

‘Dogs of the Government’

The Portrayal of the Police in South African
Literature between 1979 and 2010

Keryl Howie

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Department of English and Creative Writing
School of Humanities
University of Adelaide
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Abstract

This thesis examines the portrayal of the police in South African literature written in English (or in some cases translated into English) between 1979 and 2010. It considers how writers have utilised crime fiction, confession, autobiography and realist fiction in order to address the perception that the police who are intended to protect the community have been despised by the majority and, at times, associated with evil. This thesis argues that the problematic subject of South Africa's police is at the heart of the country's transition from apartheid. It tracks representations of the police as exemplary of the changing preoccupations of South African literature.

To tell a story of the police is to engage with the political. This is especially so in a South African political and social context that has radically corrupted the codes of westernised policing. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) exposed the Security Branch police as responsible for gross violations of human rights, damaging the reputation of police officers to a far greater extent than had been the case through their often violent upholding of the apartheid regime. Commencing with works published in 1979, the year in which the government took decisive action through the Security Branch to increase the sinister nature of policing and legislate for increased protection of the police from public scrutiny, this thesis examines works by writers who have used the figure of the police officer to embody the political and to make public, in some instances, stories of the police that were previously untold. Bringing together fiction and non-fiction I contend that the writers' choices of genre have been fundamental in their challenge to state-sanctioned representations of the police and the nation's historicity.

Chapter one discusses the apartheid crime fiction of Wessel Ebersohn as an example of protest literature. Chapters two and four capture two different chronological moments in the transition to confessional literature and address the key interest of this thesis; that is, the impact that changing public information about the Security Branch police has had on the white South African imaginary. A sense of uneasy identification between the writer and his or her police officer subject is evident in the non-fiction considered in these chapters. Receiving police confessions becomes transformational for the writers who come to a sense of their own complicity. In contrast, Gillian Slovo, whose mother was murdered by Security Branch police, affirms images of the police as evil in her fictional rendering of the TRC.

A secondary interest of this thesis is in the remaking of memory and the part played by portrayals of the police. Chapter three anticipates the literary move toward the remaking of memory. The writers considered all used realist fiction to revise literary representations of the police under apartheid (John Miles and WPB Botha) and colonialism (AHM Scholtz). Through their police officer subjects they turn attention to Afrikaner responsibility for apartheid and challenge Afrikaner notions of supremacy and entitlement by usurping existing myths and reimagining silenced memories.

The thesis concludes with an analysis of post-apartheid crime fiction. Rather than considering works that have contributed to the more recent flooding of the literary market, my focus is on the earlier works of Deon Meyer and Margie Orford and the first post-apartheid work of Wessel Ebersohn, published up to 2010, in which the writers reveal the generic difficulty in situating the image of the police officer,

damaged by apartheid, in the emerging fictional form. Despite the hope engendered by democracy a decreasing confidence in the police is evident in these writers' works as they evolve from the police procedural to the thriller. Certainly the generic shift is consistent with a global preoccupation with the thriller, but the threats to society and the inadequacy of the police are given a distinctly South African flavour.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Keryl Howie

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Introduction

On 19 October 1989, over four years before South Africa's democratic elections, Butana Almond Nofomela, a black police officer, faced the death penalty for murdering a white Brits farmer. Nofomela had served in a South African Police (SAP) counter-insurgency unit based at Vlakplaas near Pretoria — a training ground for the execution of State violence against political opponents. Nofomela's cold-blooded murder of Jan Lourens was not part of his death squad duties but he did expect to get away with it. He had done so for many officially sanctioned murders (Bell and Ntsebeza 11). When he realised that his commanders were going to allow him to be executed he turned to Sibusiso Masuku, a sentenced prisoner with links to the anti-apartheid Lawyers for Human Rights (12).¹ He told Masuku of his involvement as a member of a police 'death squad' in the killing of African National Congress (ANC) civil rights lawyer, Griffiths Mxenge. Nofomela's story was heard beyond the prison walls and his execution stayed (12). In his subsequent affidavit to the Supreme Court he disclosed his involvement in at least eight other assassinations and kidnappings as a police death squad operative (Human Rights Committee 121).

Described by the Human Rights Committee of South Africa (HRC) as 'a remarkable event' that 'threw open the floodgates of hidden information' (119), Nofomela's confession on the eve of his hanging has proven to be a seminal moment in South Africa's history.² Against official denials of the existence of death or 'hit' squads, Nofomela's revelations about the SAP's Vlakplaas C1 Assassination Unit played a part in the demise of South Africa's National Party government and its apartheid agenda.

A month after Nofomela's confession, on 17 November 1989, *Vrye Weekblad*, an independent, alternative press Afrikaans newspaper, published the story of Dirk Coetzee, the Commander of Vlakplaas from 1980 to 1981. Coetzee's first-hand account of one of the SAP's Security Branch assassination squads corroborated Nofomela's revelations. He told of police involvement in 'political assassinations, poison drinks, letter bombs and attacks in neighbouring states' (Pauw, *Heart of the Whore* 29). Despite these revelations the apartheid government continued to deny the existence of SAP death squads. In February 1990 President FW de Klerk appointed Judge Louis Harms to head a 'Commission of Inquiry into Certain Alleged Murders'. In November of that year Judge Harms exonerated the SAP from allegations of involvement in any death squad activity. He found that police death squads did not exist. However, in March 1994, when Judge Richard Goldstone delivered his 'Third Force Report' following his 'Inquiry Regarding the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation', he revealed evidence of police involvement in a 'horrible network of criminal activity' aimed at destabilising South Africa (De Kock and Gordin 245).³

In April 1994, the month in which Nelson Mandela was democratically elected President of the Republic of South Africa, the South African Police Force was transformed into the South African Police Service (SAPS). In May 1994 Eugene de Kock, who had been the Commander of Vlakplaas from 1985 to 1993, was arrested for murder, kidnapping, fraud and other offences. Negotiations to bring apartheid and political conflict to an end had begun seriously in May 1990 (Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] 1.50) and in 1992 the ANC had made the first call for a truth commission 'to help lead the nation away from a deeply divided

past to a future founded on the recognition of human rights and democracy’ (TRC 1.48). On 15 April 1996, the TRC hearings began. In the hearings that followed, South Africa’s police were held up as the accused as ordinary South Africans told stories of massacres, deaths, tortures, killings and people disappearing without a trace. Previously untold stories of police activities were made public. South Africans and the world at large heard of gross violations of human rights committed by members of the SAP and the government. Many South Africans thus came to a new understanding of their country’s history and the role of their police as the hearings ‘exposed communities who did not know, or had not wanted to know, to the truth about human rights abuse [and] to the reality of suffering which had occurred’ (TRC 1.147).

The reference in my title to the police as ‘dogs’ refers to Zakes Mda’s question in *Ways of Dying*: ‘But who could argue with the dogs of the government, as the policemen were known throughout the villages?’ (39). It makes two points: that members of the SAP Security Branch were *used* by the government to enforce and uphold the ideals of apartheid; and that the government controlled the police and unleashed them to ensure community compliance. The vexed position of the police in South Africa has been evident in the widespread social perception that the police — meant to be protectors of the community — were despised by the majority and, at times, associated with the most evil aspects of a white-dominated South Africa. Examining crime fiction, confession, autobiography and realist fiction, while drawing on historical and sociological information, my thesis explores the portrayal of the police and policing in a range of South African writing in English (or in some cases translated into English) between 1979 and 2010. Following the statement by

David Bruce and Rachel Neild that the police are ‘the most public face of government’ (41), and David Bayley’s observation that the police are the ‘most visible expression of government authority’ (20), this thesis examines how South African writers have used their portrayals of the police to comment on government authority and community perceptions of that authority.

Indeed, to tell a story of the police in South Africa is to engage with the political. This has especially been so in a socio-political context that radically corrupted the principles of westernised policing. Whereas the foundations of policing in the West are generally traced to Sir Robert Peel’s nine purposes or goals — commonly referred to as ‘Peel’s Principles’ and arguably the most important aspirational statements ever made about policing (Drew and Prenzler 9) — in the South African context their basis in a relationship of trust between the community and the police has been destabilised. This thesis considers narratives that depict the police during South Africa’s transition from being a racist police state in the closing decade of apartheid to a democratic, post-TRC nation. It shows how the writers make the politics of this transition apparent through their portrayals of the police. The thesis is principally concerned with policing by the formal SAPS, rather than with law-enforcement engaged in by ‘[o]ther agencies, both in the private and the public sector, [that] play an increasingly important role in the business of policing’ (Rowe 5), such as private security agencies. It applies a narrow definition of police work, proposed by Michael Rowe as ‘primarily a matter of law-enforcement’ (5), recognising that this was the official intention of the SAP but that it was continually transgressed, particularly by the Security Branch.

A key interest of this thesis is the activities of the Security Branch of the SAP (originally named Special Branch when it began in the late 1940s) and, in particular, the impact that the changing public information about that branch has had on the white South African imaginary, as reflected in literature. Systemically using torture as a means of obtaining information and terrorising detainees and activists, members of the death or hit squads of the Security Branch were largely responsible for rising levels of mistrust and fear of policing by the non-white majority during apartheid. Of the 293 members of the government's security forces who applied for amnesty during the TRC hearings, 256 applied for offences committed while they were members of the SAP. The majority (229) were members of the Security Branch at the time of the violation (TRC 6.182).

This interest in the Security Branch has influenced the scope and period of study of the thesis, particularly the point at which the thesis commences. A wider analysis of South African literature portraying the police might commence with the Soweto Uprising of 1976 or the earlier Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, both significant instances in which uniformed police officers opened fire on innocent demonstrators. However, 1979 stands out as a year in which the government took deliberate action to increase the sinister nature of policing efforts while, at the same time, affording the police even greater protection from public scrutiny. Vlakplaas was established in 1979 in response to a perceived need to turn counter-insurgency activities of the state security apparatus into a counter-revolutionary program, and amendments to the Police Act that year outlawed the 'publication of false information about the action of the police' (HRC 99). This was also the year in which Wessel Ebersohn published the first of his apartheid crime fiction novels, a

form of protest literature in which he exposed the corruption of the police and, in particular, of the Security Branch.

Suspicious about the existence of death or hit squads stretched back to the 1970s but it was only in the late 1980s that hard evidence came to light confirming the existence of such squads within the police, defence force and intelligence service (HRC 168). The use of intelligence and counter-intelligence, and implementation of counter-revolutionary measures to ensure internal security had progressively come to prominence following the assassination of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd by a right-wing Afrikaner in September 1966 (O'Brien 36). The State Security Council (SSC) was implemented in 1972 to oversee the national security strategy, working in conjunction with the National Security Management System (NSMS), implemented in 1979. Counter-intelligence and counter-terrorism aspects of the strategy were largely implemented by the Security Branch of the SAP (34). In 1987 the Branch comprised fourteen sections (A to O) and thirteen percent of the SAP's 92 000 members (including reservists) (38), but arguably its Section C1, named Vlakplaas after the farm near Pretoria on which it was based, became the most infamous.

Vlakplaas was not established as a death squad but to 'turn' ANC and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) guerrillas to operate against their former comrades (34). The turned operatives were known as askaris. When Coetzee took command in 1980 Vlakplaas comprised five white policemen and fifteen askaris. De Kock took over the unit in 1985 (TRC 2.317). It was under his leadership that Vlakplaas gained its reputation as the 'security arm of the National Party' (O'Brien 47). He brought the brutal experience he had gained while attached to Koevoet — the SAP Counter-

insurgency Unit, attached to the Special Branch and formed in Namibia in 1979 for operations against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). At Vlakplaas de Kock accelerated the assassination program and introduced paramilitary training to police members (47).

The TRC exposed the Security Branch officers as responsible for gross violations of human rights. They had undertaken overt and covert operations encompassing actions including assassinations and attempts, torture, assaults, intimidation, misinformation, fomenting violence, ambushes, entrapment operations, abductions, disappearances, harassment, arson, attacks on buildings, sabotage, burglaries, smear campaigns, and illegal arms movements. Many of the officers pleaded that as instruments of the government they had only been doing their job as decreed by those in authority. The activities of these officers tainted the reputation of the SAP generally.

Few close analyses have been undertaken of the manner in which police and policing are represented in literature. Two significant works — DA Miller's *The Novel and the Police* and Caroline Reitz's *Detecting the Nation: Fictions of Detection and the Imperial Venture* — focus on British Victorian fiction. They examine the role of the English detective following Sir Robert Peel's establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829. Miller, who argues that 'no openly fictional form has ever sought to "make a difference" in the world more than the Victorian novel' (x), addresses various 'modes of "social control"' (viii), of which the police are only one, and the emergence of a more widely defined modern disciplinary power. He discusses how the police systematically function as a topic in the 'world' of the

novel, and how the novel systematically participates in a general economy of policing power (2).

Reitz, who offers an advance on Miller's work, is concerned with how fiction 'collaborated with other kinds of texts to shape national identity in Victorian England' (xv). She is indebted to Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and in particular his 'equation of knowledge and power' (xxi). Drawing on Foucault's analysis of how a society becomes disciplined, she argues the 'gradual public acceptance of and identification with the police' could, in part, be attributed to the nineteenth-century detective acquiring his 'cultural authority through knowledge rather than force' (xxi). Reitz suggests that the English detective narrative 'turned national concerns about abuses of authority into a popular story about British authority in the contact zone of Victorian culture; this in turn allowed the detective and the imperial project to become extensions of rather than anathema to English national identity' (xiii). With the detectives' authority stemming from their knowledge that promised mastery of a specifically imperial world, the Victorian detective narrative helped change perceptions of domestic criminal justice and imperial expansion by producing a figure with which English readers could identify (xiv). The figure of the detective became one of the chief vehicles for reimagining Victorian authority as essentially non-violent (79). '[T]he premise of Victorian policing [became] the premise of Victorian imperialism: knowledge is more effective than violence in the acquisition and maintenance of authority' (74).

In South Africa, until around 2011 there has been a notable absence of critical discussion about literary portrayals of the police. There are a few exceptions. In

Novel Histories: Past, Present and Future in South African Fiction (1997) Michael Green analyses the detective stories that appeared in *Drum* magazine. He also considers Wessel Ebersohn's use of the figure of the detective to shape contemporary historical events (223). Susan VanZanten Gallagher makes little more than a passing reference to confessional accounts of police perpetrators in her otherwise comprehensive *Truth and Reconciliation: the Confessional Mode in South African Literature* (2002). In *The Theatre of Violence: Narratives of Protagonists in the South African Conflict* (2005) Don Foster, Paul Haupt, and Marésa de Beer detail the stories behind the TRC evidence of two ex-police officers. All three analyses consider South African writing during apartheid — a period in which the role of the police officer was indubitably problematic and censorship intentionally stifled political portrayal.

Little socio-historical analysis of the SAP was undertaken during the apartheid period and up to the late 1980s. Government controls ensured that within South Africa only a sanitised view of police activities, at best, could be made public. Regulations introduced when South Africa's first State of Emergency was declared on 30 March 1960, following the Sharpeville Massacre, made it an offence for subversive statements to be published.⁴ In the years that followed, increasingly restrictive powers were enacted. The Publications Control Board had the power to ban publications other than certain newspapers, and could 'declare publications "undesirable" if it consider[ed] them harmful to relations between sections of the population, or prejudicial to the safety of the state, the general welfare or peace and good order' (HRC 98). Following amendments to the Police Act in 1979 that outlawed the publication of false information about the police, further amendments

in 1980 protected police from ‘newspaper coverage of anti-terrorist operations, except for reports based on police information’ (HRC 99). The government’s approach was to ‘steadily close off the areas which the press may freely cover’ (HRC 96).

Coinciding with its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1988, the SAP published *The History of the South African Police, 1913–1988*. Opening with a message from Adriaan Vlok, Minister of Law and Order, praising the manner in which ‘the dignity, the life, freedom and property of every South African [had] been respected and protected’ by the police force (Dippenaar v), the history charts historically significant moments, events and individuals, and includes statistical information. A largely self-congratulatory account in which the political discourse is informed by the ideologies of Afrikaner nationalism and the Total Strategy (van der Spuy ‘Political Discourse’ 86), the book fails to mention apartheid and its impact on the police force, police misconduct or abuse of police powers.⁵ In her review Elrena van der Spuy questions whether a police history by the police would dare to violate the operational code of ‘absolute secrecy’ within a police subculture (‘Political Discourse’ 101). Writing in 1990 she suggested that as a political analysis ‘Dippenaar’s *History* will eventually be relegated to the *rubbish heap* of historical analysis, or cherished for the banality spawned by the inclusive ideology of total-onslaught/total-strategy politics’ (‘Political Discourse’ 103).

Dippenaar’s account of the Soweto uprisings is a telling example of the distorted nature of official reports of police activities. Sources independent of the South African government reveal that in the lead up to 16 June 1976 students from

schools in the Soweto area held strikes in protest against the enforced use of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction. A peaceful demonstration march to culminate in a rally at Orlando Stadium was planned for that day. What transpired was a confrontation between thousands of students and heavily armed police. Brutal images of police firing tear gas and live ammunition at unarmed students brought a backlash against South Africa from around the world as unrest against the government spread across the country. The picture of Hector Pieterse being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu with Hector's sister, Antoinette Sithole, at his side, running to the medical clinic has become symbolic of the day. Hector was the second child to be shot by police that day. One hundred and twenty-eight people were killed by the police in the first five days of the uprising alone.

Dippenaar praises the police action and argues that they attempted to play a conciliatory role. Suggesting that police were aware of the planned boycott, but not of the planned mass procession, he describes how the unrest unfolded in Vilikazi Street (where Pieterse was shot), with police injured and vehicles damaged as protestors pelted them with stones. According to his account, Colonel Kleingeld, the commanding officer, gave the command to hurl tear-gas grenades at the crowd, but not a single grenade exploded. Police instead launched a baton charge. One police dog was beaten to death by the rioters. When the officers tried to return to their vehicles the crowd took it that they were fleeing. The unit was surrounded and, '[i]n view of their utterly precarious position, Colonel Kleingeld was obliged to use his fire-arm' (504). As police attempted to move through the crowd Kleingeld fired three shots over the heads of the crowd to disperse those who attacked police. Dippenaar concludes:

The fact that only two people were shot dead during this first clash between Police and rioters, testifies to the sense of responsibility and discretion with which the policemen used their fire-arms. [. . .] There can be no doubt about the fact that the Police were compelled to fire. (504)

Whereas Dippenaar's description of the unfolding events suggests the police acted with restraint and within their lawful authority, the images of the violence circulated around the world showed otherwise.

The following year, in 1989, *Acta Juridica*, an annual thematic journal that considered current legal issues, published by Juta Law in conjunction with the faculty of Law of the University of Cape Town, published a compilation of papers on policing in South Africa.⁶ Noting a dearth of information about policing in South Africa, despite the high levels of violence in the country, the editorial preface pointed to the fact that policing had become a major focus of political controversy with the legitimacy of police action increasingly being questioned. The preface identified that at the time there was no full academic account of the system of policing in South Africa. Little was known about the history of policing or about the training and deployment of police (Bennett et al. n. pag.). Contributions to the journal provided analyses of police practices, and discussion on historical perspectives of the SAP.

As South Africa moved toward democracy, information on the police became more accessible and censorship restrictions eased. In 1993 Gavin Cawthra published *Policing South Africa: The South African Police and the Transition from Apartheid*. Cawthra's book covers the SAP's history, organisation, strategy and 'the policing imbroglio of the first years of the 1990s' (viii). This was closely followed by John

Brewer's detailed study of the origins and development of policing in South Africa, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa* (1994).

Tim Prenzler and Rick Sarre suggest professional policing is one of the great inventions of the 19th century (Drew and Prenzler 20). Arguing that police protect people from crime and are there to help them feel safe, they proffer that a police force is 'a vital institution in the realisation of the fundamental democratic values of freedom, security, safety and justice' (qtd. in Drew and Prenzler 20). But how does this accord with apartheid South Africa, a class-divided society in which segments of the population experienced the police differently? From its formation on 1 April 1913 the SAP's primary task was to police race relations and contain and control black South Africans, keeping them in their place as a 'subject population' (Brewer 333). At the height of apartheid only one in ten members of the SAP was engaged in crime detection and investigation; the other nine were engaged in efforts to protect the apartheid regime (Terreblanche 43). Three-quarters of the country's police stations were concentrated in white areas with policing aimed at black people working in the towns (Shaw *Crime and Policing* 12). There was little by way of 'ordinary' policing in the black townships, and this became less of a priority as political opposition to apartheid mounted (12). Whereas colonial forces elsewhere modernised, until 1994 the SAP remained structured by the colonial-like role it continued to discharge (Brewer 332). The survival of this style of policing into the last decade of the twentieth century was an 'oddity' of the SAP (333).

Politically, in class-divided societies such as South Africa, 'the most crucial sectors for determining police prestige, power and resources are the majority higher

up the social scale'; however, police activity generally bears most heavily upon a relatively restricted group of people at the base of the social hierarchy' (Reiner 171). Under apartheid that restricted group also included political activists. Typically, the culture of the police — that 'subtle and complex intermingling of the themes of mission, hedonistic love of action and pessimistic cynicism' (114), where mission is not 'a political enterprise, but [. . .] the preservation of a valued way of life' (111) — aligns with the dominant societal group against outsider groups (110). Under apartheid, the SAP's activities demonstrated a police culture that reflected and perpetuated the power differences within the social structure it policed (129), raising as questionable the legitimacy of such a service.

From their inception, policing services across the globe have struggled with the question of legitimacy. This question even proved to be one of the greatest impediments in establishing Britain's Metropolitan Police. It was not until the 1950s, over 120 years after Peel's Principles were introduced, that the 'widely hated and feared institution' of the Metropolitan Police came to be regarded as 'the embodiment of impersonal, rule-bound authority, enforcing democratically enacted legislation on behalf of the broad mass of society' (Reiner 73). Key to this turnaround was successful depoliticisation (4) alongside the 'construction' of the 'benign and dignified English police image' (61). Physical force was decreed a last resort and public sympathy was garnered through a crowd control strategy of 'win[ning] by appearing to lose' (64). At the heart of police legitimacy is the notion of procedural justice: fair decision-making that is rule-based and consistent; and fair treatment or respect by the authorities of the rights of accused persons to be treated with dignity and courtesy (Sarre 15). But legitimacy is contingent on the broad mass

of the population accepting the lawful right of the police to act as they do, even if disagreeing with specific actions (Reiner 4). For the SAP, its characterisation under apartheid as a colonial force, ‘centralized and under political control, act[ing] as a servant of the state in suppressing part of the populace, [. . . and using] methods [that] relied on brute force as the first resort’ (Brewer 333), jeopardised aspirations of legitimacy and has tainted its democratic ambition.

It is not my intention to reduce this thesis to the question of the legitimacy of the police; however, this question is embedded within the portrayals of the police considered in this thesis. Taking Reiner’s observation that the police are ‘an integral aspect of the presentation of society as governed by the rule of law’ (171), I contend that it is in implicitly questioning the legitimacy of the police that the writers whose works I discuss question the political and, in doing so, reflect on national identity. Given the nexus between the police service and the State, what does the state of the police service reveal about the state of the State? Writing in 1989 van der Spuy pointed to the intentionality of the relationship when she suggested that ‘the conflict over the form and content of policing and its resolution [. . . would be] dependent on the form and content of South Africa’s immediate political future’ (‘Literature on the Police’ 291). Under apartheid strict censorship with broad prohibitions on political representation constrained writing about the State. Depicting the police presented a malleable option but has not been straightforward. Troubled by evidence of the evil deeds committed by the police (particularly Security Branch officers) during apartheid and of the inadequacy of South Africa’s post-apartheid policing service, writers have grappled with how to situate their damaged police in literature.

My thesis brings together works of fiction and non-fiction, and makes central to its argument the function of narrative and questions of genre. In doing so I defer to Paul Ricoeur's discussion on the narrative function as support for my approach, in particular his proposition that 'the references of "true history" and "fictional history" cross upon the basic historicity of human experience' (*Hermeneutics* 293). Ricoeur argues that

the historicity of human experience can be brought to language only as narrativity, and moreover that this narrativity itself can be articulated only by the crossed interplay of the two narratives modes. For historicity comes to language only so far as we tell stories or tell history. (294)

At the centre of Ricoeur's position on the narrative function is his 'insistence that history and literature share a common "ultimate referent"' — 'the human experience of time or "the structures of temporality"' (White 'Metaphysics of Narrativity' 175). Hayden White, a highly regarded analyst of Ricoeur's work, points out that this assertion represents a considerable advancement over previous discussions of the relations between history and literature which were based on the supposed opposition of "factual" to "fictional" discourse' (*Content of the Form* 175).

For Ricoeur, narrative histories and fictional narratives share the feature of 'emplotment', with the 'meaning of stories [being] given in their "emplotment"' (White *Content of the Form* 173). His argument pivots on the idea of emplotment. Emplotment is the configuring of a sequence of events with the coherence of a beginning, middle and end 'in such a way as to represent "symbolically" what would otherwise be unutterable in language, namely, the ineluctably "aporetic" nature of the human experience of time' (White *Content of the Form* 173). But whereas 'only

history can claim to speak about events which really happened, about the real action of men in the past' (Ricoeur *Hermeneutics* 288), by its nature, fiction constantly undermines its own meaning (Eagleton 125). Ricoeur describes history as both 'a literary *artefact* (and in this sense a fiction) and a representation of *reality*' (*Hermeneutics* 291). Fiction, with its characters, events, situations and plots being 'imaginary', ignores the burden of proof carried by history (288), and is more 'mimetic' (289). However, in referring to fiction as 'mimesis' he clarifies that it is not to be translated as "imitation" in the sense of copying some already existing model' (292). Rather, he explains that mimesis imitates 'not the effectivity of events but their logical structure, their meaning' (292). The imitation runs deeper than being a mere 'reduplication of reality' (292). He argues that

fiction is not an instance of reproductive imagination, but of *productive imagination*. As such, it refers to reality not in order to copy it, but in order to prescribe a new reading. (293)

He concludes by suggesting that in 'its mimetic intention, *the world of fiction leads us to the heart of the real world of action*' (296) and proposes that 'by opening us to that which is different, history opens us to the possible, whereas fiction, by opening us to the unreal, leads us to what is essential in reality' (296).

Ricoeur's work affirms the position that fiction and the representation of reality do not exclude one another. Fiction is as integral to the narrative dimension of history as representation of reality is to the productive imagination of fiction. Far from being 'an antithetical opposite of historical narrative, fictional narrative is its complement and ally in the universal human effort to reflect on the mystery of temporality' (White *Content of the Form* 180). The confessional and

autobiographical narratives, or works of non-fiction, which I discuss purport to provide historical accounts and so, arguably, facts about policing under apartheid. Equally, in the depictions of the police in the fictional works discussed, the writers draw on their personal experiences of the police and in this way the meaning underlying those experiences or events. Bringing the narrative modes of fiction and non-fiction together in this thesis enables consideration of those pieces of evidence on which the non-fiction bases its claim as a source of history, and it also enables reflection on the meaning of the events from which the fiction emerges.

Ricoeur also directs attention to the intentionality behind historical knowledge and fiction, emphasising that a historian selects ‘what, in his estimation, should not be forgotten, what is memorable in the strict sense’ (295). He suggests historical narratives can be considered ‘an index’ of historical events, the narrativization of which ‘effects a symbolic representation of the processes by which human life is endowed with symbolic meaning’ (White *Content of the Form* 178). What is most worthy of being retained if not ‘the values which governed the actions of individuals, the life of institutions, the struggles of the past’? he asks (295). For each of the writers I discuss the events involving the police on which their narratives draw were so compelling as to endow life with ‘symbolic meaning’ and so recording them was seen as a crucial part of South Africa’s index of historical events.

Choice of genre is defining for each of the works considered. This thesis spans a range of texts from protest literature in the form of apartheid crime fiction, to confessional and autobiographical accounts pre-dating and following the TRC, realist literature considering the re-making of memory of the police, and the re-emergence

of crime fiction. The texts discussed reveal changing trends in South African literary representation from 1979 to 2010. As much as ‘the police’ as topic directs us to the political, so, I argue, does each author’s choice of genre. Whereas questions about the legitimacy of the police have the potential to deter reader engagement, depending on the reader’s personal experiences of the police, I argue that the writer’s choice of genre challenges this. It is my contention that in the works examined, in which each writer’s portrayal of the police is inextricably embedded with the political and questions of legitimacy, the writer’s choice of genre is the key to readerly engagement.

John Frow addresses the intentionality of genre toward readerly engagement in his comprehensive analysis, *Genre*. He argues that genres ‘actively generate and shape knowledge of the world’; they ‘create effects of reality and truth, authority and plausibility, which are central to the different ways the world is understood in [writing . . .] painting, or in everyday talk’ (2). Genres define a set of expectations which guide our engagement with texts (104), and are a means by which ‘texts seek to control the uncertainty of communication’ (4). But, Frow cautions, a model of a genre can never provide straightforward guidelines (4). ‘Genre cues’ direct attention to ‘layers and sublayers of information’ that respond to the particular and local purposes of the speaker, reader or viewer, but ‘this is always a matter of interpretation, not of recognition’ (‘Reproducibles 1631).

In “‘Reproducibles, Rubrics and Everything You Need’: Genre Theory Today’ Frow laments the decline of genre theory: ‘genre continues to be considered a matter of the categorization of texts rather than a matter of the textual categorization

and mobilization of information about the world' (1633). He argues for a deeper appreciation of the pragmatic function of genre (1630), one that is not 'caught up in the taxonomic conception of genre' (1632). Drawing on Tzvetan Todorov's recognition of the social mode of existence of genres and notion of 'an institutionalized codification of the discursive properties of a genre', and Hans Robert Jauss' proposition that genres are 'historically determined, delimited and described' (1629), Frow suggests that the 'order formed by genres is thus specific to a historical period and is a function of particular literary institutions' (1629). Genres 'form a horizon of expectations against which any text is read, [. . . and] are themselves subsumed in a broader horizon formed by a period's system of genres' (1629). Frow posits that each 'genre's form is relative to those of all other genres in the same synchronic system, and it changes as that system evolves' (1629). Wai Chee Dimock also reminds us that genres do not work in isolation but with 'a continuous stream of input from other genres' (1380). As this thesis tracks representations of the police as exemplary of the changing preoccupations of South African literature, it brings to the fore the historically contingent nature of genre.

In chapter one I discuss Wessel Ebersohn's apartheid crime fiction. He published four novels between 1979 and 1990. At the time that he wrote, crime fiction was the most widely read class of fiction in the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK) and many other countries not under Communist rule (Symons 13). However, despite its acceptance worldwide, it struggled for a place in apartheid South Africa. Its comparative absence during the time that Ebersohn was writing is noteworthy. In South Africa crime fiction was regarded by some to be writing of a 'supposedly lighter vein' or one that failed to engage with the system (Davis

‘Political Loyalties’ 182). Regardless, Ebersohn used the popular fiction form to articulate an analysis of the realities of apartheid.

Ebersohn’s approach is closely personalised. His apartheid crime fiction reflects aspects of his own experiences of being harassed by the Security Branch police while writing *Store up the Anger* (published after the death of the founder of Black Consciousness, Steve Biko in 1976). Portraying police characters that embody the apartheid State they represent, his narratives are a form of protest literature that exposes constrictions imposed by that State. In his apartheid Yudel Gordon novels (*A Lonely Place to Die*, *Divide the Night*, and *Closed Circle*), named for his lead investigator, a psychologist and Ebersohn’s mouthpiece, social commentary underpins Yudel’s analyses of the psyche of the suspects, representative of those controlling the South African nation, and of the constraining mechanisms of apartheid, political and geographical. In *Store up the Anger* Ebersohn portrays parodic characters to challenge apartheid and describes torture methods by which the Security Branch police coerced subjects into submission.

Using the police procedural, a genre that emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the mysteries being solved by regular detectives working in teams and using ordinary police routines (Dove 1), Ebersohn draws attention to the fact that the role and function of South Africa’s police in upholding the apartheid regime were so at odds with the principles of the crime novel that they problematised the writing and reception of that genre in South Africa. Apartheid censorship legislation prohibited openly reporting on police activities such as physical and psychological torture. Turning to crime fiction, in which the police are an integral element, enabled

Ebersohn to legitimately detail such actions. Writing crime fiction allowed him to depict the ineptitude of the police and the endemic corruption sustaining the political environment. Two of his novels (*Store up the Anger* and *Divide the Night*) were initially banned by the South African Publication Control Board: *Store up the Anger* for being offensive to public morals because of its assault on ‘the whites and especially the Afrikaans speaking Boers’ (‘Banned “Biko” Novel’ 18); and *Divide the Night* because of the inclusion of a torture scene.

Ebersohn extended the bounds of crime fiction by developing a distinctively South African genre. Whereas traditional forms of crime and detective fiction such as that by Edgar Allen Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Agatha Christie reaffirmed the notion of a resolution and were intended to reassure the community that the police and the political were on the side of good and would prevail, Ebersohn foregrounded the fact that the political environment under apartheid rendered such endings impossible. As I will show, he exploited the participative nature of crime fiction and amplified its transformational properties. As readers are led through the investigations by Yudel they discover the essence of the facts on which Ebersohn’s fiction is based. Yudel’s commentary is a key to Ebersohn’s endeavours to create reader awareness of the political, engage readers and transform thinking about their relation to the ‘national interest’. In relating accounts of the activities of the SAP’s Security Branch, of which many South Africans were ignorant, at a time when openly reporting such matters was illegal, he contributed toward the changing reputation of crime fiction, using it as a form of protest literature.

Ebersohn's work stands apart because few other South African writers turned to crime fiction in the 1970s and 1980s. James McClure wrote eight novels in his Trekkersburg series about an Afrikaner detective, Lieutenant Tromp Kramer, and his 'Bantu' assistant, Sergeant Mickey Zondi, between 1971 and 1991. But he did not commence writing crime fiction until after leaving South Africa in 1965. Like Ebersohn, he wrote crime fiction because it is enjoyed by a wide group of readers (Robinson 10). He also considered it 'an ideal frame-work in which to examine a society' (10). Along with Ebersohn he was concerned about the seriousness of much South African writing: the works of Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer were 'all as deadly serious as a political meeting' (Wall 116). He had a background in journalism and spent his early years as a crime reporter for *The Natal Witness*, making it his business to get to know the police. When named the top crime novelist of 1971 by the British Crime Writer's Association for his first novel, *The Steam Pig*, he attributed the award to his intimate knowledge of South African Police procedures. Equally he suggested it was that knowledge that contributed toward his decision to leave South Africa:

I knew violent people like Kramer and Zondi, and while I disapproved of their behaviour I could also see their inability to behave otherwise. That was the dilemma which finally drove me from South Africa, because I am incapable of ever taking sides [. . .] If you have a police force administering a multiracial society it must itself be a multiracial set-up — but where apartheid was at its lowest ebb was in the police. (Short n.p.)

Because McClure wrote from outside of South Africa with an increasing remoteness I am not considering his works more closely in this thesis. However, it is

worth briefly addressing the puzzling lack of reception accorded his works in South Africa despite their considerable popularity in the US, the UK and Scandinavia for revealing devastating truths about South Africa (Peck 49). ‘Jean White argued in *The New Republic* that she had “learned more about . . . the sickness of South Africa’s *apartheid* society from [McClure’s police stories] than from most ‘serious’ fiction and in-depth newspaper reports”’ (Peck 49). Exploring the conundrum Richard Peck concluded that McClure’s style of planting ‘sly barbs’ in the minds of the South African English-speaking readers might not have sat comfortably with them: they seem to have preferred books which did not force them to consider the nature of their society more carefully (66). But lack of local appreciative reception was not peculiar to McClure’s work. Writing in 1994 Kathrin Wagner identified Nadine Gordimer’s works of the previous decades as being ‘relatively unpopular within South Africa’ despite ‘growing international acclaim’ (2). She saw critical responses to Gordimer as uneasy ‘with the quality of Gordimer’s vision’ (4) — a vision expressed in a fiction that ‘not only reflects a consciousness which has been fully shaped by the inner tensions of the white culture [Gordimer] rejects as by the resistance ideologies she has come to embrace more fully’ (6).

McClure uses his portrayal of the relation between Kramer and Zondi to comment on the moral dilemma of apartheid and suggest ‘how Whites and Blacks can maintain their difference from one another while working together for the improvement of South African culture’ (Tomarken 37). He had been struck by the unconscious nature of relationships between black and white police officers and realised ‘the people involved weren’t conscious of just how friendly they were with each other’ (Short n.pag.). Against the country’s policies of racial segregation he

exposed the fact that South African 'society would not have been able to maintain law and order without some tacit sharing' (Tomarken 54). Kramer might be the lead investigator but none of the crimes would be solved without Zondi's assistance. 'Zondi's intellectual faculties are considerable, perhaps superior to those of Kramer; in Kramer's mind Zondi is an equal partner although he must necessarily appear to others as the dutiful Bantu assistant who performs the menial investigatory tasks assigned to members of his race' (Lockwood 448).

Kramer and Zondi represent a 'microcosm of the best of South Africa, that which is redemptive and redeemable' (Tomarken 54). Unlike Ebersohn's investigators, McClure's police are able to restore order in the community, but not without black and white coming together. Kramer and Zondi retain 'their personal integrity while fighting the apartheid system in their own way' (Lockwood 465). For readers outside of South Africa McClure's works presented a somewhat idealised solution to the dilemma of apartheid. But for South African readers perhaps the resolutions he proposed were not so publicly palatable. Regardless of the reasons, consideration of the lack of reception given his work contributes toward an appreciation of the difficulties of publishing crime fiction in South Africa from the 1970s through to the early 1990s and using the popular fiction form to portray the police.

Political change for South Africa gained significant momentum from the late 1980s: the country emerged from the oppressive era of apartheid rule as the move to democracy increasingly became reality. On 2 February 1990 President FW de Klerk announced that political parties and organisations that had been banned, including

the ANC, the PAC, and the South African Communist Party (SACP), would be allowed to operate again. Activities that had been restricted under the governments of Prime Ministers Vorster and PW Botha, including freedom of speech, became possible under de Klerk. That Nofomela's confession in October 1989 of his involvement in police death squad activities was made public, and that Dirk Coetzee's story was published in *Vrye Weekblad* the following month, are testament to the tangible nature of that change. The release of Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990 publicly signalled a significant turning point in the transition toward democracy, as did the formation of the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The ANC subsequently agreed to suspend its armed struggle in support of negotiations.⁷

Despite the revelations of Nofomela and Coetzee and the changing political environment there were no government admissions of complicity in police death squad activities. The police also remained silent about their role in upholding the apartheid regime. When appearing before Judge Louis Harms former members from Vlakplaas denied death squad activities but spoke of insurgents being arrested. De Kock did admit that about twenty people had been shot. On 13 November 1990, despite the evidence of more than seventy days of court hearings into a number of murders, Judge Harms exonerated the police and found that deaths squad had not existed at Vlakplaas (Pauw *Into the Heart of Darkness* 91). Even the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, said, 'We've got the Harms report . . . death squads never existed in the South African Police. The police don't kill people, they arrest them' (Pauw *Into the Heart of Darkness* 92). This denial of the role of the police appeared to have an impact on the manner in which stories of the police and policing unfolded

as the country moved toward democracy and the commencement of the TRC hearings. With the formally constituted court disregarding Coetzee's open confession of death squad activities writers looked for other means by which to make such narratives public.

The confessional account came to occupy a seminal position in South African discourse as the country undertook to distance itself from apartheid. The objectives of the TRC included that it should establish 'as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature and extent of the gross violations of human rights committed during the period from 1 March 1960' (TRC 1: 55). Challenged by the complexity of the concept of the truth of the country's past the TRC considered four notions of truth: 'factual or forensic truth; personal or narrative truth; social or "dialogue" truth [. . .] and healing and restorative truth' (TRC 1:110). Confessional discourse predominated as perpetrators sought amnesty in return for what they tried to present as full disclosures of facts relating to acts associated with political objectives. The process of storytelling, in which victims and perpetrators related their stories was considered particularly important (TRC 1:112). Perpetrator narratives drew attention. For Michiel Heyns, the inclusion of perpetrator narratives provided 'a means of reinvention for those people who inflicted the sufferings of which the victims speak' (44). Susan VanZanten Gallagher argues similarly that the TRC hearings not only gave perpetrators new public identities as officially named abusers, but also provided a forum in which they could 'redefine and so attempt to heal themselves, often by repudiating a former self as one formed by indoctrination' (*Truth and Reconciliation* 123). She suggests that by enabling both victims and perpetrators to tell their stories

through the TRC, a new story emerged, replacing the ‘false narratives of apartheid’ with ‘new conceptions of national identity’ (124).

Jacques Pauw’s *In the Heart of the Whore: The Story of Apartheid’s Death Squads* (1991, referred to hereafter as *In the Heart of the Whore*), which predates the commencement of the TRC, and *Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid’s Assassins* (1997, referred to hereafter as *Into the Heart of Darkness*) are indicative of how the confessional narrative was used to break through the silences about the realities of policing that the government had struggled to maintain. In *In the Heart of the Whore* Pauw relates the confessional account of Dirk Coetzee, and in *Into the Heart of Darkness* he relates the confessions of Eugene de Kock and other death squad operatives. Pauw’s narratives, discussed in chapter two, reveal his dawning awareness of his own complicity, as a result of which he moved from working for newspapers loyal and devoted to the government’s policies to become a founder of *Vrye Weekblad*, at the time the only Afrikaans newspaper left of the government. Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism illuminates Pauw’s confessional discourse, enabling readers to appreciate and understand how people like Pauw, a journalist who had been oblivious to the manner in which the police upheld the apartheid regime, and Coetzee, the commander of a police death squad, could be moved to the point of mutual understanding and admiration through their dialogic exchange.⁸ Through Coetzee, Pauw was able to come to a sense of his own complicity in the atrocities of apartheid. The idea of transformation in this manner is also the topic in Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela’s *A Human Being Died that Night* which I discuss in chapter four.

Coetzee's first confessional account, *In the Heart of the Whore*, published in the lead-up to democracy, anticipates the importance of confession that drove the TRC. Pauw used this narrative to challenge South African readers with notions of complicity that would later be publicly debated in the TRC and addressed in its final report:

The emergence of a responsible society, committed to the affirmation of human rights (and, therefore, to addressing the consequences of past violations), pre-supposes the acceptance of individual responsibility by all those who supported the system of apartheid (or simply allowed it to continue to function) and those who did not oppose violations during the political conflicts of the past. (1.131)

Pauw revisits the question of complicity in *Into the Heart of Darkness*, published a year after the TRC had commenced.

Pauw uses the confessional mode to relate an account of Coetzee's life during the decades of apartheid. In turn, he embeds his own confessional narrative within Coetzee's. As a journalist Pauw had endeavoured to be at the forefront of journalism, breaking news to the world. He brought his professional background to his work, demonstrating what Bakhtin refers to as an 'imprint of individuality' by which authors distinguish their work from that of others connected with it, including those works that express opposing views (Bakhtin *Speech Genres* 75). The context of Coetzee's confession, as related by Pauw, differs markedly from the context in which his story was subsequently made public through the media and the TRC. From new contexts new meanings emerge. It is this change in which I am particularly interested. Why does Pauw, the journalist, choose the confessional mode rather than

simply report the facts that are related? Why does he attach himself to a police officer who was guilty of some of the most inhumane crimes committed by the Security Branch? Why and how, through his attachment, is he drawn to make his own confession?

In selecting the confessional mode Pauw draws on the dialogic properties of that discourse as a means of positioning the reader so that, in the act of reading, the public itself becomes a confessor, the one who receives the confession.⁹ VanZanten Gallagher argues:

Confessional literature impacts both the individual, socially situated, and society, made up of individuals. In the act of reading, the public becomes a confessor, receiving the confession. A certain kind of community is created, particularly when notable individuals write their personal accounts, which often become archetypes or modes for the community as a whole. (*Truth and Reconciliation* 33)

Pauw creates what Stevan Weine refers to as the possibility for testimonies to ‘earn private and public responses, and generate dialogue’ (127). By placing the confessions of Coetzee and other death squad operatives in the public arena, Pauw and the police officers can be seen to be seeking recognition from the community to whom they confess, while providing the opportunity for readers to come to a better awareness of themselves and of the world.

The prospect of the individual coming to a new awareness of the self through the ‘other’ lies in such engagement, and in this engagement rests the potential for a new national consciousness. But Pauw further reveals the significance of context in

creating meaning in his rendering of a confession from Eugene de Kock in *Into the Heart of Darkness*. Whereas he positions readers sympathetically in relation to the confessions of Coetzee and other death squad operatives, he positions readers to sit in judgement over de Kock. He uses de Kock to symbolise all that was evil under apartheid. Following his arrest de Kock did not grant interviews, did not appear in public and the courts and judicial commissions of inquiry prohibited the taking of photographs of him (Pauw *Into the Heart of Darkness* 31). Pauw constructs a confession which he purports to be from de Kock, rather than relating a confession directly received from him, as he does for Coetzee. It is in this contrast between Pauw's approaches to confession that the importance of the dialogic exchange as a means of transforming relations emerges.

In their introduction to 'South African Fiction after Apartheid' (2000), Attwell and Harlow discuss what has been referred to as the so-called 'miracle' of South Africa's transition (2). In their view, among the obstacles to the transition to democracy are the nation's past (2). They argue the need to find the resources, policy and vision to bind the nation and take it 'decisively from a traumatized past to a reconstructed future', and suggest that the TRC was flawed (2). Despite seeking to entrench a new public morality the TRC made no provision for natural justice and tended to obscure the systematically abusive social engineering that was apartheid (2). The debilitating legacies of apartheid include extensive poverty, educational deprivation and the 'warped criminal justice system which, because it was developed as an instrument of political oppression, seem[ed] incapable of dealing with ordinary crime' (2).

