveness at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." In *The Limits of Transition: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission 20 Years On*, edited by Mia Swart and Karin van Marle. Leiden: Brill | Nijhoff, 2017.

Kuljian, Christa. *Darwin's Hunch: Science, Race and the Search for Human Origins*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2017.

Kutz, Christopher. *Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Kwok, Yenni. "The memory of savage anticommunist killings still haunts Indonesia, 50 years on." *Time Indonesia*, September 30, 2015, http://time.com/4055185/indonesia-anticommunist-massacre-holocaust-killings-1965/.

LaCapra, Dominick. "Trauma, Absence, Loss." *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1999): 696–727.

Lanzmann, Claude. "The Obscenity of Understanding: An Evening with Claude Lanzmann." *American Imago* 48, no. 4 (1991): 473–495.

Laub, Dori. "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening." In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, edited by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Leftwich, Adrian. "I Gave the Names." *Granta* 78, Bad Company (2002): 11–31.

Lepore, Jill. "Historians who Love too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography." *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 129–144.

Letsoalo, Matuma and Mmanaledi Mataboge. "Spooks vet ANC candidates." *Mail & Guardian*, March 28, 2014, http://mg.co.za/article/2014-03-27-spooks-vet-anc-candidates/.

Levi, Primo. *The Drowned and the Saved*. London: Abacus, 1989.

Lévinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority*. Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

Lewin, Hugh. *Bandiet: Seven Years in a South African Prison*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974.

Lewin, Hugh. *Bandiet: Out of Jail*. Johannesburg: Random House, 2002.

Lewin, Hugh. *Stones Against the Mirror: Friendship in the Time of the South African Struggle*. Cape Town: Umuzi, 2011.

Li, Darryl. "Echoes of Violence: Considerations on Radio and Genocide in Rwanda." *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 1 (2004): 9–27.

Liebenberg, John and Patricia Hayes. *Bush of Ghosts: Life and War in Namibia 1986-1990*. Cape Town: Umuzi, 2010.

Lifton, Robert. *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide 1933-1945*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

Lindsay, Lisa and Stephen F Miescher. *Men and Masculinities in South Africa*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.

Llewellyn, Jennifer J and Robert Howse. "Institutions for Restorative Justice: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 49, no. 3 (1999): 355–388.

Love, Heather. "Close Reading and Thin Description." *Public Culture* 25, no. 3 (2013): 401–434.

Lucas, John R. *Responsibility*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Mackenzie, Megan H. *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security and Post-Conflict Development*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.

Madondo, Bongani. "We don't need white liberals to speak for us." *Sunday Times Opinion & Analysis*, May 22, 2016, http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/opinion/2016/05/22/We-dont-need-white-liberals-to-speak-for-us.

Maimela, Mabel Raisibe. "Black Consciousness and White Liberals in South Africa: Paradoxical Anti-Apartheid Politics." Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of South Africa, 1999.

Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Mandela, Nelson. *A Long Walk to Freedom*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1994.

Mandela, Winnie. *491 Days: Prisoner Number 1323/69*. Johannesburg: Pan Macmillian, 2013.

Mangan, James A and Callum McKenzie. "Radical Conservatives: Middle-Class Masculinity, the Shikar Club and Big-Game Hunting." In *Reformers, Sport, Modernizers: Middle-Class Revolutionaries*, edited by James A Mangan. London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2002.

Martinot, Steve and Jared Sexton. "The Avant-Garde of White Supremacy." *Social Identities* 9, no. 2 (2003): 169–181.

Masondo, Andrew. "Sawing Electric Pylons." *Dawn: Journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe*. Souvenir Issue (1986): 21–23.

Maughan, Karyn. "Joe Mamasela, apartheid askari and remorseless killer." *Mail & Guardian*, April 22, 2016, https://mg.co.za/article/2016-04-21-joe-mamasela-apartheid-askari-and-remorseless-killer.

Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2001.

