

THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN NOVEL WRITTEN IN
THE STATE OF EMERGENCY BETWEEN 1985 AND 1990.

MA THESIS IN AFRIKAANS EN NEDERLANDS.

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**THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT IN THE SOUTH-AFRICAN NOVEL WRITTEN IN
THE STATE OF EMERGENCY**

The nature of the subject is contested in post-modern linguistic and literary theory. I propose that the disappearance of the subject in the text is a consequence of materialist philosophy, and follows on the rejection of the notions of the transcendental and metaphysical human subjects. Within the context of South African novels written in the State of Emergency between 1985 and 1990, the subject is urgently and dramatically reaffirmed. In a context of social crisis the communal nature of the subject is re-established in an African context different to the terminal nihilist nature of the Western, individually defined subject. As such, South African culture is typified by the Afro-European tension between the cultures of apocalypse and liberation, and an anthropology of South African literature is of necessity theological and prophetic in nature.

**THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT IN THE SOUTH-AFRICAN NOVEL WRITTEN IN
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PREFACE

This thesis aims to investigate the literature written in and around South Africa during the State of Emergency in the period 1985 to 1990.

A meta-linguistic philosophical framework within which my literary analysis takes place is sketched out. A subjective and personalised style foreign to traditional academic discourse is used in this part of the thesis, as the nature of the argument which is developed depends on a personalised form of dialectic to examine the issues under discussion. The thesis continues in examining the political and aesthetic context of the State of Emergency. Thereafter a literary semantic analysis of the function of the subject in a literary text follows, whereupon the texts themselves are examined. The textual analyses are accompanied by extensive quotation from the texts themselves, as I cannot assume my reader to have examined all the texts under discussion. I conclude with generalised deductions about the nature of South African literature of the period.

I wish to look at the ideological concerns of the texts under discussion. In doing this I will lift out the central themes of the texts concerned. I will identify common themes and common metaphors. I am furthermore interested to discuss issues relating

to period literature, and whether there is a common aesthetic and ideological approach within the texts examined.

My central hypothesis is that the social crisis affecting the subcontinent has given rise to a literature in crisis. This is displayed by the themes novels concern themselves with, as well as the way the novels are written.

I contend further that relationships in crisis, within a context of social crisis are the central metaphor of the period. This is extrapolated to the writers' relationship to their texts, such that the texts themselves are in crisis, in terms of form.

INTRODUCTION

An anthropology of literature

The study of cultural phenomena is crucial in a political context where these influence political developments. It is in this context that it is necessary to develop an anthropology of literature, if it is literature which one is studying.

Prior delimitations of disciplines are not always useful frameworks of analysis. It is for this reason that I spell out a Metaphysical context for my epistemology, and define my methodology of cultural analysis (a linguistics applied to literature - Literary Semantics) as an Ontology of aesthetic universals.

Nonetheless, as literature is contextual, macro-social factors are of greater significance in analysing literature, than mere linguistic, 'cultural' criteria; even though literary analysis cannot be reduced to sociology or anthropology, due to its aesthetic attempt to deal with universals. What follows provides some idea of how literature could be approached within the present day South African context.

We need to create a systematic analysis of the cultural forces shaping South African society. The dialectical relationship between the cultures of liberation and apocalypse reflects the

conflict of interests between state and people. The ruling hegemony is breaking down. The alternative social metaphor has been established. Those who rule do not shape the societal metaphor. Those who shape the societal metaphor do not rule.

The fundamental contradictions at the roots of the state's hegemony and the culture of liberation originate out of this juxtaposition. We have moved from a politics of realism towards the ideological justification of unreality. The hope of liberation is offset by the irony of relative powerlessness. The hope of control is offset by the cost of it's maintenance. The dialectical progression crucial to the furtherance of either culture is impeded by the myth constructed around the 'other'. Central to both parties' symbolic system is the demonisation of the antagonists.

Swart gevaar and racist regime are the fundamental projections which shift the shadow from within one culture to the other. Yet, for either side to extend it's aims, there needs to occur a deconstruction of it's central claims. Whether this can be done without extensive damage to the control over the popular mind remains to be seen.

Liberation forces need to operate within a liberalised context if they are to effectually extend their influence. The state needs to co-opt independent agents if it is to maintain control. Central to this procedure is some extent of demythologisation. The dead end of the Western apocalypse can only be offset by

restructuring the psyche within a neo-african cultural framework. The achievement of liberation can only flow from harnessing the material base of the system, which implies a liberalisation of the culture of liberation.

CHAPTER 1: TEXTUAL AND SOCIETAL PRAXIS.

Given the above analysis of the 'cultural struggle', the specific function and nature of literature within South African society can be more closely examined. Various approaches are possible, and the issues which need to be examined are diverse. The primary process by which literature achieves what it does might be a worthwhile entrance to the question at issue. Thus the following study attempts to quantify the convergence of textual and societal praxis within South African discourse.

South African literary discourse demonstrates a dialectical relationship between an apocalyptic and liberatory culture within the hierarchy of power relations in our society.

In the pre-revolutionary context of the succeeding States of Emergency since 1985, writers have increasingly linked aesthetic and political transformation. As linguistic constructs of gender, class, ethnicity have become politically controversial, so there has been a convergence of societal and textual praxis. Equally, as direct political had become increasingly costly, so cultural struggle increased in importance as a political strategy.

It might be expected that changing power relationships which restructure society would affect it's 'cultural' structure. The relationships of the subject to nature and to others, a broadly useful definition of culture, should be subject to change within

this context. The portrayal of human experience within diverse forms of expression might consequently indicate the nature of this change.

The ideological transformation of linguistic/cultural constructs to establish hegemony should also be apparent. The politics of perception become important where political struggle occurs on a symbolic front. Equally so, the cultural diversity resultant of social stratification and the divide and rule strategy of apartheid, imply that any political campaign needs to generate commonly powerful symbols if it is to receive broad support. Cultural expression would reflect political perception and the symbolism which informs it.

Literary texts specialise in linguistic strategies which transform the semantic categories of normal societal discourse. They also utilise the socially powerful mythical structures available in discourse for their own ends. An analysis of literary discourse within a particular social context of cultural struggle might consequently quantify the dialectic of social change. This becomes relevant in an academic context where reductionists theories of political analysis are inadequate in shaping an understanding of social experience.

It thus becomes valid to study 'fictional' cultural forms to determine what symbols inform political perceptions, as well as how and why this is the case. The dialectical structuration of

metaphorical processes within literary discourse functions in an indirect way as the projective metaphysical voice of societal change. The collective reading of individual texts exposes the dynamic tension to be resolved in the restructuration of a new social discourse/social order. The specific nature of the relationship between cultural forces and their material context can thus be described in an informed way.

Progressive claims upon literature, especially within the context of campaigning for a 'people's culture', problematise traditional aesthetic concepts. On the other hand, analysis of the relationship of culture to class implies that the literary idealism of most South African texts, as well as their cultural/political function militates against the ability of literary activism to transform society in real terms.

The tension between proponents of social realism, populist culture, aesthetic idealism and apocalyptic individualism structures our literary discourse. Each tendency reflects a particular configuration of the relationships of: culture and material context; political and aesthetic transformation; subject and society; the material and metaphysical nature of the text. It becomes important to determine how these relationships present themselves within a text to structure it accordingly. A socio-linguistic/literary semantic study of particular texts may provide a means of description and explanation.

Explicit intentions inform the work of many South African writers. Black Consciousness, Feminism, Socialism, Nationalism exist in close proximity to one another within local writing. The implicit consequences of modernist and post-modernist vocalisations of the human condition of the individual western subject also present a specific position. The simultaneous co-existence of these ideological forces within a particular society present a valuable matrix within which one can evaluate the ways in which literature and its societal context interrelate, as well as how particular social conditions are transmuted in cultural forms.

Thus the political nature of the text can be inherently dealt with, rather than in terms of extrinsic categories; as the text is an utterance within a social context, rather than an aesthetic abstraction which is set above its' social context. Consequently the socio-linguistic analysis of a text would describe the aesthetic transformation of politically controversial social constructs within the context of broader discourse.

In a context of politicised discourse all literature becomes involved in the generation or maintenance of ideology, as the discourse which is aesthetically transformed is inherently 'political'. Literary activity in turn, is drawn into societal transformation. Where writers take up the central political themes shaping cultural struggle within a particular society, the aesthetic transformation of language converges with the political redefinition of central social constructs.

Idealised culture is a glorification of material power. The naked force of government is clothed by the aesthetics of justification. The relative nature of the state is exploded to an unquestionable eternal manifesto for humanity in an absolutised condition, whereby the crude contradictions of a political system are sublimated to the explanatory antimony fundamental to the tensions of existence.

Alternately state culture functions as the superstructure wherein material contradictions essential to, and resultant of the existence of the state are resolved.

The limitation of dissent to intellectual, cultural expression, creates a successful dualism wherein political challenge can be defeated; thought without power lives at the mercy of power, and does so by serving that power. Loyal dissent, aesthetic indignation, merely serves to irritate, and thus entertain the powerful.

The creation of a protected space, wherein people's culture can grow, is creating the opportunity for the idealisation of political struggle; an idealisation which is nostalgic, purely ideological, or futuristic. To speak of liberation within an oppressed space, or a space which exists at the benevolent or strategic mercy of the state, is to remove actual meaning from

liberation. Cultural struggle, though it may mobilise fiction cannot afford to fictionalise a struggle for liberation.

The nakedness of confrontation is hidden within the victories of pretence. Our true weakness is excused by a false sense of victory. Cultural activity flows from political struggle. Cultural activity must be fundamentally subversive if it is to challenge the anaesthetisation of the state successfully. Culture cannot be escape. It needs to be confrontational. One cannot afford to create a privileged romanticised space.

Literature may be described as transforming language. As such its political nature can be disclosed. It transforms language forms to achieve literary effects; it attempts to document, pre-empt or cause at least linguistic, if not directly societal, change.

Literary language usage becomes literary in forcing an implied reading of a language form. It achieves this by disjunctive discourse which disallows 'normal' interpretation. Thus it breaches the communicative presuppositions which are basic to a communal societal understanding. The communal understanding is only restored when an implied reading is possible.

Common understanding of significant societal constructs is essential to the maintenance of hegemony. Any change in hegemony is dependent upon changing communal understanding, without destroying its basis of existence. The literary manipulation of

language as described above is crucial to this process. The significance of rhetoric and propaganda within times of social change is self-evident.

As much as specific societal constructs such as ethnicity, gender, class and culture become controversial and undergo semantic change within a context of political change, and specific ideologies are generated around them; so language carries, and changes their impact. As literary discourse specialises in the transformation of language constructs, and generates ideology, so the study of the convergence of aesthetic and societal transformation within a context of social change becomes important in understanding that change.

Implied language usage can be classified into primary and secondary forms, depending upon the way in which language presuppositions are defied. Primary forms question the offered intention of a language form. Secondary forms question the rationality or relevance of a particular utterance. It may be that politically transformative discourse can be meaningfully analysed in utilising this distinction.

The construction of hegemony would possibly utilise secondary forms of implied language usage, because the fundamental social contract needs to be maintained, while the deconstruction of hegemony would attempt to demonstrate in analysis that a discrepancy exists between political intention and utterance.

Irony, myth, ideology, symbol: all feature within the discourse of social analysis.

The primary forms of implied language usage: irony, satire, parody etc. are all rereading strategies, in relationship to an already existing discourse and intent on questioning the underlying assumptions of discourse. An emphasis is placed on the relative nature of discourse, and the locus of utterance is the individual.

Often, all discourse is described as conforming to either primary or secondary implied language forms, with the denial of the existence of normative discourse. The distinction between the emphasis on the two seems to be ontological, with materialist irony and parody, versus metaphysical metonymy or metaphor, being possible categories of understanding.

CHAPTER 2

EPISTEMOLOGY: AN AUTHOR IN SEARCH OF A METALANGUAGE

I propose a theory of knowledge which derives semiotics and anthropology from metaphysics. The modern history of knowledge has resulted in the disintegration of the field of knowable objects. Post-modernist theories of literature have displayed the anarchistic possibilities which lie within the generative nature of the human subject, yet they have failed to generate sufficient confidence in their own abilities.

We are left with the feeling that people are playing a sophisticated game which doesn't really have rules. The central tension is well illustrated by comparing Deconstructive and Marxist criticism. The marxist call for a committed form of criticism goes with the attempt to form an analysis of literature in the service of a metalanguage. The deconstructive committment to the denial of a metalanguage results in an anarchic approach to criticism which cannot give us a valid reason why we should engage in it.

Essentially it is my feeling that either positions are a form of sophistry, enhancing rhetorical method to the status of theory. Critics in search of a metalanguage use the rhetorical method of Metaphor, while their opponents use the rhetorical method of Irony.

Meta-linguistic Metaphor - myth - aligns hegemony and metaphysics, even if it is only a pseudo-metaphysic of meanings generated by a materialist subject in an affirmative interaction within 'society'.

Meta-linguistic Irony - scepticism if you will - is discontinuous with hegemony and leaves the individual in a solipsistic form of idealism which declares the subject a cynical demigod unable to disbelieve in itself. The former is an idealistic materialism, while the latter is a materialistic idealism. As Plato has already dealt with the Sophists it seems necessary to move beyond this point.

Johan Degenaar has illustrated the above tension in the criticism of literature in his essay on Marxism and Deconstruction (Degenaar,1990,p164); reaching a synthesis within the play of differences by speaking of the glorious possibilities of the free actualised subject in Nietzschean terms.

Yet Degenaar's humanist optimism also fails in that it accepts irrationality without properly coming to terms with the terms of this irrationality. It is exactly this which a Catholic Metaphysics addresses itself to.

If irrational presuppositions are inevitable within human thought we may conclude that they are necessary precursors to human knowledge. Furthermore, any human science has untestable axioms, as well as statements which cannot be proved right or wrong (See

Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem (Hofstadter, 1981,p58/9)). Furthermore, any Science requires a scientist, which implies; at least within the human sciences; a commitment to reflexivity and self-knowledge.

We come to know ourselves in a socially reflexive act which requires faith in what is beyond us, as well as what we ourselves are. We are thus led into Ontology, Metaphysics and Epistemology, for in dealing with ourselves in a social context we are forced to deal with the Numinous questions centering around issues of truth, beauty, justice and love.

Let us, more immediately then, deal with some basic issues regarding human knowledge.

To know we must exist, and exist socially. We must be in a context, and in a way, that context must be within us. We may speak of an erotic transitivity with regard to a phenomenological theory of knowledge. Our context, thus, includes us in space, in time, and space and time within us.

Furthermore: we are persons, involved in a social dialectic where we know. We cannot know without being known, as our knowledge takes place within a symbolic, physical field; within the social construct which is language. (See further M. Versfeld's essay on Aquinas's notion of truth as Adequatio, (Bobik, 1970,p81)) We

know, thus, because we acquire language from other active human subjects.

Language would unite sign, concept, meaning and referent, as much as knowledge has a subject, an object and something by which the object is known - the concept of the object united with it's outer form, the sign. (Interestingly enough, when there is no evident outer form, we enunciate this outer form for ourselves in some inner way.)

Human knowledge, then, in all it's forms based on an irrational self-reflexive act which structures the hidden I, may be considered a metaphysical act due to it's irrational, though reasonable framework of presuppositions and untestable elements.

In the same way then, knowledge acquired in the use of language, is both material and metaphysical at the same time, in uniting sign, concept, meaning and referent. The epistemological experience by which we know ourselves as subject points to the notion of a transcendental subject.

The central point of integration which unites the transcendental and the relative experience of the human subject in time and space is found in the two doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, read with the epistemological perspective of a dialectic phenomenology where Subject, Object and means of Knowledge anchor one another. The acquired nature of language

teaches us that any human subject cannot be anchored in itself, it has to be anchored in another Subject.

It is irrational yet reasonable to assume that human subjects are objects of God's knowledge, given the fact that we cannot be held responsible for our own existence or creation, as we experience an universe we cannot control, and then only partially. It behoves us then to understand human knowledge according to the way in which God knows us.

God knows humanity by His creative act, and also essentially within the Incarnation which acts as bridge between Godly and human knowledge. God knows humanity in the historical Jesus, humanity knows the Father God through the intervention of the same Jesus, via the medium of the Spirit of God.

We shall follow the path of analogy, which allows us at the same time to develop a theology as well as an anthropology. It is well known that humans are spoken of as being made in (or into) the image of God. Let us look then at the essential human tenets.

Humans are people because of other people, social beings, being both material, physical beings, yet rational and metaphysical in their use of reason within Language. They are free moral agents capable of generating and attributing meaning to material and abstract aspects of their experience.

They are capable of knowledge via the use of their senses, and enter into complex relationships with one another. Thus they are both objects as well as subjects of knowledge, experiencing nature and society creatively.

What then do humans tell us of God in being made in God's image? We may speak of the community of the Godhead in which Father knows Son in the Spirit, Son knows Spirit in the Father, Father knows Spirit in the Son. The very essence of the attribution of meaning within any language act points to this.

Deixis is at the centre of the attribution of meaning within the Language act. The active subject engages in placing the Other in language by creating an union of sign, meaning, concept and referent within the I, the Self within time and space. The Transcendental, Absolute Subject is beyond time and space, where Being is Eternity and Existence is Essence.

Each member of the Trinitarian community sustains the Others in the musical Grammar of Being. Deixis (Greek for Pointing) points us thus to the Incarnate Word which was with God from the beginning, was made Flesh, was crucified and rose from the Dead, to enable creation to be taken into the musical grammar of being.

Creation, Incarnation, Death and Resurrection are a single complete act, spanning eternity and historically created time. Any act is an imitative act in which the unique suchness of the

generative subject analogically fullfills the interactive dance of Being.

The mediation of the Incarnational Presence creates for the subject within time a Sacramental Universe by which the unique and transient nature of all experience centred in the Self is linked to the Absolute and, by which a transitive knowledge of all Being becomes possible. (See A.E. Bowman : A Sacramental Universe, 1939) and M Versfeld, "Reflections on Evolutionary Knowledge" in Our Selves(Versfeld 1979,p113)).

Many modern approaches to philosophies of language and communication ignore completely, and sometimes deliberately, the transcendental nature of Language and the metaphysical nature of language experience. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein speaks of the unsayable Tao, and Chomsky posits, similar to Jung, an universal 'depth structure', a generative, transformational grammar; whereas the structuralists and post-structuralists undermine their own ability and desire to communicate by making of language an artificial abstract depersonalised systemic edifice, which, in following Descartes, is discontinuous with experience within time and space.

CHAPTER 3

TOWARDS A METAPHYSICAL THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT IN THE TEXT IN THE FACE OF POST-MODERNISM.

It is surprising, given the 'discovery' of the unconscious within the discipline of psychology, that linguistics has remained for the larger part technicist, and even more surprising that philosophy itself has become embroiled in a solipsistic attempt to engage itself by virtue of a positivistic meta-theory which is a parody of metaphysics.

It is therefore important that we deal with dualism and alienation within modern theories of language. It is obvious that we need to do this in a way which will escape from the alienation which, we propose, is indicative of modernist and some post-modernist theories of language.

A reflexive exercise of language dynamics which is contextual and transitive should enable us to deal exactly with this. Its' contextual and reflexive nature requires the personal tone which is normally 'unacceptable' in an academic treatise.

I have entered a relationship with you, via the use of language; and the way in which we communicate; the extent to which we communicate, depends on whether we are alienated or not.

We may note that alienation is not abstract. In saying that I am alienated I imply that I have alienated myself from someone and something, or that someone has alienated me from themselves. Equally I may be alienated from a community of persons.

Let us therefore examine how we at present may be alienated from one another and how we may overcome that alienation.

You must presume that my central concern is not alienation as such, but that I intend to talk about the relationship we, and may I presume, other philosophers of language, should enter into. You must also presume that I conceive of alienation in ethical terms, and specifically as something negative. That means that I perceive the use of language in ethical terms, and that I would speak of the good and bad usage of language.

If you disagree with me, in talking about the irrelevance of morality to language usage, your objection must of necessity be based in a moral point of view, and I presume you will, in convincing me, suit your words to your convictions. If you will not let your words express your convictions your actions display insincerity and I will remain as unconvinced of the validity of your point of view as you ostensibly are.

Thus, if you are to convince me that ethics have nothing to do with language you must be eloquently ethical, and in that case we have no argument.

We may note that ethical eloquence approximates what we may call the good usage of language. If I am a 'good' hearer we may presume that we are in agreement as I would be using language well in understanding you. To the extent that we are in agreement with one another we are not alienated from one another. This does not mean, however, that a difference of opinion implies that we are alienated from one another. We may note that it is that which is between us (Language), which separates us, which enables us to agree. When either of us *is* alienated from Language we shall be alienated from one another.

We may also note that when someone's words do not express their convictions they would be in some sense be in disagreement with themselves and with Language. That is to say, they are alienated from themselves and from Language. Furthermore they are the agents of their own alienation.

In the same way as we have seen that our linguistic experience has ethical implications, so we may deduce principles regarding ontological values from our linguistic experience. If, for instance, I wish to write about Truth, Beauty and Justice, I cannot do so without expressing myself in a way which will be either true or false, attractive or ugly, moral or immoral. It would be a contradiction to say that some statement could possess the opposite qualities stated, simultaneously.

If my statements about truth are false; or if my expressions regarding beauty jar the senses, or if I am clearly immoral in my defence of justice, then one could presume that I don't know what I am talking about, and furthermore, have no knowledge of what I am saying myself.

The above presumes, however, that any hearer, myself, or shall we say yourself, for instance, would be able to distinguish between truth or falsehood, beauty and ugliness, justice and injustice. While it may be that we as speaker and hearer together share a common delusion regarding truth, or are agreed in a perverse indulgence in ugliness, or mutually deceive one another for our own evil purposes, we cannot be at one in a mutual appreciation of what is true, beautiful and good if we do not agree that the truth, beauty and goodness of any thing under discussion has an independent and objective possession of these qualities in and of itself. Unless this is so we have no recourse to anything in defending our positions.

As much as I am, at the very least, able to generate the obvious distinction between the truth and falsehood of my statements by the principle of non-contradiction, so I may presume that we can gather some conclusion from the way in which we might disagree on our own notion of truth, beauty and justice.

It must be obvious that I cannot proceed to talk about truth without myself presuming it's existence, and, even more compellingly, invoking it concretely; in maintaining my

argument's integrity. Thus I could say that the inner consistency of any discourse, or, at the very least, of this particular discourse, is suggestive of the ontological existence of Truth.

We might presume that the Truth at large has been let loose and is raging around ferociously, with little regard for falsehood. While the measurable truth of the integrity of my own statements is clear, and the meaning of the truth of my statements definable, that cannot necessarily be said for Truth itself.

While we may speak of the reasonability of an hypothesis - which Karl Popper has related to its falsifiability (Popper, 1963, p228); the notion of an empirical and systematic set of propositions which will elucidate Metaphysical and Absolute Truth for us, is absurd, for we cannot state those propositions without invoking presuppositions which, if they are to provide us with reasonable hopes of discovering what we pursue; will possess the qualities pursued.

Martin Versveld mentions in his essay "Noordwand van die Maer Maagd" (in Versfeld, 1982, p119) a party of mountaineers pursuing yetis, and speculates that they didn't find them because they might have made up part of the search party.

Now, it is obvious from the way I am pursuing Truth, Beauty and Justice, that I presume that we sit down together and discover the nature of the search party, and by way of introducing

ourselves, discover exactly who is present and what they are searching for. Shall we say that we might find that we shall only discover the object of our search by giving up, and finding that it has searched us out.

Aquinas teaches us that our knowledge of anything is in accordance with the nature of that thing, and correspondent to our own nature (Versfeld, 1979, p130), and thus, we may conclude, to study Truth, Beauty and Justice is to become; in our knowledge of these; of ourselves true, beautiful and just. This is essentially necessary as we would otherwise display ignorance of those ontological values, in being ignorant of ourselves.

We may note that this peculiar transitivity arises from a rejection of the absurd subject-object dualism which infects modern science and philosophy; and, which, though theorists both in the natural sciences and the humanities are moving away from it, is still perpetuated by the inability of seekers to see themselves as part of what they seek.

An abstract and systemised Materialism, especially when enacted by metaphysical creatures such as we humans are, is an alienation of self, as much as it is an alienation from what this abstracted systematic idealism of an hypothetically materialistic cosmos would like to know and would profess some knowledge of.

Few materialistic sceptics are consistent enough to admit to the absurd, thus unjustifiable nature of their pursuit of some propositions which cannot be a knowledge of what is real, for even that cannot perceivably exist. If one conceives thus, that Rationalism is irrational, one might be willing to suspect that we can only examine the real irrationally by accepting it's irrational nature and rationally coming to terms with it.

To be consistent then, what is real, how do you and I relate to what is real? Put differently: are we real, and, if we are, what is the nature of our corpo-reality, which, by virtue of us sharing together this examination of our corporeality exists for us subjectively, and, by virtue of this language act - is in some sense external, objective and separately real, though related to us both together.

This language act is a reality or existent entity, by which, in our correspondence to it, our individual, and contingent experience of ourselves and one another is to some extent independently justified - to the extent that, though it cannot be replicated, for it's reality lies in it's transient immediacy; can be corroborated by others and thus, in that further limited sense, be verified in another particular context.

Obviously, we are asking, in asking what is immediately real, who we are, and how we relate. And, if we are to pursue this question

rationally, we must ask ourselves what our irrational nature and experience is, as much as we ask what our rational nature is.

What then is the present situation, as far as we are able to recognise, understand and describe it? We were considering what it would be like to discuss Truth, Beauty and Justice. I presume that we came to some knowledge of what it would be like by proceeding to discuss what it would be like. Thus, if we were to cease the pretence, and actually discuss Truth, Beauty and Justice, we might suppose that we could possibly, even probably have some experience of these.

However, before we proceed, we might like to investigate, as proposed, what it means to discuss something, especially to the discussants, and what it means to be a discussant. We have already noted that in a dialectic epistemology of ontological values, discussants would be affected and changed by their interaction with the embodiment of these values; furthermore, in our critique of a positivist and rationalistic epistemology we found that what was under investigation was present in some prior way, in the investigators.

We may note in passing, that this ubiquitous presence in student and studied cannot be reduced to a situation in which it could be said that the existence of the pertinent qualities in what was under investigation depended on the observer for their existence, and that we could dismiss it's verity as an aberrant product of a subject-object relationship, to be explained away by reifying the

subject or object independently of one another. We may say, though, that these ubiquitous properties of independent and autonomous (being both autonomous and numinous) beings become apparent within interaction.

Thus, while, for instance, truth, beauty and goodness might be present in both of us, this might only become apparent to us, for one another, as we enter into a relationship demonstrative in itself of these values.

In this alienated modern world, however, we perceive of existent being in atomic and alienated terms, mutually exclusive, coming into relationship by some existential shift, which, because of the arbitrary, and rationally unjustifiable nature of this shift, though the nature of this shift (existential and irrational leap of faith, whether it be of an electron or a human) may be conventional; is meaningless, though possibly necessary in existential terms.

In this context it hardly seems feasible to speak of the relationship between anything, never mind the relationship between sentient beings, as anything but arbitrary, absurd, and of no significance to the extent that any other relationship between any other things may replace it, and no relationship bears any significant similarity to any other as much as anything bears any significant relationship to any other thing.

However, as soon as one has anything, it is something in relationship to another thing, for we could not recognise it except by being able to discriminate it from another. Its discrete uniqueness, or relational fixity, implies that, if any field of meaning is system, the relationships of the members of that system is fixed in some way. The notion of a floating signifier, though drawing our attention to the fact that meaning is a relational concept, is by it's inherent slipperiness, meaningless.

We may note that Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida have done for language what Newton did for particles and Thomas Hobbes did for society, in postulating the arbitrary relationship between being. Those powerful enough to dominate the field of knowledge will create arbitrary, conventional language in their own image. (See M. Versfeld's "The Logos of The mortal God", (in Versfeld 1960,p141) and "Communication", (Versfeld, 1972,p53)).

What would it be like, on the other hand, if existent being is already in some relationship to itself? We can hardly conceive of one thing by itself, for, if we are able to recognise it, it must exist separate from ourselves; even if, following Cartesian reduction we conceive of what we perceive as ourselves, we can hardly identify the seen self with the seeing self.

The seeing eye cannot see itself. If we recognise something, and recognise it as discrete from ourselves, we have to recognise it

by something; identify something with it. As much as we cannot identify the seeing self with the seen self, we cannot identify the seeing/identifying self (if we presume these faculties to be unified) with that by which we identify that which we recognise.

In our discourse however, we are talking and listening together as sentient beings. We are conscious of ourselves as a listening/speaking self, but, as speaking and listening selves we utilise language which is language in that we accept that signifier and signified are in some relationship to one another.

We are brought into language by accepting the social contract regarding the relationship signifier and signified, and that means that we agree with another, and remain consistent to ourselves in the recognition of signifieds as constant and signifiers as consistent. We cannot but know conceptually but by language, and thus our knowledge is socially informed.

We know socially in being known and knowing other sentient being. When, furthermore, the object of our knowledge is another sentient being, and we cannot but know except via mutually interdependent knowledge based in our common linguistic experience, we have to accept the irrational basis behind all our knowledge, by which we accept that what we refer to is the same as what another refers to, and that our act of reference (linguistic reverence) coincides with the Other's understanding and act of reference.

By this we are betrayed into the metaphysical Word which mediates between us and another, which has an existence of its own. If we are sentient beings we are that within a community of properties.

Whereas Descartes conceives of himself as an autonomous, isolated Ego (Descartes, 1967, p149), we may presume that we can only conceive of ourselves, indeed even I conceiving of myself individually, in communal terms in conjunction with other being, and more expressly, in terms of self-consciousness, in conjunction with other sentient being.

It is significant that Socrates responds to the Delphic Oracle's charge that he know himself by engaging in Dialectic, thus, not desiring to know himself in himself, but rather knowing himself within the interaction with another, within the transitivity of being.

I propose that the demise of Newtonian Science, Cartesian Mathematics and Philosophy, Hobbesian Social Theory, and Saussurian Linguistics is related to the inability of the Egoistic Subject to successfully project an hypothetical, systematic and abstract world from its' Atlas-like body of atomic corruption.

The apocalyptic disintegration of this samsaric illusion which the Nihilists, Modern Physicists and Deconstructionists have indulged in is a desirable, though ambivalently destructive

consequence of the destruction of the false Ego, ambivalently destructive in that the destroyers of illusion are logically tempted towards the same scepticism which constructed these edifices in the first place, unless they 'allow' themselves, as they see it, some privileged, absolutised metaphysical position.

Let us proceed to examine the nature of knowing the other and the self. To know something we must be able to recognise it, and recognise it as distinct from something else. Equally we must be able to label it by means of some other thing or concept. Even further, we must be able to replicate this process of identification. There must be, in other terms, the knower, the object or concept known, a label for this object or concept and other objects or concepts from which this object or concept can be distinguished.

There is a community of labels and concepts/objects which exist through the process of identification. The ontology of being is such that an object or concept is known in its' uniqueness, by its' accidental and transient nature: by its' similarity to, and difference from another. We may presume that knowledge, as it is accidental, is a posteriori and that knowledge is furthermore post-linguistic in that nothing can exist for us before we can recognise it; and we recognise it by referring to our concept of it, as we have remembered it. We may recall the philosophical tradition of all knowledge as a form of remembering.

There exists some pre-linguistic recognition in which we may relate a concept to what we know and experience as irrational and undifferentiated. But knowledge, as we properly understand it, is rational as the exercise of identifying something as constant, unique, depends on us having some signifier we attach to that thing. We can only know something if we are able to distinguish it from ourselves; thus knowledge is not only a posteriori, phenomenological, if you like, and post-linguistic; but also to do with the knowledge of the self.

I can only identify myself by the process of separating myself from the other and by assuming that the other is distinct. We are, however, distinct by the act of knowing something, and thus we enter a circularity from which we cannot escape except by accepting that we can know an Other by that Other knowing us.

Thus self-knowledge is contingent on the inter-action with another knowing entity. The process of knowledge then is subsequent to an historical process by which we see ourselves as seen. This seems to be the irrational but notably, not arbitrary, basis of rationality.

The act in which I see myself, the beginning of self-consciousness, the ground of self-knowledge, is both rational, in that it proceeds on the basis of identification, and irrational, in that it assumes that self and seen self correlate. I cannot presume that there is anything which could be a solely rational

act, but that does not mean, I think, that it is thereby completely and solely irrational.

My identification of anything is dependent on my ability to recognise it as distinct from anything else by virtue of its' distinctiveness; that quality by which it exists as itself and not as something else. To exist is to exist as something specific - peculiar, being found in place and time. No quality exists separately from specific being, and nothing exists which does not have specific qualities.

The qualities which are peculiar to anything, accidental in the true sense of the word, are those in which the simplicity of that thing inheres indivisibly. Thus the ontology of anything, its' definition if you will, is related to its' essence, and furthermore, its' existence for us, in an empirical/semantic field; for what can exist for us outside our experience of it is related to the ontological existence within us, of the concept correspondent to it. The notion of truth as 'Adequatio' focuses on the validity of how the concept which can only exist because of language, corresponds to its' object.

Now, obviously, we are faced with some kind of problem. As much as my relationship with anything changes as I and itself change within time, perhaps even by the act of knowing itself, so the type of correspondence between a concept and its' object, which is encapsulated within language, will also change. Can the truth then of anything remain unchanged. Is all knowledge of a

situation which is past, that there is no knowledge but historical knowledge, while the present constantly eludes us.

Truth could be said to be unchanging in that something was true at a specific time for someone about something existent at that same time. One could say, taking the argument to its logical conclusion, that truth properly belongs solely to the unchangeable, and that the truth of anything which would be in accordance with the Beauty and Goodness of that thing is dependent on how that thing relates to an absolute form, which is unchangeable.

Regarding then, the unchangeable nature of truth within a state of flux, one could say that, given the uniqueness of a particular thing for a particular person at a particular time, and given furthermore, that nothing in our empirical/semantic field does not exist but by its concrete uniqueness, that truth is always truth about something or someone, and that truth in the abstract does not exist.

We have to ask ourselves, however, about the truth about something or someone beyond our empirical field of knowledge. We cannot assume that there are no non-empirical forms and we cannot assume that there are ways of knowing which, because they are not knowledge of what exists materially, don't exist. One might quite well conceive of that type of knowledge which comes by faith or other irrational processes which involve analogy, metaphor, symbol and myth, and which is the 'spiritual' knowledge of

Universals and whatever expresses absolute qualities. These forms of knowledge are not automatically invalid because they are irrational, where that rationality is founded in empiricism and shaped by the logical process of abstraction.

Regarding mediated knowledge, we know by a self which knows, but we do not know the nature of the knowing self, and by that, as this unknown self mediates between us and all being; all that we know, and by knowledge we mean that something becomes us and us it in a transitive way, remains essentially a mystery to us.

Thus, when we come to discussing our knowledge of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, we shall rather discuss the ineffable nature of the Metaphysical interaction by which we involve ourselves in knowing anything, and furthermore, what it means to be known. It is beyond the grasp of reason based on rationality to speak the unspeakable. But does that mean it is completely beyond our grasp?

Shall we not speak of the erotic nature of all knowledge, and what it means to be know as opposed to just know? Shall we not speak of the path of intuition and the mystical initiation into the Ground of all Being? Shall we not attempt the poetic where the prosaic fails us? The patriarchal age is passing and reason may venture beyond rationality to speak of an Incarnate Word born of a Virgin.

As much as our language acquisition is an autogenetic erotic function passing beyond ourselves into community, to the same extent is our movement into Metaphysics an acceptance of our erotic conjunction with Metaphysical Being. My primary hesitation about Modern Feminism is it's inability to be erotic where it remains materialistic, and it's inability to become metaphysical where it is erotic, as it's eroticism remains autogenic and not communal. As soon as we accept the communal nature of intercourse, we accept Metaphysics.

We have been unwilling to engage in an eroticised dialectic, and we have, in following the materialist path ended up in an abstract academic hell which, due to it's systematised attempt to rewrite gender dualism has been Manichean and has betrayed us into a mind-body dualism where we have yet again fallen to become Cartesian/Hobbesian archons needing power for domination.

Post-modernism has recreated Cartesian dualism in intellectualising the Bodyword which is incarnate Eros in the flesh, incarnate metaphysics accepting the body, and the body in coitus as our primary signifier.

We must, I think, learn to accept that our acquisition of language is a physical experience, and also that it isn't arbitrary, and that, subjectively speaking the relationship between sign, referent and meaning is not experienced as arbitrary.

Furthermore, we need to accept the metaphysical cloth from which our material experience is cut. Indeed, I think we need to accept the mythical nature of language, and accept that Cartesian abstraction by which we attempt to demarcate Truth, Beauty and Goodness is the very demise of our experience of these. If we are to speak of Beauty we need to realise and understand ugliness, indeed, we need to perceive the ugliness of the alienation which follows the path of Cartesian or Hobbesian dualism.

It is no coincidence that de Saussure's theory about the arbitrary and conventional nature of the relationship between form and meaning (Culler, 1976, p19) is found, pre-dated by centuries, in Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan, (Hobbes, 1968, p100-118) which leads the freedom of the individual, as well as the possibility of communion, between 'users' of language vis' a vis' truth into the existential abyss.

It is also no coincidence that Roland Barthes' Post-structuralism is a neo-nominalism, where free-riding meaning is an abstract projection of a non-existent subject. Barthes has gone off his head, like Descartes went off his via his pineal gland; though Barthes departs from the gaping erotic body caught as a glimpse through the torn garment of language. His statement that the author is dead follows logically from Nietzsche's statement that God is dead. Barthes has lost the signified, and with it the Transcendental and Literary subject; only to replace it with the fulfillment of his erotic desire for a playful truth as the

false Ego of the collapsed, disintegrated and masturbatory self. The Ego as reader is an interpretative amoral ubermensch.

His book Roland Barthes (1978) is nothing but the magnificently absurd display of the jaded body attempting to enjoy itself. It is a travesty of the Sacramental Bread of Life, the Erotic Body given for us, which the Death of the Author could hardly propitiate.

