

# Cape Calypso / Impurity and Danger

YOU CAN GET LOST IN STELLENBOSCH. The first day at the Institute, 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 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

A DISCRETELY GREY hard-cover copy of the third impression (from 1970) is delivered with the eminent library service that brings 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 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

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.<sup>1</sup> 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 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 his fellows at the Institute, gave him the book with this intriguing title, by the late sociologist Charles Tilly.<sup>2</sup> Written under the verdict of a terminal cancer, which most certainly added a special clarity to the thought, it is, as

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 Technology-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"<sup>1</sup> – which portends 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

*A semblance of difference? False diversity – as the apartheid regime's encouraging of the con festivals in the Cape, letting*

---

1 Kross 2002: 60

2 Tilly 2006

1 Douglas 1966: 28

2 Dubow 2014: 99-101

3 Douglas 1966: 4

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, often in the presence of the police, who in some instances even 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 white peers and self-appointed 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

*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.*

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.<sup>4</sup>

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.*<sup>5</sup> Durkheim quarrelled with the English political philosophers, particularly Herbert Spencer, refusing to subscribe to utilitarian psychologism. He 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*.<sup>6</sup>

Louis Moulinier, a French classicist, made a study of purity and impurity in Greek thought – “excellently

---

4 Ibid.: 14

5 Ibid.: 19

6 Ibid.: 20

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 the Institute, 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 hir new career in a new country (*why is that preposterous? If ze were to emigrate, ze would possibly choose between Argentina and South Africa...*)

Why do victims become perpetrators? Have the former guest workers in their own country, potential criminals by definition, guilty until proven innocent, simply internalised the *Bantustan* mentality?<sup>3</sup> It may be 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...<sup>4</sup>

Ze sees Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley for a coffee at the Institute, after just having finished reading *Imagined Liberation*, their comparative study on “xenophobia, citizenship and identity in South Africa, Canada and Germany”. Last year at about the same time, a few weeks after the book launch, just before their return

3 D. Everatt in special issue of the journal *Politikon*, 2011, in Adam & Moodley 2013: 37

4 Hassim et al. (2008:198, quoted in Adam & Moodley 2013: 39-40

empirical by current anthropological standards but free of 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 condemned in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* by an English reviewer for wanting in 19th century anthropology.<sup>7</sup>

Sin is fundamentally conceived as a material impurity. Blood, a holy substance endowed with miraculous power, is expected to remove the stain of sin.<sup>8</sup> 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”.<sup>9</sup>

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 as one of the really important analyses of the complexities at the core of the South

7 Moulinier, L. (1952). *Le Pur et l’impure dans la Pensée des Grecs, d’Homère à Aristote*, in Douglas 1966.: 26

8 Eichrodt, W. (1933). *Theology of the Old Testament*, in ibid

9 Ibid.

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 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 biography has none of the cosmopolitan ingredients. Ze was privileged middle-class, though growing up in one of Malmö's "Million programme" inner suburbs, and naturally assumed an attitude of superiority and alienation. Only after moving to Stockholm, to become a journalist, did ze start to identify with Malmö, and precisely for the "cosmopolitanism"

*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".<sup>10</sup>*

*Therefore, the negotiation of complicity should be an essential moment in intellectual responsibility.*

*A year later, on hir return to the Western Cape, ze will disclose another correspondence; Jacob Dlamini's Askari, the beautifully disturbing "story of collaboration and betrayal in the anti-apartheid struggle".*

*How different would the history of apartheid sound, asks Dlamini rhetorically, if told not as the story of racial war but of what we might call a fatal intimacy between black and white South Africans?<sup>11</sup> It is an intriguing assumption, given that the subject of the interrogation is Glory Sedibe, the defector, traitor, sell-out, turn-coat, collaborator, Comrade September turned apartheid agent Mr X1, abhorred by both his former fellow freedom fighters in the ANC and his later white trash superiors at Vlakplaas. Complicity is mutual, collaboration always marked by ambiguity ... The ruthless Askari, perpetrator and victim, fell outside the frame of the TRC. Nobody wants to acknowledge that in the apartheid dusk most cats were grey.*

---

<sup>10</sup> Sanders 2002: 9

<sup>11</sup> Dlamini 2014: 2. The notion of "fatal intimacy" is borrowed from Njabulu Ndebele.

