Stellenbosch Stomp / Impurity and Danger

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The aim of this article is twofold. It addresses the issue of xenophobia in a South African context, and it does so in a form that intends to be inventive and interrogative by itself. One of the main premises for the interrogation is the assumption that the regularly resurfing nationalism, identity politics and xenophobia, in Europe as in South Africa as, possibly, everywhere, can be framed by the discourse of Purity-Impurity, as outlined and analyzed by British anthropologist Mary Douglas in Purity and Danger (1966). Douglas theorizes purity and impurity in terms of instantiation and disruption of a shared symbolic order. Simply put, purity conceals the preservation of that order, whereas all that threatens the social equilibrium is encoded as impurity. The close reading of Douglas, combined with analyses of “apartheid and complicity” (Sanders 2002) and the current outbursts of xenophobic violence (Adam & Moodley 2013), run in parallel with the author’s fictionalized journal from his stay as research fellow at Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS).

Keywords: purity, impurity, apartheid, cultural mixing, xenophobia, contamination, intellectual responsibility, complicity

Introduction

The cryptically titled article to follow is an attempt at “writing across borders” and combining academic and artistic approaches to a given research object. For lack of a more appropriate term, I have used “ethnographic fiction” to describe the kind of interpolation I am trying to pursue. Ethnography and fiction are the two main components I wish to combine and possibly merge into a hybrid genre. This idea emanates from an artistic research project, The Truth of Fiction (2007-2010), in which I interrogated ‘truth’ and ‘fiction’ in the recent social transformation processes in South Africa and Argentina, using both ethnographic and literary methods. The interrogation, from a writer’s perspective, brought me in the end, to my own surprise, to the crossroads of Literature and Anthropology. The resulting report was presented and defended as a dissertation in Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo.\(^1\) The final format, an academic dissertation, incorporating elements of reportage, essay and memoir, was something that evolved in the process, in accordance with my ambition to find one form that was somehow congenial with the subject matter. But it was nevertheless a compromise, where the literary in the end had to abide to the academic format.

Would it be possible for these practices to meet on equal terms – and possibly even converge? Is it even desirable that they converge? These were crucial questions for my artistic research project, and the somehow discouraging answer seemed to be: no, they are different practices and equally valuable only insofar as they remain different. However, the Fiction and Truth project actually also had “literary” offspring in a hybrid text, “Hillbrow Blues”, that was first written and published in Swedish and later elaborated and published in an English version.\(^2\) It was conceived while I was working on the South African case study, more specifically on a chapter about “writing the city”
(Johannesburg). So, it was a way of approaching the same material from another perspective.

The difference between the Hillbrow Blues and the corresponding parts of my dissertation is precisely the component that would be defined as fictional; the stream of consciousness, the subjective distortion of reality. Moreover there is the distancing device of the third person. That was added in the English version – and I discovered that it really made a great difference. “He” is not necessarily “me”. I’m not exactly sure where he comes from, or where he is going.

So, it is a fiction. And it is ethnographic in the sense that it is conveying the experience of a real place. It’s not the report of one journey, but a condensation of many journeys, with two registers in time, a now and a past, a before and an after; in this case, before and after South Africa’s transition from apartheid to democracy.

My second “ethnographic fiction” was written as part of a project carried out by artists, academics and master students at Malmö University and Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore, India.\(^3\) Bengaluru Boogie is also an interpolation of two time layers; the emerging IT metropolis of the first years of the new Millennium – “the pre-broken Bangalore” as one of my informants called it – and the combusting megacity ten years later; juxtaposing a non-published journalistic reportage from 2003 with the fictionalized impressions of two re-visits, in January and November 2013.\(^4\) The breakneck feature of this text is the protagonist’s change of gender, which came quite naturally at that very specific moment in India (January 2013, when rage over the gang-rape of a woman physiotherapist student caused mass demonstrations all over the country). Although not necessarily having undergone literal (physical) sex change, the former “he” has now become a “s/he”, creating a compositional challenge, and by all means a disturbing difficulty, which gives new meaning to the term third person.

The protagonist of the Stellenbosch Stomp remains a “ze”,\(^5\) and there is moreover a thematic continuity from the previous interrogation, as India serves as a reference point and comparison to South Africa for many of the core issues at stake: social hierarchies (race/caste purity), communal violence etc. However, in this case the supposedly congenial form is elaborated as two distinct yet correspondent texts that run in parallel – and should preferably also be read in parallel.
You can get lost in Stellenbosch. The first day at STIAS, ze walks out in the wrong direction, following Marais street instead of van Riebeck, and when ze realizes the mistake and tries to correct it, without either a map or the direction of hir residence, ze soon gets disoriented in the lofty labyrinth of shaded pave walks and white rectangular buildings, departments, dormitories, all belonging to the University; like a city plan by Le Corbusier, sanitary, modern, conspicuously white, buzzing with students who have just returned from the summer break, Afrikaans-speaking, conspicuously white with scattered exceptions in pairs or small groups, their faces shades of brown, not black, bruin-mense, as they were benevolently branded by their white superiors. Ze is going to walk these streets every day in the coming months, but this first impression of disorientation will persist in a latent feeling of estrangement. Where is ze? It could be a campus town anywhere in the affluent West, California, Australia, a subtropical Holland – Hottentott Holland – a garden city with vineyards climbing the backdrop of the

Dirt is matter out of place. It’s a one-liner almost in the category of the medium is the message. Mary Douglas’ Purity and Danger is one of the “hundred books which have most influenced Western public discourse since the Second World War”, according to the Times Literary Supplement. Ze receives a discretely grey hardcover copy of the third impression (from 1970) with the eminent library service that delivers whatever ze orders from the anonymous librarian all the way to hir desk within a day or two. The yellowed pages are full of pencil underlining and notes, and ze finds these reader’s comments, made during the dark times, as intriguing as the text itself; the first library stamp is from 1975, the book has been frequently borrowed in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s, but only sporadically thereafter; how was it read, ze wonders, during the State of Emergency: as subversive critique or as ideological support of the politics of purity outlined and implemented by Afrikaner academics, all affiliated with Stellenbosch University. This was arguably the ideological cradle of apartheid (although two of the Afrikaner fellows protest vehemently against hir allegation, made in passing over lunch, and stress that the racial segregation was long established as an integral part of the British colonial indirect rule; group area laws were implemented already in 1913, after the formation of the union, long before the Nationalist Party’s takeover in ’48).

The Anglo Arrogance. Michael recalls how the English speakers bullied the Boers in
majestic mountains. This is the cradle of apartheid. It’s hard to believe, unless you think of it as benevolent evil. D. F. Malan, the first prime minister of the apartheid state was chancellor of Stellenbosch University when his National Party ascended to power in 1948. His hat and pipe, a rock-hanger and a few bookshelves are left as curious props in a corner of the University museum, between the ethnographic display of tribal cultures and the dull mimicry of modern art. Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, the engineer rather than the architect, the brutal implementer of the master plan, had been Professor of Sociology at this same university in the formative 1930s, but his imprint is somehow retouched from the records (Where did all his busts go? All of them could hardly end up in Orania, the Afrikaner reserve in the semi-desert Karoo). His as staunch successor, John Vorster, was a former Law student at Stellenbosch, and Verwoerd’s closest collaborator in the Ministry for Native Affairs, Werner Eiselen, had held the chair as Professor in Volkekunde, the science of physical and cultural anthropology that formed the academic basis for the ideology of apartness and separate development. Eiselen, the benevolent racist; loyal bureaucrat and perverse visionary, proposing total separation as the only way in which African cultures could be protected from the pernicious effects of urbanisation. Ze looks for vestiges of oppression, of surveillance, the fencing off of the barbarians at the gate, but dividing lines are invisible or internalized, not blurred; the

school. After Verwoerd had been assassinated in Cape Town in 1966, by a “mixed-race, uniformed parliamentary messenger” (as Wikipedia describes the culprit), when the successor John Vorster gave his first talk to the nation on radio, some of Michael’s Anglo South African schoolmates (including himself?) even burst out in laughter at the new Nationalist leader’s stumbling English.

Ze imagines the author of these notes as one and the same Afrikaner student, who has struggled with the English, dictionary in hand, and had to look up and translate consecrated (heilige) and profane (goddelose/heidense). Written in 1966, in High Modernity, in the heyday of Western rationality and Techno-Optimism (in the vacuum after the continental genocide yet to be named the Holocaust), Purity and Danger is a radical cultural self-examination – “…[W]e shall not expect to understand other people’s ideas of contagion, sacred or secular, until we have confronted our own”8 – which portents the civilization critique and the postmodern breakup of the ’70s and ’80s. High Modernity coincides with High Apartheid; a yearly growth rate of six to seven per cent, dislocations, evictions, expulsions, obscene exploitation; the negation of modernity, reversing the influx from country to city, returning unwanted labour units to the miserable reservoirs called homelands (later Bantustans), while the white citizens prosper in unprecedented wealth.9
campus security policing the streets is so discrete that one could take them for road workers in their orange vests. While xenophobia rampages the country, Stellenbosch remains a bubble, even when load shedding blacks out the streets, the whites confidently torch their way back to their moderately armoured residencies.

**Why?** Simon, one of hir fellows at STIAS, gave hir the book with this intriguing title, by the late sociologist Charles Tilly. Written under the verdict of a terminal cancer, which most certainly added a special clarity to the thought, it is, as the subtitle reads, about “what happens when people give reasons ... and why”. Ze starts reading it in parallel with many other readings, and will finish it (four weeks later), not for the obligation of returning it with a comment, but because ze is enthralled to know why Simon gave it to hir in the first place. They had only just met over lunch. After that first conversation, the same afternoon, ze comes across Simon’s name as a reference in one of the books ze is reading for hir project on *Purity and Contamination*. Simon was one of the first to analyse the outbursts of deadly violence against “foreigners and strangers” in May and June 2008, a carnage reminiscent of and as abhorrent as the “black-on-black” butchery of the interregnum years. As ze is reading, new vile xenophobic attacks are being carried out, in Soweto and other black holes of the persisting apartheid cityscape, targeting Somali vendors, sometimes in the presence of the police, who in some instances even

Dirt is essentially *disorder*, she says. Separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to *impose system* on an inherently untidy experience. Only by exaggerating differences (within-without, male-female, black-white) is a *semblance* of order created.

