

# Re-thinking ‘whiteness’? Identity, change and ‘white’ popular music in post-apartheid South Africa

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## Abstract

*In South Africa, the prospects for social integration were auspicious after the first democratic elections in 1994. As the popular music of the time shows, it was not only blacks who exulted in the new ‘rainbow’ euphoria: many whites did so too. But for millions of black and white citizens, this moment was short lived. The government’s adoption of neo-liberal policies had severe social consequences – which it and the new elite sought to conceal behind populist calls to ‘race’ solidarity, a new racial typecasting and slurs aimed at whites in general. ‘White’ popular music has responded to these reversals in a variety of ways – including direct criticism, sharp satire, humour and the expression of ‘fugitive’ identities. Perhaps more remarkably, white musicians have stressed the need for self-reinvention in music that is ironic, unpredictable, transgressive. These songs play with malleable identities; tokens of a disdain for fixed or essential identities, they are hopeful signposts towards a more integrated future.<sup>1</sup>*

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are no more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or black, or Western, or Oriental. (Said 1994, pp. 407–8)

There is no Negro mission; there is no white burden. . . . There is no white world, there is no white ethnic, any more than there is a white intelligence. . . . The negro is not. Any more than the white man. Both must turn their backs on the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors in order that authentic communication be possible. . . . Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? (Fanon 1986, pp. 228–31)

*What is the authority by which claims about an individual’s identity are warranted? To what extent does this authority reside in the will of the individual? If individual will is not a sufficiently authoritative basis for identity, to whom belongs the authority to ascribe identity to an individual, and what is the theoretical foundation for that authority? And on the basis of what considerations do these ‘ascribers’ select, even to their own satisfaction, one identity rather than another to assign to a given individual? . . . Even when identity is conceived as a consciousness, or subjectivity (as in ‘the Chicano subject’ or ‘the white subject’), the ordinance of perceived shared physical descent over proclaimed individual consent is strong. . . . At stake in choosing to address ‘identity’ in the foregoing terms is the amount of influence individuals have over their own fate. (Hollinger 2000, pp. 22–6)*

Can we avoid having to choose between two equally destructive solutions: living together and setting aside our differences or living apart in homogeneous communities which communicate only through the market or through violence? (Touraine 2000, p. 48)

## I

In the mid-1990s – long after Nelson Mandela’s release from prison, and a couple of years beyond South Africa’s first democratic elections, a new graffito appeared on a wall in central Johannesburg. It read: ‘Re-release Mandela – the disco version’. I like to think that the writer of this graffito had something more in mind than simply a clever pun: that what was being signalled, rather, was the need to re-energise a project that had lost its way, or been hijacked – a suggestion that symbolically Mandela, its icon, was once again prisoner of forces beyond his control, and was now awaiting release in another ‘version’. What the contents of this metaphorical new version might be have become increasingly clear. Within South Africa, voices critical of the African National Congress (ANC) government, and of the new social order in general, have grown in volume, articulacy and anger – particularly in the post-Mandela era, under the presidency of his successor Thabo Mbeki. These criticisms highlight many issues. One has been the topic of some profound reflections by the eminent black South African writer Njabulo Ndebele. Focusing on what he called ‘the blinding sterility at the centre of the “heart of whiteness”’, he argued that ‘whiteness’ had to ‘undergo an experiential transformation by absorbing new cultural experience as an essential condition for achieving a new sense of cultural rootedness’. This, he suggested, was a world-historic opportunity: whites in South Africa could reclaim their humanity by assisting in ‘a humanistic revival of our country through a readiness to participate in the process of redress and reconciliation’. But this involved one essential condition: that the ‘heart of whiteness’ restore ‘dignity to the black body’. Ndebele went on:

We are all familiar with the global sanctity of the white body. Wherever the white body is violated in the world, severe retribution follows somehow for the perpetrators, if they are non-white, regardless of the social status of the white body. The white body is inviolable, and that inviolability is in direct proportion to the global vulnerability of the black body. This leads me to think that if South African whiteness is a beneficiary of the protectiveness assured by international whiteness, it has an opportunity to write a new chapter in world history. It will have to come out from under the umbrella and repudiate it. Putting itself at risk, it will have to declare that it is home now, sharing in the vulnerability of other compatriot bodies. South African whiteness will declare that its dignity is inseparable from the dignity of black bodies. (Ndebele 2000, p. 12)