ze had hardly experienced himself. The Yugoslav immigrants, ze remembers, were commonly patronised – Bosko, hir class-mate, whose gallantry, physical fitness and dancing skills only added to the condescending contempt. Southern Europeans in general, including Italians and Spaniards (if there had been any), were looked down upon. In retrospect it is hard to understand where this inherent prejudice came from. Hir family was liberal, open-minded. Culturally homogeneous Sweden of the 1960s was programmatically modern and affirmatively 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, 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 peers 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*.<sup>5</sup> This is as unfathomable to hir as ever the celebration of the Aramburazo to Beatriz Sarlo,<sup>6</sup> and definitely more shameful.

<sup>5</sup> The English translation of the Swedish expression *Osvuret är bäst* would be that it is best not to be too sure or to promise too much. By substituting *Osvuret* for *Omskuret* the sense is radically transformed while the expression sounds alike: Circumcised is the best, the meaning of which becomes mockingly ironic.

<sup>6</sup> The abduction and killing of the former Argentinean president, general Aramburu, by the guerilla organization Montoneros in 1970, was at the time celebrated by the supporters of Juan Perón,

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.<sup>12</sup>

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 skimmed them so extensively that the reading literally has left no marks? Ze thinks of the scribbled notes as reflections of the words' imprint on the reader's mind; reading as a pysical, 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."<sup>13</sup> [*What comes first? What are the cherished classifications? Con-fusion, contradiction, contra-tradition, contra-order, dissolution, disclassification ...*] Ordering/Articulation, in opposition to art; "aesthetic pleasure arises from the perceiving of inarticulate forms."<sup>14</sup> 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, boundary pollution focuses particularly on sexuality. Caste membership of an

<sup>12</sup> Douglas 1966: 34

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.: 35

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.: 37

As are his blatantly racist declarations after his first (tough) encounters with the US reality on his great tour of the Americas. In the course of the journey's first three days, he 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 him report the second robbery and offered him his place to stay, only to demand that he give him a hand job, and barely letting him get away with that, *c'mon suck it for a while, it won't hurt you*. He escaped and barricaded himself at the nearby Elk Hotel (for once he actually recalls a hotel name), where he 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 he hardly dared to walk out through the front door in the morning, expecting that his sobered and regretful tormentor would be waiting to pick him 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.

---

whom Aramburu had toppled in a military coup in 1955. Literary critic Beartriz Sarlo analyses in retrospect her own reactions to the event in Sarlo 2003

individual is determined by the mother [like Jewish matrilineality]; even if she marries into a higher caste, the children take their caste from her. Women are the gates of entry to the caste. 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.<sup>15</sup>

*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.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup> Hence, it's rather a lack of identity that instigates murder. Xenophobic violence as identity assertion – Adam and Moodley borrow the example from writer Jonny Steinberg: the unemployed South African on welfare bullying the Somali shop owner; both hold each other in utter contempt, but the powerless customer empowers 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.<sup>18</sup>

Xenophobic violence reverses daily humiliation. Reverses and relieves. Perpetration is apparently

---

15 Ibid.: 125

16 Butalia 2000

17 Adam & Moodley 2013: 193

18 Steinberg 2014

(*Stellenbosch Stomp*)

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

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.<sup>19</sup>

The re-emergence of *necklacing*; the powerless community assuming power by deciding over life and death in a gruesome ritual. *Punishment by burning tyre*. 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.<sup>20</sup> 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*).

---

<sup>19</sup> Bekker 2010:137, in Adam & Moodley 2013: 194

<sup>20</sup> Adam & Moodley 2013: 195

or, better, Bavarian or Balkan umpa-umpa ... What does the *Stellenbosch Stomp* sound like?