The difference between S/Z (Barthes, 1975) is the creative gap of intuitive madness, which is left incomplete because of a Platonic or Cartesian methodology of timeless, abstract structure, which does not except/accept the incarnate temporality of the existent self.

For this reason Barthes cannot enter Metaphysics and must indulge in a false pseudo-metaphysic/metalanguage which cannot account for it's own life but still rebels against the thought of death and subsequently the death of thought.

For death is bodily and unless we realise the metaphysical nature of our bodily life we cannot except what is within us which is beyond death, and thus accept our transcendent life.

The acceptance of the non-arbitrary nature of the relationship between object, concept and word is the onset of the onomatopoeic madness which is the death of the false social mask

behind which our mystical communion with the Word, and via that Word Incarnate, exscists - lives sentiently.

The notion of Gaia is not far from the body of this death, and is found in the death, indeed, of the body - which is the form of all transcient Being. If Jacques Derrida has given us anything it is the Protean life of the Auctor; paradoxical to his intent. The counter-statement of the paradox gives irony to his materialism.

Let us return then to our initial point of discussion. What are we engaging in when we discuss Truth, Beauty and Goodness; who are we, and for that matter, what is True, Beautiful and Good? Plato speaks of how our knowledge of the Grammar of Language will reflect the Absolute, in that the communal ground of language is the beautiful (Bernadette, 1984, p xxvi); as much as Wittgenstein, maybe unknowingly following the Scholastic tradition, speaks of how the structure of language reflects the nature of reality. At the very least then, if we understand our communication with one another, we shall have got closer to our knowledge of the absolute.

Pragmatically speaking, as indeed all speech is pragmatic, we find ourselves in a situation, and find a situation or state, within ourselves, which is metaphorical, or indicative of any speech situation. We have to presume that there is a speaking and hearing party even though I may appear to do all the speaking and you all the listening. My speech, in it's attempt to be appropriate to you is a kind of listening. Equally, your

listening is a kind of speech, as you enunciate, in some way, my words to yourself. Furthermore, as this speech act takes place in a context which is historical, it is unique, where signifier and signified are experienced as one; and the form of our experience of language, in it's accidents and it's self-reflexive nature unites process with self and other.

The distinction, made by De Saussure, between langue' and parole (Culler, 1976, p29) is wholly artificial, where any proposed langue' is merely a particular utterance within time - thus parole; and any particular form of parole hypothesises, or refers to a particular langue'.

Langue' is an abstracted , dualistic creation out of time, and a-historic. The journey of structuralists and post-structuralists is an exercise in dualism, a form of materialistic idealism, and consequently absurd.

We are in communion via language with one another within a particular society. We submit our undifferentiated experience-being to the categorisation of language, without any guarantee that these categories of understanding are valid. Yet our ability to subsequently deal with ourselves and our context is caught within our exercise of language.

Chaos and order - any functional mould of thought, and we cannot but think; are in a sense dependent on our projective ability for

their existence; but equally we are dependent upon that mould for our existence.

Thought/language; language/reality; thought/reality; distinctions depend upon oppositions, yet the deconstruction of oppositions depends upon the pursuit of irony. And irony is the realisation of discrepancy, the acceptance between is and appears, the domination of appears by ought. The acceptance of "ought" relativises the ironic pursuit. Circularity and absurdity remain central to thought.

The acceptance of absurdity privileges irony over experience. It is dependent upon history. The acceptance of history implies the indestructibility of the subject. The acceptance of circularity is the end of reason; the submission of thought to unquantified silence. The unwillingness to live before the abyss of silence, deafening silence which leaves one mute, surrenders one to the inevitability of myth.

It is exactly the realisation of the disjunction of discourse, together with the desire to make sense, create meaning; which forces us towards metaphor: the projective juxtaposition of difference. We are caught in the irrational desire that our metaphorical projection is related to myth - to truth. And we defend the subjective, relative nature of our projections against the inevitable irony of reason, by an appeal to the generative

nature of the subject. Vitality remains as the death throes of perception.

Myth - the conquest of reason, is in tension with irony - the exercise of reason. The exercise of reason follows confidence in the subject - an acceptance of the mythical personal construct. The creation of myth is dependent upon the realisation of the inadequacy of 'real' categories of understanding - thus irony. Our thought follows our language usage: style defeats meaning, yet style cannot completely control meaning.

By example we can compare as before, the two different styles of criticism. Marxism utilises the ironic mode to expose the mythical, ideological nature of language acts, and continues to enact, unselfconsciously, it's own particular myth. Deconstruction, committed to process, rather than a particular position, functions negatively, utilising the ironic mode, and transforms, as a dialectic interaction between self-consciousness and the hidden self-consciousness of the language act, irony into a self-reflexive self-conscious myth.

Marxist criticism moves from the text as langue' via parole'(the critical interactive act) to the meta-langue' of a socio-historic teleological myth. Deconstruction moves from the text as parole' to the pre-textual langue' of that text, back to critical statement as parole'. Both positions negate the central critical subject, active as an agent who cannot be subsumed within

language. While the author may be dead, we must nonetheless accept a living reader.

You yourself, as living reader, accept that you read from and within a specific context. You project, as part of the reading act, a speaker/writer, a deictic mask/metaphor for the authorial voice of the text. I myself deliberately create this mask by using the word I, and by acting reflexively and self-consciously.

The main question has to do with how the mask I create corresponds to the mask you encounter. The question is, can this mask - which is in a sense the False Ego, ever be dropped to see the reality behind it, or do we see now but through a glass darkly.

I speak, and you listen, within a particular context. Our contexts overlap via the text in which both of us share. We may also share the same class position, sociological context, frame of literary reference and so on. You and I participate in this discussion by virtue of our sharing language.

We consider things we accept communally and proceed thenceforth to examine new territory. Neither of us can proceed by ourselves. We assume some type of contract between us. It is true, I think that the nature of the contract will determine the nature of our discussion, it's scope and direction.

Let us examine, then, the nature of our contract. Ruth Kempson mentions three basic shared assumptions in her book Semantic Theory (1973,p23-43); namely: relevance, integrity and rationality. Furthermore, I propose a mutual willingness to listen and question; a shared interest in the topic under discussion.

A more radical point to be made is that we are both human; subjects, persons if you will. The ability towards freedom, a dialectical progress towards truth, a mutual participation in the mystical nature of personhood, are also part of our communion.

My point is this; if we are to discuss the metaphysical nature of Art we must at least have a metaphysic, and understand that the Ontology of Language, and everything which exists for us through language, and what exists for us outside of language, will shape our Epistemology. Our theory of Language must precede our Science of Art.

Especially as it could be said that Art is Language dealing with what is beyond Language, we have to look at the relationship between the saying, the said and the unsayable. This is no easy examination, as it involves a Theory of Madness, seen from the point within madness which bridges the rational and the irrational. We have to look at the Ontology of Universals and how we know, or participate in them, even while living in a reductionised world.

Socrates speaks in the Phaedrus about the divine madness which comes from the Gods to the inspired Poet (Pieper,1964,p57). A theory of Art, which is metaphysical, must accept some notion of Inspiration whereby we not only speak to someone, but that something speaks through us and we speak, like Augustine in his Confessions, to someone beyond our immediate hearers. Furthermore, without being solipsistic, we speak through some medium that we know not of; the richly creative Word to which our expressed thoughts are subject.

The poetic knowledge which comes by imitating God as the Arch-Poet, the instress of Gerard Manley Hopkins (Gardner,1969,p11) is the means by which the Inscape(Gardner,1969,p11) - the particular Incarnation of God in a thing's suchness it's peculiarity - uniqueness - is formed within it's artistic interpretation.

De Saussure's examination of language as langue'(Culler,1976,p27) - system of language outside of time, has left us with a Metaphysics of Abstractions, a path of generalisation which knows nothing and can express nothing in it's accidents, but only in it's 'essence'.

Noam Chomsky has followed Aristotle and Descartes into a science of generalisations (Chomsky,1966), which leaves one with an inability to create a true Metaphysics of Language. Unless one follows a phenomenological, almost existential path to a metaphysical experience and henceforth to a Metaphysics of experience, one is left with a neo-nominalist idealism which

requires that which it of necessity cannot provide - a metaphysics of Language.

We so often forget that we speak about Language Theory using Language, often using the very assumptions we might be denying, in as many words. Deconstruction has made us self-conscious again, but negates the notion of a linguistic Subject, while being spoken by a subject.

If the post-modern Death of the Author is the death of the transient Ego for the sake of the authentic, even transcendental self, it would be another matter, but, when, in our modesty, we annihilate ourselves; when we disqualify ourselves from speaking authoritatively, and then carry on speaking authoritatively, against the meta-language of others, we only succeed in making a sophistic mockery of ourselves.

De Saussure did not leave us with a linguistics of parole' as system, with the further fact that any posited meta-chomskian langue' is merely a construction, a sophisticated mechanical parole'. A.E. Bowman's systemic metaphysics of experience may provide us with different answers(Bowman,1939).

This dialogue then is unique, and to the extent that we cannot divorce it's form from it's meaning, and that it's form is the full expression of it's meaning, as much as it's meanings enable it's form, to that extent, and in this way, the relationship

between sign, referent and meaning is anything but arbitrary, even though it may be conventional.

As de Saussure grants us no contextual linguistics we have forgotten that the progressive way in which we learn language is found in a social context where learning takes place through affirmation and where grammar is developed socially and the successful linking of object and sign in a word is reinforced constantly.

We may say that all linguists (where linguists use language as a tool to examine itself and themselves) are involved in a dialectical initiation into further and further self-referential iterations. Where shall we find the Grammar which describes itself as a language utterance, as well as being generative, if only in some kind of functional way as some kind of endless fractal loop. We are attempting to deal with what A.E. Bowman in his "A Sacramental Universe" call the "Principle, of Reduplication" where $y=f(x)$ is "a superficial rendering of the formula $y= f(xy)$ "(Bowman,1939,p21).

As we are dealing with Metaphysics it might not be rude to point out that Human Epistemology is often chauvinistic; assuming that our way of knowing is the only way. We may state that while we cannot know ourselves, that knowledge is not impossible for someone else, who may be vastly different from ourselves. One is tempted to follow Plato, Aristotle Augustine and Aquinas into a

discussion of God's knowledge of Godself and ourselves; suffice it to say that we shall have them peer over our shoulders as we interact.

Our being is such that we remain essentially a mystery to ourselves. Thus if our examination of truth, beauty and justice require that we find them in ourselves, our experience must verify these conditions if we expect them clearly within ourselves. That implies that we will enter into a particular relationship which requires mutual openness to the other. Yet where else shall we find them, if not by identifying their manifestations within us with those outside of us.

Thus, if we are to see Truth, Beauty, Justice and Love we cannot contemplate it from above, as it were. We shall only be able to see it insofar as we are able to from our perspective. Therefore we shall only have a relative understanding of these qualities, and then only by means of faith.

However, though we may not have complete knowledge of metaphysical entities, we may say that insofar anything corresponds - is an image of - to these, to that extent does it experience these in its own being. It is exactly within this framework that we may talk of analogical experience of the Transcendental within the traditional Great Chain of Being.

The knowledge of anything in its' particularity - its' 'suchness' - poetic knowledge (See T Gilby: Poetics Experience, An introduction to Thomist aesthetics. and M Versfeld: Oor die ware

rasionalisme, in Oor Gode en Afgode.) - is an irrational knowledge whereby object and subject become one. This transitive experience of the Beautiful, expressed aesthetically, is, a knowledge of the Universal.

Whereas 'formalised' rational aristotelian science occurs in the systematic generalisations set up within an abstracted hypothesis, such that one is removed by the process of abstraction from the object of knowledge.

Knowledge by 'poesis' is a concrete and immediate phenomenological experience of the object in it's uniqueness and it's participation of the Universal. The hebraic notion of sexual knowledge whereby subject and object engage one another transitively to become One reflects this symbiotic, irrational engagement.

To quote M. Versfeld: (1948,p16), Oor Gode en Afgode - "Die kuns openbaar terselfdertyd sowel die kunstenaar as die aanblik van die werklike wat hy begryp en daargestel het. En dit nie deur 'n wonderbaarlike toeval nie, maar omdat die kunstenaar en die voorwerp in die skeppingsdaad onafskeidelik geword het. Dit maak nie saak of ons sê dat die kunstenaar binne die voorwerp of dat die voorwerp binne die kunstenaar gedring het nie. Albei bewerings is waar, omdat die betekenis van albei dieselfde is. Die kunstenaar kan 'n geleentheid as uniek waarneem alleen omdat dit hom tydelik geheel in beslag geneem het, sodat daar van hom niks oorbly om na ander dinge uit te gaan nie.

Poëtiese gewaarwording is riëel, omdat dit 'n manier is waarop ons met die realiteit in aanraking kom. Dit is 'n manier waarop dinge in ons gees 'n tuiste kry. "

Furthermore, poetic knowledge is a knowledge of what is real; and at the same time, a kind of insanity, as it is completely irrational. It is an inspired knowledge of the transcendental revealed in the contemplation of the particular.

Poetic consciousness is thus a knowledge of the Real through Love. (Versfeld,1948,p18) It is only within this context, now, that we are able to approach literature as a knowledge of what is real, but at the simultaneously, though particular to a specific place, character and time, indicative of the universal and prophetic within it's context. The Metaphysical status of Art is hereby guaranteed.

Our study of literature, then, is a study of the unique oneness of human subjects' with their society, a study of how the transcendant values of truth, beauty, justice and love are manifested within a particular society. Furthermore, when a society is in crisis one may further assume that the literature formed within such a time will mediate, as creators of social meaning, the critical manifestations of political truth and justice.

The study of society through the microscope of literature is therefore an exercise in ethics and metaphysics. When blood is being shed around questions of social justice the nature of the polis - the social arena , as well as eternal questions dealing with life and death, come under investigation. It is for this reason that we have examined how we come to know the truth and how we deal with justice and metaphysics in language, as these processes are crucial to the web of meanings carried in the literary texts we are to investigate.

Furthermore, if a literary text is to mediate creatively into the controversial and conflictual social context within which it is created, without being charged guilty of a manipulation of truth, it is essential that it deals explicitly with the social reality from which it springs. A text created in such a situation will implicitly, if not explicitly take a moral stand. It will also make claims about the veracity of it's point of view.

It is crucial, therefore, that any act of literary criticism is conscious, and self-conscious of the moral and ontological nature of the critical act. To maintain a critical position is to make a moral choice, and to express one's opinion of truth. Aesthetic theory is no mere argument about pretty poetic baubles, rather, it is an existential act of intervention into the same social context from which it's critics and writers spring.

It is no sophistry to declare oneself for the truth, and for justice, whether one does so under an empty heaven or no. When

one claims a shamanic, prophetic role for literature, one's own credentials come under that same examination. Criticism is, however hackneyed it may sound, a struggle for humanity, and a cosmic investigation into the nature of being.

As Augustine so clearly saw the confrontation between the *civitas deo* and the *civitas terrena* in the collapse of Rome (Wand, 1963, p241), so will we see, and experience this selfsame conflict in the society shown us in the texts under investigation. It is no coincidence that the majority of the novels we will investigate are an analysis of the dying cities of war-torn South Africa.

A literary history of the State of Emergency is therefore a study of the life and death of a society. A society dies, and from its ruins, like a phoenix, the protean liberated polis arises in the spiralling gyres of the successive moments of apocalypse and liberation.

As this thesis has cadenced from metaphysics, through ontology to epistemology; from philosophy hence to linguistics and literary theory; so it moves forward through history, sociology and anthropology to our final aim, a careful analysis of a contextualised aesthetics of literature. Plato states in his *Republic* that the individual is the city writ small. (Hamilton, 1973, p773) It is in this spirit that we perceive the oneness of the human subject and link the microcosmos of the

human subject and the literary text to society and the cosmos at large.

CHAPTER 4: THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The struggle between State and People after 1976 reached a new intensity in the early 80's. School boycotts on the Reef and in the Western Cape continued the radical culture of mass action amongst the youth. The Trade Unions were breaking new ground in the workplace. The ANC was intensifying it's actions against the state, which was also coming under increased pressure from the world community. P.W. Botha intensified repressive measures with the notion of the total onslaught. The state was active in continuing violence against neighbouring countries, while the liberation of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, together with the war in Namibia and Angola isolated the racist regime even more.

The Tricameral Elections intensified the polarisation in the country, and with the formation of the United Democratic Front a new era of People's Power began. Massive nationwide protests saw the SADF being employed in the townships and the nationwide State of Emergency declared. The State killed 2000 people, detained up to 35 000 people and harassed activists continually. Death squads saw the killing of people like Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge and Matthew Goniwe.

The Trojan Horse incident, The killings at Uitenhage, the destruction of Crossroads by 'witdoeke' suggested that violence

had become a daily part of life for most South Africans. Press restrictions and control of the media cut white South Africans off from what was happening in the country. In this context the Municipal Elections in 1988 sparked off nationwide protest. The white election the following year sparked off a similar wave of protest.

The State responded by banning the organisations central to the protests and embarked on a new wave of detentions. The subsequent hunger strikes within prisons put the state under unprecedented pressure. The banned organisations and the churches set up the Mass Democratic Movement and unleashed the Defiance Campaign which put the State in a corner. F.W. De Klerk took over from Botha and; due to massive pressure from within the country and from overseas, released the hunger strikers, and capitulated by releasing the Sisulu Seven, unbanning the ANC and SACP, lifting the State of Emergency and releasing Nelson Mandela.

4.2 CULTURAL BACKGROUND

South African society was described by the SACP as Colonialism of a Special type. The culture of Apartheid saw the state maintaining a hegemony of Afrikaner Nationalism in cahoots with Capital, while on the other hand a Resistance culture took form amongst the oppressed. Culture had become inevitably politicised with the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism, and State control of the Media.

Resistance culture took on it's specific form after the Defiance Campaign of the late 1950's, the Treason Trial and the drawing up of the Freedom Charter. The next advance came from the rise of Black Consciousness in the late Sixties and early Seventies, followed by the radicalisation of the Youth in and after 1976, where the archetypal conflict of culture took form around the resistance to afrikaans in schools.

Although Amilcar Cabral gives us the most useful definition of culture as the relationship persons have with nature and among themselves (Press, 1988, p4) it is the limited ambition of this thesis to look on culture in it's more self-conscious forms.

While the FAK, the Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns and the ATKV, together with the monolithic SABC and capitalist or nationalist written media, represented the more self-conscious culture of the oppressing class, the 'cultural struggle' of the oppressed took on a number of forms.

A culture of protest took form, with Mass Meetings and marches setting the tone for cultural expression, together with artists utilising culture as a weapon. The Soweto generation of poets put politics on the cultural agenda. Individual writers and poets involved themselves in the struggle. Cultural struggle took on a more formalised character with various organisations taking the lead. The Community Arts Project was formed after 1976. The 1982 Gabarone Conference on Culture saw a new level of debate around culture and the struggle.

The Cape Arts Festival, to be held in 1985, within the State of Emergency, was banned. The Cultural Boycott was starting to be enforced, and the UDF Cultural Desk served as an ideological oracle on matters of Culture, such as the boycott of the Grahamstown National Arts Festival. The Congress of South African Writers was formed, while the Skrywersgilde, originally formed to protest censorship, went through one heart-searching self-examination after another.

In 1987 the Culture in Another South Africa (CASA) conference was held in Amsterdam, bringing local artists and exiles into a common concern for creative protest. Alternative newspapers - like the Weekly Mail - got started. Subsequent to IDASA's Dakar Conference, which saw afrikaners meeting the ANC, the Vrye Weekblad gave a cultural voice to afrikaner resistance to the State.

The "Die Suid Afrikaan" organised the Language and Struggle conference in Natal, by which time Neville Alexander's book Language policy and National Unity South Africa/Azania opened up the language debate. "Piekniek by Dingaan" and the Voëlvry tour saw the rise of an alternative youth culture amongst afrikaners. The 'Watervalberaad' saw South african writers meet the ANC. The Weekly Mail's Book weeks and Film Festival served as forums in which socially aware aesthetic theories experienced new development.

The possibilities of an anti-hegemonic national culture came under investigation with people like Karen Press looking at the essential features of a national culture. Township art received greater exposure with media like Gavin Younge's book : Art of the South African Townships as an example.

The notion of a widespread art of resistance became current with books like Sue Williamson's Resistance Art in South Africa as an example.

The era of culture as a weapon came to a virtual end in late 1989 and early 1990 with the publication of the ANC In-house paper of Albie Sachs on culture, setting a new direction for art in a new (sic) South Africa. Widespread debate, collated by Karen Press and Ingrid De Kock in the book Spring is Rebellious, awakened diverse, but new opinions. With the attendance of people like

Mongane Serote and Barbara Masekele at the Grahamstown Festival and the virtual end of the Cultural Boycott a new relationship between Art and the struggle for humanity was ushered in.

4.3 LITERARY HISTORY LEADING UP TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY.

The culture leading up to the State of Emergency began in the late 50's with the birth of the afrikaans Sestigers, who inaugurated a break with Establishment art. Cultural expressions ranging from the Freedom Charter and the Mass action of the Defiance campaign to the work of the Drum generation of people like Can Themba, Nat Nakasa and Bloke Modisane came to an end with the destruction of Sophiatown.

The declaration of South Africa as a republic, the shootings at Sharpeville and the declaration of the first State of Emergency together with the banning of the ANC and SACP, the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the imprisonment of the Rivonia Trialists served as a backdrop to works such as Mary Benson's Dance at the Still Centre, and Richard Rive's Emergency.

The initial liberalism of white writers, became radicalised as repression increased. Censorship silenced many voices of protest, but with the Soweto generation of protest poets political writing erupted onto the South African cultural stage. Writers such as Lewis Nkosi, Alex la Guma, Eskia' Mphahlele and Bessie Head were writing from exile, while writers such as Jan Rabie, Andre' Brink and Breyten Breytenbach were strongly influenced by their own overseas experiences.

Writers were exploring the social crisis in the country in many different ways: Etienne Leroux's and John Miles's political

satire, Athol Fugard's and Nadine Gordimer's engaged writing , the 'Soweto' novelists explorations of socio-historical approaches to writing, Brink's explorations in the confluence of sexuality and politics, Sepamla, Tlali and Serote's explorations in the merging of the personal and political, the 'grensroman' investigating the bushwars and the disintegration of afrikaner identity; all showed different approaches to the central problematic.

More immediately prior to the State of Emergency the theme of political apocalypse emerges stronger than ever. Elsa Joubert's Die laaste Sondag, John Conyngham's The Arrowing of the Cane, Mewa Ramgobin's Waiting to live, Jeanette Ferreira's Sitate om 'n Revolusie, and Menan Du Plessis' State of Fear; all deal with the theme of revolution directly.

CHAPTER 5 The Socio-linguistic political contract and the literary text.

Literature is a social act of communication. As such there are various presuppositions which are shared by the participants in the language act. One cannot have a language act without an active subject. The presence of an active subject implies that meaning is being attributed to something by someone. Again, no subject is a subject alone; as a subject becomes active in being the object of someone else.

We do, after all, learn language from others. In becoming an active subject who generates or attributes meaning, we participate in a metaphysical act. This does not mean that the material nature of our act is denied, rather, the material nature of our act calls for the attribution of meaning, and an active producer of meaning requires material to identify. Knowledge, in an Ontological Sense, is no different to the attribution of meaning in language.

Hence the criticism of literature is a social, albeit a personal act which is transformative in it's nature. The nature of the transformation of a subject and it's object would reflect the fundamentally political character of both subject and object. This approach grants us an unity of semiotics, anthropology, and philosophy. At it's simplest we can state that knowing changes the one who knows, as much as what is known. I particularly want to study the nature of this transformation.

An active subject(s) generates a linguistic structure which is in turn interpreted by another subject. These subjects share language presuppositions, basic assumptions which enable them to communicate. The three fundamental assumptions are relevance, integrity of intention and rationality.

Whenever these conditions are broken communication itself is broken down. Snyman (1983,p11) has demonstrated the importance of disjunction - the deliberate transgression of these language presuppositions, in the establishment of a text as a literary text. When an assumption is seen to be intentionally broken in the deliberate presentation of a disjunct message, then the message is reinterpreted to restore communication. The disjunct nature of a text thus forces an implied reading on the part of the reading subject, who transforms the text in reinterpreting it.

Deixis is at the centre of the attribution of meaning within the Language act. Snyman (1987:17) says "Die begrip deiksis kom uit Grieks (deiktikos/deiknynai) wat beteken wys/uitwys." Johan Anker (1987,abstract) has to say the following "The prose text is a means of communication, a linguistic utterance, (message) produced by a person, the speaker or narrator, and addressed to another person (the reader or narratee. In such a text the utterance has meaning in a given context, this context is created by the speaker or narrator and the reader reconstructs this

context by the interpretation of the speaker's reference to person, place and time - the deictic elements."

My contention is that deictic reference goes beyond just these elements to refer to the social context of the language act. Unless this is also taken into account the socio-political nature of the text disappears, and the ideological nature of the text is hidden in the 'natural' features of the text. The process of reconstruction which the reader enacts to understand the text involves a recognition of the hegemony implied in the text.

Often this hegemony is not stated directly, but has to be read into the text. It is exactly the dissonance, the contradictions of a text which enables one to search for the ideological elements of the text.

The way in which persons are portrayed, and how they relate to their society will betray how the subject in the text is constituted, what is seen as normative. The fact that a text itself creates an aesthetic dissonance with normal language implies that it inherently transforms social categories, whether these be class, gender, age or race; fundamental categories of social classification in present-day South Africa.

Anker continues(1987, in Abstract), saying:" Deictic context is a given structure in the text, released from the text by the reader's interpretation of the narrator's references to the speaker, persons, the spatio-temporal context and activities. The

reader determines this deictic context by a) identifying the ego-centric speaker; b) identifying and localising references to the spatio-temporal context; c) identifying all references to person and d) the interpretations of implications in the linguistic utterance. The reader's interpretation of this deictic context leads to an interpretation of the implicated message of the text, thus completing the communication process of the literary text."

It can thus be seen that the world of the text carries implied meanings which involve social values as well. The attitudes of the ego-centric speaker, as well as that of characters in the text carry social values which are continuous or discontinuous with the values of normal discourse. I wish to focus on these values in my interpretation of texts.

Snyman (1987,p18) continues to speak about deixis. "Die deiktiese ruimte vertoon dan drie uitlopers of ondersteuningspunte. Allereers is dit die deiktiese taalelemente self, daarna die ego-sentriese spreker en die implikasies." He quotes Stephen Levinson (1983:63-64) who says "anchorage points, constituting the deictic centre are typically assumed to be as follows 1) the central person is the speaker 2) the centre of time is the time at which the spreker is currently at in the production of his utterance. 3) the central space is the speaker's location at utterance time, 4) the discourse centre is the point at which the speaker is currently at in the production of his utterance and 5) the social

centre is the speaker's social status and rank, to which the status or rank of addressees or referents is relative."

Anker (1987:285) distinguishes between two types of ego-centric speaker as follows: "a)'n spreker of vertellersaspek, die vorm van die vertelinstantie wat direk verantwoordelik is vir die uiting van die storie. b) die ego-sentriese kern van waarneming, die fokalisator, wat die kern vorm van die verwysing na tyd, ruimte persone en gebeure" I am particularly interested in the role of the narrator as a deictic mask which structures itself ironically or metaphorically - mythically in the text.

The ironic structure of the narrator is expected in texts where the voice is individualistic, antithetical, or contrary to the voice of society, transforming social data in a primarily 'higher' aesthetic way, and focusing on the subject in the text as humanistic in almost metaphysical terms, seeing the subject as discontinuous and alienated.

The metaphorical structuration of the narrator would transform social data in socio-political rather than solely aesthetic terms, and would focus on creating a new metaphor of society as well as establishing a new hegemony. The voice would see itself as part of society, rather than antithetical to it.

I am particularly concerned with the transformations central characters undergo, as an index of the literary subject's view of social change.

The active subject engages in placing the Other in language by creating an union of sign, meaning and referent within the I, the self in the text. Normal deixis is suspended in the literary text to be superseded by the deixis implied in the text, and put there by the reader.

Coetzee (1988:3) discusses the Althusserian concept of interpolation by which ideology constitutes the human as subject through codes of recognition. People within a specific ideological milieu recognise codes which only exist in that milieu. Language would carry these interpolations, but ideological interpolations can also function socially as fetishes or myths. The recognition process is nothing more than the reflection of the subject in a larger Subject.

Coetzee continues (1988:4) in describing how the human becomes a subject in literature and speaks of the contract a text makes with a receiver. This correlates with the basic assumptions of relevancy, intentionality and rationality that lie at the basis of 'succesfull' communication. A particular ideology is naturalised to appear as truth when a receiver accepts the terms of the text.

Knowledge is produced in literature under specific circumstances and a certain base is transformed to become the literary work. The human subject is as he or she produces meaning, and is structured in the how and why of production. The way in which the subject which Amuta (1989) calls the mediating subject produces meaning in the literary text is related to the Marxian concept of production.

When the text is produced the author has become a product of ideology, and disappears as subject in the text to be replaced by the subject-in -the -text.

Amuta (1989:81) speaks of the historicity of the author as mediating subject: "The process by which socio-historical experiences enter a work of art is essentially one of mediation, the active and purposive transposition of the empirically real into a fictive reality. In the case of written literature the author is the mediating subject and his mode of representing socio-historical experience is a function of objective factors

such as facts of biography, class orientation, ideology and political alignment." "The importance of the mediating subject in a dialectical theory inheres in the very materiality and constitutive nature of literary creativity."

Furthermore: "For the mediating subject literary creativity is an act of praxis, an historical act. To insist on a theory of literature that treats the literary work as an epiphenomenon which can be understood in spite of the centrality of its producer is to dehumanise literature and to succumb to the reification theories of art which capitalist alienation compels. On the contrary, to emphasize the crucial role of the writer as an active subject is to underline the centrality of the human factor in literature."

The meaning of any language expression is dependent on the discourse in which it takes it's place. It also intervenes into the existing sets of meanings to challenge the hegemony of those users of language who determine meaning for the sake of power within their particular society. Literary language may be particularly effective in challenging hegemony as it is transformative language which takes existing meanings and transforms them aesthetically.

HEGEMONY MYTH AND METAPHOR.

When one encounters a disjunct language act, one restores the language presuppositions by reading the implied meanings in the text. Implied language forms such as metaphor, symbol, irony and parody are suggestive in their nature of implied meanings in the text. The primary forms of implied language usage break the integrity presuppositions of the communicative act. Irony and sarcasm, for instance, lead us into reinterpreting the intention of the speaker or writer.

Secondary forms of implied language, such as metaphor, simile or symbol challenge the rationality and relevance of the communicative act. Both types of forms of implied language may break language presuppositions to do with time, space and identity. The deictic structure of reference, by which these particular presuppositions are given a value, also changes.

Deixis is the linguistic representation of reference in the text. The value of the I, the speaker in the language act, determines the value of here and there, now and then, me and you and them. Johan Anker has provided a basic framework for the analysis of deictic reference with respect to character in the prose text. He speaks of "Deiktiese ruimte" which replaces normal referential space, time and personal reference. When language presuppositions are broken, as in a literary text which is understood to be fictional, and, in Formalist terms, non-referential, the rules of deixis change. The normal values of time, space and character are deliberately transgressed, and a textual time, space and characters are created. Snyman (1987) speaks of metaphysical space, which is the textual web of meanings made possible by fictionalisation.

The sociolinguistic context, represented textually in terms of register, tone and so on is also seen as a backdrop to deictic, or textual space. There is also an underlying set of assumptions which a speaker/writer and listener/reader share. These have to do with social assumptions regarding identity, group membership and so on. The literary/deictic space can be transformative of these assumptions as well. The metaphysical space of a language act is transformative of language, and thereby also transformative of society.

We recognise literary language by it breaking language presuppositions and presenting a disjunct form or message. We are forced into an implied reading of the text to endow the text with meaning. Furthermore: the meaning of any expression is dependent on the system of discourse in which it takes its place. It also intervenes into the existent set of meanings to challenge the hegemony of those users of language who attempt to determine meaning for the sake of maintaining ideological power within their particular society.

Literary language may be particularly effective in challenging hegemony as it is transformative language which takes existing meanings and transforms them aesthetically. The ideological basis of a text is integrated into the referential web of social meanings and is naturalised within the text. The text becomes a site of struggle where hegemony may be maintained or

deconstructed by the mediating subject interpolating his or her ideology onto the text.

The active voice within the text acts as the central point of reference in the text. Whereas the identity of Voice is straightforward within a transparent text, the nature of voice changes within the meta-textual structure of the text. The central voice is a literary mask which is the metaphorical identity of the writer/speaker in the text.

CHAPTER 6:THE LITERARY MASK

The status of the literary mask changes with the way a particular text is structured. We shall look at how three novels are structured with reference to the literary mask. They are Breyten Breytenbach's Memory of Snow and of Dust, Andre' Brink's States of Emergency and Andre' Letoit's Suidpunt Jazz.

All three novels present us with multiple narrators, in which the subjective voice shifts from one person to another, and a number of alter-egos of the central subject.

In Breytenbach's Memory of Snow and Dust the main character transformation has to do with Mano's transformation into Anom Niemand. The actor who is a nobody becomes a nobody, the character in the novel becomes a manipulated character in an absurd story. He starts off as an actor in exile, african in european space, contrasting the space of exile with the space of home, and ends off in the place, the prison, going through the inexorable political drama towards death.

Mano says,p110:" 'We always work with death at hand. He is in fact the one we are talking to and the props we play with - the clothes and the masks - are in fact his, are elements of his presence" This preoccupation with death foresees Mano's own death prepared for him by Barnum as the writer. Mano continues to speak about death and his role as an actor in the face of death. His words are metaphorical of the human condition as a whole. All identity and all roles prefigure death.

Mano says, speaking of acting, but metaphorically also of writing and living: "Ours is the work of night, we burn fiercely but pathetically against a black backdrop, we splutter and then we go out and our invisible partner, death takes over centre stage" The central characterisation in the book as a whole is concerned with that which is absent as much as that which is present.

Mano is a mask of Barnum, the ghost writer who is a metaphor of the Breytenbach icon, as much as Meheret is also another mask. The accidental characters Ka'afir and Polichinelle are also masks of Barnum, as is Don Espejuelo, the prison companion of the Albino Terrorist, the author hidden, or made absent in the text; The text as a whole is a death mask for the author who is absent but present in the text, represented in each deictic centre, each voice on the centre stage. The author is involved in the creation of a work of illusion.

The reader as alter ego of the writer (Meheret), is presented first as child, The section "Uteropia" is opened by the poem : "A Kind of Telling". The text as unborn child is brought forth by the story-telling voice from the utopian world of the ethiopian uterus, then; as Mano goes through an alienating transformation to become a kafferkaesque elkerlijk - Anom; the reader becomes the God-Father, omnipotent before Anom's monologue in his movement towards the second birth - death - in juxtaposition to the anomomous child of Mano and Meheret's' move to birth. As the text is born it dies - uniting the apocalypse of death to the lifegiving interpretative movement from the womb of the platonic cave.

The different voices in the text also act as alter-egos for the central icon, the public personality Breyten Breytenbach. The first alter-ego is Meheret who speaks to the unborn child, (the reader as foetus). The second, and primary alter-ego is Barnum who writes the text of Meheret and Mano, (also the author of the plays: My brother and Lovesong to an unborn child). He enters the world of Mano together with the voices Ka'afir and Polichinelle, and introduces the second section of the novel: On the noble art of walking in no man's land. The third alter-ego is Mano who writes to his God/Father/Barnum/Breytenbach alter-ego and addresses the female Other - greta.

The text itself can be viewed as a written drama, rather than a simple prose text. Externally sections of the prose text are presented in dramatic form. There are the dialogues of Ka'afir and Polichinelle from p30 throughout the text; there is the medieval morality play in sixteen tableaux: My Brother - p80, there is the play Barnum writes about Agamemnon and Iphigenia p188, which is also the Lovesong to an Unborn Child, p192. The whole second section of the novel, On the noble art of walking in no man's land, p211, is alternately presented as a drama, with dramatis personae, and a series of letters.

The text speaks for itself in the words of Mano, who has the following to say of the work of drama, the performance which is the text, p110: "In a sense we are engaged upon the creation of an illusion, and it is a matter of knowing what to leave out, what traits to accentuate. The conception of life, and therefore the illusion of life, lifelikeness in other words, is the art of seeing how close you can come to the improbable, to the absence. To death." The text would then be engaged upon the weaving together of life and death in the form of an illusion, weaving together the disjunct and separate elements of life and death in dramatic form.

Indeed, the narrative is spun around life and death. Meheret addresses her narrative to her and Mano's unborn child; Meheret says (p209): "Nine months full. You are not a book. And yet you are nearly written. You have come with me such a long way. Now the detachment must come. Tonight will be a wake. By dawn, I know it must happen at daybreak, the waters will break and you will come down from the mountain to slip from my thighs and enter the sea, my little dolphin. You will lift your blue, smothered head to the light, tied to me with a rope of blood. The rope is the connecting link between death and life. May you go out the good way. May you walk well." As the narrative proceeds towards birth it proceeds towards Mano's death. Mano's narrative is concerned with his rebirth as Anom Niemand, the role Barnum would have him play in partial imitation of himself.

The coming together of Mano and Meheret is theatrical: their child is conceived in a theatre, between acts, they bring together all elements of life and death in their union, the unborn child which is the metaphorical representation of the text

under production. The text is the Memory of Snow and of Dust, the snow of the inner mountain; the dust the dust of Africa, of the movement, the collective culture of the child's parents: africans, or humans in exile, displaced actors on life's stage in the moment between the beginning and the end of the play, between birth and death.

The movement towards birth is the movement towards death, the movement towards death is the movement towards rebirth. In the movement towards birth the father is absent, in the movement towards death the madonna and child are absent. The mother is the skin of the child. The text is the mother of the reader. The text is the coffin of the writer. Apocalypse and liberation meet in the sacrifice of Mano for the sake of the unborn child, as Aggamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia, as the authorial voice is sacrificed for the reader's interpretative freedom.