A semblance of difference? False diversity – as the apartheid regime’s encouraging of the con festivals in the Cape, letting the coloured show their colours; even the queers come out of the closets to parade at the white masters’ back. The queer *coloured*, that is, subject to the indifferent white gaze in the non-existent public sphere, the non-public non-space of absent contagion
participate in the looting. A month later Durban will explode in murderous rage, instigated by the Zulu king in leopard pill box garment, spreading inwards from the dismal townships to the city centre; ze will watch the footage in awe, the familiar street signs, the city mall, the burning tyres, threatening thugs with pangas and sticks and kicked-around strangers running for shelter ... Yesterday’s breaking news of the bullying and harassment of black secondary school children by their self-appointed white superiors, will be forgotten. The concerned expert panels assembled on prime time in all the news channels to discuss why race is re-emerging as top obsession of the South African mind twenty years after the demise of apartheid, will reconvene to explain the xenophobic logic of inclusion and exclusion.

Why is indeed the most pertinent question. Ze is back in South Africa for the seventh time. Three months as a fellow at Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, one of the privileged to have been invited to this creative space for the mind, as the slogan reads. Ze has not been anywhere abroad for so long, not since Ethiopia in the late 1980s. And for three months, ze will hardly set foot outside Stellenbosch, except for weekend excursions down the coast, and a three-day trip with J. to Namaqualand and Namibia (and a second trip to Namibia, to renew the residence permit). Ze is playing with the thought of being in exile, imagining his new career in a new country (why is that

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AT THE DAWN OF ANTHROPOLOGY, Henry Burnett Tylor tried hard to prove that civilisation was the result of gradual progress from an original state similar to that of contemporary savagery. His understanding of cultures had obvious semblance with Darwin’s handling of organic species, although Tylor was not so much interested in the survival of the fittest as in the lingering survival of the unfit. William Robertson Smith, inheriting the idea of evolution, was not interested in dead survivals, but in what modern and primitive experience had in common. Tylor founded folklore; Robertson Smith founded social anthropology.12

Robertson Smith inspired Emile Durkheim to develop “the germinal idea that primitive gods are part and parcel of the community, their form expressing accurately the details of its structure, their powers punishing and rewarding on its behalf”.13 Durkheim quarrelled with the English political philosophers, particularly Herbert Spencer, refusing to subscribe to utilitarian psychologism. Durkheim claimed the need for “a common commitment to a common set of values, a collective conscience” in order to correctly understand the nature of society. Magic, to Durkheim as to Robertson Smith, was an evolutionary residual, yet a form of primitive hygiene.14

Louis Moulinier, a French classicist, made a study of purity and impurity in Greek thought – “excellently empirical by current anthropological standards but free of
preposterous? If ze were to emigrate, ze would possibly choose between Argentina and South Africa...)

Why do victims become perpetrators? The former guest workers in their own country, potential criminals by definition, guilty until proven innocent, have they simply internalised the Bantustan mentality? Perhaps it is more accurate to talk about afrophobia, the self-hate of blacks, a psychological disease of the mind that has killed more black people in the last five hundred years than any epidemic or plague.

Ze sees Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley for a coffee at STIAS, after just having finished reading Imagined Liberation. Last year at about the same time, a few weeks after the book launch, just before their return to Vancouver, they had received hir in their Cape Town summer home. The chillingly premonitory analysis could not have been more timely. Why? Apartheid is only part of the answer, and Neo-liberalism but another partial reason. Xenophobic attitudes are equally strong among elites, black as white, and increasing in all groups, with Indians being slightly more tolerant than others. On the other hand, ecumenical tolerance still prevails; neither Islamism nor Islamophobia are as yet featuring in the public debate. The South African divided society has long learned to co-exist with diversity. That, says Heribert, is the main hope to overcome anthropological bias” – and finds Greek thought to have been relatively void of ritual pollution in the time described by Homer, while later littered with clusters of pollution concepts, as expressed in the classical dramas. [litter is not Douglas’ word, but clusters has that derogatory tinge; litter as opposed to dirt]. The study is roundly condemned in the Journal of Hellenic Studies by an English reviewer who finds it wanting in 19th century anthropology.

Sin is fundamentally conceived as a material impurity. Blood, a holy substance endowed with miraculous power, is expected to remove the stain of sin. But since the common verb for making atonement can be translated as both “wipe away” and “cover”, the meaning may just as well be interpreted as “covering up one’s guilt from the eyes of the offended party by means of reparation”.

Covering up one’s complicity... Responsibility-in-complicity. Ze orders Mark Sanders’ analysis of the intellectual and apartheid; [connect vessels that have not consciously communicated, that is part of hir responsibility as researcher-writer; perhaps the most important part; it would be preposterous to assume any kind of (intellectual) originality, other than as bricoleur, facilitator of flows between vessels, miscegenator of ideas, prolific and promiscuous] ze was aware of its existence, but never read it before; although ze read Sanders’ later book on the TRC. Now Complicities appears
xenophobia. And yet now, in contrast to 2008, ANC leaders are coming out with coded xenophobic statements, Zuma’s own son even breaking the code, in allegiance with the Leopard-skin pillbox king.

The most captivating part of the book is the couple’s concluding autobiographies; she, an Indian from Durban, granddaughter of indentured labourers, he a German war child, a catholic conservative turned radical rebel of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, their fates unite in Durban during high apartheid, transgressors of the Immorality act, forced in exile for loving across the race barrier; now Canadians, world citizens, intercontinental commuters...

Hir own autobiography has none of the cosmopolitan ingredients. Ze belonged to a privileged middle-class, though growing up in one of Malmö’s “Million programme inner suburbs (which hir mother experienced as a social degradation), and naturally assumed an attitude of superiority and alienation, identifying with the town and province of hir birth (Linköping, Östergötland). Only after moving to Stockholm, to study at the School of Journalism, did ze start to identify with Malmö, and precisely for its (alleged) “cosmopolitanism”, which ze hardly ever experienced hirself. Ze remembers the common patronising view on the Yugoslav immigrants – Bosko in hir class, who tried hard to be accepted, and was liked by the more open-minded girls who appreciated his

as one of the really important analyses of the complexities at the core of the South African transition (a good verdict for a book, to mature with age).

“When opposition takes the form of a demarcation from something, it cannot, it follows, be untouched by that to which it opposes itself. Opposition takes its first steps from a footing of complicity”.22 Therefore, the negotiation of complicity should be an essential moment in intellectual responsibility.
gallantry, physical fitness and dancing skills, which only added to the condescending contempt. Southern Europeans in general, including Italians and (of course) Spaniards, were inconsiderably viewed as inferior. Ze doesn’t know, and it is in retrospect hard to understand, where this inherent prejudice came from. Hir family was liberal, open-minded, and affirmatively non-discriminatory. Culturally homogeneous Sweden of the 1960s was programmatically modern and anti-racist (*avant la lettre*), with its prominent jazz scene (Alice Babs and Duke Ellington), and mixed marriages (Gösta and Fatima Ekman, Svenne and Lotta Hedlund). The Swedish Sin was transgressive, the most defiant degree of Immorality. Ze received Stokely Carmichael’s *Black Power* as a guerdon in 7th grade, while never even reflecting on hir own assumed sense of privilege and superiority. Ze recalls with shame the bullying of the few Jews, *Thomas Löwy, Bernhard Rubinstein*, not for being Jews, but because they were strange, non-conformant, yet trying hard to appease, bearing the humiliation with resignation, and how ze never interfered in their defence but rather added to the insults. As late as in the mid ‘70s, one of hir class mates in the School of Journalism was generally disliked for his arrogance and the jokes about him and the slander behind his back always hinted at his Jewishness: *Omskuret är bäst.* This is as unfathomable to him as ever the celebration of the *Aramburazo* to Beatriz Sarlo, and definitely more shameful. As are hir blatantly

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**THE BRAHMIN’S DAILY BATH.** Luckily for collaboration between the castes, ground does not act as a conductor of impurity. But straw which covers it does.25

When ze comes upon the central passage on *Dirt as matter out of place*, ze finds to hir surprise that there are neither notes nor underlining in four pages. Has the reader jumped them, or read them so extensively that they literally have left no marks? Ze thinks of the scribbled notes as reflections of the words’ imprint on the reader’s mind; reading as a physical, bodily, sensual practice, the tangible text tattooed over yellowish pages of living skin.

Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. Hence, “our pollution behaviour is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications.”26 [What comes first? What are the cherished classifications? Con-fusion, con-tradiction, contra-tradition, contra-order, dissolution, disclassification] Ordering/Articulation, in opposition to art; “aesthetic pleasure arises from the perceiving of inarticulate forms.”27 Anomaly – ambiguity (not synonyms, but in their practical application there is little distinction)

Since place in the hierarchy of purity is biologically transmitted, sexual behaviour is paramount for preserving the purity of the caste. Therefore, in the higher castes,
racist declarations after hir first (tough) encounters with the US reality on hir great tour of the Americas. In the course of the journey’s first three days, ze was robbed twice, at the YMCA in New York and the Greyhound Bus station in San Francisco, and then next to raped by a Vietnam veteran who helped hir report the second robbery and offered hir his place to stay, only to demand that ze give him a hand job, and barely letting hir get away with that, c’mon suck it for a while, it won’t hurt you. Ze escaped and barricaded himself at the nearby Elk Hotel (for once ze actually recalls a hotel name), where ze had to pay a week’s rent in advance for a filthy room with red plastic covered chairs and a sullen broadloom, percolated with smoke and sweat, and ze hardly dared to walk out through the front door in the morning, expecting that hir sobered and regretful tormentor would be waiting to pick hir up (promising to make up for everything).