This warped criminal justice system that Mandela's government inherited is depicted in the works I consider in chapter three: John Miles' *Deafening Silence* (published in Afrikaans in 1991 and in English in 1996), AHM Scholtz's *A Place Called Vatmaar: A Living Story of a Time that is no More* (published in Afrikaans in 1995 and in English in 2000), and WPB Botha's *A Duty of Memory* (1997).

Testament to South African literature taking upon itself 'the imperative of breaking silences necessitated by long years of struggle' (Attwell and Harlow 3), each of these narratives is concerned with recovering memories of the past and exposing policing as a mechanism of apartheid's abusive social engineering. Miles' novel was initially published in the same year as Pauw's *In the Heart of the Whore*. Scholtz and Botha's novels were published at a time when South Africans were still sceptical about the integrity of their police and reluctant to embrace, or fearful of embracing, the topic of the police in literature. Consistent with my approach throughout this thesis, I discuss the three works in the chronological order in which they were published in order to foreground the changing socio-political environment and its impact on the manner in which the police were portrayed. Whereas Miles and Botha expose the silence maintained by the fading apartheid government about the role and function of the police, Scholtz re-imagines policing before apartheid in order to reveal its crippling colonial roots.

The importance of restoring memories denied or silenced by apartheid has been acknowledged by South Africans as integral to the country's transition to democracy. Fundamental to the TRC were questions of memory, including the recovery, preservation and even the creation of memory. Its task was two-fold: to 'recover parts of the national memory that had hitherto been officially ignored', and

gather records. The latter would ‘form a part of the national memory for generations yet to come’ (1.113). But not everyone has supported the manner in which the TRC dealt with memory. Criticism has drawn attention to the narrowness of its approach: its ‘singularly influential role in the production of a *sanctioned* narrative or collective memory’ (Bethlehem 78). Miles and Scholtz’s novels were published before the TRC; Botha’s novel appeared while the TRC hearings were still underway. Independent of the TRC’s ‘sanctioned’ narrative they are noteworthy for the manner in which they prefigure the importance that the TRC would later place on making memory. The novels reimagine accounts of policing that were omitted from official South African history. In narratives that would have drawn the attention of the censors at the height of apartheid, they challenge the recorded narrative. Miles provides an account behind the *Sowetan* newspaper report of 30 November 1987 of the shooting of a black police officer and his wife when their house was raided by three armed men (1). In the mimetic intention of their fictional form, in Ricoeur’s sense, these narratives lead us to what is essential in the meaning of the events on which these memories are based.

Each of the narratives provides a fictionalised police perspective on the workings of the police, and is concerned with the distinction between the public institution of policing, historically branded as an apparatus of apartheid, and the integrity of an individual police officer committed to a chosen career. The actions of the police embody the political. Significantly, each narrative is embedded with a message of hope. Miles’ Sergeant Tumelo John Moleko, Scholtz’s Constable Rigard Prins and Botha’s Sergeant Muller are officers of integrity who recognise and advocate for justice.

The Afrikaans backgrounds of Miles, Scholtz and Botha are integral to their works as they empower Afrikaners to expose the injustices of apartheid. Miles and Scholtz initially published their novels in Afrikaans at a time when Afrikaans literature was repositioning itself politically. Some writers saw this as an ‘opportunity for Afrikaans to free itself from the negative associations of the past’ (Viljoen ‘Afrikaans Literature’ 463). However, Scholtz wrote *A Place Called Vatmaar* in English with Afrikaans dialogue, and the novel was subsequently translated into Afrikaans. Although Afrikaans was his first language, he had not received any schooling in it and had been ‘discouraged from using the language in his creative writing by its reputation as language of the oppressor’ (Viljoen ‘Displacement’ 100). Botha, who left South Africa in 1975, and writes in English, writes about Afrikaner guilt.

Miles, Scholtz and Botha write from within conservative Afrikaner culture to expose how aspects of that culture contributed toward corrupting the basic tenets of policing. When the SAP was initially formed in 1913 it was a British-dominated force with officer classes overwhelmingly made up of English speaking officers. Afrikaners were encouraged to join in the following years but there was a reticence among all but the lower-status, poorly educated Afrikaners (most of whom were from farms) to enlist (Brewer 44). Other forms of employment proved more attractive for educated Afrikaners. As the number of Afrikaans speaking police officers increased so did the tension between them and the English speaking officers. By 1927 the force had become more experienced, with fewer turnovers of younger men; however, the officer ranks were still predominantly English-speaking (81). The pass mark for promotional exams had been reduced to 40% because most sergeants

writing in Afrikaans failed to reach the required 60% (81). The fact that Afrikaners with lower levels of education were attracted to poorer-paid, lower-status jobs such as the police is considered to have made it easier for the SAP to adapt to the transition to National Party rule in 1948 (96). By then the SAP had been thoroughly Afrikanerized, including its officer classes (96). Police culture emerged from the political strategies of Afrikaner nationalism that demanded special treatment because of their Afrikaner heritage, and their subordinate class position of poor whites (96). As the government formally adopted apartheid the need for the SAP to police race relations, and intensify monitoring and control of the black population was clarified (166). 'The police controlled boundaries between the races with a level of systematic inhumanity which was not known before, and the legal and political constraints which moderated police conduct in the past were lifted' (222). Brute force, an organisational culture and managerial ethos which encouraged this, and an armoury of equipment which made the police into a killing machine, distinguished policing under apartheid (222).

At the time of the transition to democracy in 1994 there was a strong suspicion that many police officers supported the Conservative Party and the even more right-wing AWB (the white supremacist group formed in 1973 by the former police officer who served as the Prime Minister's bodyguard, Eugène Terre'Blanche) (Brewer 316). The lower echelons of the SAP tended to come from that part of the Afrikaner social structure most threatened by the reforms implemented by the National Party (317), including the job reservation reform. There is evidence that police failed to act against right-wing extremists and even colluded with them (318). The SAP's lack of plans for dealing with major public order incidents meant that

control of such situations was often in the hands of very junior officers. Those officers in the middle and lower ranks, in which there was the most extreme right-wing support, were the same officers who determined police practice on the ground, rather than following operational policy (319). With its Afrikaner roots the SAP struggled to be regarded as a legitimate policing service for all as it underwent the transition to democratic policing.

Miles' and Scholtz's works reveal realities about policing in South Africa of which many would have been oblivious before the TRC. Botha fictionalises revelations about Security Branch operations at the time they were being recounted in the TRC. Each of the writers turns attention to Afrikaner responsibility for the horrors of apartheid, challenging Afrikaner notions of supremacy and entitlement by usurping existing myths and re-imagining silenced memories.

In chapter four I discuss three texts as responses to the TRC hearings and what had emerged there about police brutality. Again focusing on confessional narratives I consider *A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State* (1998), de Kock's own account as related to Jeremy Gordin, a journalist, while incarcerated for crimes he had committed as a police officer, and *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid* (2003). In the latter, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a black female psychologist, and TRC Amnesty Committee Commissioner, discusses the six interviews she conducted with de Kock while he was in the maximum security section of Pretoria Central Prison. Both Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela position themselves as confessor to de Kock's confession. In the dialogic engagement that ensued in her meetings with de Kock,

Gobodo-Madikizela also came to face her own complicity in brutality. As a comparison, I discuss Gillian Slovo's *Red Dust*, a fictional narrative inspired by her personal experiences of the TRC when she attended the hearings that related to her mother's murder. Whereas Pauw, Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela were moved by the personal bonds they formed with the police officers who confessed to them personally, Slovo remained distant from and unpersuaded by the police officers who confessed to killing her mother.

For many South Africans, the confessional discourse produced by the perpetrators, in particular the Security Branch police, was the most disturbing aspect of the TRC (VanZanten Gallagher *Truth and Reconciliation* 127). Many white South Africans, who for years had denied or were oblivious to the fact that atrocities took place, were stunned by the horrific evidence that pointed to the state's involvement in human rights abuses (127). Some questioned whether perpetrators should have been given the opportunity to present their confessions at all: trying to understand perpetrators may 'diminish our outrage towards their acts, shift the deeds out of focus, and potentially draw our sympathies' (Foster, Haupt and de Beer 42).

The Commission was sensitive to the public's response to the perpetrator narratives and even self-critical of its own lack of emphasis on the political accountability of the nation's leaders and voters:

the greater part of the Commission's focus has been on what could be regarded as the exceptional — on gross violations of human rights rather than the more mundane but nonetheless traumatising dimensions of apartheid life that affected every single black South African. The killers of Vlakplaas have

horrified the nation. The stories of a chain of shallow graves across the country, containing the remains of abducted activists who were brutalised, tortured and ultimately killed, have left many South Africans deeply shocked. The media has understandably focused on these events — labelling Eugene de Kock, the Vlakplaas commander, ‘Prime Evil’. The vast majority of victims who either made statements to the Commission or who appeared at public hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee to tell their stories of suffering simply did not receive the same level of public attention. (1.133)

Suggesting that this lack of focus drew the nation’s attention away from more commonplace violations, the Commission was concerned that:

ordinary South Africans do not see themselves as represented by those the Commission defines as perpetrators, failing to recognise the ‘little perpetrator’ in each one of us. To understand the source of evil is not to condone it. It is only by recognising the potential for evil in each one of us that we can take full responsibility for ensuring that such evil will never be repeated. (1.133)

Following the concerns of the TRC an increasing preoccupation with narratives of self-reflection is evident in South African literature in the ten years following the coming of democracy (Irlam 697). In his study of post-apartheid literature Shaun Irlam lists nineteen examples of literature that has taken an ‘introspective turn’ (714). He identifies a perceptible move toward ‘minutely autobiographical and confessional introspection’ with writers using the confessional mode to engage with the question posed to all South Africans: ‘Who were you during

the decades of apartheid?’ (712). Literature picked up where the TRC left off, and gave credence to the notion of national identity in a state of becoming, and able to be influenced by the self-examination of individuals (714).

The three texts discussed in chapter four form part of the body of introspective writings emerging in the transition from apartheid. Like Pauw, Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela draw on the dialogic properties of confessional discourse to position the reader as reading confessor. They attach themselves to de Kock and place his story in the public arena to seek recognition from the primarily white South African community to which his confession is directed. Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela challenge the epithet ‘Prime Evil’ that the media assigned de Kock. De Kock told the Amnesty Committee about the horrific actions he had personally undertaken as a police death squad commander. He had already been found criminally guilty of eighty-nine charges, including six for murder, sixty-six for fraud, and nine for possession of illegal arms. On 30 October 1996 he was sentenced to ‘two life sentences plus 212 years, all to run concurrently’ (de Kock and Gordin 274).¹⁰ Significantly, the TRC acknowledged the fullness of his disclosures through which he had broken the ‘code of silence’ among police officers (5.202). By publishing de Kock’s confession in narrative form Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela opened the opportunity for readers to receive his confession in a very different context, and so — as they hoped — to come to a better appreciation of how the evil of apartheid was attributed to him.

Slovo’s narrative reflects a deep scepticism about the police and the processes of the TRC through which they were not seen as culpable. It makes apparent her

disdain for the Security Branch officers, in particular Craig Williamson, who attributed her mother's death to 'the state', while accepting no responsibility himself (Slovo *Every Secret Thing* 260). Her narrative affirms images of the police as evil. The contrast between the views of Pauw in relation to Coetzee, and Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela in relation to de Kock, and Slovo's view of the Security Branch police captures the deep divide of opinion on the culpability of South Africa's police for the crimes of apartheid.

As the TRC hearings came to a close and South Africa distanced itself from apartheid, the threat of crime hanging over the country became a new focus for literature. The TRC had offered a narrative to South Africans and the world that portrayed a corrupted policing service. Post-TRC a new reality was emerging. The country's transition to democracy and reconciliation had been touted 'a miracle' by some (Burton 109). But there was increasing agreement among middle-class social critics that urban crime had replaced the civil war that had been avoided (Samara 25). Levels of crime increased by 15% between 1994 and 1999 while the number of unsentenced prisoners increased by 215% (Steinberg *Crime Wave* 42). Even though murder rates began to decrease (from 27 000 per year in 1995–96 to 19 200 in 2006) the number of robberies, including armed robberies, increased (from 123 000 in 1995–96 to 230 000 in 2003) (Altbeker *Country at War* 50). However, it must be acknowledged that prior to 1994 'the "real" state of crime was never reported' (Comaroff and Comaroff 'Figuring Crime' 221). And, of course, crime statistics are always highly contested. As Comaroff and Comaroff note, one of the paradoxes of crime statistics is that while they 'constitute a widely cited measure of social order, they tend also to be *distru*sted, due largely to their susceptibility to abuse' (211),

being circulated ‘not merely as information, but as discourse about the nature and efficacy of governance itself’ (229). Because they are compiled from cases reported to the police or discovered by the police through their investigations crime statistics inevitably undercount the incidence of crime (Comaroff and Comaroff ‘Figuring Crime’ 219). In South Africa this is exacerbated by a historic mistrust of the law, a belief that conviction rates are low, and the uneven bureaucratic capacities of the SAPS (219). Also of note is that ‘rising crime rates may be less an indicator of rising crime than of increased confidence in, and the success of, policing’ (219).

Regardless of how recorded statistics might be interpreted, along with concerns that the nation exhibited ‘an unhealthy addiction to violence’ (Altbecker *Country at War* 48) came the realisation that the police lacked the ‘finesse and nuance to deal with crime’ other than using the ‘bluntest of blunt instruments’, supressing crime ‘largely through highly visible, labour-intensive operations’ (Altbecker *Country at War* 141). Altbecker observes:

what makes South Africa’s crime problem unique is not so much the volume of crime as its extraordinary violence, with interpersonal violence and the exponential growth in robbery the principal manifestation of this. (*Country at War* 33)

Journalists whose investigative writings had proven so revealing during the demise of apartheid turned their attention to the new threat to the stability of the country. Writers started to research crime rates, the operations of gangs and the responses of the police. Exploring the operations of the SAPS took on a new level of interest, as in Jonny Steinberg’s *Crime Wave* (2001), *Midlands* (2002), *The Number:*

One Man's Search for Identity in the Cape Underworld and Prison Gangs (2004), and *Thin Blue* (2008); Mark Shaw's *Marching to a Different Tune* (2001), and *Crime and Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Transforming under Fire* (2002); Antony Altbecker's *The Dirty Work of Democracy: A Year on the Streets with the SAPS* (2005) and *A Country at War with Itself: South Africa's Crisis of Crime* (2007); Andrew Brown's *Street Blues: The Experiences of a Reluctant Policeman* (2008); and Andrew Faull's *Behind the Badge: The Untold Stories of South Africa's Police Service Members* (2010). Free of the restrictions of censorship, non-fiction writers, particularly journalists, could openly explore the criminality troubling the country and write plainly about policing activities.

Around the same time, from 2004, crime fiction in English began to re-emerge in South Africa. Many of the writers, including Wessel Ebersohn, Deon Meyer and Margie Orford, had started careers in journalism. Orford voiced a case for writers looking for new ways in which to express their concerns about the state of security and policing in post-apartheid South Africa. Among the serious intentions behind her own move to crime fiction, she said, was 'the wish to understand the roots of local violence, to create a sense of order, for herself and her readers, and to represent current reality more fully than journalism allows' (Hunter 88). She looked to crime fiction because she wanted to 'write about South Africa as it is [. . .] not how it was meant to be' (Orford 'Writing Crime' 185). As an investigative journalist she could relate the facts endlessly but crime fiction, she said, 'offers a way of telling an emotional and moral truth, a forensic exploration of the physical, emotional and moral aftermath of violence' (191), and respond to real crimes as 'violent ruptures and the resilience of survivors' (187).

The number of writers turning to crime fiction has continued to grow. Since 2008 and consistent with the worldwide trend, South Africa has seen a burgeoning of crime fiction published in English. Richard Kunzmann, Andrew Brown, Margie Orford, Mike Nicol, Jassy Mackenzie and, more recently, Roger Smith and Michelle Rowe have published multiple works. Orford and Nicol have each developed a crime series centering on their investigators. The proliferating works written in Afrikaans by Deon Meyer continue to be translated into English. In 2010 Wessel Ebersohn returned to publishing crime fiction with *The October Killings*; in 2012 he published *The Top Prisoner of C-Max*.¹¹ That same year, the critic Christopher Warnes identified approximately forty South African writers who had published crime fiction works since 2002 ('Writing Crime' 981). From tentative beginnings crime fiction had firmly established itself as a dominant genre for South Africans publishing in English.

In chapter five I examine the roots of this re-emergence. Rather than considering works that have contributed to the more recent flooding of the literary market, my focus is on the earlier works that opened the way for the post-apartheid crime fiction genre, and thus concludes with works published in 2010. This is not to discount the large amount of crime fiction published thereafter, but my argument concerns the period of transition, not its aftermath. Whereas literary criticism on later South African crime fiction has gained in momentum since that time, including special issues of *Current Writing* in 2013 and *Scrutiny2* in 2014, little attention has been paid to the period during which crime fiction began to re-emerge after apartheid. Concluding with works published in 2010 means that I have not considered works published since the Marikana Massacre on 16 August 2012 when

uniform police officers fired on striking mine workers at the Lonmin Mine in the North West Province, killing thirty-four workers. This is not to disregard the socio-political significance of this event. Professor Philip Frankel, a mining sociologist, commented:

From my own experience, I sense that there is a virtual consensus among overseas opinion-makers (including strategic investors) that our local “miracle” is scarred beyond redemption under a basically leaderless, corrupt and unreformable government. Events at Marikana make a mockery of our claims to democratic governance, and we remain one of the most unequal countries in the world. (11)

The report of the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, handed down in June 2015, condemned the police, noting that their actions contributed significantly toward the outcome of the dispute. Works portraying this massacre and literary criticism of those works represent yet another emerging field for future consideration that would extend my study. However, for now, I have restricted my particular interest to how writers of earlier works, works written during a particular cultural/generic transition, dealt with the figure of the police officer, whose image had been damaged and tainted by apartheid, as they developed post-apartheid crime fiction as a popular form.

I discuss the first three works each of Deon Meyer and Margie Orford. These were published in English between 1999 and 2009 (Meyer’s *Dead before Dying* was published in Afrikaans as *Feniks* in 1996) and depict the country’s policing service struggling in the transition to democracy. I also discuss Wessel Ebersohn’s first post-apartheid crime fiction work, *The October Killings* (2010), and compare his approach

to that taken in his apartheid crime fiction. With Meyer and Orford developing a crime series for their investigators, and Ebersohn continuing the adventures of his apartheid investigators, readers are given a clear map of the country's changing socio-political conditions. Violent crimes including gang violence are on the rise. The image of the police officer, as a troubling embodiment of the political, brings to the fore issues underpinning the country's socio-political woes.

Whereas the transition to democratic policing had promised much, with ANC policy makers recognising in the months before the 1994 election that the most critical policing priority 'was to improve relations between the community and the police, and by so doing legitimate the police in the eyes of those it had once suppressed' (Shaw *Crime and Policing* 28), what transpired has fallen well short of a model of community-police trust. Once it became apparent that the police — who had so ruthlessly acted as a force of political control under apartheid — were unable to deal with the picture of criminality and lawlessness that was emerging through populist discourse, the initial public optimism that buoyed the transition began to dissipate. Police came to be viewed poorly in their fight against crime (Shaw *Crime and Policing* 34). For the majority of South Africans it was not enough to say that the police were legitimate — legitimacy had to be earned (34). The works of Meyer, Orford and Ebersohn commence in the style of the police procedural, a genre intended to portray 'those things ordinarily expected of policemen' (Dove 2). But in the South African context, with the police continuing to bear the taint of apartheid, this is not straightforward.

Since Meyer, Orford and Ebersohn share a background in journalism, their decision to write realist fiction focusing on the police is not surprising. What is, however, is the rapid decrease in their confidence in the post-apartheid police. Their initially optimistic representations of post-apartheid policing, capturing the mood of the move to democracy, are eroded by the inadequacy of the police in dealing with the seemingly uncontrollable levels and complexity of criminality. As endorsements of hope in the future of policing fade so a transition in the genre becomes apparent: the police procedural gives way to the thriller. In other words, containment of the crime and solving a mystery become secondary to the focus on the crime and the criminal committing it (Scaggs 84).

Most telling is Meyer's work. His focus on the police changes radically across his first three narratives, as does his tone. In *Dead before Dying* the police are the primary investigators and Meyer's portrayal is optimistic. The police understand the law and operate within it. But as Meyer portrays the police as representatives of the transforming body politic, he depicts the future of the country resting on the unwholesome bodies of the past and the transformation of their grotesque apartheid bodies is incomplete. Moreover, in his first novel the police are central to the narrative and do solve the crimes, unlike Ebersohn's apartheid crime fiction. In *Dead at Daybreak*, published in English in 2000, the police are distanced from the action. The primary investigator, Zatopek van Heerden, is an ex-police officer and private investigator; that is, he sits outside of the police. The police are given only a peripheral role in the final arrests and interrogation of the suspects. In Meyer's third novel, *Heart of the Hunter*, a thriller published in English in 2003, the police are

barely mentioned other than as traffic officers. An almost complete loss of confidence in the police is evident.

Orford's first crime fiction novel, *Like Clockwork*, was published in 2006, three years after Meyer's noticeable shift. Her work is distinguished by her choice of a female primary investigator, Dr Clare Hart, who is a psychological profiler; again, like Meyer and Ebersohn, Orford's key character sits outside of the police. While the police remain integral to Orford's investigations, they are peripheral characters, and her lead police investigator, Captain Rediwaan Faizal, has only a secondary role. These peripheral positions are noteworthy given Orford's explicit statements about crime fiction as a means of understanding the crime and violence in South Africa. As with Ebersohn, Orford's police characters satisfy a relatively superficial law and order role. The deeper ratiocinative function rests with her psychologist investigator and central figure, as understanding the psyche is the key to creating a sense of social order.

Interestingly, however, as with Meyer, Orford's rendering of the police is sympathetic: she recounts the brokenness of those who once investigated the darkest reaches of South African society. But the flawed past of the police threatens future stability. Orford's police hero solves crimes only in collaboration with the psychologist investigator, Clare Hart. While Orford's first foray into crime fiction, *Like Clockwork*, is a somewhat shallow rendering of her police characters, by her third novel, *Daddy's Girl* (a prequel to *Like Clockwork*), she includes characters of greater depth. Orford had by this time studied SAPS policing, detection methods and conditions and was able to provide readers with insight into the state of the SAPS. At

the same time she draws on social anxieties regarding the rising gang culture in the Cape to develop a stronger thriller element for her story, echoing the move more generally in post-apartheid South African crime fiction to the thriller mode.

A year after *Daddy's Girl* was published Ebersohn published his first post-apartheid crime fiction novel, *The October Killings*, which also depicts the new era in policing following the transition to democracy. The roles and functions of his investigators changed significantly from those of his apartheid narratives, and a black woman joins Yudel in his investigations. As with his apartheid fiction, Ebersohn engages with political questions, also addressing questions of complicity and amnesty that arose out of the TRC. He alludes to the South African nation taking on greater responsibility on the international stage, including as a contributor toward transnational policing, now that the country is free of the sanctions which constrained it during apartheid. Collaboration between the investigators is key to the progress of the investigation they undertake. However, consistent with his apartheid crime fiction, Ebersohn evades a final resolution, reaffirming that, for many, the crime of apartheid will never be resolved.

This thesis is framed, then, by works of crime fiction. Crime fiction is arguably the most popular form of literature through which readers come to images of the police and policing. The fact that the genre has struggled for acceptance in South Africa when its popularity has been the norm in many parts of the Western world is of particular interest for this thesis. In his exposition on forms of time and chronotype in the novel Bakhtin identifies 'the significance of legal-criminal categories in the novel, and the various ways they are used — as specific forms for

uncovering and making private life public — [as] an interesting and important problem in the history of the novel’ (*Dialogic Imagination* 124). He traces the evolution of this category from the Hellenistic period as literature sought to find ways to make public the private lives encapsulated in the literature of the time. Strategies such as inserting a ‘criminal trial [. . .] (along with searches and investigations)’ into a novel, inserting ‘criminal activities into private life’, ‘circumstantially and conditionally, in a half-hidden way [. . .] utilizing eyewitness accounts, confessions of the accused, court documents, evidence, investigative hunches and so forth’ were used as mechanism for ‘snooping about, of overhearing “how others live”’ (123). He identifies a number of these aspects of the Greek romance chronotope — ‘the *criminal trial* [. . .] and legal–criminal categories’ — as having ‘an enormous organizational significance’ in the history of the novel (124). He specifically mentions the importance of ‘the adventure-detective novel (the investigation, clues, piecing-together of events with the help of these clues)’ (124). Even though modern day crime fiction is considered to have its genesis in the works of writers like Edgar Allen Poe, published in the 1830s and 1840s, Bakhtin shows the origins of the genre in the romance chronotope, a generic type that ‘lie[s] at the heart of specific varieties of the novel genre, formed and developed over the course of many centuries’ (251). The absence of this category in its most popular form for so long from South African fiction is a direct expression of the political climate that stifled the instinctive tendency to ‘snoop’ about.

As this thesis traces South Africa’s political transition through the portrayal of its police, it also tracks a normalising effect in South African writers, evident through the restoration of their ability to utilise the chronotopic form with the

freedom of writers in other countries. The narratives at the centre of the thesis bring to the fore the troubling image of the police that was also made public through the TRC, and illuminate aspects of that image that have problematized the writing of crime fiction.

Chapter 1 — Writing the Police During Apartheid — Wessel Ebersohn's Crime Fiction

Among writers who lived and wrote in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s Wessel Ebersohn stands out for placing the police at the centre of his stories. Self-consciously including personal experiences in his fiction he challenged the establishment by making known details of his own encounters with the police. In 2009 he said that he writes crime fiction because it allows writers to ‘reveal all sorts of elements of the country that normally stay hidden’ (Nicol). In his three apartheid novels — *A Lonely Place to Die* (1979), *Divide the Night* (1981) and *Closed Circle* (1990) — Ebersohn uses Yudel Gordon, a prison psychologist, to offer a psychological analysis of the country’s crimes and ills and the extreme means of social control. In *Store up the Anger* (1980) — a narrative which is ‘very obviously based [. . . on the] case of Steve Biko’ (Thornycroft ‘Acclaimed SA Novel’ 12) — he recreates scenes of torture and punishment at the hands of the Security Branch police. The manner in which he chronicles the changing South African political environment is of interest, but it is his choice of genre that demands attention. Why, when some South African critics considered crime fiction ‘writing [of] a supposedly lighter vein, work which did not in some manner engage relevantly with “the system”’ (Davis ‘Political Loyalties’ 182), did Ebersohn turn to it as a genre of choice?

Much has been written about the myriad difficulties faced by South African writers during the years in which Ebersohn’s early works were published. Paul Gready has suggested that the aim of those writing against the controlling powers of apartheid after the 1976 Soweto riots was to ‘restore voice, self, and world to the

body wrapped in silence; to inflict reversals, and record and inspire resistance; to see through the official written record, broadcast its silences, and unveil its hypocrisies' (*Writing as Resistance* 122). Michael Chapman pointed to the tension associated with 'the imaginative writer's artistic integrity in a situation calling for the commitments of political affiliation' (*Southern African Literatures* 397). Focusing on the black writer, TT Moyana said, putting it simply, '[t]he basic problem of course, is apartheid' (85). The difficulty facing the creative artist in South Africa was that life itself was 'too fantastic to be outstripped by the creative imagination' (95). And Nadine Gordimer reflected on the troubled position of the white writer who had to make the decision whether to remain responsible to the dying white order or to declare him- or herself positively as answerable to the order struggling to be born. She suggested that to declare him- or herself for the latter was only the beginning. The writer had to:

try to find a way to reconcile the irreconcilable within himself, establish his relation to the culture of a new kind of posited community, non-racial but conceived with and led by blacks. (*Essential Gesture* 278)

Ebersohn too struggled with his personal dilemma:

Examining my position in the society into which I was born and the rights I claim for my trade, I find that I am in a battlefield, gripped by sympathy for one side and held by blood ties to the other, hoping by my work to add a little sanity to the proceedings, but aware that such hopes are probably futile.

('Wessel Ebersohn' 17)

For him, a particular concern was the nature of fiction emanating from the dire inspiration that his country offered. He was troubled by South African fiction which

he believed had ‘become obscure, vague and not a little masturbatory’ (‘Soul of the City’ 42). He sought a way to ‘consciously [try] to bridge the gap between escapism and serious writing’ (‘Soul of the City’ 42), and ‘reflect some of the hard, unpleasant realities of [his] country’ (Nicol).

Ebersohn turned to crime fiction, displaying an affinity for aspects of the genre that enabled writers to engage with society, while also revealing the inadequacy of the genre in the South African context. Basing the plots of his stories on the psychology of his characters he questioned the way South African society was run. But Yudel Gordon, the primary investigator of his crime series, is not a police officer. He is an ‘old school’ amateur detective of the formulaic detective story. Using characters such as Yudel, he drew attention to the policing of the country to show the role and function of the police in upholding the apartheid regime so at odds with the principles of the crime novel that they problematised the writing and reception of the genre in South Africa. Rather than producing writing that might be deemed, in Davis’ terms, ‘politically irresponsible’ (‘Political Loyalties’ 182), he wrote candidly about the police. Despite strict legislative controls over references to policing he used a genre that enabled him to legitimately confront ‘the system’.

The terms ‘detective’ and ‘crime’ fiction have been used interchangeably to describe the crime fiction genre; however, among writers who have considered these forms more closely there is some agreement about the differences. In the traditional detective story the role of the detective seems to be one of upholding the law and preserving the ideals of the predominant authority. The formulaic detective story is stylised and static in nature, and sublimates violence and brutality (Green ‘Detective

as Historian' 93). The stories are generally set in the present and address 'the preservation of a particular way of life dominant at a particular time' (94). In his early 1970s study Julian Symons suggests that the Anglo-American detective story, in particular, is 'strongly on the side of law and order', with the criminal generally appearing first as an accepted and often respected figure (17). The detective may be a professional or an amateur and, if an amateur, may run a detective or inquiry agency, or get involved in a criminal case by chance (16). Good people and bad people are clearly defined, and do not change. The police do not beat up suspects and the criminal's state of mind is not considered interesting. The police 'are on the side of light and the criminal on the side of darkness' (16). In comparison, crime fiction is often radical in 'questioning some aspect of law, justice, or the way society is run' (175). Plots are based on the psychology of the characters, settings are integral to the crime, and pressures involved in a particular way of life lead to the crime. Ultimately in crime fiction the crime is resolved.

Stephen Knight and Julian Symons separately point to the conclusion of the Second World War as a defining moment for detective and crime fictions. The war changed thinking. It involved 'general experience and widespread acceptance of bureaucratic organisation, and communicated a notion that security could come from organised, technically skilled collective effort' (Knight 169). After the war the detective became 'a policeman, acting with institutional support, conducting more or less accurately reported police business' (168). The detective had 'in a symbolic sense failed to prevent the War and in a realistic one appeared more absurd as scientific and forensic aids to detection became more refined and more important'

(Symons 148). Security was no longer safely in the hands of the traditional, readily identifiable detective.

In 2009 Nels Pearson and Marc Singer pointed to a general shift in criticism of detective and crime fiction since the 1970s — the period in which Ebersohn was writing. They suggest that rather than viewing the genre as a paradigm of the Western nation-state that assures readers that ‘society ultimately coheres through a shared commitment to reason and law’ (1), criticism now views detective and crime fiction as ‘formally diverse, flourishing in multiple centres, and engaged with the production of knowledge and transformation of consciousness with and across societies’ (2). This movement is attributed to an increasing awareness of the fact that, from its inception, the genre has been intrinsically engaged with epistemological formations that are ‘produced in encounters between nations, between races and cultures, and especially between imperial powers and their colonial territories’ (3). DA Miller’s and Caroline Reitz’s analyses of Victorian detective fiction can be seen to have emerged from this changed awareness of the genre. Ebersohn was writing his apartheid fiction at the time critical thinking was starting to change — ten years before Miller’s work was published. He is one of few South African writers who embraced crime and detective fiction in the apartheid era.

Ebersohn exploited and confounded the conventions of the crime fiction genre, so contributing to the change in thinking about its transformative nature and, of course, the aptness of it being used to engage politically. In its vocal opposition to apartheid ideology Ebersohn’s crime fiction can be seen to be in the tradition of the protest literature that overtly expressed resistance against the apartheid government

and oppression, dominating the South African literary tradition from 1976, following the Soweto riots, through the 1980s. Such literature emerged from a number of genetic areas during this period. Among them, as Louise Viljoen points out, ‘[r]esistance to Afrikaner nationalism and related constructions of power was one of the strongest themes in Afrikaans literature in the period from 1976 to 1990’ (453), including poetry written by black Afrikaans writers (457), and works by female Afrikaans writers (459). According to Peter Horn, ‘[b]lack South Africans claimed that black literature, under the conditions of apartheid, had to serve the resistance against white oppression; they declared that ‘good’ black literature necessarily had to be politically committed’ (526). He also reminds us that ‘the prison looms large in South African literature produced under apartheid’ (535). Prison writing is among the works on which Gready focuses in *Writing as Resistance*.

While protest literature developed as a strong tradition in South Africa, by the late 1980s firstly Njabulo Ndebele and then Albie Sachs cautioned about its limitations. Clarifying his 1986 observation that ‘protest literature may have run its course in South Africa’ (*Rediscovery of the Ordinary* 55) Ndebele suggested that one of the ‘central tasks of an alternative ideology’ was ‘to provide, among other things, new ways of thinking about the future of the country’ (64). He argued that what was needed was a ‘freeing of the oppressed social imagination from the constraints of attempting to envision the future under the limitations of oppression’ (64). Sachs similarly argued that culture should not be seen as ‘an instrument of struggle’ (*Preparing Ourselves for Freedom* 239) because to do so risked completely shutting out ambiguity and contradiction (240). Ebersohn’s first three crime fiction works were published when protest literature was at its height. Even though questions were

being asked about the future of protest literature when he published his fourth novel, *Closed Circle*, in 1990, for him the need to expose corrupt government practices was compelling.

A Lonely Place to Die

Yudel is carefully selected for the challenges that Ebersohn places before him. When we first meet him in *A Lonely Place to Die* he is 37 years of age. He is described as ‘an untidy little man’, ‘short and slight’, with a ‘great dense fuzz of curly brown hair that might never have been combed’ (31). With eyes that are ‘the dominant feature, sharp and intense’, when wearing his glasses he ‘looked exactly what he was — a brilliant student of his subject’ (32). He is a prison psychologist and more than adequately able to fulfil the role demanded of him by the detective story, for he is that ‘keen observer who notices things missed by others’ (Symons 174). However, as a psychologist he also represents the move toward the use of new aids to detection methods apparent in the emerging crime novel: psychological profiling and hypnotism.

Yudel acts as Ebersohn’s mouthpiece. Through his musings he expounds concerns about South African society and critiques apartheid. His positioning outside of the police affords him access to areas that are inaccessible to the police and he reveals police and government corruption that remains hidden from, or is ignored by, elements of South African society. Further, as a Jew, he represents a minority group and understands how, in stratified South African society, the social worth of any group is determined by its relation to the Afrikaner. As he attempts to save

N’Kosana, a black man who has been beaten up by the police, he reflects on the thinking of the men who were pursuing him:

That he was English-speaking made him an outsider. That he was Jewish made him a creature apart, not a man, but a Jew. To kill an Afrikaner was murder. To kill a Jew might be no more than culpable homicide. But N’Kosana was black. Killing him would not be a crime of any description.

(178)

Yudel comes to his investigations through his friend Colonel Freek Jordaan, a detective in the South African police. We see little of Freek in *A Lonely Place to Die*. Yudel tells us that he has a ‘stern law-and-order orientated mind’ (33), and is loyal to his fellow Afrikaners. Although not blind to their weaknesses, no man loved the Afrikaner more than Freek (*Divide the Night* 38). He comfortably fits the description of the detective foil in the tradition of Sherlock Holmes’ Watson. He personifies the virtues of ‘middle-class manhood: loyal, honest and brave’ (Knight 84). However, as Freek becomes more integral to the investigation in *Divide the Night*, taking on more of an investigative role himself, Ebersohn distorts his role as a traditional foil. As Freek becomes less of a contrast to Yudel, the investigator, he becomes more of a contrast to his fellow police officers whom Yudel investigates. Capturing the ambiguity of the policing role, Yudel tells Freek, ‘despite your authoritarian exterior, you are on the side of the angels’ (*Lonely Place to Die* 27). But Freek is no angel. He gambles on horse races, and jokes with Yudel about the women with whom they have had sex. He is, however, a man of integrity who shows that not all police officers are evil. As an Afrikaner and a police officer he struggles with the laws of his country and the culture of the policing service. Through Freek, Ebersohn makes

apparent an alternative for South African policing and, by virtue of his portrayal of Afrikaner society through its police, for Afrikaners generally.

A Lonely Place to Die opens with a description of a black man fleeing. It is not immediately apparent why, from whom, or from what, he is fleeing, until, trapped against the vastness of his surrounds, he is caught by two policemen. ‘We’ll fuck him up good before we take him back. That’s the only way to work with this type’ (7), one of the officers says. We are left pondering whether a crime has been committed and, if so, whether it is Muskiel Lesoro, the black man whom the police suspect of murder, or the police who would be the accused? From the outset the ‘rules’ of detective fiction are clearly confounded as the police beat up the suspect and violence is far from sublimated.

Although the makings of a crime novel are apparent as Yudel and Freek begin to investigate whether Muskiel could have committed the murder, it becomes clear that this is not a conventional crime story, for the integrity of the police is questioned. Yudel is not a police officer acting with institutional support, as a crime fiction investigator might. He is an amateur who comes by his detective role by chance. The good people and the bad people are clearly defined, and they do not change. But Freek is the only good police officer; the more we see of the local Middelpruit police the more we see a police service lacking integrity.

Ebersohn questions the effects of blind obedience to the apartheid government through the Middelpruit police officers whom he portrays as the antithesis of the police of the formulaic detective novel: they are depicted as

slovenly, arrogant, illiterate and incompetent. With his psychological insight Yudel takes control. He understands their society. Through him we hear Ebersohn's views of the failings of the local police and the inextricable link between those officers and the State President:

In a patriarchal society like the one in which they [. . .] had grown up you listened to the voice of the establishment, you followed the lead of the Member of Parliament or the church dominee or your senior officer or anyone that was a step higher on the ladder of life than you were. You never questioned the views of those above you and never forgot your place in the structure of things. You also never let those lower down forget theirs. The top man was automatically right. (77)

In the Western model of policing the police are employees of the State but fundamental to it is the autonomy of the individual officer, for he or she has some discretion when exercising the powers of that office. The belief that the elements of an offence are met and that an arrest is justified rests with the individual officer. However, when institutionalisation such as that engendered through the hierarchical structure of the police force and Afrikaner society gives rise to unquestioning commitment to those in authority the result is debilitating. Ebersohn depicts a police force so enfeebled by the authoritarianism of apartheid that they are rendered incompetent for a conventional role in detective fiction. For instance, rather than assisting Yudel, the investigator, to solve the crime they attempt to arrest him and, when they fail, then continue to pursue him. By virtue of the linkages to the 'top man', the police and others in the chain to the top emerge as the criminals and subjects of Yudel's investigation. Whereas the police procedural is generally a forum

for espousing the virtues of superior policing tactics and intuition, in the apartheid context the ineffectual police will just not fit this mould.

Against the ineptitude of the police, Ebersohn shows Yudel using his psychologist's understanding of human nature to cut across apartheid's stringent boundaries of race, religion and gender. With Yudel displacing the police as a controlling power, Ebersohn's approach reflects the move in South African writing of the late 1970s and 1980s toward counter-histories. Such writing was intended to 'discredit the apartheid regime's justification of itself internationally' (Moslund 17). Despite Yudel's white skin, the people of the local black township confide in him because of his intelligent approach to investigation and because he is not accompanied by a police officer. When he speaks to a black servant he is able to discover who committed the murder and why. And then, understanding that a 'lesbian's fear of publicity in an unbendingly puritanical society would be the deciding factor' (112), he is assisted by a young woman when he threatens to expose her as gay. In other words, the marginalised of society hold the solutions to the crime. Treating the police with due contempt, Yudel mocks the geographical and social bounds imposed by apartheid and by doing so is able to solve the crime.

When interviewed in 1981, Ebersohn described the Afrikaner as a 'tragic figure' in South Africa: 'in the long term, there's no way he can maintain power' (Schwartz 15). Amidst their rising uncertainty in the late 1970s and early 1980s as neighbouring countries moved to majority rule, Afrikaners struggled with the idea of losing power.¹² However, Ebersohn was concerned not so much with the inevitability of the loss of power as with the extreme measures to which Afrikaners were turning

in order to retain power. While he draws attention to the rising unease in white communities about their physical safety — depicting Middelspruit, an isolated Afrikaner community, with a revolver, rifle or shotgun in almost every house, and with houses shut and bolted at night against the constant threat of the black community of Phantomol — he makes apparent his alarm at the rise of organisations ‘dedicated to the protection of the people against neurotically conceived dangers and revenge for imagined wrongs’ (40). This alarm underlies all of his apartheid novels.

Ebersohn also questions the role of extremist groups committed to the preservation of Afrikaner society. Boere Nasie closely resembles the white supremacist group, Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), which emerged in South Africa in the early 1970s. Yudel’s investigation suggests that both groups share a Nazi parentage, with Boere Nasie phonetically mimicking ‘Boere Nazi’, and the arrangement of three sevens in a triskelion shape on the AWB flag suggesting a swastika. The AWB, formed in 1973 by the ex-police officer Eugène Terre' Blanche and six others disillusioned by the views of Prime Minister BJ Vorster and communist influences, could be a blueprint for Boere Nasie. Yudel wonders whether Boere Nasie is ‘[h]alf a dozen wild young men saving their people, or a country-wide organization with friends in high places’ (197). But Yudel is not able to establish whether Boere Nasie is responsible for the attacks on the monastery, or whether the group even exists, and his inconclusive investigation into this elusive group confounds the expected crime fiction ending. In the apartheid context closure is problematic. Departing in this way from the conventions of crime fiction, denying his readers a resolution, Ebersohn carries this narrative trajectory through his apartheid crime fiction.

The publication of Ebersohn's first crime fiction novel, *A Lonely Place to Die*, drew little critical attention. He described it as 'a thriller set against the South African social scene' (Schwartz 15). Stanley Ridge acknowledged the interest in South African life, but pointed to the novel's sense of unrealised potential (24). Ebersohn's first foray into the crime fiction world prompted little interest but this changed when his next two books, *Store up the Anger* and his second Yudel Gordon story, *Divide the Night*, were banned.

Store up the Anger

Ebersohn's second novel, *Store up the Anger*, first published in England in 1980, is not a Yudel Gordon story. It emerged instead from Ebersohn's commitment to understanding the anger that he witnessed as 'one of the few white faces in an angry, militant black crowd' (Charney n.p.) at the funeral of Black Consciousness founder, Steve Biko in 1977. It is the narrative of Sam Benghu's incarceration and torture at the hands of the Special Branch police.

On 18 August 1977 Steve Biko and Peter Cyril Jones were arrested by police outside of King William's Town in the Eastern Cape. They were returning from Cape Town, where Biko had travelled in contravention of a banning order, hoping to meet with leaders of the Western Cape branch of the Black Consciousness Movement (Mangu 249). Biko was transferred to the Walmer Police Station for 20 days before being transferred to the notorious Sanlam Building in Port Elizabeth (260). He was handcuffed, placed in leg irons, chained to a grille and subjected to twenty-two hours of interrogation, during which he was tortured and beaten (Woods

vi). He ‘suffered at least three brain lesions occasioned by the application of force to his head’ (Mangcu 261). Having sustained blows to the head that damaged his brain, Biko lapsed into a coma (Woods vi). The doctor who attended him admitted he should have been sent to hospital but the police initially refused. When Biko was finally dispatched,

he was transported in the back of an open van for 1,200 km., without medical supplies, supervision, or even notes, so that a Pretoria prison doctor treated a man dying of brain damage with vitamin injections and drip feed; and [. . .] the drip feed was later found empty. To inhibit public criticism, the government banned nineteen organizations in October 1977, including the two [most] widely read African newspapers. This gave the Port Elizabeth security police an effective public immunity, and the senior officer in charge of the interrogation was later promoted to the rank of deputy commissioner. (Brewer 274)

After fourteen days of testimony in the inquest into Biko’s death it took five minutes for the presiding magistrate to deliver the verdict absolving the police of any responsibility or criticism. As Xolela Mangcu notes:

With this judgement the magistrate confirmed what black people already knew and what many white South Africans pretended not to know — that South Africa was a police state (264).

Ebersohn researched Biko’s death but was adamant he was not tempted to write a history of Biko (Green *Novel Histories* 221). Conjecture about whether his narrative is based on Biko has been fed by ambiguities apparent in the opening pages, ambiguities which are integral to the theme and structure of the novel. The

novel was dedicated to the memory of those of Sophiatown and old Cato Manor, and ‘those who passed through pain and humiliation at the hands of the security police and were willing to talk about it’ (Ebersohn *Store up the Anger* n.p.). The disclaimer, appearing on the same page as the dedication, complements and challenges the dedication, stating that the narrative is not ‘derived from a knowledge of actual incidents or real people’ and that apart from references to historical figures and historical events, the characters, dialogue, and events described are fictitious (*Store up the Anger* n.p.).¹³ Although the disclaimer was probably motivated by legal requirements, the reader is left in uncertain territory. Is this a work of fact or fiction?

This ambiguity has plagued the book from its first publication. Two panels with differing agendas came to similar conclusions. The South African Publications Control Board said that it was ‘very obviously based with only slight efforts at glossing over, on the sensational and broadly documented or rather reported case of Steve Biko’ (Thornycroft ‘Acclaimed SA Novel’ 12). The panel for the Booker Prize discounted it from consideration because ‘it really seemed to be a documentary about Steve Biko rather than a novel’ (Green *Novel Histories* 218).