The illusory and elliptical nature of the text is spelt out further, p110 "Because the recognition of life itself is an illusion, and the mind - or the imagination must be left room enough to make the associations, to fill the gaps, to effect the jumps. Birds are not frightened off by people but by scarecrows only very crudely and summarily representing people. The shadow on the wall is imbued with more life than the person or the object throwing the shadow."

The text in the same way leaves us with an implied space out of which we have to construct it's meanings. The characters before us only come to life as we breathe on them, giving them life. We are called on by the text to do for it what Mano calls on those watching the drama of life to do. In effect the text attempts to represent the drama of life for us in an illusory way. The aesthetic basis for the text is at the same time its philosophical undergirding.

The function of the aesthetic is seen as the following, p110: "We are crafting the mechanism of memory. More precisely, we fashion the hollows in which memory can fit. Our modern age doesn't provide for memory anymore: the child going to school or the scientist doing his research work doesn't need it any longer - functional memory is built into his computer. Naturally, programmed memory is dead data, it cannot be self-generating or self-inventing or selftransforming like the memory of man. But it is probably more reliable, objective, precise. Except that in this process of compartmentalisation, people are losing the faculty of memory and therefore of invention, and this is a pity because we are human and terrible exactly because we have memories which we cannot circumscribe or codify. We actors imitate the shape of memory. We cannot compete with artificial

intelligence in the conveying of knowledge, but we can suggest the incoherent, we can apprehend the forms and the movement of time, the slowness and the uncertainty of it. We can approximate life - but it will be scripted, rehearsed, directed, repeated - and thus again an illusion"

The memory of snow and of dust is thus the description of the humanisation of the subjects involved. Art is the only agent which can enact this humanisation. Mano is engaged upon a project to make a movie, he goes to South Africa to perceive, to get a new look on the place, only to be caught up in the memory of the old, the repeated pattern of oppression and dehumanisation. The text is essentially about these two contrary movements of humanisation and dehumanisation.

The role of the writer with regards to illusion and with respect to the transcendental subject is expressed as follows by Barnum: p62:"I am the brother of God. Only his brother, mind you, nothing more. You could say I am his immigrant African brother. He is not African, of that we can be sure, for our continent is too deep in the shit. By this I mean that I have all the attributes of God, but none of his responsibilities. I can create people out of paper and ink, from thin air - plucking them live from some obscure chamber of the memory. There is a lascivious cruel joy in making them dance the way I want them to, in plotting their destinies for them, in killing them off. You could say they are as many sacrificial goats dying in my place. As long as I can kill and describe that killing, I shall be alive. I shall nurture the joke of being alive" Barnum continues his lecture to Mano on the role of the writer: "But you must know when you write that you are interacting with life. You are bringing to life a form of communication which will be receptive way beyond you to what exists outside of you."

Barnum has the following to say about memory:p62/3:"The more I think about it, the more I'm convinced that we are alienated because of an absence of memory. Our means to having a memory, to constituting a historical personality, have been mortgaged by our flagrantly evened-out modes of communicating. We have been introduced to the self-creating void. Perhaps by the fact that our social problems have insoluble and unsolvable. The Western dream of progress, of the ability of man to find solutions and to dominate his environment, has been smashed. We have become ants with a built-in echo of loss. We humans are now a foreign race, ear-marked by absence, and the absurdity of our lives reverberates in us."

Barnum plays out his aesthetic theory of humanisation in this context:p63:"The magic of the writer is that he can shape this absence and then slip into the skin of his making. And what if writing were the art of selling the skin of absence? Suppose now that I started writing about the two of you ..."

The text then is an exercise in the creation of a memory, selling the skin of absence. The main text is preceded by the following poem regarding memory:

A Kind of Telling

Memory is a strange thing
 all by itself. Through which
 words, incidents, people will
 move like snow or like dust.
 Words giving surface to memory
 in the present, or remembered
 as the fall-out of past writers;
 incidents modifying the meandering
 remembrances
 of memory people, my people.
 I am the memory of a kind
 of artisan novelist. The biography
 I am repeatedly in the process of
 writing is always the same one,
 and it may be described
 as a variously sliced-up or torn-apart
 book of myself as the essential
 apocryphal memory.

The text is then an "variously sliced-up or torn-apart book of myself as the essential apocryphal memory". The self speaking bears some relationship to the author and the text is biographical, if only in a metaphorical sense. It is the memory of snow and of dust, which words will give surface to. The text, then, is an imaginative history, which will tell the story of memory people, and more specifically express the story of the coming together of mano and meheret. It is a mask of the author, apocryphal - made up but essential. The text, then is a deictic metaphor, where the characters trace the meaning of the character behind the text. Fabricated memory, fantasy memory is being created by the author.

The cover of the book, done by Breyten himself, presents us with a central figure drawing on a landscape. The landscape and canvass are integrated, though slightly disjunct. A figure is hidden behind the canvass, about to enter the landscape, as the artist

is about to enter the canvass. The figure's foot wears a shoe, socks and pants identical to that of the artist, while the artist's one foot is missing a shoe, suggesting some sort of identification with him.

The artist carries a hat instead of a palette, and paints with his hand, not having any brushes with him. The figure has a small label on his pants, initialled "breyten". The figure is possibly a metaphorical representation of the breytenbach-barnum figure, at the centre of the work, an artist at work. The picture is an example of art as apocryphal memory, the made-up fall-out of past works and writers. The theme of the story as centred around a fictitious, semi-autobiographical writer figure and his relations to other fictitious characters is thus presented at the very beginning of the text.

The first part of the story is addressed to the unborn child, the reader in a sense, metaphorically in a child which grows as the text does. Barnum intends the following for his two protagonists, p63: "Oh I'd make of it a sad but romantic tale. Obviously I shall start with what I see, or think I see." Meheret becomes the locus of memory in the first instance. -

"To you Meheret, I shall give a rich past robed in the security of a pastoral African setting. Already you have such a calm face, except maybe for the eyebrows. But you are here now, away from the green escarpments of your native land. So I shall imagine you as a would-be writer confiding and confessing that past interwoven with a dramatic, let us admit a doomed, love affair with someone like Mano sitting next to you here. As scribe you will be telling your sorrows to an unsuspecting reader somewhere in the background. Obviously I cannot imagine your reader, but it will be my task to invent your passages, to be born from your sighs and your thighs as it were." It is evident that Barnum will be writing Meheret's passages, and meddling in her affairs.

Mano's story is a partial echo of Breytenbach's prison experience, told in The true Confessions of an Albino Terrorist and in Memory of Snow and of Dust p63: "You Mano, will be a restless exile - somebody imperfectly hiding the volcano of revolutionary ardour under the cold ashes of a cold actor. You will be pleased to know that I intend to put the two of you in bed together, and have you repeatedly tie the slippery knots. I am a generous man.

Then I shall send Mano back on a supposedly political mission to South Africa, commissioned by some mysterious all-powerful

organisation. South Africa is the dog with bloody sores lying athwart the public mind at present it is all too tempting not to use it as a setting, it is the ideal set-up for playing out my fantasies and my fears as also for promoting the sales of my book. I am the ruthless creator. Your parting, I'm sorry to say, will have to be a wrenching experience for the both of you.

Down there, I'm afraid, I shall have you caught, betrayed perhaps inadvertently by a close comrade. You will be put in prison"

Mano and Meheret come together as the archetypal erotic Yin and Yang, male and female. Barnum writes about this coniuncto oppositorum in his reflection: "A touch of the moon" (p30), wherein they come together as moon and water.

Meheret is the locus of memory, she is creating a racial memory in her letter to her unborn child. She writes as an exile of her african past, looking back, whereas Mano, as Anom, attempts unsuccessfully to transcend the past and the present in his walking across No Man's land.

It is thus that Eros and Thanatos meet in the act of love, represented here, and experienced in the theatre, between acts, where their child is conceived. Aggamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia is juxtaposed with the erotic transcendence of their love.

Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphøgenia can be read as the inverse of the Oedipal complex, seen from the point of view of the transcendental father, sacrificed daughter and the vengeful mother. It is also perhaps a complementary analysis of the Electra complex criticised by feminists for it's phallogocentric nature.

Iphøgenia who has attained to a still innocent womanhood is cast out, albeit reluctantly by the father for the sake of maintaining his transcendental familial and political omnipotence; she escapes, by redemptive human intervention, from being sacrificed for the sake of the father. She is cast out as a stranger on the no man's land, and while wandering alone encounters the male as equal in the form of her brother - sexual and spiritual equals. In the adult aspect of the Iphøgenia

complex it is Clutaimnestra as vengeful mother and lover who kills the father. The sublimation of sexuality in the maintenance of the incest taboo is, however a point which requires further investigation.

That Breytenbach deals with the transcendental in terms of the Iphegenia complex is confirmed in his deconstruction of the central Christian myth in looking at it from the point of view of the vengeful father and the suffering human aspect found in Christ, as well as in the masses suffering under the yoke of the patriarchal religion.

Anom addresses his male patriarchal 'God' as follows (page 258) - "Again , I played at being God - dare I say Noma? - and in the process became aware of the limitations and the ultimate impotence of being God (you cannot write yourself free because your very essence is ink, or the condition of being black on white), and in that consciousness I became God. Or his photocopy. God hated mankind so badly that he sent his only begotten son, his inheritor, his self-beyond-the-self, to be killed so that mankind would have neither God nor successor to God. All of which was to be replaced by Guilty Conscience. By this 'sacrifice' God made mankind accomplices to murder. God also must have had an all-devouring hatred for his son. He could not suffer the idea of being replaced. Dare I say Noma? Perhaps it is better to cling to atheism - that at least is a state religion."

The truth of the second part of the text: On the noble art of walking in no man's land, is that Mano acts out the part of Anom Niemand - an archetypical Blakean Christ - who finds that he is the ('Coloured') player of the white South African patriarchal God. He is the carbon copy of God. The central irony is that he is playing an accidental part, he is arrested and tried because he is a white : (p267) - "Only a White could have done the deed. The accused was, in a manner of speaking , the White for the job." He is arrested totally arbitrarily, he plays his part of Anom Niemand so well that his actual assumed identity, that of political activist - Mano is totally subsumed.

He is playing the fatalistic role that Barnum has given him, he is, at the end, like Iphegenia, the human sacrifice given up to death for the sake of making Barnum's text - the necropolis of South African society - The memory of Snow and of Dust catch the winds to Troy. The text is implicit criticism of the sacrifice of the human subject for the sake of the transcendental, especially the false transcendentalism of the visionary polis, the City of God rewritten by political legislature, whether of Right or Left; to become hell on earth, the civitas terrena.

Barnum sacrifices Mano, sacrifices Meheret, sacrifices their child, indeed, in a supreme irony, makes Mano, like Aggamemnon, sacrifice his child, for the sake of the polis. He is writing about his attempt to transcend his social situation, and attempting to come to terms with his past, especially with respect to Noma - the absent white patriarch - as invisible as God.

He attempts to look beyond his own death, and does not know the dramatic irony by which he addresses his transcendental white father who is already a dead man, as a matter of fact, the letters which he writes to Noma, are as futile as his earlier attempts to contact his father as a boy.

The text presents the reader as metaphor of the writer. The writable text produces the possibility for subjective self-reflection. The essential projection of identification lets the reader become a creative subject who creates a memory of the

text. This generative memory functions as a re-enactment of literature

Meheret as writer also functions as a metaphor of the reader. With the unborn child as a metaphor of the reader, we are born into the text and the text is born in us. The reader becomes metaphor of the writer; metaphor which is the coming together of mano and meheret; brought together by an author (read Transcendental Subject). This is the mythical sexual relationship of writer in erotic conjunction with the reader; the antithetical relationship between god and the human subject (vis a vis barnum and vis a vis anom) and; furthermore, as Anom becomes embroiled in the workings of Leviathan - also a relationship to the hegemonic necropolis.

THE TEXT AS TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL AND SEXUAL ACT

Brink's text States of Emergency shows a similarly self-conscious 'post-modern' approach to the notion of voice in the text as Breytenbach's text. A South-African author, acting as the metaphorical, self-conscious representation of Brink himself, makes notes for a love story within the context of the State of Emergency.

He tells the story of another author - Jane Ferguson who has written a love story. His own story deals with a post-graduate student and her relationship with an academic (another alter-ego of the public Brink). The various stories converge on one another, as much as they converge on Brink's previous novels.

The text is an exercise in the coming together of sexuality and violence, the circumscribed contradiction of two moments. The text itself is in emergency. It is presented as notes for a novel which won't be written. It is about the inner emergency of an authorial voice who cannot come to terms with the political situation, with love, and with the text.

The primary authorial voice finds that writing resolves nothing, and he finally abandons his text in the end, finding it impossible to write satisfactorily about the individualist existential liberation of love within the social, collective emergency of political angst and guilt.

The text deals with three dramatic areas, that of the State of Emergency, the relationship between Phillip Malan and Melissa,

the relationship between Chris de Villiers and Jane Ferguson. Love and Emergency is the common theme which binds the text together.

The chaos of society influences Chris de Villiers to act against apartheid. The world in which he moves is the space of oppression, the space of political struggle. His relationship with Jane takes place as he is fleeing the country, and to an extent it is an island in space and time between the continuing struggle against apartheid. When two of the hotel staff are arrested he goes to see the police.

He gets involved at a danger to himself, his life is a space of struggle. When he returns to the struggle in deciding not to leave the country his fate is sealed and he is arrested.

Jane takes up the text she is writing as a response to his death in detention. The author who narrates the story of Phillip and Melissa, and who follows the drama of Jane's relationship with Chris continually digresses to speak about the Emergency.

Milton Thaya reports on the state of the township from time to time, and the author is called upon to intervene. There seems to be no ordinary love in the period of social chaos in which he writes. Where love is unable to transcend the social, an act of political commitment defines meaning for the subjects in the text.

The three spaces of the text become one and the same. Differing states of emergency, all symbolising one another, flow into one another. There is no closed work as such, only a theme in crisis. In the time of emergency nothing is normal. The text of Jane Ferguson which comes out of personal emergency lies at the bedrock. It comes as an attempt at resolution of her relationship with Chris de Villiers and his subsequent death in detention within the context of the State of Emergency.

The sub-text is a picture of a futile love, the irony of the death of love in the face of time, the small space of love amidst life as it continues. It is the story of the love of a married man and a woman about to be married - the story of an impossible love which transgresses conventional moral boundaries, which exists outside of these boundaries, and cannot exist within them.

It is put as follows (p131): "Whatever may happen afterwards, however monotonous or horrible the rest may be, this week she can - must - break out, do whatever she wants to, taste everything, try everything, risk everything. This week is hers. She must live it to the hilt, challenge her own possibilities to the utmost. The immemorial, romantic dream of total escape, the island, the encapsulated paradise, that frozen eternal moment in which man and woman and fruit and serpent are caught, motionless and achingly beautiful, in some early Renaissance painting. To each other they are without history, weightless, even nameless. He knows nothing about her, nor she of him. All that is relevant is this given moment. Except for the point, the still point, There would be no dance, and there is only the dance".

Love exists within an existential place, free for a brief moment from the outside world, which comes pouring in over it, forcing the authorial voice into a transformation which deals with the socio-political apocalypse. Love and violence become integrated as the author offers his story as a sacrifice for the reader.

The metaphor of love which attempts closure is offset by the irony of fate which would tear this possible love apart. Thus the innermost text ends with death. Love cannot be resolved positively.

The death of Chris de Villiers is followed by the immolation of Jane Ferguson as the text she writes doesn't resolve her situation. Her suicide is to be understood within the context of the story of Ntombinde, the bride of the Sun.

Interestingly enough, this story can be read as another version of the Iphigenia-complex which became familiar in Breytenbach's text: *The Memory of Snow and of Dust*. The intervention of King Usikulumi, Ntombinde's father, chases the Sun away. Father and Lover cannot co-exist for the daughter.

Conflagration results (p170): "And in the violence of his (the Sun's) rage he set fire to the mat and to the skins and to the hut, and throughout the village the fire raged. Ntombinde fled into the night and watched from afar how everything was consumed by the fire: every man and woman and child of her tribe, and every single hut; and from there the flames sped up the mountain,

burning down everything in their way until the whole mountain was ablaze.

'Don't go away! Don't go away!' shouted Ntombinde, but the flames of the Sun raced further and further into the mountains. In despair she ran after the fire, with her bare feet on the scorched black earth, scaling the tallest cliffs, until she reached the top. From there she saw the whole mountain burst open from the heat. And deep inside she saw the fire raging on like a lake of flames. With one great leap Ntombinde hurled herself into that furious whirlpool to be reunited with her lover. And that was the end of Ntombinde and that is the end of the story."

Ferguson makes the leap into the dark of death where her lover is, making life art in imitation of her character's actions. Fire burns through the book. In it's female aspect it is seen as follows (p48): "Apropos of the reference of sin and the Garden of Eden above, it is amusing to think that, just like the forest and the enclosure surrounding the mystical castle of love in the Roman de la Rose, the circle of fire in which Brunnhilde is secured by Wotan in the woods, and the tangled thorns protecting the Sleeping Beauty (all of them but variations of Paradise) may be quite simply, like the ring of the Nibelungs, metaphors of the vulva. It requires a knight brandishing his blade to break the taboo (see page 212 - discussed later); Eden is guarded by an angel with a flaming sword; and the fire which finally gives access to the Castle of the Rose in the Garden of Earthly Delight is caused by a candle - 'qui ne fu pas de cire vierge' - lit by Venus."

Yet the fire is one of apocalypse - erotic apocalypse, as experienced in orgasmic death by Melissa (p143): "This time she cannot let him go again; she clings to him with a passion which confounds him, a hunger which has to be sated against all the empty unpredictable days ahead ('Are you not burned by the fire in my blood?'): fighting him, with the angry thrashing of her body against his, to draw from him, not seed, but reassurance and hope and faith with which to counter a surge of fear she has never felt so urgently: a fear of the future which has already begun to invade the present, a fear of the ultimate, of death. In the violence of her orgasm she bursts into uncontrollable sobs. Not in the way she often cries at the moment of climax, but in a total abandonment from which, after a long time, she only half-emerges, gasping and trembling. He feels left behind, stunned by those unknown silent regions she has traversed in her coming.

'What's happened?' he whispers in her ear, amazed, in awe, exhausted.

She stares at him with vacant eyes. 'I don't know. I think I died.'

The theme of fire as the onset of the death within the vortex of time rages even further. Phillip's first intimations of mortality are described in terms of matches burning away (p127): "I started striking them, one after the other, all eighty of them, transfixed by the small flicker of each flame against my fingers, and the slow decline of the brave little flare, until it died away." The shed where this takes place burns down as an eerie result.

This incident is conflated with Jane's narration of the burning down of the bungalow at the hotel (p82): "Starting as an ominous red glow, it changed into a raging blaze as we watched. Leaping flames, billowing smoke, casting an eerie flickering light over the whole backyard.

A terrifying site, yet incredibly beautiful too. All my life this fascination. Camp fires in the veld with Dad when I was small. I could stay awake all night just gazing into the flames. Perhaps the single most vivid memory of my childhood: Dad drawing or writing with fire in the night."

Jane is burnt as a child, she rushes into the burning bungalow when she thinks that 'Clive' is in there. In the process she gets burnt, and, in 'Clive's' treating of her burns their relationship starts. His intervention after the fire in going to the police, is also what makes him rediscover his commitment to his political role'.

The conflagration in the township on June 16 (p100) demonstrates the apocalyptic nature of the time of the Emergency starting to impinge on the lives of Melissa and Phillip. The novel is reaching its turning point in the apocalyptic orgasmic experience where innocence is replaced by commitment, knowledge and guilt.

Jane Ferguson now comments on her own writing (p205): "Now I can start writing. Want to. Must. I must find the words for it. Words of fire, like a blazing stick forming patterns in the dark". We have moved from a beginning , through a middle , now towards an indeterminate end: p206: the compulsive returns to the submarine interior of her little room with it's light changing according to the seasons - an icy white winter, purple in spring, an intensifying green in summer. The never-ending threats to the integrity of their love: saved from the everyday, but by that very circumstance marked for destruction. That one special afternoon accorded them to spend together, when Greta was away: and then Milton Thaya came and by the time he left the day was nearly over; and when at last he found her - that far-off rock, fire-encircled - the sun was already setting. Their brief apotheosis on the day of the demonstration, and it's consecration afterwards in her room: and Greta waiting for him in the small white car outside."

The next day completes the conflagration (p209): "It is a blazing hot day, as if the sun is shining through a giant burning-glass, all the white beams refracted towards a single spot; the world can go up in flames at any moment." The movement is about to be completed.(p211): "As their ears get tuned in to the silence the myriad of other calls become intelligible to them, like before. Sudden blinding flashes of light stabbing at them through the branches overhead.

He stretches himself out on his back. She sits beside him in her ancient posture, knees drawn up, sandals kicked off, narrow feet together. After a while she also lies back, their bodies touching. Without speaking, they lie there, delivered to silence. (p134: The bodies of two lovers fitting each other perfectly, every contour and inlet of the one matched by it's complement in the other. Like the two halves of the original symbolon: the stone the ancient greeks used to split so that each of two friends or relatives could keep one: and when they were parted and one of them wished to send a private message to the other, it would be accompanied by his half of the symbolon to guarantee the authenticity of the message. Symbolon: symbol: the bringing together of two halves, one close at hand, the other from afar, the abstract and the concrete, the matching of opposites

There is another connotation of the word which may be illuminating. Symbolon: symbalon: cymbal: two discs brought together in order to produce a sound (that clanging sound which indicates that one hath not love.)

Body and body: I love you. In one of his writings Barthes says something to the effect that it is the incompleteness of life which makes writing possible.")

As if the mountains, and the trees, and the hard earth beneath them, and their very bodies, have no relevance in themselves, but serve only as obstacles, objects to make space possible, discernible... 'Philip', she says at last, 'for God's sake, don't ever leave me. I won't be able to bear it. I'll go mad I think. You know what happens to a woman who goes mad? Internal combustion. She burns. That's what happens. She burns.' He presses her against him until at last the tenseness leaves her.

The first time we were here, he thinks, I had to come through flames to reach you; now the fire is inside me, in my blood. Desire stirs in him; he feels the urge to make love to her here, now. He senses his penis erect like a weapon, a sword, between them. But this very image disturbs and disarms him. In her experience sex has so often been associated with violence."

The violence of the outside world has been interiorised, and now, in its turn, even nature burns, (p214). They have themselves set the sacred grove alight. Ntombinde's mountain finds its place in the social and personal apocalypse of the Emergency. "We've set fire to the wood," she whispers ... plumes of smoke are spiralling up from the wood. Within ten minutes entire trees are exploding in spectacular eruptions of fire, sending a heavy black cloud of smoke drifting over the town.

'there'll be nothing left of the wood,' he says.

'There'll be nothing left of anything.'

By now sirens of the fire brigade are howling through the streets, like a stampede of obsolete animals trying to escape the burning of their familiar world.

Right through the night, and the following day, and the second night, the mountain continues to burn. The whole town is pervaded

by the smell of soot and charcoal. Arson, rumour has it: it's the blacks taking revenge for the killing of the child. The next to be set alight will be the white suburbs... The Eastern Cape, this ancient battlefield of white and black, is set to explode again. Will anything ever be the same again? It is as if an entire familiar order is passing away. The town is surrounded by a wasteland of black soot, grey ash. But it isn't only the trees. There is something in himself, in them, he thinks, that has been destroyed in this fire. A sanctuary, an island has been taken from them.... From the very beginning we have been invaded- not only by the past, but by the future. Since the first dawn this day has been dormant in the wood. From the first germination of a seed the fire smoulders within it."

Time is the apocalyptic, ironical context for the symbolisms of love. The web of meanings surrounding and penetrating the text is the ironical power of time which engenders and undermines the text - p133: Ilse/Jane/Melissa give the following analysis of 'their' first experience of orgasm: "Only years later, when I learned the word for it, I realised what had happened, and then it caused an extraordinary feeling of being doubly displaced. I was transported back to the day it had happened (which nevertheless remained unattainable in time and space, since I wasn't really 'there'); and at the same time propelled forward from that day to the subsequent discovery of the word. And these two impulses seemed continually just to elude each other: the experience was too early; the word too late. I was neither wholly 'here' nor ever adequately 'there'. A kind of suspended existence, somewhere inbetween (but between what and what?). And it occurred to me that one is almost never where one is. Zeno's arrow. Part of you is always somewhere else. You so seldom catch up with yourself. Language keeps you at a distance. And perhaps the only truly memorable moments in life are those rare, precious instants when you truly are where you are - knowing you are there - containing within yourself the whole of yourself and of your knowledge of yourself.)"

And as a comment on the temporariness of the existential moment: "Futurity breaks into their present; pastness gnaws at it... Let's plunge into this one week as if nothing else has ever existed, will ever exist again. Hold me. Don't let me go. Promise you won't abandon me.

Because in itself this moment is so fleeting it needs to grope for reassurance in notions of immortality. Time infected with immortality. Eating the forbidden fruit is to enter time, to enter history, to submit to meaning."

The inevitable political world consumes all. Writing a text of love in the South African State of Emergency becomes an Act of Emergency, an attempt to move beyond death, to grab at the human within the apocalyptic, an attempt within the text to ward off death.

The aesthetic becomes a liberatory space in which the impossible space of human love is affirmed. The text opens with Fugard's words: "The only safe place in the world is inside a story." The aesthetic is used to attempt to ward off the emergency, to preserve the human in the art of love.

The various masks of the central voice come off one by one. Ferguson's immolation of herself is the final symbol of the state of emergency. The only hope lies in the open-ended freedom of silence, the "story not yet written."

Andre' Letoit's text: Suidpunt Jazz takes a similar approach. A meta-textual authorial voice takes us through the novel and proceeds to introduce numerous alter-egos to the reader. His name is Libido, or Fanie, or Johan, or Afrika. His main alter-ego is that of Piet Retief. Timo Bezuidenhout is the ego which acts as the major protagonist throughout the novel.

Letoit also presents a mask for himself which is related to the public personality cult which he has built around himself. Even God is metaphorised as writer. The central ego attempts to keep control of the text, and wishes to subvert the Letoit figure in the text.

The textual continuum of time space and character are anarchic interruptions of normal space, time and character. The writer searches for the transcendental Anima represented by a succession of women in the text. In his search he becomes the Shadow, the archetypal African Raka. His whole universe becomes the apocalyptic and orgasmic expression of the Self in the text.

The post-modernist demise of the subject in the text, represented here by the discontinuity in voice, time, place and character is reminiscent of the schizophrenic experience in which ego-boundaries and the sense of 'objective' time and space fade. Twentieth century culture can be psychoanalysed as schizophrenic, in which the field of objectified knowledge and art disintegrates, only to be integrated subjectively and irrationally in existential, or visionary/religious ways.

Especially Breytenbach's text is an exercise in the shedding of the samsaric world of illusions. Enlightenment comes solely

through the rejection of objectified prosaic and abstract Cartesian/Newtonian/Hobbesian time, society and space. The individual who achieves satori loses his or her false self, but thereby is integrated with the Universal Self which is beyond time and space as we understand it.

CHAPTER 7: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS IN THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

Richard Rive's novel: Emergency Continued, works with similar dynamics as the previous texts. The context is the State of Emergency within which an author attempts to come to terms with the social context of political crisis.

The text follows on from Rive's text Emergency which was written as a response to the 1961 Emergency which saw the Congress movement banned. The same characters take in their place at the centre of the story. The narrator is Andrew Dreyer, the deictic mask for the author. Like Rive he has written a book.

The text is presented as follows: an omniscient narrative voice tells the story of Andrew's life, which is interspersed with Andrew's letters to Abe Hanslo, one of his comrades in the story around the first Emergency. Andrew comments on the structure of his novel as follows (p22): "My intention is to write this novel as seen through my eyes. To that extent it will be autobiographical. But then all serious writing is biographical, or is it not? As the omniscient narrator I suppose I am allowed to show how the happenings affect me or anyone else for that matter. What makes it worse is that I am casting this history into the novel form. But this has a distinct disadvantage. I do not have the supremacy of the long view. I have no perspective. In fact I am so close to my subject that I am practically in the middle of it."

Andrew comments further on his enterprise as follows (p67): "The frustrating thing is that I cannot progress any faster than events are happening. I do not know which characters will appear next on my pages and what they will do. In art one does know. In life one doesn't. The novelist's absolute control and omniscience are missing from my book. This is first-person reality written as third-person narrative. Many times I cannot distinguish between fact and fiction. I often wonder whether they are different. Instead of being in control and manipulating, I am being controlled by events and am being manipulated by happenings. It is a strange experience for a novelist."

This tension develops further and further so that Andrew writes to Abe (p132): "I find that events happening here resemble fiction more and more. In a superficial way, I suppose it is possible to separate fact from fiction. But are they really different? Are they not different sides of the same coin? Something happens which is so improbable that it defies passing itself off even as fiction, except that it has happened and is a fact. Two of the many ways in which fiction differs from fact are that fiction is manipulable (the omnipotent writer) and is also able to call on the technique of coincidence. The writer has the power to move his characters around at will, can cause events to happen at will, and can come to any conclusion he chooses at will. But once life seems to behave like fiction, once it seems to become manipulative and coincidental, then incredulity sets in, and in the words of Oscar Wilde, "Life imitates Art".

At present the almost hypnotic regularity with which I experience crisis on crisis, resembles art more than life. It all seems so structured. Situations are sufficiently regular and repetitive to resemble selective and manipulative art. This is the confusion I am experiencing as an actor in, and a recorder of, these events. At times I feel as if I am not merely writing a novel about life, but that the events are writing themselves. Life writing about life. A novel about a novel. A mirror as it were reflecting not nature, but another mirror. What then is real and what is reflected? Am I writing a novel or is the novel writing me? And in the process is something qualitatively different being created? Can art ever be greater than the artist? Is that fiction or is it merely a fiction?"

The text as a whole deals with the ethical question of commitment within a society in crisis. The Cape Flats are burning, society is polarised between those striving for freedom and the political system of oppression. The youth are in the forefront of the struggle and the events centre around Andrew's son - Brad - and his old comrade Justin's daughter. The situation has changed from the Sixties, and the whole situation is far more intense.

The tension between Andrew, who has become absorbed into his private world and has disengaged from any political activity, and his son, represents the central crisis in familial terms. Andrew

finds himself overtaken by political events, and the essential movement of the book is his movement to the integration of the privileged private space with the public sphere.

As Andrew takes in a political stance his life gains new meaning. Where he initially takes a liberal uncommitted stance on things, watching from the fringe, he later becomes committed in his actions. The pivotal point in the novel is where he decides to speak at the rally called to protest detention without trial, as well as the school crisis.

His search for his son is the movement to find himself as well, as much as his letters written to Abe is an inner dialogue with regard to his coming to terms with what is happening around him. His search brings him into contact with his old friend Justin, whose debilitated condition is a symbol of the terror and the crisis that permeates the novel.

Following on Andrew's commitment to the Struggle Justin's death is the apocalyptic moment in the text. The choices have been made and the movement to political chaos refers equally to the personal moment of crisis which the central characters experience. Andrew develops an ambivalent attitude to death (p161): "My will has also begun to fail for some time now to identify itself with my life. What else is left for me with which to identify? A friend murdered? A son missing? His girl-friend detained? My school in chaos? My daughter estranged? My wife escaped into religion? And I escaping into the secret enclave of my strangeland mind?"

I realise that in a way I am committing suicide. I am drowning myself in a sea of bitterness and self-pity. I am throwing myself from a skyscraper to be dashed to pieces against the hard reality of disillusionment. I am like Arthur Nortje, another poet who died before his death, consumed and eaten up in isolation, overcome by "the solitude that mutilates, the nightbulb that reveals the ash on my sleeve."

Brad's return home is the life-giving moment where Andrew finds himself again. The novel ends, like Brink's States of Emergency, in indeterminacy. There is a prophetic insight into Rive's own death, shortly after the completion of the novel (p185): "I am metaphorically tired. I still have to end this chapter of my life. I do not know how to do so because chapters of one's life don't just end, they spill over into the next chapter, and the next and the next. Maybe the confusion of fiction and fact is a deliberate one. Maybe it will paradoxically clarify matters. Maybe fiction does create a clearer insight into reality. Maybe life does, in it's own peculiar way, imitate art"

Ryk Hattingh's text: Ignatius Brand, explores the channels of violence in a single man. The text opens with a fire in which a man burns to death like a dancing Shiva in front of Ignatius's eyes, (p11): "Rogin Pluim kon nie meer die hitte voel nie. Sy lyf het nie meer aan hom behoort nie. Sy oë was nutteloos. Maar Ignatius Brand kon sien.

Alles was lig en sy oë het sy kop verlaat, hulle was êrens in die lug en hy het homself op die aarde sien staan omring deur brandende bome en rooi bloedspirale."

He settles down to a pastoral existence with his wife Es. They would find themselves in an Eden, but chaotic apocalypse threatens; (p16): "Toe Ignatius en Es die plasie gekoop het, het hulle 'n inferno op die koop toe gekry. Die grense en heinings het bewussyn nie uitgehou nie. Die ellende in die distrik het onder die deur en deur die mure gesypel."

At the heart of the farm is a compost heap in which fire and life become one. He is surrounded by the parallel forces of life and death, the landscape which brings forth life is raped, (p21): "Om hom was 'n wêreld besig om dood te gaan, om steriel te word. 'n Aarde se moer is oopgeruk en vol hormone en gif geprop."

The force of death is such that Ignatius imagines his own death. But death includes life in a stranger way; (p24): "Om te skryf is om en om die stiltes te draai, vinniger en vinniger, totdat die werklike bevryder - tyd ons weer in die groot stilte dompel. Dit kom van binne af.

Energiespirale begin draai by die plek waar die slang opgekrul lê, hoer en hoer, kop toe, kroontjie toe. Na die blom met die duisend kroonblare.

Vinniger en vinniger. Die rugstring word getoets, dit moet sterk genoeg wees om die energie te gelei. En dan, met sy kop stewig op sy reguit nek, sy lyf gereed, maak die blom in sy kop oop en die slang breek uit sy sakrale lêplek los en skiet boontoe, in sy rugmurg op, op en op deur die blom na die lig. Die slang byt in die son vas. Wit en skoon klim die engele teen Ignatius se werwels uit."

Jacob's ladder and the archetypal phallic tempter of mankind become one in Ignatius's experience of the edenic garden. He and Es are about to bring forth a child, but everything goes wrong. While he experiences the violence of army life on the Namibian border one of his brothers dies; he is to be court-martialled; then their dog dies, and then the foetus dies and Es has to give birth to their dead child.

At this time the State of Emergency is proclaimed, and one night he plays russian roulette, averting his death at the last moment. Shortly thereafter he barely escapes from death by drowning while collecting mussels from the sea.

In one of his flashbacks to his youth he remembers a brush with death, when a snake appears from a compost heap. The snake is killed and thrown into the fire, calling to mind the apocalyptic fire and the compost heap that he himself builds later on.

He leaves his paradisiacal farm behind and divorces Es, he hears the news that yet another of his fellows - Oom Hendrik is dead. He is called up for further military service. He views the state of South African society as follows (p63): "Ek is 'n slagoffer. Jy is 'n slagoffer. Ons plant bomme in asblikke voor kleuterskole, ons voer wapens uit, ons gooi mense van hul grond af, ons verdedig alle grense met oorgawe." While his mother cries for him and he weeps over Es and the death of Oom Hendrik, the State of Emergency is announced.

Ignatius moves into a day to day existence and looks back to the time when he almost drowned. Words are inadequate to deal with the mysteries of death and life, (p64): "Hy sukkel nie meer om te vertel wat gebeur het nie. Hy kan onmoontlik nie al die vrae beantwoord nie. Daar was nie woorde in die water nie.... En al wat ons het om oor die ontoereikendheid van die woord te praat,

is die woord self... Woorde vreet hulself op, en as Ignatius nie versigtig is nie, gaan hulle hom ook opvreet. Woorde vreet mense, en in die tye kan dit tog nie."

It is a time of social apocalypse, described as follows, (p66): "Johannesburg in vlamme. Stukke van geskifte, onvoltooide manuskripte waai deur die strate. Dis 1985. Ignatius gryp daarna, lees die woorde, probeer sinne maak, maar hyself is te gebroke. Die woorde wil nie met hom praat nie."

Ignatius sees various possible responses to the situation, (p67): "ALMAL WAG VIR IETS om te gebeur. 'n Tweede Jesus of 'n avatar van Wisjnoe of 'n inkarnasie van Gautama Boeddha of 'n kernoorlog. Sommige praat selfs van bevryding. Dis hoekom almal nou so druk besig is om te skryf."

He questions the role of writing in a context of social change, (p67): "Word gerus 'n skrywer en gaan skryf 'n boek. Maar moenie vir een oomblik dink jy gaan beter verstaan, werklik ondergrawe of enige verskil maaak nie. Tensy jy natuurlik jou pad tot by die wapenopslagplekke oopskryf."

His vision of writing is apocalyptic, (p67): "Gaan skeep karakters en daarmee saam die illusie dat dit mense is wat kan voel, pyn en plesier kan beleef, laat hulle lank genoeg leef om te se wat jy wil se, dan laat jy hulle begin hoes en betekenisryk aan tering sterf, of laat hulle met die polisie bots en doodgeskiet word, of gebruik opslagkoeels, of haelgewere. Of noem eenvoudig nie weer hulle name nie. Laat hulle tussen die reels verdwyn. Dit is een van die oudste maniere om van baie mense ontslae te raak."

Ignatius ends up in hospital with a sick dying man who speaks of the erotic conjunction of good and evil and of the dominative rationalistic fear of the female spirit (p69): "Die woord het miskien vlees geword, maar nog nie mens nie. Dit het man geword, maar nog nie vrou nie. Die woord moet eers vrou word voordat ons kan begin dink aan 'n beter wêreld. ... Die koue ingeperkte brein druk nou soos 'n grys grafsteen op die dooie hart. Dink jou in: die ontwaking van begrip, die herlewing van die rede, die oorwinning van die waarheid as die hart genadiglik deurbreek, god en die duiwel mekaar oplaas omhels."

Ignatius thinks back to the circumstances which brought him there. He saw the murder of one of his associates from the farm - Henry Wildeman. He goes drinking, gets involved in a fight which has him end up in hospital.