At lunch the next day, Ulrike from Austria, who was surprised that Swedes would go to Turkey – and even Iran! – for transplantations, and who, when confronted, admitted her prejudice, says that the interesting thing about studying apartheid at its roots is that it forces you to confront the racist in yourself.

boundary pollution focuses particularly on sexuality. Caste membership of an individual is determined by the mother [like Jewish matrilineality]; even if she marries into a higher caste, the children take their caste from her. Female purity is carefully guarded and a woman who is known to have had sexual intercourse with a man of lower caste is brutally punished.

*The Other Side of Silence*... Urvashi Butalia’s account of the horrendous brutality of the Indian partition; wives and daughters being killed by their husbands and fathers and brothers, rather than falling into the arms of the enemy; women voluntarily killing themselves to defend the chastity of the community ... the communal carnage targeting the women in particular.

In South Africa, by contrast to India, it’s not the clash between dogmatic conflicting identities, but the very opposite: insecure, fragile identities searching to assert themselves, develop self-esteem, escape humiliation and reverse denigration. Hence, it’s rather a lack of identity that instigates murder. Xenophobic violence as identity assertion – Adam and Moodley borrow the example from Jonny Steinberg’s eminent tale of Asad Abdullah: the unemployed South African on welfare bullying the Somali shop owner; both hold each other in utter contempt, but the powerless customer empowers
For some reason ze is obsessively associating Stellenbosch with The Snobs? The godforsaken English pop group, performing in Regency costumes and wigs, whose one hit, The Buckleshoe Stomp, never made the charts in Britain but became a big success in Scandinavia (big in Japan!). Recorded live, as ze now learns, at Medmenham Abbey, where, two centuries earlier, prostitutes dressed as nuns had been provided to the prominent guests of the legendary Hell Fire Club. 1964. The year Barry Goldwater ran for president in the United States of America (and Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life-time imprisonment, barely escaping the gallows). Ze is scarcely old enough to remember the silly song and the silly group, but why does that silly memory pop up in the face of the pious whitewashed Dutch mansions of this neat University dorp? The porticoes look like elegant veils, like the Droste Cocoa lady (was she a nun?), no, that association is too far-fetched; ze had no idea of the peculiarities of the Hell Fire Club before ze googled it (nowadays all this crap information that ze used to take pride in storing is ubiquitous, only a mouse click away). It must be the stomp, the alliteration with Stellie, the somehow blasphemous, ridicule, (dråplig is the Swedish word, literally meaning murderous) coupling of high-brow conservative Stellenbosch with vulgar Dixieland jazz or, better, Bavarian or Balkan umpa-umpa; the Stellenbosch Stomp. What does the Stellenbosch Stomp sound like?

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himself (asserts his identity) by ordering the kwerekwere around, and he in turn has to react with superior discipline not to provoke potentially lethal fury.

Xenophobic violence reverses daily humiliation. Reverses and relieves. Perpetration is apparently joyful, as noted by Simon (funny that ze come across his quote just after eating lunch with him); the emotional dimension of xenophobia symbolically frees the perpetrators from the real deprivation.32

The re-emergence of necklacing; the powerless community assuming power by deciding over life and death in a gruesome ritual. The stabbing of Emmanuel Sithole in Alexandra in front of the camera captures the moment of murderous impulse, whereas the necklacing of Angolan shebeen owner Joseph Hipandulwa in Kayelitsha is unbearable to even imagine.32 Like the beheading by knife of IS prisoners. Is the gruesomeness the perversion of this humiliation in reverse? Cleansing by fire, by fear, by fury – targeting the vulnerable, powerless makwerekwere, while the real culprits for the misery of the murderers are immune from their rage, since they have the power to retaliate. (Julius Malema’s young supporters put tire necklaces on statues commemorating World War I … Hans-Dieter, the new German fellow warns that the removal of Cecil Rhodes from the UCT campus will be the beginning of a Culture War: Soon they’ll start burning books that remind of colonial times).
Ze’s been given an apartment in a rental house for undergraduate students; almost like a dorm, Leiwatrer on Rattray straat, ten minutes walk from STIAS, five minutes from the dorp centre. The location is perfect, but the end of January, when ze arrived, is when students come back from the summer holidays, and they party days and nights on end before submitting to the chores of the new semester. Ze’s literally surrounded by them; walls and floor vibrating with an incessant dull hit parade (bland is a word that comes to hir mind), cars roaring on the parking in front, hysterical laughter, especially two high-pitch voices in chorus, an octave above the others; they virtually drive hir to the brink of grabbing the kitchen knife and stepping into the backyard terrace screaming BLOODY BOER BRATS... (Ze did in the end walk out and ask the young hostess on top to, PLEASE, lower the volume; she silently abided, turning it down two or three steps to a still loud but bearable level, until someone a few minutes later turned it up to normal again.) Ze tries hard but ze can’t help becoming the grumpy old neighbour, nagging the girl next door for letting her visiting sister use hir parking lot, although ze doesn’t have a car to park there, as yet. (She looked at hir in awe and apologized a hundred times and ze was struck with sudden sympathy for the spoiled and curled and inoffensive girl who could have been hir youngest daughter, knowing that she would turn to her sister and burst out in laughter as soon as she had shut the door.)

ZE DWELLS WITH DEPRAVED DELIGHT in the chapter on Leviticus. The irrationality of the abominations. The rational assumption, that what was forbidden to the Israelites was prohibited solely to protect them from foreign influence, is not a comprehensive argument, since some heathen practices were accepted. Sacrifice, for example, which is moreover given an absolutely central place in the religion. Maimonides explains the acceptance of sacrifice as “a transitional stage, regrettably heathen, but necessarily allowed because it would be impractical to wean the Israelites abruptly from their heathen past”.

The word transitional stands out in the context as premature, a premonition; only decades later will it attain a central standing, and yet retain its ambiguity. Transition, as opposed to evolution, or development, is the in-between, a neither-nor, the very process of change, instability, metamorphosis; not development as unfolding, realization, but disruption, revolution. If development is clean, orderly, pure, transition is dirty, messy, contamination... “Van Gennep likens society to a house with rooms and corridors in which passage from one to another is dangerous. Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is indefinable.”

Any cosmological enquiry, says Douglas, should start by seeking the principles of power
STIAS IS A REFUGE. After three weeks, ze had still not taken in the privilege of having 24/7 access to a spacious air-conditioned office with a view to the rolling foliage of a lush botanical garden (are there non-botanical gardens?); a creative space for the mind, precisely, not the "soul", although the scaled Nordic architecture and interior design also may evoke the idea of a spiritual retreat. Nobody disturbs hir; hir only duty is to be there, in place, to participate in the lavish lunches, Monday to Friday, and the afternoon seminar every Thursday, sometimes also Tuesday, when the researchers present their findings to each other. After seminars there is always wine and snacks, generous yet moderate; what remains in the bottles is left to self-service when tables are cleaned, but nobody would dream of overdoing the welcome, let alone go somewhere else to continue the party. Some even go back to their offices after the seminars. Michael, the composer, the artist in residence since more than half a year, virtually lives in his room on the ground floor, with an electric piano and a mattress, on which he naps after lunch, and the note blades of his work in progress papering the walls. But he is receding to Cape Town over the weekends, where his wife is soon going to meet up from their second home in London. Marlize, an archaeologist from Johannesburg, is always in place when ze arrives in the morning; she sits with her back to the open door staring at the computer screen, even on a Sunday morning when ze discovers that ze has forgotten

and danger. In the Old Testament we find the blessing as the source of all good things, and the withdrawal of blessing as the source of all dangers. Holiness – in its root set-apart – becomes equated with wholeness and completeness, which is extended to species and categories.36

And you shall not lie with any beast and defile yourself with it, neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it: it is perversion”.

The rare Hebrew word tebhel is significantly mistranslated as perversion, whereas the actual meaning is mixing or confusion. Hybrids and other confusions are abominated:

You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your fields with two kinds of seed; nor shall there come upon you a garment of cloth made of two kinds of stuff.38

You Bastard! You Pervert! That which is abominated shall not be eaten. (He who does not dance, neither shall he eat)

The fear of blood mixing haunts not only the Boer, but all white settlers; no, the English are not haunted, they would simply not imagine the temptation of miscegenation (as Israeli soldiers refrain from raping Palestinian women), whereas the Afrikaners know that they are bastards on the outset, sons and daughters of one hottentot ancestor (not necessarily female)39; “in an abyssal historical irony, given the origins of the tongue in
the key to hir office, and has to go back to Leiwat, only to discover that ze hadn’t forgotten the key, only put it in the outer pocket of hir shorts, but it doesn’t matter, because it’s less than ten minutes walk, and ze needs some exercise anyway. Being so close to the workplace is a luxury ze hasn’t enjoyed for decades, if ever; commuter as ze has been all hir professional life, spending two three hours a day in the limbo of transit, a bubble in the time-space-continuum to which ze has become so accustomed that ze takes it for granted, a fact of life; ze even enjoys the morning limbo, as a reserved moment of focused reading, but dreads the late afternoon return, when ze’s too tired to read anything other than the sports section of the major tabloid...

Lunch is the meeting point where the fellows gather between 12.30 and 12.40, not too early, not first in line, and absolutely not too late, when the others are already having the dessert. One of the fellows that arrived after hir, Edward, from Johannesburg, a hardened sociologist in his sixties, complains jokingly that it is like a boarding school. Edward is the former tutor of Jonny Steinberg (proudly announcing Steinberg’s recent decision to return to South Africa from his exile in England), refreshingly void of the bitterness that English-speaking white liberals almost unanimously developed from the mid-nineties onwards; he is rather like a British labour intellectual, naturally loyal to the New South Africa, if not necessarily to the current government, his white skin so tanned

which Afrikaner nationalists ground their identity, it shuns hybridity and measures purity”.

Not only the hybrid is abominated, but everything that breaks the classifications, stated by the merciless God. An English-speaking black is the most frightening abomination.