It is useful to point out that Ebersohn’s intertextual approach is akin to that which André Brink identifies in JM Coetzee’s *The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee*. Brink suggests that in writing this text Coetzee was able to ‘read between the lines’ of the historical documents to imagine a story behind the history which

does not set itself up as a ‘correction of silence’ or of other versions of history; but through the processes of intertextuality set in motion by its presentation it initiates (or resumes) strategies of interrogation which prompt

the reader to assume a new (moral) responsibility for his/her own narrative, as well as for the narrative we habitually call the world. ('Interrogating Silence' 23)

Real events act as a mechanism for the reader's appropriation and a trigger for his or her creative imagination. The reader is enabled to imaginatively fill the spaces created by the silencing of apartheid. Fiction complements fact as the reader extricates the story from the realm of the documentary and is no longer restricted by the necessity for reductive reasoning in the search for a verifiable truth.

Through such a structure in *Store up the Anger* the narrative lends itself to reader re-invention. The text is no longer only concerned with the life, detention and interrogation of Bhengu or Biko. With the fictional elements inducing a capacity to generalise and typify, *Store up the Anger* becomes the story of all detainees, and all residents of a Sophiatown or Cato Manor. The reader assumes responsibility for reading — and in a sense reproducing — the narrative which sits critically outside of the censor's control.

However, *Store up the Anger* was banned by the South African Publication Control Board for being offensive to public morals. Pointing to the assault on 'the whites and especially the Afrikaans speaking Boers', the Board argued that Ebersohn's accusations would 'undoubtedly evoke violent, passionate reaction from a reader' ('Banned "Biko" Novel' 18). The ban was subsequently lifted after an appeal by the British publishers since the Board had claimed that although the book dealt with a political subject it would not be read by 'revolutionaries or potential revolutionaries as bedtime literature' (qtd. in De Lange 77).¹⁴ The banning of this

work was noteworthy. As Daniel Kunene suggests, for apartheid writers, banning, like jail, became ‘a mark of authenticity’ and a ‘sign of confrontation with the power structure’ (436). Ebersohn himself, not surprised by the ban, was more astonished when it was lifted. The lifting coincided with the appointment of Professor van Rooyen as chairman of the Publications Appeal Board. He was responsible for ‘handing down noticeably more enlightened decisions’, introducing laws in which fewer works were banned, and granting publishers applications to reprint long-banned works (Davis *Voices of Justice* 122). A work’s evocation of anti-government emotions, criticism of the military or the police, or employment of emotionally loaded words such as “suffer,” “oppressed,” [or] “struggle,” in the context of revolution, was no longer sufficient for it to be found undesirable (Davis *Voices of Justice* 124).

Store up the Anger defies conventional novelistic structure and asserts its right to a post-modernist reading responsive to the silencing of apartheid. Using an interrogative frame in a narrative about interrogation Ebersohn exposes and provides a response to the silences that apartheid forces and enforces. Instead of using chapters, the novel divides the narrative into Sam Bhengu’s present and past. The present — his torture and interrogation — is in roman type on the page. The past is italicised, with the lighter, angled text, less clear on the page, seemingly mimicking Bhengu’s struggle to recall his past through his damaged brain. Each thread of the narrative commences at its traumatic extreme. In the present, Bhengu is in the interrogation room and knows he is dying. In the past the young Sam accompanies his father and sister to Mama Mabaso’s home in Sophiatown, where they are abandoned by their father. The two narrative threads are interwoven throughout the

novel, as if the present is interrogating the past. The silence that Bhengu maintains in the face of his police interrogators is replaced by the voice of his past. But the voice of his past responds only to the interrogation he himself provides. Appropriating the police interrogation, Bhengu confronts the silencing of the oppressor with the very weapon of the oppressor's control, subverting the power and control of that weapon as he claims them. In this way Ebersohn's descriptions of the police and their techniques challenge the boundaries of censorship within which he was required to write for his work to be published in South Africa. Almost paradoxically and, for Ebersohn unexpectedly, despite exposing the story of the controlling mechanisms of apartheid, control was returned to him as a writer, from the censor, when the ban on his book was lifted.

Ebersohn's strategies of subversion do not end there. He uses parodic figures to draw attention to the hypocrisy of apartheid. As much as Bhengu is the central character of his narrative, so are the parodic Special Branch police officers and it is through Ebersohn's characterisation of them that he makes some of his most critical comments about apartheid. It is not difficult to appreciate why the Publications Control Board was concerned that his characterisation might put whites, 'especially the Boer, Afrikaner' in the dock (Thornycroft 'Acclaimed SA Novel' 12) and evoke (in)appropriate reactions from readers. (Although the Publications Control Board did go on to conclude that even though most of the police had Afrikaner names, readers would not see them 'allegorically', or 'as representatives of all Afrikaners', or 'even literally as the police', but 'would recognize that they were just lawbreaking "characters representing the criminal element"' (McDonald 80).) Ebersohn's depiction of Captain Gerrit Strydom, a man who 'in appearance could have been a

dominee of the Dutch Reformed Church, of which he was a member' (14), and who really believed that 'what he was doing was his Christian duty and had to be done well' (17), is an explicit criticism of the Dutch Reformed Church. 'Do you think we're going to allow you to endanger our women and children?' Strydom asks Bhengi (17). 'That's why we aren't going to let you out of here until you tell us what we want to know' (17). But Ebersohn's most subversive comments about those in authority come through in his depiction of van Rooyen, who physically tortures Bhengu by repeatedly dropping a small sack of sand from his shoulder height to fall on the base of Bhengu's skull so that no bruises will show.

Van Rooyen remains nameless until he starts unpacking from his bag old *Playboy* magazines and paperbacks with erotic titles (evidence begged from Vice Squad officers), as if Bhengu is able to recall his name at the moment van Rooyen unpacks his 'true' self. Van Rooyen discusses the sexual exploits of officers and their wives. In a farcical scene akin to an Aristophanean comedy, he is depicted as a cuckold. Since he shares his name with the man who became chairman of the Publications Appeal Board, and the counsellor who represented the Port Elizabeth Security Branch police at the inquest into Biko's death, the double-meaning of Ebersohn's parody emerges. Is it the banned materials that enable his name to be recalled, or his manner of showing them one-by-one, as if presenting them in evidence in court? Bhengu's death is caused by Van Rooyen's lack of restraint, the first signs of which are signalled to the reader by his sexual deviance. In exposing his own lack of control van Rooyen exposes multiple facets of the excesses of apartheid's controls, representing at once the torturer, the censor, and the counsellor for the government agent.

Whereas *A Lonely Place to Die* portrays the police as incompetent instruments of apartheid, *Store up the Anger* portrays the Special Branch officers as the evil centre of Afrikanerdom that their subordinates cannot resist. One of the officers on the edge of the group, for instance, is trapped by Van Rooyen's power during van Rooyen's torture of Bhengu. He assists in the torture but is troubled:

There was an element in his consciousness that said that what van Rooyen was doing was wrong, but all of his training and experience had conditioned him to help a fellow police man against a prisoner always under any circumstances. There could never be any exceptions to that rule. (232)

Ebersohn thus brings to light some of the most concerning cultural aspects of the SAP, in particular, the vulnerability of young officers to those in authority. Gavin Cawthra points out in his comprehensive analysis of the transition of the SAP from apartheid that in the 1970s and 1980s young Afrikaner males formed the main recruitment pool (77). Common among the white officers was 'an overwhelming culture of racism, sexism and intolerance' and of those who tortured, killed or assaulted black South Africans, many were regarded by their victims as 'sub-human' (*Policing South Africa* 77). Underpinning police culture was the active promotion of Afrikaner nationalism, with the vast majority of white police supporting right-wing political parties or paramilitary formations (77). These attitudes were 'overlaid with a Calvinist belief that the will of God legitimises the law and the state, and that the task of the police is thus God-given' (77). In 1977 Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger declared that South African policemen were 'the mandate-holders of God' (77).

In *Store up the Anger* Ebersohn builds on his illustration of the fundamental risks associated with institutionalised indoctrination to capture these concerns about Afrikaner culture. Among the primary instruments of the regime, the group of Afrikaner men of the Special Branch were committed to fighting what they believed was the threat of communism. The implied exclusivity of this group is apparent through descriptions of Lieutenant Malcolm Brown, the officer with an English name, home language, and accent, who would always be ‘an outsider to some extent in that very exclusive group’ (106). And despite another young officer’s apparent compassion for Bhengu, draping him in a blanket when he is taken to hospital, Ebersohn shows that Bhengu sees through him:

those like Fourie felt that what they were doing was evil. But they covered it up, driving it deep into the unconscious corners of their minds, and they went on doing it. They would always. (102)

Store up the Anger provided a view of the interrogation or torture chamber that South African legislation had attempted to deny. The government ‘steadily close[d] off the areas which the press may freely cover’ (HRC 96) through legislation such as the Publications Act 1974 that empowered the Publications Control Board to ‘declare publications “undesirable” if it considers them harmful to relations between sections of the population, or prejudicial to the safety of the state, the general welfare or peace and good order’ (HRC 98). Accordingly, addressing topics such as the torture chamber presented challenges for South African writers. In ‘Into the Dark Chamber: The Writer and the South African State’ JM Coetzee argued that the true challenge for the writer was ‘how not to play the game by the rules of the state, how to establish one’s own authority, how to imagine torture and death on one’s own

terms' (*Doubling the Point* 364), and represent the torturer without falling into the many pitfalls with which the approach to the torture chamber is riddled. In asking how the writer might represent the torturer he suggested 'pitfalls' to be avoided: use of 'clichés of spy fiction', and making the torturer 'a figure of satanic evil, [. . . or] an actor in a black comedy, [. . . or] a faceless functionary, [. . . or] a tragically divided man doing a job he does not believe in' (364).

Ebersohn uses his imagined torture chamber to explore the psyche of the police. The chamber was intended to impose psychological and physical barriers on detainees, causing them to speak. Revealing aspects of his country of which many were unaware or that could not be made public other than in a fictionalised presentation, Ebersohn's story of Bhengu's triumph over the torture chamber by remaining silent is a triumph over the restrictions of the censor and a step toward a triumph over apartheid.

Paul Gready poses the question of whether the death envisaged for Bhengu can conceivably be termed a 'triumph' (*Writing as Resistance* 126). But this is not only the story of Bhengu dying; it is also a story of the demise of the Security Branch police as instruments of apartheid and, with their passing, the death of apartheid. When Colonel Lategan says to Bhengu, 'You're dying and you're blaming us. But we didn't kill you. You killed yourself' (217), Bhengu inverts Lategan's words and is able to speak, saying 'You also' (217). Both men represent the opposing poles of apartheid — Bhengu, the incarcerated, oppressed leader of the Black Consciousness movement, and Lategan, his captor and oppressor, a Special Branch police officer. The triumph of Bhengu's silence is a defeat for the Special Branch, and so apartheid.

Bhengu's death on his own terms is implied but not stated and points to Ebersohn's sense of the future for South Africa. There is inevitability but not finality as the narrative comes to a close with the two threads of the story converging and the past and present becoming one. Bhengu tells himself: 'Everything is going to be fine. There are no problems. [. . .] He knew he could do it now' (240); he 'knew that he was dying' (7). At the same time Ebersohn gestures toward the collapse of the Security Branch. In the ambiguity of his ending Ebersohn substantiates the conflicting scholarship on the South African novel in the 1980s. Stephen Clingman comments that for literature at that time 'from the questions of "reformism", to competing socialist and nationalist agendas, to transformations in everyday political culture, the issue which dominate[d] everything [wa]s that of the nature and shape of a future South Africa' ('Revolution and Reality' 45). Elleke Boehmer notes that the late 1980s South African novel involved a 'tailing-off, an unwillingness or an inability to comment on what might follow' (50). She suggests there was 'a diffidence about "registering" any final "collapse"', a refusal to anticipate any ultimate end and, therefore, any possibility of a new beginning (50).

Divide the Night

Ebersohn's third apartheid novel, *Divide the Night*, is the second of his Yudel Gordon series. In this novel the task for Yudel is not to determine the crime or the suspect, but to explore the psyche of apartheid itself, as embodied in the gangrenous shop owner, Johnny Weizmann. On the surface, the narrative is an investigation into the murder of the fourteen year old coloured girl, Cissy Abrahamse, while trying to steal food. But we know that Weizmann is the murderer even before the end of

chapter one. The usual function of the crime novel is displaced. As Yudel tells Freek, his role is to cure Weizmann, ‘so that he won’t do it anymore’ (38). As a man who ‘has gangrene at all extremities’, so that ‘[e]very few months or years he loses a joint of a finger or toe’, Weizmann embodies the moral decay of apartheid: its slow and painful progression towards complete dysfunction. Ebersohn poses the question of whether the solution to the problem of apartheid lies in the solution to the problem of Weizmann.

When Yudel first meets Weizmann he has a momentary impression of a man of great dignity. However, as he looks into Weizmann’s desperate and despairing eyes, he sees ‘the sadness of a man that was close to surrendering every interest he had in life’ (19). Claiming to be a victim of twenty-seven break-ins in two years, the shop owner is now ‘a patriot’, helping the police, ‘like a good South African’ (23). Through Weizmann, the people who gather at his shop and the members of the extreme right-wing South African Freedom Campaign, Ebersohn depicts what Geoffrey Davis identifies as the ‘leitmotif’ of his apartheid crime fiction: white South African society fearful of losing power (‘Political Loyalties’ 192). Vigilantism and extremism grew out of this fear, the implications of which Ebersohn depicts through images of white South Africans seeking to make their country safe for ‘decent people’ in the face of multiple threats — ‘a communist threat, a big-money threat, a liberal-Jewish threat and a black threat, a permissive society threat, a pornography threat, a newspaper threat, a women’s liberation threat’ (*Divide the Night* 175).

Ebersohn was ‘constantly plagued’ and harassed by the Security Branch while writing *Store up the Anger*: he received daily anonymous telephone calls, was tipped off about pending raids on his home, and friends were advised to stay away from him because he was ‘dangerous’ (Thornycroft ‘Author Harassed’ 2). He uses these experiences to bring authenticity to his narrative. Yudel is concerned about how the police associate him with communism because of his books. He reflects: ‘The word “communist” was a feared one [. . . a]ssociated with it were 90 and 180 day periods of detention [. . .] It was not a description many South Africans wanted to have linked to themselves’ (53). Ebersohn foregrounds the dilemma of writing in the apartheid context: which is more fantastic, fact or fiction? When Yudel refuses, on the grounds of professional privilege, to tell the police whether he has been treating Weizmann, he puts himself in conflict with the officers whom he suspects are Security Branch police. In describing their harassment of Yudel, Ebersohn outlines the country’s detention laws and the seemingly limitless powers of the ‘political police’ (53). He portrays a spectrum of torture inflicted on those who were targeted by the apartheid regime: Yudel’s anguish at not knowing whether the men are the Security Branch police, Rosa’s being driven from the family home to ensure her safety, and Thandi’s death while being interrogated. Through Yudel’s narrative Ebersohn conveys his view that subtle, psychological torment can be as debilitating and horrific as any physical torture.

As in *Store up the Anger*, Ebersohn portrays the Security Branch police as pre-eminent in the defence of Afrikanerdom — an impenetrable and cohesive group.

The faces [Yudel] saw were unalterable in their solidarity. They were the ultimate in-group. You could reach no nearer the core of any group than these

men were. They were the protectors and defenders of their people. They were entrusted with the very existence of Afrikanerdom. There could be no yielding by them, no uncertainties and no disunity. (193)

Yudel's role as detective in *Divide the Night* is thwarted when he is not able to solve all ills or use his psychologist's skills to heal South Africa of apartheid. He cannot cure Weizmann and realizes that he will instead have to prove his guilt. As for the crime, so for apartheid: Ebersohn denies a resolution. Instead he emphasises Yudel's investigative journey. When Yudel travels into Soweto in defiance of the pass laws to attend a South African Freedom Campaign meeting, he enters a torture chamber needing 'to see' Thandi's torture (200) so that the 'eyes' of the reader also witness it. It was this focus on the activities of the police in the torture chamber that led to *Divide the Night* being found 'undesirable' and so banned under the Publications Act in May 1981 (Publications Appeal Board 81.1). The ban was lifted in December of that year when the Publications Appeal Board determined that:

The main issues are whether the book, and in this respect especially (sic) the torture scene, would create animosity or contribute toward the creation of animosity between Black and White or lead to or contribute to a violation of the interests safeguarded by [. . .] the Act which deals with state security and public order [. . .] The present publication does not incite or attempt to undermine but can be regarded as a sharp attack by way of fiction against possible abuse of powers. This amounts to political criticism, which the Act does not intend to stifle, even if unwarranted — annoying as this kind of criticism by way of fiction may be to a substantial number of South Africans. (81.1 – 81.4)

The banning of the book reaffirmed Ebersohn's ability to engage with contentious issues through crime fiction, extending the bounds of the genre as, in Carl Malmgren's terms, an 'oppositional discourse' (123).

Ebersohn continues in *Divide the Night* the exploration of the interplay between the Black Consciousness movement and apartheid that he began in *Store up the Anger*. As the book closes, Freek kills Majola, representative of a Black Consciousness movement that is dying, after he tried to kill Weizmann. Thus the key witness for Yudel's investigation is dead. Yudel has dealt with the problem of apartheid and Freek with the struggle against apartheid. But Yudel has not cured Weizmann; the psyche of apartheid has not changed. Weizmann's gangrene, a metaphor for the state of the nation suffering apartheid, continues. An incurable disease, the treatment for gangrene remains amputation — at its extreme, amputation until the body no longer exists. Implicit in Ebersohn's ending is the prospect that apartheid will, in time, be the cause of its own destruction.

Closed Circle

In *Closed Circle*, published nine years after *Divide the Night*, Ebersohn makes some of his most poignant comments about the culpability of the Security Branch and the government. With a title that recalls the classic Agatha Christie detective novels in which the detective from outside a closed circle of society solves murders within, this novel demonstrates Ebersohn's uncompromising condemnation of the damage caused by the closed, Afrikaner society. Whereas his first two Yudel Gordon novels comprise a prologue followed by the text, the structure of *Closed*

Circle differs — a prologue and three parts, each of which is dated and set in specific locations, chronologically and geographically confines the narrative to South Africa in the 1980s. Through such an approach Ebersohn effectively narrows the reading of the narrative. At the same time he more openly confronts the censorship board in his condemnation of the country's political situation.

Behind Yudel's fictional story, commencing in September 1984, is the violence that broke out that month in the townships of the Vaal Triangle, south of Johannesburg. As police killed and wounded people the uprisings signalled violent protests which subsequently spread across the country. The government used defence force troops and the police, declaring states of emergency as it struggled to regain control. Violence gained momentum. Citizens were victimised and fearful about whom to trust. Cawthra suggests that these 'seminal events illustrate a general truth, that the police were always in the front line in the enforcement of apartheid' (*Policing South Africa* 1). Over the decades they ensured 'black South Africans were kept in their places in segregated and inferior institutions' and helped 'implement the massive social engineering that perpetuated white minority rule' (1):

They arrested several million South Africans under the pass laws and helped to remove forcibly three and a half million people [. . .] The Security Branch, the political police, targeted opposition organisations that supported majority rule. The branch monitored a third of a million citizens, detained tens of thousands and tortured many of them, drove opponents into exile or ensured that they were locked up in the country's jails or swung from its gallows. To justify the sustained campaign of repression, the South African state [. . .] portrayed its enemies as part of a world-wide communist conspiracy. The

police came to regard themselves as defenders of the ‘free world’ and ‘Christian civilisation’ against the communist threat, but in the process they made a mockery of the precepts of modern civilisation. (*Policing South Africa 2*)

With suspicion growing about the manner in which the Security Branch embodied the ideological extremes of the government Ebersohn used his crime fiction to provide an account of their activities. *Closed Circle* is a work of fiction but for Ebersohn the context of the narrative was very real. With Yudel’s story echoing aspects of his own Ebersohn exposes police actions in the face of censorship, defying the censor’s bounds.

Readers who had read the July 1980 *Sunday Express* article ‘Author and his Family Harassed: Government slaps pre-publication ban on Ebersohn novel’, (Thornycroft 2) would have recognised Ebersohn’s experiences while writing *Store up the Anger* in those of Yudel. Ebersohn says that when he had finished his research for *Store up the Anger* ‘he was convinced that the claim that the Special Branch could make anyone talk was true’ (Charney n.p.). When interviewed by Peta Thornycroft he explained: ‘We had learnt much from the harassment [. . .] We knew how easy it was to pass from being an ordinary member of the community to being an outsider, and how there was nothing romantic about occupying that position’ (‘Author Harassed’ 2). Standing as an account of the activities of the Security Branch, *Closed Circle* confirms for those outside of the closed circle governing the country that they are not alone in their fear about the country’s future. With the

security of the family home threatened, Yudel's story emerges from Ebersohn's, reinforcing Ebersohn's thoughts about psychological torture:

perhaps this was part of the plan. Let the victim know that he's to be raided, then let him feel that he has escaped. The effect will be all the more devastating when you finally do hammer on his door. (Thornycroft 'Author Harassed' 2).

Ebersohn uses a disclaimer to ironically draw attention to this novel as a multi-dimensional text of investigation in which he chronicles events in South Africa between September 1984 and 1990:

This book is a work of the writer's imagination. The characters, events and organizations portrayed in its pages are all fictitious. Any resemblance between them and real people or historical incidents is entirely coincidental. Those who hold official positions in the story are not to be confused with the real incumbents of the years 1984 to 1990.

In his analysis of Ebersohn's use of crime fiction to relate history Green describes Ebersohn's approach in *Closed Circle* as the 'thin fictionalising of actual persons and events [. . . so that each is] identifiable in relation to actual historical cases' ('Detective as Historian' 98). Ebersohn draws readers into the investigative process to work through the clues with Yudel and discover facts behind some of the more horrific apartheid crimes. Readers familiar with the murders of Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge will discover similarities in Ebersohn's description of Elizabeth Ngcube, the wife of Fellows Ngcube, being 'gunned down and bludgeoned to death in front of her children in the driveway of her Umlazi home' (224).¹⁵ Providing sufficient detail for readers to see through the veneer of fiction, Ebersohn exploits the participative

nature of the crime fiction genre to entice readers to piece together a chronicle of events, identify suspects and victims, and draw their own conclusions about the culpability of the Apartheid State. In doing so he affords himself protection from the censorship board, as through his disclaimer and also by virtue of the reader having to discover the facts to which he alludes.

The novel opens with Yudel, outside of his role as a prison psychologist, being approached by a publisher to investigate a number of attacks on radical leaders. Foregrounding concerns about the inability of the country to deal with the increasing levels of politically motivated crimes, the publisher tells Yudel that he knows that the security police are behind the attacks. He considers that the CID are 'outranked' in this case, and that Yudel has 'the talents that would be needed' (23). He wants 'proof that will lead to public exposure', but does not expect convictions (24). When Yudel agrees to undertake the investigation, the text enters the hard-boiled detective tradition, as described by John Cawelti:

In a world where the law is inefficient and susceptible to corruption, where the recognized social elite is too decadent and selfish to accomplish justice and protect the innocent, the private detective is forced to take over the basic moral functions of exposure, protection, judgement, and execution. (152)

Taking on the characteristics of the private detective, then, Yudel becomes the investigator. But, through his ironic allusion to detective fiction in the title, *Closed Circle*, Ebersohn suggests the moral centre is not within the closed circle of the government of South African society; rather, it is exterior to it.

Yudel investigates the clues to the crimes with which the prologue opens — the murder of Fellows Ngcube, a black man ‘who had stood up in court to cross-examine and humiliate policemen and government witnesses’ (210), the drive-by shooting of Lionel Bensch, the only ‘member of the military wing of the national resistance [. . . who] was living free’ (210), and the kidnap and murder of Ray Baker, a white man who had slept with an Indian woman (210). He does not investigate the nation’s psyche but uses his psychological insights as the primary crime investigator. He tells Baker’s wife, Dahlia, that he is ‘the investigator’ (159). Pursuing clues, he traverses geographical and legislative boundaries and enters places such as Alexandra township to take his white readers to sites which they (and he) are forbidden to enter. Readers are given a glimpse of the civil unrest that gripped the country through the description of massacres, the stoning of police vehicles, burning of government buildings, and hijacking of cars. Cutting across the nation’s notional boundaries Yudel reveals a country in disarray, in stark contrast to the closed circle of Afrikaner society governing the country. The narrative of the crime is subordinate to the chronicling of violent events across the country.

Ebersohn uses Yudel’s investigative journey to expose and comment on the inhumanity of the legislation underpinning apartheid. When Yudel visits Elizabeth Ngcube, one of the small group of black business and professional people who, ‘although they had never been convicted of any crime, had their every move monitored’ (145), readers see the implications of the Internal Security Act 1976 (which amended the Suppression of Communism Act 1950). This legislation provided for restrictions on freedom of movement and expression, generally referred to as ‘banning orders’. In Yudel’s interaction with Dahlia readers are given an insight

into race classification legislation. Dahlia, an Indian woman, had been ‘contravening the racial provisions of the Immorality Act by having intercourse with a white man and [. . .] ignoring the Group Areas Act by living in a white area’ (93). When she and Yudel go to an Italian restaurant, staff are anxious about whether to serve them and Yudel thinks he hears the words ‘a white man and a sammy woman’ (155).

The transition in Yudel’s role from psychologist to investigator is consistent with a move toward an understanding of the diversity of crime fiction. But it is also seemingly at odds with the superficial structure of the novel which is comparable with that of detective fiction. As in *A Lonely Place to Die* and *Divide the Night*, *Closed Circle* evades closure. No suspects are brought before the law despite Yudel believing that Colonel Wheelwright, the head of the Security Branch, raped a Security Branch prisoner and sympathised with the terrorists. When interviewed by Green about this lack of resolution Ebersohn explained:

the problem with *Closed Circle* was that I am aware that there have been many of these sort of killings in South Africa and almost none, in almost no cases have the killers been brought to justice, so I just simply couldn’t have the fictitious character brought to justice. (*Novel Histories* 217)

For Ebersohn, the convention of a final resolution in the crime fiction genre is problematized by the historical authenticity which his fiction brings to the human experience.

Just as Ebersohn frustrates the conventions of more traditional forms of detective and crime fiction, his narrative form mimics Yudel’s defiance of the legislative restraints of apartheid when undertaking his investigations, emphasising

the impossibility of operating and writing within the bounds of apartheid. Thus Ebersohn affirms that solving crimes is not the principal concern of crime fiction; rather, as Cawelti notes:

Exposing the inefficiency and corruption of legally constituted social authorities like the police, the hard-boiled detective pursues his mission until he has defined its moral implications in such a way as to satisfy his own sense of honour and integrity. (160)

One member of the SAP remains a glimmer of hope for the police and detectives in an otherwise corrupted service. This is Freek, who, despite being a police officer is oblivious to the involvement of the Security Branch in corruption. Through his loyalty to the ideals of his service he is blind to the truth about the origins of the killings. He has been overlooked for promotion for fifteen years because he refused transfers to the Vice Squad and Security Branch — a feature that proves redeeming. He represents the honest few among the detectives. Through him Ebersohn's message is clear: not all South African police should be considered corrupt — but the true nature of the activities of the Security Branch may surprise even the most respected of serving members.

Closed Circle concludes with an epilogue that summarises events between 29 April 1986 and the handing down of the outcome of Judge Louis Harms' Commission of Inquiry into Certain Alleged Murders in November 1990. The focus of the narrative is exposure rather justice. Wheelwright may not have been publicly exposed but Ebersohn's chronicling of events around the complicity of those associated with the Security Branch is revealing. For him it was not possible to tell

the story of South Africa's apartheid police within the generic bounds of traditional detective or crime fiction or of legislative restrictions. Ultimately it would take an easing of censorship restraints for writers to be able to expose what they knew as the truth behind the Security Branch. When change did come, it came quickly. It was only a year after *Closed Circle* was published that Jacques Pauw was able to use non-fiction to publish the confession of a Security Branch police officer, effectively affirming the truth underpinning Ebersohn's fictional chronicle.

Chapter 2 — Police Confession and the Dialogic

In the Heart of the Whore: The Story of Apartheid's Death Squads

Toward the end of 1984 the South African journalist Jacques Pauw met Captain Dirk Coetzee, the former commander of the Security Branch counter-insurgency unit based at Vlakplaas, near Pretoria. Pauw considered Coetzee ‘a strange man with an extraordinary story’ (*Heart of the Whore* 16) when he revealed details of SAP death squad activities. What was extraordinary, for Pauw, was to hear about the Security Branch police stabbing a Durban attorney, and poisoning a young anti-apartheid activist from Port Elizabeth. And what was strange was Coetzee’s willingness to reveal his own involvement and that of other members of the SAP, and to tell of the support they received from ministers of the government. Pauw listened in ‘awe and almost total disbelief’ (17) as Coetzee recounted events of which Pauw had been completely unaware:

I was the commander of a South African Police death squad. I was in the heart of the whore. My men and I had to murder political and security opponents of the police and the government. I know the deepest secrets of this special unit, which acted above the law and enjoyed very special protection. (12)

Pauw admits that he was among those white South Africans who were stunned when they first learnt of their government’s involvement in gross violations of human rights. As a journalist with *Rapport*, a pro-government Afrikaans Sunday newspaper, and a ‘typical Afrikaner from a fairly conservative Pretoria background’ (17), Pauw had been responsible for reporting on the events of his country. Through

the revelations or confession of Coetzee, an Afrikaner police officer responsible for enforcing the apartheid laws of the Afrikaner government, Pauw found himself confronted with an ignorance that he came to identify as complicity. He had failed to recognise and report human rights abuses occurring in his country:

It was only after I had met Dirk Coetzee that I realised how many times South Africa's black people must have grieved about yet another detainee who had slipped on soap in a police cell shower, fractured his own skull on an interrogation room wall, fallen out of a window, disappeared from the face of the earth — or simply been assassinated. (17)

In 1991, two years after *Vrye Weekblad* published Dirk Coetzee's story of police death squad activities, Pauw published an extended version of Coetzee's narrative entitled *In the Heart of the Whore: The Story of Apartheid's Death Squads*. This was the culmination of Pauw's two-year investigation into state-sponsored police death squads and followed Coetzee's revelations to him in Mauritius in November 1989. The men had met there after 'weeks of secret planning, of late-night meetings, cryptic messages smuggled to the Political-Military Council of the ANC and clandestine visits to the organisation's headquarters in Lusaka' (12). Coetzee's confession that he was 'in the heart of the whore' (12) and had commanded an SAP death squad that had murdered political and security opponents of the police and the government, was to become one of the public scandals of the apartheid era that stunned much of the (white) South African nation. Pauw's investigative work to make Coetzee's story public was the type of work to which Judge Richard Goldstone paid tribute when he said

[t]here were many public scandals during the apartheid era [. . .] All those scandals had one thing in common: They came to the attention of the public either through leaks by disgruntled insiders, or through the courageous work of investigative journalists. (158)

Pauw's journalistic origins impose on *In the Heart of the Whore* as he acts as a witness to Coetzee's account. As Paul Gready describes it, the role of the journalist under apartheid was to

see and see through apartheid as lived reality; to move within and between variously constructed worlds, of insider and outsider, self and other, the blind and the invisible and create a dialogue between them; to make a greater part of South Africa imaginatively, yet tangibly, available to its inhabitants.

(*Writing as Resistance* 249)

Pauw had been reluctant to act on Coetzee's information when they first spoke in 1984. At the time South Africa's censorship laws proved a silencing power 'intertwined' as they were 'with the ideology of apartheid' (de Lange 13). The Publications Committee had the power to ban anything that was offensive to the inhabitants of the Republic, and harmful to the State. The Police Act outlawed the 'publication of false information about the action of the police unless the reporter had reasonable grounds for believing the report to be true' (HRC 99). Pauw kept the information secret, knowing what the Security Branch were capable of if they regarded anyone as 'the enemy' (18).

The period between Pauw's first meeting with Coetzee in 1984 and their meeting in Mauritius was one of unrest across South Africa. States of Emergency

were declared in 44 magisterial districts from July 1985 to March 1986, and then for all of South Africa for consecutive years from June 1986 to June 1990. Townships were occupied by security forces and ‘curfews, restrictions of every imaginable kind and deaths of men, women and children [were] almost a daily occurrence’ (HRC 42). Human Rights Committee figures indicate approximately 5,200 people died in this period (42).

Police used the powers of the Internal Security Act 1982 and the Criminal Procedures Act 1977 to arrest and detain people without trial. They used ‘deadly force with almost no liability or accountability’ (Marks 47). Security and emergency legislation which had been enacted in 1963 was used to enable prisoners to be detained without trial. From the introduction of up to 90 days detention in isolation, without access to the courts, for the purposes of interrogation, powers of detention for various reasons were progressively increased as additional control measures were enacted. The Internal Security Act, No. 74, enacted in 1982, provided for long-term (twelve months) ‘preventive’ detention, indefinite interrogatory detention, six months ‘witness’ detention, and short-term (fourteen days) ‘preventive’ detention (HRC 44). Nelson Mandela described the period as a time when ‘in many communities in Natal and on the Reef around Johannesburg, a poisonous mixture of crime, political rivalries, police brutality and shadowy death squads made life brutish and untenable’ (707). As South Africa emerged from the mid-1980s it confronted what was arguably ‘its greatest crisis of legitimacy as internal resistance escalated and much of the world severed social, political and economic ties’ (Marks 46).

Against this background life changed for Coetzee and Pauw. After their first meeting both moved to distance themselves from their former positions under apartheid. Coetzee was medically discharged from the SAP in January 1986, after having been suspended from duty in 1984 and tried for misconduct for sending a report about telephone tapping by Security Branch police to Doctor Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, then leader of the official opposition in the House of Assembly (16). In 1988 Pauw founded, with others, *Vrye Weekblad*, an ‘independent and free-thinking’ newspaper established to provide a voice for ‘Afrikaners who had broken ranks with the establishment’ (*Heart of the Whore* 21). By 1989 a slow move toward a ‘more open, free and just society’ (19) was evident as the authoritarian presidency of PW Botha came to an end.

With this move to openness came an easing of censorship restrictions. Even so, writers had to decide how to deal with the changing environment. In 1993, the year before South Africa’s formal move to democracy, André Brink described the situation as one of ‘ambiguities and vacillation’, in which the writer had to ‘redefine radically the space available to him or to her’ (*Reinventing a Continent* 176). He suggested writers could now ‘exploit the new freedom by experimenting with the boundaries of the permissible’ (176). But this level of freedom was not available to Pauw publishing his book four years earlier. Testing the limits of publishing came at a risk. He and Max du Preez had been required to place a deposit of R40,000 with the government, on the minister’s belief that *Vrye Weekblad* might be banned at any time (HRC 98). The deposit was ‘clearly designed to discourage the registration of small opposition newspapers’ (HRC 98). Any breach of restrictions in publishing *In the Heart of the Whore* was likely to risk the closure of *Vrye Weekblad*. But five years

after their first meeting, publishing Coetzee's story in South Africa became a possibility. Prompted by Nofomela's confession as he faced execution for murder, Coetzee agreed to Pauw's proposal to approach the ANC for protection, to enable his account to be made public.

The first five chapters of *In the Heart of the Whore* are devoted to Coetzee's narrative. Readers are given a 'first hand' account of the actions to which he confesses. The opening is striking, intending to capture the reader's attention. Two corpses, one of whom is Sizwe Kondile, are being burned on Coetzee's advice to murder the men. An account of the murders of Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge follows. The detail is exacting. The story progresses sharply in the style of new journalism, 'moving from scene to scene and resorting as little as possible to sheer historical narrative' (Wolfe 31). Realistic dialogue is included — a device that 'involves the reader more completely than any other single device' (Wolfe 31) — placing the reader alongside the offenders at the scene of the kidnapping and killing of Griffiths Mxenge. The reader is present as Griffiths pleads, 'Where are you taking me? Please don't kill me' (2). Surrounding this is a picture of the Mxenges' life — banning orders, imprisonment on Robben Island, the birth of their first child, and Victoria's words at the funeral of the Cradock Four — Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkonto and Siceo Mhlawuli who were abducted and killed on 27 June 1985 on their way to a meeting at Cradock — 'Go well peacemakers. Tell your great grandfathers we are coming because we are prepared to die for Africa' (8). The struggle under which the Mxenges lived as opponents of the government is apparent. Using the 'people's *status life*' technique that Tom Wolfe identifies in *New Journalism* as being 'as close to the centre of the power of realism as any device in

literature' (32), Pauw brings a heightened sense of the real to Coetzee's account. Significantly, then, seven years before the TRC, Pauw lays before South Africans the horrific acts that Coetzee, one of their police, committed on their behalf in the name of apartheid. For some South Africans a new police identity was beginning to emerge.

Embedded within Coetzee's narrative is Pauw's confession to being among those white South Africans who were stunned when they first learnt of their government's involvement in gross violations of human rights. Writing in the first person, Pauw admits his surprise at what Coetzee told him. He had been a relatively new journalist when these incidents occurred. Reporting them had not been important to him or the Afrikaans newspaper for which he worked. However, through his interaction with Coetzee he realises his own inaction as complicity. The chapter title, 'Testimony of an Assassin', takes on new meaning when it becomes apparent the narrative is not only the testimony of Coetzee, the police assassin, but also of Pauw, the journalist.

Pauw's challenge is to reposition the reader in relation to Coetzee, despite the horrific nature of his revelations, so that he is accepted as an authentic witness. Rather than the reader denying any association with Coetzee's actions Pauw seeks to cause South African readers to question the principles that underpinned apartheid and drove Coetzee. The dialogic properties of confessional discourse are pivotal in understanding Pauw's approach. Acting as interlocutor to Coetzee's confession Pauw assigns him a subjective position, thereby enabling the reading confessor to engage directly with both confessing subjects. Coetzee's and Pauw's confessions are thus

received concurrently. Pauw quotes selectively from Coetzee and positions himself as the first person of his own confessional narrative. As the two narratives come together, they address what Ina Gräbe refers to as the ‘shared responsibility for violations mainly instigated, or condoned by formerly empowered white perpetrators’ (4).

Mikhail Bakhtin’s work on the dialogic nature of confessional discourse offers insight into Pauw’s work. The confessional discourse came to be integral to South Africa’s approach in repositioning relations between people as the country sought to distance itself from its apartheid past. Because of the importance of confessional discourse to Pauw’s works, as well as to the TRC and to Jeremy Gordin’s and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela’s works which I discuss in chapter four, closer consideration of Bakhtin’s work is useful here.

Bakhtin reminds us that context is a determining factor in creating meaning. Describing the units of speech communication which one exchanges with another speaking subject as an ‘utterance’ (*Speech Genres* 75), he notes that a whole utterance has ‘*contextual meaning*’ and requires a responsive understanding (125). With a change in the context of an utterance, new meaning emerges. Further, no two utterances are identical. An evaluative, responsive understanding makes the utterance dialogic. Every utterance, therefore, is not just a reflection or expression of something ‘already existing outside it that is given and final’, it also ‘always creates something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable’ (120). A sentence repeated within one and the same utterance becomes a new part of the utterance because ‘its position and function in the entire utterance have changed’

(109). Any notion of a fixed, essential truth is undermined. Critically, a story re-told takes on a different meaning because of the differing context at a different moment in time.

As an element of context within their control, writers choose a particular genre to create a way of seeing. The relationship between the utterance, the author and other participants in a speech communication is a feature of any utterance. Both the ‘referentially semantic assignments (plan) of the speech subject (author)’ and the ‘speaker’s subjective emotional evaluation of the referentially semantic content’ of the utterance, determine the compositional and stylistic features of the utterance (Bakhtin *Speech Genres* 84). Using the confessional mode is not incidental, then, but a determining factor in the writer’s construction of a relationship between the readers, the subject — in Pauw’s case this is Coetzee — and him- or herself.

Bakhtin’s discussions of confessional discourse and the confessional consciousness in ‘Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book’, are useful for understanding the basis of these relationships — the interdependence of participants in a dialogic exchange. Such understanding enables us to appreciate how Pauw constructs his confessional account to induce readers into a new relationship with Coetzee and himself. Bakhtin proposes that in confession the role of the other in dialogue emerges with clarity — the need for the presence of the ‘I’ and ‘another’ is affirmed:

I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another; I must find myself in another by finding another in myself (in mutual reflection and mutual acceptance). Justification cannot be *self*-justification, recognition

cannot be *self*-recognition. I receive my name from others, and it exists for others (self-nomination is imposture). (*Problems of Dostoevsky* 287)

For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky asserts ‘the impossibility of solitude’ and establishes ‘the very being of man (both external and internal)’ as the ‘*deepest communion*’ (287). The self that confesses is motivated by a desire to be in communion with others — in community, and receiving its name from and existing for that community (Bakhtin *Speech Genres* 125). It follows that for Coetzee and Pauw their confessions are directed at orchestrating a position of engagement with and acceptance by the community through their narratives.

The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are those that take place ‘on the *boundary* between one’s own and someone else’s consciousness, on the *threshold*’ (Bakhtin *Problems of Dostoevsky* 287). In an encounter, ‘everything internal gravitates not toward itself but is turned to the outside and dialogized, every internal experience ends up on the boundary, encounters another, and in this tension-filled encounter lies its essence’ (287). The self is a dialogic self that emerges from interactions with others and is dependent on the consciousness of others. The idea of a fixed, essential self is as futile as is the notion of seeking a fixed, essential truth through the self. But this does not mean the act of confession is not directed toward a notion of truth.

Bakhtin posits that in addition to directing an utterance toward an addressee, the author presupposes a ‘*superaddressee* [. . .] whose absolutely just responsive understanding is presumed, either in some metaphysical distance or in distant historical time’ (*Speech Genres* 126). This ‘superaddressee’ assumes various

ideological expressions ‘(God, absolute truth, the court of dispassionate human conscience, the people, the court of history, science and so forth)’ (126), depending on the motives of the participants in the dialogue and the context. The ethical intent of the author is directed to the superaddressee, as if standing above all participants in the dialogue.

Edward Sampson cautions against adopting an overly optimistic view of the dialogic encounter. He reminds us that participants in a self–other relationship do not contribute equally (143). In any relationship there will be a power differential. In this regard Bakhtin’s work on the interdependent nature of the self complements Said’s discussions on the constructed nature of identity. Both affirm the instability of identity and argue that identity emerges from the tension between self and other. Said asserts that identity is ‘constructed, and occasionally even invented out-right’ (332). He suggests that society transforms by recreating its ‘others’, or ‘another different and competing *alter ego*’ (332). He maintains that the existence of the ‘other’ or ‘*alter ego*’ is essential for developing and maintaining every culture (332). Said and Bakhtin both expound the transformative nature of identity, but Said extends this to show that through the recognition of a power imbalance a particular kind of self can be affirmed. The power differential between participants in a dialogic encounter becomes a determining factor in the meaning of an utterance.

The dialogic nature of confessional discourse presupposes a responsive understanding from participants in the dialogue (including, in the case of narratives, the readers). In preferring the confessional mode for Coetzee’s narrative, Pauw creates opportunities for it to come up against other dialogic threads as it is read.

There is an expectation that through the engaged reader the narrative might realise its potential as a participant in social dialogue. As dialogic threads to other threads of the past, present, and future, it contributes to the creation of new understandings and new meanings through which multiple narratives may emerge.

Stevan Weine's discussion on the power of testimony to bring about change after political violence or catastrophe is instructive for considering the transformational nature of the confessional discourse. While testimony and confession differ, in that confession encapsulates an admission, the dialogic nature of both discourses makes Weine's work transferable. Emphasising the 'eventness' of testimony, Weine argues that testimony can be seen as a product of not only the survivor, who authors the testimony, but also of the receiver with whom words, memories and stories are exchanged. The act of receiving the testimony and responding becomes an event in itself, through which new meaning is created. The dialogic exchange of voices responding to voices makes it possible for testimonies to 'earn private and public responses, and generate dialogue' (127). Through this dialogue those reading (or listening) to the testimony and those testifying might come to 'a better awareness of people themselves and of the world' (136). Testimony, which derives its power to change from its dialogic properties' (94), serves as the means by which 'survivors and receivers engage with some of the most critical political, existential, and moral questions that a society can ask concerning identity, otherness, existence, values, and enemies' (135).

Weine's explication of confessional discourse reinforces the transformational nature of that discourse through which the self is able to re-constitute itself and

others. Using Bakhtin to read Pauw's narrative we see the significance of Pauw attaching himself to Coetzee, the police officer and, as a consequence, making his own confession while relating the police officer's confession. Through that attachment Pauw is able to find himself in the mutual reflection and mutual acceptance that the communion brings. That is, Pauw is able to draw a sense of himself and his own complicity through the dialogic relationship with the confessing police officer. Pauw turns this outward, publishing his confession with that of Coetzee, so that in the broader dialogic exchange members of the reading community might also come to new understandings of the actions of the police and Pauw as journalist and writer during the decades of apartheid.

Using a structure which, through its capacity for 'eventness', is conducive to a dialogic engagement with the reader, Pauw's confession carries the potential for responsive others to grant a private or public response and generate a dialogue through which they come to a (better) awareness of themselves and of the world. Revealing himself for the reader and through the reader, Pauw seeks a consciousness of himself, while providing an opportunity for the reader to find him- or herself in another (in this case, Pauw). Implicit in Pauw's argument is the notion that such an engagement facilitates the transformation of individual identity. By extension, where a collective of individuals are motivated by a desire to be in communion with others — in the *'deepest communion'* (Bakhtin *Problems of Dostoevsky* 287) — this, in turn, is conducive to the transformation of a community or a nation.