Of course, this process was never going to be easy. For a start, within the anti-apartheid struggle itself the concept of ‘race’, though nothing other than a social invention, was never deconstructed. ‘Races’ were assumed to be real, natural entities; thus race-thinking remained entrenched, and a non-racial future simply meant that the future would be ‘multiracial’: at best a co-existence free of racism. As Gerhard Maré has argued:

‘Non-racialism’ was the commitment, but races remained the building blocks, not only of apartheid society, but also of resistance organisations and the theoretical and strategic thinking that informed analysis and practice within attempts to restructure society. (Maré 2003, p. 11)

More obviously – the ‘miracle’ of the ‘rainbow revolution’ notwithstanding – it has recently become clear just how close South Africa came to the brink of civil war nine years ago when, in the run-up to the first democratic elections, a tiny but organised minority of 50,000 white conservatives, in collusion with units of the South African Defence Force, stood armed and poised for war. Disgruntled arch-conservatives have continued to plot – in exile for instance, where the racist, white South Africans of the London-based ‘Springbok Club’ have used the Internet to enlist other white supremacists in their campaign to recolonise South Africa and Zimbabwe and restore

'civilised' white rule. And as if in grotesque (though not, sadly, isolated) echo, two white rugby players were recently convicted of murdering a black youth they caught poaching on a farm: they severely beat the boy, left him to die under a tree, and later threw his body into a dam. As the erstwhile black premier of the Free State Province, Winkie Direko, put it: 'I have sympathy with whites. Yesterday you were the *baas* and I was the *kombuismeid* [kitchen maid]. Now I stand here as the premier of the province. It must be a bitter pill to swallow, but it has to be done' (*Mail & Guardian*, 23–29 March 2001).

Indeed it does. But how is it to be done? What is involved here? What are the implications for white – and surely also for black – identities? At a recent conference in South Africa, Stuart Hall argued that we ought to avoid 'monumentalism' and instead think hard about how to introduce *new subjects*. 'We are talking', he said, 'about the production of a new subjectivity. Something which has never yet been seen on earth in this part of the world, which will not forget the terrors out of which it has been constructed and the violence and the horror but which will also make something creative out of it' (Hall 1997, p. 16).

I think there is a role here for music – the 'last and best source of participatory consciousness', as Charles Keil described music, with its 'capacity not just to model but maybe to enact some ideal communities' (Keil 1994, p. 20). If part of what is involved is a battle not just against racism but also against ethnic absolutism, then it seems to me that music can join that battle; that it can become part of a new cultural politics, enabling a set of aesthetic practices that will fortify such struggles and, as Hall says, permit 'new subjects to be introduced'. This is not a new idea: Paul Gilroy (1993), George Lipsitz (1994), Les Back (1996), David Hesmondhalgh (2000) and others have made similar points about music and identity. Gilroy's example is, of course, Britain, where, against all the evidence of complex, ongoing social and cultural change, racist attitudes have constructed blackness and Englishness as incommensurable. Gilroy thus looked towards a new cultural politics that would defy primordialism and give life to an aesthetic at once English and black. And in similar vein, Back has shown how music can play a role in undermining the ideology that socio-cultural groups – including nations – are hardened, reified categories. Citing work that shows how in Birmingham, for instance, reggae music has created sites where interaction between black and white people can occur, he notes that such musical cultures have developed aesthetics and practices that starkly oppose the dominant, racialised views of the nation. Instead, these musical cultures 'imagine new types of association that transcend the divisions of race, class and gender' and thus redraw the 'map of nationhood' in radically different ways. And so, as black culture tends to become a class culture, '[w]hites in this situation may have more in common with R. Kelly than John Bull' (Back 1996, p. 10).