Even the opponents of apartheid (avant la lettre) opt for racist solutions. Olive Schreiner, writer and feminist pioneer, and explicit opponent to Cecil Rhodes’ colonial savagery, talks of South Africa as “a mixture of races”, but only in a social sense, since she, like everyone else, opposes miscegenation; her vision of a federation of South African states, as opposed to the Union of 1910, is a vision of a racially separated society that clearly resembles the radical apartheid visions of ethnic nations in separate development.

The crux is of course simply that the whites are a minority, and in a state where all citizens were given equal opportunities, they would be a powerless minority. In a state of unchecked miscegenation, they would be “ploughed under” by the black masses, tarnished, vanished ... tainted by the tar brush.

God’s stepchildren ... Shame lies in the sexual unions that give rise to racial mixing, spreading the “degenerate seed” that is inherited from one generation to the next and always threatens to erupt, “thereby retrospectively revealing all the past white
by the African sun that it may appear as if he’s got psoriasis. One of the unwritten rules is to circulate, not sitting down with the same people at the same table every day; but, of course, some are socializing more than others, dominating both seminar discussion and lunch conversations, and of course ze feels more connected to some than to others. Hir first acquaintance is Simon, some five years hir senior, professor emeritus at the department of sociology and social anthropology in Stellenbosch, who can count to ten in unbroken Swedish with rasping r:s (he had a Swedish girlfriend in his youth). Simon, who lend hir the Charles Tilly book, introduced hir to Michael, the composer, who in his turn happens to be a friend of Aryan, one of hir South African reference points ever since they first met in Malmö, in 2008, when Aryan was a visiting professor at K3 and ze was working on the South African part of hir dissertation. (Ze remembers Aryan’s story of the application for a visa at the Swedish embassy in Pretoria; “Are you a visiting professor?”, asked the incredulous official, “Or are you visiting a professor?”)

Ze relates less actively to the many Swedes; Lars, an archaeologist from Lund, “the Stone Age man”, reminding hir of hir own elder brother; Peter, the cognition philosopher, also from Lund, whom ze is slightly acquainted with from decades back, just as ze distantly knows his wife, Susanne, although ze didn’t know that they were a couple; Susanne is working on a project on the global organ trade and transplantation industry, with Elmi, a

generations of its carriers as frauds, false whites”. Coetzee points to the direct parallel to the Christian ideas of ‘falling from grace’ and ‘original sin’.43 Shame is not strong enough to denote the original mixing of fluids because black blood is a form of defilement; a formless horror evading description – much like the HIV virus, which can be kept at bay, at best, but never cured. The only way the polluted community can cleanse itself is by expelling the polluter. And the only way that the responsible polluter can put an end to the suffering is by sexual abstinence, thereby killing the taint (virus) and extinguishing the bloodline that carries it – the ever-damned tradition of hybrid impurity.44
surgeon from Cape Town, who commutes from home and sometimes is late or not appearing at all, because she has been summoned to her clinic. “I had to do a kidney”, she excuses herself with a smile, and looks as if she had just come from an invigorating session of Pilates at the nearby gym. The interdisciplinary mix appeals to hir generalist curiosity, the archaeological richness of Southern Africa and the speculation on how *homo* became *docens*, or the difficulties in matching organ donors and recipients when the genetic variation is as vast as it is in South Africa (ze pricked up hir ears: did ze get that right? Is *genetic variation* a euphemism for racial differences? Does mixing augment or diminish the genetic variation? Are there strictly medical arguments to support creolization and contamination?) Ze knocks on Elmi’s door for an answer, but she can’t give hir a straight one. In the long run, yes, but in a short perspective there is vulnerability. In the long run we are all coloured. But in the short run we are all dead. *Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas* 

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FOR THE ARCHITECTS OF APARTHEID, *apart-ness* means the self-determination of every nation, and the principle that no nation be dominant over another. Those who take this notion seriously propose *Total Separation*. Werner Eiselen, the founder of *Volkekunde* never described African cultures as explicitly inferior to “white” culture, but regarded them as being in a state of decline, due to the corrupting contact with “white” society. Subsequently, they ought to be protected from foreign (white, modern) influence and given the chance to develop in line with their own particular cultural imperatives. The favoured metaphor to illustrate that each culture contained its own dynamic for development was H C Andersen’s fairy tale about the ugly duckling that is able to flourish only when it finds itself among its own kind. Malinowski, at the time seen as a progressive thinker who opposed racist assumptions, envisioned a future “common society”, with a “new type of culture, related both to Europe and Africa, yet not a mere copy of either”. This idea of a potential “hybrid culture” inspired Z K Matthews, future executive member of the ANC. Why does this idea never find root in South Africa? Always dismissed at an embryonic stage. Why this obsession with blood purity, also among black intellectuals? Eiselen conjures the image of Bantu barbarians at the gate, ironically alluding to the white paranoia provoked by “black-peril” propaganda. But, instead of enhancing the
Load shedding
Dining at De Wijnhuis in darkness. No chips served, but meat, presumably grilled over open fire; a meagre portion with one piece of beetroot and one of squash, and a tomato salad on the side. Maybe to compensate, the waiter pours the glass full with Fairview Caldera, an excellent wine in the non-exclusive range. The candlelit restaurants are oases in a pitch dark desert. The atmosphere warm, almost intimate. Afrikaans all around hir, a more inclusive language than English... why does ze think that?; ze watches the people strolling by on the pave walk: young Afrikaners in knee-long shorts, flabby, often of dark complexion, and it suddenly becomes so evident that it is just because the border is diffuse that the bordering has been so important. For some reason that somehow contradicts her reflection ze finds it relieving that Afrikaans is the first language among both blacks and whites. Then the power comes back, to the applause of all guests.

advancement of black intellectuals, his conclusion is that they should be saved from the inevitable disappointment of realizing that, however hard they tried, they would never be accepted members of the white society, due to racial prejudice. The mission-educated blacks (the abominable English-speaking blacks, mimicking English gentlemen) were doomed to be an “intellectual proletariat”.49 (Eiselen, a German, and Verwoerd, a Dutchman, overcompensate their foreignness by becoming more Afrikaner than the caricature Voortrekker.) The only proponent of mixing is Breyten Breytenbach, who launches the idea of Zuid-Afrikanerdom (South Africanhood) as opposed to the nationalist purism of Afrikanerdom, and defines it as a culture of hybridity (basterskap).

We are a bastard people with a bastard language. Our nature is one of bastardy. It is good and beautiful thus. We should be compost, decomposing to be able to combine again in other forms. Only, we have walked into the trap of the bastard who has acquired power. In that part of our blood which comes from Europe was the curse of superiority. We wanted to justify our power. And to do that we had to consolidate our supposed tribal identity. We had to fence off, defend, offend. We had to entrench our otherness while retaining at the same time what we had won. We made our otherness the norm, the standard – and the ideal. And because our otherness is maintained at the expense of our fellow South Africans – and our
A cat amongst ermines. Ze can’t really free hirself from that feeling; a sensation ze actually experiences in literary circles as much as in academic ones, but maybe that is simply a constitutive human complex which some are better at masking than others. In the eyes of the other fellows ze probably makes an impression of self-confidence, and moreover seniority, which is something ze still hasn’t really apprehended. In the academy ze remains, in hir own eyes, an outsider, although hir position in the university hierarchy is nowadays solidly established, as opposed to that in the wrecked cultural public sphere, where ze is practically forgotten, even among the remaining subscribers to the regional daily newspaper where ze worked as an editor, critic and columnist for more than fifteen years.

Three weeks is normally an ocean of time, or rather an interregnum which ze has learnt (since ze became a parent) to seize with utmost efficiency. Hir last novel was in substance written during two weeks in Athens, in October 2011, when ze worked in such a manic fervour to the very last minute that ze did not even allow hirself the intended, long-awaited excursion to Hydra, and during a prolonged week (ten days) in Visby, exactly one year later, when ze was so totally immersed that ze, to hir own surprise and satisfaction, finalized the project with the exact margin of the extra three days. Now ze has three months, an unfathomable amount of mind space, but ze is also in

South Africanhood – we felt threatened. We built walls. Not cities, but city walls. And like all bastards – uncertain of their identity – we began to adhere to the concept of purity. That is apartheid. Apartheid is the law of the bastard.  

Note the ambiguous value in the word bastard... Bastervolk, bastertaal, basterskap are positive notions, on which a new inclusive identity can be built – but the baster is a bastard in the conventional sense that the word has attained. And when Breytenbach returns to Paradise a decade later, at the beginning of the transition, it’s only the latter meaning that remains: The Afrikaners aren’t such reprehensible bastards after all. If you leave them to their own devices they don’t really bother other people. The problem is that their minds were warped by European exclusivism. At least they have a modicum of respect for nature and for animals. (No self-irony. Afrikaners, like Swedes, have difficulties detecting irony. Marlize, the archaeologist, was shocked by hir use of words like hotnot and kaffir.)
another mode, another calendar (chronology), which more resembles the stumbling first year of the Fiction and Truth project. Back in the garden of forking paths; the traces of hir coming endeavour barely discernible. Three months are more than sufficient for a well-defined writing task, but barely enough to even get started with a major research project. Ze is not obliged to produce anything, but ze knows that the conditions are as good as can be, that the days are numbered (vanitas vanitas) and time is now. Ze started writing after a week, well aware that writing itself is hir main method, not only the subject of methodological reflection. Ze writes in English, and just as last time it is not a matter of course. Then the choice was in a way a more natural one, although ze had little previous experience in English writing, because the format was a dissertation, albeit with elements of reportage and memoir. At the time ze would not even have considered writing fiction in another language than Swedish. Now, when the ambition is to write across borders, to let genres and practices contaminate one another, ze still holds on to English and, once made, ze feels impudently assured about hir decision. Ze has no nostalgic or other attachment to the Swedish language, other than the confidence in mastering it quite well. There are a few writers that ze holds in very high esteem – Lars Norén, for one, the only living Swedish author that would really deserve the recognition of the Nobel Prize – but there is no Swedish literary tradition that ze