Willem Posel, the dying man in hospital with Ignatius, presents a relativising and ironic vision on life to Ignatius, (p74): " En jy, wie is jy? Waarom is jy hier? Jy wil natuurlik gesond word. Dis hoekom jy hier lê. Jy dink nog woorde kan dinge verander. Jy is nog jonk en dink jy sal iets kan sê wat nog nooit vantevore gesê is nie en sodoende die wêreld verander. Jy sal onverskrokke in jou verlede gaan rondkrap en al jou persoonlike dwaashede verwoord en as die waarheid voorhou ... Jy sal daarop aanspraak maak dat jy jou tyd verstaan, dat jy oplossings het vir die land se probleme. Pas op, moenie te seker wees nie. Die dood is orals. Miskien is daar 'n vrou êrens wat jou hand sal neem en jou uit die skaduwee van die ysterpiel sal lei. Miskien vat sy jou see toe. Enigiets is moontlik. In die tye van ewigdurende noodtoestande word die ondenkbare so alledaags en gewoon. Onthou net, elke liewe dag sterf daar mense, en nie net doer op heroïese slagvelde nie, hier om jou, op kampusse en in winkelsentrums. Soos selle in jou kop."

In a time like this life is contradictorily linked to death, (p74): "Elke dag keer soldate terug van die onderskeie slagvelde af terug waar hulle mense doodgeskiet en geelimineer het. Mense soos jy: 'n hopleë vleis, 'n paar pinte bloed, derms en heelwat kak, en dan moet hulle skielik weer normaal optree, op die regte plekke sag vat en lag en hulle kinders vermaan om nie die kat se stert te trek nie. Dis verskriklik."

Ignatius, in thinking of the insufficiency of the will to power, looks at the symbiosis in nature of life and death, (p76): "'n tuin is 'n plek waar daar nie ewigdurend en onvoorwaardelik vooruitgegaan word nie. Verval en groei is ewe belangrik; die tuinier wat dit nie verstaan nie, loop die gevaar om ten aanskoue van 'n genadelose natuur moed te verloor, neerslagtig te word en homself uiteindelik vernederd en onvergenoegd uit sy eie tuin te verstoot."

Within the necropolis of Johannesburg in the State of Emergency Ignatius foresees the end, (p76): "Hy ... is oortuig van 'n dramatiese einde, vuur en swael, apokalipties om die waarheid te se." He has become relatively indifferent to the process of life and death, (p76): ".. die gedagte stem hom nie onrustig of neerslagtig nie. Hy bou nie bomskuilings of jaag in beachbuggies

agter black holes aan nie. Inteendeel, die moontlikhede wat die onafwendbare globale krisis vir lewe inhou, gee hom hoop."

The culture of apocalypse within which Ignatius lives relativises the movement towards the culture of liberation, (p80): "VRYHEID IS DIE heel hongerste woord. Vryheid hys vlae, bou tronke en maak oorlog. Vryheid rig beelde op en gooi hulle om. Vryheid martel met warm ysters. Vryheid maak revolusie. Vryheid onderdruk. Vryheid skree ten hemele, fluit op pad galg toe, raak liries in die loopgrawe.

Vryheid praat en skryf, maar selde om vrywees te beteken. Eerder om te vertel van Ignatius Brand en die enkeling se onvermoë tot vryheid, die individu se hulpeloosheid binne die grense van sy eie, en grootliks sinnelose rede. Vryheid eis om erken te word deur elke eenheid van bewussyn, elke mens. Vryheid sal nie ophou vreet voordat dit vry is nie. Nie voordat elke mens op die planeet die woord vryheid se betekenis geken en vergeet het nie."

The inexorable unity of life and death, the patriarchal force of experience and the virginal innocence is seen as follows in alchemicalistic mode, (p80): "Die rooi man en die wit vrou, ook bekend as die rooi leeu en wit lelies, en nog baie ander name, word saam in die filosofiese eier gekook. Die gekombineerde materiaal word geleidelik swart (bekend as kraai of kraaikop), en later wit (swaan); nou word dit verder verhit en die stof in die eier veredel (die swaan vlieg weg); by verdere verhitting verskyn 'n sigbare kleurespel (poustert of reënboog); en eindelik word die inhoud rooi. Dit is die volbringing van die Groot Werk. Die rooi stof is die steen van die wyse, ook bekend as ons koning, rooi leeu, groot lewegewer."

The apocalypse is to be experienced individually in Ignatius's death, (p80): "Soos in enige sterfeling se lewe, breek 'n tyd aan om te vertrek, om verder te gaan, om tot siens te se, om te sterf.

Selfs woorde verander van betekenis, OK. Dis moeilik om die plek vaarwel te roep, af te maak as 'n onmenslike gejaag na wind, en werklike betekenis in die werkers se vryheidsliedere te vind.

As die ou gode vervloek en tot uitgediende mitologiese karakters gereduseer is, neem dit heelwat tyd en harde werk voordat mens enige nuwes vertrou. Jy moet jou eie hand in jou skepping kan sien. En dis nie so maklik om sonder daardie gode te leef nie."

Even the apocalyptic vision is ironised, (p81): "Jy glo aan 'n apokalips? Die ou dekadente sensualis sigself. Die opgevoede individu wat vervreemd en gemaklik sy/haar doemprofetiese boodskappe neerskryf, en dit terwyl die meeste mense in die land nie eens kan lees nie"

The apocalyptic and liberatory moments are, in the final instance, a cosmic transformation of the individual - the death of the ego for the sake of the self, (p81): "Ignatius Brand, 'n voorbeeld van 'n enkeling waarin kosmiese bewussyn gemanifesteer het, weet dit is sy plig, sy karma selfs, om sy onbenullige self te oorkom en met oorgawe deel van die universele bewussyn te word. Om betekenis na te jaag en nie weer uit te fok nie. Hy is positief."

In this context his whole life becomes different, he relates to his social context in a new way, (p82): "Laat in die aande as die voorstede slaap, het hy na die konvooië geluister. Dan, in die nag en die donker, kon hy sy gedagtes soos 'n vuur bal en saam met sale vol mense se ja! dit is nie net 'n regering wat moet val nie, maar waardesisteme, ideologië, beskawings, paradigmas. Ignatius Brand lees die tekens. Hy sterf 'n bos en 'n see af. Twee mense se dood ontstel hom nie. Wildeman se gewelddadige einde, terloops, was onafwendbaar. Hy kom nie woordryk in opstand nie. Hy verf politieke baniere in die nagte. Hy droom die wrede stelsel oop."

In the meantime personal and social apocalypse escalate, (p82): "Briewe uit die Suid-Kaap vertel van voorspelbare dinge. Opstand en onderdrukking in die townships, gemak en angst in die dorpe. Saul, die Joodse apteker, het vir Stevens doodgeskiet. Die het met Saul se vrou gelol."

Ignatius's individual experience is archetypal, (p82): "Daar skuil 'n groot plan agter alles. Ignatius moes deur sy eie persoonlike klein helletjie gaan, hy moes eers uitmekaar val en vergeefs na die stukke gryp, tot net sy naam, Ignatius Brand,

oorbly. Soos 'n potskerf uit 'n tyd toe die kruike nog heel was. Dit is hoekom hy nie verdrink het nie en weer by sy ma moes kom draai, om vleis te eet, en amandels en heuning, om bio-plus te drink en ryp korrels uit die aar te draai. Dit alles om vandag hier voor jou te kan staan. En ook nie meer lank nie."

And thus the text which opened with death ends with the death of Ignatius. While he is visiting some people a handgranade is thrown into the room, but his consciousness moves beyond death, (p85): "hy sal kyk tot die leeftyd verby is en selfs dan sal hy nie 'n oog knip nie. Hy hou die (wyn)glas teen sy lippe en voel hoe die skrapnel deur sy oë in sy brein bars en ek kan tog nie dood wees nie want ek sien nog en ek lag kan julle nie sien ek kan nog sien nie. ... hulle dink ek is dood hulle sien die vuur. Wat sukkel hulle nog met my lyf, kan hulle nie sien ek is hier in die vuur waar sy my roep nie.

O God geliefde kyk die vlam daar onder in die suburbs, ek was daar, 'n enkele foton in 'n donker wêreld. Laat Ignatius brand want ek kom geliefde, ek het nie meer die masker in die vlamme nodig nie. Kyk die planeet, blou en rond, word kleiner en kleiner en jy kan maklik daardie blou kraal in jou hare vleg god saam met die maan en die komeet en ons kan mekaar omhels en ons kan een word en stil en heel want dit is nie die einde nie"

The experience of the apocalypse is in the end an erotic conjunction with the divine which transcends the individual consciousness for the sake of unity with undivided universal Being.

Time of our Darkness by Stephen Gray revolves around the relationship between a middle-aged homosexual and a black schoolboy. Pete's relationship with his longtime lover is in crisis when Disley happens onto the scene. Their relationship transgresses the prejudices of South African society in breaking barriers of age, race and sexual orientation.

They create an alternative private space amidst the political turmoil around them. Their relationship infuses Pete's life with meaning, and leads him to explore the nature of South African society. As a white homosexual he already experiences what it means to live beyond the common bounds of society, and beyond the legal. Disley has also transgressed the bounds of his society, in opting for an education which precludes him from the direct political consciousness and action of his peers.

His friend Jenny, together with Disley initiate him into a new political and sexual consciousness. He sees the violence within the country and is aware of its neuroses, (p214): "We were surrounded by graves in 1985, from the past and present. The earth rotted with the dead. My country seemed a never-ending burial ground to me. It was like a bad smell, a stain on the fingers that would not scrape off. We were all sick with the sickness of death, so blunt to the early end, the bullet in the back, the dog's jaws, the sirens, the prison-gates closing on multitudes."

The book ends with the death of Disley, the deportation of Jenny, and reconciliation between Pete and Andre'. Jenny and especially Disley are sacrifices to apartheid society. Future hope, embodied in Disley, is sacrificed to the cruel vagaries of the oppression and exploitation of the apartheid society.

Die Hol Gevoel by R.R. Ryger is a litany of sexual violence, and a kind of parody of the prodigal son. The main character Lytton is tormented by his dead father, ever present as a super-ego in his head. The text begins with his father's violence towards him,

and his father's death from a heart attack and the suicide of his mother. His sister ends up in a mental hospital and he is adopted by "die Twee Malles".

He has been discharged from the army where he experienced the trauma associated with extreme violence, and he is on a kind of pilgrimage, sent out by his foster-parents to experience life. The urban landscape which he encounters is one of anarchistic chaos. He is close to losing control of himself.

The second chapter opens with an apocalyptic vision, (p18):

"Vreemde tye is aan die kom
 Ek lees Openbaring
 'n Kenner vertel dis die Bom
 Die lewe hang aan 'n naelstring so dun soos garing

Vreemde tye is aan die kom
 Sprinkane wat seermaak rondom
 Prediker vertel van hout wat gaan brand
 Jare lank

Wie een woord byvoeg
 Oor hom sal God die plaes laat kom

Vreemde tye is aan die kom
 Valse profete gaan glo feesvier
 En miljoene mense voor die Dier
 Taai tye, en dit alles oor 'n som

Vreemde tye is aan die kom
 Oor Vreemde Vliëende Voorwerpe word bespiegel
 'Maar,' se 'n boemelaar, 'Moenie komkommer
 Oor daardie soort stront, die hel is hier op die grond.'"

Lytton manhandles his way through this hellish life. He is aggressively drunk most of the time, always on the point of losing control. He taunts and abuses those around him. He abuses a woman in a bar and gets involved in a fight as a consequence. The accusing voice of his dead father follows him everywhere, questioning him about his belligerence. He beats up a beggar who asks him for money. He meets some women and acts in a provocative way towards them.

When they accuse him of belligerence he responds aggressively; he throws the beggar who has accompanied them out of the car that

they have been driving in at high speed and manhandles the women. He encounters one of his friends who is engaged in a discussion about religion with an old man, and in the discussion retorts that there is no God.

He wakes up the next morning from a dream in which he has seen the beggar falling onto the road - his head bursting open as he hits the tar. He had a blackout and can remember just about nothing from the previous night, and is informed that he got involved in another fight. Some time later he suffers another blackout while having intercourse with a woman. He is informed that he treated her very roughly. His dead father still keeps on bothering him, and when he looks in a mirror he sees his father looking at him. He realises that he looks like the father whose face he hates. He finds it difficult to find a purpose in life, and feels like Dion, whose flat he will be staying in, that his mind is chaotic.

In this condition he meets Aletha, a woman he actually falls in love with. He ends up sleeping with her. He identifies her as someone special - different. He tries to stay in control. His father's voice keeps on tormenting him and it is as if there is a war between him and the father-image inside him. He also worries about whether Aletha will accept him. He meditates on the state of the world as he experiences it, (p44):

"alleen op die aarde
 die aarde in die ruim
 die ruim oneindig
 oneindig verby
 die aarde in my
 ek is god
 god is groot
 groter as die heelal
 die heelal in my
 hoe kan mens verstaan
 hoe kan mens bestaan
 hoe kan mens aangaan
 met 'n toegeroeste brein?"

Lytton - the subject at the centre of the novel, is related to the transcendent subject - the subject as Eros - and the

transcendant father image - the subject as Thanatos - is also related to the cosmic, but demonic subject.

His relationship with Aletha seems to be changing him, though he loses control at times, and is aware that there still is chaos inside him. While he is slumbering images flash through his brain.

The Jim Morrison song: The End, moves subliminally through him, (p59): "Ride the snake. To the lake. He's old and his skin is cold". He has moved into a green landscape and changes into a snake. When he looks at his reflection in the lake he discovers with a shock that he is still a snake. As he looks his reptilian features slowly become human again.

He becomes his step-father: "Hamydal die Malle" He wonders about his real father, (p59): "Hy dink so hard as hy kan, maar hy kan nie onthou hoe hy lyk nie. Hy maak sy oë stadig oop. Hy is nog steeds Hamydal. Paniek oorweldig hom, hy slaan wild na die gesig voor hom. Glas breek, pyn skiet deur sy regtervuis, bloed ..." He wakes up and discovers that his bloody hand is bandaged. He also hears that Dion, a closet homosexual, has committed suicide.

He idealises Aletha, and discovers a positive alter-ego for himself in her, (p62): "Aletha, die skone. Aletha, die wonderlike. Sy is te mooi en te wonderlik. Sy gee hom nie ruimte om te dink nie, sy is die heel tyd in sy brein met haar liefde. Hy dink hy het haar ook lief. Hy dink ook dat sy alles deurmekaar maak. Sy eenvoudige bestaan van drink en droom is omgekeer. Die pynlike werklikheid van liefhê skud hom rond."

Nonetheless he gets drunk and, in telling Aletha of Dion's death, is extremely abusive towards her, and feels persecuted again by his dead father.

He ends up in the same state as the beginning of the novel, in a personal, apocalyptic crisis, (p67): "Hy voel heeltemal leeg. Die Twee Malles het gesê hy moet reis en volwasse word, maar al wat hy word is leer en leer. Hy voel heeltemal hol. (*italics mine*) Hy is moeg om so te lewe. Hy weet hy is heeltemal uit beheer. Miskien is dit wat die Twee Malles wou gehad het. Mens moet dalk eers die gevoel ken voordat jy volwasse kan word. Maar vir hom is dit alles 'n fokop." In this state he returns to his step-parents' home.

He finds his step-mother Armandine very ill, wanting to die, and discovers that his step-father has taken a new lover, Christina. Hamydal himself is jaded, and counters Lytton's accusations about his unfaithfulness to Armandine as follows, (p84): "As jy so oud soos ek is en jy het soveel kennis soos ek en jy besef een dag skielik dat jy nog steeds niks weet nie, dan is daar net een redding. Jy raak verslaaf aan seks en jy soek seks tot jy die perfekte maat vind. Armandine was dit nie ..."

Lytton's friend Tyle who has accompanied him home wants Hamydal to help him get better. Hamydal's response is to beat him up and then to have intercourse with him.

Sexuality and violence are interwoven. Transcendant and human good and evil are interwoven in an erotic conjunction, exemplified in Lytton's intercourse with Christina, (p94): "Haar soene is soos 'n wonderlike dwelmmiddel, haar vroulike seks maak hom lam, dit laat hom deurmekaar kreun van genot terwyl blink sterre voor sy oë dans. Orrelmusiek borrel deur sy are en donder in sy kop. Hy sien duiwe rondfladder terwyl die hel se vure om hom brand en die son val saam met elke drukslag suigend, gulsig op sy erekte penis neer. God weet, hy kan nie meer nie, die hemel hoor hom, sy maak hom mal.... Christina skreeu. Sy's erger as drank, sy's 'n heks. Sy is god."

Tyle attempts to have intercourse with Armandine, but sorrow breaks them and Lytton and Christina who are watching them. Lytton's mind reels with all that has happened, (p96):
 (Christina) -"Jy moet kophou. Jy moet nie mal raak nie."
 (Lytton) Nee, die wêreld het nie nog 'n malle nodig nie. Dinge gebeur. Dit gebeur maar net."
 "Deure gaan oop en deure gaan toe."
 "Jy moet verder kyk. Die toekoms wag."
 'n Nuwe messias is op pad.

Christina tells Lytton that Hamydal is about to take his own life. Lytton responds as follows, (p97):

"Selfmoord.
 Breindood.
 Heeltemal dood.
 Die einde breek nooit aan nie.
 Ry die slang.
 Hy is oud en sy vel is koud.
 Die aarde is groot
 So groot soos 'n ertjie in 'n pispot.
 Wie gee om as ek selfmoord pleeg.
 Die einde breek nooit aan nie.
 Die hel bestaan nie.
 Die Bybel is oud.
 Ek is koud."

Lytton rages against Hamydal, the Blakean/Oedipal transcendental Evil. He decides that Hamydal has to die. He rages against Hamydal's control of everyone. But one of his own friends - Faan

- whom he discovers has also committed suicide, said that he sometimes thought that Lytton is the devil. The inner voice of his father torments him again, mocking him with the possibility of his going mad.

Lytton feels that Hamydal, who has always been mad is now finally out of control: (p103): "Hamydal is 'n valse profeet. Hy glo nie in die Christine se God nie. Hy was eens op 'n tyd student. Hy het alles wat hy kon geleer. Hy het op die dun draad van goddelikheid gedans. Hy was goed. Nou is hy sleg. Hy glo aan seks. Hy misbruik almal. "Hy moet dood."

He encounters Hamydal and Christina, but is paralysed in Hamydal's grip. Christina dances for Hamydal and he kills her. Hamydal engages in a ritual dance and challenges Lytton to break free from his grip, (p105): "Dis jou laaste toets... As jy uit my towerspreuk kan breek en vanself beweeg, sal jy weet jy is die nuwe messias. As jy nie regkom nie, is jy vasgevang in jou liggaam tot jou dood toe."

The dance becomes more frenzied and Hamydal moves into a trance-like state, the apocalyptic moment has arrived, destruction and freedom are in tension, (p106): "Die musiek en krete bereik 'n waansinnige tempo. Hamydal val soos 'n besetene rond. Dan is hy weer in die lug. Hy skreeu en skreeu. Lytton skreeu in sy brein. Skielik is daar 'n geweldige plofgeluid. Hamydal skiet meer as vyf meter die lug in op. Hy is 'n vlammebol."

Lytton is caught within his body and wants to escape it when the internal voice of his father challenges him. He realises that to escape his body would be death. He still fears death and hopes for life. He is subsequently able to move and thereby realises his messianic role. He is an apocalyptic Messiah. Hamydal's death is his birth. He becomes Hamydal.

Armandine is caught like him, but though Hamydal's death might free her, the death instinct in her wins. She cannot live without Hamydal, she is pleading him to kill her.

Lytton returns to Aletha, and confesses his experiences to her. He has killed his mother. His father is dead. Tyle was raped and

is dead, (p114): "Hy's ook dood! God, Tyle is ook dood! Almal is dood! Almal is dood!

Lytton's mind has completely degenerated. He goes into a trancelike dance. He speaks with his dead father. He experiences horrific hallucinations. He sees a terrible old woman who tears off her face again and again. His father comes to meet him. He thinks he is in hell.

Aletha calls the police. They see him dancing in a frenzy. One of the policemen tries to hold him. Lytton attacks him and the other policeman shoots Lytton.

The existential burden of Lytton falls like Elijah's mantle on Aletha's shoulders, (p116): "Hy is dood. Ek is ontslae van hom, maar ek voel nie beter nie. Ek weet nie of ek ooit beter sal voel nie. Hy het my lewe vir altyd verwoes. Tyd heel wonde, maar ek twyfel of selfs God hierdie wond kan heel. Ek weet nie eers meer of ek in God glo nie. Ek voel so alleen. So alleen en leeg." The 'Hol gevoel' of the title has come full circle.

Where they play the Blues, by Verne Harris examines the religious, relational and political crisis of it's main character - Gudrun. It is the story of an existential rite of passage, her moving from a white, fundamentalist experience to a politically committed, and sexually and philosophically liberal position.

The setting is Pietermaritzburg, during the State of Emergency.

She is involved through her work in a project which brings her into contact with the realities of South African society, and which challenges her, (p18): "The idea of travelling regularly into the townships exhilarated and frightened her. During the height of township violence, when the TV screen held images of burning tyres and surging crowds, Gudrun had slept with difficulty. Although Pietermaritzburg had remained relatively quiet, and absolutely so for its white population, the word township had become irrevocably invested with the power to disturb."

Nonetheless, however, she desires to be involved, (p18): "Although politically ignorant, from her high school days she had

felt the need to contribute somehow to ending what she perceived vaguely to be the oppression at the heart of South African society. Her conversion to Christianity in her first year at university provided some coherence to this perception, but also became the basis for a sharp distinction in her thinking between spiritual and political liberation."

She moves from this dichotomous position, but in moving, becomes estranged from her husband James who is apolitical. Her psyche cannot accept simplistic fundamentalism and she begins exploring. The tumultuous change in her is expressed by a dream she has in which her dead father plays a direct role, (p47): "Her father took her into the kitchen, which was empty. Now there was no stiffness in her. She embraced him; gave herself to him. She could hear voices in the other rooms and her father's silence. Her ascent to an orgasm was being measured by the weighing of voices against the silence. But as her ecstasy approached, her father pulled away from her, and began to spread himself against the walls. She tried to call, but now her face, her whole body was rigid. He became the walls, pushing out and up, until he became a cathedral. Gudrun lay naked in its nave. Her body was white and cold on the stone floor, but she could not move. People were shuffling down the side aisles. They ignored her. She tried to shout, and suddenly felt her voice run from her throat, up, up to a minute stained-glass window. She did not know what she was shouting. This, more than anything else, terrified her. She would know if only she could shout louder."

Blues Magawana her colleague who is involved in the UDF initiates her into the political realities of South Africa, so that she becomes politically aware and involved, while her contact and sexual intercourse with Albert van der Merwe frees her existentially, even though the image of James returns jealously to her for a time. She frees herself by divorcing James, from whom she has become distanced in all the aspects of her being.

She moves from an integral view of life to one which accepts conflict. Albert says the following, (p112): "Look, to me one of the great tragedies of modern Western thinking is its refusal to embrace disunity. Its reasonableness takes it into mediocrity. At the heart of creativity, and all the truly great thinkers through the ages, West and East, have realised this, is contradiction. At the cutting edge of creation is the perception of both beauty and ugliness, the awareness of meaningfulness and absurdity, and so on. Two sides of a coin if you like. Denying one side makes a distortion of the other."

The ethical tension between right and wrong is cast within an existential frame, Albert refers to Camus, (p113): "Everyone has the ability to rebel against evil, and we must do it. In the end life is a jumble of absurdities, and in the whole scheme of things just plain absurd. If you deny that, you end up creating another little absurdity for yourself, or worse, if you have a position of power. But if you accept it, then rebel against it, in your rebellion you create something meaningful.'

While she is in a dagga trip the realisation of death comes to her strongly, and she questions the apocalyptic moment as follows, (p121): "I cannot accept that death is final,' she said. 'For those who knew someone who has died, that death never ends. In some ways it is only the beginning of something. Of what, I don't know, but it is a beginning. Surely for the person too, it is also a beginning?'

Albert responds to her, (p121): "Our lives seem so clearly defined. But we don't know that birth is the beginning, nor that death is the end. It could so easily be that we are in a short phase, with unknowable past and future stretching away from the

limits of time. We didn't need any preparation for this phase; why should we need preparation for what lies ahead?"

The violence in and around Pietermaritzburg intensifies, and Blues seeks refuge on Albert's farm. He is detained, and Gudrun then hears that he has been murdered by Inkatha directly upon his release. The social chaos of the State of Emergency has come home in a personal way to Gudrun, and she seeks some way to come to terms with it, to order her experience.

She recalls a central motif from her childhood where she was similarly in crisis, (p137): "She weighed this strand in her life, perceiving it as part of a woven garment, meeting other strands, parting, only to meet again. Always the weaving is at work, creating patterns, sometimes beyond one's control, at other times seemingly within one's grasp. She disliked loose strands." She wonders whether she will ever come to terms with James and with Blues's death.

Albert suggests to her that she go overseas for a while to gather perspective on what has happened to her, politically and personally. She counters the suggestion, saying: (p142) For the first time in my life I feel I'm making a meaningful contribution to society. I know it's a pretty fragile thing, but it's real and I must nurture it. Coming to terms with my South African-ness has been a struggle; now I can find my place in the struggle."

Gudrun has been transformed in her experiences, moving from the personal oppressive moments around her father's death to a coming to terms with self, which involves a social and sexual reorientation. She has moved into an existential realism in which the positive and the negative poles of experience are re-integrated.

Louoond, by Jeanne Goosen, offers an alternative vision of the human condition in which the violence of South African society is integrated. The text opens with the following quote: "Nog 'n boek deur 'n vrou. Luister vriende, die wêreld van die kombuis is van mens en God verlate. Dit is 'n - een van beheerde histerie. - J.G. Franshoek, 1987."

The main character identifies herself with two alter egos - Maria Callas and George Sand. She experiences a form of crisis, (p9): "Callas is waansinnig en ek is desperaat: In this house of distress, why, why, oh Lord, why do you repay me thus?"

Chaos and crisis is ever-present, (p9): "Callas gly leggiero met die toonleer af tot onder. Die toonaard verander. Sy bevraagteken die lewe in mineur. Wanhoop is internasionaal. Tosca stort met 'n gebroke hart oor die muur. Sy beëindig haar miserabele, geliefde lewe."

Again, George Sand, (p9): "Chopin arpeggio teen die plafon uit. Die pleidooie is hunkerend, maar George Sand slaan nie ag nie. Sy rook 'n Turkse sigaar. Sy sit iewers in 'n donker hoek en broei haar eie onheil en eiers uit. Sy skryf 'n woord en dit brand 'n gat dwarsdeur die papier. Sy is 'n protagonis op reis en sy hoor nie hoe haar geliefde sy morbiëde longe op die klawerbord uithoes nie."

A female spider in the cosmic world of the kitchen symbolises the central theme of creative violence inherent in nature, (p11/12): "Bo teen die muur, naby die plafon, trek 'n spinnekop blink drade uit haar maag. Sy weef 'n trourok en sluier. Sy sal 'n man vang en hom met haar liefde verslind, eiers lê en haar kleuters leer ballet. En juig: die spesie sal voortbestaan."

The woman's Dobermanns kill a chicken, and fight over it. The kitchen is a place where the woman rules violently, (p10): "Aha hierdie vrou is 'n kranige kombuisdirektrise. Sy regeer haar domein met 'n skerp mes. Elke oog steek 'n preek af."

the question of revolution dominates her thoughts, (p20): "Werk God in die sones van die rewolusie?" The relationship between the woman and her maid Anna encodes the nature of revolution. Anna says, (p20): "Al brand hulle reg rondom alles af, aan hierdie huis sal hulle nie raak nie, want na die rewolusie is dit MY huis."

The woman satirises the revolution, which will take over her space, (p21): "Wanneer die rewolusie kom ... Hulle sal hierdie huis waarin ek nou woon met sy geelhoutvloer en stinkhoutdeure voor my oë tot op die grond afbrand en ek sal sweet blow all

voel, maar die vrek weet, as hulle aan my Callas tape raak, is die hel los! ... "

She meditates on the violent principle of nature, represented in her kitchen as an army of flies and bacteria, (p26/7): "Die mikroskopies drakone is pure naalde, sterte, hare en hulle maak gereed om my ore, neus, keel, longe, maag oë en anus aan te val. Die natuur se boodskap is duidelik: as jy wil leef, moet jy baklei, anders word jy geboelie!

n' Klomp vliëe kopuleer in die suikerpot. Vreet en aanteel is 'n universele sport, dit is die enige wettige religie. Dit is 'n voetnota onder aan die lang elegie van die lewe.wat op aarde krioel, is altyd en ewig op hitte. Die seisoen juig en die wind dirigeer die makabere lied. Niks kan die uitputtende kringloop stuit nie. Dit is die politiek van 'n waansinnige stelsel.

Is daar sin in so 'n orde? Is dit werklik kreatief, en sal daar ooit vernuwing kom? Word die Maker nie self van sy eie nimmereindige herhalings moeg nie? Kan hy dit ooit nog beëindig, of het Hy vasgestrik in sy eie spel geraak?" The spider creates a brutal art to catch its fly, her politics is one of deception and vicious play, similar to the aesthetic of the writer, which is satirically and irrationally macabre: Her art - "KOMBUIS BLUES" is hidden in the louoond of the title, in the cosmic kitchen which is her world.

The newspaper mirrors the callous art of the kitchen, coldly introducing the politics of human cruelty, (p33): "Blad sy Drie maak die deur na buite oop. Dit is 'n saaklike verslag. Dit bied geen ruimte vir sintuie of rede nie. Die grys landskap behoort aan die fotograaf. Dit is sy wêreld, en dit is 'n wêreld waarin niks meer saak maak nie. Dit maak bang en gee aanstoot. Die motief is nie duidelik nie. Crossroads se lyke is terloops aangebring. Hulle lê op 'n hoop, gelinieer en gestileer, 'n vrag oorskot, mense sonder innerlike lewens, bondels bene. Die onvoltooidheid van die lywe hinder; daar is hande en voete en neuse wat makeer en dit is asof die gesigte gevreet is. Party van die dooies is buite verhouding geswel, en , my god, die boonste een het 'n vergrote skildklier."

The woman enters into the picture and discovers her own primitiveness, (p34): "Daar is 'n ander kreatuur wat in my lewe. Dit is 'n blind homp mens met oerkennis, 'n dier of 'n half-dier en dit deins terug. dit reageer op die reuk van vrugwater en ontbinding. Dit ken afgryse, dit ken paniek en rou bloed en jellie en dood, en dit ken die verskriklike angs van dood. Dit vlug, dit beur tussen donker flardes mens deur. Alles wat geslag en vermink is in Crossroads, hurk weer saam. Die vorm kom terug. Dit verstar, dit word 'n stil, soliede hoop dooies, o asseblief, die oë is kinderlik en hulle is oop.

Die dier worstel, draai op sy. Dit beur vorentoe, my lyf vou, ek skeur van binne na buite, die ontbinding skiet by my mond uit. Ek stik in die senings, in die stukke vleis en sap en sop, ek verdrink in die donker lig."

This apocalyptic vision of the self, involved in the photo, the political reality of the polis, changes all perspectives, (p34): "Niks is veilig nie. Niks is meer bekend nie. Ek is buite die foto, maar niks wat buite die foto gebeur, is meer van enige belang nie. Die realiteit is van alle sielkunde beroof. Daar is nie meer verwysingsraamwerke nie. Die foto kondig die nuwe geskiedenis aan. Dit kondig 'n wêreld aan wat nog gekonstrueer moet word. Dit is die onbekende gesig van die toekoms. Dit vervul met vrees."

Death and life are inexorably linked, (p35): "Wat verrot is, is lewende natuur. Wat onsigbaar is, is wat saak maak. Dit beweeg weg van mekaar, maar dit bestaan onafskeidbaar saam."

The tragic state of humanity is laid before God, (p35): "God, Here, U kyk toe dat al hierdie dinge gebeur en U verroer nie 'n vinger nie. U speel met insekte, gee hul komieklike gesigte, U slinger 'n miljoen planete in die ruim rond en wanneer U toornig is, verklaar U 'n hele spesie tot niet. Uit aminosure kruip die mens. U het ons hoog en bewus gemaak, heilig en tragies, en korrup, maar seker korrek. Ons moet sterf, maar voordat die siddering kom, moet ons die verskriklike vrees leer ken, ons moet gedurig kalmeer en U, U wat op dood skoei, U eis dat ons U ewig lief sal he. Here, God, U wat die kontrak met die demoon verbreek het, U aandag asseblief! Het U die koerant vandag gesien!"

Nature is a site of conflict, in which all dies, even humanity, (p36): "Ons sal klip word, 'n blou radioaktiewe klont, beaar met senuwees en bloedvate, 'n versteende verslag van wat ons eens was. Die son sal op die klip skyn, die wind sal dit verweer, weerlig sal dit in skerwe splyt. Dit sal 'n heiligdom word vir voëls - maar oplaas sal ook die klip gedelf word om ammunisie en plofstof te vervaardig. Uit die klip sal vuur kom en van vooraf sal die slagting ad infinitum voortgaan. Asseblief ..."

Nature is Machiavellian, (p36): "Die reendruppels glinster teen die ruit. Hulle is besiel met selle wat swierig splyt. Dit is 'n bekende politiek en dit is vertrouwd met die kuns van verdeling. Dit organiseer gedurig en doelgerig. Kompleksiteit is kos. Hulle werk in 'n kommune saam om die aarde te oorheers, magsugtige diktators met oorlewingsambisies."

The central character wages war against the beelzebub: (p37) "Ek tel die vliëeslaner op. Rahab, mag wat teen die orde rebelleer, ek sal jou onstuimigheid tem Die warm bloed word koud. My asem reel die maat. Ek proe rewolusie op my tong. Ek, die mens, is hard, bitter, fanaties. My gedrag is pure patroon en my hand tree op volgens my verstand. Ek verteenwoordig 'n duisend verwoede arms. Die toorn het ontvlam!

Elke hou van die vliëeslaner is 'n slagspreuk. Die taal is magtig. Dit sweep op en dit oortuig. Dit swiep, dit begeester en spiere versterk die trefkrag."

The woman goes fishing on Langebaan lake with her friend Hermien, a revolutionary in hiding. They discuss violence and revolution.

Hermien has a Machiavellian view of violence, (p50): "Geweld is normaal in 'n wêreld wat misluk het, se sy. Sy steek haar duim en voorvinger agter by die vis se kuwe in en druk die are stukkend. Die dier hou op spartel.

Op 'n vlak van terreur, se Hermien, bestaan die objektiewe wêreld nie meer nie. Vrede, rede en moraliteit is leë woorde. Mag word hoofsaak. Mag staan gelyk aan geregtigheid."

The woman lives out power in her own domain, (p51): "Ek leef in die tradisie van die vrou. Die kombuis is my veilige domein. Ek benodig geen ander bronne van kennis nie. Ek bepleit my saak met 'n skerp mes. Ek regeer en die slagting gebeur oor en oor. Lewe bibber op die afgrond van die dood."

There is a tension in the text between a religious and humanistic view of the impending apocalypse . Callas/Sand's neighbour - the Arminian woman, prepares her followers for the Second Coming; while Hermien attempts to foster in the revolution.

Hermien rejects a religious teleology, (p52): "Die godsdiens waarmee ons grootgeword het, is vol pienk geloof en eensaamheid, vol uitverkorenes en waarskuwings, en skeidings tussen skape en bokke. Die bande met die verlede moet verbreek word, sê Hermien. Geskiedenis kondisioneer. In die twintigste eeu is rewolusie 'n suiwer biologiese saak. Dit is hoofsaaklik die behoeftes van die liggaam wat dikteer, se sy. Die ware rewolusie is onbaatsugtig, dit is alles behalwe heroïes of idealisties."

She continues, (p53/4): "Ek was deur baie dinge, sê Hermien, barmhartigheidsdienste, kospakkies en vroomheid, soet woordjies en daardie soort van ding, jy weet. Dit is natuurlik alles deel van 'n politieke teorie wat dom ordentlikes bewonder, deel van die edele leuen oor die ewige lewe. Ewenwel, die een ding het tot die ander gelei ... Geweld is nie die ontkenning van barbaarse instinkte nie.... Jy kan geweld net begryp as jy self daarby betrokke is. .. Geweld is die enigste suiwer daad wat oorgebly het."

Violence is seen as an ennobling thing, (p56): "Geweld maak mens vreesloos. ... Dit louter. Dit beteken 'n nuwe lewe met nuwe waardes. Hy wat 'n mes neem en die tiran keel-af sny, vermorsel nie net die onderdrukker nie, maar ook die onderdrukte. Hy vernietig sy gevoelens van minderwaardigheid en herstel sy selfrespek. Hy herskep homself en daar is weer hoop, 'n nuwe menslikheid. Geweld reinig. ... dit is skeppend. Dit is katarsis."

The Arminian woman holds to the opposite regarding the Millennium, (p56): "Dit is beter om plat te lê en die Toorn te vrees, se die Armeense vrou en sy glimlag droef. Hy sal openbaar, o ja, o ja, Hy sal, op sy tyd! Wat vir ons 'n duisend jaar is, is vir hom 'n oogwink."

Hermien counters, (p56): "Sy een minuut bly nog ons duisend jaar! ... Ons kan dit nie ontsnap nie! Dit bly 'n menslike ervaring en ons moet derm vir derm daardeur!"

The Arminian woman awaits the Millennium, (p56): "Ons moet van die sterwe wins maak, sê die Armeense vrou. Sy staan op drie sakke sement in haar tent. Ons sal ons telkens na God haas om Hom te erken as die oorsprong van alle dinge, liewe broers en susters. Mens en God is lots-verbind. Die massa-vrouekoor sing. Hulle stemme sweef oor die groen vallei. Die berge antwoord. Als wat leef, juig ... Maak gereed vir Die Dag dat hy kom, se die Armeense vrou, en sy sprei haar arms uit oor die armoediges van gees."

In the end nothing is pure, nature is brutally ordered, humanity is maladjusted and violent, attempting to rise above the animal; natural selection will favour the brutally powerful. Hermien and the central character come into conflict around the fascist pragmatism of the social revolution. There is no resolution, and nothing is left untouched.