Ze's been given an apartment in a rental house for undergraduate students; almost like a dorm, Leiwater on Rattray straat, ten minutes walk from the Institute, 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".<sup>21</sup>

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."<sup>22</sup>

Any cosmological enquiry, says Douglas, should start by seeking the principles of power and danger. In the Old Testament we find the blessing as the source of all good things, and the withdrawal of blessing as the

---

21 Maimonides, M. (1881), *Guide for the Perplexed*, in Douglas 1966: 48

22 van Gennep, A. (1909), *Les rites de passage*, in Douglas 1966: 96

THE INSTITUTE 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; 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; the only requirement is to be there, *in situ*, to participate in the lavish lunches, Monday to Friday, and the afternoon seminar every week, 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, 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. Marlene, 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 the key to hir office, and has to go back to Leiwater, 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

source of all dangers. Holiness – in its root *set- apart* – becomes equated with wholeness and completeness, which is extended to species and categories.<sup>23</sup>

*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.*<sup>24</sup>

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.*<sup>25</sup>

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 are not raping Palestinian women*), whereas the Afrikaners know that they are bastards on the outset, sons and daughters of one hottentot ancestor (not necessarily female)<sup>26</sup>; “in an abyssal historical irony, given the origins of the tongue in which Afrikaner nationalists ground their identity, it shuns hybridity and measures purity”.<sup>27</sup>

Not only the hybrid is abominated, but everything

<sup>23</sup> Douglas 1966: 53

<sup>24</sup> Leviticus. XVIII, 23

<sup>25</sup> Leviticus. XIX, 19

<sup>26</sup> Rabie, Jan (1964), *Die Groot Anders-Maak*, in Sanders 2002: 146

<sup>27</sup> Sanders 2002: 82

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, Edmund, from Johannesburg, a hardened sociologist in his sixties, complains jokingly that it is like a boarding school. Edmund 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 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 in sociology at Stellenbosch, who can count to ten in

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.<sup>28</sup>

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 generations of its carriers as frauds, false whites.*<sup>29</sup> Coetzee points to the direct parallel to the Christian ideas of 'falling from grace' and 'original sin'.<sup>30</sup> 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,

---

28 Ibid.

29 Millin 1924, as interpreted by Coetzee 1988

30 Coetzee 1988: 141

unbroken Swedish with rasping r:s (he had a Swedish girlfriend in his youth). Simon, who lent hir the 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 hir department and ze was working on the South African material of hir dissertation. (*Aryan told hir about the incredulous official at the Visa section of the Swedish embassy in Pretoria: “Are you a visiting professor? Or are you visiting a professor?”*)

Ze relates less actively to the many Swedes; Hans, an archaeologist from Lund, “the Stone Age man”, reminding hir of hir elder brother; Stefan, the cognition philosopher, also from Lund, whom ze is slightly acquainted with from decades back, just as ze distantly knows his wife, Marianne, although ze didn’t know that they were a couple; Marianne is working on a project on the global organ trade and transplantaion industry, with Elmi, a surgeon from Cape Town. Elmi commutes from home and is sometimes 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*

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.<sup>31</sup>

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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup>

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”.<sup>34</sup> This idea of a potential “hybrid culture” inspired Z K Matthews, future executive member of

---

31 Hemer 2012a: 135

32 Kross 2002: 53-73

33 Eiselen 1948), in Kross 2002: 65

34 Malinowski 1938, in Kross 2002: 60

*creolization and contamination?)* Ze knocked on Elmi's door for an answer, but she couldn'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*

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.<sup>35</sup> But, instead of enhancing the 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".<sup>36</sup> (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-Afrikanedom* 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*

---

<sup>35</sup> Eiselen 1920, in Kross 2002: 61

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. The term "intellectual proletariat" was borrowed from historian Arnold Toynbee

*(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 hir 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.

A CAT AMONGST ERMINES. Ze can't really free himself 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

*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 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.<sup>37</sup>*

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.<sup>38</sup> (No self-irony. Afrikaners, like Swedes, have difficulties detecting irony. Marlene, the archaeologist, was chocked by hir use of words like *hotnot* and *kaffir*.)*

---

<sup>37</sup> Breytenbach 1982: 156, in Sanders 2002: 144

<sup>38</sup> Breytenbach 1993: 80

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 himself 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 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 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

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".<sup>39</sup> 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".<sup>40</sup> 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.*<sup>41</sup>

Is Purity of the Heart the most treacherous? Interior will implies pious communalism, parish, *Gemeinschaft*, whereas exterior enactment connotes pragmatism, commerce, trading of tricks, *Gesellschaft*... The Barefoot Boer in the City of Gold

---

39 Douglas 1966: 58

40 Ibid.: 59

41 McNeill & Gamer (1938), *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, in Ibid.: 61

matter of course. Then the choice was in a way more natural, although ze had little previous experience in writing in English, 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 decides to hold on to English and, once made, ze feels impudently assured about hir choice.