MAGIC, ACCORDING TO FRAZER, author of The Golden Bough, interpreted by the scornful Douglas: “as if primitive tribes were populations of Ali Babas and Aladdins, uttering their magic words and rubbing their magic lamps".52 Malinowski uncritically developed this idea of a rite based on the magician’s physical enactment and deluded wish-fulfilment, “a kind of poor man’s whisky, used for gaining conviviality and courage against daunting odds”.53 Miracle, on the other hand, is independent of rite; a gift, a grace, which could be expected to erupt anywhere, at any time, in response to virtuous need - or the demands of justice. [The Saving Grace]

Any religion must swing between the poles of interior will and exterior enactment... The rage of the Old Testament prophets was continually renewed against the parading of empty external rites instead of humble and contrite hearts. But the Messiah of the New Testament relegates Mosaic Law as “the old dispensation”. After the Sermon of the Mount, any person, man or woman, leprous, bleeding or crippled, is welcome to approach the altar. Sin (impurity) is turned into a matter of the will and not of external circumstance. Yet, the ideas of pollution persist; the Penitential of Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury enjoins penance of three weeks' fast on any woman, lay or religious, who enters a church or communicates during menstruation.54

Is Purity of the Heart the most treacherous? Interior will implies pious communalism,
would adhere to. (Ze takes pride in being mistakenly listed in the former Immigrant Institute’s register of immigrant writers in Sweden; in fact that curious discovery sparked the idea of imagining a personal history in Argentina). So, ze is fine with English, but a broken English, or rather English with an accent, although ze would not know how to define that twang. Scandinavian, perhaps, but then, no, that would not be its significant characteristic. Cosmopolitan, in the sense of being a second language; the global lingua franca of non-native English speakers, like hiself, who share the predicament of being cosmopolitan (a paradox, as when coined by the ancient Cynics). Migrant English, deterritorialized (decontextualized) English, also congenial with the subject of this interrogation. Moreover, ze has no Swedish publisher, and ze is never again going to humiliate hirself by trying to find one. Writing in Swedish would be like writing a diary, for oneself. Whereas in English ze can address a presumptive South African public ("Hillbrow Blues" was published by UKZN Press, who would have published the dissertation, too, if it weren’t for the second reviewer; ze received the verdict at hir sister’s birthday party, when ze expected the conclusive confirmation). On the spur of the moment ze also decides to aim at a form that is neither academic nor literary (in alignment with the apartheid classification of the “coloured” as neither black nor white). A claim to be both

parish, Gemeinschaft, whereas exterior enactment connotes pragmatism, commerce, trading of tricks, Gesellschaft... The Barefoot Boer in the City of Gold

As a social anima, man is a ritual animal ... [I]t is very possible to know something and then find words for it. But it is impossible to have social relations without symbolic acts. Basic, banal things, like the days of the week, cannot be experienced without ritual. We cannot experience Tuesday if for some reason we have not formally noticed that we have been through Monday...

Ritual changes perception because it changes the selective principles. It can permit knowledge of what would otherwise not be known at all. It does not merely externalise experience, bringing it out into the light of day, but it modifies experience in so expressing it. Thoughts that have never been put into words are after framing changed and limited by the very words selected...

This is a beautiful passage, opening an abyss of awe. Is Art the attempt at challenging, circumventing or at least illuminating the limitations of language? And is Literature that illumination in the words themselves, transformed, dissolved, like letters in the Book of Sand?

Durkheim was well aware that the effect of religious rite is to create and control experience. Radcliffe-Brown adopted and modified this thought, refusing to separate
literary and academic would not only be immensely pretentious, but somehow banal, aiming at all and nothing, and it would miss the point that ze believes ze is trying to make. *Neither nor*, by contrast, challenges the very border, *limes*, as an uninhabited (but possibly booby trapped) no man’s land. Not one text, no monograph, but several, parallel and traversal, in different tenses and registers. *Transdisciplinary interventions*, as ze so fancifully coined it for the Bangalore project. The “ethnographic fictions” would be one layer, a diary in Swedish another, perhaps. A pamphlet for a *politics of contamination*, radical in the fundamental meaning of the word, written from an imaginary exile, as if ze had actually left Sweden behind. Which would hir imaginary new homeland be? Hardly Argentina, after all, which contrary to the counter-factual fantasy of hir last novel, apparently remains stuck in its evil circle; Cristina Kirschner, on official visit to China, is a laughing-stock in the *Late Nite News* (along with Mugabe and the bully of bullies, Jacob Zuma). Australia? Canada? Well, why not South Africa? For sure what Edward describes as a “violent democracy”, like Mexico or Colombia, or Latin America as a whole, but also an immensely vital culture, capable of ironic introspection. (Ze muses at the weekly satire of the *Late Nite News*: *When the ANC was fighting for power, it was clearly not electric power.*) The imaginary exile is intriguing. When ze asks hir brother-in-law, the Sinologist, what his choice would be, he answers: Taiwan, or the city state Hong Kong.

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religious ritual from secular ritual, de facto attempting to replace religion with ritual, unfortunately thereby removing the barrier between the sacred and secular with one hand but putting it back with the other.57 He also failed to follow up Durkheim’s idea that ritual belongs within a social theory of *knowledge*, treating it instead as merely part of a theory of *action*. [The British-Continental dialectic in a nutshell?]
He and his wife, hir sister, are transcribing hir father’s diaries. It is a mammoth project that has gnawed the conscience of the children ever since the patriarch’s death in 1998. The sixteen diary volumes and the close to a hundred 8mm films have been in the possession of hir youngest sister, who has done some occasional transcribing of selected parts. Now the approaching 100th birthday seems to have prompted her to resume the project in a systematic manner. Ze feels that ze ought to help, that this is a task for hir, rather than hir brother-in-law; ze has had the intention for so many years to make it hir “next project”, but something has always come in-between. Now ze is both physically and mentally entirely somewhere else, but that is perhaps the prerequisite for breaking the resistance to try to get under the skin of hir father, whose physical traits are appearing with ridiculous resemblance in hir own reflection. Ze recalls how ze mercilessly cleaned out his workroom, until only one box remained; a whole work life reduced to some folders, compendiums, and a collection of stamps and first-day covers. The box is stowed-away in hir attic ever since. Ze has never opened it. But ze has read the diaries, in parts. After completion they were put in the living-room bookshelf, for anyone to read. On birthdays and other special occasions, hir father used to read out loud; it was a family ritual, like the regular screening of the 8mm films, an initiation rite for all presumptive boyfriends and girlfriends of the five siblings. Ze never had any

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DOUGLAS DEFENDS the dichotomy primitive-modern, insisting on the unity and variety of human experience. Progress means differentiation; thus primitive means undifferentiated and modern means differentiated. The primitive culture must be taken to be unaware of itself, unconscious of its own conditions.

To what extent is the modern culture (world) aware of itself and conscious of its own conditions? Certainly only to a limited extent in 1966, pre postmodernity’s coming to awareness of its own historicity.

The European history of ecclesiastical withdrawal from secular politics and from secular intellectual problems to specialised religious spheres is the history of this whole movement from primitive to modern.

Again: Douglas writes in Modernity’s zenith, when the return of Religion to the political and intellectual arena seemed as unlikely as a regression to pre-industrial feudalism.

Yet, she does not dismiss the primitive. Among “continental” scholars, she says, le primitif enjoys honour. “The only conclusion that I can draw is that they are not secretly convinced of superiority, and are intensely appreciative of forms of culture other than their own.”

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difficulty deciphering the miniscule handwriting (whereas ze is increasingly unable to interpret hir own notes from yesteryear and sometimes even yesterday). But the two three last diaries became gradually unintelligible, like the ever more fractured films. They never contained any secrets, only notes about occurrences in the family and the world. An occasional glimpse, a hint, of something untold between the lines, but mostly measured, dry recollections and reflections. Ze is not sure whether ze really wants to dig deeper. Ze doesn’t expect to find anything new below the surface. Hir father’s accurate account is restrained by date and class: a distanced observer, sharp and sensitive, but neither bold nor radical; a social liberal who always voted on Folkpartiet. Anyway, ze reveres him, only too well acquainted with his lethargic side, and now also reconciled with his contentment. At the 60th and 70th birthdays (and 65th, too?) ze had repeatedly urged him to write something other than the diary, to sum up and synthesize his immense experience and knowledge. Although well intentioned, it was a note of deception, and ze wonders how he took those remarks from the prodigal son. (How would ze take a correspondent request from hir daughter?) He was content, and he had all reason to be. Yet, there was something encapsulated, an absolute vulnerability. The hermit crab. Obsessively social; emotionally dependent. Ze can fully understand why hir brother-in-law identifies with him, and maybe that is the explanation of hir own

_IN VAN GENNEP’S house of rooms and corridors in which passage from one to another is dangerous, the person who must pass from one room to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others._\(^62\) Initiation rites are supposed to be dangerous, possibly lethal, but are in fact often perfectly safe; the dangers being trumped up to warn us from going out of the formal structure, into the margins.

Transition in ritual is the process of death and rebirth, during which the initiate is an outcast, without place in society – allowed and even enjoined to transgress law and act as a criminal; to rape, steal, waylay [and even kill?] To be in contact with danger is to be in contact with power [Endangerment, empowerment, putting one’s self at risk].

*Contrast between form and surrounding non-form accounts for the distribution of symbolic and psychic powers: external symbolism upholds the explicit social structure and internal, unformed psychic powers threaten it from non-structure._\(^53\)

Now it’s hir underscoring. Ze reads the sentence again and again. What about the “aesthetic pleasure” that “arises from the perceiving of inarticulate forms”? Non-articulate, non-form, non-structure, non-power ... [perceiving as opposed to perception? The present experience vs. the remembered past? Explicating instead of embalming...]