Die Eerste Lewe van Adamastor by Andre'P.Brink is an exercise in myth. Sexuality and Nature are integrated such that the usurpation of the one is the usurpation of the other.

It presents the fabulous history of T' Kama Grootvoël and his relationship with the first white woman in Africa. It may be considered a parody of the mythical relationship between Adamastor and Thetis and a metaphor of the relationship between man and woman.

The beginning of the text presents us with an explicit writer located in time, with academic critical knowledge of other texts; this writer takes on the voice of Adamastor, asking what the

source text on which Camoens based his text about Adamastor would look like.

The writer puts the question in a different way, p4: "gestel daar was 'n Adamastor, 'n model vir Adamastor, en gestel hy het deur die eeue in baie verskillende, opeenvolgende gedaantes bly voortbestaan om die lotgevalle van die Kaap van Goeie Hoop (of van Storms, om't ewe) waar te neem, selfs mee te maak, te beliggaam: hoe sou hy' dan, vanuit die perspektief van hierdie jaar onse Here, Negentien -soveel-en-tagtig, terugkyk na die moontlike begin en/of dit probeer konstrueer." T'Kama then acts as narrator looking back in time on his own history, locating himself for the major part in the historic present.

T'Kama's history personalises the political questions of the novel, written in April-June of 1985, at the height of political turmoil in the Second State of Emergency. The tone of the work is light and humorous, and the South African conflict is examined in terms of its origins.

The physical world is made magical. All the things encountered in the pilgrimage T'Kama and his tribe make are portents. The drought which they experience and which forces them to carry on journeying, is interpreted as a sign from heaven that T'kama is bringing bad luck on the tribe by his involvement with Khois. The death of their flocks is interpreted in a similar way.

The woman is more mythical than actual, the whole book is indirectly about her and her effect on the people she is with yet she is a totally bound woman, abducted into a totally different culture.

Central to the novel stands T'kama and his sexuality. His abnormally overgrown penis which he carries over his shoulder like the North-American Indian Trickster, is the giant, the adamastor-like disturbance which hinders his normal sexual relations. The suspension of normal sexual activity goes together with abnormal natural and social conditions, and it is only when normal sexual relations are restored that nature and society return to normal as well.

T'Kama's huge penis which cannot enter the woman, no matter how he tries is like a phallo-centric form of existential guilt which he carries around with him. The bad luck which alienates him from his followers is compounded by the curse which falls on him when he accidentally kills a chameleon. He has to fight to maintain his leadership of the tribe.

The political is integrated with the mythical, in that the south african scenario is investigated in terms of its' origins. The first meeting of white and black presents the two possibilities of positive and negative relations. The exploitative behaviour of the europeans leads to violence, while the relationship between T'kama and Khois presents the alternative.

The spiritual and mythical question around which the novel centres is whether the gods and nature and circumstance will allow this first interracial relationship to happen or not. At first everything seems against it, but then through the intervention of the miraculous, things actually work out for a time.

T'kama has to encounter the archetypical monster in order to gain access to the anima-figure of Khois. The crocodile in the river that bites off his huge penis is a blessing in disguise when the witchdoctor magically fashions a new penis for him. The celebratory moment of sexual intercourse between T' kama and Khois is also the restoration of nature when the drought is broken and all being celebrates their union.

When the european sailors at the end destroy the relationship by physically taking back the woman, and murdering T'Kama the pattern for the struggle in the South Africa to come is established. Eros is temporarily overcome by Thanatos; their violence at the end is directed specifically against the bond between black and white. It is only the fact that Adamastor miraculously is incarnated again and again that defeats the apocalyptic moment of death.

Die wilde kind by Fransi Phillips moves beyond the political into a mythical examination of the forces of Eros and Thanatos.

Michael is a sculptor living in London. After a dream in which a strange and wild little voice calls him, he goes to live in Botswana. He makes figures from stones and stumps which he finds in the veld. He hears that an opera singer, Claudia, stays near him.

He watches fire, and draws figures which he sees in the flames, (p7): "Vreemde wesens is voor sy oë in die vlamme gebore en het hulle hele bestaan in 'n paar oomblikke voor hom afgespeel voordat hulle weer vergaan het: 'n Man met die kop van 'n aap., 'n wolf met vlerke van vuur. 'n Oosterse prinses wat in 'n slang verander, 'n goue engel tussen die sterre, 'n kriegagtige robotman in 'n maantuig ... So vinnig as wat die vlamme verander het, het hy geteken: 'n eindelose reeks verskynsels wat uiteindelik 'n hele uitspansel sou word."

A while later a child is born to the operasinger, a wild child - issue of the union between the Diva and a travelling Bushman. Michael remembers the little voice which called him in his dream while he was in London. The child looks like a wild animal, wears no clothes and, like a wild animal, spends all its time in the veld. She also learns to play the flute.

One day he encounters her in the veld; she is there one moment and gone the next. At home he watches the fire as he always does, and he sees a child reaching out with its arms towards him, her arms change into branches blowing in the wind and he wonders whether she is cold in the night, being naked in the veld. Just before he falls asleep the child bursts out laughing. The laughter changes into a bird which hangs above his head and laughs. Some months later Michael is busy working on a sculpture of a "mensvretermoeder": (p17): "'n kolossale vrou uit Afrika wat aan 'n mens sit en eet terwyl sy geboorte gee."

In the evening a man comes to tell him of the death of the Diva, (p18): "La Scala het afgebrand ... Hulle het haar gered, maar sy het weer teruggegaan na die brandende gebou en tussen die vlamme gaan staan en sing. Blykbaar was daar iets, 'n soort krag, wat die brandweermanne verhoed het om haar 'n tweede keer te gaan red. Almal was half-verlam deur die waansinnige toneel: die pragtige stem wat in die vlamme gesmoor is... eenkeer het ek met haar probeer praat oor haar gevaarlike manier van lewe, maar ek kon haar nie werklik bereik nie. Om uit te brand was die enigste manier van lewe."

The child tried to follow her mother, but the firemen prevented her from doing so. Since then she has refused to talk and has been trying to light fires whenever she can. Michael, who has promised to look after the child, if anything should happen to her mother says he will fetch her and look after her as she belongs in the veld.

Michael identifies with the child very strongly, (p20): "Hy vind dit vreemd dat dit so belangrik is om die wilde kind terug te bring na die veld, asof iets in sy eie siel gevangene gehou word deur die wete dat sy in 'n inrigting toegesluit is. Maar hy is ook bang vir die chaos wat haar vure in die veld kan veroorsaak."

He starts dreaming, (p20): "Op een tydstip sien hy 'n vrou met vuur in haar hande; dan weer 'n dier wat in 'n net spartel.

Van ver oor die veld kom Claudia singend op 'n brandende dier aangery. So ver as wat die dier beweeg, raak bome, bosse en gras aan die brand. Michael wil opspring om die vuur te blus, maar hy word verlam deur 'n eienaardige, walglike gevoel van opgewondenheid en ekstase."

Another vision fills his mind, (p21): "'n Engel met Michael se gesig en 'n paar goue vlerke, geklee in 'n lang, wit rok, kom oor die veld aangery in 'n brandweerwa. Hy hou onder die boom voor die huis stil waar Michael se vragmotor gewoonlik staan. Michael roep na die engel, maar hy lag net en waai deur die venster van die brandweerwa."

He fetches the child from the city; she won't talk, and when they come home she gazes intently into the fire which has been made. She refuses to wear clothes and only gazes intently at the fire. Michael gives her some fire-like opals to wear around her neck. They go to sleep, and he is woken by the intense light of a fire that the wild child has made in the hearth.

Some time later the child disappears in the night, and Michael hears that the veld has caught fire. The firelike creative chaos which is necessary for the creation of art threatens to disrupt the overall order of nature.

The tension is stated as follows, (p47): " ... Just as in alchemy the volatile spirit of Mercury must be "killed" or fixed by the stable solar principle of sulphur, so the lithe and sinuous dragon must be slain by the angel. The symbolism is this: the vital spirit is by nature chaotic, but the intellect cannot operate without its power. To "kill" the dragon is not to eliminate it, but to tame it, to leash it, to order it ... Peter Lamborn Wilson."

While fighting yet another veldfire, presumably caused by the wilde kind, Michael himself is caught in the ambiguous beauty of fire, (p49): "Hoe mooi lyk die brandende veld in die nag, dink Michael. Hy neem 'n sak. Vir 'n oomblik maak die vuur 'n vreemde gevoel van opwinding in hom wakker. Dis asof iets in hom vrygelaat word deur die vernietigende vlamme. Dan hoor hy Radikgomo se stem: "Michael, jy staan te naby aan die vuur!" Hy skrik, staan 'n paar tree terug en begin die vlamme met die nat sak slaan. Skielik verskyn daar 'n gevleuelde draak in die vlamme. Die draak begin vlamme na hom spoeg. Die sak skaaf sy hande, maar hy hou aan veg teen die vuur. Erens uit die nag, of uit Michael se drome, stryk daar groot 'n engel met goue vlerke neer in die vuur. Die engel en die draak begin veg ..."

At home afterwards, he starts drawing, (p50): "Ingedagte begin hy krap. Geleidelik verskyn daar 'n engel en 'n draak op die bladsy. Hy teken nou vinniger: 'n reeks sketse wat die verskillende stadiums uitbeeld van die geveg tussen die engel en die dier. In die laaste skets word die engel en die monster een." Evil and Good become one in the psychological and aesthetic processes.

Michael has invited visitors from overseas to an exhibition of his art. Journalists ask him questions about his approach to art. He comments as follows of the dragon and the angel fighting, and the identifications he makes, (p69): "Ek het eenmaal gedroom van 'n engel wat my gesig het ... Maar soms voel dit vir my of daar ook erens 'n dier in my wegkruip." They ask: "As jy die chaos in jouself wou ontken, sou jy seker nie 'n kunstenaar kon wees nie." "Ja. Die skeppingsproses is altyd 'n konfrontasie, en uiteindelik 'n ontmoeting tussen chaos en orde. Ek wil nie een van die twee ontken nie."

He also comments on the artist as hermaphrodite, the conjunction of male and female, in discussing a sculpture he has made of David Bowie, (p70): "Bowie is net so veranderlik soos party van die monsters in ou stories. En hy is 'n moderne simbool van tweeslagtigheid, soos die eenhorings en die engele in die ou tyd."

They enquire further: "Is daar 'n rede waarom jy die verskil in kleur tussen sy oë beklemtoon het?"

"Ja. In die Middeleeue het die mense geglo dat iemand met twee verskillende kleure oë op 'n geheimsinnige manier verbind is met die chaotiese wereld van drake en elwe."

"Daar is merkwaardige ooreenkomste tussen jou en Bowie se voorkoms" se 'n joernalis.

Michael knik. "Mense merk dit dikwels op."

"Kan dit dalk wees dat Bowie in een van sy baie gedaanteverwisselings 'n beeldhouer geword het wat saam met 'n elfie in die veld kom woon het?" vra die joernalis.

"Dit klink of jy 'n goeie verbeelding het," lag Michael.
 "Waarom skryf jy nie 'n storie daaroor nie?"
 "Ek kan dit nogal oorweeg," se die joernalis. "Wil jy iets sê oor die beeld van die mensvretermoeder?"
 "Die beeld is baie sterk beïnvloed deur die Afrika-kuns. Veel meer hoef ek nie daaroor te sê nie. Dis tog duidelik dat geboorte en dood in die beeld bymekaar kom."

Thus the text works in its characterisation with a multiplicity of identifications, investigating archetypes and their interaction in the aesthetic sense. These conjunctions of good and evil, chaos and order, Yin and Yang are the matrix, or depth structure of the text.

Claudia's house burns down, and Michael suspects that the child might have caused the fire. He is worried that she might be caught in the fire. Yet another fire breaks out, this time an enormous conflagration which seems to set the whole world ablaze. He sees the child in the fire, (p80): "Skielik kom die kind tussen die vlamme deur na hom aangehardloop. 'n Entjie van hom steek sy vas ... "Klein wilde dier!" roep hy angstig. Die volgende oomblik val die skaduwee van 'n monster, soos 'n hiena of 'n wolf, uit die nag oor die kind. Die kind spring om en verdwyn in die donker op die dier se rug..."

The child lights fire after fire; she sees her mother in the fire and wonders how she can bring her mother back to her from out of the flames. After being mute since her mother's death, she begins speaking, (p98): "Michael ek wil jou iets vra. Wat moet ek doen om my ma te laat terugkom uit die vlamme?"

The child does not understand death, she lights fires in order to see her mother's face in the flames. Michael has to answer her, (p98): "Ek sien ook soms beelde in die vuur. Dis goed as jy jou ma op so 'n manier lewendig kan hou. Maar as jy na haar beeld in die vlamme wil kyk, sal jy maar hier by my moet sit en kyk na die vuur. Om die wereld aan die brand te steek, gaan haar nie nader laat kom nie. En as jy ooit weer 'n vuur maak, gaan ek jou terugneem Johannesburg toe."

She asks where her mother is, and Michael says she is with the stars. The child is afraid that Michael will die. She thinks that

Michael will kill himself by smoking cigarettes, and Michael has to stop smoking to convince her that he won't kill himself.

The child questions the origin of life and the nature of death, (p130): "Michael was ek dood toe ek nog nie gebore is nie?" vra sy skielik. Hy kyk op: "Dis 'n snaakse vraag. Ek dink nie jy was dood nie" Sy word weer stil. Maar na 'n rukkie vra sy: "Sal ek by die sterre uitkom as ek sterf?" Hy frons: "Jy is te klein om te sterf." "Kan klein mense nie sterf nie?" vra sy ernstig. "Hulle behoort glad nie te sterf nie. Jy behoort eintlik nog nie eers oor die dood te dink nie." "Maar my ma het gesterf. Daarom dink ek oor die dood."

Yet again a veldfire breaks out. This time it isn't caused by the child. She wants to accompany Michael who is going to fight the fire. Michael rather wants her to stay at home. She is deeply disturbed by the fire. He leaves, and after he has left she follows him because she is afraid that he will die in the fire like her mother.

She desperately seeks Michael. She encounters the fire, (p134): "Die klein wilde dier kom van die kraal se kant af oor die veld aangehardloop. Sy hardloop deur die rook, tot byna teenaan die vlamme. Die trane loop oor haar wange. "Michael!" roep sy, "waar is jy?"

Verward gaan staan sy en kyk na die vuur. Meteens verander een van die vlamme voorhaar oë in 'n engel. Die engel staan met sy rug na die kind en veg teen die vlamme. Waar is Michael dan? wil sy vir hom vra, maar sy verstik in die rook. Vir 'n oomblik kyk die engel na haar. Sy skrik: Dis Michael se gesig!

"Dis Michael!" roep sy hees. "Michael, kom na my toe. Jy gaan ook verbrand soos my ma!" Nog een maal kyk die engel om na haar, voordat hy dieper tussen die vlamme inloop. Huilend hardloop die kind agterna."

The fire is only extinguished late in the afternoon. Michael goes to look for the child and finds her. He can see that she has been terribly hurt. He sees that she is going to die, (p137): "Eers wanneer dit so donker is dat hy haar gesig glad nie meer kan sien nie, tel hy haar op en dra haar uit die rietbos. Hy loop oor die veld met die kind in sy arms. Die sterre word nou vinnig meer. Vure wat eeue lank brand, dink hy.

By die huis sit hy haar op haar bed neer. Soos enige ander aand begin hy hout in die vuurherd pak. Wanneer die vuur goed brand, sit hy een van Claudia se plate op die draaitafel, tel die kind weer op en gaan sit met haar voor die vuur en luister na die musiek. Toe Radikgomo die volgende oggend daar aankom sit Michael met die kind in sy arms en staar na die as in die vuurherd."

Michael looks back upon his association with the child, (p138):
 "Soms lyk die ondervinding met die wilde kindvir Michael heeltermal onwerklik. Dalk was sy net nog 'n beeld in die vlamme, dink hy dan, wat haar klein bestaan in 'n paar oomblikke voor my kom afspeel het voordat sy weer in die wildernis en die vlamme verdwyn het. Of dalk was dit 'n verlange in myself wat soos 'n elf een nag in 'n droom aan my verskyn het om my uit Londen die wildernis in te roep."

Despite her death the child continues existing for him, (p138):
 "En soms vind hy dit moeilik om te glo dat die kind gesterf het. Dan is hy seker dat die plante in die veld, die insekte, voëls en klein diertjies wat voor hom die bosse invlug, en die vreemde wesens in die vlamme net ander gestaltes is waarin die wilde kind aan hom verskyn. En in die nagte droom hy hy sien die kind op die rug van die vreemde monster: half engel, half dier, wat hoog bo die aarde rondvlieg tussen die voëls, die engele, die drake en die sterre."

The human imagination, the aesthetic work is what lives beyond death. Eros represented in the imagination as the aesthetic overcomes the will towards death.

Erf, by Lettie Viljoen is the examination of a slow degeneration of South African society, and its effect on the central character - Bets.

The erf of the title is the ruined Edenic space for which the central character and some down and outs -Loewie and his harem - struggle. They create chaos in her garden, disrupt her life and make her feel threatened. She feels ambivalently towards them, and they steadily encroach on her space. Apartheid has marginalised the people who invade the erf; they are all caught in the movement of something larger than themselves.

The State of Emergency looms over all the happenings, and as she becomes politically involved, the violence in the townships encroaches on her consciousness. The shadow side of humanity is experienced in the ambivalent vitality of her besiegers, and is expressed as follows, (p65): "Die mens is nie die welwillende wese wat homself net verdedig wanneer hy aangeval word nie, sy buurman is dikwels vir hom nie net 'n potensionele helper of seksuele objek nie, maar iemand deur wie hy sy aggressie wil bevredig deur sy kapasiteit vir werk sonder kompensasie te eksploiteer, hom seksueel te misbruik sonder sy toestemming, sy besittings in beslag te neem, hom te verneder, pyn aan te doen, te martel, te onteer en ontwy, en dood te maak."

The role of the writer is represented by a spider who spins her web to catch her prey. As much as the down and outs are destructive, and she herself is self-destructive, so society and the State are destructive. The central character is locked in a sublimated sexual struggle with the male, (See Klaaglied vir Koos) and involved in resistance to the corrupt authorities.

Bets has dreams which subliminally threaten violence and conflict, (p96): "Sy het gedroom van die paddastoelwolk. Daar was 'n paar van hulle in 'n vertrek, almal het gewag. Hulle was almal op die massiewe omverwerping bedag. Die een kind het op haar skoot gesit. Links van haar 'n loodgrys muur. Maar sy kan tog sien hoe die ellipse van die horison uitgestryk word deur die enorme druk van konsentriese ringe in gestraalde lae. Sy kan dit voel in haar maag wat voel of dit stadig uitgeruk word."

In the end the garden is re-established, but it doesn't regain its pristine innocence. The larger space of town, township and society remain disturbed, and violence remains to threaten.

Longlive!, by Menan du Plessis, says the following on it's back cover: "The action of Longlive! takes place over one day from sunrise to nightfall, and the interwoven parts are the lives of a group of young people - explored in their own flashbacks - throughout this momentuous day. Andre' Binneman, brooding academic; Desiree September, voluntary worker at a trade union's advice office; Marisa Siervogel, flamboyant actress and a somewhat unlikely new activist; these three share a house with

the elusive Chris Braaf, a gifted young opera singer whose last day this is in South Africa.

The themes of the novel are played out against a background of protest marches, detentions, school boycotts, a township funeral. The question that haunts each character is: How to act in response to such times?

The times are violent, but it becomes apparent that mere speaking may be an act of violence; while neglect of the gift of the voice may be fatal in the bloodiest sense."

Andre' considers the State of Emergency, (p20): "Last spring the army had moved for the first time into civilian areas: into Sebokeng, Soweto, Kwanobuhle, Tembisa, Duduza, New Brighton, Galeshwe, Bongoletho, Joza, Kwa Themu, Guguletu, Langa. Strange to think it was only a year ago. These days it hardly drew any outrage anymore when soldiers occupied a new suburb, surrounding the place with blade-wire, setting up searchlights overhead. In March this year, people in a crowd were shot dead for walking down a dust road, in remembrance of a massacre twenty years before, in the same town. In another town, more than thirty people were gunned down; and seventy-five thousand attended their funeral. There were new massacres, new murders.

Mid-year, in Cradock, came still more murders, when the victims were dragged out into the veld, hacked to death and left there, charred and mutilated under the cold stars. ... Finally the suspension of ordinary law was made official; and after that the frightened weeks came tumbling over the country, harsh as stones, with daily reports of detentions, street riots, gunfire, stormings, mass arrests, murders and more murders."

Andre' remembers the march to Pollsmoor, he remembers his own experience on campus, as well as what happened elsewhere, (p70): "by midnight there were eight dead, and hundreds more wounded; and a day later the toll of the dead had risen to seventeen. Within a week, thousands of teenagers had abandoned school and taken to the streets of their neighbourhoods. There might be a lull of two or three days, but then the barriers of oil-drums, old bicycle frames, crates, branches and burning tyres would rise up again. The Casspirs would come cruising back down the streets; and the stones and bottles of petrol would once again start flying."

In this context he considers his own beliefs and how he should respond. He considers joining Umkhonto weSizwe, but struggles with himself and his inability to act.

Andre's relationship with his family are bad, he avoids his mother, he moved out of home when he lost all respect for his father. His younger brother Riaan out on a pass from the army, comes to visit them. They discuss his army experience, and later on his fears and doubts about the political situation. His brother says, (p246): "I just don't know anymore. I mean: don't get me wrong, it's not a problem for me to fight. I believe in defence and all that. Only, I suppose I'm on the wrong side.

I don't know. Sometimes I even think: it's all so mad and sick anyway, maybe it would be for the best if they do just blow everything up. Let the whole place go to hell. Then at least something clean could come out of it afterwards, out of the ashes. Like those flowers, what do you call them? They only come up after there's been a veld-fire; and they're the colour of fire.' 'Fire lilies?' 'Fire lilies, yes.'

Andre's father comes to fetch Riaan, and when he is extremely offensive, Andre' chucks him out of the house. As he drives off he has a heart attack.

Desiree's parents were both politically active in the Unity Movement, and she is politically conscientised. Her father's life intertwines the forces of life and death, (p54): "He had a radiance.... here was a man who'd been through the fire. And the miracle was that it didn't destroy him. No. It changed him into something purer and finer than the rest of us.... Towards the end of his life, there was something about him. He had a quality, he burned. Only it wasn't fire, but something much quieter: a kind of light.

Desiree' inherits her father's mantle. Her political commitment is deromanticised, but deep. In her work at the advice bureau one is confronted with the daily consequences of apartheid. People are treated unjustly, and their suffering in the struggle against poverty is overwhelming. Two of her colleagues have also been detained.

Her own family experience hardship after the death of their parents. Her older sister had to give up studying, and her brother is on the run from the police for his part in the

political structures at his school. Due to the schools boycott he also most probably won't be able to write his matric exams.

Marisa's life is topsy-turvy. Her relationship with her lover is strained, she is an actress who has stopped acting, but, as so many people accuse her, makes an act of her own life. She is emotionally insecure, and dissatisfied, so that even when she was making a success of things she found the pain of living would make her break down, so that she had to convalesce. She is aware of both the beauty and ugliness of her surroundings.

She is enamoured by beauty, but the political ugliness around her forces her into an authentic existence, which takes its form in a political commitment.

Her commitment leads her into involvement with the local UDF area committee. She attends a township funeral, and experiences first of all a sense of strangeness, and discomfort, and subsequently comradeship and a sense of purpose. She experiences the brutality of the police and the determination of the people in resisting the savagery of the State. She is almost overwhelmed by distress.

Chris' presence is subdued. We never see what he does. We only know about his activities from the other presences in the text. We are given his words in reported speech only.

The night before he went to visit his father. He is disturbed by the memory of his dead mother. They were victims of the Group Areas Act, and his father has disturbed Chris's memory of her. It is the last day before he leaves for overseas. He has only paltry interactions with the other members of the house, and none of them come to his last recital to which he has invited them. Andre' discovers that he has brought a gun with him, from his father, and Desiree' hears from Andre' that he has been visibly distressed and wanted to talk to her. It is in this context that we hear that he has committed suicide!

In the end everything disintegrates, everyone's lives has been disrupted by the forces around them. Chaos reigns. The State of Fear of the political context has become a force of destruction of the individual. It is the aesthetic voice which has been killed. The text which is a vital thing has become violent in itself.

A Scattered Survival, by Sipho Sepamla investigates the changing relationship between parents and children after 1976. The text begins with the death of Ma-Eli, the only person in Rre Moleko's family who ever held them together.

The eldest son, Eli, curses God for taking her away, and the breakdown of the family is characterised by the fact that they do not hold to the mourning customs which propriety demands. Eli, who is alienated from the family, severely criticises his oldest sister Mirriam who has had an illegitimate child. His younger sister, in turn, is a prostitute, and her workless lover lounges about the house without paying for anything. Their uncle Pelo attempts to hold the family together, but instead a squabble arises, and a crisis of authority looms.

Eli doesn't have a job, and he appeals to uncle Pelo to organise something for him at the factory where he works. He has to wait, a painful experience which all the oppressed go through, (p18): "Only now the pain of waiting rouses fear and despair. Men are jailed for their politics. The waiting in this case gouges wounds that run deep." Eli's getting a job takes a major burden off his shoulders, but he doesn't fulfill the custom of giving his uncle his first pay-packet, and is plagued by guilt.

Eli is involved in a power struggle with his father. He is dissatisfied with the situation at home, where the whole family is crowded into a small house, (p26): "Eli saw the burden of the crammed house as his challenge. Somehow the passing away of his mother seemed to press on his conscience a duty which turned into an obsession: the house had to be improved and he was the chosen one for that duty. The idea etched itself on his mind, carving a track on it as people and beasts do on a wild unbeaten stretch of veld."

Rre-Moleko struggles with his family, (p33): "Why should I care about these children? I didn't teach them to go about the streets opening their thighs to men; I didn't teach them to go from house to house drinking brandy and whiskey. Call them children! you still think you have children in the house? Not me! Don't rope me into that madness!" Ma-Eli also degenerated through drinking into the living corpse that she was before her death.

Rre-Moleko has lost any authority over his children, they cavort loudly till late at night, celebrating Eli getting his job, without him doing anything, (p35): "It was a wonder that Rre-Moleko did not intervene. He didn't as if admitting his own helplessness. He had lost the battle to assert his authority in the house long before his dear departed wife died. Like many other parents, he blamed the white man for making it difficult to bring up his children properly. The humiliation suffered before his children, called a boy among his children, until they, the children, balked at white authority, taking the initiative from their parents, this had the effect of undermining parental control in the homes.

Eli's celebration turns sour when his younger brother Thabo, who is a comrade, challenges him, also he has a fierce argument with his sister Mirriam; and he takes out his frustrations sexually on his unfortunate girlfriend - Meisie.

The whole family's degradation is symbolised by the promiscuous behaviour of the children, especially Tiny, who had a bright future ahead of her. They have no conception of the meaning of love, and after a while Rre-Moleko loses all his feelings for his children.

The situation is bad, (p68): "Any observer of human beings could tell that there was something missing in the house of Rre-Moleko. It was as if this something had drifted out of the kitchen door and window at a time no-one had noticed."

Thabo and Mirriam are away most of the time. Tiny and Vela are always drunk. Rre-Moleko doesn't care for much and is degenerating, Eli doesn't care for his family, and is moving up in the world. He buys new appliances, and in like manner gets a new girlfriend, Zodwa, after violently throwing out Meisie who has burnt one of his shirts.

He makes friends with a white, Klaus, who he brings to the local shebeen. When they, with Maggie to act as a partner for Klaus, go to a disco Eli gets jealous and beats up Zodwa when they get home. Rre-Moleko calls the police, and they lock up Eli for the night.

In the meantime Rre-Moleko has found a woman in Ma-Eli's place. His sister introduces him to Ma-Dlamini from Vosloo, and after a while she moves in. Eli feels threatened by her presence, and thinks that she wants to take the house from them. Thabo is still on the run from the police.

Eli starts a business lending money to people, and uses false notes to get rich quickly. He buys a car and starts building on back rooms to the house. But things turn sour, and the car won't start, and the building is left incomplete. To crown it all he is fired, and in desperation gets a job as a prison warder, making himself a pariah in the local community.

In this time the State of Emergency is declared, (p153): "One day a State of Emergency was declared in the country. Hundreds of political activists were detained. It was a bad time when the net was cast farther and farther from the point of departure, meaning that, after the security police picked what they called radicals, they went for what they called moderates.. When no more of that kind remained they detained those they reckoned to be associates or sympathisers. It was truly a terribly time introduced by the emergency."

Eli is fired yet again, and as the State of Emergency worsens, Thabo is detained. Eli finds employment with a furniture store, and rips them off. He also starts sleeping with a policeman's wife. Thuntsa the policeman is after Eli, so he seeks cover at his cousin's in Alexandra township. His cousin Galiboy introduces Eli to a white girl who lives in Hillbrow - Patty.

In the meantime MaDlamini decides that Vela has to go, but Tiny manages to stave off the attack. Rre-Moleko responds as follows, (p216): "Today's children have no respect. Why should they think the year '76 stood for the fall of parenthood? I refuse to have my children tell me what to do with my life. I brought them into this world. They can't therefore lay down the law for me. Sies!"

Eli stays in Hillbrow to become Patty's lover. His every need is catered for. Everything is fine until one day he gets beaten up by some whites in an alley. He is taken to hospital where he has to lie for several months. Patty comes to see him; and, only after a while do his family come to see him.

One Sunday Tiny comes with a whole group of youngsters, Thabo's friends, (p241): "The ward was turned into a revival. Freedom songs were sung loudly, they were sung defiantly and in a moving harmonious way. Some youth would raise his hand pointing at the Seat of Power, another would thrust his hand this and that way as

warriors were known to do with their assegais; there was a resounding stamping of feet other youths jumping into the air to celebrate Eli's triumph over the forces of darkness, for the singing was really a demonstration of this triumph."

Eli is torn between staying in Hillbrow or returning to Wattville. Finally, after much difficulty, he decides to return to Wattville. His life turns sour, and then he hears that the police are after him. Furniture World, and his dubious dealings have caught up with him, and he gets five years. Tiny fights with MaDlamini and wants her out of the house. She and Vela meander along. We hear nothing further about Tabho.

Three years later Eli is released. He hods forth that MaDlamini is a witch, and also believes that all his ill fortune is related to displeasing the Ancestors in not visiting his mother's grave. He and Tiny start molesting MaDlamini, Rre-Moleko responds as follows, (p264): "'You think we have children these days? The world began in '76. Children lay down the law. Today we have the law of the whiteman and the law of the children.' Don't you think the world is coming to an end? Doesn't the Bible say so?'

A long silence followed. Rre-Moleko would have paid a lot to know what went through MaDlamini's mind at that point. For him things seemed to be crumbling, shattered by an enforced act of keeping two adult children who ought to be in their own homes. A sense of failure overwhelmed Rre-Moleko for the first time after a long life which took it's course without touching him much. Here was Eli, here was Tiny, children near his heart for many years. They threatened his happiness because MaDlamini had been for him that kind of person. She had brought him to the touch of skin something deeper, it went far beneath the skin. And now he was about to lose it."

He has to choose between MaDlamini and his children, (p265): "These children are a burden. Even during the time of the 'late' I wanted to chase them out of the house. Grown ups must lead their lives as they please at their own place. But the 'late' always said: Don't blame my children for staying here . They can't find houses. The whiteman has to blame! I listened , do you hear me? I listened because it was the truth. Black people have nothing on earth, no land, no houses, nothing!'"

MaDlamini decides to leave, and Rre-Moleko takes the unprecedented step of leaving his own home to join her. When he announces this to the family Eli says that MaDlamini is a witch, and Rre-Moleko slaps him, and forces him out of the house. Rre-Moleko and MaDlamini leave.

Eli and the rest carry on as before, and they have to get sub-tenants to pay the rent. Eli has his house at last.

Nkulukulu Nkwitshi speaks out the common will of the people in the inkundla where government agents have tried to assert their will, (p45): "We are here as the authentic sword of democracy, and we shall not be daunted despite the fact that we know that even the very air that we breathe has ears. We stand here in the name of the people and the will of the people cannot be crushed. The whole trajectory of the process of history is a living testimony to this truth. No power on earth can kill the will of a people to live." Nkwitshi speaks yet again, (p47): "We have come to know also that only a relentless struggle with plenty of sacrifices will finally improve our lot. We are our own liberators and the path of that liberation requires a complete break with the past with its humble petitions and respectable deputations. New and more militant methods of struggle have to be forged. Of this I am convinced"

The imbongi ends the inkundla in the same spirit, (p47):

Come let us turn our backs on the sterile deeds of
the past,
When we prostrate begged at the oppressor's table,
For crumbs grown stale and jackboots sullied with
slime,
And waxed nostalgic o'er the master's slap in the
face.

Come, let us look beyond the slum and the slush of
the present,
Beyond the dreary round of endless misery,
Into the bliss and fullness of our glorious heritage,
Where man unbound will stalk the joyous fields of
freedom found.

Whereas Vusumzi and the people of Phalo enjoy the moral high ground, the Native Commissioner and his henchmen are portrayed as weak people solely acting in their own interests. Ngcothoza the collaborator is completely isolated, and as the conflict between officials and people escalate he is even estranged from his wife. When unknown parties burn down his house, and even the authorities mistrust him, and his own soul is tormented, there is no option for him but suicide. "His death was symbolic of the death of an age" - p126.

The conflict between State and People escalates, almost to the point of revolution. Nkwitshi, friend of Vusumzi concludes, (p157): "the oppressed in South Africa must travel along the hard road. They must wade through the thorny path of armed resistance whose grass is strewn with the jagged blades of revolution. Their sustenance will be the hope and conviction that beyond the immediate gloom lies self-determination - a reality that will be brought home to them as they see the success of their struggle gain momentum, opening up to them vista upon vista of a promising future."

The culture of liberation is clearly spelt out, and the need for militant action is emphasised. There is a clear difference from the culture of apocalypse that sees it's world coming to a ruinous end. The emphasis is on vitality, and upon human dignity among a context of dehumanisation.

Vusumzi is treated worse than an animal in banishment, forced to do hard labour. Despite his situation he is a source of hope and encouragement to those around him. He speaks of the significance of resistance and of what is to come, (p193): "Your resistance... is the beginning of a process that will finally engulf the whole country. Worse things are still to come; worse violence is still going to be penetrated upon us black people in the name of law and order, that is, white power and white supremacy..... But in spite of all this, the struggle will escalate into a tempo of its own until the expropriators of our land and liberty are themselves expropriated.... we are our own liberators.... I believe that our victory is certain."

He analyses the oppression of his people, (p196): "We exist in a perpetual state of living hell. 'Children of Bondage. Prisoners we've been all our lives; our fathers before us - conceived in chains, born in chains, nurtured in chains and dying in chains. Generations of innocent humanity have been serving an indeterminate sentence under the merciless heel of racist dictatorship. But we have seen glimpses of light through the bright spectacles of history; flashes that have emancipated our thoughts and spirits from the fetters of the death-trap of domination, where innumerable minds of our brothers and sisters still lie buried in eternal suffocation. Incarcerated spirit of humanity. Children of Bondage."

He addresses his absent wife, before undergoing the final banishment - that of death removing us from life, (p198): "If I had the wings I would have flown to you at
midnight,
To steal e'en from the dark that sweet and immortal
kiss of love;
To drink a breath of peace and find a balm;
And rise above the stinging flames and thorns of life
That plague us from the cradle to the grave,
Denying us the fruits of life itself, and casting us out
And down into the deep and dismal chasms of the
netherland,
Where Life and Death are jailed together
In the dingy catacombs of unholy matrimony.
If I had courage I would have dared the light of day:
Defied the world and broken the chains that bind us
To its strings of hate, deceit and inhumanity.
I would have shared your radiant pledge
of happiness;
Your warmth, your smile, your loveliness;
I would have found the road to Paradise."

Vusumzi's death is seen transformed as a heroic and inspirational end, he dies, and his life and death are "the very incarnation of the new spirit, the spirit of defiance against unjust official edicts and of intransigence in matters of principle." - p202.

When Hato - Vusumzi's councillor dies a short while later, their force and vitality in conjunction with the Ancestors is invoked. Jumba evokes this transcendent spirit, (p214): "As you well know , we are the people who originated with the law. It is that law and that order that keeps us together and alive as a people... we are consoled that their (Vusumzi and Hato) spirit lives on and is whole; death is but a shadow of their real being; that is eternal. They are not dead, they have joined the company of those who departed before them. They live a life very much like our own, but a spiritual life; it is an eternal life, for nothing dies where they have gone They have attained immortality"

At Vusumzi's funeral The people of Phalo bring their homage and speak of the liberation that is to come, (p219): "We may bury the flesh and bones of our dear departed friend, but his spirit lives

on. The enemies of freedom may conquer the body, but no power can ever lock up in a tomb the will of the people. Individuals may be murdered, but no power can silence the voice of freedom. This is the beginning of what to many looked like a fantastic dream. These are the opening of the flood-gates of democracy, the birth-pains of a new order.

On the horizon looms the dawn of a new day. We stand on the threshold of a new epoch, when we shall pick the life-giving fruit of a cogent reality. But between us and the front stoeps and parlours of democracy lies a yawning chasm, which we must traverse before we can graze in these new pastures,, where we, as children of bondage, have never frolicked."

And thus ends the story of the life and death of a man, and his impact upon his society. Liberation is the central theme, and the notion of sacrifice, almost a substitutionary sacrifice, is the keystone to the achievement of freedom.

And They didn't die, by Laurretta Ngcobo looks at the life of a rural woman and her community, and examines the consequences of apartheid for her society.

Jezile's immediate crisis of identity is related to her sexuality, more specifically her childlessness. This affects her position in the community as a newly married woman. Her status is totally related to her marital position. Her husband is a migrant labourer in Durban, and comes home seldom. When she 'fails' to fall pregnant she takes a pass to be able to visit her husband, Siyalo; in conflict with the decision of the women of her community Sigageni; who have all decided to refuse carrying passes.