Five years before the TRC hearings began Pauw posited a position for shared responsibility for the atrocities of apartheid. In suggesting that all members of

society, not only those of the security forces, should examine themselves and their deeds, Pauw's and Coetzee's confessions are early examples of the type of self-reflection to which the TRC would later refer. Of note is the fact that *In the Heart of the Whore* was published at the time discussions about the idea of a truth commission for South Africa had already commenced, very controversially, and a year before the truth commission was formally proposed. The idea of a truth commission was mooted by Professor Kader Asmal on his installation as Professor of Human Rights Law at the University of the Western Cape on 25 May 1992. The National Executive Council of the ANC adopted his recommendation before the 1994 elections. It proposed the appointment of a truth commission to conduct an independent investigation 'aimed at enquiring into allegations of violations of human rights' by not only the apartheid regime, but also by its own members (TRC 1:50). Writing earlier, for Pauw the necessity to expose apartheid was fundamental:

Because of Coetzee's willingness to talk we now know about a very important moral and political evil that existed in apartheid South Africa. In a future political dispensation, we can guard against the occurrence of a similar situation and prevent our future leaders from abusing their entrusted political power. Many of the people of Nazi Germany would later say: "Wir haben es nicht gewusst" (We did not know). South Africans will have no such excuse. Dirk Coetzee has warned us all. (75)

Pauw's use of the confessional mode in the closing stages of apartheid is a notable departure from the trend in Afrikaans writing but an early signal of the genre's emergence in South Africa. VanZanten Gallagher notes that before the collapse of apartheid, 'Afrikaner writers seldom employed confessional rhetoric or

wrote many autobiographies or memoirs' (*Truth and Reconciliation* 145). Silenced by 'a reticence characteristic of their Dutch heritage, by the shame and guilt of being the oppressor, [and] by bewilderment or outrage in the face of widespread international denunciation', Afrikaner identity was largely constructed through means of group rather than individual narrative (145). It was only when the myth of the Afrikaner nationalistic story, that they were the 'Chosen People', began to crumble, and with it their 'precariously maintained sense of identity', that the confessional mode became increasingly apparent in Afrikaans writing (146).

Despite Pauw's Afrikaner background and that at the time he was working with *Vrye Weekblad*, *In the Heart of the Whore* was published in English only. While this was more conducive to capturing international markets, it may also indicate Pauw's desire for justification and recognition from the English-speaking community to whom his confession is directed. Choice of language is a choice of context for Pauw. With the Afrikaans language carrying the historical burden of being the language of the oppressor for large numbers of South Africans, Pauw's confession opens up dialogue beyond South Africa's Afrikaans-speaking community, and beyond South Africa. It enables him to signal his pursuit of a re-constituted self in a transformed South African community in which the Afrikaner group acknowledges its wrongs, while also exposing misconceptions in the Afrikaner nationalistic story. With that, he prompts as to how identity can be transformed and demythologised.

Central to engaging the responsive reader is the need for Pauw to break down preconceptions of Coetzee as a monstrous other. He attests to Coetzee's credibility — describing his 'considerable achievements and exemplary service in the

Uniformed Branch' (36) — contrasting it with the criminal career that followed. Depicting Coetzee as having a 'remarkable memory' (32), and reinforcing his ordinary nature, Pauw comments he 'had grown very close to this man whom [he] probably would otherwise have despised' (27). Pauw comes to what Bakhtin terms an 'excess of vision' — [i]f two persons look at each other, one sees aspects of the other person and of the space [they] are in that the other does not and [. . .] *vice versa*' (*Art and Answerability* xxii). Pauw's 'excess of vision' contributes to the context of Coetzee's confession for the benefit of the reading confessor. Through this approach Pauw enables the reading confessor to see aspects of Coetzee — for example his reliability — that Coetzee himself is not able to relate with any degree of credibility.

Pauw closely attends to Coetzee's interactions with the ANC to portray the extent to which the apartheid government legislated and orchestrated (or in Said's terms, constructed) the identity of the 'other' in South Africa. While Coetzee's changed relations with the ANC were critical to his being able to make his story public, for some white South Africans his narrative depicted a very different ANC from that with which they were familiar. As a police officer Coetzee had been responsible for actions which violated the human rights of ANC members. In 1989, 'furthering the aims of the ANC warranted a long jail sentence' (20). For Coetzee, consorting with them was not without risk:

I had to take a calculated risk and walk straight into the laager of the enemy, the African National Congress, tell them of my involvement in the atrocities against them, and hope to heaven they would accept me as a victim of the apartheid system and a fighter in a dirty, unconventional war. (28)

Coetzee had considered the ANC his 'other'. However, having met with and confessed to some members, he was able to see them as 'another' (in Bakhtin's terms) through whom he was able to find his self, and from whom he received his name ('Comrade Dirk' [73]). Having been in opposition to them he moved to a position of mutuality, describing them as '[h]ighly intelligent, well informed and very civilized' (28). He was shocked that they were so far removed from the images 'conjured up by the state and its supreme instruments of propaganda [. . .] and the government-supporting Afrikaans press' (28). In a gesture that prefigures the manner in which the Amnesty Committee of the TRC would grant amnesty to perpetrators who made full disclosures, Coetzee was accepted by the ANC.

As an investigative journalist Pauw investigated Coetzee's claims to prove the government knew of, and were complicit in, the activities of the SAP's death squads. Using testimonies of other officers he reveals a police culture of concealment and lying. Including accounts of Eugene de Kock whom he describes as an elusive man 'loathed and feared by the askaris who worked under him' (77), and Petrus Jacobus 'Pieter' Botes, the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) operative responsible for the car bombing in which Albie Sachs (at the time an ANC activist and law professor at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique) lost part of his right arm, Pauw writes that the security police 'believed themselves to be fighting a secret twilight war against an evil enemy' (62).¹⁶ As Coetzee told Pauw:

I did it for Volk and Vaderland and I believed it was the right thing to do.

After I was kicked out of the force, I realised that I had been used to do their dirty work. (19)

Pauw's analysis of the court system clearly demonstrates that responsibility for the existence of the death squads extended beyond the SAP. Magistrates rejected victims' torture allegations with tedious regularity. For Pauw, the complicity of the court system was exemplified in the inquest into the death of Steve Biko in which Magistrate Prins found 'on the available evidence [Biko's] death cannot be attributed to any action or omission amounting to a criminal offence on the part of any person' (Woods 354).

Pauw criticises Judge Louis Harms' 'Commission of Inquiry into Certain Alleged Murders' and, in doing so, brings to the fore the importance of context and power differential in confession. As strange as Coetzee's stories had been when Pauw first heard them in 1984, Pauw believed Coetzee. Judge Harms did not. In addressing his confession to Judge Harms, fumbling in English, his second language, Coetzee was not able to find mutual reflection and mutual acceptance or a responsive understanding (in the Bakhtinian sense) in his address to the Judge who discounted his confession. However, the outcome of this hearing was in stark contrast to the outcome two months later, in January 1991, in the million rand liability suit brought by police officer General Lothar Neethling in the Rand Supreme Court, Johannesburg, against *Vrye Weekblad* and *Weekly Mail*. In that matter Mr Justice Kriegler found that SAP death squads did exist. This was a momentous outcome, as Pauw notes:

It was the first time that a South African court had found that the government had assassinated its political opponents. It was a severe blow to the morale of the South African Police, already undermined by the continual allegations of

death squads, partiality and inability to stop the growing wave of political violence. (248)

As much as Pauw places responsibility for the existence of death squads with the government, as an Afrikaner, a journalist, and previous government sympathiser, he is primarily motivated by the need to right the wrongs of apartheid. Moving between ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’, he alludes to the collective guilt of the Afrikaner people:

This was a story that South Africans had the right to hear. We were dealing here with allegations that struck to the very heart of government ethics and morality. Death squads were a blot on all of us. [. . . W]e as Afrikaners had a duty to open and clean up this festering sore in our society. (21)

Slipping into the discourse of healing that became dominant following the TRC, Pauw draws the analogy of opening up a wound to cleanse it, suggesting that the poison be countered through exposure. His analogy is an interesting contrast to later views that referred to the TRC as a ‘band aid’ solution. For the TRC detractors, it covered the wound and the embedded poison remained hidden.

Rather than displaying a ‘sense of guilt and apocalypse, a foreboding that the end is near’ (*Truth and Reconciliation* 146) — something that VanZanten Gallagher argues characterises Afrikaner writing of the late 1980s and 1990s — *In the Heart of the Whore* prefigures the later workings of the TRC. With the police at the centre of the narrative, it manifests an optimistic belief in the potential for individual responsibility within the police service to deal with the question of apartheid. Pauw concludes by expressing that he is ‘convinced of the desperate need South Africans

have of [. . . a] healing process after having been brutalised by four decades of apartheid rule' (262). That need extends beyond the victims to 'those who had to enforce this ideology through violence and force' (262).

Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid's Assassins

Pauw published his second exposé of confessions of apartheid death squad activists, *Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid's Assassins*, in 1997 prior to the outcome of the TRC amnesty application hearings. Much had changed in South Africa since *In the Heart of the Whore* was published. Nelson Mandela had been released from prison on 11 February 1990 and had been democratically elected President of South Africa in April 1994. In the transition to democracy the police had been identified as 'a key institution that had to be transformed for a new democracy to come into being with due promise of national stability and legitimate assurance of law and order' (Marks 54). In April 1994 the South African Police Force became the SAPS. Now based on the ideals of democratic policing, the new SAPS was formed as a single service, uniting the previously separated forces of the SAP, those that had served the independent black homelands, and the railway police.

The changes to transform the police service were aimed at producing 'transparency, accountability and representivity' (Marks 62); however, there was no denying the historical nature of policing in South Africa against which this new service was implemented. In his 'Third Force Report', released in 1994, Justice Goldstone identified police involvement in crime, death squad activity, gun running and the orchestration of violence. Eugene de Kock's trial and conviction in the

Pretoria Supreme Court in October 1996 for six murders, and conspiracy to murder (among other offences) were reported publicly. On 22 October 1996 *Prime Evil*, a television documentary produced by Pauw on the life of de Kock was shown on South African television.¹⁷ All pointed to the questionable integrity of a police service in which the conduct of members had been disreputable and criminal. Jonny Steinberg describes the extraordinarily ambiguous status of the police in South Africa at the time of the transition:

It is seldom noted that the meaning of police had a long history under white rule, and that its reputation was at its most vile only moments before it was asked to step forward and police a new democratic society. (*Thin Blue* 94)

The TRC hearings, which began in April 1996, were reported in the press, on radio and on television. Information about police brutality — so successfully suppressed under apartheid — swept through the country's media and South Africans and the world heard about policing methods used to uphold that regime. As Colin Bundy describes in his discussion on the TRC as history:

There is horror in the testimonies and grief and pain and anguish; there is courage, cowardice, resilience, self-knowledge and denial. The cumulative account provides an explicit and terrible record of violence, vindictiveness and brutalisation [. . .] Above all, the TRC has made it impossible for South Africans ever to claim, 'but we didn't know'. (9)

The sorts of revelations with which Pauw had grappled when he published *In the Heart of the Whore* were now being integrated into the national narrative. *Into the Heart of Darkness* was published at a poignant moment during the TRC hearings. Centred on Pauw's research and investigations into Eugene de Kock and other death

squad operatives, the book included confessions to Pauw by those he labels ‘apartheid’s assassins’, as well as personal interviews, evidence presented to the TRC and the Supreme Court, and portions of testimonies given at the Harms and Goldstone Commissions.

As South Africans awaited the outcome of the Amnesty Committee’s deliberations on de Kock’s application, Pauw used his compilation of assassins’ confessions to explore the ‘evil’ perpetrated in the name of apartheid by individual police and South African Defence Force (SADF) officers.¹⁸ As if he doubted the capacity of the nation to absorb such horror into its national narrative he spoke of the questions de Kock raised about South Africa’s future: ‘how’, he asked, are we going to deal with narrow culpability and broad responsibility, about where the essential guilt for the country’s shameful past lies (321)? Central to his question was how the country would deal with the police death squad operatives who had committed evil in the name of apartheid. Were they fundamentally evil? Would they, rather than the country’s leaders, be made to carry the burden of the blame for the country’s past? And what of the future for those for whose apparent benefit the perpetrators of apartheid committed their evil acts?

Pauw draws early attention to the themes of his book through two contexts: Hannah Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. His main title, *Into the Heart of Darkness*, directs readers to Conrad’s novel, which explores the evil nature of the excesses associated with pursuing Western ideals in the Congo Free State in the late nineteenth century. The epigraph from Arendt reminds readers of one of the central

tenets of her work — the horror of the seeming normality of those who committed atrocities in the name of the Nazi government:

The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, but they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal . . . this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together.

In Arendt's narrative of the Jerusalem trial of the Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann she brings to the fore her concerns about the implications for moral standards of judgement when evil, such as that committed by Eichmann, is considered normal by the society around him. Conrad and Arendt both include details of atrocities committed in the narratives they relate; however, their deeper concerns are with the implications of the overall narratives, and the impact of the normalisation of evil, rather than specifically with the atrocities.

Into the Heart of Darkness is essentially presented in two parts. Juxtaposing de Kock's story, covered in chapters one to ten, with narratives of other death squad operatives, included in chapters eleven to twenty-one, Pauw explores the Conradian notion of the co-existence of good and evil within human nature. In de Kock's case Pauw demonstrates that while some fellow officers respected and even idolised him and said that he should be regarded as a hero, others feared him and some even saw him as monstrous. Lucas Kalino from Angola who teamed up with de Kock at Koevoet so admired him that he named his son 'Eugene de Kock'. Vic McPherson who was made a senior police officer in the new SAPS in 1994 said de Kock 'was brilliant in what he achieved for the South African Police' (44). On the other hand, Joe Mamasela who worked with de Kock as an askari said, 'On the surface he

appeared to be a relatively nice chap, but behind the mask lurked a terrible mamba' (46). He 'wanted to make us dogs of war' (68). His technique, for Mamasela, was to instil fear in the askaris: he was 'just a monster, he had absolutely no feeling for human life' (150).

Into the Heart of Darkness opens with the story of three ordinary boys who later joined the SAP: two white boys who become heads, in turn, of one of the SAP's death squads — Dirk Coetzee and Eugene de Kock — and one black boy who became an askari — Joe Mamasela. All became involved in counter-revolutionary activities. Pauw considered they all represented 'the banality of the evil' he saw as having been established in South Africa with the National Party taking power in 1948 (16). This, he said, was now 'South Africa's culture': the evil of the kind of killing undertaken by these police officers. He asks, 'What caused these souls to become so dark and led them to so much wickedness?' (16).

Pauw commences the reader's journey toward uncovering 'the innermost secrets of the men based at Vlakplaas' (16) first by exploring de Kock. Locating the origins of de Kock's evil within the heart of Conrad's Africa, he links the excesses and actions of de Kock with those of Conrad's Kurtz. De Kock was '17 years old and untouched by the cruelty and harsh realities of the world' (35) when the army showed him the film *Africa Adieu*, about a rebel uprising in the Belgian Congo. The shocking nature of the film that depicted churches burnt down and people massacred (35) motivated de Kock to join the police. Not understanding the film as a subversive condemnation of colonialism he believed that such an uprising would occur in South Africa if Communists were to take over.

In *Heart of Darkness* Conrad critiques the excesses of the late nineteenth-century expansionist Belgian civilizing mission. Setting his narrative in the Congo Free State at the time when Leopold II of Belgium absolved himself from personal blame for atrocities committed in the protection and expansion of his empire, Conrad explores the problematic nature of those societal standards. Conrad's narrator, Marlow, recounts his journey into the heart of the Belgian Congo in search of the enigmatic Kurtz. Having gone in search of 'a very remarkable person' (37), Marlow instead finds a 'shade of Mr Kurtz' (82). He finds a man who, despite being 'a gifted creature' (79) when isolated from society and turning to his own interests, 'lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts' — having adorned the posts outside of his house with human heads — and is somewhat 'wanting', and deficient (95). Using Kurtz, Conrad questions the prospects for humanity in the absence of moral guidance. Through Marlow, he suggests we are guided in questions of morality by society's standards or public opinion, by the laws of society and by work. Even though Kurtz has a final moment of revelation when he cries, "The horror! The horror!" (112), Conrad suggests that in the absence of socially controlled moral guidance individuals turn to their own judgement, and are guided by their 'faithfulness' or 'devotion' to their own interests. Ultimately Conrad portrays Kurtz as a man who is destroyed by the excesses of his own interests, as played out through his work. As Marlow discovers the co-existence of good and evil within human nature he realises that all men could find themselves within reach of evil.

Pauw draws on Conrad's work in his characterisation of de Kock. Asserting that '[f]or a long, long time to come Eugene Alexander de Kock will remain a symbol of apartheid's most evil face: that of murdering and torturing the opponent of

its racial policies' (29), Pauw depicts de Kock as an instrument of the government, one who embraced its values and virtues, and thus failed to recognise the inherent evil in his own actions. But Pauw was not the only writer drawing such comparisons. In an essay on the TRC Michiel Heyns also compared de Kock with Kurtz because of the 'sheer lack of restraint that characterized [de Kock's] total surrender to the seductions of his own power' (48). Similarly, Pauw distinguishes de Kock's relentlessly uncompromising approach as unforgivable because he 'didn't stop when the ANC was unbanned, but continued to kill, plotted to derail a fragile peace process and tried to uphold an unjust system' (147). Restricting the reader's purview to that of de Kock as an evil and guilty criminal Pauw amplifies the reader's sense of difference from him, inviting South Africans, including the police and other death squad operatives, to define themselves in opposition to de Kock. Implicit in Pauw's position is the belief that other police officers, including Coetzee, might develop a post-apartheid identity as other than evil and separate themselves from the images of apartheid policing that were being publicly presented.

Pauw's differing judgement of Coetzee and de Kock is most apparent in the manner in which he presents their confessions. While he positions the reader as a potentially sympathetic reading confessor in *In the Heart of the Whore*, in *Into the Heart of Darkness* he invites the reader to sit in judgement over de Kock. Quoting dialogue from evidence led in the case of the State versus Eugene de Kock, heard in the Pretoria Supreme Court, in 1995 and 1996, and de Kock's submissions to the TRC and Harms and Goldstone Commissions, Pauw presents what can only be seen as a purported confession because of his selective quoting. Its reorganisation includes exchanges such as the following between de Kock and Anton Ackermann, the senior

state advocate in de Kock's Supreme Court trial, to draw attention to the evil inherent in de Kock:

Ackermann: How would your enemies see you?

De Kock: As merciless.

Ackermann: What else?

De Kock: I haven't met many, because most are dead.

Ackermann: Mr de Kock, have you ever tried to establish how many lives you've taken?

De Kock: No, one doesn't do it. It's a terrible thing to think about. (30)

Rather than being induced into a dialogic exchange, Pauw carefully places readers outside of de Kock's confession, so that we remain distant from de Kock, innocent of the violence that he has meted out, and separated from complicity in his actions. Pauw constricts any reinterpretation of de Kock's words and reminds readers that de Kock was found guilty following his statements.

David Schalkwyk is critical of works, such as Pauw's, through which the discourse of evil that emerged at the time of the TRC focused on de Kock as a symbol. He argues: 'The point is not that Eugene de Kock does not deserve to be called evil, but rather that by reserving the term for him [. . .] the popular imagination managed to exonerate itself from the taint of evil' (10). If de Kock had not existed, 'South Africans would have had to invent him', he suggests (11). His concern is the refusal of the TRC to speak of evil; to not do so is to miss something essential (13). For him, this dilemma was somewhat overcome in de Kock's Supreme Court trial which 'marked the public emergence of the discourse of evil' (9); however, attaching

the epithet ‘evil’ almost exclusively to de Kock allowed ‘the complicity of many others’ to be forgotten (11):

from the politicians of all persuasions, to big business, to the judiciary, to the white population generally few used the opportunity to see in themselves the tiniest complicity with evil (13).

Pauw undoubtedly depicts de Kock as evil, seeing him as an outgrowth of apartheid that South Africans should now be able to abandon, but the pressing issue for him is the need to consider the moral questions of South Africa’s past which, for him, are integral to the country’s future. In doing so he examines the question of evil further, using his own story and those of other death squad operatives to provoke readers to consider their own complicity.

While Pauw uses Conrad’s work to underpin his depiction of de Kock, he draws on Arendt’s work to consider the evil acts committed by other death squad operatives (these include Dirk Coetzee, Joseph Mamasela, Paul van Vuuren, Peter Casselton, Pieter Botes, Leslie Lesia, Barry Bawden, Ferdi Barnard, Rich Verster, and Dirk Stoffberg). Relating details of his meetings with them and their confessions to him, he focuses on their normality, arguing — despite their pleas that they ‘only followed orders’, and that ‘the generals knew everything’ (17) — they have become the new ‘lost generation’ of ‘South Africa’s secret wars’ (21). The term ‘lost generation’ suggests that they have achieved nothing, that ‘the killing was a waste of time and human life’ (20), but above all that they are a generation produced by an earlier one, ‘lost’ to a society that had not cared enough about the direction it was taking.

Pauw's focus takes on deeper meaning when considered in the light of Arendt's argument in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* that, despite having committed atrocities, Eichmann was 'terribly and terrifyingly normal' (276). Arendt's concern was that from the viewpoint of our legal institutions and moral standards of judgement, this normality was 'much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied [. . .] that this new type of criminal [. . .] commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or feel that he is doing wrong' (276). Eichmann maintained that he had diligently obeyed the orders of his superiors, and told the court 'he not only obeyed *orders*, he also obeyed the *law*' — the Führer's orders and the new law of the land that came with those orders (135).

For Arendt, Eichmann's case exposed a fundamental question of morality: how do people tell right from wrong when all they have to guide them is their own judgement, against a background of flawed moral principles. Whereas the legal case against Eichmann 'rested on the assumption that the defendant, like all "normal persons", must have been aware of the criminal nature of his acts' (26), and must have been capable of telling right from wrong, the problem in Eichmann's case was that there were so many like him — 'the whole of respectable society had in one way or another succumbed to Hitler' (295). The moral standard for 'normal' had shifted markedly, exposing a dilemma for modern legal systems based on the assumption that intent to do wrong is necessary for the commission of a crime (277). In directing readers to Arendt's work Pauw poses similar questions: '[D]id apartheid create these monsters? Or are they simply evil?' (21).

Pauw goes behind the images of death squad operatives including Willie Nortjie, Joe Mamasela and Ronald Bezuidenhout with which readers may have been familiar through the TRC to portray the normality of these men and challenge questions of the origin of evil. He describes Willie Nortjie as ‘soft-spoken’ (55), Joe Mamasela as a reborn Christian, and Ronald Bezuidenhout as ‘a good man’ (101). Personally endorsing their confessions, and positioning the reader as reading confessor to their accounts, he orchestrates the possibility of the reader coming to a responsive understanding of the operatives’ utterances through dialogic exchange. Changing the contexts of their confessions from those previously made public through the TRC and other hearings, his work points toward the later work of Don Foster, Paul Haupt and Marésa de Beer who, in their studies of torturers, suggest that ‘ordinary people are transformed by particular practices in their routine work environments into killers and murderers’ (56). In his depictions Pauw makes apparent their argument that ‘situational forces take precedence over dispositional tendencies’, that there is little evidence that those involved in violent work (including police) were ‘out of the ordinary’ subsequent to the period of violence, and that they returned to ‘rather ordinary lives’ (56).

As he had done with Coetzee’s story in *In the Heart of the Whore*, Pauw uses Paul van Vuuren’s story to address his own complicity, extending further his concern about the need for South Africans to consider their responsibility for apartheid. Much had been done through the TRC to publicly raise questions of complicity since *In the Heart of the Whore* had been published. Along with opinions on the lingering effects of the discourse of reconciliation associated with the TRC, views on complicity

proved polarising. Even the TRC was self-critical about its own focus on the ‘exceptional’ (1.133).

In his seminal work, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*, Mark Sanders theorises ‘the intellectual’ in terms of responsibility and complicity, arguing that responsibility emerges from a sense of complicity (4). For him, as Stephen Clingman asserts, complicity is the very foundation of ethics (288). Ethical action is never uncontaminated by complicity (281). Sanders suggests it is the work of the intellectual to recognise complicity and act on it (288). The intellectual is prompted by a ‘folded-together-ness [. . .] in human-being (or the being of being human)’ (Sanders 5). Developing this idea of ‘foldedness’, Sanders argues that the exchanges in the TRC between witness and questioner revealed the makings of an imperative:

one is always already occupied by another; and as an intellectual, one is called upon to act out of this being-occupied. In this sense the intellectual is an ethical figure — although not necessarily a figure of virtue. (209)

Sanders’ study ‘sees an intrinsic, existential link between complicity and responsibility’ (Clingman 290). However, Grant Farred condemns the way Sanders redefines complicity in the South African context, resting on ‘a foundation of racial equivalence’ (120). Stemming from his criticism of the discourse of reconciliation emerging from the TRC, or what he calls ‘the Oprah-isation of (mainly white) national guilt and expiation’ (114), Farred labels Sanders’ forced linkage between complicity and responsibility as ‘historically dangerous’ (122). He argues that Sanders is ‘intent on subverting black agency, wresting back authority from itself and re-preventing it as politically ineffectual’ (122). He suggests that while the effects of

Sanders' arguments may be that all complicities are rendered equal, the reality is that 'they do not, in the case of black South Africans, all have equal outcomes' (122).

Regardless of Farred's criticism, Sanders' idea of foldedness and his observation that the link of advocacy to responsibility-in-complicity is constantly made and remade in the daily work of the intellectual (201) is insightful for considering Pauw's alignment with the death squad operatives whose confessions he relates. Sanders suggests that

[t]he intellectual represents the other, the principle that, being a part of oneself, the other ought justly to be represented, and that particular loyalties ought not stand in the way [. . .] When parochial loyalties are favoured, the intellectual, aware of complicity, becomes a critic or opponent. (201)

Does Pauw choose to tell his story through the stories of these death squad operatives because he considers they are a part of him? As police officers have they acted on his behalf? As a journalist Pauw advocates for them, representing them (the other) and coming forward on their behalf, assuming responsibility for a foldedness in being human, and demonstrating loyalty to them. As he draws similarities between his story and van Vuuren's he portrays a self occupied by van Vuuren. In the sense Sanders invokes, Pauw embraces this occupation and acts out of the sense of being occupied.

Pauw reflects on the similarities and differences between his and van Vuuren's lives under apartheid and relates van Vuuren's story on his behalf while testifying to his own complicity. Both grew up in typical Afrikaner families and studied at university but, in Pauw's assessment, they are separated by their ability to

make ethical decisions. 'I am also an Afrikaner who grew up in a conservative home, was baptised in the DRC and indoctrinated by the total onslaught ideology. Yet, I did not kill' (23). Whereas van Vuuren joined the SAP, requested a transfer to the Security Branch and chose to become a killer, Pauw refused to do military service and co-founded *Vrye Weekblad* to expose police death squads. He argues that the essential difference was their abilities to distinguish the actions required to uphold apartheid. However, despite not carrying a gun in defence of apartheid, Pauw considers that by having been a journalist at the government-supporting Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport* before meeting Coetzee, he is no less guilty than van Vuuren. Pauw's ethical responsibility is apparent since he recognises his own complicity and accepts responsibility for justly representing the death squad operatives.

Pauw asserts a collective complicity, for instance, when he confesses to having written a misleading story for *Rapport* about the killing of Jeanette and Katryn Schoon: 'Many of us participated either willingly or unwillingly in creating the incredible darkness that embraced South Africa during that time' (193). After interviewing Commissioner of Police, General Johan Coetzee, Pauw had printed the Commissioner's story that the Schoons had been killed by the ANC. Six years later, when he was working for *Vrye Weekblad*, it was common knowledge that the Security Branch were responsible for the letter bomb that killed the Schoons. When Marius Schoon returned from exile he told Pauw that nothing had hurt him more than that article. 'I could say nothing to Marius other than how sorry I was and that I had been totally misled at the time' (194), says Pauw, using van Vuuren's argument that he did not know but those at the top did.

In representing van Vuuren, Pauw leads readers through a transition from seeing him as evil to seeing him as ordinary. But this is not the only transition. The book also invites a transformed view of Pauw. If van Vuuren is seen as ordinary, should Pauw, who committed far less sinister acts, not also be seen as ordinary? When Pauw first saw van Vuuren at the TRC he thought that ‘every movement he made [. . .] spoke of evil’ (206), and as van Vuuren related incidents in which he was involved as a security policeman during the 1980s Pauw wondered whether this was ‘the face of evil’ (189). But when he later met him on his farm with his family he saw ‘[o]rdinary Afrikaner people having Sunday lunch’ (181), and watching him cuddling his baby and hugging his wife he could only see him as normal. He asks, ‘Where is the face of evil now?’ (206). In acting as an interlocutor for van Vuuren’s confession Pauw poses the question of whether van Vuuren could be exonerated because he has testified on van Vuuren’s behalf in a demonstration of what Sanders calls a ‘folded-together-ness’, portraying van Vuuren as fundamentally ordinary.

Pauw does not deny the actions of the death squad operatives but argues that white South Africans have the responsibility to view their behaviour differently and, therefore, to address their own analogous complicity to re-assess their place in South African society as the country undergoes the transition from apartheid. Much debate about how the death squad operatives should be considered had arisen from the Amnesty Committee hearings, as Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert comments:

One got the impression that the few who did come to confess had no other choice because the evidence that had emerged from the De Kock hearings was so damning against them. And even when some of them came to testify, the grey safari suit and shoes tucked away for the occasion, they still tried to

evade, conveniently forgot, and transferred responsibility. The general impression they created was that they genuinely could not understand why they were the ones who had to come forward. They had just done their duty; they had only been the foot soldiers of the policy-makers. (65)

Heribert and Kanya Adam similarly argue that the perpetrators who appeared before the TRC and the Amnesty Committee typically 'acknowledged the suffering they caused, or even expressed coded regret, but rationalised their deeds in terms of the political climate of the time or their assigned role in the apartheid machinery' (43). Pauw challenges these views, portraying the confessions as survivor testimonies in which the actors are puppets of the government and victims of institutionalisation.

The final scene of *Into the Heart of Darkness* is of de Kock returning to the heart of the prison where he is locked away from contact with the new democratic nation. In contrast, Dirk Coetzee and Paul van Vuuren return to the normality of life in the new South Africa (323). The court has found de Kock guilty and attributed to him individual responsibility for the evil acts he has committed. The book closes as de Kock awaits the outcome of his amnesty application. Pauw surmises that if he is not granted amnesty he is 'essentially going to remain the symbol of evil perpetrated during the apartheid years' (318). Along with the courts and the media Pauw too has distinguished de Kock from the other death squad operatives and contributed to his construction as the symbolic other of the new South Africa. Although he agrees that de Kock should be incarcerated he foresees issues for South Africa if the problems of apartheid are attributed to him alone and all who were complicit in some way in upholding apartheid continue to deny responsibility.

Pauw's two books encapsulate some of the most significant moments and quintessential revelations in the history of the way in which South Africa's police contributed to the demise of apartheid. Employing his expertise as an investigative journalist he was able to uncover images and facts that were stifled by apartheid and constrained by the limitations of the TRC. Having established personal relationships with some of the police death squad's most despised operatives he sought ways in which to break through the public's barriers of resistance to accepting their narratives and seeing them as other than evil. Turning to confessional discourse he exploited the dialogic properties of that discourse in an endeavour to bring readers into other ways of seeing them. Notable in his approach was the manner in which he attached himself to the police officers in a relationship that I have described, in Sanders' terms, as a 'folded together-ness' in being human. Duty bound to act out of his sense of being occupied by the other, as his journalistic instincts would prompt, and having come — through his exchanges with the death squad operatives — to a sense of himself as complicit, Pauw's work is distinguished by its bold interest in bringing about a reappraisal of the national narrative. His contribution is significant for opening the way toward a new national narrative and ensuring that memories that had been silenced would be made public. Formally, this became the work of the TRC but it was also embraced by writers of fiction. The way had opened for them to be able to expose the actions of the police, actions silenced under apartheid, and to challenge the nation's formally documented history.

Chapter 3 — Re-membering the SAP

Much has been made of the manner in which the TRC dealt with ideas of memory. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee focus on this in their compilation *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*. Recognising that many were ‘urging their fellow South Africans to forget the past and to look to a new future’ (1), their collection brings together responses to the idea of the TRC as a public forum for the production of memory. In her contribution Ingrid de Kok discusses concerns about the constructed nature of memory emerging from the TRC. She questions whether in the attempt to ‘bring the disappeared stories back into symbolic currency, but within the bounds of the settlement’ (58) (between the National Party and the ANC that gave rise to the TRC), the TRC might not ‘unwittingly encourage cultural and social amnesia’ (59). De Kok draws on Derek Walcott’s metaphor of a cracked heirloom in his Nobel Prize speech to argue the ‘gluing together may be the key function of art and cultural education in a time of social change, but it involves seeing and feeling the fragmented, mutilating shards, before the white scar can be celebrated’ (62).

Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee summarise her argument:

the task of memory is to reconstitute turbulence and fragmentation, including those painful reminders of what we were and what we are. (5)

De Kok also reminds us that memory is never complete but always subject to contestation, with the potential for new memories to emerge and history to be rewritten. The argument about fragmentation and incompleteness is particularly relevant to my analysis of the realist fiction that emerged in the closing years of apartheid and in the lead-up to the TRC. In this chapter I consider the manner in

which three writers used realist fiction to reimagine — and so create memories of — the figure of the police officer that had been obscured during apartheid.

The police are pivotal to each of the narratives discussed — *Deafening Silence* (published in Afrikaans in 1991 and in English in 1996) by John Miles, *A Place Called Vatmaar: A Living Story of a Time that is no More* (published in Afrikaans in 1995 and in English in 2000) by AHM Scholtz and *A Duty of Memory* (1997) by WPB Botha. Images of policing that emerged from the TRC would later recall the horrors of apartheid and would significantly narrow the nation's perspective of its police to the activities of the death squad operatives. *Deafening Silence* and *A Place Called Vatmaar* stand as groundbreaking works having been published before images of the realities of policing under apartheid were generally being made public and debated.

Deafening Silence, the fictional story of the killing of black Police Sergeant Tumelo John Moleko and his wife Busi Moleko, was first published as *Kroniek uit die doofpot* in the final years of apartheid. It recreates the true story of Police Sergeant Tumelo Richard Motasi and his wife, Busisizwe Irene Motasi, who were murdered in their home by Security Branch police on 30 November 1987.¹⁹ Contributing toward the creation of a national archive or memory of events Miles' novel exemplifies Ricoeur's assertion of the mimetic nature of fiction, for — despite its generic status — it was referred to as fact in evidence during the TRC Amnesty hearings and by Antjie Krog in her account of the TRC, *Country of My Skull*.

A Place Called Vatmaar was first published in Afrikaans the year after South Africa's democratic elections and before the TRC hearings began. In this narrative Scholtz, writing from the position of the subaltern in that he was classified 'coloured' under apartheid, (re-)imagines the impact the creep of colonialism has on the heterogeneous community of Vatmaar.²⁰ Integral to the narrative is Scholtz's depiction of the police as the major instrument of colonialism. By recreating a pre-apartheid history that captures the relation between the disenfranchised of South Africa and the law, Scholtz brings to life 'the arrogant invasion of the other' that Dipesh Chakrabarty elsewhere identifies as the law-state history of imperialism (*Habitations of Modernity* 114). Scholtz envisages a context for the subaltern position in order to create a South African coloured past. As he creates memories of a coloured past through fiction he shows the potential of the subaltern position to transform the nation.

As the title suggests, *A Duty of Memory* (which was published while the TRC hearings were still being conducted) turns attention to responsibility for creating memory. The novel reminds readers that memory rests in the hands of individuals: South Africa's story is not one fixed narrative emerging from the TRC but a collection of disparate stories emerging from a vast array of repositories. Centering his narrative on the farm and exposing it as a site of torture and horror, Botha subverts notions of Afrikaner superiority inscribed through the *plaasroman*. In this subversion he contrasts the role and activities of the Security Branch police with those of the local police officer, Sergeant Muller, in order to explore notions of truth, apology and Afrikaner guilt.

As South Africa emerged from the closing years of apartheid, attention turned to making acceptable national memories. Writing in 1996 André Brink pointed to the enormous impact of censorship and repression:

Throughout the apartheid years whole territories of silence were created by the nature of the power structures that ordered the country and defined the limits of its articulated experience. (*Reinventing a Continent* 240)

The fictional works in this chapter creatively reimagine a policing past for South Africa. In doing so each seems to recognise Ingrid de Kok's plea to be true to the ongoing turbulence and fragmentation. Each brings to the fore the difficulties of representing South Africa's police; that is, the difficulties of reinscribing the often despised and loathed figure of the police officer into the national memory.

Deafening Silence

Deafening Silence has been acknowledged for bringing to light stories of the workings of the police. It includes revelations about police operations, discrimination and murder by police officers. Despite the narrative's fictional status, in March 1997 during the Amnesty Committee hearings for the murders of Richard and Irene Motasi, Irene's mother was asked about the book when being cross-examined. Mr Brian Currin, who appeared for the victims, offered to answer the questions:

Mr Chairman [. . .] In an attempt to give publicity to this particular matter, I gave my entire file to John Miles many years ago and he wrote a novel which is based on these facts, but it is fiction. And he wrote it around this particular story, there are many gaps in the information that we had, there was lots of speculation and he filled in the gaps to make it a whole story [. . .] the book in

fact is written as fiction, although he does relate it very closely to the information he got out of my file. (TRC 3 Mar. 1997 572)

As Richard Motasi's attorney since February 1986 Currin had earlier offered to make himself available as witness to clarify speculation about what had happened to the Motasis (TRC 3 Mar. 1997 552). Even within the amnesty hearings the cross-examiner had sought to clarify details of how often Richard Motasi had travelled to Zimbabwe, as referred to in Miles' book (TRC 3 Mar. 1997 572). Miles' approach can be seen to support Ricoeur's argument that the selection of what seems important to a historian dictates what becomes memorable and thus what is retained in culture. For Miles, the compelling question centred on how to communicate the facts that he had gathered about the murder of the Motasis in the context of late-apartheid South Africa — how to bring historicity to language in an environment that did not support reporting of the facts. He therefore turned to realist fiction, drawing on the facts provided to him of the life of the Motasis.

Miles' novel was originally published in Afrikaans. Choice of language was one of the primary concerns for many South African writers publishing in the early 1990s. Miles already had a reputation as an avant-garde Afrikaans-language writer when *Kroniek uit die doofpot* was published. Although it was not unusual for Afrikaans-speaking South African writers to write in English, and many did so because of the opportunity to capture a wider audience, for Miles, writing in Afrikaans brought other benefits. It enabled him to unequivocally write for a Southern African audience defined by, and associated with, the language of apartheid's perpetrators. He was able to direct his work at those mostly responsible for imposing the silences he sought to expose and thereby continue to challenge as he

had done in his earlier novel *Donderdag of Woensday* (banned from 1978 until 1983). Providing, in Afrikaans only, a narrative of the evidence, testimonies, research and investigative work that underpins the story, Miles empowered Afrikaner readers to claim as their own the quest to expose the injustices of apartheid. He may have risked rejection of his novel by an audience confronted by images of its own culture; however, in delaying publication in English he privileged Afrikaner ownership of the story.

The transition from apartheid to a democratic government has been considered a time of loss for Afrikaner culture. However, while the loss of power and authority was palpable for some, other Afrikaners sought to distance themselves from apartheid. Writers such as Miles embraced the chance to write candidly about what had been happening in their country. Despite the Publications Act not having been amended by the time *Kroniek uit die doofpot* was published in 1991, the impact of censorship had eased significantly. This provided opportunity for Miles to expose the murder of the Motasis by the police and comment on the lack of censure. He was breaking new ground, nevertheless he did so with a certain degree of care. The many nameless characters — ‘the friend’, ‘the publisher’, ‘the publisher’s wife’, ‘the publisher’s neighbour’ who is also ‘the advocate’, and so on — suggests that in the still uncertain political environment he wished to protect those who had helped with his investigation into the killing of the Motasis.

Miles exploits the changing political environment and assists readers in drawing links between his narrative and the real, alerting readers to the novel’s ‘dual status as “history” and “fiction”’ (Ngwenya 272). Where in *Donderdag of Woensday*

he had used disclaimers and ‘dislocation as a conscious authorial technique to evade the censors’ (de Lange 45), in *Deafening Silence* he affirms the contemporaneity of the story. The name in the dedication ‘*for Tshidiso*’ is the name of the Motasis’ son. The map of locations referred to in the novel, which is positioned opposite the Table of Contents, is a schematized depiction of the real locations.²¹ The list of chapter titles in the Table of Contents provides actual place names (indicated on the map) along with the actual dates of events relating to the Motasis. The ‘*List of names*’ that follows, despite being fictional, provides brief details of the roles of actual characters and how they are related. The reader, therefore, is left in little doubt that this narrative is about the murder of Tumelo Richard Motasi. Fiction makes a firm gesture towards its being a representation of fact.

As well as representing the Motasis’ story, *Deafening Silence* is Miles’ account of writing apartheid. But in a fictional account of apartheid, what balance of fact and fiction is appropriate? When details are included about how the police protected corners of society, how do readers know whether they are reading fact or fiction? Miles’ own voice is evident in the self-conscious omniscient narrator who leads readers through the narrative. The unnamed writer who, in a metafictional sense, acts as a guide and ‘constantly reminds the reader of [the narrative’s] process of construction’ (Ngwenya 272), reveals his strategy for dealing with the clash between fact and fiction:

I’ll meddle with everything: my concoction will be as chaotic as life itself
 [. . .] I’ll call Tumelo John, Tumelo John . . . to confuse the confused and
 enable the imaginative to see more clearly. (47)

Through the multiple layers of the narrative Miles makes apparent the complexities of its construction and the interrelated nature of the accounts. For him, writing apartheid in 1991 is about referring to things as they are and piecing together snippets of facts. Only those who were confounded under apartheid will remain confused; the rest will understand.

HP van Coller discusses Miles' narrative craft in exposing reality through fiction in 'Intertextuality in *A Deafening Silence* by John Miles'. He argues that similarities in *Deafening Silence* to a well-known, canonized Afrikaans short story, *Klein-riet-alleen-in-die-roerkuil* (*Little-reed-alone in the Whirlpool*), signal a warning to Afrikaans readers that Tumelo John's 'quest (for justice) will end tragically' (331). *Deafening Silence* poses ethical issues, he suggests, with one of the 'nagging questions' being the 'responsibilities of an author within an unjust and dehumanizing political system' (329). Despite considering the difficulty of presenting historical facts as chronicle, he does not mention the Motasis. Rather, he suggests that Miles creates two alter egos of himself as the real author, proposing, somewhat vaguely, that Miles establishes a link through the names of Tumelo John Moleko which 'are (almost) similar to those of the real author, John Miles' (329). His omission of the Motasis is surprising given that he presented his paper two years after the links between the Motasis' story and Miles' novel were verified in evidence to the TRC. Nevertheless, in examining how Miles positions his story in relation to an Afrikaans literary canon, van Coller uses points of reference that are likely to be known only by an Afrikaans readership, thus also reinforcing the Afrikaans ownership of the narrative.

Miles presents his two narrative threads — the stories of Tumelo John and the writer — as separate but intertwined narratives to show how, in the South African context, they are inextricably bound. Together the narratives create a new account of the past and demonstrate the complexity of recovering narratives. Placed side-by-side and presented in alternating chapters the accounts provide differing perspectives on the same events. Tumelo John's narrative commences in 1952 when he is nine years old. It skips to 1973 when he becomes a police officer, believing this to be a role of integrity through which he can commit to the pursuit of justice. However, he and his wife are murdered by police officers as a result of his relentless demand to be treated justly after being assaulted by a white superior. The writer's story commences in August 1988, nine months after Tumelo John's murder, when he receives a bag of statements, letters and files relating to their lives. As he tries to piece together a chronology of Tumelo John's life he realises that:

the policemen and the writer, the black man and the white, [is] each confined to his own territory, yet [each is] caught up in the jaws of a predatory system where only the blind have vision or freedom of movement . . . his history is my story; his story, my affliction. (17)

Miles expands the 'historical records' he received from Brian Curren with fiction — such as Tumelo John's trips to Zimbabwe which Curren confirmed during the TRC hearings were fictional (TRC 3 Mar. 1997 572) — to reconstruct an account of the country's past and bring new truths to light. Melding fact and fiction he emphasises the indeterminate nature of the emerging narrative to show that in the telling (reading) a narrative is in a perpetual state of reconstruction. Any notion of an essential truth is undermined, as the ability to rewrite history and recreate memory is

affirmed. In an investigative process, mimicking that of the police, Miles' fictional writer brings together scraps of evidence and searches out multiple perspectives, despite the overriding silence, to reconstruct an account of the lives of Tumelo John and his wife. Assumptions fill gaps in hard evidence as Miles allows meaning to emerge from the multiple layers of narrative. Five years before the TRC, Miles' multi-dimensional, non-linear narrative provided a foretaste of what was to come for he provided new stories of South Africa's police, both perpetrators and victims. The TRC would later report that the telling of stories by both these groups, victims and perpetrators, 'gave meaning to the multi-layered experiences of the South African story', and 'provided unique insights into the pain of South Africa's past' (1.112).

Deafening Silence depicts the imagined perspective of a black frontline police officer working within the political apartheid machine — a view that many white readers would not have contemplated. From the inception of the SAP in 1913, black officers had been treated as secondary. Brewer explains that even though just under thirty percent of the initial nearly six thousand officers of the SAP were black men they received no formal training (43). They were significantly underpaid when compared with white officers and in 1926 were described by the Police Commissioner as having 'a tendency to crime, indiscipline and untrustworthiness' (62). By 1973 when the fictional Tumelo John joined the SAP nearly fifty percent of the just over thirty-one thousand police officers were black officers (239). Educational entry standards had been raised in the 1960s as had training standards. Becoming a black police officer was 'seen as a mechanism for social mobility' (237). But being aware of the life chances that a policing career offered often made black police officers obsequious. Combined with rigid training and discipline this seems to

explain the willingness of black officers to commit atrocities against their fellow countrymen and women (237).