Ze has no nostalgic or other attachment to the Swedish language, other than the confidence in mastering it quite well. There is one Swedish writer that ze holds in very high esteem –Lars Norén – but there is no Swedish literary tradition that ze would adhere to (in fact, ze takes pride in being mistakenly listed in the Immigrant Institute’s register of immigrant writers in Sweden; 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 (or third) language; the global lingua franca of non-native English speakers, like himself. Migrated – *deterritorialised* – English,.

Moreover, ze has no Swedish publisher, and ze is determined to never again humiliate himself 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.

On the spur of the moment ze also decides to aim at a form

*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.<sup>42</sup> Basic, banal things, like the days of the week, cannot be experienced without ritual. [W]e 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...<sup>43</sup>

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?

---

42 Ibid.: 62

43 Ibid.: 64

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 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 a “violent democracy”, in Eddie’s words, 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. He and his wife, hir sister, are transcribing hir father’s diaries.

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.<sup>44</sup> The primitive culture must be taken to be unaware of itself, unconscious of its own conditions.<sup>45</sup>

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.*<sup>46</sup>

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.”<sup>47</sup>

---

44 Ibid.: 77

45 Ibid.: 91

46 Ibid.: 92

47 Ibid.: 93

It is a mammoth project that has gnawed the conscience of the children ever since his death in 1998. The sixteen diary volumes and the close to a hundred 8mm films have been in his youngest sister's possession, and she has done some occasional transcribing of selected parts. Now the approaching 100th birthday seems to have prompted her to resume the effort in a systematic manner. Ze feels that ze ought to help, that this is a task for his, rather than his brother-in-law; ze has had the intention for so many years to make it his "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 his father, whose physical traits are appearing with ridiculous resemblance in his 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 his 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, his 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 difficulty deciphering the miniscule handwriting (whereas ze is increasingly unable to interpret his own notes from yesteryear or 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

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.<sup>48</sup> 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.*<sup>49</sup>

Now it's his underscoring. Ze reads the sentence again and again. What about the "aesthetic pleasure" which "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. Pollution dangers strike when form has been attacked. Authority is a very vulnerable power, easily reduced to nothing.<sup>50</sup>

Power vanishes without resistance.  
Who said that? Baudrillard? He, who

---

48 Van Gennep 1909, in Ibid.: 96

49 Douglas 1966: 99

50 Ibid.: 104

about occurrences in the family and the world. An occasional glimpse of something untold, a hint, 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. Date and class restrain his accurate account. A distanced observer, sharp and sensitive, but neither bold nor radical; a social liberal who always voted *Folkpartiet*. Anyway, ze reveres him, only too well acquainted with his lethargy, 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. Yet, there was something encapsulated, an absolute vulnerability. The hermit crab. Obsessively social; emotionally dependent. Ze can see why hir brother-in-law identifies with him, and maybe that is the explanation of hir own estrangement ... After all, ze ought perhaps to write hir journal in Swedish. A diary. But how sincere could ze be? A diary in third person, perhaps. The future past tense. The pluperfect future ... In a fictional diary ze could disclose anything (*even the truth*). Yes, the Swedish retains a function even though ze impudently 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.

*A year later, interrogating the parts of hir father's "war diary" that have not as yet been transcribed (or deliberately*

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.<sup>51</sup>

*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".<sup>52</sup> [*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 which should not 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.<sup>53</sup>

What is the difference between pollution and contamination? Is contamination always intentional? And mutual - an act of

---

51 Ibid.: 102

52 Gellner, E. (1962), *Concepts and Society*, in Ibid.: 111

53 Douglas 1966: 113

left out?), ze will make the unsettling discovery that he, in the spring of 1939, as a student in Uppsala, attended the infamous meeting at Bollhuset, where the admission of ten to twelve Jewish intellectual refugees from Nazi Germany was discussed. Not only did hir father attend; he voted with the majority, fore the protest against "refugee import". This revelation will come as a complete shock and overshadow the centenary, which passes without celebrations, almost unnoticed ... Ze will read what ze has written above and realize that a note or comment en passant is not satisfactory. Nor is an easy dismissal. (How would ze have voted?) Ze will pursue this path, juxtaposing hir own diary from the correspondent time in hir own life (the late seventies in Stockholm). But not now. Not here. In another interrogation. In Swedish.

consent ... consensual ... crosspollination, the blurring of boundaries, the mixing of fluids, insemination, consemination ... Dlamini refers to Douglas when calling collaborators "polluting people – dirt", but that is a misreading (on his or my behalf), connoting her guilt-by-association to ANC leader Chris Hani's defence of necklacing as "a weapon devised by the oppressed themselves to remove this cancer from our society; the cancer of collaboration of the puppets".