## II

In South Africa, whatever the difficulties, the prospects for such integrations were particularly auspicious after the first democratic elections in 1994. The struggle against apartheid was a struggle against racism; thus anti-racism and the experience of 'interracial' solidarity were among its greatest legacies, and they found victorious embodiment in the country's progressive new Constitution. They have, moreover, remained fundamental commitments for many people, not just black but white as well: a significant minority of whites, after all, had participated in the struggle against

apartheid, expressing their opposition through a wide range of political and cultural styles, ideologies, practices and movements, often at great personal cost. For these, as for other whites who followed their example, this post-1994 mood was summed up by the Afrikaans-speaking editor of the *Citizen* when he wrote: 'I've got a white skin. But otherwise, I'm an African. . . . [As white Afrikaners] we're a group of people in the process of becoming a new nation, part of an inclusive nation of South Africans' (*Mail & Guardian*, 15–21 October 1999). And the white, Afrikaans editor of *Beeld* made a similar point: 'We're from Africa not from Europe. We regard ourselves as Africans with paler skins . . . This is where we want our children to live and we want to make this country great for all its people' (van Rooyen 2000, p. 38–9). To the same end, the *Mail & Guardian* devoted a long feature to the work of the white South African artist and poet Wopko Jensma, whose importance was summed up in the claim that he was the first local artist in any medium to transcend the barriers of language or colour: his work was neither English nor Afrikaans, neither Black nor White. This made him, the article said, 'a terrifying, new sort of human. He is the first South African' (10–16 March 2000). More sensationally, and much more irreverently, white Afrikaans performance artist Piet Pienaar made a well-publicised, dramatic visual statement about his changing identity when he submitted himself to a circumcision rite derived from Xhosa practice. He announced that a black woman doctor would carry out the operation, and that it would take place in an art gallery, in front of cameras linked 'live' to the Internet. Viewers around the world would be able to log on to the Webcast at the cost of one US dollar a time, and then join in the auction of his foreskin. Posterity, Pienaar argued, would understand the event as belonging to 'a time when white male Afrikaners were feeling oppressed by their identity. Most Afrikaners aren't circumcised – it's a Jewish, Muslim or Xhosa thing – and this is a symbol of me broadening my identity' (*Mail & Guardian*, 20–26 October 2000).

Signs that whites were exulting in the 'rainbow' euphoria of the new South Africa were especially evident in the popular music made and largely bought by them just prior to the first democratic elections, and for a couple of years afterwards. White singers and bands found numerous ways of identifying with the liberatory post-apartheid social order. They wrote songs – some of them anthemic – that welcomed the 'new beginning' (Phillips 1993); or celebrated the fact that 'the freedom of Madiba<sup>2</sup> brought dancin' in the streets/tiekiedraai and toyi-toyi with a mellow beat/so we're all part of the old and of the new' (Goosen 1996); or prayed that the 'rainbow nation/shine on' (*ibid.*); or hailed (in what has since become a local popular classic) 'all the world in union/the world as one/as we try to reach our destiny/a new age has begun' (Powers 1995); or inverted a colonial term of racial abuse by telling a white audience that 'jy's net 'n wit kaffir van Afrika' [you're just a white kaffir from Africa] (Goosen 1996); or made use of local black languages (Goosen 1992; Rauch 1995); or pleaded for all South Africans to let go of fear and work towards uniting the country (Rauch 1995); or incorporated black performers (Kerkorrel 1992; Rauch 1995); or, in only faintly disguised reference to the incoming president Nelson Mandela, welcomed back Moses and wished him the best of luck (Phillips 1993):

Hey Moses you're back with a smile, huh!  
 who's gonna say it's from the Sacred Cow?  
 say Moses I think you're the best  
 please don't turn out like all of the rest

Hey Moses you put a smile on my face  
 can you save this place?  
 say Moses I think you're the best  
 please don't turn out like all of the rest

Musically, these white bands sought, to a limited degree, to overcome ancient separations by fusing rock or other 'white' styles, such as *boeremusiek* (ethnically Afrikaans country dance music), with local 'black' idioms. These idioms included, principally, *marabi* (the generic, pan-ethnic music that took root in the country's urban slums in the first three decades of the twentieth century) or *marabi*'s sequels (such as township jazz, *kwela* and *mbaqanga*) (Ballantine 1993); sometimes a neo-traditional style such as *isicathamiya* (a migrant-worker idiom made famous by Ladysmith Black Mambazo) was brought into the mix. In Laurika Rauch's 'The Flying Dutchman' for example, the integration is with the cyclical guitar riffs and looping bass lines of *mbaqanga*; in her song 'Falcon', a Western popular ballad style is interleaved with *isicathamiya* (Rauch 1995).