Mbembe, Achille. "Achille Mbembe on the state of South African political life." *Africa is a Country*, September 19, 2015, http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-african-politics/.

McEachern, Charmaine. "The Media Truth Commission: Brokering a Healing History." In *Advances in Communications and Media Research, Volume 4*, edited by William H Miller. New York: Nova Science Publisher, 2006.

Mettraux, Guénaël, ed. *Perspectives on the Nuremberg Trial*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Milgram, Stanley. *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*. London: Tavistock, 1974.

Miller, Phillip. *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape, and Testimony*. St George's Cathedral, Cape Town, December 2006.

Millett, Kate. *The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment*. London and New York: Penguin Books, 1994.

Mills, Charles. "Kant and Race, Redux." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 35, no. 1/2 (2014): 125–157.

Minow, Martha. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.

Mitchell, Natasha. "First we call them insects: The prelude to horror." *ABC News*, April 25, 2012, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-04-26/mitchell-first-we-call-them-insects/3969192.

Mngqibisa, Olefile Samuel. "Documents of the Exile." *Searchlight South Africa* 2, no. 4 (1992): 25–32.

Monteith, Sharon. *Advancing Sisterhood?: Interracial Friendships in Contemporary Southern Fiction*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000.

Morley, Rachel. "Fighting Feeling: Re-thinking Biographical Praxis." *Life Writing* 9, no. 1 (2012): 77–95.

Morrell, Robert. *Changing Men in Southern Africa*. Durban: University of Natal Press, 2001.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Morrissey, Belinda. *When Women Kill: Questions of Agency and Subjectivity*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Morrow, Seán. "Dakawa Development Centre: An African National Congress Settlement in Tanzania, 1982-1992." *African Affairs* 97, no. 389 (1998): 497–521.

Morudu, Palesa. "Eugene de Kock at the Franschhoek Literary Festival: Of screwed courage and a screwed country." *Daily Maverick*, May 16, 2016, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-05-16-eugene-de-kock-at-the-franschhoek-literary-festival-of-screwed-courage-and-a-screwed-country/#.V1AFsRWKTeR.

Mosupi, Azizzar. "'I pitied 'Prime Evil'." *Times Live*, May 17, 2016, http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2016/05/17/I-pitied-Prime-Evil.

Mtolo, Bruno. *Umkonto we Sizwe: The Road to the Left* [sic]. Durban: Drakensburg Press, 1966.

Murphy, Jeffrie and Jean Hampton. *Forgiveness and Mercy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Musila, Grace. *A Death Retold in Truth and Rumour: Kenya, Britain and the Julie Ward Murder*. Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2015.

Nakayama, Thomas K and Robert L Krizek. "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81, no. 3 (1995): 291–310.

Ndebele, Njabulo. "A home for intimacy." *Mail & Guardian*, April 26, 1996, https://mg.co.za/article/1996-04-26-a-home-for-intimacy.

Ndebele, Njabulo. *Fine Lines from the Box: Further Thoughts about our Country*. Johannesburg: Umuzi, 2007.

Ndebele, Njabulo. "Foreword." In *Categories of Persons: Thinking Ourselves and Others*, edited by Megan Jones and Jacob Dlamini. Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2013.

Ndelu, Sandile, Yingi Edwin, Musawenkosi Malabela, Marcia Vilakazi, Oliver Meth, Godfrey Maringira, Simbarashe Gukurume and Muneinazvo Kujeke. *#Hashtag: An Analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement at South African Universities*. Edited by Malose Langa. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2017.

Ndlovu, Isaac. "Inside Out: Gender, Individualism, and Representations of the Contemporary South African Prison." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (2017): 1–14.

Neocosmos, Michael. "Remembering Phyllis Naidoo." *Daily Maverick*, February 20, 2013, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2013-02-20-remembering-phyllis-naidoo/#.V5HndZNWneQ.

Nkosi, Bongani. "David Mabuza believes he has been cleared of apartheid-era police spy allegations." *The Sowetan Live,* May 16, 2016, http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2016/05/16/david-mabuza-believes-he-has-been-cleared-of-apartheid-era-police-spy-allegations.