Jezile and Siyalo's togetherness fills them afresh with extreme joy, but the threat of the unjust laws and dehumanising conditions which threaten black people's lives is ever present. The city women of Kwa Mashu and Cato Manor express their resistance to these conditions in a militant way, and the spirit of defiance is mirrored by events in the whole of the country. Jezile is inspired by events, and participates in the marches and protest meetings.

Back at home the drought makes living more and more difficult, while Jezile's conscience is tortured by the knowledge that she has taken a pass. She attends the women's Thursday prayer meeting in trepidation, where the leading figure Nosizwe, explores their situation in the Reserves, and spells out the terrible conditions they are forced to live under. Another woman, Tokozile speaks of

the imminent freedom from oppression that will one day be theirs.
Jezile speaks of the urban women's struggle for liberation.

But the oppression which they face is not only that of being black in South Africa, it also has to do with the subordinate position that they hold as women in a patriarchal society, (p55): "What was difficult to understand was that despite the formidable position of power that being a mother implied, in reality young mothers were truly powerless. Being a mother did not put a woman centrally at the home of her in-laws. She could decide nothing about her life; where to live, where to go, with whom and when. Her position of power as a mother could only be exercised from the outside. Essentially she was in a permanent state of dependency and estrangement - always under suspicion should anything go wrong. The fear of betraying her in-laws was always there."

Jezile's friend Zenzile especially experiences this, and her continual pregnancy weighs like a burden on her. She subsequently gives birth to a stillborn baby, and dies. It is a wry irony that Jezile's status changes as she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a child.

The chief of Sigageni, Siyoka is deposed and banished by the government authorities, and the conflict between the people and the state over many issues intensifies. The women still refuse to take the passes, and Jezile burns hers. Siaylo is deported from Durban for his political activities, and cannot find a job anywhere. The women who protest against the passes are arrested, and jailed for six months.

While inside they are brutally treated, they have to do hard labour, and some of them are raped. Jezile discovers that she is pregnant again, and is worried that people might think that the child isn't Siyalo's.

Outside the prison world the people are also suffering. It even seems that nature has turned against them, as the winter becomes terrible, and the cow that gives milk for Jezile's daughter S'naye dies. When Jezile returns from prison the child is close to dying, and the relationship between Jezile and Siyalo turns sour. But there is a change of season, and their relationship is healed. Their despair isn't over, as there is no milk for their newborn child, Siyalo steals some from the neighbouring white farmer, is caught and jailed, for ten years. What is a necessity

in the life of the indigent is a crime under the apartheid state, and any 'illegal' act of will becomes a political issue.

After Siyalo's imprisonment depression overwhelms Jezile. To keep on living is a constant struggle, and she feels isolated from those around her. The community of Sigageni also struggles for its existence, and in a spirit of resistance to the brutalities of the State the community prepares for a stage of siege. Siyapi the stooge chief's house is burnt down, as well as Duma's, his councillor.

A cause of Siyapi's death the community is besieged, and a number of people are killed in retaliation. The men of the community take to the hills; and Sigageni is tormented by the communal guilt of Siyapi's horrible death, as well as an intense fear of what is to come. Jezile's life becomes more and more difficult. She finds solidarity with the other struggling women.

In order to live she is forced to seek work, and she gets a job in Bloemfontein. Mrs Potgieter, her madam, exploits her, and she experiences extreme loneliness and despair. Mr Potgieter rapes her, (p205): "She felt dirty and steeped in evil. The feel and the smell of his slimy emission filled her with so much revulsion... Pain was etched on every muscle of her face; her body was in revolt against itself, against the outrage."

She lives from day to day in anguish, and when she realises she is pregnant it seems as if everything is against her. When the baby is born it is white, and in the consternation that follows she is dismissed and has to go back in shame to Sigageni. There the whole affair is seen as a communal catastrophe, and she suffers excommunication. and she has to return to her mother's home, and is there, in some way restored to life.

But the custom which is supposed to protect her and guide the community, turns against her, and her two daughters Ndondo and S'naye are taken from her, (p227): "And she, Jezile, who had been a mere vessel, a vessel to carry humanity - to carry the Majolas and only the Majolas - was now unable to claim for herself her own flesh and blood. They were Majolas and she was a Mapanga. Pain raged beyond her control. Life seemed to recede like the setting sun leaving a pool of darkness behind. She had been emptied, turned inside out. She lay whimpering, huddled on the grass mat, covered in her dark grey, threadbare blanket. Doors of memories opened and shut as she raced back to the beginning. She

shut herself away from the unbearable present, from her loss and her world."

The Mapanga women comfort her, and she finds a new life in looking after her son Lungu. Siyalo is released from prison, but she doesn't see him. In time the political crisis in the country rises anew, and the confrontation between State and People intensifies yet again. It is 1976, and Jezile's youngest daughter Ndondo who takes on a leadership role in her school is hunted by the police, and she has to skip the country. Some months later Lungu leads his schoolmates in rebellion against the system, and in the confrontation, he is shot and paralysed from the waist down.

He carries on to study Medicine, and S'naye becomes a nurse. The State of Emergency is declared, and Ndondo returns surreptitiously. While Jezile helps Ndondo escape the security force cordon around Sigageni; a white soldier attempts to rape S'naye. Jezile comes upon the scene, and kills the soldier. She goes to meet Siyalo, and the novel ends with their reconciliation. The apocalypse makes itself present in the calamities which an outrageous fortune visits upon the family of Siyalo. In the end, within South African society, either white or black must die; there is a direct and urgent conflict at the heart of our society.

The novel - A Rainbow on the paper sky, by Mandla Langa expresses the move towards liberation from oppression in South Africa. It is explicit in its commitment to liberation. It is dedicated to "all the people fighting for freedom in South Africa"

The text focuses on impending liberation from the start. It starts with a quote from Antonio Jacinto, from which the title gets its name:

"When I return to see the sun's light they deny me
with standards raised
- my freedom is a fruit of harvest -
we shall go
and gather corn cobs and colours
and offer flowers and resurrection to the dead
and to the living, the strength of our lives
my love
we shall go
and draw a rainbow on the paper sky

for our son to play with"

The people of Ingwavuma, of the village Ndaweni are resisting incorporation into Swaziland. They have an history of resistance against the Apartheid State and it's oppressive Homeland Authority. Their chief, Ndungane, leads his people against this onslaught.

The text follows this history of resistance, and it's effect upon Ndungane's people, and more specifically his own family. His two sons Mbongeni and Thokozani have left home to try their fortune in Durban.

Mbongeni and Thokozani experience the degradation and exploitation of city life under the effects of apartheid. Thokozani turns to fervent religion as an escape from his situation, while Mbongeni becomes a popular musician. Mbongwa, Ndungane's trusted lieutenant, takes Ndungane's daughter Khetiwe to Durban, to her Aunt Margaret, as it is felt that Ndaweni is too wild a place for her. As Mbongwa travels to Kwa Mashu which is a dangerous place for him as a member of MK, as he might be recognised, he recalls his involvement in the Armed Struggle, and considers what is to come in Ingwavuma. The spirit of armed resistance continues.

Khetiwe grows up under the care of her aunt Margaret, who runs a shebeen. She has an incisive understanding of life, and examines the injustice of South African society herself, (p19): "To her people seemed ill-equipped to deal with the world. She had seen its claws and teeth from the shebeen which, for her, was the best observation tower. She had touched and in turn been touched by the world's searing, brutal nakedness; it was in the shebeen that she had seen how hideously the country could treat its despised people. She had listened to men and women - people whose testimonies sounded increasingly like letters from Purgatory - who talked about strikes in factories, about who had been ailed, about those who had been cut down never to rise again."

Khetiwe's political consciousness develops, but she also understands the hidden movements of the soul. When she sees people dancing she manages to see them express their hidden agony and the despair which accompanies the life of the oppressed. The music of Mbongeni's group expresses this nihilism as well as the hidden hope which fuel people's lives, (p28): "His singing was an anthem to some unimaginable spirit that gave strength to men and women on the treadmill, people cast into the unspeaking darkness outside. In his voice Khetiwe heard about all the voyages the nation had taken to try to wrest back that little self-respect which had been snatched away for all these centuries."

Ndungane comes to visit those of his family in Durban. He discusses the crisis the country is in, (p41): "The country is in trouble. We are all in some kind of trouble." Khetiwe, who has been involved in school politics, and whose education has been disrupted, says the following to her father: (p41): "I'll get the education I originally set out to get, baba.... And if it's going to help our people, I'll study hard. But, having lived here for almost a decade, and having seen the things I've seen, I become scared. I feel that people here are trapped. The teachers are trapped and the students are bewildered. It's as though people are wading blindfolded in some limitless forest, each with a knife in his hand. And we slash and we maim anything that touches us."

As much as Mbongeni represents the forces of life; death also has its hold on him. The whole family is in crisis; Thokozani is arrested wrongfully for theft, and in keeping a promise to a

fellow-prisoner he ends up, totally confrontarily to his deep religiosity, in bed with a woman.

His sexual experience burns inside of him and transforms him completely; (p55): "Then fingers went across his chest leaving a sensation hotter than a flame. The fingers moved to his neck, to his ears and he said no! But his lips were beyond releasing any sounds except gasps that became louder when her breasts mashed against him. Then he was engulfed by an almost suffocating heat when he felt her body full against his, arms and legs entwining themselves around him as if they had belonged there since the day of creation. He tried to will her body to move back, but, then, the body was beyond the control of the mind. He thrust, not knowing how such things were done and felt the yielding body, now covered by a film of perspiration, moving to meet his, fingers that seemed to be everywhere guiding him and finally funnelling him into a clasping warmth whose sweetness defied description. Then there was the tortured gasp, and this heightened his excitement and he thrust deeper and deeper, knowing that he would even curse God if something happened to disrupt this journey. It ended with him exploding and shuddering as he had never imagined man could shudder."

The sexual experience is an apocalyptic one. It transforms Thokozani forever, and brings new vitality into his life. Yet, as he experiences vitality, the moment of death is close at hand, changing the whole family's consciousness, (p56): "Nomusa is dead. She dies giving birth to a life we struggled so hard to bring to this world."

The attack of the Bantustan authorities on the village begins again, a house is burned to the ground; Simpi, Mbongwa's brother is found hacked to death; in the night men come to burn down Mbongwa's hut, and are killed. When their bodies are examined, Ndungane finds cards with the sign and seal of the Bantustan Territorial Authority, as well as guns which could only have been issued with police permission.

Ndungane realises that retribution is about to begin, he prepares his village for warfare. There is intense conflict and people on both sides are killed, and it becomes clear, after three weeks that the people of Ndaweni have won this round of the war.

As time goes on Khetiwe becomes a student-nurse, and Thokozani gets involved in the struggle of the workers in the unions. When

some of his comrades kill a collaborator, and he refuses to give incriminating testimony in their trial, he is tortured by the Security Police and detained for six months.

Khetiwe still questions the nature of the society that she finds herself in, (p67): "What have we done, she thought, finally to find ourselves in this land of screams, where tongues have forgotten the idiom of regeneration? What lies before us but waste, limbs severed from their life-giving bodies, everything shrouded in appalling nakedness, the nakedness of the dead?"

It is in this context that she is approached to join the ANC, and is revitalised in the thrill of taking part in the struggle to free the people of South Africa. When her friend Mark is killed in the Maseru raid by the SADF, she is sobered up, and decides to return home, where she will continue the struggle.

The Movement inspires Khetiwe, but she needs to dismiss its romanticism, (p106): "'We get romantic about working in the struggle,' Shelley said. "We see all these cloak and dagger films and imagine ourselves performing deeds of such heroism that, even if we die, our names remain etched, eternally, on the lips of people. But it is not like that. While individual effort is essential, the Movement - as its name says - is for people, hundreds of thousands, millions of dispossessed people, walking, marching, moving on and on, like a river. The action of the regime is like trying to turn back the clock of history. An impossibility because people are history."

Thokozani is released, but it is 1976, and the revolution takes a new turn, and in the wake of arrests following Soweto Day, June 16, he is redetained.

Another focal character, Hugh, is introduced. He left the country to join MK in the aftermath of '76, and has returned as an insurgent to train people to become fighters for freedom. He dreams, a very non-revolutionary thing to do, but then he justifies his dreams, (p114): "But, he told himself, there is something entirely acceptable about these dreams. They are necessary if only because there is always something in man that yearns to see dreams honed into reality. And our reality is the struggle, the thrust of the revolution, people engaged in shaping their own destiny, building a rockpile of resistance that would grow into a monument to their inalienable rights to humanity. That was the essence of dreams. A nation - this dictum rang in his head, deafeningly - that has lost its power to dream has lost

its will and capacity to fight, to sharpen the blades of the struggle."

The struggle is violent and costly, it may be redemptive, and bring freedom, but it is waged at the cost of people's lives. Thokozani is released, Mbongeni has compromised himself in allying himself with the System. The people of Ndimande are successfully trained for armed confrontation. Khetiwe builds and runs a clinic at Ndimande, where she again confronts the pain of people who are oppressed.

She has a positive vision of hope, (p174): "days and nights of love and war are upon us. Because really, why are we involved in all these things, these schemes that can certainly mean a death sentence if we're captured, if not for love? Love for what? In a country where a whole people have learnt the art of self-hatred, is there room for love?"

The love of dreams, she answered herself in the unanswered night. Respect for memories and dreams and visions that mean we don't have to countenance the sight of orphans whose eyes have dried and melted inwardly. Or widows whose tears have cut dongas on faces the colour of teak, old women with knobby hands that have forgotten softness, lips divested of the power to smile. Love means dreaming about the destruction of empty streets, streets swept clean of young limbs that would otherwise be kicking a football or jumping hopskotch, children singing in the way only the innocent can sing. It means the annihilation of all those things that cause people, especially the young ones, to disappear, to be swallowed by the great silence of graveyards that filigree the land surface like poisonous pearls. So many gone, so many on their way Love means dreaming of a land where the everyday sight won't be the crushing weight of coffins or of men and women - the whole nation in an endless funeral procession - dressed in robes of mourning."

A vision of cathartic violence is needed to usher in the end of the social sickness which is apartheid: (p174): "a township built on an angry foundation, birthing cold, red stone dwellings that are like specks of blood from a wound ... this township where everything moves with a vertiginous swiftness; the train traverses the location, a trail of caked blood, an insistent snake hissing pure venom for its seething cargo

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In some summer she knew, these questions will be impossible to ask because, after long nights of anger, of people squashed into an obscene nightmare, the lights burst in the dark and there is glass everywhere. The impurities within the blood system of the country splash out of the distended boil and gouts of pus spatter on the fine robes of the masters. Then the police and the army are called in. Heads are broken. People die. The streets are full of overturned garbage cans; there is glass and blood everywhere.

Somewhere, a building burns and the alarm goes on and on into a disconsolate morning of another battle. At the end of it all, the people count their dead; they bury them without sermon and song. They raise their wounded from the battlefield and salve their wounds. The police vans, beetles on a carcass, crawl all over the township, the armed occupants search for faces they can maim. The police see one collective fist that stands challengingly like a stone monument. Armoured trucks are brought in; the children devise incendiary bombs. The smell of the night becomes the smell of burning things. Sometimes our nostrils are assailed by the stench of burning flesh."

Amidst the terror of the struggle the dreams of Hugh and the hope of Khetiwe meet as they fall in love. Their sexual oneness will wipe out all this terror. But Mbongwa is captured, and, when he leads the police and the soldiers into the forest, they come across Khetiwe who kills Duma the quisling, but she and Mbongwa are killed in return. The police sweep the countryside, and Ndungane and six others are incarcerated on Robben Island.

But resistance hasn't ended, and the novel leaves us with Thokozane as a full-time Trade Union organiser, and the vitality of his daughter - Khetiwe. *Aluta Continua - The Struggle* continues.

Although P.J. Haasbroek's novel Die jaar Nul deals with the Cambodian revolution of the Khmer Rouge, and has no direct bearing on the South African State of Emergency; the examination of revolution and people's experience of it makes it extremely relevant to our examination of political themes.

The novel deals with the experiences of a calligrapher, Ton lon Jin, his experiences of the peal chur chat, and his relationship to the goddess-like dancer Khrismi. Initially the revolution is far away, and its presence is felt only in the aircraft that fly high over Phnom Penh and the presence of the American soldiers in the city.

When Ton lon Jin is asked by his wife what he thinks will happen, he speaks of blind resignation to a fate which one cannot escape, except in the realm of his imagination. He finds release in the creation of meaning in his calligraphy.

The aesthetic pattern of the text is mirrored in Ton lon Jin's calligraphy. He and Khrismi discuss art, and he explains as follows, (p6): "'Die lyne krul en draai, en die kolletjies hier en daar is simbole,' verduidelik hy. 'Elke teken dra 'n gevoel. Dit vloei sag, met teerheid inmekaar of kerf skerp soos die snye van 'n mes. Die boodskap van die skrif en die boodskap van die woorde word dieselfde.'"

He explores his philosophy of life in his work, for him the whole world is one and its beauty is to be found in the freedom which comes from uniting oneself with everything and from accepting freely everything in the past or the future that comes to one. He shows this fullness in the following texts which he gives to Khrismi, who wants to experience the same unity of meaning of form and meaning as he demonstrates in his writing, (p7):

"Die een hoogste godheid
 is in alles,
 en leef, ook as dit sterf.
 Wie dit sien, is siende,
 want wie in alles wat is die hoogste godheid gevind het,
 die' mens sal hom nie self verwond nie."

"Die groot Eenheid:
 Alles is een, en een is alles."

The peace of the city is threatened more and more by the encroaching fighting. Soldiers, and armoured vehicles make their appearance in the streets, and fear descends on the city.

Despite this, the school where Ton lon Jin teaches remains peaceful. He himself seems untouched by the fear, and explains his thinking to Khrismi, (p12): "Dink aan 'n rivier waarin jy dryf. 'n Diep sterk stroom. Rondom jou is al die mense wat jy ken, en almal is ewe bang, want niemand weet wat kom nie. Dan draai jy jou op jou rug sodat jy kan opkyk. Hoog, na die wolke toe en nog hoer. Jy hou aan kyk en kyk, en knip nie eers jou oë nie. Omdat jy nie die oewer sien nie, sal jy nie weet dat jy beweeg nie. Dit sal vir jou voel asof jy op een plek stil lê in die water. Wanneer dit gebeur, sal jy skielik in die wolk bokant jou 'n donkerbruin kolletjie sien, 'n puntjie wat groei, wat langer word, 'n wortel, 'n tou wat kronkelend afsak na jou. Dit sal dik en grof wees sodat jou hande nie daarop sal gly nie. Jy moet dit vasvat en daarteen opklim tot inn die wolke. Tot in die wêreld van jou verbeelding. Daar is alles moontlik, en word al jou wense waar. Jy hoef sekerlik nie daar bang te wees nie."

Khrismi, however, wants to experience the full vitality of the real world, and speaks of her desire for Ton lon Jin. They become aware of the violence of their passion for each other, (p19): "Ek het 'n blom in my hande gehad, se sy, 'n rooi blom. Dit het lig op my handpalms gerus, en ek het in die kelk ingekyk, en die geur daarvan geruik. Hoe is ek van di blom bewus? het ek myself afgevra. soos 'n wond, het ek gedink, 'n rooi wond waaruit 'n soet geur kom. En soos 'n wond in my hand, is ek een met die blom. En hy vra aan haar: Toe jy gedink het dat julle een is, was jy bly? Meer nog, antwoord sy. My vreugde was onbeskryflik. Kon jy dit begryp? wil hy weet. Sy skud haar kop. Hierdie gedagte, se hy, nee, hierdie besef het nie sommer uit die bloute gekom nie. Daar is niks wat uit niks kan bestaan nie, nie eers 'n idee nie. Wat jy gevoel , die erkenning van jou eenheid met 'n blom, die wil om dit as eenheid te ervaar, het 'n oorsprong. Waar kom dit vandaan? vra sy. Kom dit uit myself uit, of het daardie groot bloeisel in my hand dit aan my gesê? Alles is een, antwoord hy, ewig en onveranderlik, in alles wat lewe. Die blom is in jou en jy in die blom. Jy is in alles; nie net 'n deeltjie daarvan nie, maar self is jy die geheel. Daarom het die gedagte van eenheid met die blom in jou hand uit die wese van eenheid self opgestoot."

The implicit violence which is part of the passion of the oneness of all being spills over into the fighting in Phnom Penh. Refugees fill the city with their despair, and the fighting draws closer. Ton lon Jin is caught up in the masses trying to flee, and when he eventually comes to his home he sees his son Vong San being killed and it seems to him that all chaos has broken loose.

Ton lon Jin is detained and he is tried, and sentenced to be lashed. He realises the horror of the new dispensation, (p29): "Ton lon Jin [het] die diepte van die einde gepeil en die bloedrooi geboorte gesien van Pol Pot se nuwe tyd.

Hy wou die verskrikking definieer in terme wat aan hom bekend is, maar geen beelde uit die geskiedenis, die poësie, die godsdien, of uit sy drome was daarvoor voldoende nie. Soms het die water in die swart angs van 'n nagmerrie hoer gestyg, of het 'n wal vuur onstuitbaar deur 'n woud en oor al die huise gestorm en was niks of niemand gespaar nie. Hy het gedink dit kan so wees as die Tonle Sap oor sy walle sou stoot tussen die houthuise in. Daar was die vuur in Hiroshima. Die dood en vernietiging sou dan volledig wees. Dan weer, ontstel jy jou met die moontlikhede van persoonlike gevaar, het Ton lon Jin gedink. Dis net jy' wat verdrink of verwond word, wat die tande voel insink in jou lewende vlees. Jy kan nie die bajonette of die napalm keer nie. Jy kan nie vlug nie en wag hulpeloos op die einde."

The terror is complete, and it tears everyone out of their normal lives and brings them to a new and terrible beginning, (p35): "Daar is niks meer oor agter julle nie. Ons het alles vernietig. Ons het vandag heeltemal van voor af begin Vandag was die eerste dag van die jaar nul, en julle is nou heeltemal in 'n ander wêreld. Julle kan nie meer hiervan wegkom nie. Daar is nie 'n manier waarop julle kan ontsnap nie, nie eers in julle gedagtes nie."

Ton lon Jin remembers his discussions with Khrismi about heaven and the terrestrial order; and how she criticised his idea of heaven as a place of order, (p37): "eintlik is ons bang vir so 'n hemel. As jy se daar is eenheid en harmonie van alles, dan word dit mos 'n orde. 'n Volmaakte orde Sy het gefrons. "En die hel dan? Die' is dan seker ordeloos. Pure anargie en chaos. Jy weet , Ton lon Jin, daar was nog altyd mense wat die orde wou verbeter. Hulle het gedink hulle sal so 'n hemel hier op aarde skeep. Maar wat gebeur dan?... In die naam van die nuwe beter orde slaan hulle mense en word die tronke vol. Duisende is al doodgemaak uit ywer vir een of ander ideale Dit lyk my byna onvermydelik dat elke nuwe orde sy eie drag leiding bring; daaraan kan ons nie ontsnap nie. Daarom dink ek die hel is juis orde, 'n groot, ysige orde van mense wat in rye staan soos bome in 'n plantasie, roerloos vas op een plek. In die hemel sing en dans hulle Jy maak my bang as jy so van 'n Groot Eenheid praat, Ton lon Jin."

Ton lon Jin becomes the scribe in his work camp, wring down the totalitarian rules of the New Order which will dominate the 'new' peoples' lives. He experiences the nihilistic terror of the work camp. He becomes the scribe of the commanding officer, who wants to write an autobiography. He has moved from scribing the eternal aesthetic truths to the meaningless scratching of a pathetic and violent history.

He has no idea of what happened to his wife and daughter, and loses all hope except that it is rekindled when he meets Khrismi again. They experience a moment of love amidst the terror, but it clouds the horizon again.

The Vietnamese have taken up the fighting against the Pol Pot, and as the fighting comes closer, the soldiers become more cruel, and fight against one another. A firefight breaks out as the camp is attacked by the Vietnamese, and Ton lon Jin escapes in the chaos. He flees into the forest, and comes to an ancient temple. He has come to the end of his tether and considers suicide.

He is captured by some children who live in the temple, and befriends them, and becomes their teacher. The walls of the temples are covered with relief-sculptures, and in one that Ton lon Jin examines, the cosmic struggle between good and evil is portrayed, (p82): "Die grys leermagte van die Khmer het met hulle wapens ontplooi, met hulle gepantserde strydwaens elk getrek deur twee perde, en hulle olifante. Dit lyk asof die god van die onderwêreld, Ravana, met sy een en twintig koppe en bygestaan deur 'n magdom demone, teen Hanuman en sy heiliges toutrek. Die tou is 'n reuse-slang, en in die middel, soos 'n arbiter, wydsbeen gehurk op die rug van 'n skilpad, is Vishnu. Dit is 'n oneindige tafereel wat voor Ton lon Jin uitstrek. 'n Magtige stryd. Visse swerm in die see onder die kolonne, die prooi van reuse krokodille en luiperds met gevlekte flanke, en bo-oor, ekstasies in hulle ewige dans, duisende fladderende apsaras."

While he examines these reliefs, he hears Mitheary, the oldest of the girls, screaming, and gunfire. He goes to investigate and ends up killing the soldier who was trying to rape her. The cosmic conflict of good and evil now involves Ton lon Jin personally, and he himself cannot escape violence and the cruel nature of reality, and personal guilt.

The gunshots brought Vietnamese soldiers to investigate, and Ton lon Jin and Mitheary are taken to Siem Reap. He has to stand trial again, he is accused of collaborating with the Khmer Rouge, but is exonerated. He is a refugee like many others. He and Mitheary stay in Siem Reap, where he hopes to find news of his family, or Khrismi. One day they hear music and join the dancing. It is a liberatory moment, (p95): "Hy voel die musiek ook nou in sy borskas. Die tromslae en die swaar pols van sy hart het verenig, en dit pols deur sy are tot in die uiterstes van sy lyf. Hy begin ook spring, bokspring uitbundiger, spring boontoe in die maanlig in, op deur die soel lug, deur die ritme van die trom en die simbaal, en uiteindelik hoër as die fluit."

A new vitality fills him and it is in this context that Mitheary leads him to make love with her, (p96): "Ton lon Jin vou sy arms om haar lyf. Sy voel sag en warm teen hom, en klein en donker, en dan kom hy agter hoe haar bewegings hom stuur, hom rig, hom inlei in 'n kleiner, donkerder, sagter warmte, en hy voel hoe hy onwillekeurig opstu boontoe, dringend dieper, hoër binnetoe, al vinniger, hygend na asem, swetend, polsend, polsend, tot hy haar stem hoor, haar onsamehangende woorde, die lang, uitgerekte sug, en dan, skielik, spring die vlam oneindig uit sy heupe uit.

Na soveel jare. Bevryding."

It is clear that orgasm is liberation, and that Eros is the means to freedom. The apocalyptic moments of the revolution are transformed into the moments of liberation. Life has taken its turn. Ton lon Jin lives for a while with the love of Mitheary, and he resumes his search for Khrismi.

The other children from the temple come to join them, and Ton lon Jin begins teaching them. He starts a little school. It becomes clear to him that Mitheary and Jay Keo have become lovers, and that Mitheary is expecting Jay Keo's child. He catches malaria. While he is in hospital he dreams about Khrismi, that she has come to visit him, he dreams of her dancing the victory dance of Hanuman, but is aware of some threat facing them; then the dream changes, and all becomes beautiful and pleasant. He reads the following in his dream, (p114): "

Wat binne is, kom buite
en uit kom in.

Die kleinste word al groter
en uiteindelik die geheel.

'n Mens hoef nooit te soek nie, want jy word gevind.

Ton lon Jin gets better, and decides to return to Phnom Penh together with one of the children, Nan Mith. When he goes to find Nan Mith in an opium den, he comes across Khrismi. He is totally astounded by her beauty in the dance by which she charms all the onlookers. He realises that he cannot hold her, and that she doesn't belong to him, and he is in some way part of her. He has come full circle, and in that experiences the Oneness of all Being: enlightenment.

Karel Schoeman's novel, Afskeid en Vertrek, takes place in an unspecified, future South Africa, where the political situation has deteriorated into a full-scale war. It is the story of Adriaan, an alienated Afrikaner poet, who lives a lonely existence in a Cape Town which is falling to pieces.

The novel opens in the first winter of the war. War was at first distant, and its effects indirect. The political situation is in crisis, but the novel focuses more on its effects on a single man, and the crisis that he is going through. His lover has left him to go overseas, and he is also suffering from a post-natal depression after the completion of his latest collection of poetry.

The central character is a loner, who cannot really reach out to anyone, and who is caught in a lonely world of barriers that he himself has erected. The ruling white class is disintegrating, people are fleeing overseas, there are frantic attempts to live as they did earlier, but fear and uncertainty dominate.

Adriaan observes life from a distance, he doesn't really involve himself. His work as an archivist also keeps him away from people. He observes Nico his friend's attempt at happiness through promiscuous adventure with cynicism. He accompanies him on a midnight jaunt, and, as he returns home, he observes the disintegrating inner city of Cape Town, and the presence of the homeless vagrants and refugees, who together with the army, express the decaying nature of South African society; (p38): "Nico kan genoeë neem met 'n oomblik van liggaamlike voldoening; Nico kry bevrediging uit die opwinding van die soeke en die lang agtervolging, in so' 'n mate dat die oorwinning wat so kompulsief nagestreef word selfs 'n ongewenste antiklimaks kan uitmaak indien dit uiteindelik behaal word. Vir hom is die tyd van sulke avonture en illusies egter lankal reeds verby: hier is daar net 'n ruimte gevul met die wrakstukke van die stad (*italics mine*)"

In his walk home he ponders the emptiness of his experience and the dull emptiness which characterises his present existence. He sees a picture of violence which characterises the present time. His sorting at the museum of historical debris which has survived war, is indicative of the culture which he finds himself in, a culture which is falling to pieces. Adriaan is a poet without words, unable to conceptualise and express what he sees in front of him: the debris of a violent society falling apart.

This vision is expressed as follows, (p67): "ek ... kyk uit oor die stad, oor al die ligte, en ek sien dit hier voor my as 'n bloot dekoratiewe patroon in die donker, sonder diepte en werklikheid. En dan word ek bang, alleen in die nag in die slapende stad wanneer my weerstand op sy laagste is, want ek besef dat hierdie land en die lewens wat ons almal gelei het geen werklikheid meer besit nie, en dat daar waarlik niks oorgebly het nie behalwe 'n patroon van liggies teen die donker."

The apocalyptic vision comes closer to home, (p80): "In die middestad en die voorstede het onsekerheid en bedreiging gedurende die eerste winter van die oorlog al hoe meer vertrouwd geraak. Die man uitgestrek op die sypaadjie was nie meer dronk nie, en wie die moeite gedoen het om te kyk, kon die poel bloed onder sy kop sien; die geknars van fyn kristal onder jou skoene was die glas van ruite wat opsetlik ingegooi is, en die winkel daaragter was dikwels geplunder of uitgebrand. Skielik was die verre kreet in die nagtelike strate egter in jou eie tuin en die bloedvlekkie uitgesmeer oor die paadjie na jou eie deur; tussen die rakke met waspoeier en konfyt het die geweld losgebreek terwyl vroue gil en blikkies oor die vloer uitrol, en die man wat terugdeinsend langs jou steier laat 'n bloedveeg oor jou klere: die hand wat jy instinkmatig uitgesteek het om jou te weer, is rooi van die bloed."

The Southern African State of Emergency appears obliquely in the text, in all its forms, (p80): "Mans in donker pakke of mans in uniform het op die flikkerende televisieskerms van die woonkamers verskyn om verklarings af te lê en versekerings te gee, blik pal op die lens van die kamera gevestig as bewys van hulle opregtigheid, maar aan die situasie het niks verander nie, en die toenemende geweld het onlosmaaklik verweef geraak met die toenemende verwaarlosing en aftakeling van alles wat ons tot nog toe leer ken het en met die groeiende onsekerheid en die onbepaalbare gevoel van bedreiging en angs wat daardie eerste winter van die oorlog gekenmerk het."

When he goes with Carla to her cottage by the sea, roadblocks, military patrols and squatter camps are evidence of the decaying and violently renewing culture of South African society. It is the last time that Carla will be there, as the war makes it unsafe to go. The house carries traces of its past, a secure and celebrated world which is no longer possible; the landscape itself has mutated to filled with camps and barbed wire where people before had lived in relative happiness. Death and gore has invaded the eden of the past.

Carla is left speechless in front of the uncertain future, unable to conceptualise the dim patterns which delineate the new society.

Back in town Adriaan is confronted with the anxiety of the upper class. Initially they attempt to ward off the consequences of violent change by making their houses into fortresses, but even that security is threatened, and the homeless occupy the abandoned houses in the suburbs, annexing them as their territory.

The nature of the inner city also displays the contrast between the decay of the upper classes and the vitality of the disordered mass of people moving in to annex their territory, (p136/7): "Die geleidelike toename van onsekerheid, die gewelddadige aanloop tot die oorlog, en uiteindelik die oorlog self met sy nog groter, sy dit grotendeels onderdrukte geweld, sy noodregulasies en noodtoestande, het die sekerhede van die bestaande strukture op blywende wyse aangetas en getoon hoe min hegtheid hulle in werklikheid besit.... En tog, terwyl die lewe van die ou stad kwyn en tot niet gaan het 'n nuwe lewe die vewaarloosde strate begin vul ten spyte van al die beperkings en verbiedinge en die gedurige dreigement van skielike en onvoorspelbare geweld."

Stalls of fruitsellers, makeshift business on the street, buskers, beggars and hustlers have taken over the inner city, making it strange to Adriaan's eyes: a new place filled with adventure, but also threatening and unpredictable.

Adriaan tidies up the manuscripts which culminated in his latest poetry collection, and is dismayed by the emptiness inside him. He characterises this traumatic period as a time of death, being left with a debris of words as the only remnant of meaningful existence. He spends his time alone, often unable to sleep at night, imagining the horror of torture and conflict which lies at the bedrock of his society.

Universal guilt and uncertainty taints everyone, and the distinction between perpetrator and victim, oppressor and oppressed, is blurred. He remembers the past with nostalgia, and is haunted by it. He desires the human contact he had in the past, especially the presence of Eros in the closeness of another.

He thinks back to his relationship with Stephan with dismay, analysing its nature, and agonising about the illusory nature of their oneness, and his loneliness.

The soldiers leave the city, and bells ring out the clarion call of danger, and fires appear on the horizon. Adriaan examines the abandoned emptiness of his society in the metaphorical empty house, the 'Het behouden huis' of desolation, empty of any human presence, threatened by the encroaching war and the transitory nature of human relationships.

Adriaan half-wakes from his dream about the house, and becomes aware of a deep pulsating meaning which is beyond experience, (p153): "Iets gebeur, besef hy, met 'n wete wat so diep en so intuitief is dat hy dit nie in woorde sou kan omsit nie. @rens het iets begin uitpols, dof en onreëlmstig en so ver dat dit nie gehoor kan word nie en skaars gevoel, soos 'n fladderende hartslag, onseker aarselend tussen lewe en dood. Dit sal sterker word en reelmstiger uitslaan met 'n eie ritme - eers kom die ritme en daarna eers die woorde..... Hy sal weer skryf, dink hy; eers die ritme en dan die woorde, eers die ervaring, dan die ritme, dan die woorde en uiteindelik sal hy hulle kan neerskryf en sal daar 'n soort uitbanning kan plaasvind wat soms ook as bevryding ervaar kan word."

It is clear that liberation is encoded in the individual sense as an aesthetic experience, where one is delivered from an alienated state into some kind of intuitive oneness with being. There is nonetheless no escape from reality or freedom from the decay of society. Existential guilt and the self tainted by social violence remains.

Adriaan and Bernard journey into the platteland to visit the aged poet Dekker. Again the landscape bears evidence of decay and smouldering violence. The physical decay is paralleled by a disintegration of consciousness and communication, (p165): "Woorde het verlore geraak , dink Adriaan loom by homself.... hele beelde, frases en segswyses het afgebrokkel en verpulver soos die krummelrige kranse aan die uiteinde van 'n kontinent. Waar daar eens vaste grond was waar mens kon staan, breek die land nou af in die oop see, waar daar eens kusdorpe was, speel die gety, en nie eers die kerktoringmerk nog die plek nie. In hierdie land het dit onmoontlik geword om te praat, en die herinnering aan die ou taal het verstar tot onbegryplike hierogliewe op die papier waarin venters hul handelware toedraai. Geen klok klink meer onder die golwe nie. (*italics mine*)

Dekker functions as an alter-ego for Adriaan, enabling him to see himself at some sort of objective distance. He becomes aware of the cosmic aloneness of the individual, unable to bridge the gap between oneself and the other. He also relativises the poetic experience by which one has access to meaning. At some point it becomes impossible and it is in its nature transitory.

Love as bridging the gap between persons is also relativised, (p184): " "Jy dink die liefde is alles," se Dekker stadig, "'n huis waar julle veilig kan woon, vier mure teen die donker en die koue. Maar die huis bly nie staan nie, die klei verkrummel, die wind waai deur gate waar daar stene was. Jy kan nie vlug in iemand anders se arms nie. Jy raak nog aan die slaap in daardie omhelsing, maar wanneer jy wakker word, is jy alleen in die donker. En dan lê jy daar wakker en jy besef dat jy nie heeltemal magteloos is nie en dat jy nog altyd kan skryf, en daardie wete troos jou. En jy skryf, of jy probeer skryf, en die woorde staan op papier en dit het gebeur, daar is weer 'n soort bevryding of beswering, al sou jy nooit verstaan hoe nie en al is dit nooit presies soos jy dit self sou wou gehad het nie. Maar jy aanvaar dit dankbaar en jy probeer maar weer, en so gaan jy aan. Maar ook dit bly nie, nie die liefde nie, nie die werk nie, nie die woorde. Alles krummel weg; die wind waai oor alles."