Frequently, too, the iconography of the album covers underscores such messages – as in James Phillips's gospel-inflected *Sunny Skies* (1993). With every song in its own right a small masterpiece, this is one of the finest, most beautifully crafted albums in the history of South African popular music, and – as political art – one of the most explicitly committed to fundamental social transformation. On its front cover is a reproduction of *Huis Met Witboom*, an oil painting by Water Meyer; a picture of a typical middle-class white home, it suggests a death-like aridity. On the back cover is a photograph of another kind of home – a squatter shack, with an old car parked outside. At a moment of transformation in South Africa's history, both scenes cry out for regeneration. But there is an important difference between them. Unlike the suburban home, the shack dwelling – poor though it is – is alive with colour, humour and sense of creativity: painted on the shack's door, for example, in homage to the spirit of change, is the legend, 'Mikhail Gorbachev seems to be beautiful'. In an unexpected gesture of identification, James Phillips himself leans against the wall; he strikes a pose becoming of a proud homeowner.

In making such statements, these songwriters and performers used – and extended – the methods and procedures of 'protest' music devised by various white popular musicians during the last decade or more of the apartheid era. Johnny Clegg is the best-known member of that earlier cohort. He first came to prominence in South Africa at the end of the 1970s as a young white guitarist and singer who had mastered *maskanda*, a neo-traditional musical style developed by Zulu-speaking migrant workers. His musical partner was master *maskanda* musician Siphosiso Mchunu; as Juluka, they sought ways to combine *maskanda* with typically Western idioms, and gave performances around the country to mixed, rapidly growing audiences. At a time when the inhumanity and the contradictions of the apartheid system were reaching breaking point, Juluka thus embodied a number of potent cultural transgressions. And so they offered hope: an often euphoric promise that the final struggle against apartheid could be won. Yet from the start the band's musical integrations were awkwardly worked. Certainly, symbols for 'white' and 'black' met in the songs' own interiors – but typically as binary, and often unequal, oppositions: 'white' represented largely by an English folk-rock style derived from the 1960s, which carried the song's narrative, and 'black' virtually relegated to the choruses. The lyrics addressed topics relevant to the anti-apartheid struggle, but commonly in two languages (English and Zulu) split along the same lines.

Still, it was a winning formula. Juluka (and later Savuka, thus renamed after Mchunu went back to farming in the mid-1980s) quickly became an international band, with, for example, the 1982 hit 'Scatterlings of Africa' (reissued on Clegg 1999) reaching the top fifty in the UK and then number one in France and elsewhere. More curiously still, growing fame meant that it did not seem to matter that the 'African' part of the musical equation sometimes dropped out altogether, resulting in straightforward, if often delightful, rock songs. World fame, evidently, came at the price of a smoothing-over of some of the grain that *maskanda* had brought to the band's style.<sup>3</sup>

Clegg and other white anti-apartheid musicians set the example. They established patterns, methods, and continuities of influence that extended not just into the 'rainbow' moment of the early 1990s, but far beyond – into the work of many white groups who identified with the new democratic order long after the euphoric early years had given way to an era of disillusionment, ambiguity and anger. The contours of that era will be discussed later. For now, we must begin by delving a little more deeply into the ways that, during the post-apartheid years, white musicians and groups have sought to signal their break from the past and their identification with the new, non-racial democracy.

A concept of prime importance for these white, post-apartheid performers is *integration*, and they suggest it in a number of ways. First, through music. The Transformers, for example, are primarily a white, Afrikaans-speaking band underpinned by an aesthetic rooted in white Afrikaans music, and with wide appeal to a similar audience. But they include black musicians, and their 1997 album seeks explicitly to integrate aspects of *marabi*, pennywhistle *kwela*, *mbaqanga*, Cape Malay *goema* and the blues, with traditional Afrikaans music and lyrics, to produce a transformed, or transforming, hybrid. Singer-songwriter Eugenie imports elements from the realm of neo-traditional Zulu music to produce arresting Afrikaans–Zulu musical and linguistic combinations. For example, 'Koebaai' (2000) promises to be another traditional Afrikaans *liedjie* (literally, 'little song') until – startlingly – a black backing vocal group appear and introduce Zulu phrases along with an idiom seemingly derived in equal measure from *isicathamiya* and the Enja repertoire! In other examples, Tananas (1996) allude to *marabi*, pennywhistle *kwela*, *maskanda* and *goema*, Janjie Blom en die Bushrockbandvriende (2000) invoke the looping bass lines and the electric keyboard stylings of *mbaqanga*, and Syd Kitchen and AmaKool (1999) strikingly inflect a folk-rock ballad with some of the guitar characteristics, and the male backing-group incantations, of *maskanda*.