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*<sup>7</sup>, 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 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

<sup>7</sup> Kaganof 2014

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.*<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup> 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.<sup>56</sup> (The association inevitably goes to Jyothsna in Bangalore; thinking of her as *Coorg* immediately transforms the image, as if that clarified everything; what if ze were reduced to a Swede... Would that explain anything?) *The sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group.*<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Douglas 1966: 122

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.: 123

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.: 124

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, rewinded 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 *Chronique d'un été*,<sup>8</sup> turning the tables, calling the viewer ... The productivity of inadequacy (*ze can't quite remember the meaning of that note; oh 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 sense that ze is striving at in hir yet to outline project, with the challengingly affirmative subheading *In Praise of Impurity* – ze formulated it, unknowing that Kwame Anthony Appiah had “In Praise of Contamination” as an intermediate headline in *Cosmopolitanism*, evoking a tradition from Roman (Carthagian) playwright Publius Terentius Afer to Salman Rushdie of *The Satanic Verses*.<sup>9</sup>

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

---

8 *Cronique d'un été* (Chronicle of a Summer), Paris, 1960, directed by anthropologist and filmmaker Jean Rouch, in collaboration with sociologist Edgar Morin

9 Appiah 2006: 111-113

Again, it's hir own underlining – or, rather, hir 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 Moodley referred to Freud's narcissism of small differences,<sup>58</sup> but not to Fear of Small Numbers,<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> (The real culprits – the indigenous elite in cahoots with the 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-

---

58 Freud, S. (1961), *Civilization and its Discontents*, in Adam & Moodley 2013: 191

59 Appadurai 2006

60 Du Toit & Kotze 2011: 162, in Adam & Moodley: 190

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.

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 he City Hall of Cape Town a few days later.<sup>10</sup>

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.

<sup>10</sup> Kentridge 2015

apartheid revolutionaries”.<sup>61</sup>)

*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.”<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup>

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 vs. Jews is not reversible, nor Americans vs. Mexicans. Not even Hindus vs. Muslims, even if that would be closest to an equal and reversible demonization. (There is an interesting passage in David Malouf’s

---

<sup>61</sup> Mngxitama, A. (2009), “We are not all like that : Race, class and nation after apartheid”, in Adam & Moodley: 39

<sup>62</sup> Vaknin, S. (2011), *Malignant Self-Love : Narcissism Revisited*, in Adam & Moodley: 191

<sup>63</sup> Kakar 1996: 189, in Adam & Moodley: 193

<sup>64</sup> Volkan 2006, in Adam & Moodley: 192

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 his mind all the way back to Stellie in the pink van, driven by a shemale 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-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 him out of bed. *Undo unsay unsave unhappen unremember ... Unforget* is his own unsettling contribution. *Unthink unlive*. Life is to him a fiction unlived. *Unclean unpurify unimmaculate uncleanse unclassify unbarrass unfuck*.

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.<sup>65)</sup>

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 sociological approach is more convincing than a psychoanalytical one.<sup>66</sup> 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".<sup>67</sup>

Ze transcribes the quote from V. S. Naipaul's *An Area of Darkness*, one of his 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*

---

65 Malouf 1990

66 Douglas 1966: 124

67 Ibid.

AFTER SIX WEEKS, his 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 he associated with Ollantaitambo, a deeply entrenched memory from his Grand Tour through the Americas, are as normal as the left-hand traffic, which he never had problems with, because it's just the reverse, a parallel world in the mirror... Fellows are leaving and new fellows take their places, he's socializing as usual but in a more reserved manner, the privilege has become routine, he is half way through his sentence and worrying slightly about not using the time in the most optimal way ... optimal, a strange word, how can time be used optimally? Halfway and starting the descent, he 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). Everybody seems to feel this slight frustration, although nobody would speak openly about it ... Unless you come here to finish a book project, as Jörg (*about the Dutch-Roman law*), with his blond German housewife taking care of their three blond daughters, you are inevitably affected by the violent vibe, even in the Stellenbosch bubble (*which, as all bubbles, one day will have to burst*).