Ritual pollution arises from the interplay of form and surrounding formlessness.
estrangement ... After all, ze ought perhaps to write hir journal in Swedish. A diary. But how honest could ze be? A diary in third person, perhaps. In the future past tense. The pluperfect future ... In a fictional diary ze could disclose anything. Yes, the Swedish retains a function even though ze insolently dismisses it in hir public writing. As already stated, no monograph but a plurality of layered texts. A screwed-up diary may be one of them.

Pollution dangers strike when form has been attacked. Authority is a very vulnerable power, easily reduced to nothing. Power vanishes without resistance. Who said that? Baudrillard? He, who later also claimed that the Gulf War had never happened. What if the 1980s had never happened? In retrospect the happy nihilism of postmodernism seemed even more repulsive than the Marxist puritanism that preceded and provoked it.

Transitional is ambiguous, neither-nor and both-and, in-between loyalties and double loyalties, those outside the structure are dangerous and vulnerable to (protective) violence from those belonging fully in the structure. Witches are “the social equivalents of beetles and spiders who live in the cracks of the walls”. They attract fear and dislike; the power attributed to them symbolises their ambiguous, inarticulate status.

Baraka is witchcraft in reverse It floats between the segments of the formal political structures. Like witchcraft or sorcery it is detected and proved post hoc. If witchcraft is institutionalised jealousy, baraka is institutionalised admiration. “People in fact become possessors of baraka by being treated as possessors of it”. [Being possessed = being polluted? Baraka Obama]

Pollution (only) occurs where the lines of structure, cosmic or social, are clearly defined. A polluting person is always in the wrong (having crossed some line that should not
Elmi’s husband, Stephanus, is a musicologist, and also a friend of Michael and Aryan. Ze meets the three of them at the screening of Aryan’s latest film, Threnody of the Victims of Marikana,67 at the University of the Western Cape. Stephanus is introducing it and moderating the discussion afterwards, and he starts his presentation by evoking Stellenbosch, “where the only thing that is not white is, perhaps, the conscience”. The threnody of the striking mine workers of Marikana in the Gauteng, who were massacred by the police on 16 August 2012, is a shortened version of the film Night is Coming, Aryan’s contribution, as one of three invited artists, to an academic collaboration between the universities of Stellenbosch, Oxford and Harvard on Music and Landscape. The film was supposed to be screened at Harvard, at the third seminar/workshop, but it wasn’t because it was thought to have misrepresented what happened in Stellenbosch.

Not what the prominent participants had expected, after flying in, having a good time at the restaurants and wineries and club floors, and flying back to the USK with the contention that the New South Africa has come a long way (as Aryan put it, or as ze reads his scorn). The threnody leaves nobody unmoved. What does it mean to look at the footage of the massacre through the eyes of the killers? Not the bragging perpetrators, as in Joshua Oppenheim’s The Act of Killing, but yet the ones who pull the trigger, the police, the state of decision, life or death, the police state; we are looking over the

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have been crossed) and this displacement unleashes danger for someone. Pollution can be committed intentionally, but intention is irrelevant to its effect – it is more likely to happen inadvertently.68

What is the difference between pollution and contamination? Is contamination always intentional? And mutual - an act of consent … consensual … crosspollination, the blurring of boundaries, the mixing of fluids, insemination, consemination …
shoulder of the executioners of a ritual murder, in a state of police, we are witnessing and partaking, complicit in the decomposition, seeing through listening, hearing through watching, the percussive reality of South Africa. Marikana is disturbingly absent in the public memory, a void in the story of the post-apartheid, post-transition nation in the making, the dissonance of an unimaginable Sharpeville in democracy, a Soweto uprising, a state of emergency, a red alert, again, rewound memories erased; the violent democracy, the virulent police state. And the presence of this absence, the melancholy of the threnody... Aryan, urged to comment, sits down among the audience and lets the images speak, that’s how he works as an artist, the provocateur, l’enfant terrible, but never as an empty gesture, always with a purpose, a bit like Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin in Ch"{o}nique d’un "{e}t"{e}, turning the tables, calling the viewer ... The productivity of inadequacy (ze can’t quite remember the meaning of that note; it is a growing concern that ze more and more frequently can’t decipher hir own handwriting; ze always used to carry a notebook wherever ze went, also serving as a sporadic diary, after ze gave up all attempts at writing a regular diary – yes, it had to do with Harvard’s refusal to screen Aryan’s film, with the consequence that it travelled far beyond usual academic circles.) His inadequate report of an academic encounter, a conference proceeding contaminated with the brutal footage of the police state. Yes, a perfect example of contamination in the

Naughty, no, wicked is a better word, void of erotic connotations; Douglas lustfully smashes Frazer’s Golden Bough to splinters, and she gives a subtler but nonetheless sinister bashing to Norman O. Brown – which ze finds particularly intriguing, since Brown is a recurrent covert reference in hir Argentina trilogy (none of the few reviewers noticed, in spite of the many clues; The Brown Companion, Bruno Norman...). The wry wit comes through in sentences like this one: “If anal eroticism is expressed at the cultural level we are not entitled to expect a population of anal erotics. We must look around for whatever it is that has made appropriate any cultural analogy with anal eroticism.” Ze puts it down in hir notebook; a sentence to be used in a dinner conversation in a novel, if ze ever writes another one.

Pollution is like an inverted form of humour (a propos Freud’s analysis of jokes), It does not amuse, but the structure of its symbolism uses comparison and double meaning like the structure of a joke. The symbolism of the body’s boundaries is used in this kind of unfunny wit to express danger to community boundaries. The Coorgs in Karnathaka were so obsessed by fear of dangerous impurities entering their system that they treated the body as if it were a beleaguered town, every ingress and exit guarded for spies and traitors. Anything issuing from the body is never to be re-admitted, but strictly avoided. The association inevitably goes to Jyothsna in Bangalore; thinking of her as Coorg
sense that ze is striving at in the yet to outline Purity and Contamination project, with the challengingly affirmative subheading In Praise of Impurity – ze formulated it, unknowing that Kwame Anthony Appiah used “In Praise of Contamination” as an intermediate headline in Cosmopolitanism, evoking Roman (Carthagian) playwright Publius Terentius Afer (Terence), whose mode of mixing tragedy and comedy was known as “contamination”.73

How can we live with the presence of the absence? What do we do with the knowledge? “Who is the main actor?” asks one in the audience, a student in his late twenties, scared (as he puts it) by the suggested continuity from the apartheid state. “Who is the responsible?” “You are”, says Aryan. “What are you going to do now?”

The TRC, and the innumerable truth commissions before and after, have accustomed us to the dichotomy perpetrator-victim. But what about the bystanders? The silent majority, standing by, consenting or not, the amorphous system of oppression, murder; the standers by, dreading to be defined by their omission, what they don’t do. (And who is ze to judge?) The troubling thing about Marikana is that it doesn’t go away. It is not an event with a beginning and an end, it is still there, in its present absence or absent presence… we are watching it as it unfolds over the shoulder of the police, complicit in the act, in our own inaction, unable to think rationally, adequately.

immediately transforms the image, as if that clarified everything; what if ze were reduced to a Swede… Would that explain anything?

When rituals express anxiety about the body’s orifices, the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group.74

Again, it’s his own underlining – or, rather, his exact transcription, supplemented with “Appadurai” and an expression mark. Ze doesn’t have Appadurai at hand, but ze makes the note to check whether A. refers to D. He must! As an anthropologist he must have been fed from Douglas’s breast… But you can never be sure. The forking paths often run in parallel, without crossing. In their analysis of xenophobia, Adam and Moodely referred to Freud’s narcissism of small differences,75 but not to Fear of Small Numbers,76 let alone Purity and Danger, which latter they of course most probably were aware of, as cultivated intellectuals, but not regarded as a relevant reference. Discipline borders are just as carefully policed as genre borders; no, not even necessarily policed, there is simply no cross-going traffic

Envy and narcissism. Envy turned on outsiders. The former victims turned perpetrators single out target groups for their apparently superior abilities. Violence becomes a desperate but decisive method of last resort with which perpetrators compensate for their own shortcomings.77 (The real culprits – the indigenous elite in cahoots with the
Somebody asks what Musicology and Stellenbosch are getting out of it, and Stephanus rightly comments that Aryan would not have been able to do the film about Marikana without them. *He needs that kind of structure.* Aryan does not object. It’s a brilliant example of miscegenation of art and academia, an exemplary illustration of what art and academia can accomplish (in disjuncture). Like Bill Kentridge’s power point performance in the City Hall of Cape Town a few days later.\(^{78}\)

Composers steal all the time, says Michael. Because they love music. Bela Bartok, was it, or Stravinsky, said that it is just a matter of concealing it the best. Why are writers so afraid of being epigones? Inspiration doesn’t come from nowhere or from within; it comes mediated through others, only slightly distorted. The voice of the old man, the witty funny lucky bastard, no not even a bastard, a silver-hair *whitey*, with his three muses, the giant yellow soprano, the bobbed blue megaphone – and the wondrous bald ballerina following him around like his shadow, like a monkey, tearing the books, mocking him ... What a beautiful impossible couple. Father and daughter, master and pupil, master mistress masturbating his bald ego ... The words of the old man, the admirable fool, echoing in hir mind all the way back to Stellie in the pink van, driven by a she-male in pink t-shirt, and coming back in the early morning, after having been temporarily drowned by the barren dialogue of Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid, semiporn-

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old ruling-class – cannot be targeted, since they still wallow in the glory of liberation and effectively silence dissent. The government’s lip-service condemnation of xenophobia conceals the fact “that ours is a neo-apartheid state managed by yesterday’s anti-apartheid revolutionaries”.\(^{79}\)

*The threat of the “nearly-we” who imperil our self-concept.* “The ugliest manifestations of racism are reserved for immigrants who look, act and talk like us. The more they try to emulate and imitate us, the harder they attempt to belong, the more ferocious our rejection of them.”\(^{80}\) Germany’s extermination of the Jews is the historical proof of this logic (and a forceful argument against assimilation, as proposed by anti-migrant nationalists). But why does minimal difference trigger hostility? Adam and Moodley quote Indian psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar: The community in which we are socialised is part of our personal identity. And the clash between internalisation of social rules, i.e. *culture*, and a person’s natural drives is solved through the projection of “bad” representations onto others; first inanimate objects and animals and later people and other groups.\(^{81}\) The disavowed bad representations need such “reservoirs” – Muslims for Hindus, Arabs for Jews and vice versa – which also serve as convenient repositories for rages for which no clear-cut addressee is available.\(^{82}\)

“Since most of the bad representations arise from a social disapproval of the
saturated Wild West clichés, Garrett in the bathtub with five señoritas and a young Kris Kristofferson shot in the bed ... In the early morning it is the old man’s witty words and sentences forwards and backwards that drags hir out of bed. *Undo unsay unsave unhappen unremember ... Unforget* is hir own unsettling contribution. *Unthink unlive.* Life is to him a fiction unlived. *Unclean unpurify unimmaculate uncleanse unclassify unbarrass unfuck*

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child’s *animality*, as expressed in its dirtiness and unruly sexuality, it is pre-eminently this animality which a civilized moral self must disavow and place in the reservoir group.”