Nussbaum, Martha C. *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Nuttall, Sarah. "Subjectivities of Whiteness." *African Studies Review* 44, no. 2 (2001): 115–140.

Nuttall, Sarah. *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post Apartheid*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009.

Nuttall, Sarah and Kerry Bystrom. "Introduction: Private Lives and Public Cultures in South Africa." *Cultural Studies* 27, no. 3 (2013): 307–332.

Nuttall, Sarah. "Surface, Depth and the Autobiographical Act: Texts and Images." *Life Writing* 11, no. 2 (2014): 161–175.

Nyamnjoh, Anye. "The Phenomenology of Rhodes Must Fall: Student Activism and the Experience of Alienation at the University of Cape Town." *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 39, no. 1 (2017): 256–277.

O'Malley, Padraig. *Interview with Mac Maharaj*. January, 15, 2003, https://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/cis/omalley/OMalleyWeb/03lv03445/04lv03689/05lv03751/06lv03756.htm.

Olney, James, ed. *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Olusoga, David and Casper Erichsen. *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide*. London: Faber & Faber, 2011.

Oyěwùmí, Oyèrónké. *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003.

Panh, Rithy. *The Elimination: A Survivor of the Khmer Rouge Confronts his Past and the Commandant of the Killing Fields*. Translated by John Cullen. Paris: Éditions Grasset & Fasquelle, 2012.

Parkinson, Anna. *An Emotional State: The Politics of Emotion in Postwar West German Culture*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2015.

Pauw, Jacques. *In the Heart of the Whore: The Story of Apartheid's Death Squads*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1991.

Pauw, Jacques. "To forgive a monster." *News 24*, July 15, 2014, https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/To-forgive-a-monster-20150429.

Pigman, George W. "Freud and the History of Empathy." *International Journal of Psychology* 76, no. 2 (April 1995): 237–256.

Posel, Deborah and Graeme Simpson, eds. *Commissioning the Past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2002.

Posel, Deborah and Pamila Gupta. "The Life of the Corpse: Framing Reflections and Questions." *African Studies* 68, no. 3 (2009): 299–309.

Posel, Deborah. "The TRC Report: What Kind of History? What Kind of Truth?: A Preliminary Exploration." *The TRC: Commissioning the Past*. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, June 11, 1999.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

Pressley-Sanon, Toni. "Addressing the 'Negro Problem': Rethinking the Coon and the Mammy in *King of the Zombies* and *Revenge of the Zombies*." *Black Camera* 8, no. 1 (2016): 27–54.

Qambela, Gcobani. "Torture removed any 'choice' from askari betrayals." *Mail & Guardian,* February 13, 2015, https://mg.co.za/article/2015-02-12-torture-removed-any-choice-from-askari-betrayals.

A Question of Madness. Directed by Liza Key. Cape Town: Key Films, 1998.

Quintal, Genevieve. "Intelligence service an ANC tool: Kasrils." *IOL News*, April 15, 2015, http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/intelligence-service-an-anc-tool-kasrils-1676525#.U4idGeKDrc.

Ractliffe, Jo. *Vlakplaas: 2 June 1999 (Drive-by Shooting)*. Stevenson Gallery, N.d., 1999.

Ratele, Kopano. "Make Indigenes Unconscious of Whiteness: A Response to Green, Sonn, and Matsebula." *South African Journal of Psychology* 37, no. 3 (2007): 431–436.

Ratele, Kopano. *Liberating Masculinities*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2016.

Rév, István. "The Man in the White Raincoat." In *Past for the Eyes East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989*, edited by Oksana Sarkisova and Péter Apor. Budapest: Central University Press, 2008.

Richter, Linda and Robert Morrell. *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006.

Robinson, Geoffrey. "'Down to the Very Roots': The Indonesian Army's Role in the Mass Killings of 1965–66." *Journal of Genocide Research* 19, no. 4 (2017): 465–486.