This emptiness, this sense of dissociation, is linked to liberation. When one is empty one is free. When there is meaning one is bound. Freedom and meaning are juxtaposed, and one does not achieve both at the same time. Dekker finds meaning beyond this in the essence of things being what they are. For each thing has its place, and bare existence is meaning enough, (p185): " "Daar is iets anderkant liefde, anderkant woorde, anderkant skepping selfs; ek moes 'n ou man word voordat ek dit begin leer het. As jy ver genoeg gekom het, tot by die verste punt waar jy alles agtergelaat het en jy nie verder kan kom nie - dan ontdek jy dat dit eers die beginpunt is van die reis, en dat die pad nie meer verder gaan nie, weg van jou af, maar binnetoe, in jou in. En dan sluit die stilte om jou en jy soek niks meer nie, jy bestaan net in jou self, en daar is 'n soort vrede. Maar dit is anderkant woorde, soos ek se." "

Dekker and Adriaan have come close to one another, and the need and the meaning of writing is explored, (p189): " "Watter sin het dit om te skreeu waar jy gefolter word," vra Dekker peinsend, "alleen in 'n kamer waar niemand jou kan hoor behalwe die mense wat jou ondervra nie? Maar dit maak nie saak nie; jy het protes aangeteken, jy het die onreg uitgeken en benoem, en verklaar dat dit onreg is en nooit reg kan wees nie. Gaan aan, gaan aan, soek die woorde, spreek die woorde uit wat jy vind. Skreeu, skreeu in die stilte in." "

They together have come a distance, approached one another, though its success has only remained relative, (p189): "Die woorde wat soos valle en vangnette om jou voete verstrengel lê, kan vir 'n oomblik tot tengere koorde uitgroeï waarop jy voetjie vir voetjie oor die afgrond voortbeweeg. Die masker kan soms afgeruk word saam met die vel waarmee dit vergroeï is, om kortstondig, nie die gesig te toon nie, maar die grilligerige netwerk van spiere, senuwees en bloedvate wat die skedel bekleë."

As Adriaan journeys back to the city with Bernard, they stop and each walk in their own direction, with their own thoughts. Despite their physical distance Adriaan feels closer to Bernard at that moment than he has ever been to anyone else. They share the open space and the silence.

As with the previous return to the city, there is a greater realisation of the disintegration of society. A picture is given of a city under siege, being bombed, where people attempt to carry on life as usual, and where violence, suffering and uncertainty become part of normal life.

But the apocalypse is examined in a personal, more private way, (p206): "Daar is geen rampe of oorloë nodig nie, besef hy toenemend saans in die stilte van sy woonkamer, in die stilte wat hy met hom saamdra deur die strate van hierdie bewaakte en verkommerende stad, langs al die mense verby, nie eers meer die skielike kreet, die skielike geloei van 'n sirene in die nag wat dui op die blywende aanwesigheid van onsigbare geweld. Die afgronde, die afstande, die onmeetlike, eggoende ruimtes kan jy in stilte en by lamplig ervaar, en die eindelose ontdekkingstogte kan jy aanpak sonder om uit jou stoel uit op te staan of selfs die boek wat jy vashou, opsy te sit."

The degeneration of the city and the subject is the same, (p203): "êrens langs die pad het hy die beheer oor sy lewe verloor wat hy eens gehad het of in elk geval gemeen het dat hy besit. Dit het uit sy hand gegly, dit tol weg buite sy bereik, waai weg soos papier of sand of as, stroom weg soos die reën oor die ruite. Die hele lewe het koersloos en vormloos geword: die stad het tot 'n sigenekamp verval waar geboue leegstaan, mure afskilfer en voertuie uitbrand; die land is saamgebind met doringdraad, gestut met tenks en gewere. Niks bly meer staan nie."

Adriaan accompanies Bernard on a visit to his dying father. They are led to discuss death, and Adriaan tries to comfort him. He is caught in an inability to deal with his feelings, (p214): " "Ek het jou lief" sou hy vir Bernard wil se, en hom in sy arms neem en vashou, maar saam met hierdie wete kom ook die besef dat dit nie moontlik is nie. 'n Man se nie sulke woorde vir 'n ander man nie, nie in Afrikaans nie, want die onwrikbare patroon van die taal staan sulke permutasies nie toe nie. 'n Man hou nie 'n ander man in sy arms vas nie, die hare, die wang van die ander teen sy lippe: nie in 'n geparkeerde motor in 'n voorstedelike straat en verkieslik ook nie elders nie. Tussen mens en mens loop die doringdraad (*italics mine*)"

Adriaan dreams about the land and the city. Here everyone is filled with an anxiety and suspicion. They participate in the fear of the land as they are rooted to the land, and will of necessity experience the dark side of it, no matter how long that knowing has been postponed. everyone is delivered up to violence and the dark, (p216): "Oor die wye sonoorgote land het die donker uitgeskuif, geleidelik maar onafwendbaar soos nag wat vanuit die ooste van die onvrugbare aarde besit neem..... Donker spoel oor die aarde, spoel oor die rotsskilfers en klippies, die gruis, die puin, en syfer in die dorre aarde, deurtrek dit, deurweek dit, en sak af om soos grondwater in roerlose poele tussen die rotsbanke te bly lê. Die land is aan donker oorgelewer."

The oppressors will experience that which they themselves have done, (p217): "Die wat geslaan het, is self geslaan, wie neergevel het, het self gestruikel en geval; skielik het ons besef dat die bloed op ons besmeerde hande ons eie bloed geword het en nie meer die van 'n ander is nie. Waar mense lê soos hulle geval het, het ons wat huiwerig tussen hulle rondbeweeg om die verspreide kledingstukke te versamel verras besef dat die baadjie ons s'n is en dat die skoene ons pas: vir die eerste keer het ons hier bekende gesigte aangetref, vasgedruk teen die stof in hul val; en uiteindelik ook ons eie. Maar wat het ons ten slotte ooit die reg gegee om te glo dat ons alleen ongeskonde sal bly?"

There is a need to escape the apocalypse which is South African society, (p217): "Kom vlug met my uit hierdie bedreigde stad waar die heersers hul ondergang afwag, terwyl die inwoners dit lankal reeds ontruim het. Ons sal vir ons 'n pad vind tussen die bouvalle en ontreddering waarin daar geen landmerke oorgebly het om ons rigting te gee nie, waar die strate uitgewis is, die pleine gevul met puin, die brûe gebreek. Die leers het hul teruggetrek, die laaste sluipskutters het hul stellings verlaat, en die gedreun van die lug het stil geword. Kyk, tussen die barste in die beton stoot daar grashalmpies uit en die groen waas van die lente het die bouvalle begin oordek, op die oop ruimtes waar daar so kort gelede nog geboue gestaan het, dein veldblomme in die wind. Die onderbreking is maar tydelik, die oenskoulike vrede berei hom voor op nog groter geweld en die stilte is gevul met dreigement; maar nou in hierdie oomblik is dit vir ons moontlik om weer uit te tree in daglig en sonskyn en die hemel te sien."

This imagined city is doomed to destruction, and there is no escape. The imagined other is encountered dead, and desperation becomes commonplace.

Adriaan becomes aware that the time of devastation may pass. The winter is ending, and there might be some relief, (p230): "In hierdie bedreigde stad, in hierdie uitgebrande land, tussen die leuens en bedrog, tussen die illusies en die ontnugterings, waar woorde waardeloos geword het en elke sekerheid lankal reeds verkrummel het, tussen die wagposte en versperrings, waar doringdraad die wee afsluit en bloed die asfalt vlek, in hierdie uitgestorwe land, in hierdie dooie stad het hulle hul pad tussen die puin, die versperrings en die mynvelde gebaan, versigtig en met ingehoue asem - soos koorddansers; soos slaapwandelaars - het hulle voortbeweeg, en deurgekom om weer die glans van die silwer lig te sien, verblindend vir oë wat gewoon geraak het aan die donker, en die jong gras langs die hange te ontdek. Die winter is deurstaan; ook die oorlog kan moontlik oorlewe word."

It is in this context of possible renewal that Adriaan begins to write again. He walks in the city, and encounters a man whom he accompanies to his hotel room. They have sexual intercourse, and in this entrusting he finds meaning, though this also carries its price (p242): "Geheel en al onvoorbereid hierop lewer hy hom oor, reik uit en beantwoord die gebaar:, asof hy oor die rand van 'n afgrond struikel, stort hy af in 'n bodemlose diepte, gedra deur die gewig van sy liggaam waaroor hy geen beheer meer het nie, en skielike pyn sny vlymskerp deur hom, helder soos sonlig deur die vloeiende vaal silwer van die dag sny om te verlig wat troebel was en in genadige duister verborge gele het. Om nooit meer sulke pyn te ervaar nie, dink hy in 'n oomblik van verskrikking, en reik na die ander uit, om te vergeet, om vir goed te kan vergeet dat sulke pyn bestaan; en wie weet tewens dat so iets nie moontlik is nie. Telkens weer sal jy verraai word of jou uitlewer om opnuut te verduur, hulpeloos om iets anders te doen as wag dat die oomblik verbygaan."

Adriaan and the man don't only share their bodies, they communicate about their feelings. They talk about their perspectives on the country which is so filled with fear. They are both in a sense not solely strangers in fact, but also by nature. They have both taken departure from the land, the stranger about to return overseas, Adriaan withdrawn into himself.

As he turns homewards through the city, it is as if he is in another country. Nonetheless, it is still a threatening place. He is stopped by some soldiers, and searched, and as he walks further he sees no-one, and fear takes its hold again, (p249): "die stad het ontbind tot 'n plek van lee strate en 'n geritsel en gefluister in die skadu, 'n gebied van duisternis in 'n land van agterdog en angs"

As he returns home, he is aware of the transient nature of all things, his love, his poetry, the order of the city, (p250): "Liefde bly dus, en herinnering; maar dit kan nie al wees nie, dit kan nooit genoeg wees nie. Verlange bly, verlange om die patroon te soek en te vind: verlange ondersoek vraend die meanders en tas die buitelyne af, ongedurig en onseker soos 'n blinde, lig sy kop op soos 'n blinde, draai sy kop speurend om 'n geluid te probeer opvang, en bly uiteindelik ook nie beskaamd in sy verwagting nie. Onder die vingers begin die verkrummelende klip vorm aanneem asof dit dui op die bestaan van ou randstene waar daar eers 'n pad geloop het en daar nog altyd wee gevind sou kan word; in die stilte waar die wind die geur van klam aarde aanwaai, begin daar 'n fyn reëlmatige gepols waarneembaar word"

He finds words, and the meaning which he finds in writing is where he is liberated. The creative Eros, physically, and mentally as the Muse, is the means of liberation.

Sipho Sepamla's novel Third Generation deals with the experiences of a group who meet the challenge of oppression in South Africa head on. The scene is post June 16 1976 and the conflict between the State and the oppressed has reached its pitch. The novel opens with the scene of Sis Vi who is a nurse describing the sacrifice young people made and the terrible consequences seen in Baragwanath hospital where she works.

The group made up of Lifa (the narrator of the story), Potlako, Solly and Thandi involve Lifa's mother - Sis Vi - in a scheme to fetch recruits for military training from Port Elizabeth. Lifa's father was imprisoned on Robben Island, but has remained uninvolved as the cost of political involvement is too high. The younger generation have decided to move into action, and they identify themselves with the long tradition of struggle against apartheid. Papa Tuks, who co-ordinates the underground on the Reef is their link to the past. They consult him when Sis Vi doesn't arrive with the recruits, and they fear that something has gone terribly wrong.

The recruits with Bra Joe are arrested on the road back to the Reef, and Sis Vi is also detained. Despite the setbacks to the group they are determined to go on. Papa Tuks speaks to them as follows, (p45): "The struggle must go on till the bitter end. One casualty cannot be allowed to contain the cause. We must send out more recruits, it is up to you chaps. They'll come for me; put my broken bones in jail. You chaps must go on, nithini bafana? ... Ya, the line cannot be broken anymore. The days of the assegai are gone forever. We meet bullets with bullets. There's no longer a monopoly of power. No more."

The Third Generation is characterised as follows by Papa Tuks, (p47): " 'I tell you, from the ashes of yesterday's fire will arise today's burning spear. Raa!' It took me by surprise. It revealed the complex nature of the human spirit. One moment Papa Tuks was near death, next he was all life." Vitality is that which will result in victory. The culture of liberation shapes resistance to oppression and looks to the future as a time of freedom and renewal. But in the meantime the System is already on the group's tail, and the process of the hunt must reach it's conclusion.

Sis Vi is detained in John Vorster Square, and as she hears the singing of the prisoners, she realises the vital strength which is inside her ,and which she will need to face the coming interrogation. The security police are brutal, and she is almost broken by their efforts.

As Papa Tuks is also arrested, the Third Generation are on the run, and Potlako is persuaded by a friend to skip the country. While Lifa and Thandi discover their love for one another Sis Vi faces brutality in detention. She is severely beaten up, but despite the torment she experiences her spirit remains undaunted.

Buda B, Lifa's father comes back from a business trip to Botswana. He encountered one of his former comrades who is disillusioned with the struggle, and reflects on the similarity between his situation, where he stayed at home and his friend skipped the country, to Lifa and Potlako's situation. The progress of the struggle is relativised by this historical irony.

Solly's brother Thamsanqa who is a trained insurgent is killed by the police in a shoot-out, and Solly himself is also arrested. Now only Lifa and Thandi are still on the run. There is a wake for Thami where the people sing of their defiance and vengeance. "How he died was sacrificial in the manner reminiscent of the Son of Man." - p120. At his funeral there is a sense of Resurrection, (p122): "Bra Thami was being entombed into the hearts of everyone, a hero to live for evermore."

Solly's spirit is cracked by torture and it seems as if all has come to an end, (p130): "Solly remained silent. This silence was born generations before. It had heard all manner of voices proclaim righteousness and a life hereafter; it had heard of the good done for him and his kind. It had been from the same silence that the scream of yelling warrior's spears, clashing in the air, halted the war to listen to promises. The years had come with promises, had left each warrior's heart broken, just as his own family had been broken by yells which had given birth to his own generation. a generation which called the bluff of these yells with his silence. Giving away the names of his colleagues was a betrayal of the silence, and so, after he yielded them, he insulated himself in silence."

He is tortured even further, and when he breaks, he tells them about Thandi, and she is arrested as well while on a visit to her mother. Solly, however, manages to escape, and flees into Botswana, from whence he is kidnapped treacherously, and redetained. Sis Vi, Papa Tuks, Thandi and Solly are brought to trial.

The trial is a fiasco, and the people in the dock act in defiance of the judge and the court. They receive vocal support from the public. Papa Tuks speaks from the dock, defending the group's actions and speaking of the oppression of the people and the unending and glorious struggle which will free them.

Lifa decides to skip the country and seek military training, he sees the necessity for revolution in the life of the people, and hopes for liberation. Freedom must come through struggle. Life must come from confrontation.

Under the Lion, by Steve Jacobs deals with the Kafkaesque experiences of Josef S in the somewhat South African, Capetonian, city of Eisstad. We are placed at a distance from the South Africa we know, and encounter anew the terrible characteristics of South Africa in the time of the Emergency.

Josef S encounters the crisis in the country indirectly at first, and is gradually initiated into the sense of chaos which permeates his society. The political crisis becomes a personal crisis, and he moves into a new awareness, wherein his life acquires new meaning.

At first he encounters the troubles in the country indirectly, through the newspaper, (p17): "The morning newspaper bore the headline, VIOLENCE IN TOWNSHIPS: 7 DIE. The story reflected a world that had nothing in common with the lawyer's: a world of teargas, bullets, armed police vehicles called Leeus, a world of terror that existed only in the pages of his newspapers.

The press had been reporting on this turbulence for months: sometimes it seemed to get better, sometimes it got worse. Names of people appeared, and then were no longer mentioned. Perhaps their owners had been arrested, or murdered, or had left the country. sometimes the same name was prominent for a longer time, sometimes the activists demanded that someone be freed, sometimes the Government clamped down on its enemies. Josef S followed the general pattern of the thing. On any given day, he might have been able to chronicle the events of the previous week, but after months, the newsprint blurred into general headings: PETROL BOMB ATTACK, MINISTER SPEAKS, TEARGAS USED ON CAMPUS, MINISTER'S SPEECH REJECTED, LANDMINES DETONATED ON NORTHERN-BORDER FARMS, CONSUMER BOYCOTT CALLED TO PROTEST DETENTIONS, POLICE BREAK UP MARCH ON PARLIAMENT, ACTIVIST MURDERED..."

Josef S feels weak, and uses his work as a protection from the outside. Gradually this barrier breaks down. He falls ill and has a dream which parodies the immoral status quo of the rich and powerful, and he realises and rejects the corrupt nature of his society.

When he is a bit better he goes up to Leeukop. As he looks over the city, and wonders at the contrast between Eisstad, and Valhalla the township, (p33): "Is it not stranger, he thought, that they are shooting children there, that flames and anarchy are the governors of these places, while twenty minutes away, by car, the suburbs are peaceful and the inhabitants virtually unaware of their neighbours' predicament? Which is worse, he wondered, being confronted by violence as a fact of life, or having to endure the nightmare of imagining it, waiting for it to come closer, waiting for the day when the anger would spill into the suburbs of eisstad and destroy its icy tranquillity for ever?"

He sees an old canon on the mountain, and meditates on the violence endemic to his society, (p33): "the weapon sat, gleaming, proud useless, a spent force watching over violence of a different nature with its black blind eye; violence that came from the land, violence with its roots as far back into history as the cannon itself."

Josef s walks around the Waterfront, and sees the crisis of the time sprawled as graffiti over the walls. He feels the force of destruction in everything in his surroundings, (p40): "Every day had been a holocaust at the fish factory: the clatter of machinery, the winches, the flowing silver bodies, rivers of death to be gutted and packaged, or smashed and ground into meal. Now the factory had become a shell with the atmosphere that old prisons or old concentration camps wear, places where immense suffering has occurred, places that exist in the heart of cities, where people know and condone."

His society is basically the same as the fish factory - a machine of violence heading for destruction, (p40): "Suddenly Josef saw that the fish factory was the centre of Eisstad: the cold heart of the city. Perhaps that was why he had been drawn back to it now, in this time of upheaval.... The heart of Eisstad, begun with hope and enthusiasm, had become a death factory, was itself dead. And the decay had spread through the city, and through the Republic. As a body dies in stages, so the Republic was thrashing and kicking in its death throes."

He thinks about the forced removals that moved the people onto the flatlands of 'Valhalla', and the anger of the young . He thinks of the destruction of order and system taking place. "Josef knew that he was being swept along on the tide of change.", (p38).

Josef's relationship with his wife is in crisis, and their sexual intercourse takes on a violent form, (p46): "They were two opposing armies, sweating, trapped in battle against each other." His relationship with his brother is ambivalent, and it degenerates as the violence that his brother has experienced in the army, comes out of him.

Josef returns to work, but is unable to retreat from the world. There is to be a funeral, and one of his clerks, Ben, who is from the township, tells him how things happened. At the same time he hears that someone has attempted to assassinate the president - Buth. He himself has a dream where he sees people marching carrying coffins, and he takes hesitant steps to join them. He also has a vision of possible peace, when the lion will lie down with the lamb. He sees a protest, where dummies symbolising corpses are dumped in the square.

At home again he is dreaming when his wife wakes him up, (p62): " 'I was dreaming,' he said. 'About dust.' 'Come here.' And she wiped his face with a corner of the sheet. 'Your eyes are watering. You're crying.' 'Yes,' he said. 'That's all I remember ... Dust.' 'Tears and dust,' she declared. 'Apocalyptic dreams.' 'I suppose we're living in apocalyptic times,' he said quietly.

Josef S is unable to concentrate on his work as he slowly becomes immersed in the conflict which characterises his society. He is in a position where he has to take a moral stand, which he does in confronting his colleague at work. He is confronted by the violence which his brother was involved in while in the army.

He goes into the township and takes part in the funeral, becoming one with the protesters, sharing their identity.

A prominent legal activist who takes on the defence of the president's assassin is murdered, and Josef is approached by Ben to take on his defence. He finally decides to take on the defence of William Ngo. This decision is pivotal in his life.

His colleagues are horrified, and he receives threatening calls, and his house is defiled by a dead cat being hanged on his door. His wife Dorothy no longer feels safe, and he has to install burglar proofing.

The president dies, and a new wave of violence sweeps the country. Josef S identifies himself more and more with the struggle of the oppressed, and he goes to visit a hunger striker - Albert Poynter - who is fasting for peace on the mountain. He remeets Margaret Spears, who he noticed before in as the woman who organised the protest of the dummies. He sees her as some kind of ideal, and sees that , (p125): "The people involved in the struggle smile a lot, he thought, as if they have found a salvation which I am seeking but can never have.

Josef keeps on having dreams which refer to the political situation of the country, and his whole life is taken over by the problematic of the country. His family relationships become more and more strained. On the other hand his sense of identity fluctuates between not feeling part of the country, and, by participating in the struggle, achieving some kind of personal salvation.

He also realises that he has fallen in love with Margaret Spears, and that he might find release and wholeness through her. His whole psyche is in turmoil.

While he is walking his wife's dog Lex on the mountain it is killed, presumably by the lions let loose by the eccentric Dr Foster, who sees their presence on the mountain as bringing vitality to Eisstad. Josef S meditates on the violence let loose in his society, (p155): "The lion, symbol of human cruelty and war, of human aggression, lived in flesh and spirit on the mountain that bore its name. The War Gods, fed by army and popular resistance alike, had taken up residence on the Leeukop.... he had elected not to join those twisted deities and consequently he had become their enemy. They had summoned him into their stronghold to give him a taste of their power, to warn they would defeat him in the end, that reason would not prevail in the Republic, and that those working for reason would be swept aside by the mighty paw of their agents."

He comes home to the message that Dorothy is leaving him, and has taken up with his brother; his whole normal life is submerged by the chaos around him. He starts drinking, thinking of his father who committed suicide. He is on the path to self-destruction, falling apart like the city of Eisstad. In this context, his defence of William Ngo offers redemptive possibilities.

He and Ben go to meet William Ngo, who is a desperate man, unwilling to be defended, intent on his own death as a spark that will get the Revolution going. He attends a public meeting with Margaret, where Albert Poynter will be ending his hunger strike. There is a bomb scare and the meeting ends early. He reads the following morning that Poynter has died in an 'accident'.

William Ngo's trial comes up, and it seems as if the spark to violence that he was predicting will take place. He meets Margaret and hears from her that her father, with whom she had a close relationship, has died. Josef gets more and more desperate, drinks more, and involves himself in an imaginary conversation with his dead father. It is a time of death and dying. The force of Thanatos rules over the world. The death penalty which William Ngo sets the city afire, Josef sees the rioting, but is unable to come to terms with it, and returns to retreat into his office.

The Flatlands Democratic Front is banned, and restrictions are placed on the Media. Josef's psyche just about disintegrates, (p 213): "He was standing at the lip of the Abyss, which had gouged a sinuous web out of the plain. He had expected a sulphurous , smoking pit; horned devils lashing the backs of tormented souls with enormous whips. Instead, the ravine was packed with dense vegetation, a lush paradise devoid of human life. Sheer white cliff faces dropped through layers of trees and bushes to a dark languid river that wound through reed beds. Shocks of red flowers burst out of ash green backgrounds like wounds; wild grasses hissed at the stirring of subterranean breezes. A red path, its roots lost somewhere in the depths, provided access to the outside world; the footprints of the mourners were embedded like fossils in the hard earth. amazed he compared the luxuriant pit with the dust-bowl he had crossed. Was this where life had begun?"

Josef attempts to keep some semblance of normality. He hears that the son of the judge who sentenced William Ngo to death, had committed suicide in protest of the decision. Ben almost comes to hate him, as he sits on the fence. He predicts greater violence now that the movement has been driven underground. He challenges Josef to take part in a candlelight vigil that they are holding in Valhalla for William Ngo.

He encounters his wife's newly published book in a window-front. It is dedicated to his brother. He reads in the newspaper that Margaret has been detained.

Josef S goes with Ben into the township. He is drunk. He drives around aimlessly, and a mob runs across the path of his car. He comes across a corpse in the middle of the road. His psyche is filled with voices and images, as he drinks, (p225): "Thirst was fire in his throat; he reached for a bottle that would bring relief to his tortured gullet. he longed for the sweet liquid to quench the burning thirst, to dull the senses and send the sodden spirits soaring, to kill Josef S, the clown who sat in alleys amid forests of glass tempting strangers to join him in his damnation. But the bottle was gone, and there was nothing, not even water, to put out the raging flames. Even if the mobs of Valhalla did not get him, how would he last the night."

He hears the roar of an engine, and sees a Leeu. His brother gets out. He taunts his brother, and hears that Dorothy is pregnant by him. He conceptualises his brother as his enemy, who in turn identifies him as enemy, an agitator. He hurls sand at his brother who shoots him.

There is a funeral to commemorate him. Josef S, the Kafkaesque victim, becomes an hero, sacrificed for the life of a people, (p229/30): "He was in a procession in which everyone held up a candle to the night sky; the flickering lights were the eyes in the tail of an enormous jewelled peacock. This was his funeral and the vanguard carried him aloft with intertwined hands while the mob shouted: 'Power! Power! Power!' He was gently jostled as his comrades bore him on a wooden bier across a dusty plain towards a grave at which the world's cameras waited." The wild lion priest officiates at his burial, and in his burial he rests, under the lion.

Michael Cope's book, Spiral of Fire⁹³, is set in Cape Town in 1986. It follows the life of Billy Marks, a computer analyst and programmer, and explores his reaction to the situation around him.

The book starts with a poem: - TURNAROUND,

"When the old servant turns his new face around,
 deep fire moving underground.
 And when that fire moves into your love:
 terror below, thunder above."

We are to witness a transformation where the underlying fire at the depth of things moves into the birth of a new order, and where creativity and chaos are interlinked.

As in Under the Lion, Billy first takes cognisance of the political situation through the newspaper. The conflict reported is that of Crossroads, where a whole community was destroyed by the 'Witdoeke' with the help of the police.

Billy relates the social context he is in to a science fiction novel he is writing. The book is a kind of refuge, as well as an exploration of utopian ideas. The person dominating his text is Mylia, a teacher of ideas.

Billy thinks back to his student days, and recalls a protest at St George's cathedral. He also remembers his days in Maseru, and thinks of the cross-border SADF raid. The book shifts between the present and the past, between the science fiction text and the narrative of Billy's life.

His text is an exploration of an anarchist society, where the balance of life is organically kept. It serves as a counterbalance to his own society, where inequality and the imbalance of power is the status quo.

Aatjie, an old friend of his, asks him to keep a briefcase for him. Aatjie is on the run, and doesn't explain the situation to Him at all. Billy has to keep the secret, and he imagines all kinds of things, even a visit from the security police regarding the mysterious contents of the briefcase.

The devastation of Crossroads impinges itself on Billy's consciousness . The destruction of four thousand homes, leaving thirty thousand people homeless has him re-evaluate what he can do. His lover Sue is moved to rejoin the Black Sash, she thinks of leaving her job to do something more necessary and useful, but he is unable to involve himself. He examines social dynamics through the medium of his book.

Mylia teaches him about the balance of forces, and the intertwined moments of destruction and growth, (p99): " 'Look at the trees. Let your eyes settle and just look at them.' Trees. Big dark shapes. I stood still, until I was aware of the shapes, the presences of the trees.

'Now imagine that a fire comes. Some fool drops a coal, or lightning strikes, or whatever causes trees to burn. Imagine the flames, great big flames. Feel the heat of them on your skin. Hotter than the steam bath, much hotter. Where has the fire come from?' 'From the coal, the one that someone dropped.' 'That's how it started, yes. But if you drop a coal onto a bare rock, nothing happens. where do the trees get all that heat, that fire?' 'Er ... from the sun?' 'Yes , naturally. From the sun. But imagine a seed, one that's going to grow into a tree. It's in deep space, in isolation, and the sun shines on it. Will it turn the sunlight into a tree, into fire:?' 'I think I'm getting the picture.' 'now look at the trees again. Just ordinary trees. Where is the fire now? Inside them. It is them. Latent fire, energy. Imagine the movement of that fire through time. How carefully the mother guards, treasures and guides that flame, organises it into complexity, into the earth, the air, into you and me. The fire is in you. Dried out, you'd blaze with a fine light. This is the seed of the father.' I picture that glowing energy held in the form of the trees. And outward, into the world. I see the whole of this world as a fine web of shining lines of fire, piercing through the land, the seas, the sky, winding round us and through us."

The utopian world expresses the symbiosis of life and death, order and chaos which underlies South African society. Billy's psyche works through the moments of crisis central to his life. He recalls the suicide of one of his friends, Jessica, and how it traumatised him.

Sue challenges him about the way he lives, and wants him to express in real life the sentiments and ideas he is working through in his novel. He defends himself, seeing his writing as an attempt to discover the new, uncover possibilities.

Billy's other-world community faces a crisis when one of them is caught in an act of sabotage. They respond by massing in the town square, which troops have occupied. The troops wish to deal with the person in charge, but there is no such person, the community is trans-personal. The assembled community starts singing, and the captured woman moves into action against the soldiers, but ends up being killed.

In the meantime, Billy, who has a part-time job writing a security sequence for a company, discovers that the company is only a front for some sinister organisation like the Security Branch. He proceeds to write a programme that will destroy the system as a whole, while it itself will remain undetected, (p160): "How do you blow up a system? But a system's got the seeds of its own explosion in it, you just have to programme it right, intercept with interrupts in under past the operating software, just let the force of some of those built-in little routines come out". The destruction of the computer system becomes a metaphor for the destruction of the system of apartheid itself.

Sue, who doesn't know about Aatjie's briefcase and the imminent destruction of 'Crencor's' operating system, accuses him of apathy and hypocrisy, (p156): "- Just a book! You're letting your bloody life be just a book. And I just happen to live here. And the country is just a wounded animal bleeding into the ground. Just a this, just a that, and you never fucking take anything in your hand, make it real."

Billy ends up returning Aatjie's briefcase to him, and the novel closes with the funeral rites of the woman killed in Billy's utopian world. There is a sense that life will come from the situation that he is in, as much as a strange vitality is demonstrated by the celebration of the life of the dead woman.

When they mourn her death, they build a funeral pyre for her body, and the whole community throws their flaming torches onto the bier. The one sacrificed for the sake of the community is taken into the trans-personal unity of the community, a flame returning to the 'Matrix', the Ground of Being.

J.M. Coetzee's novel, AGE of IRON, deals with a dying woman, Elizabeth Curren, and her experience of personal crisis, mapped onto the political crisis of her society. The apocalypse is first and foremost that of the individual faced with the cosmic chaos characterised by sickness and death.

As with Lettie Viljoen's book, Erf, the central character encounters a vagrant who invades her space, acting like a carrion bird in expectation of her death. Yet Mr Vercueil himself is also decaying.

Elizabeth Curren addresses her absent daughter in a letter, the text which Mr Vercueil is to deliver after her death. This text is like a reversed umbilical chord, an attempt to move beyond death, (p5): "How I longed for you to be here, to hold me, comfort me! I begin to understand the true meaning of the embrace. We embrace to be embraced. We embrace our children to be folded in the arms of the future, to pass ourselves on beyond death, to be transported."

There is the hope to live on through the next generation, but there is the need to "embrace death as my own, mine alone." - (p5). Thanatos reigns, but there is attempt after attempt to escape its clutches, to affirm life. The woman's relationship with the vagrant Vercueil is a bizarre affirmation of life.

Writing is a reflexive act, the wail of pain accompanying death. She writes about Vercueil as alter-ego, seeing herself in him, as she is unable in some sense to see herself. Writing is a transformation of the dying body into the live text, an existential act which is to transcend death.

Curren is as yet unwilling to die, (p11/12): "We sicken before we die so that we will be weaned from our body./ The milk that nourished us grows thin and sour; turning away from the breast, we begin to be restless for a separate life. Yet this first life, this life on earth, on the body of earth - will there, can there ever be a better? Despite all the glooms and rages, I have not let go of my love for it."

The house where Curren stays is falling apart, the garden run wild, another symbol of decay. The country itself is on the way down, (p20): "Since life in this country is so much like life aboard a sinking ship, one of those old-time liners with a lugubrious, drunken captain and a surly crew and leaky life boats, I keep the shortwave radio at my bedside." Life is filled with nothing but death, (p23): "My existence from day to day has become a matter of averting my eyes, of cringing. Death is the only truth left. Death is what I cannot bear to think. At every moment when I am thinking of something else, I am not thinking death, am not thinking the truth."

Elizabeth thinks of the crisis of the country when she watches television and sees the "parade of politicians every evening: I have only to see the heavy, blank faces so familiar since childhood to feel gloom and nausea. The bullies in the last row of school-desks, raw-boned, lumpish boys, grown up now and promoted to run the land. They with their fathers and mothers, their aunts and uncles, their brothers and sisters: a locust horde, a plague of black locusts infesting the country, munching without cease, devouring lives. Why, in a spirit of horror and loathing, do I watch them? Why do I let them into the house? Because the reign of the locust family is the truth of South Africa, and the truth is what makes me sick? Legitimacy they no longer trouble to claim. Reason they have shrugged off. What absorbs them is power and the stupor of power. Eating and talking, munching lives, belching" (p25)

Power, and the death that accompanies it is manifested in the polis, (p26): "We watch as birds watch snakes, fascinated by what is about to devour us. Fascination: the homage we pay to our death. Between the hours of eight and nine we assemble and they show themselves to us. a ritual manifestation, like the processions of hooded bishop's during Franco's war. A thanatophony: showing us our death Viva la muerte! their cry, their threat. Death to the young. Death to life. Boars that devour their offspring. The Boar War.

South African society is burning, like Curren herself, (p36): "The country smoulders, yet with the best will in the world I can only half-attend. My true attention is all inward, upon the thing, the word, the word for the thing inching through my body. An ignominious occupation, and in times like these ridiculous too, as a banker with his clothes on fire is a joke while a burning beggar is not. Yet I cannot help myself. 'Look at me!' I want to cry to florence - 'I too am burning!'

Florence the maid's child Bheki and his friend beat Mr Vercueil, and when Elizabeth goes out to intervene, she and Florence argue. They speak of the new generation of children, the children who are like iron, (p46/47): "Children of iron, I thought. Florence herself, too, not unlike iron. The age of iron. After which comes the age of bronze. how long, how long before the softer ages return in their cycle, the age of clay, the age of earth? A Spartan matron, iron-hearted, bearing warrior-sons for the nation. 'We are proud of them.' We. Come home either with your shield or on your shield.

And I? Where is my heart in all this? My only child is thousands of miles away, safe; soon I will be smoke and ash; so what is it to me that a time has come when childhood is despised, when children school each other never to smile, never to cry, to raise fists in the air like hammers? Is it truly a time out of time, heaved up out of the earth, misbegotten, monstrous? what after all, gave birth to the age of iron but the age of granite? Did we not have Voortrekkers, generation after generation of Voortrekkers, grim-faced, tight-lipped Afrikaner children, marching, singing their patriotic hymns, saluting their flag, vowing to die for their fatherland? Ons sal lewe, ons sal sterwe. Are there not still white zealots preaching the old regime of discipline, work, obedience, self-sacrifice, a regime of death, to children some too young to tie their own shoelaces? What a nightmare from beginning to end! The spirit of Geneva triumphant in Africa. Calvin, black-robed, thin-blooded, forever cold, rubbing his hands in the afterworld, smiling his wintry smile. Calvin victorious, reborn in the dogmatists and witch-hunters of both armies. How fortunate you are to have put all this behind you!"

Bheki and his friend are riding a bicycle when a police van forces them off, and they fall. Bheki's friend is hurt quite badly, and has to go to hospital. Elizabeth tries to staunch the flow of blood from his forehead, asking herself why, (p58): "Why, I ask myself now? And I answer: because blood is precious, more precious than gold and diamonds. Because blood is one: a pool of life dispersed among us in separate existences, but belonging by nature together: lent, not given: held in common, in trust, to be preserved: seeming to live in us, but only seeming, for in truth we live in it."

She thinks of the apocalypse in terms of blood, and of how her sickness is ironically bloodless; that she is bearing her sickness like a child, (p75): "I have a child inside I cannot give birth to. Cannot because it will not be born. Because it cannot live outside me. So it is my prisoner or I am its prisoner. It beats on the gate but it cannot leave."

She feels the need to be cleansed from her sickness in her death, (p59): "How terrible when motherhood reaches a point of parodying her self! A crone crouched over a boy, her hands sticky with his blood: a vile image, as it comes up in me now. I have lived too long. Death by fire the only decent death left. To walk into the fire, to blaze like tow, to feel these secret sharers (cancers) cringe and cry out too, at the last instant, in their harsh unused little voices; to burn and be gone, to be rid of, to leave the world clean. Monstrous growths, misbirths: a sign that one is beyond one's term. This country too: time for fire, time for an end, time for what grows out of ash to grow."

Florence receives a call to go to Guguletu and to Site C. Elizabeth offers to take her. It is 1986, and the witdoeke are killing people, and destroying Crossroads. They encounter roadblocks and see the chaos, (p87): "We were at the rear of a crowd hundreds strong looking down upon a scene of devastation: shanties burnt and smouldering, shanties still burning, pouring forth black smoke. Jumbles of furniture, bedding, household objects stood in the pouring rain." They see men setting the shacks alight. She is confronted with the crisis at the centre of her society, and stands accused with the rest of white South Africa, and stands speechless, unable to find words, (p91): "To speak of this ... you would need the tongue of a god."

She is taken to see Bheki's body, killed in the fighting, she has lost her political innocence, moved to tell her story (p95): "I tell you this story of this morning mindful that the story-teller, from her office, claims the place of right. It is through my eyes that you see, the voice that speaks in your head is mine. Through me alone do you find yourself here on these desolate flats, smell the smoke in the air, see the bodies of the dead, hear the weeping, shiver in the rain. It is my thoughts that you think, my despair that you feel, and also the first stirrings of welcome for whatever will put an end to thought; sleep, death. To me your sympathies flow; your heart beats with mine. "

She experiences the madness that has taken hold of the country, transformed everyone to monsters. She does not lead a real life, it is one of pretence and absence, (p100): "I have intimations older than any memory, unshakeable, that one upon a time I was alive. Was alive and then was stolen from life. From the cradle a theft takes place: a child was taken and a doll left in its place to be nursed and reared, and that doll is what I call I"

The place of her life is one of ideas, Hades, (p101): "Hades; Hell: the domain of ideas. Why has it ever been necessary that hell be a place on its own in the ice of Antarctica or down the pit of a volcano? Why can hell not be at the foot of Africa, and why can the creatures of hell not walk among the living?"