It is already beginning to burst. Jillian, author of a remarkably open-hearted aid worker memoir, whom he met last year and whom he invites as his first lunch guest (fellows are encouraged to invite visitors), compares today's booming IT and tourism town to the Stellenbosch she knew in the early '90s, all white, all

*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.*<sup>68</sup>

*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.*<sup>69</sup>

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.<sup>70</sup> 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.<sup>71</sup>

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.*<sup>72</sup>

Again, a lucid, revolutionary thought,  
against the grain of her time, defying

---

68 Naipaul 1964, in *Ibid.*

69 Douglas 1966: 125

70 *Ibid.*: 130

71 *Ibid.*: 139

72 *Ibid.*: 140

male, all Afrikaans-speaking (*ze comes to think of Antjie Krog's boervrouwe, with their "impressive cleavages"*<sup>11</sup>). .... For hir, the immediate comparison 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 (and which ze hated then), ze knows exactly what it is about Lund that ze hates, the narrow-minded academic conservatism that believes itself to be open and cosmopolitan but in reality is as provincial and parochial as 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.

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.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup>

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.<sup>75</sup> 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*

---

73 Ibid.: 141

74 Ibid.: 143

75 Ibid.: 154

(*Mandela Rey*)

NELSON MANDELA RYLAAN – some innovative and witty Afrikaner graffitist had transformed the road mark of Nelson Mandela Driveway to DELA REYLAAN . (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 as sternly declined with the argument that the song was politically incorrect<sup>12</sup> ...)

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?*

WHEN ZE MEETS ANTJIE KROG again, after five years, at the University of the Western Cape, she does not recognize him. It's a strange situation, where he 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 recall their meeting at *Waltic* in Stockholm, but not the animated interview in Cape Town the year before, when everything he asked was something she had thought about the last weeks.

Anne Phillips, with whom he invites Antjie Krog for lunch

12 Hemer 2012a: 250

*definition of an intellectual as someone who thinks about something other than sex 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 he becomes a Man with myriads of mistresses, and unlike the muses they drain his resources, like heroine, or some other drug that sips into his mind and subtly alters his personality ...* he 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].<sup>76</sup>

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.*<sup>77</sup>

---

76 Galatians, 3:24, in Ibid.: 158

77 Douglas 1966: 158

at the Institute, says she admires his courage to write about South Africa. She has herself decided not to, after realising the complexities. Antjie also questions his 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 the seemingly essentialist position; the same that ze criticized in his reading of *Begging to Be Black*,<sup>13</sup> 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 collaborating with Antjie in his research proposal. But then afterwards, in his office, she gives some valuable suggestions, as if their collaboration were already a fact, and the farewell is on a friendly 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 his dissertation on similar ground: the argument that ze was not up-to-date with current research was clearly a pretext for a disapproval that could not be expressed in the open: that ze as an outsider had no right to claim any authority whatsoever in domestic affairs. Defiantly, ze defends his entitlement to write about anything, and even the claim that ze, precisely as a foreigner, may have something important to say.

<sup>13</sup> Krog 2009

*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.<sup>78</sup> 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.<sup>79</sup>*

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<sup>80</sup> [Ashes to ashes, dirt to dirt].

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.<sup>81</sup>

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

Sartre's portrait of the anti-semitic:

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

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.: 160

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.: 161

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

*(Rushdie's Bitch)*

At The Time of the Writer festival in eThekweni (Durban), in which ze participated eight years ago, debutant writer Zainub Dala is assaulted in the street for stating that Salman Rushdie is one of her favourite writers. The assailants call 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