Robinson, Jacob. *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight: The Eichmann Trial, the Jewish Catastrophe and Hannah Arendt's Narrative*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965.

Roediger, David R, ed. *Black on White: Black Writers on What it Means to be White*. New York: Schocken Books, 1998.

Rosenbaum, Ron. *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of his Evil*. London: Macmillan, 1998.

Rousseau, Nicky. "The Farm, the River and the Picnic Spot: Topographies of Terror." *African Studies* 68, no. 3 (2009): 351–369.

Routledge, Paul and Ian MacKinnon. "Bombs and betrayal haunt would-be MP." *The Independent*, October 29, 1995, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bombs-and-betrayal-haunt-would-be-mp-1579969.html.

Rowland, Anthony. "Reading the Female Perpetrator." In *Representing Perpetrators in Holocaust Literature And Film*, edited by Jenni Adams and Sue Vice. Oregon and Middlesex: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013.

Sanyal, Debarati. *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2015.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Aftermath of War*. Translated by Chris Turner. New York: Seagull Books, 2008.

Sanders, Mark. *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Schnall, Simone, Jonathan Haidt, Gerald L Clore and Alexander H Jordan. "Disgust as Embodied Moral Judgment." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34, no. 8 (2008): 1096–1109.

Scholtz-Hofmeyr, Renzske. *The Farm*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Cape Town, 2011.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Shome, Raka. “Whiteness and the Politics of Location: Postcolonial Reflections.” In *Whiteness: The Communication of Social Identity*, edited by Thomas K Nakayama and Judith Martin. London: Sage, 2000.

Simmel, Georg. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Edited and translated by Kurt H Wolff. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950.

Simpson, Thula. *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC’s Armed Struggle*. Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2016.

Sjoberg, Laura and Caron Gentry. “Reduced to Bad Sex: Narratives of Violent Women from the Bible to the War on Terror.” *International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2008): 5–23.

Sloterdijk, Peter. “The Time of the Crime of the Monstrous: On the Philosophical Justification of the Artificial.” In *Sloterdijk Now*, edited by Stuart Elden and translated by Wieland Hoban. Cambridge: Polity, 2011.

Smeulers, Alette. “Female Perpetrators: Ordinary and Extra-Ordinary Women.” *International Criminal Law Review* 15 (2015): 1–26.

Smith, Charlene. “‘Sorry I killed your brother’.” *Mail & Guardian*, November 13, 1998, http://mg.co.za/article/1998-11-13-sorry-i-killed-your-brother.

Smith, Elizabeth Irene. “‘The Body in Pain’: An Interview with Elaine Scarry.” *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 32, no. 2 (2006): 223–237.

Snead, James A and Colin MacCabe. *White Screens, Black Images: Hollywood from the Dark Side*. New York: Psychology Press, 1994.

Soske, Jon and Shannon Walsh, eds. *Ties that Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016.

Spengemann, William C. *The Forms of Autobiography: Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980.

Staub, Ervin. *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Stevens, Garth. “Tactical Reversal or Re-centring Whiteness? A Response to Green, Sonn, and Matsebula.” *South African Journal of Psychology* 37, no. 3 (2007): 425–430.

Steyn, Melissa. ‘*Whiteness Just Ain’t What it Used to Be’: White Identity in a Changing South Africa*. New York: State University of New York Press Albany, 2001.

Steyn, Melissa. “Rehabilitating a Whiteness Disgraced: Afrikaner *White Talk* in Post-Apartheid South Africa.” *Communication Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2004): 143–169.

Steyn, Melissa. "'White Talk': White South Africans and the Management of Diasporic Whiteness." In *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire*, edited by Alfred J Lopez. New York: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Steyn, Melissa. "As the Postcolonial Moment Deepens: A Response to Green, Sonn, and Matsebula." *South African Journal of Psychology* 37, no. 3 (2007): 420–424.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin. "When the Perpetrator Becomes a Reliable Witness of the Holocaust: On Jonathan Littell's *Les Bienveillantes*." *New German Critique* 36, no. 1 (2009): 1–19.