Tumelo John, however, presents a very different picture from the one Brewer gives. He becomes the ironic embodiment of policing in South Africa, for he had an idealised view of the police. He had chosen to become a police officer because, ‘even as a child, he thought it was an honourable profession, serving the law, protecting good people . . . it also meant security’ (32). After being slapped, kicked and punched by Colonel van Niekerk for not being able to account for the absence of another officer he suffers deafness and ongoing ill-health, although as he loses his physical ability to hear, he is able to hear (understand) more clearly. As the ‘silence’ of the truth of policing in South Africa becomes deafening Tumelo John’s physical deafness and health worsens, ultimately contributing to his death.

Tumelo John is a tragic figure who is murdered by his fellow police officers because of his relentless pursuit of justice. When an armed Tumelo John seeks out Colonel van Niekerk, his superior who had beaten him, he recognises the reality of how the police were being used. He finds van Niekerk, now retired, a shuffling old man who, without his uniform, ‘looked like a bag of silage, slightly dented, on the moving conveyor belt of a mill’ (267). He realises van Niekerk was unimportant:

It was what was behind him that was important, whatever it was that gave him power and permitted him to break what he would, gave him orders and said, trample with the boot, tug on the rein. Not Van Niekerk, but the faceless Head Office . . . which made Botha head of the college. (268)

Van Niekerk is also shown as a tragic figure as, by extension, are other police officers who were unable to comprehend how they were being used by the apartheid government. He had been defined by his reputation as a tyrant when, in reality, he too had been a pawn and victim of those to whom he answered. Likening apartheid to the conveyor belt of a mill, Miles suggests an endlessness from which ‘bags of silage’ like the tyrant van Niekerk need to be shaken or lifted.

Miles evokes the idea of this story as myth in order to remind readers that this is not only the story of Tumelo John but also the story of anyone who fights for justice. The opening words — ‘The story actually has no beginning’ (16) — and concluding sentence — ‘Ultimately, all stories are without ends . . . we can only remind one another of that’ (296) — capture the idea of the endlessness of myth. The narrator’s reference to Tumelo John as the ‘proverbial common man’ (16) reminds readers that in myth there is ‘no origin in a particular consciousness, and no particular end in view’ (Eagleton 90). In studying a body of myth we are ‘looking less at its narrative contents than at the universal mental operations which structure it’ (90). The immediate narrative is not the source or end of meaning. Rather, meaning is embedded in and emanates from the narrative’s structure (90). In a manner consistent with that in which the TRC would later explicitly challenge individuals to consider their own deeds in relation to apartheid (1.131), Miles uses the writer to prompt readers to think more widely about the implications of the narrative:

I’m not writing only for the day when there’s no one left who supports apartheid, when no one can believe any longer that people could have been so callous as to defend such unjust treatment . . . I don’t want my characters to

remind people of something far removed from themselves. No, you must recognize yourself — everywhere and in everything. Then it will have been worth the trouble. (147)

Concerned with the lack of transparency under apartheid, Miles is critical of the role of the media in reporting the murder of the Motasis. He uses two journalists to demonstrate the inadequacies of crime reporting. Juxtaposing the writer's visit to a crime reporter with the writer's visit to Pallo Seleke, the assistant editor of the *Sowetan*, Miles suggests there were many reasons for the lack of accurate reporting on police actions. Although the crime reporter and Seleke both consider themselves serious reporters, neither made the truth about policing in South Africa public. Despite, or perhaps because of, his police contacts the crime reporter is unable to distinguish fantasy and reality. In contrast, Seleke avoided Tumelo John through fear, and he pleads:

[w]e were operating under a state of emergency. Hadn't we already done all we could to suggest the government was using death squads? What more could I do without risking being locked up. (272)

Miles makes apparent how in quite different ways apartheid distorted the journalistic role that, in democratic societies, provides a voice for the people. He shows how in some instances journalistic reports were silenced through fear while in others they proved to be no more than a fanciful version of reality.

Restrictions on the press are further evident in the final chapter in which Miles quotes the *Sowetan's* report of the deaths of the 'Molokes'. Except for Miles' fictional character names, the report is a direct quotation from page one of the

Sowetan on 30 November 1987. The newspaper report entitled, ‘Couple Shot Dead’ was accompanied by a photograph of Tshidiso Matosi with the caption, ‘TSHIDISO Matosi . . . stayed whole night with bodies’ (‘Couple Shot’ 1). The original report is an example of the more restricted public account of such an incident that could be published in 1987 before censorship provisions around policing were relaxed. Interestingly, the article is wrapped — and perhaps strategically placed — around a text box which encloses the newspaper’s disclaimer, ‘Reports, pictures and comments in this edition may be censored in terms of the Government’s state of emergency’ (‘Couple Shot’ 1). As a contrast, Miles’ narrative affirms the progress that had been made by 1991 toward the freedom of writers to make public the police involvement in such sinister activities. Miles’ rendering of the *Sowetan* account further confounds the distinction between fiction and fact. Readers familiar with the newspaper report are prompted to consider how much of the rest of the fictional account should also be read as fact.

Six years after the publishing of *Deafening Silence* other accounts of the murders of Richard and Irene Motasi were made public. Each independently corroborates the factual basis of Miles’ narrative and supports the integrity of his fictional rendering as a contribution toward (re-)making memories. In 1997, the Security Branch police officers involved in the killing of the Motasis give evidence to the TRC Amnesty Committee, as a crucial addition to this Jacques Pauw published a version of the killings in *Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid’s Assassins*, citing the account as part of Paul van Vuuren’s story. Antjie Krog also included an account of the killings, with direct reference to Miles’ novel, in her non-fiction account, *Country of My Skull* (1998). Pauw and Krog both approach the story

from the perpetrators' perspectives. Of particular interest is what they reveal about the accuracy of Miles' narrative of the Motasi's story, a fictional rendering written at a time when writers were still dealing with the censorship constrictions of apartheid.

In chapter two I discussed how Jacques Pauw used van Vuuren's story in *Into the Heart of Darkness* to reflect on his own complicity in crimes committed in the name of apartheid. In his application for amnesty Paul van Vuuren revealed that he was involved in an operation to kill Richard Motasi who was believed to be an enemy of the State and ANC collaborator. Van Vuuren conceded that they did not have instructions to kill Irene Motasi. The Amnesty Committee concluded that the killing of Richard Motasi was politically motivated and the officers acted on the orders of their superiors and against a person they believed to be a supporter of a political organisation. Van Vuuren was thus granted amnesty for the murder of Richard Motasi but his application for amnesty for the murder of Irene Motasi was refused. In *Into the Heart of Darkness* Pauw describes meeting van Vuuren and quotes van Vuuren saying to Tshidiso, 'All we did was a waste of human life' (203). However, whereas Pauw relates van Vuuren's own account of his story, and has van Vuuren provide the names of the perpetrators and the reason for the attack, Miles adds details where the facts were not available to him. Here Tumelo John recognises voices in his dying moments — 'Afrikaans, Zulu, a sigh in Sotho' (290). Together the two narratives shed new light on the story of the Motasi as van Vuuren's personal truth corroborates aspects of Miles' fictional portrayal. A new depth of narrative truth emerges as the previous silence about the murder of the Motasi is broken. New memories are created and history is rewritten.

In remaking the narrative and, therefore, memories of the murder of the Motasis, Pauw's and Miles' accounts support Charles Villa-Vicencio's assertion that finding the truth of apartheid would involve looking beyond the narrative of the TRC. Villa-Vicencio went on to suggest that academic historians and those of similar spirit carried the onus to uncover the truth, arguing that perhaps 'poetry, music, fiction and myth can contribute more to healing than any attempt to explain in some rigid, forensic way "who did what to whom"' (25). While he acknowledges the importance of the TRC's contribution of a well-stocked archive to national and individual memory, he particularly complements Antjie Krog's approach in producing a semi-historical account of the TRC, further supporting the legitimacy of fiction to complement fact in remaking South Africa's history and memories.

Much has been written about *Country of My Skull* and its rendering of the TRC. While primarily directed at capturing images of the TRC's processes, it is several books in one: 'the story of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the story of how that story was told by a particular reporter, a reflection on the moral and psychological drama that was played out, and Krog's negotiation with her own sense of complicity and desire for redemption' (Olivier 224). Of particular interest to my discussion is Krog's vignette about Paul van Vuuren and Jacques Hechter giving evidence to the Amnesty Committee about the killing of the Motasis. Having listened to their testimonies during the TRC, Krog is troubled by the truth of their narratives. Their versions of events raise questions about their truth and the purpose of narrative. She turns to Roland Barthes — 'Narrative does not show, does not intimate . . . [Its] function is not to represent, it is to constitute a spectacle' (122) — and asks whether

van Vuuren's and Hechter's narratives were 'not true but simply a spectacle for [the] occasion [. . . of] amnesty.

Krog's reference comes from Barthes' comprehensive exploration of narrative, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' (as translated by Lionel Duisit), in which he asserts that 'the claim that "realism" is the prime motivation of narrative must be largely discounted' (271). He explains:

The function of narrative is not to 'represent'; it is to put together a scene which still retains a certain enigmatic character for the reader, but does not belong to the mimetic order in any way [. . .] Narrative does not make people see, it does not imitate. (271)

But the genre of narrative that he is discussing is detective fiction, in particular Ian Fleming's *Goldfinger* and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Purloined Letter*. So it is unsurprising that he emphasises the 'enigmatic character' of the scene. In proposing that three levels can be distinguished in any narrative work ('functions', 'actions' and 'narration') he suggests those levels are 'bonded together according to a mode of progressive integration' and that the action 'receives its ultimate meaning from the fact that it is being told, that is entrusted to a discourse which possesses its own code' (243). Whereas he draws on the discourse of detective fiction, Krog reflects on the discourse of confession which, as I have discussed in chapter two, is 'coded', to use Barthes' term, quite differently. In her more emphatic translation of Barthes — Krog refers to narrative constituting a 'spectacle' (122), whereas Duisit translates Barthes as arguing narrative puts together 'a scene' which retains 'a certain enigmatic character' (271) — Krog heightens the level of suspicion around truth that can come from narrative.

She explores this conundrum by creating an interplay of narrative, bringing together in her own text, van Vuuren's and Hechter's testimonies, and Miles' fictional account of the death of the Motasis. She intersperses her narration of van Vuuren's and Hechter's amnesty hearings with passages of her account about being evacuated from the Munitoria Building during a fire. She relates parts of their testimonies, and of Joe Mamasela's account of the killings from an interview she conducted with him some months later. She also quotes translated passages from *Kroniek uit die doofpot* about the ambush and killing, and includes Miles' quotation of the *Sowetan* newspaper report of the killings. And then, quotations from Miles appear between Hechter's and van Vuuren's versions of events with Krog reminding readers that Miles' work is fictional. Playing on the notions of fact and fiction in South Africa — that the facts are so strange as to read like fiction — she describes taking Miles' book from her bag and reading his fictionalised account of the attack on the Motasis. She affords his novel the same status as Hechter's and van Vuuren's testimonies, and draws iconic images from the three accounts to show how the stories 'correspond', how they 'differ' and how '[e]very narrative carries the imprint of its narrator' (131). Testimony and fiction are used interchangeably. Victim and perpetrator accounts of the same event come together as she contemplates the multiple versions of narrative. Pivotal for her is the realisation that the narratives may differ but 'the core elements stay the same. They overlap' (132). Amidst the noise of the competing factual and fictive versions of events, certain consistencies emerge.

For Krog, there is little distinction between the truth coming from the testimonies of Hechter and van Vuuren, and Miles' fictional account. The finer

details of events may forever remain unknown but the compelling fact is that '[b]ecause of these narratives, people can no longer indulge in their separate dynasties of denial' (Krog 134). Regardless of whether the narratives constitute spectacle, in Barthes' terms, or are considered fiction based on real events, for Krog, they reveal an essential and immutable core.

Country of My Skull demonstrates that "truth," and, by implication, narrative, is always already contingent, subjective and improvisatory' (Cook 81). In her post-modern composition of disparate stories and accounts that simultaneously conflict and cohere, Krog mimics the uncontrollable process of the TRC itself on the page. Her layering of narrative and compilation of narrative fragments expose spaces between the stories, opening the narrative to new threads of interpretation and meaning over which she indicates she has little control. Nevertheless, in her ordering of the narrative there is intent to deliver meaning and to direct interpretation. Krog explains: 'Telling is [. . .] never neutral, and the selection and ordering try to determine the interpretation' (127). The stories of van Vuuren and Hechter to the TRC are thus 'only part of a whole circuit of narratives: township stories, literature, Truth Commission testimonies, [and] newspaper reports' (126). It is noteworthy that she uses their testimonies to the TRC to comment about truth and narrative. Through her intertextual use of *Deafening Silence* to reflect on their testimonies she endorses the semi-historical status of Miles' work. In doing so she retrospectively advocates for the integrity of the manner in which Miles and others like Ebersohn used fiction to represent fact, thereby undermining the silences that prevailed during apartheid. Her approach supports the utility of realist fiction for recreating memories and rewriting historical records.

A Place Called Vatmaar: A Living Story of a Time that is no More

In 2004, reflecting on trends in South African literature in the decade after Mandela's democratic government came to power, Shaun Irlam identified an emerging 'culture of introspection and separate development' (699) through which writers were exercising the 'liberty to explore their own histories' (697). '[O]ld forms of the nation [had] been discredited and new forms of legitimacy [were] yet to be established' (703). Communities silenced by apartheid sought to (re-)discover and make known their historicity. AHM Scholtz's *A Place Called Vatmaar* (published in Afrikaans in 1995 as *Vatmaar: 'n lewendagge verhaal van 'n tyd wat nie meer is nie*) is an example of such an exploration. Foregrounding the heterogeneity of the South African nation, in its mimetic intention Scholtz's fictional work contributes toward building an archive of memories. Whereas *Deafening Silence* contends with portraying images of policing under the waning censorship restrictions of the late apartheid years, Scholtz's novel is noteworthy as one that brings to life a coloured history of South Africa that had been largely unrepresented because of apartheid. Scholtz, who refers to himself as a 'coloured', writes from within the community represented to provide a voice for a community whose narrative had been stifled. Expressing the freedom with which writers could write following the lifting of censorship restrictions Scholtz candidly depicts police interactions with the coloured community. His characterisation of the police as colonial is central to a narrative in which he shows the origins of apartheid policing to be embedded in the country's colonial past.

Dipesh Chakrabarty discusses the challenges of endeavours like that undertaken by Scholtz to incorporate into the existing historical narrative 'minority

histories' which have been excluded ('Minority Histories' 15). Chakrabarty reminds us that minority societies 'cannot be thought of as societies without memories. They remember their pasts differently' (22); the 'Discipline of History' is only one way among many of remembering the past (22). It is through 'tell[ing] the story of a group hitherto overlooked, [and being] able to master the problems of crafting such narratives — particularly under circumstances where the usual archives do not exist' — that the 'Discipline of History' renews and maintains itself (16). 'Some scholars now *perform* the limits of history by fictionalising the past, [. . .] by studying memory rather than just history, by playing around with forms of writing, and by other similar means' (24). The intrinsic value of minority histories is apparent: reading the narratives of such societies as 'subaltern pasts' puts us in touch with the plural ways of being that make up our own present and help to bring into view the disjointed nature of our own times (24).

Reference to 'subalterns', or those subject to the ruling class, has its origins in Antonio Gramsci's work, published as *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (1971). In 1982 historians from England and India launched *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Although the field of subaltern studies has its genesis in the studies of culture and class in caste-based India, it has wider application, including in the South African apartheid context in which repressive race-based divisions of society were legislated. Subaltern studies open the way for commenting on and analysing repressed pasts or histories that remained unarticulated under apartheid. Considering *A Place Called Vatmaar* in light of ideas of subalternity enables it to be read as a means of 'excavating' the past or

history of the subaltern group represented. Further, reading it through Gramsci's work also prompts an examination of its influence as a counter-hegemonic narrative.

Nelson Mandela's democratic government proffered the TRC as its pre-eminent vehicle of cultural change in order to underpin the significant political and legislative reform intended to disrupt the country's apartheid culture. The TRC was to provide a platform for those who had been marginalised and victimised under apartheid. It could not, of course, touch everyone and nor could it achieve a complete shift away from the country's divided past. The cultural shift envisaged for a genuinely new South African nation would require much more than a reframed political will, and much more than one-off initiatives, particularly when these were part of a negotiated settlement. New representations would be required for the country to transcend the past by encouraging the social imaginary to move beyond entrenched thinking concerning difference and separation (Moslund 28).

Sten Moslund suggests that literature as 'a discursive and imaginatively free space where borders of habitual thinking can be suspended [. . .] may inspire a shift in discursive "truth effects" [. . .] to keep challenging these borders' (28). The argument that literature can influence such a shift has been widely made. He calls upon social, cultural and political opinion-makers in South Africa to 'consciously situate themselves against representation of past exploitations of history' (28). Annie Gagiano argues similarly for the need for all South Africans to broaden their cultural vocabularies. She contends that 'the deep fissures in South African society require intense efforts in order to make those isolated from one another mutually intelligible' ('Two Bad-time Stories' 161). Discussing *A Place Called Vatmaar*, (as well as

David Coplan's *In the Time of Cannibals – The Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants* [1994] and Mongane [Wally] Serote's *Come and Hope with Me* [1994]) she suggests: 'This is where texts such as novels and those containing the oral art of neglected communities can function as "translations"' and as such, have 'profound social importance' (161).

Hints of Gramsci are apparent in Moslund's assertion that it would take more than political opinion to move the South African social imaginary. The capitalist dimension of apartheid and the counter-hegemonic nature of South Africa's move away from apartheid make this particularly apparent. As a narrative written from a subaltern point of view in order to recreate a subaltern history, *A Place Called Vatmaar* challenges the way in which the tenets of the ideal of westernised policing had been corrupted in South Africa. It is useful to consider Gramsci's work further for an understanding of how, through re-imagining a coloured history, Scholtz's work contributes toward breaking down established ways of thinking.

In his early works Gramsci considered the cultural dynamics reinforcing bourgeois hegemony. Later, particularly in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, he focused on theoretically formulating a counter-hegemonic strategy out of capitalist domination (Reed 563). He considered how the nature of bourgeois rule relied 'not only on coercive state power but also, and more importantly, on a system of institutions — schools, churches, communications media, universities — which establishe[d] ruling class moral and ethical leadership over the whole society' (Reddy 222). For him, the way out of capitalism is predicated on the ideological alignment that the philosophy of praxis has to the disparate subaltern forms of

consciousness of folklore, common sense and religion (Reed 563). He directs attention to the transformative nature of the subaltern position, and suggests that counter-hegemony ‘unfolds as subaltern ideological orders are transformed from within’ (Reed 564). A direct relationship and ‘sentimental connection’ between the intellectuals of a society and the ‘people-nation’ or ‘popular element’ is necessary. The intellectual’s error is in ‘believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned’ (Gramsci *Prison Notebooks* 418), that is, ‘the intellectual can be an intellectual [. . .] if distinct and separate from the people-nation, [. . .] without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them, [. . .] and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world’ (418). Without a sentimental connection, relations are purely bureaucratic and formal, and give rise to intellectuals becoming a caste (418).

Gramsci characterises hegemony as ‘the “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group’ (12). The first steps in constructing counter-hegemony lie in problematizing the everyday, common-sense practices of social activity and thought to bring about a higher level of critical, systematic consciousness that corresponds to resistance actions of the subaltern (Reddy 222). But counter-hegemonic thought and action needs to develop from below. Considering Gramsci’s work makes apparent the inadequacy in South Africa’s transition to democracy of legislative reform and changes in governance without embracing subaltern modes of thought as a means of breaking down hegemonic relations and forming critical sentimental connections.

A Place Called Vatmaar, which touches on questions of representation and claiming identity against a history of being silenced and objectified, is written as a portrayal of a pre-history of coloured resistance against apartheid. Scholtz's work supports theories of subalternity, such as those by Spivak which identify necessary agency of change as located in the subaltern ('Subaltern Studies' 205). I have already discussed how Afrikaner introspection during South Africa's emergence from apartheid gave rise to literature considering questions of complicity and confession. In *A Place Called Vatmaar*, in which the subaltern looks inward, Scholtz acknowledges the complicity of the subaltern group in maintaining white colonial hegemony. This is evident in Scholtz's depictions of interactions involving the early 20th Century police who are portrayed as the instruments of colonialism, and reinforce the divisions that gave rise to the position of the subaltern. But Scholtz also conveys an optimism about recovering the history and culture of the subaltern group.

Scholtz relates the story of the fictional settlement of Vatmaar, settled when the Anglo-Boer War ended in 1902. Imagining a time before the National Party came to power in 1948 with its apartheid agenda, he depicts colonial conquest, suppression, racial exploitation and discrimination. His novel is set during the period in South African history that Max Coleman describes as subject to an 'ad hoc art of control' before the qualitative shift to apartheid's 'rigorous science of repression' (HRC 1). Rather than being in the form of the protest literature that typified the apartheid period, *A Place Called Vatmaar* depicts pre-apartheid South Africa. It 'recapture[s] hybrid subject positions that later became extinct as apartheid artificially hardened racial identities' (Irlam 701). Rendering a coloured history, which had not at the time been written, from the ideological position of the coloured,

and through the political consciousness of the subaltern, Scholtz's narrative contributes to claiming a position for the subaltern community by establishing a narrative for that community and (re-)inscribing its history. Sympathetic critiques suggest that Scholtz's work goes even further: that he depicts a model for an integrated South African society (Viljoen 'Displacement' 101) and portrays a way 'for modern people towards a more meaningful life' (Van der Merwe 125).

Emphasising the minority status of his subaltern subjects, Scholtz challenges traditional western constructions of subjectivity. A lack of intrinsic value is suggested in the name of the village and his novel's title. The term 'vatmaar' comes from a word used by the Cape coloured man Oom (Uncle) Chai for goods collected from the houses of Boers destroyed at the direction of English soldiers — "'vatmaar" stuff' means 'stuff you can just take because it's there for the taking' (Scholtz 20). Scholtz's narrative technique also supports his depiction of Vatmaar's inhabitants as exemplars of subaltern identity. Direct speech is indicated by colons only and rather than having chapter divisions the narrative appears as a string of short stories about the lives of the disparate group of people who make up the village of Vatmaar. Both techniques contribute toward a graphic impression of a literature of a minority using the language of a majority, deterritorialising that language (to use Deleuze and Guattari's concept). As Louise Viljoen points out, as a narrative about displacement by colonisation, literatures such as *A Place Called Vatmaar* are 'political in nature' and have the 'potential to subvert hegemonic structures and question [their] own displacement from the centre' ('Displacement' 97). In presenting interrelated stories through which the narrators collectively tell the story of their community, Scholtz's transcription of versions of oral narratives links to African oral literature (Meintjes

131). *A Place Called Vatmaar* ‘does not present a narrative *about* the marginalized, but deconstructs a colonial centre’ (131), allowing the subaltern voices to speak for themselves.

By situating the people of Vatmaar at the centre of his narrative Scholtz exposes the ‘willing or forced acceptance of alien Eurocentric worldviews in the modernisation process [. . . that] resulted in Africans being de-centred to the fringes of a basically European civilisation’ (Moslund 95). Vatmaar is settled as a refuge for people of all races. Its heroes and heroines cross conventional race borders (van der Merwe 131). ‘The tables are turned’ — ‘the centre and the margin have changed places’ (134). The ‘racist whites are marginalized and negatively stereotyped’ (133) — the coloured village of Vatmaar is at the centre and the white settlement of Du Toitspan is relegated to the fringe. Unencumbered by colonial controls when first settled, in Vatmaar there is ‘no church or police station to put fear into [the people’s] hearts. No football team or dance hall to distract [them]. No doctors and lawyers to depend on’ (Scholtz 13). There are no words for stealing or rape, and no incurable sexual diseases. But as the effects of colonialism impact Vatmaar’s people we see how the move toward modernity obscures the subject position of the subaltern. This becomes particularly evident through the actions of the police as the public agents of the colonial government.

It is through his female subaltern subjects, Tant Vonnie and her daughter Kaaitjie, that Scholtz explores the increasing constrictions of colonialism as European laws are introduced, crime is defined, and policing is imposed from Du Toitspan. Men and women work in harmony for the good of the whole community

in *Vatmaar* and there is no subordinate gender (van der Merwe 132). As colonialism takes hold; however, readers are given a sense of what Spivak observes elsewhere: ‘in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow’ (‘Can the Subaltern Speak’ 257). Tant Vonnie tells her daughter Suzan that to be ‘black and a woman as well, is the lowest a person can be born, very close to a slave, sometimes worse’ (Scholtz 244).

Tant Vonnie’s and Kaaitjie’s imprisonment renders them helpless in the face of the coloniser’s law as applied by the police. Tant Vonnie (a ‘white-skinned’ coloured, of German descent) is arrested when the mounted police officer from Du Toitspan arrives just as Mevrouw Martha September, ‘a black coloured woman — the kind that hates white-skinned coloureds’ (150) — falsely accuses Tant Vonnie of stealing her wedding ring. Kaaitjie is arrested after her employer Mevrouw Bosman suspects her husband as responsible for Kaaitjie’s pregnancy. Mevrouw Bosman arranges for the pregnancy to be terminated. Depicting the ‘*violation*’ (Gagiano ‘South African Novelists’ 94) of the colonised, Scholtz portrays the objectification of the coloured women as the Du Toitspan police officers deny the women access to justice.

Scholtz’s depiction of the police role in the objectification of Tant Vonnie and Kaaitjie supports Peter Fitzpatrick’s observation that ‘operatively’ the essence of colonialism was concentrated in criminal law (276): the criminal law was intended to ‘uphold comprehensive “public” standards in the face of a contrary diversity’ (277). The colonial administration brought the full force of criminal law and discipline to

bear on the constitution and fixing of ‘native’ society but did not then transform that society toward modernity. Rather, the ‘native was maintained as an object and limiting case of disciplinary power’ (278). ‘Criminal law, as the embodiment of the public and general element, [came to be] identified with the nation and with the cause of “national unity”’ (279). ‘Almost by definition, policing in a colony [was] not by consent’ (Drew and Prenzler 12).

Chakrabarty, like Fitzpatrick, holds the view that modernity ‘teaches us to think of the law as the key instrument of social justice’ (*Habitations of Modernity* 102). Analysing the effects of colonialism in India he notes that the Indian desire to legislate followed the arrival of the British, with the move toward legislation encapsulating modernity (104). But he clarifies that ‘pre-British histories and structures [. . .] were perfectly capable of producing compassion in people’ (104). Arguing for narrative as a form of political intervention, and suggesting that it is ‘a political force in a sphere that law or theory can never reach’ (113), he asks whether we can ‘imaginatively bring into being modern civil-political spheres founded on the techniques of the dialogic narrative even as we live and work through those built on the universalist abstractions of political philosophy’ (114). He points to the paradox of imperialism:

the modern state has always operated, whether inside or outside Europe, by producing its own colonized subjects whose consent to its rule is never won by pure persuasion; violence or coercion always has a role to play. Whether it is the law or theories of citizenship, they all work by abstracting and synthesizing identities and do not allow for the radical alterity of the other.

(112)

Scholtz's text depicts the origins of apartheid in colonialism. Juxtaposing the effects of pre-colonial and colonial structures through Tant Vonnie's narrative he foregrounds the absurdity of the modern idea that the law, and so the police, represent justice for all. Portraying the so-called progress of colonialism as Vatmaar is increasingly subjected to legislative controls imposed from Du Toitspan, while critiquing colonial domination, he recovers the voice of a coloured woman silenced by the coloniser. Through her story we encounter others who are incarcerated with her and see their treatment at the hands of the law.

However, in exploring the implications of colonialism, Scholtz alludes to the complicity of some subalterns, projecting in the actions of those with whom Tant Vonnie shares the police cells a naivety that contributes to their demise as they come up against the full force of the criminal law. Each has a different cultural background, representing the heterogeneity of the Vatmaar community. They set out to help others as, in their pre-colonial world, they are said to be innately predisposed to do; however, according to colonial law, their actions are now illegal — Neels Wool, a 'coloured, a mixed race' man is arrested for buying liquor for a black man (laws permitted a coloured to 'buy white man's liquor' [188] but black people 'were not allowed to buy wine or "spirits"' [187]); Chan Look, the 'son of a Chinaman' is arrested for running an illegal fahfee game started by his father to enable the poor to get money; (Oom) Hendruk January is arrested for trying to sell a diamond that he found in the drift sand while cleaning the streets (diamond selling was made illegal by a law in Cecil John Rhodes's time 'to keep the diamond monopoly in the hands of a few white people' [203]). All are jailed as a result of actions intended to help

others. In their unwitting concessions to the constrictions of colonialism, each naively becomes complicit in his own subjugation.

Despite being the primary instruments of colonialism, employing the authority of their office does not sit easily with all of the police officers, each of whom represents a different racial group. Collectively they are those ‘who used the law against the poor people’ (302); individually they fulfil their role differently and are so regarded. Constable Rigard Prins, one of the few public servants who could speak English and Afrikaans, is depicted as a sympathetic police officer. He is ‘the people catcher who rides a horse’ (301). He has to remind himself of the responsibilities of his office. Enforcing the law is not instinctive for him. When Mevrouw September accuses Tant Vonnie of stealing her ring he acknowledges his duty: ‘You are right, I am the upholder of the law, I will have her charged’ (152). He is recognised by the community as one who ‘carried out his duties like a man and always greeted before speaking to anybody, it didn’t matter who it was’ (302). Despite Constable Prins coming from Du Toitspan there is a degree of mutual respect in the relationship between him and the people of Vatmaar — he adjusts to his responsibility to police them and they adjust to the implications of being policed.

However, after Prins dies and three policemen are directed to serve Vatmaar — Sergeant Piet Cronje, ‘a white man’, Detective Sergeant Walter Kerns, ‘a coloured’, and Constable William Masibi, ‘a Native’ (302) — policing is imposed as a foreign activity. There is no police station in Vatmaar. The officers are stationed at Du Toitspan and travel to Vatmaar to investigate matters. Sergeant Cronje, who never goes to Vatmaar, puts Sergeant Kerns in charge. Considered ‘more of a skollie

than a man', Sergeant Kerns is 'the most hated man Vatmaar had ever known' (302). Constable William Masibi is a friendly man and knows that as 'a black constable, [he is] regarded as lower than a white convict' (306). He is not allowed to carry a firearm or arrest a white man (189) and rides a bicycle because he is not allowed to ride a motor bike (305). His empathy and compassion are evident when he is directed to investigate Kaaitjie for having absconded from work. He reasons that it is 'only poor people who are put in jail for absconding' and tells Sergeant Kerns there is nobody by the name Kaaitjie in Vatmaar (305). In contrast to Sergeant Kerns, who deceives Kaaitjie so that he can arrest her, Constable Masibi is shamed by his involvement in her arrest and laments, 'What kind of law is this? [. . .] To do this, to one of your own people, what is more, to a pregnant girl? But that's the way it is' (306).

A Place Called Vatmaar illustrates that significant historical period when the simple compassion underpinning the workings of the heterogeneous community clashed with the inhuman application of colonialism. Kaaitjie's incarceration contributes to her death. In Masibi's concession that 'that's the way it is' (306) and in Tant Vonnie's, Neels Wool's, Chan Look's and Hendrick January's yielding, Scholtz depicts how coercive state power brought about moments of complicity in subjugation, so capturing the essence of colonialism that led to and underpinned apartheid — the objectification of the subaltern through the imposition of the criminal law.

At the time that Scholtz was writing *A Place Called Vatmaar*, attention in South Africa had already turned to emerging narratives that exposed corrupt policing under apartheid. In *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa* Brewer examines the

history of the South African Police from its formation. He concludes that the allegations levelled against the SAP in 1994 befitted the essentially colonial style of policing in modern South Africa. This includes incompetence in investigating ordinary crime, collusion with the Afrikaner and black right wing, political partisanship, and police involvement in death squads and political assassinations, among others (332). Noting the irony in the formation date of the SAP — 1 April 1913, ‘an inauspicious date [. . . that introduced] eight decades of bad luck for the majority of the population’ — Brewer identifies the key problem for the SAP as its failure to transcend ‘its origins as a colonial force’ (332).

Brewer goes on to argue that whereas colonial forces elsewhere continued to modernise, the SAP (until 1994) was always structured by the colonial-like role it continued to discharge (332). The SAP’s primary task from 1913 had been to police race relations and contain and control black South Africans, keeping them in their place as a ‘subject population’ (333). From the beginning the police were ‘experienced by the subject population as the main mediation of social control’ (335). Police ‘enforced the administrative regulations which controlled their movements, limited their rights and opportunities, monitored and controlled their contact with Whites, and allowed state penetration of their ordinary lives’, symbolising ‘a system of internal colonialism which accorded them second-class citizenship’ (335). Even the extensive recruitment of black South African police was a reflection of ‘the colonial policy of getting the colonized to share in the administration of their oppression’ (333). As with colonial forces elsewhere, the SAP was ‘centralized and under political control, acted as a servant of the state in suppressing part of the populace, [. . . and] its methods relied on brute force as the

first resort' (333). However, as Brewer again points out, the 'oddity' of South Africa's policies of internal colonialism was that, unlike elsewhere, this colonial style should survive into the last decade of the twentieth century (333). This 'oddity' is key for Scholtz's narrative in which he depicts its foundations.

In contrast to the debased treatment of Tant Vonnie by the police, who deprive her of a voice and presume her guilty, she is treated sympathetically by the magistrate when she attends court. Showing narrative as a potent form of political intervention, as Chakrabarty would later argue elsewhere, Scholtz provides readers with an example of a context in which modernity and the law might prove an instrument of social justice for all. The magistrate listens attentively to Tant Vonnie, grants her a voice, and engages in dialogue with her. Thus, using the framework of the law, Scholtz suggests the ameliorating power of narrative dialogue and an alternative experience of colonialism. In this way, a year before the commencement of the TRC hearings, and more than a year after the recommendation for the hearings had been formally adopted, Scholtz can be seen to direct toward the importance of narrative or storytelling in addressing breaches of colonial-based criminal laws.

A Duty of Memory

Whereas *Deafening Silence* relates the narrative of an individual black police officer, committed to his duties and to justice, who is murdered by the white Afrikaner police establishment, *A Duty of Memory* provides an account of an individual police officer struggling against being stigmatised as part of that same establishment. Published in the year following the commencement of the TRC, when

stories of the horrific actions of the Security Branch police under apartheid were being revealed, *A Duty of Memory* is underpinned by a sense of Afrikaner guilt and complicity. Described by André Viola as a work ‘staging forty years of unabated sound and fury on Afrikaner farmers up to the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’ (95), *A Duty of Memory* is the fictional story of two South African families — the white Afrikaner family of Andries Hertenberg and the black African family of Lettie Mufana. Both live on Leeufontein, the family farm of the Hertenbergs, near Middleburg in the Eastern Transvaal. The novel centres on the lives of Eben and Jo, the children of Andries and his English wife Caroline. Eben’s self-conscious reflection on the legacies of apartheid — ‘I really want to know. What’s it all for?’ (21) — echoes throughout as Sergeant Franz Muller, a local police officer, struggles to come to terms with his own complicity in the horrors of apartheid.

In the narrative frame of this story about recovering and obscuring memory, Botha captures the concern about the creation of ‘cultural and social amnesia’ (59) to which de Kok refers. Eben is dead and so his first-person narrative is derived from a tape recording. As an archive or artefact of his memory, the tape becomes the object over which his family and the Security Branch police fight. Attempts by Security Branch officers to destroy Eben’s account of their activities are contrasted with Sergeant Muller’s words that ‘the tape’s an historical record . . . [we] have a duty to preserve [it] . . . we all have . . . a duty of memory’ (210). Jo and Captain Hattingh of the Security Branch are ultimately killed in a stand-off over the tape which is recovered and played to ‘the commission’. In the fight over the tape and the conflicting positions of the police Botha makes it clear that, for South Africa, the

struggle over memory is not straightforward. It is not only about recovering and creating memory but, for some, particularly some of the Security Branch police officers, it is about denying or obliterating memory.

Botha uses the voices of the dead protagonist and victims of apartheid to reveal the impact of the atrocities of apartheid and the role of the police in those atrocities. Through Eeben's narrative, copies of letters and telegrams from Caroline to her parents in England, notes that have been stored away and, at times, forgotten, and letters from Mafimane Mufana to his mother Lettie, the past provides the context for the present as these disparate pieces reveal an inconclusive whole. In 'gluing together' these fragments Botha enables readers to see and feel what de Kok refers to as 'the fragmented, mutilating shards'. The resultant non-linear narrative visually portrays the difficulty of reconstructing memory, while the brokenness of the narrative echoes the TRC's gathering of fragments. The fragments become the source on which efforts to recover memories are based.

Botha uses the farm as a pervasive presence in this narrative to counter-discursively bring to light ways in which the traditional plaasroman underpinned and reinforced an Afrikaner consciousness that opened the way for and maintained apartheid. When Eeben takes over responsibility of Leeufontein on Andries' death and transforms the farm to a police Security Branch site of torture to uphold the Afrikaner ideal, the link between the farmer and the idea of landownership is exposed as a source of shame and horror rather than glory. Through the incursion of the Security Branch activity into the traditional role of the farmer Botha critiques the ideological basis of Afrikaner supremacy and undermines its power.

Occupying a central place in the history of Afrikaans prose, the plaasroman was closely associated with ‘the assertion and exploration of Afrikaner culture and the inscription of essentialist notions about the relations between land and identity, self and other’ (Warnes ‘Everyone is Guilty’ 120). The plaasroman reached its strength between 1920 and 1940 during ‘the Afrikaner’s painful transition from farmer to townsman’ (Coetzee *White Writing* 63). It emerged from a concern for the survival of the Afrikaner and a belief that Afrikaners would lose their independence and identity if they lost their base in landownership (Coetzee *White Writing* 110). Providing a transcendental justification for land ownership (106) the prototypical plaasroman moves steadily toward revealing the farm as a source of meaning (88). The ideal farmer of the plaasroman is wedded to the soil but not conscious of this. At the point at which the farm appears to the farmer in the glory of its full meaning, the farmer fully knows himself (88). The farmer evolves to a position of lineal consciousness, attaining transcendence in accepting that ‘the unit of life is the lineage, not the individual’ (109) and the meaning of the farm is clarified. With lineal consciousness comes liberation for the farmer from the sense of being doomed to die. As long as the lineage lasts the self may be thought to last (109).

A Duty of Memory traces Eben’s sense of the link between lineage and land to expose the perversity of its underpinning of Afrikaner supremacy. Through Eben’s stream of consciousness his life growing up on an isolated farm in an Afrikaner community is depicted as a ‘*hele gemors*’ (8), a big mess. But this story is not confined to his family. As he depicts the Afrikaner wedded to the farm Botha portrays a group who are so isolated in asserting their supremacy that they have become damaged and dysfunctional. In oppressing others for their own gain they

have isolated themselves to the point of being fearful, even of themselves. The past ‘scares the hell out of us’ (45), says Eeben. ‘[I]t won’t be long before the secret comes out in the open. Before the truth is spoken aloud. The truth? That it’s been a waste of time, all these years. *Alles verniet*, as we say in Afrikaans. All is for nothing’ (95).

Botha uses Eeben’s return to the farm to portray those instances in which Afrikaners colluded with the police. Drawing on images that were made public through the TRC he portrays the farm as a site of torture, subverting the premise of the plaasroman that the natural right to the land must be re-established in each generation by good stewardship. He and his ‘pals’ set out to save Leeufontein from ruin by establishing a company purported to run ‘bushveld holidays’. The company is actually a front for terrorist and torture activities undertaken by military intelligence and the police on behalf of the government. Later, overwhelmed when one of his ‘pals’ shoots two innocent local police officers who had interrupted Eeben and his ‘pals’ kidnapping a man they thought was an ANC activist (but is an undercover police officer investigating a drug ring), he recognises the guilt of all Afrikaners — we have become ‘[n]ot upholders of the law, but criminals. Terrorists’ (216). Through him the disjuncture between the romance implicit in the plaasroman myth of the return to the earth and the reality of the apartheid government’s use of the farm becomes clearly evident. Gobodo-Madikizela describes such use in *Narrating our Healing* in which she recounts the death of Nokuthul Simelane.²² Before her death Simelane was abducted by police and kept prisoner and tortured on a farm. Making the point that such cases were not isolated, Gobodo-Madikizela explores the ‘stark demonstration of the normalisation of violence sponsored by the

apartheid state' (45). The farm household and everyday life appeared normal but in the backyard 'an unspeakable gross human rights abuse was taking place' (45).

In Botha's counter-discursive *plaasroman* the Security Branch officers replace the farmer as anti-heroic stewards of the land, and the ideal of the return to the earth becomes perverted by the actual interring of murdered bodies. At the time the National Government came to power in 1948 the identity of the Afrikaner as portrayed through the *plaasroman* was based on a culture inscribed with notions of Afrikaner superiority underpinned by links between the land and identity being maintained by the farmer. Although Eben attains a state of lineal consciousness after his return to the farm following Andries' death, he is unable to cope with the realisation of his own complicity in the destruction of his country. Botha's rendering reveals the horror of the progress of apartheid through which the Security Branch officers replaced the farmer and became the medium through which Afrikaner superiority was asserted.

To explore notions of truth, apology and Afrikaner guilt Botha contrasts the role and activities of the Security Branch police with those of Sergeant Muller. His figure reminds readers of the distinction that Botha needs to make between the Security Branch police and those other officers who were horrified by Security Branch actions. Botha questions what it might mean for the future of the country to have those who served as police officers under apartheid continue in that role. In a vignette played out on the veranda of the farmhouse and mimicking the TRC hearings, Sergeant Muller apologises for the way in which Jo and Eben were victimised as children by rumours about their father. Sergeant Muller comes to

apologise for having done nothing. Echoing the reactions of many South Africans to the confessions of police officers during the TRC hearings, Jo is not persuaded. She stigmatises all police. For her the police are ‘blind guardians of the volk [. . .] pimps [. . .] *Heroes of Sharpeville*’ (99). As a victim of Afrikanerdom she finds his apology for ‘*We Afrikaners*’ — for something ‘he hadn’t actually done but nevertheless felt responsible for’ (127) — incomprehensible.

However, using Sergeant Muller as a mouthpiece, Botha exposes as flawed common conceptions of the police. Depicting them as a symbol of Afrikaner control becomes the means of destabilising the image of that control. Sergeant Muller reassures readers of the integrity of the local uniformed police officer, and of the uniform itself — ‘[E]veryone knows a uniform takes away your individuality [. . .] When they attack it’s the uniform and what it stands for; nothing personal’ (103). ‘We’re not all members of the AWB. Or the Far Right’ (101). Alluding to the fact that the majority of white police supported right-wing political parties or paramilitary formations (Cawthra *Policing South Africa* 77), through Sergeant Muller Botha reminds readers that this was not the case for all, and that a distinction needs to be drawn between upright officers and the Security Branch police whose actions threaten to taint all police. Sergeant Muller understands this. The real question is how to ensure that other South Africans understand.

In this regard, Botha evinces a general confidence in the TRC. Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert suggests that during the TRC the few perpetrators who confessed had no other choice because of the damning evidence that emerged from the de Kock hearings. Even then, there was a general impression that they could not understand

why they had to come forward (65). But Botha reminds readers that for many police, including those not appearing, the TRC provided an opportunity for their integrity and the integrity of their role to be recognised and restored. The attorney for five former Vlakplaas members (Brigadier Jack Cronje, Colonel Venter, Captain Jacques Hechter, Captain Menz and Warrant Officer Paul van Vuuren) who applied for amnesty for more than forty murders read a statement on their behalf at the opening of their amnesty hearings:

As members of the security forces during the time of the struggle we have decided to come forward in the spirit of this new country, in a spirit of trust in the new government and the Truth Commission in particular, and with a purpose of cleansing our souls from the darkness of the past and to let the truth be spoken about our deeds [. . .] We were made to believe that our participation in the security forces was justified to uphold apartheid [. . .] We were made to believe that we were superior [. . .] We have come to realise that these beliefs were wrong, morally and in reality and we do not hold these beliefs anymore [. . .] We call upon our superiors and the previous government not to deny responsibility but to stand by the people and to admit responsibility for what was done by us in our endeavours to keep them in power. (TRC 21 October 1996 5)

Epitomising the community-oriented police officer of South Africa's democratic policing model, Sergeant Muller wants Eeben's tape to be played to the commission so that they can hear the truth about Leeufontein tours. 'The commission has a duty [. . .] to bring all these hidden crimes out into the open, so those who've suffered can begin the healing process, which will bring us all back together as one nation', he says (199) 'It's about what's best for all of us — the whole country. By picking out

all the rotten apples the commission will help to give people back their faith in the police [. . .] I just want people to feel confident about us; to show us respect [. . .] The police must be part of the people, not separate. Not masters or servants, but partners' (197).

A Duty of Memory concludes with two acts of memorialising that echo the TRC's view of the importance of making records available for generations to come. Through both acts survivor-initiated memorials are established and Botha captures an aspect of the preservation of memory that has since received closer attention. In 'Memory Work and Memorialisation in the New South Africa' Kay Schaffer discusses the significance of survivor-initiated memorial projects as symbols of the end of apartheid. Whereas state-initiated projects seek closure on the past, survivor-initiated projects 'disrupt the apparent seamlessness of official memory formations by placing the institutionalised narratives under scrutiny' (Schaffer 'Memory Work' 367). Heidi Grunebaum-Ralph and Ereshnee Naidu argue similarly. Grunebaum-Ralph suggests that official memory narratives are detached and 'reduce life stories and testimonies to a pre-inscribed archive' (208). She is critical of relying on the TRC testimonies which have been 'made to "fit" a particular narrative of a "new" South African history' (201). Naidu too cautions that 'state legacy projects, in [their] lack of attempting to understand and explain the past or empower people at a community level through representational memorialisation processes [pose] a threat to national reconciliation' (n.p.).