ZE TRIES TO IMAGINE the mental regimentation and self-deception of an entire community, the complacency of complicity, maybe as banal as the evil of indifference. Or ignorance. The benevolent police state. The very building for the Arts and Social Sciences, where Volkekunde was taught until 2002, disturbs the harmonious picture with its blatant brutality. The concrete colossus, previously named after Verwoerd's successor, B J Vorster, was constructed on the rubble of the evicted "coloured area", Die Vlakte, overlooking the new white neighbourhood on the other side of Merriman Avenue, anonymous one-storey buildings, chain-houses, villas, a huge gas station, parking lots; no traces, not even a plaque of remembrance of this Stellenbosch's own District Six. The former Lückhoff Skool, which was also given or traded to the expanding university, is now a centre for community interaction, dutifully telling its story in non-committal half-truths, like the grand display of the university's history, decade by decade, in the University Museum. It would take hir many weeks to find out, but that was where ze ended up

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.<sup>82</sup>

But is it a choice to reason falsely? Is it not rather an 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-semitic. Because, she writes [*and this is doubly underlined and encircled*] the yearning for rigidity is in us all.<sup>83</sup> *The little perpetrator*. Sanders expounds on a self-critical remark in the TRC report, on its failure to focus sufficiently on the dimension of "moral responsibility", stating that the attention on *the deeds of the exceptional perpetrator* led to "fail[ure] to recognise the 'little perpetrator' in each of us"<sup>84</sup>; whereas Breytenbach adds the insight that, as an intellectual, it is not enough to resist the system in

<sup>82</sup> Sartre 1948). *Anti-Semite and Jew*, in Ibid.: 162

<sup>83</sup> Douglas 1966: 162

<sup>84</sup> TRC Report, XX, in Sanders 2002:3

in his first disorientation, a lively square in what had once been Die Vlakte, now, again, a fringe area, where the white city ends, a Somali coffeeshop and a coloured hair-dresser, where he drops in for a hair-cut and asks for the direction to Dorp Street, the only street name he recalls; two months later he will accidentally rediscover the hairdresser, who will smilingly recall him and repeat the hair-cut, and suddenly the 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 his first Saturday night in Stellenbosch, Aryan suggested that he go to “try his moves” at the Springbok Pub. He was tired and hesitant; if it weren’t for the expectation to see Aryan there, he would not have gone, thinking that it would be a posh or hip show-off venue for the beautiful people (*why did he expect that?*). It was the opposite. He 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 him and inviting him to dance with them, embedding him in unpretentious hospitality, and he 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,

its overt manifestations, but *it is necessary to find the roots of the conversion of foldedness with the other into forms of complicity in its denial*.<sup>85</sup> This is what makes apartheid exemplary for the intellectual as a figure of responsibility-in-complicity. It is necessary to have not only an ideal of freedom or autonomy but an account of sufficient power to capture how that ideal is, at a fundamental level, susceptible to perversion as something like apartheid.<sup>86</sup>

N P Van Wyk Louw, the poet “whom we all revere”,<sup>87</sup> the “critic from within”, who in the end becomes apartheid’s ambassador, because he chooses allegiance to the volk before allegiance to humanity – *although he tries, in vain, to incorporate the coloureds (de bruin-mense) into the conception of “us” (ons mense)*. As ambassador in Holland, he attempts to universalize apartheid and make it an issue for Europe as well as South Africa (thereby rightfully making Europe complicit). He proposes “multinationalism” as the solution to the problem of racial domination, in South Africa and in Europe; separation (apart-ness) being the “ethically just” response.<sup>88</sup>

The lasting insight of Black Consciousness was that apartheid was not, in any essential 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 [unwanted, or ambiguously desired?]. 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

---

85 Sanders 2002: 157

86 Ibid.: 190

87 Breytenbach 1993: 59

88 Sanders 2002: 190

defying the boundaries of slave and master, white and black; the *bruin-mense* as the Afrikaners called them, in affection 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 his second visit to the Springbok Pub, he arrives at the end of a birthday party; now he's recognized, prompted to eat and drink, and one of the pitiful husbands teaches him to dance properly ... Syncopating his sense of the stomp, surprisingly, to – he searches in vain for the proper metaphor – Saturday night insouciance.

point of any opposition to apartheid.”<sup>89</sup>

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.<sup>90</sup>

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.<sup>91</sup>

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.'<sup>92</sup>

After finishing reading he 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, although fascinated by transgressions, she remains herself essentially a conservative friend of order.