Sometimes it is 'pre-colonial' black South African music that is selected for the blend, as when Tony Cox (1999) draws upon Xhosa root-progressions, or Marimba! (1999) use cyclical guitar phrases to conjure the sound of the Xhosa mouth-resonated *uhadi* bow, or David Ledbetter (1999) sings a Tswana ballad to his own 'African-jazz'-style piano accompaniment. Indigenous instruments from various parts of the continent might also be used – for instance the *hosho* rattle (Tananas 1996), or marimba, kudu horn and *djembe* drum (Marimba! 1999). Moreover, as is already evident, nominally white bands sometimes also include black or so-called 'coloured'<sup>4</sup> members, whether permanently, as with Tananas, or temporarily, as when 'coloured' rap artists Brasse Vannie Kaap sit in with Not My Dog (2000), and Isaac Mtshali (of Stimela), Gito Baloi (of Tananas) and Black Moses (of the Soul Brothers) play with Janjie Blom en die Bushrockbandvriende (2000).

If strategies of musical performance are one way of embracing integration as a socially important concept in the post-apartheid era, verbal strategies are another. For

many white musicians, song lyrics, titles, band names and, though less frequently, the inclusion of a 'black' language or dialect, are crucial. Syd Kitchen, for example, calls attention to the challenge of the new order by titling a recent album *Africa's not for Sissies* (2001); he names one of its songs 'Settler', and writes lyrics that oppose colonial attitudes and signal a commitment to the new democracy:

Now here I am, you are, each in Afrika  
 You are my brother this is my home  
 I offer love – I ask redemption  
 I offer all – I ask no question  
 I sing this loud – no hesitation

Elsewhere on the album he rejoices in the overcoming of apartheid:

Stand up for our time is now  
 Stand up we all made it somehow  
 Everywhere, it's in the air

Stand up lest the tide subside  
 Stand up we've got nothing to hide  
 All those years  
 Choked in fears  
 Now no more tears

To the same end, Koos Kombuis (1997) proclaims the theme of egalitarianism in the provocative song-title 'Almal kaffers' (All kaffirs); bands choose names like White Trash, Transformers, and Marimba!; and singers opt to include an indigenous 'black' vernacular (Coleske 2000; Eugenie 2000), or to use a 'coloured' dialect (Koos Kombuis 2000).

Similarly, and perhaps even more strikingly, some young whites have recently started to identify with the modish new musical idioms produced and consumed by black South African youths: *kwaito* in particular. This is evident, in part, from the way 5fm and other radio stations geared to white audiences have increasingly broadcast the music of popular black performers such as TKZee, Bongo Maffin and, especially, Mandoza. Yfm's head of programming, Greg Maloka, has observed that although they don't understand its 'culture', 'a lot of white kids like *kwaito*'. As one fan said, 'Me and my school friends learn the words off by heart even though we don't know what they mean' (*Sunday Independent*, 6 May 2000). Moreover, the growth of white interest in *kwaito* can also be observed in clubs and on dance floors. The idiom has, for instance, 'gatecrashed' the Roxy Rhythm Bar in Melville, Johannesburg – a venue catering to white rock fans (*ibid.*). More remarkable still are those clubs that are consistently multicultural, such as Axis, a gay club, and Angelo's Cantina, both in Durban. Both cater to many different kinds of dancers and musical tastes – including *kwaito*. As one enthusiastic young clubber put it: 'At Angelo's there is no racism and all cultures mix freely. It's a warm and friendly atmosphere. The DJs play Hindi, rave (house), *kwaito* and even Turkish music. Listening to different music, going to different clubs is what we need' (*Sunday Independent*, 26 March 2000 and 6 May 2001; *Independent on Saturday*, 18 March 2000). Although integrations such as this – we could think of them as heuristic transgressions – are still in the vanguard among clubbing audiences, they are clearly on the increase.<sup>5</sup> And not just in the clubs: indeed, the first white *kwaito* singer to achieve prominence appeared on the scene early in 2000, in the form of Francois 'Lekgoa' Henning: he sings in Sotho, English and Afrikaans, and appeals to both black and white audiences. These integrations, and

these tendencies towards integration, point us in the direction of a new, emergent identity. We might say that its bearers are becoming 'white Africans'.