Botha's narrative thus captures a sense of the importance of survivor-initiated memorials identified in these later studies. (The TRC favoured the use of the word

‘survivor’ over the word ‘victim’. It considered ‘the word “survivor” has a positive connotation, implying an ability to overcome adversity and even to be strengthened by it’, and was concerned that because ‘[v]ictims are acted upon rather than acting, suffering rather than surviving’ the word ‘victim’ implied ‘a negativity or passivity’ [TRC 1.59]). The two acts of memorialising that Botha depicts are initiated by ‘the people’ rather than being ‘political’, to recall Naidu. Even Sergeant Muller contributes toward saving Leeufontein when he invests in Jomane Enterprises, the conglomeration named in memory of Jo and Mafimane and recognising their unity in death. In doing so, not only is the hope represented by their unity celebrated, but memories of the horrific acts carried out by the police are also preserved. Rather than the link to the lineage being lost through Eeben’s death, Leeufontein is retained as a location that is central to the new Afrikaner identity. Through its purchase the site of state-sponsored terrorist activities becomes a site of memory, but now symbolising unity and reconciliation rather than horror.

The works considered in this chapter were published between 1991 and 1997, at a time when narratives of the police were being made public, initially through works such as Pauw’s, and subsequently the TRC hearings. Collectively, they depict a literary transition in South African writing, marked by the increasing freedom of writers to openly correct the historical record of policing in South Africa. For each of these writers, who are of Afrikaner background, it was imperative to break through the silences imposed by the Afrikaner government’s apartheid policies. Through their portrayals of the figure of the police officer they expose the myths behind Afrikaner notions of supremacy that were fostered under the Nationalist regime, destabilising the national memory and prompting new memories to emerge. Miles’ and Scholtz’s

images of the police were published before the TRC hearings while Botha's narrative was published during the hearings. They all contribute to destabilising a disturbing national narrative, prompting the question of how the nation should respond to TRC revelations.

Chapter 4 — Truth, Reconciliation and the Security Branch

How to respond to the endless horrific confessions of apartheid's perpetrators? Such was the question that troubled many South Africans throughout and following the TRC. Few confessions proved more disturbing and enraging than those of the SAP's death squad operatives. Was it possible to forgive and reconcile with apartheid's assassins? But the TRC was not about forgiveness; it was about truth, unity and reconciliation: 'National unity and reconciliation could be achieved only [. . .] if the truth about past violations became publicly known' (TRC 1.53). The fact that the 'discourse of "forgiveness" embroidered much of the Commission's work' (Graeme Simpson 239) is largely attributed to the 'charismatic leadership of Archbishop Tutu', the Chairperson of the TRC, who 'kept in motion' the 'religious rhetoric of Christianity and *ubuntu*, the therapeutics of healing and the conventions of the human rights regime' (Schaffer 'Memory Work' 363). Amnesty was offered to encourage perpetrators to testify as a means of uncovering the truth, not as forgiveness.

But the question of whether perpetrators should have been able to confess their actions in consideration of amnesty was a contentious one. Amnesty for perpetrators had been a precondition for the success of the negotiated settlement from the outset (Graeme Simpson 221). But some victims would settle for no less than retributive justice, insisting the perpetrators be punished. For them there was no reconciling with the violators who appeared before the TRC and in the wording of one of the Commissioners 'peppered the hearings with lies, denials and obfuscations of the truth' (Ntsebeza 103). However, section 251 of the interim Constitution had outlined the necessity to transcend the divisions of the past on the basis of 'a need for

understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* [— ‘A person is a person through other people.’ (Graeme Simpson 248) —] but not for victimisation’ (Constitution of the Republic).²³ Graeme Simpson points to the wider implications of the TRC’s mandate in his brief evaluation: ‘[m]ore than anything else, reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa resides in the redress of past inequities, in social and economic justice, which goes far beyond justice in its more narrow legal or punitive forms’ (225).

Just as there was a disparity of views on whether the TRC was an appropriate forum to deal with the crimes of apartheid, so there were conflicting views on how perpetrators’ narratives should be considered. In their insightful study of apartheid’s protagonists Foster, Haupt and de Beer conclude:

If the dominant media stereotype portrays perpetrators as monsters, as ‘Prime Evil’, then the dominant academic image is the opposite. It paints them as ordinary people [. . .] under rather extraordinary circumstances. [. . . But t]here is a competing view: the perpetrator as a willing, even eager, executioner driven by strong negative emotions against the ‘other’. The scholarly world present us with antagonistic perspectives. (321)

In this chapter I discuss three narratives that capture the disparity in how perpetrator narratives have been viewed. Against forthright depictions that emerged in the media and through the TRC of Eugene de Kock as the symbol of all that was evil under apartheid, Jeremy Gordin, a journalist, and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a black female psychologist, and TRC Amnesty Committee Commissioner, defied public sentiment to expose what they considered a narrow perspective of

responsibility for the horrors of apartheid. Both were initially cautious about what they would find on meeting de Kock and subsequently used confessional discourse to relate his account of his actions as a death squad commander. It is unsurprising that *A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State* — de Kock's account as related to Gordin — portrays him favourably and as a scapegoat. However, it does seem surprising that in *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid* Gobodo-Madikizela, a black woman whose life had been marginalised by apartheid and whose family had suffered directly at the hands of the police, should dispute prevailing media portrayals of him. She was struck by acts of forgiveness toward him and explores ideas of forgiveness and the restoration of humanity to the one forgiving and the one being forgiven. In this regard her work captures the focus on forgiveness that Tutu brought to the TRC — the person she considered most suited to the role of chairperson; she describes him as 'an extraordinary man' (*Human Being Died* 80).

The third account being discussed in this chapter is extracted from Gillian Slovo's presence during the testimony of the police officers who claimed and were granted amnesty for murdering her mother. She met with ex-police officer Craig Williamson to try to understand why her mother had been killed. But she was not moved in her views regarding the culpability of police. For her, the police confessions were full of lies, self-justifications and pretence of confession and apology. She questioned whether those confessing would even know the truth. *Red Dust* is her fictional recreation of a TRC amnesty hearing, and touches on the confessions of police officers who murdered under apartheid. Unlike the works of Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela, it is a novel not a confessional account, but it does

offer an insight into how the amnesty hearings might be interpreted. Of particular interest is Slovo's different relation to the crimes committed by the Security Branch and her different choice of genre, which reflects how she related to the subject. Whereas Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela question predominating depictions of de Kock, Slovo affirms her disdain for the Security Branch officers whom she came to see as no more than 'murderers [. . . who] were motivated by a form of personal hatred' ('Making History' 6).

For Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela who experienced a dialogic relationship with de Kock, forgiveness became a possibility. Neither set out to confess but Gobodo-Madikizela, through her dialogic relationship with de Kock, came to a sense of her own brutality during apartheid. For Slovo, whose mother was murdered, forgiveness was not possible. It is interesting that she distances herself, then, through fiction.

A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State

A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State (1998; referred to hereafter as *A Long Night's Damage*) is Eugene de Kock's own account of his activities as a police officer in the SAP. Related to Jeremy Gordin while he was serving his prison sentence — with the Foreword, Interlude and Afterword presenting Gordin's views — de Kock's story was published after he had applied for amnesty but before the first findings of his amnesty applications were handed down in 1999. Even though de Kock was granted amnesty on a number of his applications, amnesty was refused for his part in the planning of the Motherwell bombings.²⁴ The

determinations on his remaining amnesty applications were not handed down until May 2001. Those applications were refused.²⁵ Since *A Long Night's Damage* was published while the Amnesty Committee was hearing evidence from de Kock and others, there can be little doubt it was intended to influence the context of de Kock's applications, public opinion and perhaps the Amnesty Committee itself.

That de Kock was able to have his story published is, of itself, significant in what it signals regarding South Africa's transition from apartheid. The death penalty was abolished in 1995. De Kock's incarceration in October 1996 following his criminal trial meant that he was able to tell his story. In addition changes in censorship laws meant the book was not banned despite its references to national security and terrorism. A number of accounts of de Kock's story had been made public before this book was published, including media reports of his criminal trial and appearances before the TRC, Jacques Pauw's book, *Into the Heart of Darkness*, and Pauw's television documentary, *Prime Evil*. None were sympathetic to de Kock. Rather, they demonised him: they directly associated him with evil, symbolising him as the evil of apartheid. *A Long Night's Damage* is his response.

For some South Africans the idea of accepting a confession from the man they had come to know as 'Prime Evil' was unpalatable. It was with 'a heavy heart' that the ANC accepted the decision to grant de Kock amnesty for the bombing of its London offices ('ANC Accepts Decision' 3), and Andries Maponya, brother of Japie Maponya who was interrogated and tortured by de Kock before he was shot, said they would oppose the amnesty applications and found it 'very unfortunate that after his [brother's] death, De Kock and his cohorts should label [his] father an informer'

(Molwedi 4). At the exhumation of the remains of Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) operative Xolile ‘Valdez’ Sam, who was killed in November 1988 by a unit led by de Kock, the senior commander and commissioner of MK, Deacon Mathe, said ‘there’s no reason for De Kock to come out. He must be kept there (jail)’ (Ngomane 6). Some did not accept that de Kock felt shame and sorrow when he said during his trial, ‘I can’t tell you how dirty I feel. I sympathise with my victims as if they were my own children’ (Pauw *Heart of Darkness* 19). Pauw was sceptical. Since de Kock had already been incarcerated for more than two years ‘maybe the loneliness of being locked away in a solitary cell [. . .] compelled him to come to terms with his evil deeds and the futility of his dirty war’ (*Heart of Darkness* 19).

In his criticism of *A Long Night’s Damage*, Michiel Heyns captures the public sentiment that de Kock may have felt he still had to overcome. He sees the book as ‘simply an account of one ghastly murder after another with no reflection on its human significance’ (47). For him, the point of de Kock’s story is his betrayal by his superiors. Heyns does acknowledge that de Kock was ‘used by his superiors and then left to take the rap’ (47) but does not concede that de Kock may have regretted his deeds later. He claims that ultimately de Kock ‘does not understand what made him into a monster; cannot even know that he is a monster’ (47) and argues that confession seems pointless ‘without some recognition, some development’ (47). The “‘facts” pure and simple explain nothing’ (47). It is not de Kock’s list of horrific actions that most disturbs Heyns but de Kock’s patent lack of self-perception.

Heyns’ comments reflect the more widespread general scepticism about perpetrator confessions to the TRC. Graeme Simpson echoes this feeling in his

suggestion that it is likely the flood of applications for amnesty received towards the end of 1996 had more to do with ‘the successful prosecution of Eugene de Kock’ (228) than the looming initial cut-off date of 15 December. Although the prospect of obtaining amnesty provided ‘an attractive motive’ for many (VanZanten Gallagher *Truth and Reconciliation* 128), de Kock had provided ‘extensive information’ about the involvement of other ‘senior state operatives’ (Graeme Simpson 228). It appeared the threat of prosecution contributed, even if only in part, toward amnesty applicants coming forward (228). For some applicants the fear that the TRC would otherwise hear details of their actions as torturers and murderers was compelling.

But VanZanten Gallagher suggests that although the often graphic detail of the perpetrators’ accounts might have made it more difficult for the public to accept the amnesty provisions, the hard facts that were related did contribute toward ‘a new historical narrative’ (127). Details that were previously absent from the historical record began to emerge through the TRC and revelations such as de Kock’s narrative. Writing in 1998, the year in which *A Long Night’s Damage* was published, Ndebele noted that the passage of time had enabled ‘the veil of secrecy and state-induced blindness’ to be lifted, and that which could no longer be denied had emerged (‘Memory’ 20). This encouraged an ‘emergence of understanding’ and search for meanings that may trigger more narratives (20). *A Long Night’s Damage* — de Kock’s attempt to correct the meaning emerging about his actions — can be seen to be such a narrative. Although Heyns and Pauw dismissed de Kock’s confession as inadequate, along with VanZanten Gallagher they did acknowledge that his confession revealed facts which might not otherwise have been made known.

A Long Night's Damage is based on personal interviews between de Kock and Gordin which began in September 1996. Structured to represent de Kock relating his own story in his own voice, it positions him as the confessing subject directly addressing the reading confessor, so enabling his words to exploit the dialogic properties of the confessional account in order to engage the reader. His account begins: 'My name is Eugene Alexander de Kock [. . .] I have spent almost all of my adult life as a policeman and more specifically as an expert in counter-insurgency' (43). De Kock asserts his position as the 'I' of his story and identifies his own actions and motivations in order to build an image of himself as having been used by those at the 'highest levels' (270). In publishing his own confession de Kock creates the opportunity for it to come up against other dialogic accounts such *Into the Heart of Darkness* in which Pauw says that, if not granted amnesty, de Kock would 'remain the symbol of evil perpetrated during the apartheid years' (318). Thus, de Kock responds to the objectification of him and lays claim to what he sees as his rightful position in the community. His written confession —compiled after about six and a half hours of one-on-one interviews with Gordin (294) in which he had to 'answer difficult questions and to read things about himself that he didn't like' (5) — becomes material to the 'urgent social contests' such as 'the legislation of personal conduct, the constitution of orthodoxy, [and] the legitimization of violence' to which Said refers when he reminds us that human identity is not natural and stable but 'constructed, and occasionally even invented outright' (332).

Positioning the reader as participant in his confession is fundamental to de Kock being able to engage the reader, challenge preconceived assumptions about him, and enable the reader to see beyond the confronting details of his account in

order to be persuaded by his story. Bakhtin's work is again useful for considering the construction of de Kock's narrative as a way of bringing the reader into his confession:

All rhetorical forms, monologic in their compositional structure, are oriented toward the listener and his answer. [. . .] The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. (*Dialogic Imagination* 280)

In directly addressing the reading confessor, de Kock's intent is for the reader to see that he had not acted alone but had responded to orders from above, has, therefore, the 'right to be regarded as innocent' (270), and is not inherently evil. His moral position is that he changed because of the conflict in which he was involved when protecting the South African nation. He identifies the passing of legislation in 1986 that allowed for detention without trial as significant — it 'led to a kind of subculture among the security police [. . . ; w]e began to believe we were supermen who could behave ruthlessly in the name of patriotism and state security' (97).²⁶ Turning to the confessional discourse he seeks to reshape, at least in part, the construction of him as 'other'.

In orienting the reader toward a particular reading of de Kock's word neither he nor Gordin deny the allegations levelled against him — there was clearly no point in denying actions for which he had already been found guilty in the criminal court. 'Yes, I am guilty', he says (270). Rather, he draws attention to the guilt of superiors and government ministers to show that his actions were driven by those at 'the highest levels' (270). He names individuals such as Brigadier Willem Schoon who,

he says, directed him to submit false claims and blow up Cosatu House, the Johannesburg headquarters of the trade union federation (143). He names Minister of Police, Adriaan Vlok, saying Vlok falsely accused ANC activist Shirley Gunn of blowing up Khotso House, the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches, located in Johannesburg (145). In addition to the growing body of facts about what happened, de Kock shows, as emerged in the TRC, that ‘atrocities committed by individual perpetrators were part of a much larger, systematic evil that pervaded South African society’ (VanZanten Gallagher *Truth and Reconciliation* 130). At the heart of his revelations is his bitterness that in his evidence to the TRC de Klerk did not ‘own up to his responsibility and support the footsoldiers who supported him [. . . but pretended] he didn’t know about anything and that it was the madness of people like Eugene de Kock that created it’ (282).

De Kock portrays himself as a scapegoat — justice had apparently ‘been sufficiently served by turning me, a mere colonel, into a lone demon to explain all the evil of the old regime’ (250) — and aligns his guilt to apartheid ideology and so those governing the country. His intention is to undermine the embodiment of him as the evil of apartheid, and displace that title to President de Klerk and those in the highest levels of government. He is forthright about the influence on him of the Total Strategy and the political climate:

the government under which I served, as well as my commanding officers, became more and more proficient at lying [. . .] Let me repeat that I was among those on whom the Total Onslaught ideology had a strong impact. I felt I had a duty to protect my country against demonic forces. (100)

He was not alone in believing it inexcusable that President de Klerk failed to declare that those ‘at the top levels condoned what was done on [their] behalf by the security forces [. . . and] instructed that it should be implemented. Or — if [they] did not actually give instructions — [they] turned a blind eye’ (277). Gordin labels de Klerk’s submission to the TRC as ‘an exercise in evasion and obfuscation’ (292) and Slovo notes, ‘it was the henchmen rather than the politicians [. . .] who ended up jumping through the TRC amnesty hoops [. . .] Most of the politicians of old, up to and including their leader, F.W. de Klerk, did not apply for amnesty’ (‘Making History’ 4). De Kock asserts that the police were used as a tool of the apartheid state and closes with a chapter entitled ‘Did de Klerk know?’ in which he appeals to South Africans to see that de Klerk had misled the police and, indeed had misled all South Africans.

To cast doubt over readings of him as evil, de Kock demonstrates how versions of the same events differ by including quotations from the press reports of the testimonies of death squad operatives who appeared against him in his criminal trial in 1995 (pages 204 to 233). In his reminder of how the media had reported the events that he now relates he invites readers to draw conclusions about why the accounts vary and so determine for themselves where the essential truth lies. In one instance, he gives his account of the execution of five suspected bank robbers near Nelspruit on 26 March 1992. This is followed, on pages 220 to 233, by quoted reports from *The Saturday Star*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Star* and *Business Day* newspapers. Inconsistencies between de Kock’s account and that of Chris Geldenhuys, a fellow Vlakplaas operative who was called by the State to testify against de Kock, are apparent. Whereas de Kock is adamant, ‘I was not included in

any of the plans made at the scene and I did not have any input' (218), the *Saturday Star* of 25 February 1995 reports: 'In the course of the ambush, Geldenhuys said, De Kock clearly took charge of operations and fired shots at the Kombi himself' (221). The subliminal messaging in *The Sunday Times*' reporting of Geldenhuys' evidence is also evident, as in the concluding sentence in which they describe de Kock: 'His characteristic dark-rimmed spectacles have made way for less intimidating metal frames, but the lenses, thick as bottle bottoms, continue to shield the eyes of the man known in police circles as Prime Evil' (225). In his account, de Kock seeks a renewed interpretation of the same events.

In its tone and form de Kock's confession presumes a just response from what Bakhtin has called elsewhere a superaddressee. Opening his final chapter with, 'I have named all those who gave me orders and I have described what I did' (277), de Kock insists that he has admitted his guilt. Bakhtin argues that in any confession the confessant presupposes the existence of both the addressee, whose responsive understanding the confessant seeks, and the superaddressee. This superaddressee is constructed as an 'invisibly present third party who stands above all the participants in the dialogue' and is a constitutive aspect of the whole utterance (*Speech Genres* 126). As a prisoner incarcerated by the South African justice system, de Kock writes to appeal to an ideological conception of justice. He is seeking a just response in recognition of having made the public aware of the actions and decision of others, all the way up to President de Klerk. The book is his attempt to '[pull] back the covers on the whole miserable story of [the] dirty war against the alleged enemies of the state' in the same way that he did in his evidence in his criminal trial (274). Probably for him the superaddressee is foremost the Amnesty Committee, hence the book's

publication at a critical time during their deliberations. If not granted amnesty, perhaps it is a future court of the democratic government or a compassionate movement of the people from whom he is ultimately seeking release from his incarceration.

Through the extradiegetic positioning of his own voice Gordin enables the reader to maintain a distance from de Kock while considering whether to engage directly with him. Drawing on his reputation as an established journalist Gordin endorses de Kock's account and affirms his belief that de Kock's story needs to be made known. Re-positioning the image of de Kock to open readers up to sympathetic engagement with him, Gordin acknowledges the sensitivities around such positioning. He too had speculated whether de Kock would be like a non-fiction version of Hannibal Lecter or Hannah Arendt's 'banality of evil' when he first read the evidence from de Kock's trial. On closer reading, and following talks with de Kock's advocate, he looked further. How did the 'timid' de Kock cope with the 'brutal world' of the 'macho, quasi-militaristic fabric of Afrikanerdom' in the 'halcyon days of Verwoed, Vorster and the rest, when master-race fantasies filled the air' (33)? He is not seeking to exonerate de Kock and does not deny his guilt. His argument, along with de Kock's, is that naming those who gave de Kock orders 'is vital for the health and history of South Africa'. Turning to the fiction example of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* he suggests that if the creature, as created by man, is punished for his savagery the creator should also be punished.

Gordin's Interlude is positioned to break the drama of de Kock's accounts of murders, kidnappings, frauds and arms dealings and to return a degree of humanity to

the image of a cold killer that emerges through de Kock's own narrative. Interrupting the reader's stream of thought with a description of de Kock as easy to talk to, with a sense of humour, and 'a surprisingly soft pair of eyes, accentuated by soft hair and complemented by a quite charming and animated manner' (157), Gordin reminds readers that the image emerging from de Kock's unemotional account of his activities at Koevoet and Vlakplaas is an image created by apartheid — what apartheid made of the 'precious lad' from the East Rand (33). Reflecting in the Afterword on his reasons for publishing de Kock's story, Gordin associates apartheid with insanity, describing it as 'a nutty attempt at social engineering that began unravelling almost from the moment it began' (289). Offering an explanation of the psychological effects of the emotional bleakness and loneliness that de Kock suffered at the hands of his Broederbond father, Gordin maintains that de Kock is a product of the system in which he grew up.²⁷

Gordin closes by taking a risky position and expressing his wish that de Kock be granted amnesty. Apart from de Kock's defence counsel in his criminal trial, few others had publicly aligned themselves with de Kock before *A Long Night's Damage* was published. Gordin confronts readers by asking them to engage with de Kock's story and, in looking at de Kock differently, to look at the problem of apartheid differently. Blaming de Kock for the violence of South Africa is 'too simple and too easy' (290).

Red Dust

Slovo published *Red Dust* in 2000 before all Amnesty Committee findings had been handed down, and at a time when many South Africans had been preoccupied with stories of confession for four years. Through an omniscient narrator she explores some of the ambiguities, complexities and contradictions surrounding and in the committee's hearings, taking readers into the minds of those on both sides of the apartheid divide. Bringing together the multiple subject positions of victims, perpetrators, advocates and family members Slovo captures the clash of differing perspectives on the same events as she foregrounds questions by which many were troubled during the hearings, in particular whether or not the police officers who had sought amnesty had told the truth about their activities. She reminds us in her acknowledgements that the location and characters of her story are fictional, but that the South African TRC was a real event. In *Red Dust* Slovo uses fiction to explore that event.

Whereas Pauw and Gordin pursued their interests in the confessions of the police officers whose narratives they relate as investigative journalists, Slovo, whose mother was murdered by SAP death squad operatives, pursued her interest primarily as a secondary victim. Slovo's mother, Ruth First, was assassinated on 17 August 1982 in Maputo, Mozambique by a parcel bomb sent by the South African security forces. Her father, Joe Slovo, a leader of the South African Communist Party, had helped to create the TRC that enabled First's assassins to obtain amnesty and go free (Gillian Slovo 'Making History' 1). For his daughter the TRC was 'a dynamic uncontrollable process' that contained 'those qualities for which it has been rightfully admired — the healing of a new society, the unveiling of varied truths — but also

many disturbing paradoxes and contradictions' (1). She concedes that although her mother's killers did not tell the truth, she 'did discover this truth' (6). Observing their amnesty applications 'increased [her] feelings of hatred' as she came to see that they were merely murderers, 'motivated by a form of personal hatred as all murderers are' rather than by political fervour (6). Accordingly, her fictional narrative, which includes confessions of SAP death squad operatives, serves as an interesting contrast to Pauw's and Gordin's books. Rather than being a narrative *of* confession, then *Red Dust* addresses the duplicitous nature of the so-called truth *in* confession.

Red Dust focuses on the Amnesty Committee hearings in the fictional town of Smitsrivier. Dirk Hendricks, a former police officer and ex-colleague of Pieter Muller, has applied for amnesty for torturing Alex Mpondo in 1985. James Sizela, the local school headmaster is certain that Muller killed his son Steve, and hopes to hear the whereabouts of his son's remains. Although Muller has not applied for amnesty, James' lawyer Ben Hoffman has a strategy to use another amnesty application to flush out Muller. In failing health Ben calls on Sarah Barcant, a self-assured and competent young lawyer and long-time friend for whom he has acted as mentor, who now lives in New York. She will act for Alex Mpondo in opposing his amnesty application, and in the process — it is hoped — the truth about Muller will emerge.

Rather than being an account of a specific hearing, as a fictional narrative *Red Dust* is representative of a multitude of hearings and narratives involving victims and perpetrators. Rita Barnard reminds us that confession was 'in the air' (659) in the mid-1990s, with TRC hearings being broadcast daily. For those unfamiliar with

South Africa's history, only a cursory scratching of the historical surface reveals publicly known facts that align with Slovo's plot and characters. As Annie Gagliano suggests, *Red Dust* is an example of fiction that 'can (for readers) "extend" the sense of apartheid as an *experience or praxis* (in depicting both its practitioners and those upon whose bodies and minds it is practised), making it possible — in different ways — for readers to recollect and re-imagine [. . .] intimate as well as public aspects of the workings of this system' ('South African Novelists' 90). In doing so Slovo's narrative has the potential to help bring about that 'highly conscious, sensitive new person in a new society' which Ndebele argues is an aim of post-protest literature (*Rediscovery of the Ordinary* 71). Yet Slovo herself was not transformed: the novel makes palpable her anger at the amnesty process and at murderers who pretended to confess their shame.

Slovo's perspective on the Security Branch is, arguably, influenced by her mother's account of her experiences when she was detained in 1963. Ruth First documented her experiences in *117 Days: An Account of Confinement and Interrogation under the South African Ninety-Day Detention Law*. First was one of the initial group of detainees on whom the Security Branch began to practise their newly acquired skills of mental torture (First 5). Writing in 1965 she explains that the Security Branch members, despite their bumbling methods that brought ridicule, were sadly underestimated, as they discovered the effects of solitary confinement and psychological torture:

They all talked like little Eichmanns. There was rarely a Security Branch detective who did not say: 'It's the law, we're only doing our job.' This is the danger. Like Eichmann they will do anything in the name of their job. They

will be answerable for nothing. Torture itself becomes no more than the pursuit of their daily routine. (135)

The images that she drew on would continue to resonate. The excuses used by Security Branch police officers in the 1960s to defend their actions were the same as those used by officers of the same branch in their evidence to the TRC in the 1990s.

Prior to publishing *Red Dust* Slovo had made her views of the Security Branch apparent in her autobiographical account, *Every Secret Thing: My Family, My Country* (1997). In this narrative of the lives and deaths of her parents she relates meeting Craig Williamson, the second-in-command of the Security Branch's foreign section. She recounts how she had sought answers through government ministry offices about her mother's assassination. Despite her father having briefly been the Minister for Housing in Mandela's democratic government (before his death in January 1995) the responses she received were nothing more than 'a pile of bureauspeak' (Slovo *Every Secret Thing* 247). The response from the police said, in essence, that the police had 'stopped keeping files on political activists' after February 1990 (248). But there were strong suggestions, including from Dirk Coetzee, that Williamson was implicated in her mother's death (251). When Slovo finally met Williamson he told her, 'Obviously the state was responsible for Ruth's death' (260). Speaking of the parcel bomb, he insisted that he did not know 'whether the device was aimed specifically at [Ruth] or Joe' (260). In Slovo's mind it was inconceivable that he could blame the state and not accept responsibility himself. His claim that the bomb may have been intended for Joe was improbable since the parcel, 'which had Ruth's name on it, was sent to the university where she worked' (260). In his fundamental denial Williamson added lying to the litany of charges for which

Slovo suspected the Security Branch were responsible. He even confirmed that he had provided the media with information that Joe had engineered Ruth's murder because of her 'ultra-left outlook' (264).

In *Red Dust* Slovo makes her disdain for the Security Branch officers apparent in the characterisation of her police figures. We are given our first glimpse of the two former security police officers and perpetrators of torture at the centre of this story when the guards conveying Dirk Hendricks to the amnesty hearing take him to a clandestine meeting with Pieter Muller (25). Suggesting that the influence of the former security police network prevails, Slovo's portrayals of Hendricks and Muller encompass the multiple and competing personalities of the Security Branch police that were paraded before the TRC, and reflect her underlying scepticism about the officers' intentions: the humanity of the family man who sought to protect his family; the officers who argued they were only doing their job and had been sold out by those at the top; and those claiming also to be victims of apartheid. Glimmers of Dirk Coetzee's story are recognisable in Hendricks' story: involvement in the murder of ANC activists; disillusionment at being disregarded by old compatriots; and abandonment by his wife and children. Both Hendricks and Coetzee see themselves as victims. Hendricks, like Coetzee, suffers post-traumatic stress disorder after having witnessed the necklacing of 'some passing stranger who'd been fingered as an informer by an uncontrolled mob' (198). Nevertheless, Hendricks is always manipulating and manoeuvring situations to his advantage as many felt Coetzee had done. While a veneer of humanity is depicted in Muller's commitment to his sick wife and his delicate touch when handling a newly hatched bantam silkie, he is cynical about the TRC, believing it is 'all so bloody hypocritical' (95). He insists that

he will have nothing to do with the ‘Truth Commission circus’ — ‘justice, rainbow-nation style: the new stereotyping where black had become white and white, black’ (94). When Muller does apply for amnesty James sees nothing but lies in his application: ‘Steve had launched himself at the wall in front of Muller, hitting his head so hard that he had never recovered’ (286).

Through the omniscient narrator readers are given access to the thoughts of Hendricks and Muller, but it is far from unambiguous access. The fast-paced narrative with short chapters and gaps in the narrative recalls the fragmentation of testimonies recounted to the TRC. The result is a broken rather than conclusive whole, reminding us that we have only part of the story. Using this ambiguity, and through her portrayal of Hendricks as having two sides — one being his evil death squad operative side that, despite his best efforts, cannot remain concealed — Slovo fundamentally questions whether the Security Branch amnesty applications were genuine or merely self-serving gestures to secure freedom. Her portrayal questions the TRC’s expectation that perpetrators would ‘make full disclosure of their crimes’ to qualify for amnesty, as required by section 20 of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995.

The decision to hold a truth commission gave rise to much debate in South Africa, amidst which there was cautious optimism about what might come from the police. Heribert and Kanya Adam remind us that while such commissions can confirm the factual truth of an atrocity they usually fail to establish a common interpretative truth, by which they mean why something happened and who is responsible for it (44). They direct attention to Michael Ignatieff’s observation:

It is unreasonable to expect those who believed they were putting down a terrorist or insurgent threat to disown the idea simply because a truth commission exposes the threat as having been without foundation. People, especially people in uniform, do not easily or readily surrender the premises upon which their lives are based. (Ignatieff 173)

One of the most confronting encounters in *Red Dust* is Alex's cross-examination of his torturer, Hendricks. Steven Robins, in his discussion on artistic and cultural mediations of the TRC, likens the scene to the actual amnesty hearing of security policeman Captain Jeffrey Benzien (125). Tony Yengeni, who had been tortured by Benzien, cross-examined him about the 'wet bag' method of torture and had Benzien demonstrate to the hearing how he had held him on the ground while applying a wet bag over Yengeni's head to restrict breathing. Footage and descriptions of Yengeni's cross-examination and Benzien's demonstration became symbolic of the amnesty applicant's complete suppression of the 'beast' within.

In Slovo's fictional scene, under cross-examination from Alex, glimpses of the old Hendricks appear — the 'other' who has 'hidden himself' within the visage of the Hendricks who is before the hearing. In the 'flashing of the stranger's grey eyes was a glimmer of the other' (187). Sarah also recognises 'some other being that Alex had conjured up — a dangerous being' (191). What she sees is a stark contrast to her belief when she visited Hendricks that 'against all odds and all knowledge of the wrongs that he had committed [. . .] he 'sounded genuine' (146). Hendricks' role as torturer resurfaces as he causes Alex to face up to his 'betrayal' (192) — the fact that under torture he had 'offered up the information as a gift' to Hendricks and had

‘wanted to please his torturer’ (192). In her fictional portrayal of the dialogic encounter between Hendricks and Alex, Slovo depicts how, in Said’s terms, the power differential between the participants becomes a determining factor in the meaning of an utterance, and influences the realisation of the self. Alex had set out to expose Hendricks as unworthy of amnesty but in the contest between the two he is drawn to confront what he feels is his own treachery, for — under torture — he betrayed a comrade. But, as the novel also shows, it is unlikely that he did so. As I have discussed in chapter two, Said and Bakhtin both expound the transformative nature of identity through such encounters of power, but Said asserts the potential for identity emerging from the tension to be ‘constructed, and occasionally even invented out-right’ (332). For Slovo the evil, or power, of apartheid remains within these apparently contrite and truth-telling operatives. She labels as ‘dubious’ the assumption that ‘murderers and torturers can know the truth’ (‘Making History’ 4).

The ideological position of the TRC through which it sought to set victims free through the truth had its shortcomings for Slovo. Archbishop Tutu explains its intent and ideals:

Our nation sought to rehabilitate and affirm the dignity and humanity of those who were cruelly silenced for so long [. . .]. Now, through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, they would be empowered to tell their stories, allowed to remember and in this public recounting their individuality and inalienable humanity would be acknowledged. (32)

But many real-life victims were removed from Tutu’s concept of the idealised victim. In Slovo’s fiction Alex seeks neither empowerment through the TRC nor to remember. He does not want Hendricks exposed, humiliated, forgiven or given the

chance to say he is sorry. He simply wants to be ‘left in peace’ (31). He does not want to appear before the TRC in the humiliating position of ‘victim’. For him, victimhood is a choice: ‘I am not and will not be, their victim’ (316).

Among the most distasteful features of the hearings for Slovo were ‘the occasions when the victims were encouraged to forgive those who caused them such great harm’ (‘Making History’ 4). She regarded this as ‘a political compromise being turned into a forced embrace of old enemies, in which it is always the victims, who had already given up their right to legal redress, [who] were then asked to make the greatest sacrifice’ (4). In Alex’s insistence that he does not want to be labelled a victim by the TRC Slovo affirms the victim’s entitlement to determine his or her own victim status, so taking a position that Daniel Lehman would later draw from Gobodo-Madikizela’s theory of reconciliation and forgiveness — ‘the victim of the atrocity (or his or her loved ones) is the sole agent who can initiate a process of reconciliation that might lead to some moment of genuine forgiveness’ (57). Slovo offers no absolution for the police in her fictional rendering. Their position remains problematic, denied release from their status as apartheid’s perpetrators. Alex ‘*can* go away, and live healthily and sanely as a dignified participant in his society, conscious as he is of his own weakness and “ineffaceable” vulnerability to his former torturer’ (Gagiano ‘South African Novelists’ 98). But Slovo does not see him as released, because the question of his own weakness emerged, disturbingly. He suffered again, while Hendricks did not.

Also of key interest for Slovo was the nexus between the juridical concept on which the TRC was based — restorative justice — and the standard concept of

criminal law — retributive justice. It gave rise to what she refers to as the ‘paradoxical role of the TRC’: it was set up to ‘expose the truth about past illegalities without throwing the weight of the law against them, and to offer compensation without revenge’ (‘Making History’ 2). She uses as her central character a figure who, despite having been born and grown up in Smitsrivier, comes to the TRC with an outsider’s perspective, to explore the difficulties in understanding this uniquely South African blend of justice. In his reflection on the TRC Tutu describes this restorative justice as ‘characteristic of traditional African jurisprudence’ and in which ‘the central concern is not retribution or punishment but, in the spirit of *ubuntu*, the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships’ (51). However, this approach, even though it was ‘for a limited and definite period and purpose’ (Tutu 51) and intended to encourage accountability of those applying for amnesty, is troubling for Slovo’s central character. Even with her South African background and the legal expertise that she eminently employs in New York, she struggles to understand that the TRC is not about justice. ‘[H]ardened’, with the ‘soul of a prosecutor’, thinking ‘not of what should be, but only of what is possible’ (119) she questions her ailing mentor Ben’s insistence that ‘the Truth Commission is not about justice [. . .]it was never meant to be’ (318).

Through Ben’s questioning of Sarah about the difference between the value of the ‘law’ and ‘truth’ (38) readers are given an understanding of the importance of the principles of restorative justice for a united future for South Africa — united in the acceptance of difference. Legislative change may have dissolved the polarities of apartheid but the realities of its impact continue. Hendricks and Alex ‘stood on opposite sides of the race divide that had rent South Africa open, [but] were joined

together now' (185). Just as Alex had been a patriot, so too had Hendricks and Muller, 'in their own way' (151). Alex and Hendricks have now become 'intimates' (185) — enemies bound to each other. Ben tells Sarah: 'You cannot pay attention only to one side as if it stands separate from the other' (151), capturing what Kossew describes as 'the interconnectedness of South Africans and their inextricable histories of violence and oppression' (*Women Writing* 154).

Resolution is delayed in the ambiguous ending of *Red Dust*. Neither Hendricks nor Muller is excused for his actions. Alex's withdrawal as a victim opens the way for Hendricks' amnesty to be granted without being contested. But Hendricks is not freed. His amnesty application for his part in the death of Mr Desmond Ngoepe, for which he is serving a fifteen year gaol term, is yet to be heard. There is no miraculous reconciliation between Hendricks and Alex: Hendricks returns to the position of torturer during Alex's cross-examination of him and Alex stifles the rhetoric of reconciliation, denying the TRC its perfect ending. Interestingly, in contrast, the US film of *Red Dust* does depict reconciliation between the two men with Hendricks apologising. In the Hollywood rendering the TRC is portrayed as 'a "magical cure" and miraculous *rite de passage* for a traumatised country about to be reborn as a new democratic nation' (Robins 126). '[S]implistic TRC mythologies of truth-telling, confession, healing and reconciliation' are re-inscribed (Robins 147). But Slovo remains true to her scepticism and denies such an ending.

Whereas Pauw and Gordin had become convinced of the country's need to use confession to move toward forgiveness and amnesty, *Red Dust* projects Slovo's

view that she was not entirely persuaded by the TRC's approach, particularly as it related to amnesty for the Security Branch police. One crucial difference may be that neither Pauw nor Gordin suffered the death of an immediate family member by the police officers they interviewed. As the daughter of a victim of the Security Branch police Slovo felt very differently, although her use of fiction enables her to maintain a distance from the matters about which she writes. Accordingly, her rendering works as a contrast to non-fiction narratives about the TRC, particularly Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's about Eugene de Kock in which she seeks answers as to how those who were enemies under apartheid could co-habit in a new South Africa.

A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid

Gobodo-Madikizela, a clinical psychologist and academic who served on the Human Rights Violations Committee of the TRC, interviewed de Kock while he was a prisoner in 'C-Max' section of Pretoria Central Prison.²⁸ She began the interviews after de Kock's first appearance before the TRC in September 1997 and before the outcome of his amnesty application. She met with him a number of times over six months in a series of meetings that equated to forty-six hours of interviews. The interviews were not undertaken as part of her role as a committee member but because she became curious when, in his first appearance before the TRC, de Kock asked to be able to apologise privately to Mrs Doreen Mgoduka and Mrs Pearl Faku, the widows of the victims of the Motherwell bombing. Gobodo-Madikizela's curiosity was captured not so much by de Kock's appeal to apologise to the women but by the fact that the women forgave him. Even though she had been involved in

the TRC she had never imagined the possibility of forgiveness in the context of the kinds of crimes that de Kock had committed ('Psychological Power of Forgiveness in South Africa'). For her, de Kock's story raised questions about whether he was too evil to be worthy of the forgiveness of Mgoduka and Faku, and whether forgiveness would be wasted on him.

Despite the TRC not having been established on a platform of forgiveness it has become a much considered aspect. Jacques Derrida refers to the TRC to support his argument that forgiveness '*should* remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible', 'forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable' (32). He was interested by Tutu's introduction of 'the vocabulary of repentance and forgiveness' (42) and challenges the idea that 'forgiveness has to be conditioned by such confession', suggesting: 'You can speak of forgiveness in two ways: the traditional one, where one asks for forgiveness in some ritualized way, where one repents; and where forgiveness is given without such' (Sey and Derrida 55). Exploring whether 'the scene of forgiveness is a personal face-to-face, or [. . . calls] for some institutional mediation', Derrida draws on an example of a black woman whose husband had been assassinated by police officers. He quotes her translated testimony to the TRC: 'A commission or a government cannot forgive. Only I, eventually, could do it. (And I am not ready to forgive.)' (43). In Derrida's argument the unforgivable includes 'absolute victimisation which deprives the victim of life, or the right to speak, or that freedom [. . .] which permits the accession to the position of "I forgive"' (58) — the sort of victimisation suffered by Mgoduka and Faku who, now given the opportunity to speak through the TRC, offer de Kock their forgiveness.

A Human Being Died that Night is only one of Gobodo-Madikizela's accounts of her interviews with de Kock. As she developed her findings she produced what she refers to as this 'deeply personal account', as well as a scholarly account that she included in her PhD thesis in which she examined 'the extremes of both sides of the political conflict, in particular the dynamics of politically motivated atrocities committed in the context of a group and state-sponsored atrocities committed by an individual' (*A Human Being Died* 170), a number of journal articles and book chapters. Her decision to focus on de Kock, a perpetrator of apartheid, and present his story in a narrative format distinguishes her work. In their study of protagonists of apartheid Foster, Haupt and de Beer comment that there have been very few studies using storytelling or narrative approaches to those responsible for violence (ix). They point to a great reluctance among human rights scholars to conduct story-telling research on the perpetrators of atrocities (ix). Gobodo-Madikizela, herself, was apprehensive to discover that she 'felt a human bond with the man considered the most odious operative of the apartheid era' (*A Human Being Died* 170). Despite initially avoiding the transcripts of her interviews with de Kock because she was troubled by the memory of these feelings, this discovery acted as an impetus for her to continue her work.

Gobodo-Madikizela describes her TRC experience, in which she was confronted 'with the complexity of the human condition' ('Trauma, Forgiveness' 170), as the most profound moment in her life. But in her early reflection she is critical of the TRC's outcomes. In 1997, six years before *A Human Being Died that Night* was published, she wrote that whereas the TRC was intended as a process that would consolidate the spirit of the 'rainbow nation' and bring 'national healing

through truth', in reality it highlighted schisms in South African society and made the divisions 'more salient in certain cases' ('Healing the Racial Divide' 271). She argued that the TRC could not be seen as a panacea for South Africa.

However, in her gradual embracing of the TRC's call for alternatives to revenge, Gobodo-Madikizela came to see the challenge for South Africa as being how to find the way to 'create the conditions that [would] make old enemies regard one another, if not with neighbourly love and friendship, with respect as fellow human beings' ('Alternatives to Revenge' 56). Through the TRC she had come to the view that in 'a world rife with state-sanctioned violence . . . [it] is important to make the transition from vengeful citizens to caring citizens' if victims are ever to be able to live together again with perpetrators ('Remorse, Forgiveness and Rehumanization' 11). In *A Human Being Died that Night* she asks whether it is possible for other South Africans to come to a position of respecting each other as she and de Kock had done.

A Human Being Died that Night begins as two stories of two people from disparate and opposing worlds and captures the polarity of absolutes familiar to South Africans under apartheid:

He had belonged to a world that created violence, I to a world that was the object of his violence; he belonged to a world where morality meant the same thing as hate, and I to a world that knew the difference. Our worlds were the black and white of lies and truth. (19)

Having grown up under apartheid, as a black woman Gobodo-Madikizela had witnessed the 'dehumanisation' her parents had suffered and, as an adult, had been

excluded from the professional world ('Psychological Power of Forgiveness'). She was one of the oppressed and dispossessed of the black South African majority and so occupied the position of 'other' in a South African society governed by a white government. In contrast, as a white, male Afrikaner police officer under apartheid, de Kock held a position of power. Speaking Afrikaans, he represented her oppressor. As a police officer and death squad commander, he was one of the instruments through which the apartheid regime committed gross violations of human rights.

Opening with 'Scenes from Apartheid' Gobodo-Madikizela shows that her relationship with de Kock exemplified the apartheid separation of South African society. But interwoven with these images are images of South Africa in transition under democracy. At the time of writing she represents the free black majority while the incarcerated de Kock awaits the decision of the Amnesty Committee. As she travels through Pretoria signs of the transition are evident. The city which had been the centre of apartheid is the city of the inauguration of President Mandela (2). The notorious Pretoria Central Prison has been renamed 'Correctional Services: Pretoria' (1). The prison now has a black director and, symbolically, a white guard stands at the entrance (1) where, in the subservient role, previously a black guard had stood. As Gobodo-Madikizela melds scenes from apartheid with signs of the transition she reminds readers that in the 'new South Africa' apartheid lingers.

Gobodo-Madikizela's portrayal of meeting de Kock in prison for the first time characterises him as evil. When the black guards mispronounce his name as 'Dikoko', she explains that, for them, he represents something that is unspeakable (4). He had been the 'faceless and nameless' engineer behind the scenes of

apartheid's murderous operations; now that he has been exposed, 'his name was as unpronounceable — as unspeakable — as his deeds' (4). Seeing de Kock in his orange prison overalls, his feet chained to a metal stool bolted to the floor, she associates the scene with the film *Silence of the Lambs*. Drawing on images that were made public through the media during de Kock's criminal court hearings, through Jacques Pauw's works, and through the TRC hearings she says that he has 'become' evil, is the 'embodiment of evil' (6), and that the name 'Prime Evil' — commonly used by the media — 'marked him as the surest evidence of all that had happened under apartheid' (6). When interviewed by Natasha Mitchell in 2007, she reflected that she had considered him as 'kind of like the very essence of what evil is about in apartheid' ('Psychological Power of Forgiveness').

In his developmental psychopathology research project on another police officer, Kobus Geldenhuys, Derek Hook considers the inclination to objectify perpetrators, viewing them as the lens of popular culture tends to.²⁹ Also known as the 'Norwood serial killer', Geldenhuys was working as a police officer for the SAP in 1992 when he fell into a pattern of raping and killing female victims. Even though the findings of Hook's study are directed toward the psychopathological research field, they are useful for considering the production of stereotypes, and the manner in which fiction informs and constructs fact when working within the realm of psychoanalytic analysis.