---

89 Ibid.

90 Douglas 1966: 162

91 Sanders 2002: 192

92 Breytenbach 1993: 132

## References

- Adam, H. & K. Moodley (2013). *Imagined Liberation : Xenophobia, Citizenship and Identity in South Africa, Germany and Canada*. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.
- Appadurai, A. (2006). *Fear of small numbers: an essay on the geography of anger*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Appiah, K. A. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism : Ethics in a world of strangers*. New York; London: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Bekker, S. (2010), "Explaining violence against foreigners and strangers in urban South Africa: Outbursts during May and June 2008". *The African Yearbook of International Law*, 16.
- Breytenbach, Breyten (1982), *A Season in Paradise*, New York: Persea Books.
- Breytenbach, Breyten (1993). *Return to Paradise*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Butalia, U. (2000). *The Other Side of Silence*. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press.
- Coetzee, J. M. (1988). *White Writing : On the culture of letters in South Africa*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press
- Dlamini, J. (2014). *Askari. A story of collaboration and betrayal in the anti-apartheid struggle*. Johannesburg: Jacana
- Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge & K Paul.
- Du Toit, P. & H. Kotze (2011), *Liberal Democracy and Peace in South Africa*, Johannesburg: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dubow, S. (2014). *Apartheid 1948 – 1994*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Duschinsky, Robbie (2013). "The Politics of Purity : When, actually, is dirt out of place?". *Thesis Eleven*, 119 (1).
- Eiselen, W.W.M. (1920), "Die Naturellevraagstuk: 'n Lesing gchou op 7 Mei 1920 voor die Filosofiese Vereniging van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch".
- Eiselen W.W.M. (1948), "Die Bevolkingsvraagstuk van Suid-Afrika, Sosiologies Beskou met Besondere Aandag aan die Arbeidsgemeenskap van Blankes en Naturelle en die Implikasies van Apartheid," n referaat gelewer op die Simposium van i Julie, 1948, van die Jaarvergadering van die Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns te Orange Free State.
- Hassim et al. (2008). *South Africa: Go Home or Dire Here: Xenophobia and the Reinvention of Difference in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Hemer, O. (2011). *Writing transition: fiction and truth in South Africa and Argentina*. Diss. Oslo : Oslo universitet.

- Hemer, O. (2012a). Fiction and truth in transition: writing the present past in South Africa and Argentina. Berlin: LIT.
- Hemer, O. (2012b). "Hillbrow Blues", in Chapman, M. (ed.). Africa Inside Out : stories, tales & testimonies. Scottville: UKZN Press.
- Hemer, O. (2015). "Bengaluru Boogie. Outlines for an ethnoigraphic fiction", in Hansen, A.H., Hemer, O. & Tufte, T. (eds.). Memory on trial: media, citizenship and social justice. Berlin: LIT.
- Kaganof, A. (2014). Night is Coming : Threnody for the victims of Marikana. Cape Town.
- Kakar, S. (1996), The Colors of Violence, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kentridge, W. Refuse The Hour. A collaboration with Philip Miller, Dada Masilo, Catherine Meyburgh, Peter Galison. Cape Town, 26 & 27 February 2015.
- Krog, A. (1999). Country of my skull. London: Vintage.
- Krog, A. (2009). Begging to be Black. Cape Town: Random House Struik.
- Kross, C. (2002). "W.W.M. Eiselen: Architect of Apartheid Education", in Kallaway, P. (ed.) The history of education under apartheid, 1948-1994: the doors of learning and culture shall be opened. New York: P. Lang.
- Malinowski, B. (ed.) (1938), International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. Memorandum XV, Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa.
- Malouf, David (1990). The great world. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Millin, Sarah Gertrude (1924). God's Stepchildren. London: Constable & Co.
- Naipaul, V.S. (1964). An area of darkness. London: Deutsch.
- Sanders, M. (2002). Complicities : The Intellectual and Apartheid. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press .
- Sarlo, B. (2003). La pasión y la excepción : Eva, Borges y el asesinato de Aramburu. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores
- Sartre, J-P. (1948). Anti-Semite and Jew. [Réflexions sur la question juive ] New York: Schocken Books.
- Steinberg, J. (2014). A Man of Good Hope. Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.
- Tilly, C. (2006). Why?: [what happens when people give reasons... and why]. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Volkan, V. (2006), Killing in the name of identity, New York: Ingram.