Is it really reversible? Some groups are obviously more prone to become reservoirs of bad representations; currently Muslims and Gypsies, previously Jews, Kaffirs, Coolies, Boers... *Aryans – Jews* is not reversible, nor *Americans – Mexicans*. Not even *Hindus – Muslims*, even if that would be closest to an equal and reversible demonization. (There is an interesting passage in David Malouf’s novel *The Great World*, centred on the Australian World War II experience, when the Australian POWs realize that they, in the eyes of the Japanese, are no better than coolies; that the Japanese in fact wish to turn them into coolies – a fate that they, in their self-assured confidence of white superiority, regard as unfathomable, as the horror of horrors.*)

The psychoanalytic interpretation explains the predominance of promiscuity, drunkenness and excessive forbidden behaviour in descriptions of the enemy. The *animality* of the other.

Israelites were always a hard-pressed minority, and in their beliefs all bodily issues are polluting. The Hindu caste system, while embracing all minorities, embraces them each as a distinctive cultural sub-unit. The Indian case is to Douglas the principal proof that a
After six weeks, hir senses have been numbed, the beautiful mountains with their vineyard kloofs have become the quotidian setting, the running fresh water in the ditches (that you don’t want to drive in to), which ze associated with Ollantaitambo, a deeply entrenched memory from hir Grand Tour through the Americas, are as normal as the left-hand traffic, which ze never had problems with, because its just the reverse, a parallel world in the mirror... Fellows are leaving and new fellows take their places, ze’s socializing as usual but in a more reserved manner, the privilege has become routine, ze is half way through hir sentence and worrying slightly about not using the time in the most optimal way ... optimal, a strange word, how can time be used op-timally? Halfway and starting the descent, ze noted the angst of the long-term fellows who were doing their last week, realizing that this is a moment that will never come back (although most fellows, if they behave, are actually invited a second or even third time). Ze notes this slight frustration in others as well, although nobody would speak openly about it; Mats, hir room neighbour and new accomplice (they have a common denominator in the Nordic Summer University), says that taking in the South African context has been an exhausting but valuable experience... Unless you come here to finish a book project, as Nils (about the Dutch-Roman law), with his blond German housewife taking care of his three blond daughters, you are inevitably affected by the violent vibe, even in the sociological approach is more convincing than a psychoanalytical one. To touch excrement is to be defiled, and the latrine cleaner stands in the lowest grade of the caste hierarchy. Yet, Hindus are not at all controlled and secretive about the act of defecation. On the contrary, “pavements, verandas, public spaces are littered with faeces until the sweeper comes along”. Ze transcribes the quote from An Area of Darkness, one of V. S. Naipaul’s early works with ethnographic aspirations:

Indians defecate everywhere [...] These squatting figures – to the visitor, after a time, as eternal and emblematic as Rodin’s Thinker – are never spoken of; they are never written about [...] this might be regarded as part of a permissible prettifying intention. But the truth is that Indians do not see these squatters and might even, with complete sincerity, deny that they exist.

Rather than oral or anal eroticism it is more convincing to argue that caste pollution represents only what it claims to be. It is a symbolic system, based on the image of the body, whose primary concern is the ordering of a social hierarchy. Tears do not defile, as opposed to saliva and genital excretions. Partly because they are like floating water, bathing and cleansing the eyes, but more importantly because they are not related to bodily functions of digestion and procreation.
Stellenbosch bubble (which, as all bubbles, one day will have to burst)... It is already bursting, Jillian, living in Somerset West, author of a remarkably open-hearted aid worker memoir, whom ze met last year and whom ze invites as hir first lunch guest at STIAS, compares to the Stellenbosch she knew in the early ’90s, all white, all male, all Afrikaans-speaking (ze comes to think of Antjie Krog’s boervrouwe, with their “impressive cleavages”90); against that backdrop today’s booming IT and tourism town appears as a cosmopolitan haven. For hirself, the immediate parallel is Lund, where ze lived for more than ten years, to which ze has come to feel such strong and irrational resentment; Lund as opposed to Malmö, where ze grew up, which ze hated through her childhood and adolescence. Ze knows exactly what it is about Lund that ze detests, the narrow-minded academic conservatism that believes itself to be open and cosmopolitan but in reality is as provincial and parochial as the mind any of the inland villages on Österlen, where ze is now residing. Ze can easily imagine Stephanus’ struggle at the Music department, the repressive tolerance of his wild ideas about artistic research, about PhD dissertation in Music not being a performance/work and a comment, but an integrated composition/reflection.

Pollution rules, in contrast to moral rules, are unequivocal. They do not depend on intention or a nice balancing of rights and duties. The only material question is whether a forbidden act has taken place or not.91 Physical crossing of the social barrier is treated as a dangerous pollution. The polluter becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he crossed the line and second because he endangered others.92 When attacked from the outside, solidarity within is fostered. When attacked from within by wanton individuals, these can be punished, and the structure publicly reaffirmed. But the structure can also be self-defeating. Perhaps all social systems are built on contradiction, in some sense at war with themselves.93

Again, a lucid, revolutionary thought, against the grain of her time, defying both socialist and liberal utopianism; not the end of history, nor the realization of classless communism, but the perpetual paradox of dual impossibilities: neither growth nor degrowth, neither black nor white.

If the social structure were weakly organised, men and women might follow their own fancies in choosing and discarding sexual partners. If the primitive social structure is strictly articulated, by contrast, it is bound to impinge heavily on the relation between men and women. The pollution ideas bind the sexes to their allotted roles.94
Mandela Rey

NELSON MANDELA RYLAAN – some innovative and witty Afrikaner graffitist had transformed the road mark of Nelson Mandela Driveway to DELA RYLAAN. (Koos De La Rey, the legendary Boer general of the Anglo-Boer War – politically correctly renamed the South African War – is the hero of a popular anthem for young Afrikaners, chanted at pubs, rugby games and public rallies. On one of his previous journeys to South Africa, he visited a beach resort south of Durban where the predominantly white lower middle class audience again and again requested that the Afrikaner entertainer sing De La Rey, but he sternly declined with the argument that the song was politically incorrect⁹⁵ …) Dutch was the official language until after the war, when the creole “kitchen Dutch”, Afrikaans, was adopted as official language, besides the colonial English. Would De La Rey make a worse match than De Klerk?

However, when the principle of male dominance is accepted as a central principle of social organisation and applied without inhibition, beliefs in sex pollution are not likely to develop. Whereas, when the principle of male dominance is contradicted by other principles, such as female independence or the women’s right to protection from the violence of men, then sex pollution is likely to flourish.⁹⁶ Men’s anxiety’s about women’s behaviour is in most cases justified, since the situation of male/female relations is so biased that women are cast as betrayers from the start.⁹⁷ But men are not always afraid of sex pollution. Among the Bemba of Zambia, the women are matrons in a matrilineal society, yet depending on their husbands’ willingness to stay with them … Delilah on the one hand, and Samson on the other, who, if humiliated, can bring the pillars of society tumbling down.

Why do all pollution fears cluster round contradictions that involve sex? No other social pressures are potentially so explosive.

And how could it be different? Remember Bertrand Russell’s definition of an intellectual as someone who thinks about something other than sex for more than half an hour a day.

Most likely he (possibly even she) also thinks more about sex the rest of the day than the non-intellectual (whoever that is). Sexuality and creativity are so intrinsically intertwined that even noting it tends to be banal. At night ze becomes a Man with
When ze meets Antjie Krog again, after five years, at the University of the Western Cape, she does not recognize hir. It's a strange situation, where ze starts doubting whether the woman who just entered the meeting, ten minutes late, is in fact the famous Afrikaner writer. It is, and she does eventually recall their meeting at WALTIC in Stockholm, but not the animated interview in Cape Town the year before, when everything ze asked was something she had thought about the last weeks.

Anne Phillips, with whom ze invites her for lunch at STIAS, says she admires hir courage to write about South Africa. She has herself decided not to, after realising the complexities. Antjie also questions hir project in an indirect way. Writing across borders, she says, presupposes that you are confident within your borders, inferring that the vast majority of South Africans aren't; all those who are not writing in English for a white audience (and a white publisher). Ze objects and argues against her seemingly essentialist position; the same that ze criticized in hir reading of Begging to Be Black, the somehow discouraging conclusion of the Transition trilogy, that it is impossible to imagine the other as yourself. For a moment the lunch talk is turning uncomfortable and ze wonders why ze envisioned collaboration with Antjie in hir research proposal. But then afterwards, when they go upstairs to hir office, she gives some valuable suggestions, as if their alliance were already a fact, and the farewell is on a friendly

myriads of mistresses, and unlike the muses they drain hir resources, like heroine, or some other drug that sips into hir mind and subtly alters hir personality ... ze shudders and abruptly cuts off the stream of thoughts and memories

Note St. Paul's extraordinary demand that in the new Christian society there should be neither male nor female [neither Jew, nor Greek, nor bond nor free].