Hook found that his students, who generally engaged with the figure of the serial killer 'through the lens of popular culture', 'seized upon the dramatic, the horrifying, the entertaining, and the "narrative functionality" of the case history' (5).

For them, the ‘narrative-appeal came to outweigh the pedagogical values of the case study’ which was ‘being pushed continually further into the realm of fiction’ as the students drew on familiar themes of representation (5). The urge of the students ‘to objectify and “otherise”’, and to sensationalise and pose some appalled and bewildered moral disbelief was far stronger than any urge to understand the phenomena in question (6). Hook sensed that for his research no factuality existed apart from fictionalising forms of objectification, and that the latter had, in a very significant way, come to limit and condition the former (6).

Hook’s research validates Gobodo-Madikizela’s initial response to de Kock. The instinctive reaction to objectify and stereotype de Kock while assigning the evil of the apartheid regime to him is unsurprising for any who had come to know him through media representations. With de Kock labelled as the ‘other’ and securely locked away the new South Africa is seemingly able to separate itself from apartheid. Gobodo-Madikizela explains:

if de Kock is prime evil, then we need not look any further; the matter has been explained. He is evil, and we who interview, write and judge are clear-eyed about who is good and who is evil. (‘Remorse, Forgiveness, and Rehumanization’ 18)

Foster, Haupt and de Beer argue similarly that in the few cases where writers identify perpetrators by name, “‘othering” or justifying discourses are used’ (44). This enables readers to create the necessary distance from the perpetrator, affirm that they are patently not like the perpetrator, and so deny complicity or, in the sense that Sanders means it, a ‘folded-together-ness’. The readers’ ‘innocence remains intact and [their] own aggression (and potential for violence) remains unexamined’ (44).

The constructed nature of Gobodo-Madikizela's opening portrayal of de Kock becomes apparent as she describes how she came to new ways of seeing him, and new interpretations of difference from him. Through de Kock's confession to her, Gobodo-Madikizela came to regard, and be regarded by, her 'old enemy' as a fellow human being. Rather than finding him as 'other', she was surprised, and at first horrified, to find that she could identify and form a human bond with him. Confronted by her feelings she sought to understand her changed perception and how she might bring others to see that 'for all the horrific singularity of his acts, [he] was a desperate soul seeking to affirm to himself that he was still part of the human universe' (47).

It is through confessional discourse that Gobodo-Madikizela comes to see de Kock differently, directly quoting him, relating his narrative and enabling the reader to feel a replication, as far as possible, of the experience she had of receiving his confession. Of course, the relationship between confessor and confessant cannot be passive if it is to evoke the changes in perception Gobodo-Madikizela experienced. Once again, Bakhtin's explanation of this relationship is useful here. He notes that while the confessing self is motivated by a desire to be in communion with others, to receive his or her name from that community, and to exist for that community, the dialogic nature of the confessional act requires a responsive understanding from the confessor receiving the confession (*Speech Genres* 125). Without this, the motivation of the confessant remains unfulfilled. In acknowledgment of her instinctive reaction to objectify de Kock, Gobodo-Madikizela turns to the problem of overcoming barriers to the reception of de Kock's confession and, in the process, she will be addressing her own complicity.

Gobodo-Madikizela uses her credentials as a clinical psychologist with a doctoral fellowship to position her work as a psychological analysis of de Kock. Differentiating her account from the journalistic narratives of Pauw and Gordin, she places readers within the realm of the researcher, enabling readers to rationalise their intrigue in the name of research while coming to appreciate new ways of considering questions of evil, remorse and forgiveness. Describing how she ‘saw a man finally acknowledging the debt he owed to his conscience’ (51) when de Kock explains the moment in which he accepted that a human being had died during one of his operations, Gobodo-Madikizela supplements his account with her clinical observations. Structuring *A Human Being Died that Night* as her own story through which she mediates de Kock’s confession, moderating the impact of his statements through her professional commentary, Gobodo-Madikizela breaks down objectifying representations to show him as a real person seeking ordinary outcomes through his amnesty application — if not actual freedom, then emotional freedom. Demonstrating a ‘folded-together-ness’ in being human, in Sanders’ terms, Gobodo-Madikizela, like Pauw in the cases of Coetzee and van Vuuren, embraces de Kock out of a sense of being occupied by him.

Gobodo-Madikizela testifies to her own complicity in acts of brutality by showing that brutal acts were committed by people on both sides of the apartheid divide. Through their actions ordinary South Africans, including black South Africans were complicit. Gobodo-Madikizela confesses her participation in the killing of another when she relates her story of being in Umtata, the capital of the nominally independent homeland of the Transkei, during an attempted coup to remove the homeland leader, ‘The General’, Bantu Holomisa, from office in 1990.

Recreating the scene of chaos amidst the violence and jubilation she describes her car filled to the brim as she ‘honked and drove in circles in a spirit of celebration’ (11). But jubilation turned to shame when she realised, with the death of Captain Duli, who had been captured by the crowd, that she ‘had been party to the killing of another human being’ (11). She was later reminded of her shame when, as a member of the Human Rights Violations Committee, she received the victim testimony of Duli’s wife. Capturing the ambiguous nature of complicity, she says, ‘the point was not whether I could have done anything to stop it or not, but simply that I had been there, celebrating’ (11). This seemingly innocuous act of celebration exemplified, for her, the types of acts through which the spread of violence was condoned.

Gobodo-Madikizela does not recount the intimate details of the atrocities committed by de Kock; she is concerned with how she can use de Kock’s story to transform relationships. She recounts de Kock’s meeting with Mrs Doreen Mgoduka and Mrs Pearl Faku, a meeting that was striking to her, to explore ideas of remorse and forgiveness. For her the moment in which the remorse shown by de Kock, the embodiment of evil, is returned by the forgiveness of the widows of his victims, is the quintessential moment of the TRC. If reconciliation is contingent on confession and forgiveness, the realisation of this exchange is at the heart of Tutu’s Christianising of the TRC, and ‘the sort of healing and redemption that, in [his] view, would help cement the new nation morally’ (Posel and Simpson 9). If reconciliation with de Kock is possible, is it also possible in other cases? What are the broader implications for the TRC’s idea of reconciliation? What enabled these women to see de Kock in a way that differed so much from how he was portrayed in the media?

Bakhtin's work is again useful for considering Gobodo-Madikizela's portrayal of de Kock's confession and expression of remorse. She shows that de Kock creates a personal and direct dialogic exchange between himself and the widows. As the 'I' of his utterance, he directs his confession to the widows (as the 'other' of the dialogic exchange) and, with this, his need to 'find [himself] in another by finding [another] in himself' (Bakhtin *Problems of Dostoevsky* 287). Through mutual reflection and acceptance the widows are able to take their sense of being from their communion with de Kock. They offer him forgiveness and enable him to receive a sense of self from them because they have found a sense of themselves through him. Each draws their sense of self from being in communion with the other in a responsive understanding. Pearl Faku explains:

I hope that when he sees our tears, he knows they are not only tears for our husbands, but tears for him as well I would like to hold him by the hand, and show him that there is a future, and that he can still change. (14)

In the relationship between the women and de Kock the idea of finding the self in the 'other' is demonstrated even as the ambiguous and unstable nature of the 'other' becomes apparent. Bringing to the fore the change in their relationship Gobodo-Madikizela demonstrates how dialogue both depends on the existence of the 'other' and contributes to the construction of the 'other' and the 'self'. This idea of restoring humanity to the self and other was reflected throughout and since the TRC in Tutu's linking of ideas of amnesty and *ubuntu* — what he refers to as 'the very essence of being human', that 'a person is a person through other people' (34).

The poignant moment for Gobodo-Madikizela comes when she experiences good and evil literally colliding, causing her to reflect on the 'moral line' that

enabled her to maintain a distance from de Kock and still identify with him (33). For many South Africans the moral line was immutable. The criminal court had found de Kock guilty, the Amnesty Committee had not granted him amnesty on all matters, and popular media depicted him as evil. Gobodo-Madikizela's view differs. She maintains that through de Kock she came to recognise that 'good and evil exist in our lives, and that evil, like good, is always a possibility' (34). Having reached out and physically touched the distressed de Kock, Gobodo-Madikizela is unable to free herself from his statement: 'You know, Pumla, that was my trigger hand you touched' (39). Dedicating considerable discussion to the moment of the touch, heightening the sense of tension surrounding it, and bringing her psychological insight to the fore, Gobodo-Madikizela contemplates her motivations for the touch and his motivations for reminding her of his power to harm. In a Bakhtinian understanding, this physical representation of the tension-filled encounter on the boundary of the self and the other from which the self emerges, exemplifies the changeable nature of the self and denotes her becoming occupied by him. The tension underlying the encounter was palpable for Gobodo-Madikizela. On waking on the morning following the touch her hand was numb, as if her 'body were rejecting a foreign organ illegitimately planted'. That such an intimate and personal experience is necessary for such a change is central to Gobodo-Madikizela's argument.

Gobodo-Madikizela's work marks a notable turn in the portrayal of de Kock, the police more generally, and questions of complicity in South Africa toward changed societal relations. Sachs endorses the importance of her work in opening up thinking:

I was filled with admiration for her, this slight African woman, going to meet the man, the killer, the representative of all the violence and terror of the centuries. And she went to meet him with courage and with psychological understanding, to try to find out who he was, and the reasons for his actions — through a form of dialogue, not forgiveness. I am proud to be a South African belonging to a nation that has the capacity and spirit to conduct these kinds of enquiries. ('His Name was Henry' 96)

Along with Gordin, Gobodo-Madikizela distinguishes herself by insisting that de Kock was not a lone perpetrator but a representative of a system that abandoned him. Angered by the institutional influences, such as the Broederbond and those in government who created him and accepted his murderous protection but then ostracized him and stood in judgement of him, she is critical that even though arrested by the post-apartheid government he was 'in essence tried by the apparatus of the *former* apartheid state' for whom he became the scapegoat (59). As Pauw did before her, Gobodo-Madikizela draws on the example of Adolf Eichmann in her depiction of de Kock. Pauw, who did not personally interview de Kock, focuses on the 'banality of evil' committed by Eichmann and de Kock. In contrast, Gobodo-Madikizela who did personally interview de Kock and so undergo dialogic exchange with him argues the 'presence of an inner stirring' (23) in de Kock as a fundamental difference between him and his former colleagues who appeared before the TRC, and between him and Eichmann. She suggests that de Kock knew that what he had done as a police officer was beyond what most human beings could understand. More importantly, once taken away from his destructive life, it was 'beyond what *he* could

understand' (23). For Eichmann, when faced with his evil deeds, 'there was just a blankness, a blank, impenetrable wall' (23).

Stemming from her work with de Kock, Gobodo-Madikizela has continued to explore questions of transition to enable former victims and perpetrators to live together. Fundamental to her thinking is the need for those who benefit from repressive laws sanctioned by totalitarian states to be brought to account:

Large sections of the population of voters who kept the abusive governments in power, and who were direct beneficiaries of the states' repression, also have to engage in critical reflection of what their roles were, individually and collectively in making atrocities possible. ('Empathetic Repair' 341)

In *A Human Being Died that Night* she seeks to bring readers to a state of self-reflection and a realisation that the distance between them and perpetrators like de Kock, whom most considered evil, might not be so great. For her it is the hope of transformation in individuals, groups and societies between former adversaries that drives strategies of restoring peace and social cohesion ('Empathetic Repair' 341).

One of the most remarkable aspects of Gobodo-Madikizela's narrative is how she so comprehensively challenged thinking about the manner in which South Africans were stereotyping the evil of apartheid. When others were criticising the TRC for its myopic approach to the injustices of apartheid she, like Tutu, insisted that South Africans had to find ways to transcend the relationships of the past. Through her analysis of de Kock she exposed the instability of the dichotomies of the country's apartheid past — black–white, good–evil — and demonstrated, even to her own surprise, that the principles on which the TRC was based were sound.

Of the three narratives considered in this chapter Gobodo-Madikizela's has proven the most confronting, not only for the South African nation, but more generally for how we consider notions of good and evil. While de Kock's actions cannot be condoned, this does not discount the fact that there are sympathies for the position he claims as a scapegoat of the government of the day. Equally, among those for whom only retributive justice would be adequate for dealing with the crimes of apartheid there would be support for Slovo's position, as apparent in *Red Dust*, of being unforgiving toward the Security Branch police. Each of these narratives provides a different perspective on the internalised view of the evil of apartheid, embodied in the figure of the police officer. As easy as it was for South Africans to attribute all of the evil of apartheid to the Security Branch — and many did just this — these narratives collectively caution against such an approach. They use ideas of the police confession and complicity to confront and challenge, or in Slovo's case support, the portrayal of the police that was emerging in the national narrative as told through the TRC.

Chapter 5 — Post-apartheid Crime Fiction

Attention now returns to crime fiction, the genre discussed in chapter one. While the genre struggled in existence during apartheid, it has predominated since the TRC.

However, although a number of Afrikaans writers published crime fiction immediately after the coming of democracy in 1994, South African crime fiction in English has really only come into its own since 2004 although, immediately following apartheid there was a hesitant trickle.³⁰ Richard Kunzmann's *Bloody Harvests* (2004) and *Salamander Cotton* (2006), Andrew Brown's *Coldsleep Lullaby* (2005), Margie Orford's *Like Clockwork* (2006) and *Blood Rose: a Clare Hart Novel* (2007), and Mike Nicol's collaboration with Joanne Hichens, *Out to Score* (2006) signalled the gathering momentum. Michele Magwood, who reviewed this trend in 2006, suggested that the emergence of the new South African thriller might be seen as a sign of a society normalising (n.pag.): the 'subliminal reassurance in the strict conventions' of crime novels was indicative, for her, of a people working through violence (n.pag.). Since then, there has been a flooding of the market.

Special issues of *Current Writing* (issue 2, 2013) and *Scrutiny2* (issue 1, 2014) have focused on South African writers who, since 2006 in particular, have used the crime novel to comment on post-apartheid society. Speculating about the popular move to crime fiction, Jonathan Amid and Leon de Kock ask what it is about the post-apartheid (or post-transitional) moment that, at times, seems tailor-made for crime fiction (52). Rita Barnard suggests that the 'prevalence of crime, along with the counter-discourse of law and order it has provoked, has become one of the important features of post-apartheid society' and has had 'a profound impact on literary production' (667). Generally critics point to the influence of rising crime

levels and anxieties around social and political instability, although, as Sam Naidu points out, criticism and theory in this field is still in its infancy (129). I do not propose to discuss the more recent proliferation of work. Since my particular interest is in how the difficulty of situating the image of the police officer, damaged and tainted by apartheid, impacted the post-apartheid evolution of the popular fiction form, it suffices to focus on the earlier works, published up to 2010, that evidence this emergence of a post-apartheid crime fiction. In chapter one I discussed how Wessel Ebersohn's crime fiction struggled for a place in South Africa against the constraints of censorship and disregard for the genre as a serious form of literature. In this chapter I discuss his return to writing along with other works that paved the way for the recent re-emergence of South African crime fiction.

Wessel Ebersohn's return to crime fiction, along with fiction by Deon Meyer and Margie Orford, reflect the anticipation and expectations of South Africans during the transition to democracy in both the SAPS and the country at large. An optimistic, distinctly police procedural style capturing the processes of policing is evident in Meyer's and Orford's early works, with realist portrayals of policing. The police procedural emerged in the late 1940s and 1950s, with the mystery being 'solved by regular police detectives, usually working in teams and using ordinary police routines' (Dove 1). In his study of the police procedural George Dove suggests the easiest way to define the police procedural is 'to call it the *Dragnet* kind of story, in which a mystery is solved by police detectives' (2):

[T]he detective in the procedural story does those things ordinarily expected of policemen, like using informants, tailing suspects, and availing himself of the resources of the police laboratory [. . .] the resolution of the mystery is

usually the product of the work of a number of people instead of the achievement of a single protagonist [. . .]The police procedural is the only kind of detective story in which the detective has a recognizable counterpart in real life. (Dove 2)

But the police procedural style of fiction soon gave way to a more apparent thriller style of writing. This shift may be seen as reflecting the dissipation of optimism about the ability of the police to address the rising levels of crime. As the sense of crime being out of control and unable to be reined in using traditional approaches to policing has crystallized, South African crime fiction has become increasingly preoccupied with crimes of violence and those committing crimes, rather than containment of the crime and solution of the mystery. In the now predominant thriller the focus is consistent with Philip Simpson's observation in his discussion about the 'psycho thriller' that "'thriller" in the generic sense tends to connote an emphasis on physical danger and action over in-depth character study' (187). He also explains the plot of a thriller is

structured on the basic principle of suspense, or the heightened audience anxiety created when the protagonist is fighting a contest against what looks like overwhelming odds. (187)

And in his analysis of crime fiction John Scaggs suggests that in the thriller the focus is on present danger rather than reflecting on or investigating past action, and frequently the detective plays a secondary role (107).

The evolution of local crime fiction has been revealing as a critique on South African society. In her analysis of Scandinavian crime fiction Kerstin Bergman suggests crime fiction 'mirror[s] its audience's fears' and that it is generally accepted

that developments in the genre ‘reflect the changing perception of threats to society’ (34). She argues that the emergence of the Swedish police procedural from the American hard-boiled genre after the Second World War was in response to ‘the fears society faced exceed[ing] the mastery of the single private-eye hero’ (34), and adds that ‘the police procedural offered a collective of detectives who could credibly control complex new threats and anxieties’ (34). She explores reasons for the more recent regression in social and political criticism and move toward the more romantic traditions of British crime fiction by some Swedish writers. Concluding that, as yet, the reasons remain uncertain, she suggests the popularity of the genre, where ‘everything else [. . .] gives way to the entertainment factor; where a good scare is still part of the quality, but only as long as the threats do not become too real and the issues at stake not too controversial’ (44) may be a factor. ‘Perhaps the threats to society are being perceived as too big and too abstract to grasp’, she adds (34).

Whereas crime fiction was strongly established in North America, Britain, throughout Europe and elsewhere in the 1990s (Messent 176), in South Africa it struggled to gain recognition. Meyer and Orford are among those who were instrumental in bringing about the evolution of post-apartheid crime fiction and Ebersohn’s post-apartheid works are noteworthy for their difference from his apartheid works. Their experimentation with form, content and style paved the way for a burgeoning literature. But for them the problem of the police was a problem for their crime fiction — the police service represented a threat to society and a threat to the genre.

Deon Meyer

Meyer's first crime fiction work to be published in English, *Dead before Dying* (1999), was published in Afrikaans as *Feniks* in 1996, the year the TRC hearings began. Notably, at a time when the SAPS had 'a pariah status internationally' (Weitzer 71), and was considered a major problem in South Africa, Meyer chose to locate the police at the centre of his 1996 narrative, developing the storyline through them. As Steinberg writes, with the change to majority rule 'white backlash against democracy, rather than crime, was deemed to be South Africa's primary security threat' and as a result 'the police force was regarded as a risk to be tamed, rather than an instrument to be used' (*Crime Wave* 9). Within the SAPS '[p]olice discourse changed abruptly, as the language of community policing replaced that of law and order', but serious organisational reform was put on hold (9). Steinberg suggests that as a consequence the emerging new police service was 'stranded somewhere between the old and the new' (9). Questions of stability and governance simmered while the nation and the world were engaged by the drama and spectacle of the TRC hearings.

Writing in Afrikaans, Meyer, who shares a background in journalism with Orford and Ebersohn, hoped to 'contribute towards distancing his native language from its legacy of complicity with Apartheid' (Primorac 158).³¹ In turning to crime fiction he has undoubtedly achieved much more. Six years had passed since Ebersohn used *Closed Circle* to depict the inefficiency and corruption of the Security Branch and the impossibility of a just resolution in apartheid South Africa. Meyer's first crime fiction work not only marks the beginning of the evolution of post-

apartheid crime fiction, but also provides evidence of the ability to freely portray the police and plausibly propose the restoration of order.

Dead before Dying is a narrative of rebirth following the death of apartheid on multiple levels: of the individual; of the nation; of policing in South Africa; and of South African crime fiction. From the outset the novel positions itself ‘as a narrative about the successful overcoming of personal and national melancholia’ (Primorac 165). Employing what Franco Moretti terms the double system of meanings apparent in detective fiction — the superficial and the deep, with the superficial being ‘both the manifestation and the cover of the deep’ (134) — *Dead before Dying* is not merely a superficial story of the investigation of a string of murders and robberies. Instead, as readers follow the search for clues they uncover details about the rebirth of a nation and a genre. Using the trope of the body (the police officer) as a signifier and site of personal abuse by the Afrikaner during apartheid, Meyer draws on Bakhtin’s theorization of Rabelais’ images of the grotesque body as a body in the act of becoming in order to re-inscribe the body of his police officer subjects as a site of rebirth.

In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin discusses the importance of Rabelais’ work in illuminating the folk culture of humour. He identifies that in Rabelais’ work certain images of the body play ‘a predominant role’ and that images of the body are offered ‘in an extremely exaggerated form’ (18). These images, he suggests, ‘are the heritage [. . .] of the culture of folk humor’ (18), and the heritage of the particular aesthetic concept that he calls ‘grotesque realism’ (18). In grotesque realism ‘the bodily element is deeply positive [. . . presented] as something universal,

representing all people [. . .] The material bodily principle is contained [. . .] in the people, a people who are continually growing and renewed' (19). 'The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract' (19). But degradation has not only a destructive, negative aspect, it also has a 'regenerating one' (21). To degrade an object is also to 'hurl it down' to 'the zone in which conception and a new birth take place' (21). In Rabelais' works the grotesque body is 'never finished, never completed; it is continually rebuilt, created and builds and creates another body' (*Rabeleis* 317). The grotesque constructs a double body: 'In the endless chain of bodily life it retains the parts in which one link joins the other, in which the life of one body is born from the death of the preceding, older one' (318).

In a fast-paced narrative, typical of crime fiction, Meyer's lead investigator, Captain Marcus Andreas Tobias (Mat) Joubert moves from contemplating suicide in chapter one, to a state of rebirth by chapter two. Clues sprinkled liberally enable the reader to uncover the mystery of the trope of rebirth embedded within the drama. Moretti reminds us that readers of crime fiction have a responsibility beyond that of passive reader: as the detective "rewrites" the story produced by the criminal, so the reader, furnished with all the necessary clues, can solve the mystery and thus "write" the story that he is reading by himself' (148). At the macro level of *Dead before Dying* fictional order is restored when the police solve the murders and robberies. At the micro level individual police officers are rehabilitated and reborn. Through them, in turn, the image of the SAPS is rehabilitated as order is restored to the community.

As he uses images of the grotesque body to explore ideas of rebirth, the layered nature of Meyer's narrative becomes apparent. So too does his depiction of the body of the individual as representing the body politic. The need for a shift in policing culture is made clear from the outset. Colonel Bart de Wit, the new Commanding Officer, tells the officers at Murder and Robbery that he expects them to be loyal and dedicated and have a healthy body and mind. All have to make a contribution to the new South Africa. Image is important. The media and the world are watching. The slovenly, overweight, unfit bodies of the apartheid era are not acceptable. But the Colonel is not a physically impressive figure himself. His nose is 'a beak with a fat mole on the border between the organ and cheek' (14). Meyer's images resonate with those of Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*. Meyer's investigator, Joubert, carries the same name as the famous sixteenth-century physician and contemporary of Rabelais to whom Bakhtin refers. In writing about superstitions of medicine, Joubert referred to the 'popular belief that the size and potency of the genital organs can be inferred from the dimensions and form of the nose' (Bakhtin *Rabelais* 316).

The essential role in Rabelais' grotesque imagery belongs to 'those parts of the body in which it outgrows its own self, transgressing its own body, in which it conceives a new, second body: the bowels and the phallus' (317). Eating, drinking and copulation are among the acts performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body in which the beginning and end of life are closely linked and interwoven (317). The grotesque 'protrudes from the body' and of all the features of the human face, the nose and mouth play the most important part (316). Bakhtin identifies the grotesque image of the nose as always

symbolising the phallus (316). In endowing de Wit with a beak of a nose, Meyer employs the typical crime fiction strategy of obscuring vital evidence. Using the imagery that Bakhtin points to, when de Wit unconsciously rubs the mole on his nose Meyer implies the stimulation of the phallus and the creation of another body as the phallus outgrows itself. Meyer's narrative thus becomes a story about not only the individual police officers but also the duality of their bodies.

In depicting Joubert, Meyer also draws on the characteristics of the legend of the giants, identified by Bakhtin as one of the sources of Rabelais' body. The legend relates an essentially grotesque image of the body. The theme can be more or less developed but the giant's 'enormous appetite is brought out first of all' (342). Joubert is described as a big man, even at school he was '[n]ot simply tall [. . . but b]ig' (147). He is overweight and reluctantly commits to becoming fit and losing weight when challenged by de Wit. His slow and painful path to fitness is detailed. He struggles to give up smoking and is apprehensive about whether, since his wife's death, he is capable of having sex. But signs of his rebirth are evident when he is relieved to find 'the swelling in his groin changed to a hard rock erection' (106) after his teenage neighbour seduces him while preparing a meal. As he and an alcoholic colleague, Detective Sergeant Benny Griessel, work themselves into the shape expected of South Africa's police under the new regime they become the instruments through which a new police service may be conceived. As they are physically reborn they are able to solve the murders and robberies with which the novel is concerned. In Meyer's depiction, solving crime is restoring order in the new South Africa.

The opening image of Joubert as depressed and unhealthy is a pointed caricature of the Afrikaner in crisis. The toxic apartheid body is not unfamiliar to South Africans. Ebersohn's image of a gangrenous body embodied the moral decay of apartheid, and Coetzee's image of a 'deformed and stunted inner life' is not very different. In what has been considered his 'most scathing condemnation of the effects of his country's power structures' (VanZanten Gallagher *Story of South Africa* 15), Coetzee spoke in 1987 of

[t]he deformed and stunted relations between human beings that were created under colonialism and exacerbated under what is loosely called apartheid
[. . .] All expressions of that inner life, no matter how intense, no matter how pierced with exultation or despair, suffer the same stuntedness and deformity.
(Coetzee *Doubling the Point* 98)

Whereas Ebersohn and Coetzee, writing during apartheid, condemned this abomination, with Coetzee acknowledging that his observations applied to his own writings as much as to anyone else's, Meyer uses Bakhtin's grotesque imagery to invest the body inherited from apartheid with expectation and hopefulness instead. For he identifies the duality of the body as the source of its renewal and rebirth. However, it is not a state that is achieved without sacrifice.

In placing the detective service at the heart of his first work Meyer takes a traditionalist approach to crime fiction. In his optimistic portrayal his post-apartheid police officers solve crimes and are solely responsible for the investigations. They fulfil an ordinary policing role. No longer preoccupied with policing the political, they represent the law and are responsible for influencing national stability by policing the criminal law. They not only apply the law but are conscious of the need

to operate within it. They uncover the links and causal factors between events that lead to them solving the crimes. At a time when the transition to democracy created great expectation among South Africans of what its new democratic government would achieve Meyer uses popular literature to portray confidence in the post-apartheid police. If policing could normalise under democracy would it not be possible for the rest of society also?

Christopher Warnes suggests that the fact that the detective arm of the SAPS is key to solving the country's crime problem in *Dead before Dying* lends a striking historicity to the post-apartheid turn to crime fiction ('Writing Crime' 991). Interestingly, and likely unwittingly, in making the detective service central, Meyer delves into what was to become a point of contention: how South Africa's democratic government prioritised approaches to crime and criminality. Steinberg agrees with Altbeker's argument that in 1994 the hierarchy of the SAPS would have understood that their most urgent task was to rebuild the detective service. 'If the police service did stand a chance of elevating itself above existing security markets, it was by doing well what states alone can do: detecting violent crime with competence and impartiality and seeing to the prosecution of offenders' (*Thin Blue* 99). Instead, as Altbeker notes, policy decisions saw detectives deprived of professional autonomy and redeployed to uniform duties at police stations. The result was too few detectives with too little experience and motivation (*Country at War* 144). Along with the fact that the focus of attention and resources were directed toward determining how to prevent crime, parts of the criminal justice system devoted to finding and punishing criminals suffered neglect (Altbeker *Country at*

War 142). Despite Meyer's initial optimism the premise of his portrayal was not sustainable.

By the time Meyer published his second crime fiction work his confidence in his police characters had altered significantly. In *Dead at Daybreak*, simultaneously published in English and Afrikaans (as *Orion*) in 2000, Meyer's reframed police characterisations touch on concerns of officers about how their roles were changing in the move to democratic policing. When Andrew Faull interviewed white police officers about the impact of the post-1994 transition, their prevailing concern was disadvantage — they saw black officers being preferred so that the SAPS could meet employment equity targets. Detectives had suffered in the transition: with the new focus being community policing, detective work and detectives had come to be seen as 'unfashionable; relics, almost of a bygone age' (Altbeker *Country at War* 139). Reduced career prospects made it more difficult to attract and retain talented officers as detectives (144).

But concerns were not restricted to individual officers or groups of officers. As crime rates and violent crime grew it became obvious that the community-based, crime prevention model of policing embraced in the early years of democracy was inadequate (Altbeker *Country at War* 27). Policing the political had dominated the apartheid agenda but by the late 1990s 'the politics of fighting crime began to eclipse the politics of political containment' (Steinberg *Crime Wave* 9). The work of the police had shifted. Policing had to meet the needs of all South Africans rather than focusing on the needs of the white minority. Upholding apartheid rule in black areas was in the past (Bruce, Newham and Masuku 171). Policing was now about

gathering information on crime rather than politics and terrorism but, as Faull discovered in his interviews, for some this ‘seemed less important’ (66). Despite the need for policing to fight crime aggressively, the project to transform the police service into ‘a veritable crime fighting institution’ was delayed (it only really began in earnest with the inauguration of Thabo Mbeki as president in 1999) (Steinberg *Crime Wave* 9).

By the late 1990s the community had begun to become uneasy about the ability of the police to control the rising levels of crime. A ‘plethora of surveys [. . .] in the post-1994 period [. . .] found generally declining feelings of safety over time from the country’s first democratic elections’ (Shaw *Crime and Policing* 92). But perhaps the perception of an increase in crime should not have been unexpected. Jean and John Comaroff open their introduction to *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* by commenting on the coincidence that since the end of the Cold War one thing stands out: ‘the claim that democratization has been accompanied, almost everywhere, by a sharp rise in crime and violence’ (1). They explain:

political liberation in postcolonial, posttotalitarian worlds, and the economic liberalization on which it has floated, have both implied, as their dark underside, an ipso facto deregulation of monopolies over the means of legitimate force, of moral orders, of the protection of persons and property. And an unraveling of the fabric of law and order. (1)

They argue that rising criminality in postcolonies is not simply a ‘reflex, antisocial response to poverty or joblessness’, among other things, but

part of a much more troubled dialectic: a dialectic of law and dis/order, framed by neoliberal mechanisms of deregulation and new modes of

mediating human transactions at once politico-economic and cultural, moral and mortal. Under such conditions [. . .] criminal violence does not so much repudiate the rule of law or the licit operations of the market as appropriate their forms — and recommission their substance [. . .] In the process, the means and ends of the liberal democratic state are refracted, deflected, and dispersed into the murkier reaches of the private sector, sometimes in ways unimagined by even the most enterprising of capitalists. (5)

Given the complexities of the neoliberal environment, with its ‘law and dis/order’ dialectic resulting from the transition to democracy, the increasing discomfort about the ability of police to cope should not be surprising.

Meyer depicts the diminishing confidence in the police as his crime fiction tends towards the thriller: the police are distanced from the action and the narrative correspondingly captures a heightened sense of anxiety about crime being out of control. But the police maintain a fundamental role and Meyer depicts them compassionately. Traces of the grotesque bodies that loomed in *Dead before Dying* are still present: the police service is still struggling to make its transition to democratic policing. The police are involved in the final arrests and interrogation of the suspects, but the primary investigator, who had been a detective, is now a private investigator and so outside of the police. He does apprise the police of critical progress in his investigation but the novel shows a deepening concern about the inability of the police to have any effect. In including elements of the thriller Meyer exposes the limitations of the police while capturing the pervasive nature of underworld crime.

Another of the matters emerging from the TRC was the uncertainty around the distinction between the roles of the police and the military. Meyer dramatises this uncertainty to raise the anxiety about the state's ability to respond to the rising levels and complexity of crime. Creating a clash between the two government bodies as they jostle to control the investigation, Meyer emphasises the difficulty of moving to a new model of policing when the controls of the past were so heavily dependent on military intervention. Despite the insistence of a military intelligence Colonel that the murder investigation is his to manage, since the police lack relevant expertise, resolution remains with the police. Here Meyer follows a proposition made by David Bruce and Rachel Neild that police authority will be undermined if the military also have powers of law enforcement. Arguing that in a democratic policing model there may be scope for deployment of sections of the military to assist the police 'in certain clear and prescribed circumstances', Bruce and Neild suggest this requires the military to operate subject to police authority (25). However, Meyer's narrative harnesses the anxiety created by the lingering presence of the apartheid military attitude to produce a sense of uneasy disquiet in his thriller.

The structure and style of *Dead at Daybreak* are notably different from *Dead before Dying*, further showing evidence of an evolving form for crime fiction and demonstrating Frow's proposition about the historically contingent nature of genre. The narrative is presented in two threads, interwoven through alternating chapters to bring together conventions of crime fiction and confessional modes of writing: the story of the investigation to find the will, and the confession by van Heerden, the principal investigator, of his complicity in the death of his police partner. Whereas South African writing under apartheid is embedded with ideas of the struggle, as

discussed in chapters two and four, its emergence from apartheid and the TRC carried with it the burden of questions of complicity. Placing crime fiction and confessional narratives side-by-side Meyer shows the genres as not so dissimilar: both involve revealing the past to understand the present.

As they impose on each other, the two threads of *Dead at Daybreak* structurally contribute to the sense of a fast-paced, suspense-filled crime fiction narrative. This is consistent with Linus Asong's observation that in detective fiction, 'there is an intentional and consistent disruption of chronology and the basic causal-temporal relationships of the episodes' (19). The presence of one narrative strand delays the discovery of details for the other, while the two concurrently build their own mysteries, consistent with the confessional. As van Heerden tries to come to terms with his complicity, relating his life story and revealing his affair with Nonnie, the wife of Nagel, his police partner, we learn that Nagel was killed by a fleeing serial killer because van Heerden deliberately waited before shooting the felon. At the same time the search for the will becomes a search for those who mistakenly killed a group of their own paratroopers in Angola, and then murdered two Americans in a diamond exchange in Botswana.

In interweaving two narrative forms Meyer's novel opens the way for a new form of literature for South Africa. As such, his writing can be seen to pre-empt the call in 2006 by Leon de Kock for diversity in South African literature to reflect the new freedom and leave behind the 'absolute contests and the grim polarities of the past' (77). De Kock labelled as 'perhaps misguided [. . .] in all likelihood a blind error' (81) attempts in the immediate aftermath of 1994 to 'conjoin various

literatures in a spirit of fusion and of healing' (80). Discussing the works of the Afrikaans writers Etienne van Heerden and Marlene van Niekerk, he postulates that they seem to be 'informed by historical re-reading which is deeply South African, and conventions of form which are [. . . more] broadly transnational than national' (80). He concludes: 'At last we [can] do and say what we [like]. At last we [can] write what we [like]' (81). Meyer's turn to crime fiction ten years before de Kock's paper was published can be seen as leading the way in embracing transnational forms. However, in melding crime fiction with a confessional account he goes further and provides an historical re-reading of a narrative form that had dominated the national narrative over the previous decade.

Implicitly affirming his contribution toward the evolution of South African crime fiction, Meyer opens up the literary context of issues that had been worked and reworked for so many years under apartheid. He reminds readers that questions, such as that of complicity and the divide between good and evil, are not confined to the apartheid context but are embedded within universal narratives. Van Heerden's confession, for example, is to actions that arose from his domestic situation but it also prompts readers with questions that the TRC had posed about the perpetrator within. Confessing is cathartic for him and the suspect Peter Miller, who confesses to having killed his own paratroopers in Angola, but both are also survivors amidst their feelings of guilt. While the novel's ending points to a need to focus on the domestic, it would be some years before South African fiction visibly moved from the preoccupation with confession and complicity. In 2007 Steve Robins, reflecting on the cultural afterlife of the TRC, noted that by 2005 reference to the TRC had all but vanished from domestic media, and political and academic discourses (128), and in

2010 Michael Titlestad and Ashlee Polatinsky pointed to the diminishing purchase of the TRC in South African fiction and the social imaginary more generally (260).

Meyer's diminished optimism about the police and policing in South Africa is unmistakable in his third crime fiction novel, *Heart of the Hunter* (2003) (published in Afrikaans as *Proteus* in 2002). The police are barely mentioned in an investigative sense. The narrative is based on the thrill of the chase, with the gangland member employed by van Heerden, the investigator in *Dead at Daybreak*, becoming both the hunter and the hunted. Amidst a growing concern about policing in South Africa the police are relegated to the periphery with Meyer, at times, even emphasising the fact that the police are not the investigators. The new Intelligence Service, led by a woman, conducts the investigation. Central to the novel are questions about storage and security of intelligence and information, and what life offers a covert ANC operative after apartheid. In this narrative, published only six years after *Dead before Dying*, Meyer's move from writing in the police procedural mode to that of the thriller is complete.

What Meyer began as a focus on restoring a place for crime fiction in South Africa quickly evolved into thriller writing centering on crimes and criminality beyond the control of the police. The complexity of the task for South African crime fiction writers clearly weighed upon his work: in a 'crime-saturated' society such as South Africa, one cannot represent 'an uncomplicated restoration of order'; in a corrupt situation 'crime novels and thrillers circulate in a milieu in which spectacular violence is ubiquitous and routine' (Titlestad 692). The evolution in Meyer's crime fiction reflects the changing South African society and significant changes in

policing. That he published three crime fiction works in English before the first works began to appear from English-speaking South African writers firmly established him as a pioneer of a new direction for South African fiction: thriller writing about crimes beyond control.

Margie Orford

Margie Orford, Richard Kunzmann, Andrew Brown and Mike Nicol contributed toward the momentum begun by Meyer, marking the start of a new kind of South African crime fiction written in English. Orford's first novel, *Like Clockwork* (2006), however, was not published until seven years after Meyer's *Dead before Dying*. Although Orford was not the first post-apartheid writer to turn to crime fiction I am focusing on her novels first because, like Meyer, she developed a crime series for her investigators. Her lead investigators remain the same throughout her 'Clare Hart' series — five crime thrillers published between 2006 and 2013. As she injects 'some semblance of social realism' into her novels, based on her responses to particular real crimes ('Grammar of Violence' 226), the changing circumstances of her investigators and the context within which they operate also provide evidence of an emerging trend in South African crime fiction. Whereas Orford's depiction of an inadequate policing service in *Like Clockwork* is empathetic, by her fifth novel, *Water Music* (2013), it evinces mistrust. My discussion here will focus on the first three of Orford's Clare Hart thrillers, *Like Clockwork*, *Blood Rose* (2007), and *Daddy's Girl* (2009) (the last named was written as a prequel to the two earlier stories and so, chronologically, it stands as the first of the trilogy).

Among the serious intentions behind Orford's choice of genre was her 'wish to understand the roots of local violence, to create a sense of order, for herself and her readers, and to represent current reality more fully than journalism allows' (Hunter 88). She hoped crime fiction would enable her to 'write [herself] towards an understanding of the meaning of violence and its origins, and to represent possibilities of resilience and some sort of redemption' ('Grammar of Violence' 221). As an investigative journalist she could relate the facts endlessly but was concerned that she was not getting to the truth of violence, resilience or revenge. Crime fiction 'offer[ed] a way of telling an emotional and moral truth, a forensic exploration of the physical, emotional and moral aftermath of violence' (*Writing Crime* 191). It enabled her to respond to real crimes as 'violent ruptures and the resilience of survivors' and 'at least start to scratch at the truth' (*Writing Crime* 187).

Orford's significant contribution to crime fiction is her 'valuable and sometimes excoriating social analysis' of violence against women (Naidu 74). In each of her Clare Hart novels she examines and exposes 'the various ways in which women are violated, abused, exploited and annihilated in South Africa' (74). Not lost on her is the irony of the fact that as a woman drawing attention to the plight of women as victims of violence she has to display the female body, laying it out 'for examination, analysis and the reader's pleasurable consumption' (72). While the crime thriller format demands this type of representation, at the same time it can be seen as the writer's 'powerful protest against gender-based violence and the dominant gender order' (72).

Orford's investigations come via a female psychological profiler, Dr Clare Hart. Her position as primary investigator is firmly established at the outset when she discovers a body near her home in the opening of *Like Clockwork*. Orford uses her to attempt to understand the violence men do and why they do it. Like Orford, she is a journalist and filmmaker who has documented the sex-trafficking of women. For Orford, the 'very nature of the classical protagonist of the crime novel offered the only credible way for a woman to travel, in the literary sense, through South Africa' ('Grammar of Violence' 226). Through her partnership with the lead police investigator, Captain Rediwaan Faizal, Hart fulfils the role of the typical fictional detective, collecting evidence, interrogating witnesses and suspects, locating and rescuing victims, and identifying and, where necessary, shooting, dangerous villains (Warnes 988). Her 'intuitive deductive style complements Faizal's more direct, physical approach' so that working together they are able to resolve the crimes either in the arrest or death of the villains (Warnes 988).

The police are relegated to the periphery of Orford's narratives and her portrayal of their inadequacy is integral to the development of her thriller. *Like Clockwork* opens with the portrayal of a police service that is short on everything — 'staff, vehicles, computers' (26) — and clearly unable to cope. The police are necessary — in the end only the police can actually arrest and bring people before the courts — but do not demonstrate deeper intellectual traits of investigation. Initial drafts of *Like Clockwork* did not even include Faizal, but an insider was needed: 'in this crime-fighting genre, a man with a gun can change everything in a moment' (Orford *Writing Crime* 191). Questions about the integrity of officers linger, as in Faizal being given a second chance amidst hints of his involvement in

insubordination, alcoholism and violence. When the police conduct parts of the investigation they make little progress. The number of bodies, purposefully displayed with their throats cut and a bunch of irises nearby, rises to three, and then a fourth girl disappears. Despairing that they are no closer to finding the killer, Faizal concedes the impossibility of solving these murders if they are left to the police alone. He tells Hart: ‘We have to work it out. You have to work it out’ (235). Despite their role as society’s protectors, Orford’s police are limited by a past in which they have been unable to meet society’s expectations.

Orford’s construction of Hart can be read as a sign of South Africa catching up with moves in criminal investigation more generally. In contrast to Ebersohn’s use of Yudel Gordon to investigate the psyche of the nation in his apartheid crime fiction, Orford uses Hart to reinforce the fact that post-apartheid policing is about investigating crime, rather than politics and terrorism. Across the globe criminal investigation had moved toward the psychological profiling of suspects while South Africa had been preoccupied with policing apartheid. Placing Faizal and Hart side-by-side Orford intimates a future for policing, complementing policing resources with civilian elements. Her focus on forensic investigation, with the procedural detail centering not on the actions of the police but on the pathologist, Piet Mouton, and the post-mortem findings brings a further intellectual dimension to the police investigation. At the same time her writing echoes the global exponential rise in interest in forensic investigations in fiction.

Orford’s second novel, *Blood Rose*, is a noticeably more complex narrative than *Like Clockwork*, expressing Orford’s growing confidence in the crime fiction

genre as a means of engaging with socio-political questions. In this novel she uses the police to consider South Africa's obligations as a democratic nation on the African continent while exploring questions about her former home country, Namibia. Her choice of Walvis Bay as the location for the narrative apparently removes the drama from South Africa, and yet reminds us that, despite its remoteness, Walvis Bay was as much entangled in South Africa's apartheid rule as the rest of South Africa. Walvis Bay was annexed and remained under South African control when the rest of South West Africa gained independence as Namibia in 1977. It was not reintegrated into Namibia until 1994 (295). As the local police Captain, Damases tells Hart, after the South Africans left in 1994 some stayed in Walvis Bay because it was 'a good way of avoiding Bishop Tutu and his Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (54).

Shane Graham identifies questions about ideas of truth emerging in post-TRC literature, suggesting that

post-apartheid writers have largely called into question the notion that the Truth about the Past, monolithic and final, is buried somewhere out there just beneath the surface, waiting to be recuperated, and if we only dig it out it will be revealed to us in all its totalizing explanatory power. Recent South African literature teaches us, instead, that the tapestry of history must be read as a palimpsest, by paying careful attention to that which has been erased as well as that which is inscribed on the surface. (*South African Literature* 20)

Orford also uses the idea of secrets and the shifting sands of the desert to explore questions about the extent to which the TRC was able to expose the truths of apartheid. Land and landscape are critical motifs as she develops the trope of burial,

with images of burial and digging recurring. The shifting sands constantly rebury the past as Hart and Faizal struggle to recover evidence, understand what has been erased, and interpret what has been inscribed anew on the surface. Three boys' bodies are buried before the police realise that they are a part of the serial crime. The desert keeps secrets, the man who finds one of the boy's bodies tells Hart, but then 'the sand moves and there are all the skeletons' (75). When Hart explains to Faizal that a fourth boy's illness was triggered by exhaustion from digging, a 'sudden gust of east wind spray[s] sand against the office window' (245), as if the desert is desperately trying to rebury or erase evidence as Hart uncovers it. Superficially the crime fiction elements of the narrative are satisfied as order is restored when Hart and Faizal independently discover the site at which the boys had been digging before their death. But questions about the uncertainty of the past linger.

Orford uses her narrative to direct readers to other emerging crime fiction by setting up an intertextual relationship with Andrew Brown's *Coldsleep Lullaby*. When Faizal enters the investigation Orford takes the unusual step of appropriating Brown's Captain Eberard Februarie of the Stellenbosch police station to assist in the investigation. In doing so Orford demonstrates her text as 'the absorption and transformation of another' (Kristeva 37), affirming her work as integral to the growing South African crime fiction tradition. As Faizal explores links between the Namibian investigation and its apartheid causes, eliciting clues from Februarie, he asserts his role as investigator and is able to solve the mystery in his own right, at the same time placing a greater focus on the police.