Suttner, Raymond. "Op-ed: In removing Zuma we need to ensure a democratic outcome." *Daily Maverick*, May 5, 2016, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-05-05-op-ed-in-removing-zuma-we-need-to-ensure-a-democratic-outcome/#.V5YDDJNWneQ.

Suttner, Raymond. *Inside Apartheid's Prison*. Johannesburg: Jacana, 2017.

Tal, Kali. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Tatz, Colin. *Australia's Unthinkable Genocide*. Gordon, NSW: XLibris, 2017.

Taussig, Michael. *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Thamm, Marianne. "One woman's extraordinary journey: 'Je suis Eugene de Kock'." *Daily Maverick*, May 4, 2015, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-05-04-one-womans-extraordinary-journey-je-suis-eugene-de-kock/#.Vrmww1OGPeQ.

Thamm, Marianne. "'The conscience of white South Africa': Celebrating the Black Sash, 60 years later." Daily Maverick, May 14, 2015, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-05-14-the-conscience-of-white-south-africa-celebrating-the-black-sash-60-years-later/#.WqDwBb8kDeQ.

The Act of Killing. Directed by Joshua Oppenheimer. Copenhagen: Final Cut for Real DK, 2012.

The State versus Baruch Hirson, Hugh Lewin and Raymond Eisenstein. November 18, 1964. South African Institute of Race Relations, Security Trials, Court Records 1958-1978. Supreme Court of South Africa (Transvaal Provincial Division), Incomplete Evidence and Sentencing. AD1901 28.1. Historical Papers Research Archive, Johannesburg: Cullen Library.

The State versus Edward Joseph Daniels and David Guy De Keller. November 17, 1964. South African Institute of Race Relations, Security Trials, Court Records 1958-1978. Supreme Court of South Africa (Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division) Incomplete evidence and sentencing (pp 9-64 missing). AD1901 25. Historical Papers Research Archive, Johannesburg: Cullen Library.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Application Decision for Applicants Jan Carel Coetzee, Willem Frederick Schoon, Abraham Grobbelaar, Christiaan Siebert Rorich and Tlhomedi Ephraim Mfalapitsa. N.d., 2001, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions%5C2001/ac21198.htm.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearing: Part 1, The Killing Of Griffiths Mxenge by D Coetzee, B Nofomela, N Tshikalanga. November 5, 1996, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans%5Cdurban/coetzee1.htm.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa: *Day 2, Human Rights Violations of Chris Mbekela*. April 8, 1997, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Cgtown/mbekela.htm.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa Amnesty Hearing: Day 11, Craig Williamson. September 22, 1998, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/hearing.php?id=52844&t=craig+williamson+amnesty&tab=hearings.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearing: Day 2, the "Cosas Four" WF Schoon and Others. May 4, 1999, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/1999/99050321_jhb_990504jh.htm.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearings: Day 1, Eugene Alexander De Kock on the Murder of Pumelo Moses Ntehelang. September 6, 1999, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/documents/amntrans/pretoria/53674.htm.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearings: *Day 6, Robert McBride*. October 5, 1999, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/1999/9909271013_dbn_991005db.htm.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearings: Day 4, Eugene Alexander De Kock on the Attack on Transit House in Swaziland. February 22, 2000, http://www.sabctrc.saha.org.za/documents/amntrans/pretoria/54052.htm?t=%2Bcoetzee+%2Bdj&tab=hearings.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Hearing: Day 5, Thaledi Ephraim Mfalapitsa Murder of Thembisile Tuku. July 25, 2000, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200725pt.htm.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Final Report Vol 1–Vol 5. Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Final Report Vol 6 – Vol 7. Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2001.

Thiranagama, Shirika and Tobias Kelly, eds. *Traitors: Suspicion Intimacy and the Ethics of State-Building*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Thompson, Jacqui L. *An Unpopular War: From Afkak to Bosbefok*. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006.