The effort to create a new society which would be free, unbounded and without coercion or contradiction, required a new set of positive values. Virginity as a special positive value fell on good soil in a small, persecuted minority group [c.f the idea of the body as an imperfect container which will be perfect only if it can be impermeable].

Virginity as a revolutionary concept: The idea of woman as the Old Eve, connoting fears of sex pollution, belongs with a certain specific type of social organisation. If this order has to be changed, the Second Eve, a virgin source of redemption crushing evil underfoot, is a powerful new symbol.
collegial note. (The day after ze receives a mail from her, saying: *i think why we do not see eye to eye is because both of us are trying to address the intolerance we see in our respective societies, but your intolerance is a first world one and mine a third world one and behave different strategies.*)

The second external reviewer for UKZN Press dismissed hir dissertation on similar ground: the argument that ze was not completely up-to-date with all current research was in fact an excuse for the disapproval that could not be openly expressed: that ze as an outsider had no right to claim any authority whatsoever in domestic affairs. Defiantly, ze defends hir entitlement to write about anything, and even the claim that ze, precisely as a foreigner, may have something important to say.

 Dirt is (only) dangerous as long as some identity clings to it. When identity is lost (pulverized, rotted, dissolved) it enters the mass of common rubbish. *It is unpleasant to poke about in the refuse to try to recover anything, for this revives identity.*\(^\text{101}\) So long as identity is absent, rubbish is harmless and does not even create ambiguous perceptions. *Even the bones of buried kings rouse little awe and the thought that the air is full of the dust of corpses of bygone races has no power to move. Where there is no differentiation there is no defilement.*\(^\text{102}\)

Everything said to explain the revivifying role of water also applies to dirt. Dirt is a by-product of the creation of order, starting from a state of non-differentiation, threatening the distinctions made, finally returning to its (true) indiscriminable character [Ashes to ashes, dirt to dirt].\(^\text{103}\)

The quest for purity is pursued by rejection. It follows that when purity is not a symbol but something lived, it must be poor and barren. *It is part of our condition that the purity for which we strive and sacrifice so much turns out to be hard and dead as a stone when we get it.* ['Purity’ and ‘rejection’ are here not only underlined but encircled by the anonymous Afrikaner student, as is the following entire sentence:] *Purity is the enemy of change, of ambiguity and compromise.*\(^\text{104}\)

What is, then, the attraction of the barren, of that which is hard and dead as stone?
Rushdie’s Bitch

At The Time of the Writer festival in eThekwini (Durban), in which ze participated eight years ago, debutant writer Zainub Dala is assaulted in the street for stating that Salman Rushdie was one of her favourite writers. The assailants called her Rushdie’s Bitch. Dala, due to launch her novel What about Meera, the tale of a 22-year-old woman who escapes her arranged marriage in Durban to spiral out of control in Dublin, cancelled her performance after the assault.

Sartre’s portrait of the anti-Semite:

How can anyone choose to reason falsely? It is simply the old yearning for impermeability [...] there are people who are attracted by the permanence of stone. They would like to be solid and impenetrable, they do not want change: for who knows what change might bring? [...] It is as if their own existence were perpetually in suspense. But they want to exist in all ways at once, and all in one instant. They have no wish to acquire ideas, they want them to be innate [...] they want to adopt a mode of life in which reasoning and the quest for truth plays only a subordinate part, in which nothing is sought except what has already been found, in which one never becomes anything but what one already was.105

But is it a choice to reason falsely? Is it not rather the false assumption that one possesses the truth. Purity cannot be consciously conceived as un-true. Yet anything that questions the assumed truthfulness and threatens the order will be condemned as pollution – or contamination.

Douglas, more radical in thought than Sartre, critiques the implicit division between “our thinking” and the rigid black and white reasoning of the anti-Semite. Because, she writes [and this is doubly underlined and encircled] the yearning for rigidity is in us all.106

The little perpetrator. Sanders expounds on a self-critical remark in the TRC report, on its
The lasting insight of Black Consciousness was that apartheid was not, in any essential
pieces of the inner and outer map fall together, and the contours of this other parallel city appear in a flash of illumination, like the stroboscopic lights of the Springbok Pub, less than a stone throw away in the corner of Andringa and Merriman. It all makes sense.

Already on hir first Saturday night in Stellenbosch, Aryan suggested that ze go to “try hir moves” at the Springbok Pub. Ze was tired and hesitant; if it weren’t for the expectation to see Aryan there, ze would not have gone, thinking that it would be a posh or hip show-off venue for the beautiful people (why did ze expect that?). It was the opposite. Ze had a couple of Black Label (Black Labour, White Guilt) in the sports bar, to dare approach the dance floor in the other room, irresistibly drawn by the drums and base and the videos projected on the wall, assuming to be viewed as a sexagenarian voyeur, a freak, the only white among coloureds, certainly the oldest on the floor. But the atmosphere is one of familiarity, the women middle-aged, in their thirties or forties, with their friends or their husbands, curiously observing hir and inviting hir to dance with them, embedding hir in unpretentious hospitality, and ze is overwhelmed by their welcoming warmth. The sound of the Cape, the progenies of this crossroads, the breed of three hundred years of intimacy, wanted or unwanted, defying the boundaries of slave and master, white and black; the bruin-mense as the Afrikaners called them, in affection

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sense, an achievement of separateness at all, but it was a system of enforced separation that, paradoxically, generated an unwanted intimacy with an oppressive other. In a narrow sense, it decreed apartness; in a general sense, it disavowed relation (foldedness in human-being with the other). ”If such a disavowal of relation is what tends toward support for apartheid, it is an acknowledgement of this complicity and its disavowal at the heart of apartheid that is the essential starting point of any opposition to apartheid.”112
and contempt, neither black nor white, less than white but better than black, privileged among the unprivileged, yet despised for being half-caste, for being neither-nor, without tribe, without culture, without home – the left-overs of humankind, as Madame De Klerk so lovingly called them. Bastards, like the Afrikaners, but of a darker shade; the fine divisive line could cut a family in two, siblings ending on each side of the insurmountable border. Humble bastards, inconsolably compromised by their not-quite-white-ness. On hir second visit to the Springbok Pub, ze arrives at the end of a birthday party; now ze’s recognized, prompted to eat and drink, and one of the pitiful husbands teaches hir to dance properly … Syncopating hir sense of the stomp, surprisingly, to – ze searches in vain for the proper metaphor – Saturday night insouciance.

THE FINAL PARADOX of the search for purity is that it is an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction. But experience is not amenable and those who make the attempt find themselves led into contradiction. Sexual purity which implies no contact between the sexes must be literally barren.113

In the dominant imagery of Black Consciousness, the Afrikaner represents dominion over the body; the (Anglo-South African) liberal, control of the mind. If liberation has been won from the former, the struggle for freedom from the latter continues.114

The crux is to see apartheid as exemplary, not exceptional. Just as post-colonial is not confined to the former European colonies, post-apartheid (and neo-apartheid) may apply to the globalized world at large

Breytenbach, on his return to Paradise, reads a wall-truth in Cape Town: ‘WE HAVE MOVED FROM THE INTERREGNUM TO THE INTRARECTUM’. Somebody had scribbled underneath: ‘VICTORY HAS AIDS’.115

After finishing Purity and Danger ze still has problems to grapple the ambiguity. Dame Douglas to-be outlines a possible dichotomy between dirt-affirming and dirt-rejecting philosophies. Whereas the latter are typically incomplete but optimistic, the former tend to be more complete (complex) and also pessimistic. Yet, radically fascinated by transgressions, she remains herself essentially a conservative friend of order.
Conclusions

The above arbitrary juxtaposition of two distinct yet corresponding discursive registers is part of an on-going experimental interrogation, by literary and ethnographic means, of the political implications of purity and impurity, in South Africa and in the world at large. Although the form itself is interrogatory and open-ended, deliberately unsettling the conventional academic format, some tentative conclusions may be extracted.

Firstly, Mary Douglas’ classical study of purity and impurity proves to remain a valid tool for analysis of contemporary “politics of purity”. Influential, and of course also disputed, as it has been, the purity/impurity discourse remains arguably under-theorized, and holds an as yet unrealized potential for both social theory and social action. The politics of purity is the process by which British Social Work researcher Robbie Duschinsky explains “the elective affinity between purity discourses and black-and-white worldviews”. Whereas the political implementations of purity are again very tangible in the present – represented, in its extreme, by IS and Boko Haram; in less murderous form, by the European right-wing populists, gradually moving from radical (Golden Dawn) to moderate (UKIP); but also, more and less permissively, by left-wing proponents of radical identity politics – the politics of impurity remain largely unexplored.

Secondly, South Africa is an especially apt case for a purity/impurity analysis, with apartheid being one of the foremost recent large-scale implementations of a politics of (racial) purity and a subsequent prohibition of miscegenation and cultural mélange. The middle category of the “colored”, defined in the negative as “neither black nor white”, is of specific interest in this scheme. The shame-laden story of the colored represents an alternative interpretation of South Africa’s history, based on cultural mixing and creolization. This story remains to be told and further explored in a pre- and post-apartheid perspective.

Thirdly, the specific phenomenon of xenophobic violence in South Africa, may be partly explained by apartheid, partly by the exclusionary mechanisms of the global neo-liberal economy. Paradoxically, the concept of separateness at the base of the apartheid ideology may also instigate a counterforce to xenophobia, as there is a wide acceptance of cultural difference in South African society. Yet the historical racialized division lines may, in the short-term perspective, tend to be reinforced.

Lastly, rather than seeing South Africa’s apartheid policy (1948-1994) as an historical exception, I propose, in line with Mark Sanders, that it be regarded as exemplary for a polity and culture based on the principles of purity. What a polity and culture based on impurity may entail will be the subject of a sequel exploration.

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5 English does not as yet have the gender-neutral pronoun that Swedish has recently introduced ("hen", between the male "han" and the female "hon"), but South African literary researcher Cheryl Stobie assured me that "ze" is an unofficially accepted correspondent.
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13 Ibid.: 19
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