Faizal and Februarie are both depicted as hard-boiled detectives — and also as broken characters that embody the dysfunction of the country's apartheid past. But they remind readers that someone must deal with the ugliness of the dark corners of post-apartheid society, and that such dealings carry a price. Both are committed to restoring order and solving crime but are fallible. They have sacrificed their marriages and personal happiness for their jobs and, in turn, their country. In the crassness of the conversations between them they take on a hard-boiled detective idiom — a turn in Orford's crime fiction which tellingly signals her increasing political engagement as she exposes the 'inefficiency and corruption' of the police and other government authorities, aspects that Cawelti considers are typical of the hard-boiled genre (160).

Orford's portrayal of her detectives stamps her hard-boiled approach with a South African uniqueness. Her detectives deviate from those in writers like Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, the fore-fathers of the hard-boiled genre. Whereas their detectives sat outside of the police and the conflict between the detective and the police (and the law) was integral to the unfolding drama, Orford's hard-boiled investigators are the police, but their personal conflicts challenge their own identification with the law and as police officers. Orford's cautiously sympathetic positioning towards the police aligns readers politically and socially with the police as part-heroes of the narrative, and intimates optimism about the detectives being able to solve crimes and uncover the truth. Rather than the police being on the outside of the solution, and part of the problem, as is typical in hard-boiled fiction, Faizal and Februarie are able to solve the crime. Order is restored and, in her

compassionate depiction, Orford shows the possibility of the police being part of the solution to South African crime and disorder.

In contrast to Faizal and Februarie, some of the officers of the Walvis Bay police are depicted as a microcosm of an isolated society entrenched in South Africa's past. In them we see the difficulties in moving on from the horrors of the past: those responsible for protecting and bringing justice hide or deny the past and undermine the fundamentals of the laws they are meant to uphold. One of the officers who obstructs Hart is exposed as corrupt, producing child pornography, and is suspected of committing rape. However, hope rests in Captain Tamar Damses who interrupts her work only briefly to give birth to her daughter. She represents a new future for policing in Namibia — one that looks towards transnational cooperation in policing on the African continent.

Orford's first three works present a combined mystery of detection. Her third novel, *Daddy's Girl*, looks back while moving forward. As the prequel to *Like Clockwork*, it can depend on the facts of the mystery being already known. For instance, from *Like Clockwork* readers know that the kidnapped Yasmin will be found and that Hart and Faizal have an unstable romantic relationship. This means that Orford can use the prequel to create another layer in her mystery. Writing *Daddy's Girl* as chronologically the first of the three narratives allows her to place greater emphasis on the local violence and issues impacting on policing that had been glossed over in the first two. Further affirming her growing confidence in the crime fiction genre, her work also shows a deepening appreciation of her responsibilities as

a crime fiction writer wanting to address problems of violence and crime in South Africa.

In her more detailed depiction of the police in *Daddy's Girl* Orford expresses concern for their vulnerabilities. She questions the success of the civilianisation of specialist positions through the inclusion of a female civilian director who the police officers believe lacks understanding and competence. She also delves deeper into the insecurities of the officers who form the front line of policing and their susceptibility to becoming victims because of their roles as police officers. Faizal describes the family murder and suicide of a fellow officer, and repeatedly refers to serious levels of domestic violence committed by police. His own psychometric test results show 'insomnia, aggression, hyper-reaction to stress, incapacity for teamwork and compromise, inability or refusal to express [his] feelings, and an exaggerated sense of possessiveness about [his] family' (57). Despite being so damaged and broken, Faizal is depicted by Orford as a hero, distinguished as a man whose most valuable asset is his integrity. Whereas a Superintendent who is a friend of Faizal's succumbs to temptation, Faizal refuses to be bought by a gang leader. But it is not only the corruption of police officers that is at issue: Faizal tells Hart that after joining the Gang Unit he soon came to realise 'the worst gangsters are sitting in parliament, or have moved into boardrooms where they're safe' (259).

The thriller element of *Daddy's Girl* is based in the myth of South Africa's prison gangs. Orford explores the rising levels of violence associated with the gangs originating from the prisons and permeating society, known as the Number gangs — the 26s, 27s and 28s. Her story follows Jonny Steinberg's non-fiction work, *The*

Number: One Man's Search for Identity in The Cape Underworld and Prison Gangs, published in 2004, in which he provides insight into the origin and functioning of the three prison gangs operating in jails around the country. These gangs originated from bands of outlaws who plagued late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Johannesburg. The most memorable was the Ninevites led by a Zulu migrant, 'Nongoloza' Mathebula (Steinberg *The Number* 6). The gangs are

a century old, avowedly political and yet horribly pathological. They illuminate the fact that crime too has a history and a future, a canon of myths and legends by which its practitioners understand what happened in the past and decide how to act in the present. (11)

Orford's interest in South Africa's gangs came from her experience, while writing *Daddy's Girl*, of conducting a year-long creative writing course with maximum security prisoners, almost all of whom were Number gangsters. Working with prison gang members helped her to 'find a connection with those we discard through fear, through revulsion at what they have done, the families they have shattered, the violence they perpetrate' ('Grammar of Violence' 228). Her depiction of the apparently impenetrable walls of Pollsmore prison being breached when a Number gang prisoner escapes builds on the thriller elements of this narrative. Anxiety levels rise when society's control mechanisms prove ineffective.

In the finale shoot-out between the police and the gangster good does triumph over evil, despite Faizal's flaws. But even with order restored there is no 'happy ever after' ending. Faizal's marriage has failed and he has lost his daughter to his ex-

wife. Societies need their heroes but in a society such as South Africa, plagued by the damage of its past, the police heroes cannot emerge unscathed.

The events at the Marikana mine on 16 August 2012 when police killed thirty-four mine workers have proven troubling for Orford. She summed up the difficulties of writing after the killings: 'I am at a loss as to how to engage fictionally, in an ethical manner, with the incomprehensible complexity of violence of South Africa' ('Grammar of Violence' 229). The reputation of the post-apartheid police service suffered, as did the capacity of citizens to continue to believe in the fiction of a benign South African state (229). For her, this event and the investigations and hearings that followed confirmed South Africa's drift towards brutality and corruption. They also compromised her portrayal of Faizal as an albeit flawed hero; that is, her representation of a more or less good man in a bad situation. She was concerned about how to find an ethical position after a massacre for which the top police brass and the minister refused to take responsibility (229). But Sam Naidu, the editor of the special crime fiction issue of *Current Writing*, provides some reassurance about the utility of crime fiction for addressing such moments:

crime fiction is a literary form that edifies yet also entertains; its 'generic conventions demand certain sensational features but on the whole, engaging with crime, engaging with those dark themes, and provoking a psychoemotional response in the reader, are of tremendous value, particularly in our burdened society'. (229)

For Orford, edification has taken precedence over entertainment. Her final Clare Hart novel, *Water Music*, was published the year after the Marikana killings. Even though

the police are peripheral to her narratives she has not published any further crime fiction.

Wessel Ebersohn

Eleven years after Meyer's first novel *Dead before Dying* and four years after Orford's *Like Clockwork*, Ebersohn published his first post-apartheid novel, *The October Killings* (2010). In 2009 he told Mike Nicol that he had stopped writing novels that were set in the time in which they were written because he had become disillusioned by the killings on both sides of the liberation struggle (1). *The October Killings* is Ebersohn's first fictional rendering of the processes and implications of the TRC. For a self-proclaimed chronicler of events in his country, it is notable that he published no fiction during the transition to democracy. Perhaps it is a reflection of Ebersohn's reservations about turning to crime fiction at a time when the political context was still unclear.

The opening pages show a change in Ebersohn's format. The novel commences at chapter one, rather than with Ebersohn's customary prologue, and Yudel's appearance is delayed. Much has changed for Yudel and Freek in the nineteen years since *Closed Circle* was published. We are introduced to Abigail Bukula, a thirty-five year old, upwardly mobile black woman who grew up in exile during the apartheid years. Against discussions about employment equity targets Abigail, representing those who were marginalised and victimised under apartheid, is positioned at the centre of the narrative to work with Yudel and Freek. Freek has been rewarded for his integrity and refusal to join the Special Branch under apartheid

by being promoted to Deputy Police Commissioner for Gauteng. He is the highest-ranking white police officer in the country, and the only senior apartheid police officer still serving. Yudel, now a specialist contractor, works for correctional services and receives three times his previous salary. Amid the diverging lines of investigations that evade the possibility of a single resolution by a single investigator, Ebersohn explores the importance of collaboration in post-TRC South Africa.

As in his earlier works, characterisation is key to Ebersohn's commentary and he uses his investigators to portray the types of social relationships that Gobodo-Madikizela argues are essential for a South African society 'trying to restore itself' ('Reconciliation' 139). Reinforcing the propensity of crime fiction to engage with epistemological formations between races and cultures, Ebersohn's investigators represent groups that were deemed disparate under apartheid. Each occupied a position of liminality. Yudel, a Jew from a marginalised group, sat outside of the society he investigated; Freek, an Afrikaner, was excluded from the inner circle of the police service because he refused to join the Security Branch; Abigail, an educated and professional black woman, lived apart from her own society. Independently they are not able to solve the crimes that connect the murders and kidnapping of Leon Lourens. Only through a unified effort, in which the interdependence of the previously disparate investigators is emphasised, are they able to solve the crimes that originated in the country's apartheid past.

The roles and functions of the police differ markedly from those in Ebersohn's apartheid crime fiction. The police are no longer the accused; rather, they have a conventional policing role. They do not pursue Yudel, and are not pursued by

him. Freek's role has also changed and Ebersohn uses him — the Afrikaner — to portray a democratic police service working to re-establish itself on an ethical base. He is the voice of experience, the measure of integrity, a representative of the new service. Even when the dying Sergeant William Tshabalala apologises for allowing a drunk to interfere with the important task he had been given, Freek reflects that 'he would rather see one of his good men killed in the line of duty than go bad and take money to help a prisoner escape' (268). Through Freek we are given a new perspective on the police service from the top down. The Commissioner is committed to new standards and erasing the practices of the past. Whereas in Ebersohn's apartheid stories political figures influenced the police, here the Commissioner is insistent: 'I don't want my regional commissioners and deputy commissioners taking orders from every member of an executive committee who thinks he's important' (243).

Ebersohn's depiction is not of an idealised police service that has moved on from a troubled past. The ineptitude of the Tshwane West police officers leads to their demise. Spending their shift sleeping and playing cards, they are murdered when Michael Bishop, a hero of the apartheid liberation struggle who raped Abigail as a child after saving her, escapes. Even though they are portrayed as men of integrity, Ebersohn makes it apparent that integrity alone is not a sufficient foundation for a progressive police service in the complex post-apartheid crime environment. They lack an understanding of the sophistication required to fight crime in the contemporary policing environment. Tshabalala was 'concentrating on a drunk man' (269) when he should have realised that it was more important to focus on Bishop, the prisoner whom Freek entrusted to his care.

Writing in 2008, after having travelled with police patrols in Alexandra, Reiger Park and other Johannesburg townships, Jonny Steinberg noted that despite a transition to democratic policing the police service had ‘not yet garnered sufficient moral authority to rise above the logic of the past in which violence was traded in return for money, for sympathy and for tactical co-operation’ (*Thin Blue* 68). When the new police service came into being in 1994 it comprised the same members who had policed the country under apartheid. ‘[W]hile there was a large measure of symbolic change, and some measure of leadership change, the police as a whole were not subjected to mass purges’ (Altbeker *Solving Crime* 75). The new police service was tainted by the past, a ‘disgraced’ body from which any semblance of ‘ordinary policing’ had vanished (Steinberg *Thin Blue* 94).

In his rendering of ideas of healing and reconciliation Ebersohn draws on the principle emerging from the TRC to establish as ‘complete a picture as possible’ of the injustices committed in the past (TRC 1: 104). This is a key to solving the crimes. Symbolising the black nation which has been raped by white opportunists for whom the resistance movement was no more than an excuse to fulfil a psychopathic desire, Abigail realises that she must come to terms with the trauma of her father’s death and her rape at Maseru. In a scene that recalls the TRC hearings she tells Yudel:

On one night in Maseru I was saved by a good man, defending an evil cause,
and on the next I was saved by an evil man, fighting for a good cause. (236)

Facing her personal truth by telling her story — in the TRC’s terms, her ‘narrative truth’ — Abigail is able to heal her relationship with her husband while exposing the hypocrisy of the abuses of Bishop, representative of those who had been celebrated

as ‘a genuine hero of the struggle’ (10), but who had done no more than use the conflict as an excuse for criminal activity.

Ebersohn uses Abigail, as she comes to terms with her own narrative, to direct to the question of complicity — one that he had confronted well before the end of apartheid. Eleven years after the TRC report was published, South Africans were still challenged by its findings. The Commission had pursued the question of complicity in a broad sense, seeking to ‘measure the culpability of specific sectors of the state and civil society’ beyond the police and armed forces (Sanders 2). Even though the broader sectors had not typically been directly implicated in gross human rights violations, the investigations and findings were ‘grounded in a juridical notion of complicity whereby agents in these sectors were usually not the principal perpetrators of the violations investigated but were accomplices or accessories after the fact’ (Sanders 2). Ebersohn explores this notion as his hero, Yudel, questions his own culpability. Yudel explains to Abigail that he served the apartheid government because he is a criminologist and all of the criminals were in the government’s cells. But, he realises ‘there was no avoiding the fact that he had been part of the apartheid apparatus’ (163):

The truth is that I was fascinated by it [. . .] I loved being at the centre of it. I loved it. No, let me not admit to that. I was fascinated by it. That’s enough.
(168)

Yudel’s words echo those of Ebersohn who, in 1984, referred to his ‘privileged’ position as a writer in South Africa, in ‘the centre of a battlefield’ (*Momentum* 18). He suggested events such as conflict, wars, revolutions, death,

illness and decay, which ‘may be tragedies to the normal and sane’, were ‘mother’s milk’ to the literary artist (16). He was at the centre of, and benefitted from — in words that he ascribes to Yudel — ‘perhaps the world’s most significant tragedy of the time’ (*October Killings* 168). The question of complicity for Yudel emerges from the question of complicity for Ebersohn. Acknowledging and accepting responsibility for one’s actions, and recognising, in the TRC’s terms, the ‘little perpetrator’ within, both writer and character are positioned to move toward the post-TRC context.

The October Killings ends with Ebersohn’s typical lack of resolution as he maintains his approach of confounding the conventions of crime fiction. As Bishop, who raped Abigail and whom she suspects of murder and kidnapping, escapes to Zimbabwe Ebersohn suggest that South Africa is poised to look outward and take its place in a transnational policing context. Ebersohn extends this idea further with Yudel and Abigail working together in Zimbabwe in *Those Who Love Night* (published in 2010).

After *Those Who Love Night* Ebersohn returned his setting to South Africa for *The Top Prisoner of C-Max* (published in 2012). While I am not discussing these two narratives further in my thesis, Ebersohn’s change in style for *The Top Prisoner of C-Max* is noteworthy because of his move to a thriller style of writing. In this narrative he fictionalises the world of South Africa’s three national prison gangs, the 26s, 27s and 28s — described by Steinberg as ‘avowedly political and yet horribly pathological’ (*The Number* 11). But, in contrast to his earlier works, the novel is less an investigation into crimes through which the country’s history is chronicled and

more a thriller portraying repeated acts of violence and murder by gangs and a psychopathic killer. The narrative does not turn on Yudel's psychological insights as his earlier works do; much of it is told from the perspective of the fleeing felons: the escapee Elia Dlomo, and the psychopath Oliver Hall. Consistent with the movement toward the thriller in Meyer's and Orford's works, the thrill of the chase is integral to the story in which Ebersohn's underlying concerns are the prevailing gang culture, the movement of that culture between the prisons and society, and the inadequacies of the policing system to deal with its power and invasiveness.

Although not specifically addressing crime fiction, in 'The Rise of the Surface: Emerging Questions for Reading and Criticism in South Africa' Sarah Nuttall discusses a move in South African fiction toward writing where meaning is not as deeply embedded as it has been in the past. She identifies in earlier writing a symptomatic reading of the past which saw a powerful political, philosophical and literary tradition of thought, the underneath and symptoms of which 'have been such potent signifiers for whom we think we are' (409). Writing in 2012 she identifies 'a need to think about the surface as a place from which to read — power, personhood and contemporary culture — actively' (409). She suggests that the younger generation of artists and writers draw increasingly on 'notions of the literal, the surface and the skin', and that perhaps this is not only generational but a coinciding of the movement from apartheid into a time when openness and transparency are mooted, and there is no longer the need to embed meaning so deep below the surface (416). She laments an impasse in the traditional approaches to criticism underlying symptomatic readings that consider 'current aesthetic languages to be degraded forms, rather than different kinds of conceptual vocabularies' (416). Whereas during

apartheid crime fiction was questioned as writing of a supposedly lighter vein, through the layered nature of their post-apartheid crime fiction, with the engagement of the thriller or the mystery on the surface and meaning embedded just below, the works of Meyer, Orford and Ebersohn are testament to the move in South African fiction to which Nuttall refers, and the historically contingent nature of genre to which Frow refers.

Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to examine how South African literature written in English (or in some cases translated into English) between 1979 and 2010 portrayed the police and policing. My interest was not in cataloguing all literature in English portraying the police. Rather, my focus has been on narratives which explore the vexed nature of policing in South Africa, and that support my contention that writing about the police is writing the political. That this political theme manifests connection especially in the highly censored South African context is central to my thesis.

During the apartheid years, under the constraints of censorship, writing realistically about the police was a means of writing about the political. I have drawn attention to this nexus through the chronological structure of my thesis in order to show how, through their portrayals of the police, writers have explored political and social moments as South Africa has undergone its transition to majority rule.

In many corners of the world the figure of the police officer is a troubling one. This has been particularly so in South Africa where, from its inception in 1913, the SAP struggled with the fundamental question of legitimacy. When policing services elsewhere in the western world gained in legitimacy following the world wars, the SAP did not, although it was based on westernised ideals of policing. The imposition of Apartheid in 1948 reinforced the colonial base of a service that was primarily policing the political. There emerged the disturbing paradox that the figure of the police officer who was — or should have been — responsible for the safety of the community was at the same time a figure that was despised, feared and loathed by the majority. While in some corners of South African society the police have been

applauded and held up as pillars of the community, for a far greater number their interactions with the police have brought trauma and horror.

Across the timespan that I have considered in this thesis South Africa underwent monumental socio-political change. Chronologically tracing these changes through portrayals of the police has enabled me to demonstrate the historically (and so politically) contingent nature of genre, or the manner in which ‘genre “acquires meaning” from the kinds of situation it relates to’ (Frow ‘Reproducibles’ 1630). I have drawn attention to how the writers have used genre as ‘a mediating structure between texts and the situations in which and on which they operate’ (Frow ‘Reproducibles’ 1630) in order to generate and shape knowledge. Choice of genre has been crucial for writers addressing the problematic subject of their police as they have exploited the different possibilities offered by particular genres to create particular ways of seeing, and have used genre as a medium for challenging state-sanctioned representations of the police and the nation’s historicity. Through my approach this thesis has also made apparent the transformative nature of genre, both its utility as an expression of the historical and its contribution toward the historical.

My thesis is framed by works of crime fiction, commencing and concluding with works by Ebersohn, a writer I have regarded as using crime fiction to chronicle the changing nature of his country. This framing has enabled me to trace South Africa’s political transition, as apparent through the portrayal of its police, while tracking the evolution from resistance writing to contemporary thriller. In chapter one I argued that Ebersohn’s distinctively South African crime fiction style emerged

from the fact that the role and function of South Africa's police in upholding the apartheid regime were so at odds with the principles of the crime novel that they problematized the writing and reception of that genre in South Africa. Central to Ebersohn's crime fiction at that time was his choice of Yudel Gordon, a psychologist, as his primary investigator. The police took a secondary role as Yudel analysed the psyche of the South African nation. His commentary is key to Ebersohn's use of the genre to create an awareness of the political, to engage readers and to try to transform thinking.

Ebersohn's work stands apart because he was one of the few writers who turned to crime fiction during the last decade of apartheid. I have explored his closely personalised approach and the manner in which he reflects his own experiences of being harassed by the Security Branch police. Through this I have shown that Ebersohn's crime fiction was a form of protest literature through which he overcame the censor's restrictions on writing about the police and government corruption, and exposed the constrictions imposed by the apartheid State.

In the transition from apartheid the spotlight turned to the actions of the police, especially the Security Branch. The significance of confession and complicity came to the fore, largely because of police revelations to the TRC. A number of the works I have discussed in this thesis are confessional accounts of Security Branch police officers. The impact that the narratives of these officers had on the white South African imaginary, and on the portrayal of the SAP more generally, has been a central interest of this thesis. A sense of uneasy identification between the writer and his or her police officer subject is evident in a number of these confessional accounts.

Notably, out of this unease, two writers, Pauw and Gobodo-Madikizela, were drawn to make their own confessions through their narratives, although these are very differently weighted in their books and make a very different history.

In chapter two I examined Pauw's use of confessional discourse. His narratives, in particular his first, *In the Heart of the Whore*, are ground-breaking for having shattered the official silence maintained about police death squad activities. Police confessions had a major social and political impact in the transition from apartheid. Using Bakhtin's work on the dialogic nature of confessional discourse I explored how Pauw could come to a new awareness of his 'self' and of his own complicity for apartheid through the dialogic exchange with the 'other', Dirk Coetzee, the commander of one of the SAP's death squads. I argued that as Pauw's and Coetzee's narratives came together they acknowledged a shared responsibility for the violations of the formerly empowered white perpetrators of apartheid, a position of shared responsibility to which the TRC would later turn attention.

As censorship restrictions eased, writers like Miles, Scholtz and Botha used realist fiction to rewrite the historical record, to reimagine the figure of the police officer that had been obscured during apartheid, and to remake memories that apartheid had silenced. In chapter three I examined the works of these writers, showing that their narratives touch on questions of Afrikaner guilt for apartheid. Their choice of the figure of the police officer and the institution of policing as a mechanism to confront Afrikaner culture is particularly charged. From the time the National Party came to power in 1948 police culture was embedded with the political strategies of Afrikaner nationalism: '[p]olicing, after all, was the coercive

precondition for apartheid' (Altbecker *Country at War* 140). I suggested that at a time when the nation was in the process of reconstituting its memory, the fictional works in this chapter creatively reimagined a policing past for South Africa, and that fiction was explicitly turned to — as indeed storytelling had been — by the TRC in its attempt to 'recover parts of the national memory that had hitherto been officially ignored' (TRC 1.113).

Returning to the colonial base of South African policing I discussed Scholtz's *A Place Called Vatmaar* as an example of subaltern literature that reimagines policing before apartheid. Revealing the crippling colonial roots of the SAP, Scholtz depicts the life of a coloured community in relation to the police. He sees the police as integral to the maintenance of white hegemony. In *Duty of Memory* Botha fictionalises revelations about Security Branch operations and counter-discursively shows how the traditional plaasroman underpinned and reinforced an Afrikaner consciousness that created and maintained apartheid. Using the figure of the police officer each of these writers usurps existing myths in order to turn attention to Afrikaner responsibility for apartheid, and challenge notions of Afrikaner supremacy and entitlement.

From 1996 the South African nation was preoccupied with the creation of a national narrative. Through the TRC police officers took centre stage, facing their victims and the nation, as they sought amnesty for their actions under apartheid. The media attributed the epithet 'prime evil' to Eugene de Kock, the SAP death squad commander focused on in works by Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela, discussed in chapter four. These two texts challenged South Africans to look beyond assigning the

blame for the evil of apartheid to this one police officer. I argued that Gordin mediates de Kock's confession, while Gobodo-Madikizela becomes occupied by him. Again I turned to Bakhtin's work on the dialogic to inform an appreciation of how individuals such as de Kock and Gobodo-Madikizela, who epitomised the polarities of apartheid, could come to understand each other and themselves. As with my discussions in chapter two about the relationship between Pauw and Coetzee, Sanders' discussion about complicity, and Farred's response to Sanders, were helpful in considering how, as an intellectual, Gobodo-Madikizela was aligned to de Kock through a 'folded-together-ness in being human' (5), and came to a sense of potential for brutality in all South Africans. Understanding the police officer who undertook some of the most horrific actions to sustain apartheid enabled Gobodo-Madikizela to better understand her own actions in opposing apartheid. But she was tortured by her decision to forgive him. She felt an 'overwhelmingly intense' discomfort, 'stemming from [her] fear of stepping into the shoes of a murderer through empathy' (*Human Being Died* 120), and felt herself being repeatedly asked what drew her 'to this evil man' (122). It was six months after her interviews with de Kock that she looked at the transcripts of the interviews — her avoidance of them 'symbolic of [her] inner struggle with the memory of those moments [. . . when she] had felt a human bond' with him (169).

As a contrast to the non-fiction works of Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela, in chapter four I also discussed Slovo's *Red Dust*. I argued that whereas Pauw, Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela were moved by the bonds they formed with the police officers who confessed to them personally, Slovo remained sceptical about the truths told by those who confessed to killing her mother. She was not alone in questioning

the right of such officers to be granted amnesty. Accordingly, her narrative is a fiction about discovery of the truth and confession, rather than being a narrative of confession. I explored her views that a victim is entitled to determine his or her own victim status, and is the sole agent (along with his or her loved ones) who can initiate a process of reconciliation. She uses fiction to remain distant from the matters about which she writes whereas Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela seek answers to questions about how those who were enemies under apartheid could co-habit in the new South Africa.

As the democratic nation emerged works by writers like Meyer, Orford and Ebersohn signalled a normalising of South African literature as post-apartheid crime fiction began to assert its position as a popular fiction form. In chapter five I returned to a discussion on crime fiction, examining the evolution of the genre from its tentative beginnings in the police procedural toward the thriller-style writing of later years, suggesting the focus on present danger rather than reflecting on or investigating past actions, echoes the country's changing socio-political context and anxieties.

South Africa's 1994 transition to democratic policing promised much. What transpired has fallen well short of a model of community-police trust. I argued that the works of Meyer, Orford and Ebersohn reveal the generic difficulty in situating the corrupt police officer in an emerging popular fiction form. In spite of the hope that democracy brought, I suggested that a decreasing confidence in South Africa's post-apartheid police is evident in each writers' crime series. Meyer's optimistic portrayal of the police in his first crime novel dissipates by his third. As with

Ebersohn, Orford's primary investigator is a psychological profiler and the police are assigned an increasingly unimportant and secondary role. Ebersohn's first post-apartheid work embraces the new relations and spirit of cooperation envisaged for democratic policing. Arguably, the move toward the thriller is consistent with the preoccupation across the globe with the entertainment factor of such writing; however, the realism in the underlying apprehension about the inadequacy of the police to deal with the threat to society of gang-related crime and violence is disturbingly South African. Jean and John Comaroff remind us that the 'South African preoccupation with law and order — or, rather, with its mediated representation — is neither new nor unique' (*Law and Disorder* 274). However, the context of the post-apartheid preoccupation is distinctly different from that under apartheid. In the post-apartheid world it is the downside of neoliberalism that underscores the plot of the thriller — 'an escalation in global incidences of lawlessness, due in part to the retraction of the state, in part to opportunities for outlaw activity arising out of deregulation and new business practices, in part to the ready market for the means of violence' (37).

In common with the narratives I have considered is a realist thread providing a link to the real world of the political, written by writers with predominantly journalistic backgrounds. In bringing together fictional and non-fictional realist portrayals of the police I have deferred to Paul Ricoeur's argument about the mimetic intention of fiction, in particular his proposition that fiction, by opening us to the unreal, 'leads us to what is essential in reality' (*Hermeneutics* 296). Wessel Ebersohn, Jacques Pauw, John Miles, Jeremy Gordin, Deon Meyer and Margie Orford all worked as journalist before establishing themselves as writers. They

personally experienced the difficulties of addressing the political and making the facts known in the shadow of the country's censorship laws during the apartheid years. Committed to the responsibilities of the journalist's role, they sought to expose the political and uncover the murky secrets of the police, the guardians of apartheid, so that readers might come to a clearer understanding of the politicisation of their police.

Turning attention to a realist interpretation of the narratives considered I am mindful of Louise Bethlehem's discussion, 'The Rhetoric of Urgency', in which she challenges representational authenticity in realist South African fiction. She suggests that during apartheid, '[w]riters and readers pervasively assumed that literature and life maintained a one-to-one relationship, and that mimetic writing was capable of providing unmediated access to the real' (1). This resulted in a 'disregard for the discursive codes which mediate between "realism" as a literary construct and the overdetermined social "reality" of apartheid' (3). Writing about shortcomings in the black literary tradition she argues that the need for urgency in delivering the message of apartheid gave rise — in Nkosi's words — to 'journalistic fact parading outrageously as imaginative literature' (4). Writers seeking to unambiguously convey the realities of life under apartheid led to a 'rule of realism over the South African literary canon in English' (9), a consequence of which was the atrophy of the mediatory function of language 'in order that fictional discourse might retrieve social agency, and that critical discourse might partake of this retrieval as a (vicariously) political speech-act' (11).

Bethlehem's concerns are not so much the overexploitation of realism but the manner in which the rhetoric of urgency under apartheid sought to 'weld signifier to signified' (12). The preference of realism in the narratives that I have discussed is unsurprising considering my choice of writers who were journalists and lived through apartheid. Post-apartheid literature has struggled to free itself of the anxieties of its underlying apartheid context and so it is equally unsurprising that the writers continued to turn to a genre with which they were so familiar. While a more recent movement away from realism is evident in trends such as in the crime fiction thriller, the inclination toward unambiguous rendering of the figure of the police officer does indeed capture aspects of the rhetoric of urgency about which Bethlehem raises concerns, for the writers I am concerned with seek to rectify narratives of the political.

At the core of this thesis is a general fascination with the figure of the police. Altbecker describes this aptly:

police officers are [. . .] an indispensable building block for any society. They are not separate from their society, and the nature of a police force and its work reflects the society of which they are part. The result: their successes and their failures are the success and failures of the whole social order [. . .] It is to them that we turn when our society has failed in some way, and as a result they spend much of their day poking through our nation's viscera, examining its half-digested excreta. They deal with a South Africa that cannot be seen from any other vantage point. (*Dirty Work of Democracy* 7)

In South Africa the figure of the police officer has been tightly bound to the historical moment. Tracking those moments, as recorded in literature portraying the

police, has enabled me to identify similarities between the narrative of the police and the narrative of the State.

The image of policing that this thesis reveals is different from that developed in the works of Reitz and Miller. Both focus on the role of the English detective in Victorian fiction, and identify a gradual public acceptance of, and identification with, the police as they gained legitimacy in Victorian England. They see a nexus between the increasing acceptance of the role of the detective and the rise of the Empire. In comparison, this analysis of South African fiction across a politically sensitive period has shown a fundamental suspicion of the police borne out of an absence of legitimacy. Initially the product of policing the political during apartheid, the absence of legitimacy has been reinforced over the last decade as the government and the police have failed to control spiralling crime rates. This is despite the glimmer of hope at the time of the transition to democracy that legitimacy might be attained.

In Victorian fiction the figure of the detective became the hero, encapsulating aspects of what the strengthening Empire stood for. In contrast, in South African literature the police officer has symbolised corrupt and inept governance. Individual officers of integrity have been depicted but even they have struggled to reach and then retain hero status. Ultimately the policing role has proven a burden with even the heroes struggling against a debilitating national psyche.

A question that this thesis opens up is the image of, specifically, black police officers in South African fiction. Even though black officers made up just over fifty-six percent of the 123 000 police officers of the SAP in 1991 (Brewer 276), there

have been few significant portrayals of them in literature in the period I have considered. Miles' *Deafening Silence* is a notable exception and Zakes Mda includes a number of interactions with black police officers whom the villagers call 'dogs of the government' (39) in *Ways of Dying*. This is despite the fact that forces of African officers known as 'kitskonstabels', or instant constables (because some received three weeks of training at most), were used in the townships for 'Black-on-Black' policing (Brewer 304). The use of kitskonstabels had been a key strategy in the government's attempts to regain control of African townships in 1986 (Institute of Criminology 8). Publicly they were to provide community policing in the townships, but in reality they were under the operational command of the SAP's riot squad.

Referred to as 'the dogs of the SAP, doing all their hunting and watching' (Catholic Institute 19), the kitskonstabels earned a reputation of being brutal and lawless, inflicting atrocities on township communities (Institute of Criminology 5). The officers themselves claimed that they had been used by the SAP. They were treated well after their training but once the riots had been quelled they felt they were treated 'like dogs' (31). Through the actions of these officers the international media image of South Africa's police changed from one of being white bullies to that of black on black violence (Institute of Criminology 9).

Even as this thesis was being written yet another chapter in the history of the SAPS was unfolding. Protests about the delivery of services 'to those who were yet to taste the social and economic benefits of democracy promised' by the ANC had been on the rise since 2004 (Dixon 1141). From 2004 to 2008 the number of gatherings involving what has come to be known as the 'service delivery protests'

ranged from 622 to 860 per year (Dixon 1141). Four people were killed by police during the demonstrations up to 2009 (Steinberg 'Policing, State Power' 190). That same year Jackie Selebi, the country's first black Police Commissioner, resigned and the following year was convicted of corruption. Selebi's political appointment by President Thabo Mbeki in 2000 had been questioned on the basis that as an ANC career veteran he was not a police officer and so had no knowledge of the organisation he had been asked to run (189). Bheki Cele replaced Selebi as Police Commissioner and set about remilitarizing the police ranks signalling what Steinberg refers to as 'a naked return to an apartheid legacy' (189). Cele introduced Tactical Response Teams whose members were 'trained to apprehend highly armed and militarily trained groups of robbers' (189). In February 2011 those teams were attached to the division responsible for public order policing and so 'put in front of street protests and demonstrations' (189). Between February and July 2011 eleven people were killed by police during the service delivery protests (Steinberg 'Policing, State Power' 190). The policing of these protests had become violent and heavy-handed, 'more likely to provoke further violence than prevent its recurrence', suggesting they were viewed as a threat to public order rather than evidence of a democratic right to be protected by the police (Dixon 1142).

Partly in response to the protests, in July 2011 Nathi Mthethwa, the Minister of Police, articulated a policy of maximum (up to and including lethal) force (1142). As Bill Dixon points out in his analysis of the policing of insurrection in South Africa from Sharpeville in 1960 to Marikina in 2012, it is difficult to reconcile the Minister's position with the ideals of a democratic South Africa, expressed in the Constitution and the South African Police Service Act of 1995, that a member who is

lawfully authorised to use force may use ‘only the minimum force which is reasonable in the circumstances’ (1143). But, as Dixon suggests, it seems little has changed: ‘much as the old “SAP” did at Sharpeville in 1960 [. . .] the “new” SAPS resorts all too readily to the use of excessive, and often lethal, force in the face of what the police, their leaders and members of local and national elites see as insurrectionary action’ (1132). In 2011 Cele was suspended from duty as a result of allegations of corruption. He was replaced by Riah Phiyega, the first female Commissioner of Police.

On 16 August 2012 the Tactical Response Teams were among officers involved in the response to the miners striking at the Lonmin platinum mine at Marikana. Thirty-four of the striking miners were shot dead by police. Phiyega’s initial response was to claim that the police had been obliged to use maximum force to defend themselves against the miners (Dixon 1143). She was later criticised for this response in the findings of the Farlam Commission of Enquiry into the deaths of the miners, released in June 2015. In October 2015 she was suspended following the Commission’s findings. In ‘Representing Marikana’ Lucy Graham discusses four representations of the Marikana massacre, investigating ‘what cultural texts about the [. . .] massacre can tell us about post-“rainbow nation” South Africa after two decades of democracy’ (834). There is no doubt that the field to further my analysis of the portrayal of the police in South African literature is rich with opportunity.

Endnotes

- ¹ Human Rights Lawyers had been given access to death row prisoners as part of the government's strategy to distance itself from the more loathsome aspects of repression and as a prelude to negotiations toward democratisation (Bell and Ntsebeza 12).
- ² The Human Rights Committee of South Africa began in 1981 as the Detainees' Parents Support Committee. Its name was later changed to the Human Rights Commission and subsequently the Human Rights Committee. The organisation compiled evidence on repressive methods and practices used by the apartheid state to maintain power. Their publication, *A Crime Against Humanity: Analysing the Repression of the Apartheid State* is a compilation of data and information gathered over fifteen years from 1981.
- ³ The 'indirect' political mobilisation of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and police manipulation of interventions and involvement in the professional execution of attacks were referred to as being conducted by a 'third force' (Bonner and Nieftagodien 191).
- ⁴ On 21 March 1960 at Sharpeville, sixty-seven people were killed by police. Many of them were shot in the back as they fled police action in response to an anti-pass law demonstration. A week later on 8 April both the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) were banned under the Unlawful Organisations Act.

The Public Safety Act, Number 3 of 1953, empowered the Head of State to declare a State of Emergency in part or all of South Africa if it appeared circumstances had arisen which seriously threatened the safety of the public and the maintenance of public order, and that the ordinary law of the land was inadequate to enable the government to ensure the safety of the Public and to maintain public order (HRC 38).
- ⁵ The term 'Total Strategy' came into common use under President PW Botha who first introduced it in a 1977 White Paper on Defence, while he was a Minister. The strategy was portrayed by its authors as 'the apartheid government's response to the perceived threat of the "total onslaught"' — the threat to South Africa (and the Western world) of the Soviet Union's designs on the strategic value of South Africa, and the threats by revolutionary forces within South Africa that were intent on supporting and fuelling this threat (HRC 7). This strategy was formalised with the declaration of a State of Emergency in 1985. The objective of the strategy was to 'smash resistance and impose grand apartheid by maximum force' (HRC 175).
- ⁶ The compilation was subsequently published in the same year in book form as *Policing and the Law*.
- ⁷ The SACP was declared unlawful in 1950 under the Suppression of Communism Act.
- ⁸ In considering how Pauw, and Gordin and Gobodo-Madikizela, whose works I discuss in chapter four, could demonstrate empathy for the police officers whose actions were associated with evil by the general population I am indebted to the work of Susan VanZanten Gallagher in *Truth and Reconciliation: The Confessional Mode in South African Literature* and Stevan Weine in *Testimony After Catastrophe: Narrating the Traumas of Political Violence*. Both analyse confessional discourse through the application of Bakhtin's work on dialogism and the formation of identity. VanZanten Gallagher examines the historical development of confession, and considers the rhetorical contract that confessions propose. Weine advocates for the application of Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic as a pragmatic approach to exploring testimony in a manner that offers both structure and freedom to the person testifying. Both writers privilege the eventness of testimony, and assert testimony or confession as an act through which the narrator or writer engages in a process of self-constitution.
- ⁹ I use the term 'confessor' to refer to the person receiving the confession, consistent with Susan VanZanten Gallagher's use of the term in *Truth and Reconciliation: The Confessional Mode in South African Literature*, and the term 'confessant' to refer to the person making the confession.

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- ¹⁰ In January 2015 the Justice and Correctional Services Minister approved de Kock's release on parole.
- ¹¹ Ebersohn's *Those Who Love Night* was published in 2010. This story features Yudel Gordin and Abigail Bukala but is set in Zimbabwe.
- ¹² Ian Smith's white rule in neighbouring Rhodesia came to an end in 1979 with an interim government put in place prior to the elections of February 1980. These elections saw a move to black rule with Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union gaining power.
- ¹³ In 1953, as part of its policy under the Group Areas Act to designate specific areas for particular racial groups, the South African government created the Native Resettlement Board. This board was responsible for the removal of Africans from Sophiatown, and their resettlement in parts of Soweto. Two days before the removals were scheduled to take place 2000 police armed with automatic rifles invaded Sophiatown and, in the pouring rain, moved 110 families to the new township of Meadowlands in Soweto. The removal of families continued and in February 1955 the first bulldozers arrived to dismantle the structures of Sophiatown. (The Destruction of Sophiatown)
- In 1958 Cato Manor was declared a white zone under the Group Areas Act. This move was ultimately abandoned because of rioting. Riots in 1959 in which nine police officers were killed (four white and five black) put an end to blacks being forcibly removed. (History of Cato Manor)
- ¹⁴ Despite the lifting of the ban, the cover of the British publication, which showed a photograph of a painting of the back view of a naked man lying on his front, was deemed a representation of pent-up violence, and remained banned.
- ¹⁵ Victoria Mxenge, an attorney and anti-apartheid activist was stabbed and shot by four men who ambushed her when she arrived at her home in Umlazi in August 1985. Her husband, Griffiths Mxenge, a prominent human rights lawyer who represented ANC activists, was brutally murdered in November 1981. Dirk Coetzee, Almond Nofomela and David Tshikalanga were found guilty of the murders of the Mxenges. They applied for and were granted amnesty for the murders by the TRC.
- ¹⁶ 'Askari' was the term used to describe operatives such as Almond Nofomela and Joseph Mamasela, ANC comrades who were turned to become informants and killers for the security police.
- ¹⁷ The title given to this documentary was de Kock's nickname. Pauw notes that in 1995 Ferdi Barnard told him that de Kock was originally nicknamed 'Prime Evil' after a Ninja Turtle from a children's television program because de Kock always had 'a very devious way of putting a thing together that nobody else could think of', although it was not necessarily in an evil way (*Into the Heart of Darkness* 62). Barnard said the name was just a joke, but then everyone started using it.
- ¹⁸ The South African Defence Force (SADF) was as much a part of the security force responsible for maintaining apartheid and destabilisation strategies as was the SAP. Overt and covert units of the SADF played a political role (HRC 189). The SADF was among those groups named by the TRC which it considered had committed human rights violations (1.69).
- ¹⁹ There are some differences in the spelling of the last names of the Motasis across the various accounts of their murders. In *Country of My Skull* Antjie Krog refers to them as Richard and Irene Mutase. I have used the spelling that appears consistently in *Deafening Silence, Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid's Assassins* (Jacques Pauw), and the transcripts of the TRC Amnesty application and decision for Paul van Vuuren.
- ²⁰ Under the Population of Registration Act 1950 every person was classified, according to physical appearance and social acceptability, into into three racial groups: 'White', 'Black' ('African', 'Native' and/or 'Bantu') and 'Coloured'; the last of which was further subcategorized into 'Cape Malay', 'Griqua', 'Indian', 'Chinese' and 'Cape Coloured' (O'Malley). Racial classification

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- determined each individual's destiny in terms of 'franchise, mobility, residential right and social benefits and services provided by the state'. The classification law was a foundation of the apartheid system of government (HRC 148).
- 21 The map appears in *Deafening Silence* but not *Kroniek uit die dooffpot*. It may have been added to reinforce the relationships between the places referred to in the narrative for a wider English-speaking, non-South African readership.
- 22 Born in 1962, Nokuthual Simelane was a member of the ANC underground in Swaziland. She served as a courier travelling in and out of South Africa. In 1983 she was about to graduate from the University of Swaziland, having completed her Bachelor of Arts, when she went missing. Her mother received no word of her fate until 1997 when a former police security informant testified that she had been abducted by white and black police, and kept prisoner and tortured on a farm. (Gobodo-Madikizela *Narrating our Healing* 40)
- 23 'Ubuntu is the mainspring of the African humanist world-view, an attitude of tolerance and empathy grounded in the interdependence of the individual and the collective. It is conveyed in the expression: "*Motho ke motho ka batho babang*" — "A person is a person through other people.'" (Simpson 248)
- 24 On 14 December 1989 near Motherwell, in an incident that became known as the 'Motherwell Bombings', police officers Sergeant Amos Temba Faku, Sergeant Desmond Daliwonga Mapipa, Warrant Officer Mbalala Glen Mgoduka and Xolile Shepherd Sakati were travelling in a police vehicle which was blown up with explosives. The officers were killed because they had threatened to expose white colleagues who were responsible for the deaths of black activists Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mhlawauli (referred to as the 'Craddock Four') in June 1985. De Kock was instrumental in planning the Motherwell Bombings.
- 25 De Kock was refused amnesty for his involvement in the incidents which occurred on 26 March 1992 near Nelspruit, when Oscar Mxolisi Ntshota, Glenack Masilo Mama, Lawrence Jacey Nyalende and Khona Gabele were shot and killed at an ambush on the road to KwaNyamazane, and later the same day when Tiisetso Leballo was killed.
- 26 Amendments to the Internal Security Act in 1986 added a category of detention without trial. The Internal Security Act, 1982, replaced the plethora of security-related legislation of South Africa. It essentially blocked political expression (HRC 29).
- 27 Literally meaning 'Brotherhood', the Broederbond was a 'tightly-knit society of Afrikaner males who were the core of the Afrikaner nationalist movement and responsible, to a considerable extent, for the rise of Afrikaner political and economic power since the 1930s' (Gordimer *Essential Gesture* 336).
- 28 C-Max was established as a model maximum security prison.
- 29 In 'Reading Geldenhuys: Constructing and deconstructing the Norwood killer' Hook, of the Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand, provides a critique of his research project on Geldenhuys. His research was published in 2003, the year prior to the publishing of *A Human Being Died that Night*.
- 30 Deon Meyer's *Feniks* was published in 1996 and translated into English as *Dead Before Dying* in 1999. In 'Perspectives on the Detective Novel in Afrikaans' Hans Ester describes Chris Moolman's *Sweepslag* (1996), *Operasie Ché* (1997), *Die asem van Ghaddafi* (1998) and *Komplot* (2000) as examples of 'how an author can write James Bond-like suspense novels that still maintain an element of historical comment' (172). He also discusses how Etienne van Heerden combines the identifiable tradition of the detective novel and the farm novel in *Toorberg* (1986), *Kikoejoe* (1996) and *Die swye van Mario Salviati* (2000).

³¹ Deon Meyer worked as a journalist for *Die Volksblad*, a daily newspaper in Bloemfontein, before turning to writing fiction.

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