Titlestad, Michael and Mike Kissack. "Hospitality in Karel Shoeman's *Promised Land* and Antjie Krog's *Country of my Skull*." *JLS/TSW* 24, no. 1 (2008): 58–81.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *Memory as a Remedy for Evil*. Translated by Gila Walker. London: Seagull Books, 2010.

Totani, Yuma. *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: The Pursuit of Justice in the Wake of World War II*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Trewhela, Paul. *Inside Quatro: Uncovering the Exile History of the ANC and SWAPO*. Johannesburg: Jacana, 2009.

Twala, Mwezi and Ed Bernard. *Mbokodo! Inside MK: Mwezi Twala – A Soldier's Story*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1994.

Tyler May, Elaine. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. 20th Anniversary edition. New York: Basic books, 2008.

Unfinished Business. Directed by Kevin Harris. Johannesburg: Kevin Harris Productions, 1998.

Van der Leun, Justine. "The odd couple: Why an apartheid activist joined forces with a murderer." *The Guardian*, June 2, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/global/2015/jun/06/odd-couple-apartheid-activist-madeleine-fullard-convicted-policeman-eugene-de-kock.

Van Onselen, Charles, Frederick Johnstone and Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri. "'The World the Mineowners Made: Social Themes in the Economic Transformation of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914 [with Comments and Discussion]', The Incorporation of Southern Africa into the World-Economy, 1800-1940." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 3, no. 2 (1979): 289–323.

Van Onselen, Charles. *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand,1886-1914, Volume II: New Ninevah*. Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1982.

Verwoerd, Wilhelm. "On our Moral Responsibility for Past Violations." *Alternation* 8, no. 1 (2001): 219–242.

Vice, Samantha. "How Do I Live in This Strange Place?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no. 3 (2010): 323–342.

Waller, James. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Walsh, Shannon and Jon Soske, eds. *Ties that Bind: Race and the Politics of Friendship in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016.

Ware, Vron and Les Back. *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Wasserstein, Bernard. "Blame the victim. Hannah Arendt among the Nazis: the historian and her sources." *Times Literary Supplement*, October 9, 2009, 13-15.

Watson, Veronica, Deirdre Howard-Wagner and Lisa Spanierman, eds. *Unveiling Whiteness in the Twenty-First Century: Global Manifestations, Transdisciplinary Interventions*. Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015.

Weaver, Tony. "Forgive apartheid spies? Brereton cannot claim she did not know the results of her actions." *Cape Times*, October 24, 2003, http://www.armsdeal-vpo.co.za/articles05/forgive.html.

Weidner, Ruth Irwin. "Gifts of Wild Game: Masculine and Feminine in Nineteenth Century Hunting Imagery." In *The Material Culture of Gender, The Gender of Material Culture*, edited by Katherine Martinez and Kenneth L Ames. Delaware: The Du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997.

Weingartner, James. "Trophies of War: U.S. Troops and the Mutilation of Japanese War Dead, 1941-1945." *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 1 (1992): 53–67.

White, Rosie. *Violent Femmes: Women as Spies in Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Wicomb, Zoë. *David's Story*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2000.

Wilkinson, Peter. "City Profile: Cape Town." *Cities* 17, no. 3 (2000): 195–205.

Wilson, Elisabeth. "Inclusion, Exclusion and Ambiguity – The Role of Organisational Culture." *Personnel Review* 29, no. 3 (2000): 274–303.

Woolford, Andrew, Jeff Benvenuto and Alexander Laban Hinton, eds. *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Wright, Timothy. "Justice, Silence, Complexity: Recent Forays into the Reconstitution of Apartheid Experience." *African Studies* 76, no. 1 (2017): 163–176.

Zimbardo, Phillip, Craig Haney, W Curtis Banks and David Jaffe. "The Mind is a Formidable Jailer: A Pirandellian Prison." *The New York Times Magazine*, April 8, 1973, 38-60.

Zimbardo, Philip. *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil*. London: Rider, 2007.