The cancer that Elizabeth has eats her till she is nothing but a shell. She considers immolating herself, as a protest against her pain and its interwoven madness which is the sickness of her country. In this context she holds out against death by writing, (p106): "For as long as the trail of words continues, you know with certainty that I have not gone through with it; a rule, another rule. Death may indeed be the last great foe of writing, but writing is also the foe of death. Therefore writing, holding death at arm's length, let me tell you that I meant to go through with it, did not go through with it."

She meditates on her life and death, considers suicide, blames the powerful of the country for her impure life, she seeks some escape some way to end life, but cannot find it. Vercueil is her Virgil, leading her through life towards her death. He is the grim reaper come for her soul. Her lover is death. Death rules the nation, this place is a place of death. Bheki's death opened her to a death which will not burn.

The weight of death cannot be pushed aside, (p115): "Now that child is buried and we walk upon him. Let me tell you, when I walk upon this land, this South Africa, I have a gathering feeling of walking upon black faces. They are dead but their spirit has not left them. They lie there heavy and obdurate, waiting for my feet to pass, waiting for me to go, waiting to be raised up again. Millions of figures of pig-iron floating under the skin of the earth. The age of iron waiting to return."

Her writing is a feeble attempt to find meaning, to ward off death, to find some vitality, yet even this now fades, is coming to an end; (p126): "This letter has become a maze, and I a dog in the maze, scurrying up and down the branches and tunnels, scratching and whining at the same old places, tiring, tired. Why do I not call for help, call to God? Because God cannot help me. God is looking for me but he cannot reach me. God is another dog in another maze. I smell God and God smells me. I am the bitch in her time, God the male. God smells me, he can think of nothing else but finding me and taking me. Up and down the branches he bounds, scratching at the mesh. But he is lost as I am lost."

She has apocalyptic dreams, (p126): "I dream, but I doubt that it is God I dream of. When I fall asleep there commences a restless movement of shapes behind my eyelids, shapes without body or form, covered in a haze, grey or brown, sulphurous. Borodino is the word that comes to me in my sleep: a hot summer afternoon on the Russian plain, smoke everywhere, the grass dry and burning, two hosts that have lost all cohesion plodding about, parched, in terror of their lives. Hundreds of thousands of men, faceless, voiceless, dry as bones, trapped on a field of slaughter, repeating night after night their back-and-forth march across that scorched plain in the stench of sulphur and blood: a hell into which I plummet when I close my eyes."

Bheki's friend, 'John' is back from the hospital. He has a weapon, and when the police come he shoots at them and is killed in return. She flees from the police, and is harassed by some boys. Mr Vercueil finds her and takes her home. She is weighed down by the existential burden of the deaths she has seen, her own shame, and the nature of the society she is in.

She speaks with a voice that has lost authority, with a voice which is not a voice at all. Yet her voice is one of indignation, a moral voice, a voice of protest.

When she returns home she finds that the police have violated her house; she herself is interrogated. She identifies herself with the boy John, and more specifically with him in his death. She dreams of a woman with flaming hair, following Florence who is an Aphrodite-like figure. Her life is one of burning, she is a soul about to die, running around in a burning house, ending up as dust. Mr Vercueil comes to her bed, he is the lover who is the guardian against death, but also, in another sense, he himself is death. Life and death lie in an erotic conjunction.

Andre' Brink's novel, Die kreef raak gewoond daaraan, deals with the story of Thomas Landman. He is an incarnation of Adamastor, and becomes an South African Everyman, as his name suggests. He is the bearer of guilt, the perpetrator of cathartic violence which will cleanse him and his generation of the pollution of apartheid, and root him in Africa. He is also the photographer, the one that views the situation and narrates, constructs an history of his country.

The book is a multivalent collection of voices. It presents the history of the Landman family, and their history in Africa. It is also the examination of the voices of all the people that Landman meets, a gallery of characters presenting a holistic picture of South Africa and Africa in its diversity.

The central story revolves around an attempt to assassinate the South African president, and the subsequent attempts of Landman and the others to escape the dragnet of the Security police. The text itself is an exercise in violence, a brutal intervention into South African discourse. It is a journey, a rite of passage, from innocence to experience, with the bomb-blast as an existential act which gives overarching meaning to those involved. It is an exercise in the escape from alienation, a move from bad faith to the acceptance of the need of the self to act in freedom, to acquire meaning.

The text starts with Thomas and Nina walking through the different spaces of Cape Town. They look surprisingly normal, nothing to isolate them, yet "Wat hulle op stuk van sake sou uitsonder , was die wete van hulle eie dood; want dit is iets waarmee hulle leer klaarkom het, waarmee hulle vrede gemaak het, vanaf die heel eerste dag dat hulle met die beplanning van die aanslag begin het." - (p11).

The story flashes back to Thomas and Nina's meeting. It is in Crossroads, in the time that the police, the army and the 'witdoeke' destroyed the community there. Houses are being burnt down, and people are being killed. They are attacked, and as Thomas is about to leave, he sees a policeman struggling with a woman. He goes back to 'rescue' her. Their relationship begins within a context of violence, and it will end in violence.

Thomas's photography is a way to capture meaning, to lay bare the essence of history within the mystery of light and dark. The space which he examines in his photography, as in this writing, is Africa as the wild unconscious of the world. Africa is the place of the apocalypse, the place where Adamastor reigns. Two visions of Africa are possible, one in which one is the enemy and victim of Adamastor; the other in which one sees oneself as a child, an incarnation of Adamastor.

Nina and Thomas walk through the ravaged space of District Six, and they consider the violent and destructive nature of the human race, against which a few individuals act with might to attempt to cure humanity of its sickness. Thomas thinks of his friends Sipho and Noni, and also of the SADF raid into Botswana which left so many dead.

They themselves are conscious of the fact that they are about to murder someone, and that they have to come to terms with it, (p64): " "Dis moord Thomas," hou sy baie kalm vol. "Goed: ons weet waarom ons dit doen. Waarom ons glo dit is absoluut noodsaaklik. Onvermydelik. Dit het ons alles oor en oor en oor bespreek. Maar as jy alles daarvan afskil, dan bly sit jy net met die pit. En die pit is moord. En miskien - God alleen weet - is dit net so allenig om moord te pleeg as om self dood te gaan." "

Thomas and Nina make love the night before the bomb-blast, and even this is filled with violence, with the sense of apocalypse, (p71): "hier was hulle , net die twee van hulle in die bleek skynsel van die nag in hulle donker kamer, liggaam teen liggaam, man en vrou, hartseer en wanhopig, hier, verskriklik hier, nou - en op die rand van hul bewussyn, groot soos 'n son, soos 'n ster wat ontplof, die wete van dood en geweld waartoe hulle hulle verbind het, 'n onontkombare toekoms soos 'n berg wat brand."

This moment is followed immediately by the bomb-blast, (p72): "Op daardie oomblik: die bom wat ontplof. Die besef wat soos 'n skielike brandpyn binne-in hulle oopgeruk word: dit het gebeur. Die geweld van die slag is soos 'n groot hand wat hulle beetkry en oor die aarde uitsmyt, die toekoms in. Die wete dat selfs as hulle nou kon omdraai en teen die momentum van hulle eie vaart in terugjaag na waar hulle vandaan kom, niks meer sal wees soos dit was nie. Binne-in hul lewe het dit ontplof en omdraai is onmoontlik, want alles wat was, bestaan nou vir goed in 'n ander dimensie: en die enigste raakpunt is die oomblik.

En tog is daar geen opwinding of uitbundigheid in die oomblik nie. 'n Lang ontplooiende liefdesverhouding het hierop uitgeloop: en die naartig verwagte, nodige orgasme was net eenvoudig, skielik nie daar nie."

The existential moment of the leap into meaning is both erotic and violent. Eros and Thanatos meet in the existential moment of the lovemaking which is violent orgasmic explosion. Yet there was a sense of absence, of distance from the event, an inescapable alienation.

The narrative voice shifts to Nina's; she thinks of the four innocent people killed while the president escaped, (p87): "Vier lewens staan vandag teen ons aangeskryf. Nie abstraksies of statistieke nie, Thomas. Daaroor het ons gister al gepraat. Mense.Mense soos ek en jy. Vlees en been en bloed. Verbasend baie bloed. Hier : hier's my hand in die opgooisak.Dis vol bloed. Myne, wat jy kan sien. Maar bowenal daardie vier mense s'n. 'n Kind onder hulle. Nie vir 'n oomblik wil ek die verskriklikheid daarvan ontken nie. Maar ek het ook al lyke gesien van kinders wat in Crossroads, en Langa, en Guguletu, en Athlone geskiet is. Ek weet waarom ek betrokke moes wees by wat gebeur het.Al het ons in ons onmiddellike doel misluk. Dit gaan om meer as dit. Doodmaak: sodat die dooies moet begin end kry. Daarom. Hoe het Mandela gese? - "Hiervoor het ek gelewe. Hiervoor sal ek, as dit moet, sterf." Dis wat my uiteindelik laat deurbyt. Dat ek dit weet. Dat ek nie koelbloedig ander mense - "onskuldiges", die gelade woord - na hul dood stuur nie: maar dat ek bereid is om, as dit moet, self met my lewe te boet."

Nina does indeed pay with her life. She is shot dead in front of Thomas's eyes at Jan Smuts airport. The process of dying doesn't end, chaos has been sown, and chaos will reap.

Thomas visits his brother, and they talk about politics, amongst other things about the bomb-blast. They discuss violence and are locked in combat against one another. They live in separate universes, Frans within the Afrikaner - hegemony, Thomas against it. Thomas has to confront the moral ugliness of his brother, while aware that he himself bears guilt, knows that no-one can escape guilt. Frans is a 'daadkragtige', to the extent that he rapes his wife.

Thomas has changed identity again and again: Thomas Landman; Traffic policeman; Anton Swanepoel; Peter Ward; Dennis Johnstone. His identity is that of a floating signifier, the question is around whether there is an essential Thomas, or a succession of inessential identities. The postmodernist subject is one of many masks, a succession of roles played.

Thomas realises that Nina was killed as a consequence of his own actions, he himself provided the clue that they needed to track her down. As in classical tragedy it is the hero who brings himself to his own downfall by his own action.

Frans takes up the narrative voice, and tries to seek out the history of his brother's strangeness, and finds it in a detraction of loyalty. He condemns his brother totally. He himself is violent, works for Krygkor, remembers his time in the army, is motivated by fear.

The narrative voice shifts to that of the hunter, Kat Bester, who is on the hunt for the bombers. He compares the hunt to fishing. He is an inherently violent man.

Thomas visits his sister in Bloemfontein. He is on the run, a foreign man in his own country set upon a pilgrimage like Ahaspherus the Wandering Jew. He is an adamic figure, (p149): "So dink hy wrang, sou Adam gevoel het as hy 'n oomblikkie met sweet op sy aanskyn in 'n koeltekol probeer rus het van grawe en bou en probeer terugdink het aan die lewe in die Tuin voor die pluk van die eerste appel. Kaalgestroop is die ou Boom van Kennis nou. En net die nasmaak bly oor, sal altyd bly. Vrank, vrank.

Net, dink hy: dit is ook op 'n manier die teenoorgestelde van Adam. Adam is uitgedryf, weg van waar hy gemeen het dat hy hoort. Met hom is dit anders. As hy die jarelange gesprek moes voortsit wat oor soveel jare met soveel mense gevoer is, oor die 'skisofrenie' van die Afrikaner, oor een voet in Europa en een in Afrika, oor die hunkering na 'n tuiskoms en die koppigheid om nie daaraan te wil toegee nie, dan is hy nie soseer uitgedryf nie as ingedryf. Daardie rukslag van die ontploffing Vrydag, daardie oomblik van gruwelike, buitensporige geweld: op 'n verbasende manier was dit die erkenning van sy uiteindelijke tuiskoms in Afrika.

Thomas watches television at his sister's home, and hears that a massive spate of arrests have taken place following the bomb-blast. The narrative voice shifts to his sister, and she meditates on his strangeness. She is unable to understand his actions, and is aware of the distance between them. She understands the violent nature of South African society, that the Afrikaner's rule is based on violence.

She cannot come to terms with his actions, but sees some meaning in them, (p163): "Al verfoei ek wat jy gedoen het,, is daar iets in my binneste wat jou skaamteloos beny: nie oor wat jy gedoen het nie, maar dat jy iets gedoen het. Want ek weet nou: ek het 'n reg om self ook te lewe, om my lewe nou en hier in my hande te neem. Dis wat jy my laat sien het. Ek was verkeerd om al die jare te dink dat ek 'n slagoffer van ander mense se uitbuiting was. Ek was nie maar, foei tog, 'n arme opofferende eggenote wat haar lewe kwytgeraak het en uitgemergel is deur ander nie. Ek was, is, 'n skuldige, 'n aandadige."

He visits his parents and talks to his uncle who is a policeman about the eternal cycle of violence in the country from which there is no escape. The narrative voice shifts to his mother. She is aware of the temporary nature of her life and of the society of which she is a part, her history and heritage is breaking down. Her husband has a stroke when he hears that Thomas was involved in the bomb-blast. The police also search through their house, seeking clues. Thomas finds the roots of Afrikaner fascism in Christianity, thinking back to his visit to his parents, (p190): "Dis hoe dit begin het, dink hy terwyl hy daarna by sy stoel kniel en sy pa se stem oor sy rug laat spoel. Dis hoe. Hierdie godsdiens is self die fondament van 'n hele staatsorde, 'n manier van dink. Dis waar die fascisme begin. As Adam en Eva kennis kry, word hulle uitgedrywe. God wil nie he dat hulle self moet kan onderskei tussen goed en kwaad nie. Hy wil vir hulle besluit, hulle in die duister hou. En vroeër al, toe die engele gerebelleer het, het Hy hulle kragdadig uit die hemel uitgesmyt. Deur strukturele geweld hou Hy sy bestel in stand. Die Afrikaner het maar net by sy voorbeeld gebly."

Thomas stays for a while at his parents house, and he fixes a family heirloom, which in its breaking symbolised to his mother the demise of her history, (p197): "Later die more gaan hy handelshuis toe en kom maak die spieël reg. Hy gaan spit 'n paar beddings in die tuin om, ry mis van die komposhoop af op die kruiwa aan, maak vir sy ma 'n kragprop heel, verf die houtwerk van die wastafel in die badkamer, gaan sit op 'n klip en hou die hoenders dop wat skrop. En sy hart wil breek. Want in alles val daar gate soos hy kyk. En deur die gate kyk hy in 'n ruimte in waar kinders doodgeskiet word, begrafnisse met traanrook geskend word, studente met knuppels geslaan word, naamlose aangehoudenes met elektriese skokke geruk word, bomme ontplof, mense sterf: 'n ruimte waar Nina oor en oor, onophoudelik, hande-viervoet vorentoe kruip en oor 'n plas van haar eie bloed inmeakaarsak." The apocalypse of death taints everything, nothing is certain against its demise.

Thomas returns to Cape Town, and attends the funeral of the bomb-blast victims. Violence and death has spiralled out from the bomb-blast, reaching Nina, reaching his other comrades, ultimately to reach himself. In his pilgrimage he takes in everyone that he meets, their vision, their experiences, their life. He becomes a composite text of his country, an ubermensch.

Thomas thinks back to his first experiences of township life, the violence of police which he had seen, and of the photos which he took, later to make an exhibition of, which would take him overseas, and label him an enemy of the State and a part of the Struggle. His friend that took him in died in detention.

As the hunt progresses so the killing goes on. One of his comrades, who the police got hold of even before the blast is taken of her life-support systems in hospital, and dies. Through the staging of her funeral, they capture another - David, who will also end up dead in detention. Thomas's brother Frans is finally the one who ends up betraying him, linking one of his aliases to Thomas. So the chase hots up. Thomas takes refuge with a woman, Lisa, who he met on the aeroplane. She herself seeks a way of achieving authenticity in her life. When she finds out that Thomas was responsible for the bomb-blast she is faced with a choice, she feels that Thomas has achieved an authentic existence through his actions, (p321): "toe ek in een slag besef wat hom anders maak wat dit was wat my in hom aangegryp het dat hy bereid was om nee te se om iets te doen om los te breek ek praat nie van die bom nie daarvoor sou ons nog nagte redeneer ek praat nie van moord en doodmaak en vermink nie ek praat van die guts wat dit gekos het om iets te doen reg of verkeerd dit staan anderkant blote moraliteit wat saak maak is om die helderheid en die moed te he om te sien wat gebeur en dan iets te probeer doen"

She confronts him with his act of terror, and the fact of the death of his victims. He in turn, is prepared to die for what he did. Nina is cremated, and he thinks of how he saw her as a burning filament, vital, but now reduced to ash.

Thomas wonders how someone would write of him and his actions, (p335): "- En as ek eendag weg is, dood is: hoe sal ander dan die storie van my skryf? Hoe sou jy dit skryf, Lisa/Karen, as jy moes? Met skok, afgryse, veroordeling, onbegrip, vergifnis, deernis? Want dis, as jy eerlik daaraan dink, al hemel of hel wat daar vir ons is: ons enigste 'hiernamaals" die onthou van ander. Nie vergetelheid nie, nie die niet nie. Maar hoe die ander wat met ons saamry, ons gaan onthou, ons geskiedenis gaan skrywe."

Thus story is redemption, a movement beyond death, a kind of liberation from death. The living are the carriers of eternity, as much as the generations of Adamastor are living again in Thomas. The writing of his ancestral history is a resurrection of them all.

His photography is his entrance to the reality of South Africa, he becomes part of the struggle through his reportage. It is this involvement which took him to the extreme actions. The persecution and murder, the injustice and the torture, all led him on. He realises that violence is the reality which black South Africans experience, and that there is no other way. The solidarity which he experiences moves him away from the Afrikaner people to see that his people are the people of the struggle. his work as a photographer is considered a traitorous act, and, conceptualised in the same way, writing must be seen as a traitorous act.

The creativity which shows itself in his photography is one in which violence and creation go hand in hand, violence is ever-present, (p379): "Hoe na lê vernietiging en skepping nie aan mekaar nie, watter dun riffie skei die een se geweld van die ander s'n. Want geweld is daar altyd; oral. Dis 'n voorwaarde van ons bestaan. Wat is meer geweldig - gewelddadig as 'n vraag? Sy het van vrae gepraat; praat voortdurend daaroor. Haar bestaan is 'n vraagteken. Haar vrae oor geweld - enige vraag - bepaal ons grense , definieer die omlýning van die toelaatbare, die tot dusver denkbare. En dit is die soek na antwoorde op daardie vrae dat ons sulke grense oorsteek, deur hulle breek. Dit is die hart van die "geweld" wat ons menslikheid omskryf. Liggaamlike liefde - liefhê self, die oorskryding van die grens tussen "my" en "jou" - is geweld. Bevrugting, seldeling, groei, geboorte, al die prosesse van lewe, alles is ondenkbaar daarsonder. Ons registreer nie die geweld waarmee 'n boom sy sap uit die ondergrond uit opwing na die laaste blaar en blom en peul nie, nie die geweld waarmee die bloed deur ons are beweeg nie. Maar dis daar. Dis lewe. En daar is daar die ander vorme van geweld: die wat die lewe bedreig, dit uitroei, ongedaan maak. Ken mens altyd die verskil? Wie behalwe 'n god of 'n duiwel kan hom dit aanmatig om oor lewe en dood te besluit? die vermetelheid van 'n god of 'n duiwel om te besluit; om dit in jou hande te neem?"

This cosmic notion of violence exhausts him, and he thinks to himself, (p379): "Hy self het eensklaps baie oud gevoel. Honderde jare. Asof die futiele terugkeer van hom'n wandelende Jood gemaak het: asof nie sy voorvaders nie, maar hy self daardie hele worp van die geskiedenis deurgeleef het: die troue met 'n slawemeisie, die uittrek in die bitter binneland in, Abraham, Isak en Jakob, Noag, 'n hele Ou-Testamentiese kroniek in hom ingebed, Moses, Simson, Benjamin, elkeen van hulle vertaal in hom, rustelose, vervloekte, swerwende, vlugtende, soekende. Adamastor self."

Thomas and Lisa make love, and their lovemaking is not just a telescoping of the past into the present, but also a reaching into the future, an affirmation of life.

Lisa counters Thomas's acceptance of violence, speaking of its cyclical nature. Thomas sees it as inevitable, but sees and experiences it in its concrete horror. He is made to realise the horror of blood on his hands.

Thomas is on his way over the border to Botswana, almost caught a number of times, finally there is the bloody confrontation between him and Kat Bester, in which Lisa is killed, possibly by Thomas himself. He kills Kat Bester, and he himself almost dies, but comes through, losing an arm. The violence will remain with him for the rest of his life.

He looks back upon the series of events, knowing the ironical flow of history, (p550): "Hoe anders sou die aantekeninge gelyk het as ek hulle twintig maande gelede geskryf het. Hoe onberekenbaar veel het nie van toe af verander nie: in myself, in daardie ver land in die suide, in die hele wêreld: die Berlynse muur het geval, die eenpartydiktature van Sentraal Europa lê in skerwe, despotiese militêre regimes in Suid-Amerika is afgetakel, in die Sowjet-Unie het perestroika die wese van die stelsel begin aantast. Oral in die wêreld het volkere in beweging begin kom, het doodgewone vroue en manne in hul miljoene begin skreeu: "Nee! Genoeg!" Ook in Sui-Afrika het die skares begin loop. 'n Diktatuur het verkrummel. 'n Muur, doringdrade, slagordes Casspirs en gewere het begin wyk voor die aan slae van gewone mense. Robbeneieland lê byna verlate, mag mettertyd 'n museum of 'n hotelkompleks huisves, sy mure beskrewen met die inskripsies van die slawehuis op Goree. Tronke het oopgegaan. Mandela het uitgeloop in die son, deur die hekke van Victor Verster buite die Paarl, skaars tien kilometer van die plaas waar ons twee jaar vantevore ons aanslag beplan het."

The story is to be remembered for the sake of the dying, for the sake of vitality which fights against death.

In the unfinished satire of Etienne Leroux, Die Suiwerste Hugenoot is Jan Schoeman, we are placed on a passenger liner which is the stage for the rituals of life and death. Jan Schoeman is going to die; the boat has been hijacked by an unknown party, the social apocalypse threatens, and the vital forces of human lust have free rein on the ship.

We move over the depths of the unconsciousness, and are in danger of succumbing to its potential threats. Man's perilous existence is symbolised by a tightrope walker, who loses his balance, falls overboard, and drowns. The forces of death can only be propitiated through artistic ritual which will provide a way through the unconscious which is dangerous for the initiated.

CHAPTER 8:: A TEXTUAL CONVERGENCE

This chapter seeks to compare and contrast the texts previously examined. It remains to be seen whether a convergent reading is possible, such that one could speak of a unitive theme and form characterising South African literature written during the State of Emergency.

The texts examined concern themselves with aspects of South African society. They are attempts to create a discourse which will exhume the contradictions and elicit the futuristic visions possible in South African society.

The writers concerned have to choose sides in a political context which amounts to civil war. Those identifying with the ruling class experience political upheaval as apocalypse, and deal with the disintegration of their society in individual terms, not accepting the hegemony of the ruling class nor agreeing to its ideology, but rather choose to focus on the options of the individual in a time of crisis, not wanting to entrust themselves completely to the forms of the new society.

The authors identifying with the oppressed classes see political upheaval as the birth of a new society, and clearly identify themselves with their community, seeing the salvation of the individual as linked to participation in the political struggle. Aesthetic activity is seen to be part of this struggle, and the texts demand to be read as social documents, acting upon political discourse.

If one contrasts the texts under discussion on whether they focus more on the individual's experience in his or her experience of the cosmos, or whether the individual finds his or her meaning in the social realm, it is clear that some writing focuses more on the individual, whereas other writing finds meaning for the individual in his or her relationship to society. Both possibilities problematise the notion of the person, and, in examining the relationship of the individual aesthetic voice to his or her society, deals with what Ngugi would call the post-colonial class crisis of the identity of the intellectual in relationship to his or her community.

Breytenbach's text Memory of Snow and of Dust most clearly juxtaposes the individual and the social, and examines the underlying tension between the individual and his or her society. While Schoeman's novel Afskeid en Vertrek demonstrates the Western alienation between persons, a book like L.M. Mqotsi's House of Bondage places the community of the house of Phalo in the foreground. Sepamla's A Scattered Survival concerns itself with the disintegration of the township community, demonstrated in the breakdown of the family, while his The third generation focuses on the communal meaning and liberation found in engaging in the societal struggle.

Ngcobo's text And they didn't die looks at the struggle of the individual in the context of the community. Langa's A Rainbow on the Paper sky contextualises the meaning of the individual life in the context of the liberation struggle, and clearly links individual meaning to social identity.

Coetzee's Age of Iron, which contrasts the tension of a woman most alienated from those around her having to confront not only her own death, but also the death of those around her in a political, social context, knows that she lives on in her daughter, as well as in her text. P.J. Haasbroek's Die Jaar Nul looks at the destruction of the societal, and the attempt of the individual to transcend his social context.

Ryger's Die hol gevoel, expresses at its most extreme the demise of the subject alienated from his society. Brink's States of Emergency demonstrates the apocalyptic nature of the social realm, and the need to transcend it through Eros, while his Die Kreef raak gewoond daaraan demonstrates the integration of the individual with his society. Du Plessis's Longlive shows the tensions between social and personal meaning, and how alienation may destroy, even while meaning may be found in the political. Harris's Where they play the Blues, Rive's Emergency Continued, and Jacobs' Under the Lion all demonstrate the rite of passage from the individualistic to the communal. These transformations most clearly define the transformation of the subject in the text.

While there is no common political vision in the books most of them display a political consciousness. There is an obvious correlation between those texts which define the person in communal terms and those that have an explicit political message. It appears to me that, while there are no explicit propagandistic texts, ideology is naturalised or contested in most of the books under discussion.

While writers such as Goosen, Viljoen and Ngcobo, among others, have some underlying feminist consciousness, and while Gray and Schoeman's texts are a distillation of aspects of the homosexual world, the issues of gender and sexual orientation don't predominate in any of these texts.

Where some texts deal with the world of the township, and take up ideological issues, there is no explicit form of black consciousness as a major and central theme in these texts. There is no text with the notion of class at its centre. There is no self-consciousness in the books regarding the language medium in which they write, besides Letoit's Suidpunt Jazz, and no simple contrast between writing in english as opposed to afrikaans.

While Breytenbach' writes about the world of exile, even those authors in exile at the time of writing don't focus on that issue, but are drawn to the South African local scene. Had I included Hope's The Hottentot Room, or Slovo's Ties of Blood, in my analysis my inter-textual world may have appeared slightly different. If any comparison is to be made between indigenous and exiled writers, the only conclusion to be drawn is that exiled writers tend to be more romantic in their vision, and more concerned with the romance of the struggle and 'cultural' life than locally based writers taking up similar themes.

If one had to characterise the texts in terms of their 'openness' (in the post-structuralist sense of the word), most texts are, in their desire to be socially relevant and dealing with the crisis in society at large, 'closed', with the exception of the first three texts discussed: Memory of Snow and of Dust, States of Emergency, and Suidpunt Jazz, which, together with Die Kreef raak gewoon daaraan, utilise the 'post-modern' mode of writing. The floating nature of these texts coincide with a multivalent approach to voice.

The aesthetic approaches of the books are quite different, with the works of Breytenbach, Brink, Letoit, Phillips, Rive and Schoeman spelling out self-consciously the nature of writing and creativity, and investigating the relationship between reality and fiction. Most of the other authors are more concerned to tell a story, and utilise conventional modes of storytelling, focusing for the most part on a single character and his or her passage through life.

The authors have all made a conscious intervention of a moral nature into a time of crisis. The moments of apocalypse and liberation (humanisation) demonstrate the tension between the new and the old order.

Personal death - the fate of the human in the face of eternity - is one form of apocalypse which texts have to deal with. The texts of Ryger, Hattingh, Mqotsi, Gray, Jacobs, Langa, du Plessis, Phillips, Coetzee, Harris, Brink all involve the death(s) of a central character(s) as a pivotal moment or conclusion to their works

The notion of sexual apocalypse, where sexuality is equated with death and sometimes rebirth, is central to many of the texts. The works of Brink, Ryger, Gray, Letoit, Schoeman, and Coetzee. display this possibility.

Sometimes the apocalyptic moment is the unwilling disintegration of family. The works of Sepamla, Ngcobo, Du Plessis, Viljoen, Hattingh, Harris, Brink, Breytenbach and Rive all involve some or other familial crisis or break-up.

The disintegration of a culture in the face of change is central to the works of Brink, Sepamla, Langa, Ngcobo and Mqotsi.

On the other hand, change , with the death of a destructive system, is welcomed. Especially the works of Brink, Langa, Jacobs and Breytenbach focus on this aspect of social change.

The texts which focus on apocalypse ironicise the ruling hegemony, and display the relativist nature of the absolute claims of the rulers ideology.

Liberation, or humanisation, takes place cosmically in the works of Breytenbach, Brink and Letoit.

Liberation as rebirth in the next generation stands central to the works of Langa, Coetzee, Ngcobo, Rive, Sepamla And Haasbroek.

The liberatory effect of the vitality of art stand central to the work of Breytenbach, Coetzee, Harris, Haasbroek, Letoit, Schoeman, and Phillips.

The orgasmic transformation of sexual experience which brings personal redemption is central to the works of Brink, Haasbroek, Harris, Breytenbach, Langa, Letoit, and Schoeman.

Liberation through political action, where the character moves towards political committment, and the text itself is a violent intervention, stands central to the works of Brink, Sepamla, Mgotsi, Haasbroek, Jacobs, Langa, du Plessis, Rive and Harris.

These texts which deal with liberation idealise the claims of their subjects and transform their ideological position into a naturalised vision of culture and nature by the aesthetic process of utilising the processes of metaphor and myth, claiming the mythological entities of 'nation', 'people' and political righteousness for themselves, and thereby claiming the future as theirs; the notion of the coming 'universal kingdom of god' being linked to a future political dispensation.

All the books seem to claim to be part of a 'high' culture, as opposed to popular culture. There is no real attempt by any of the authors to write novels in populist 'people's culture' forms. It seems as if authors make a kind of choice regarding the nature of their audience, in choosing to write novels. The novels seem to be aiming at influencing intellectuals, as opposed to the masses; other forms of culture, mainly poetry, music and drama coming closer to doing so. Whether the novel is inherently an elitist form of cultural expression, or whether any of the writers aimed to write the mythical working class novel need not be discussed here.

The closest one comes to popular writing styles are The Third Generation, by Sipho Sepamla, and The house of Bondage, by L.M. Mqotsi. Most of the texts write in a form of social realism, with only Letoit, Phillips and Breytenbach writing in something close to a magical realist/fantasy style.

CONCLUSION: The nature of the subject

Contrary to the spirit of post-modernism, strong emphasis is laid on the importance of the subject; the subject's need to act; the ontological boldness of the subject needed to deal with one's social context and the ability to transcend oneself. The subject as voice is insistent and urgent, sometimes even violent in nature, and is, for the most part, of a straightforward nature.

The human condition as described is one which requires action, and which deals with a personal and social reality. The texts are socially referential, and in that sense closed, with a didactic and moral nature, which doesn't exclude their aesthetic character; indeed, in the creation of social meaning, it is essential that the socially normative contract of ethics is utilised.

The difference between 'Western' and 'African' modes of writing is found in the contrast between being individually and socially focused.

The contrast between 'politicised' and 'aesthetically' focused writing seems of unimportance, as many of the texts deal with political themes, without being explicitly aligned to a particular overarching ideology.

The being of the beautiful, the social intertext of the novels concerned, is the Platonic/Heideggerian ground of intersubjective Being where Ontology and Presence are re-established in the face of the Deconstructive, post-modern apocalypse which expresses the Twentieth Century pessimism. Modern Western Literature and Theoretical Criticism is neurotically alienated from its self. The demise of the Subject in Nietzsche and Barthes' declarations that God and the Author are dead expresses what Tillich (1952) calls the lack of the courage to be.

The demise of metaphysics is the inability to give form to psychic energy, and, with no form to clothe it, energy is dissipated, only to appear briefly in the ghost of Ontological Reality which is the aimless alienated 'floating signifier'.

Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle may be decoded for our pleasure to examine the fate of the Subject in the post-modern milieu wherein we find ourselves. The fact that you cannot see structure when you are sure of the activity and presence of the Subject, and when in viewing the Subject, you cannot see the created structure, may lead, as it has historically in post-structuralism and deconstruction, to the denial of the subject as well as the system, or structure.

Degenaar's useful antithetical contrast of structure beyond structuration for the notion of depth-structure; and structuration (thus structurer - Subject, as well) beyond structure for the notion of free-floating surface-structure may serve us to examine the alternation of Subject and structure in our perception.

Where 'langue' (read depth structure) exists it is a-historical, an abstract generalisation: false metaphysics, wherein mind-body dualism forces us for the sake of positivist consistency to reject the notion of depth structure and to see only floating structure without any referential, and thus ontological viability of meaning.

In contrast to this a metaphysics of experience based on praxis is viable, in that one can participate in the divine ground which is the numinous inter-subjective in its unique manifestation within a context, much like that access to the divine which contextual theology has demonstrated so successfully. (This is a combined reading of Bowman's metaphysics of Experience, Gilby's Poetic Experience and Aquinas's notion of knowledge through faith, as well as modern contextual theology.)

One may see and experience the active subject in praxis, but, when his or her activity is poetic, creative, one cannot see the created objective correlative in praxis as it is still in the making, Equally when the making is complete one cannot perceive the Subject as present as he or she has removed him/herself from the completed object.

The aesthetic object, a manifestation of the metaphysical Other, is the expression of the erotic unification of the Subject and the Divine Object-Being, which, as the human is object to its Metaphysical subject, as we are dealing with a higher state of Being, is rather Subject than Object. This process whereby the Self-Other barrier is transcended, and whereby we participate immediately in the Ground of Being, can hardly be described empirically, as we are dealing with a higher Order of Being than the material.

With the archaeological onset of Writing there comes the possibility of distance from the product of creation, different from the primary forms of Art as Performance in its ability to remove the notion of metaphysical Presence from the created object.

Equally, within the onset of the Deconstructive process of Writing there comes an even greater remove from the notion of Presence and Ontological Reference and Metaphysics. The process of abstraction is carried further, and through it, as is its express aim and intention, the experience of the transcendental becomes impossible, because, as stated earlier, the personal experience of the transcendental is only possible in its being contextually immediate.

To decontextualise is, in this context, to dehumanise, to falsify: to quote,

"Kon teks te ken
interteks ontketen,
ontken teken konteks."

The question is, beyond the notion of 'presence' as a quality of speech, where speech of itself leaves no trace beyond the subject, the deconstruction of the speech/writing dualism is possible. I believe that the Science of Eros (where Eros and Logos are one and the same in the intersubjective, transpersonal ground of the Beautiful) wherein the notion of the person as Aquinas's 'animal rationale' - undivided interactive embodiment of spirit takes the central stage; makes it possible.

By viewing, then, our texts as parole', and by considering our meta-intertext as some form of meta-parole to which our criticism is yet another intervention into the cosmic polis, we must see ourselves as either members of the civitas deo, or the civitas terrenae. Society is a communal metaphor of the subject, where the disjunctions, or contradictions within the societal field of meaning, the 'war' between 'good' and 'evil' force us to make (following Snyman) an implied reading of the social text, whereby we are driven to action to resolve the conflict, or to idealisation to explain the contradictions. The symbolic allegorical figure which the social text (culture) presents us with is thus humanity as the image of God. The antinomy between good and evil on the metaphysical level is in its turn the disjunction whereby, with God and Self (Subject and Subject) as the two interactive terms of our metaphor, we are forced to some means of interpretative resolution of antinomy.

Thus we reach, by dialectical interaction with God (much like Socrates's action upon the proclamation of the Delphic Oracle) the metonymical God-hood which, as an act of hubris, leads to the tragic fall where we incarnate ourselves as Satanic figure, the nemesis of God as a Lear-like fool, coming to our death.

In the end our anthropological rite of passage through the moments of Eros and Thanatos bring us to face ourselves in a creative death, the hemlock-like, christlike suicide which is the action of the critic as heretic, offering him or herself as redemptive sacrifice for the sake of the ontological text which is Society.

To conclude then: the novels under discussion, and the societal transpersonal intertext both seem to question the explicit divides of good and evil, and the forces of life and death. The most complex configuration of textual development is that of the erotic conjunction of Life (as good) and Death (as evil) within the political sphere; with the notion of redemptive substitutionary sacrifice, the conjunction of the godly and the human meeting erotically in the embrace of death; containing and making possible life for the Communal Other.

This is of necessity a soteriological and Christological interpretation of the social text; where Transcendental Yan, in its listening silence as Paternal Thanatos evokes the culture of Yinlike Eros as Muse the interaction of which manifests itself as the free prophetic multi-valent community of Voice. It is this dialectical eroticism which expresses in the end the antinomical Buddhalike nature of the Self as the speaking and listening Tao.

This is a Buber-like I-Thou relationship: the Tat Tvam Asi (That Thou Art) paradoxical relationship of Untu NgUnkuloomntu abanye Abantu, (The Adamic figure is godlike in being within human community) which is, in its transcendental nature the Trinity, and in the Human Sense, the metonymical, analogical mimesis by which we experience and participate in the Divine, by transcending ourselves within the intersubjective Logos.

The nature of the Subject in South African literature written in the State of Emergency, is Transcendental; with the Voice of God speaking through Communal Poesis: the creative making of social meaning in a prophetic aesthetics.

If making meaning takes place aesthetically, in moving within an irrational, pre-aristotelian type of metaphysical science, then the teleological mystical Other is known in its continual recreation in Art.

One can quite validly say that this unitive though diverse discourse interpolating into South African society in its time of crisis, makes for an integrated South African culture, if only in its Renaissance. The poets are the true legislators of humanity!

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