None of this, of course, is to deny the stark fact that there remain many white popular musicians and audiences whose connection to South Africa in the post-apartheid era is at best mythical, tentative or confused, and at worst self-serving or non-existent. For the purposes of the present discussion, we might speak of them as 'whites in Africa'. In a book on South African literature, J.M. Coetzee coined the term 'white writing', which he characterised thus:

Nor does the phrase *white writing* imply the existence of a body of writing different in nature from black writing. White writing is white only insofar as it is generated by the concerns of people no longer European, not yet African. (Coetzee 1988, p. 11)<sup>6</sup>

*Mutatis mutandis*, exactly the same might be said of the popular music made by, and for, 'whites in Africa'. One can discern here at least four different tendencies.

First, there are those performers who allude, musically or verbally, to Africa, but in such a way as to make the continent an abstraction, without real content. Typically this is done through the use of vague, floating signifiers – signs that connote 'Africa' amorphously, non-specifically. Wendy Oldfield's *On a Pale Blue Dot* (1999), for example, makes free use of such signifiers within a context marked by techno-trance features. There are mythologically 'African' chant-like vocalisations, and Oldfield's vocal style has features that her audience would most readily associate with Angelique Kidjo, the Paris-based Beninois singer whose 'Africa' already exists as a commodity for a world-music audience; she also uses the West African *djembe* drum, the Brazilian *berimbau* (a bow derived by way of the diaspora from an Angolan predecessor) and – as if to confuse matters still further – an Australian didgeridoo. Somewhat similar is *New Anthem* (1998) by Egyptian Nursery. This subtle, delicate techno-based music involves French rap, Lingala (from the Democratic Republic of Congo), English, and black and white musicians. On the one hand, it conjures a symbiosis of white South Africa and black francophone Africa; on the other, it signals a vague, modernised pan-Africa, rather than any particular view of its southern territory.

Secondly, there are white groups for whom Africa is a source of New-Age spiritualism and a variety of cognate fascinations – the primitive, the tribal, the exotic, the trance. Qcumba Zoo are a case in point. Their *Wake Up & Dream* (1996) resonates with phony, mystical identifications with the primitive and the earth, reinforced by simulations of 'ancient voices [that] sing to me'. Through such devices, Africa is present mythologically; South Africa, despite the inclusion of tongue clicks, is hardly present at all except perhaps evasively, as a silence: the album includes a version of Bright Blue's classic anti-apartheid hit, 'Weeping' (1988), but without the original, stirring background strains of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' (once symbolic of the struggle against apartheid, now the first section of the new national anthem), and without the original, evocative references to *marabi* and to a *marabi*-jazz saxophone style. More problematic yet is the unashamed ethno-tourism – voyeurism by another name – of the largely white audiences that patronise some of the offerings at a festival such as Rustler's Valley. *Sound Journey* (ca. 1999) is a record of one of those events: it presents black South African 'pre-colonial' music as romantically exotic, linking it implausibly to markers of 'primitive' music (panpipes, didgeridoos) from elsewhere in the world, and exploiting it for the entertainment of modern, global, middle-class sensibilities. Most bizarre, perhaps, is the work of a group called Arapaho (1995). They too seek to



valorise tribalism: not, however, by claiming any connection to historical South African musics or cultures, but rather through an identification with images drawn from the culture of Native Americans.

Thirdly, for some white audiences the popularity of particular groups seems to be inseparable from the fact that at least in part they assert values traditionally associated with conservative white South Africans. Included here would be a masculinist pursuit of the 'good life' of money, sex and power, as affirmed in Squeal's 'Man and woman' (1997), and a triumphant egocentricity, as celebrated by Watershed (2000).<sup>7</sup> Fourthly, just as some South African whites think of themselves as somehow 'American' or 'British', so too do some popular-music groups shape themselves according to foreign sounds and images. For instance, Just Jinger's *Something for Now* (1998) is clearly rooted in US rock and valorises 'jumpers, coke, sweet Mary Jane'; Sugardrive's *Sand Man Sky* (1997) is a grunge album; while Amersham (1998, 2000), Tree (1999) and Point Sirens (1999) all decisively orient themselves towards The Beatles – and, in the case of Point Sirens, towards Crosby, Stills and Nash as well. For Matthew van der Want and Chris Letcher (1997), on the other hand, this sort of derivativeness presents an opportunity for scathing satire:

Give me a country-and-western song  
 And I'll be happy all night long.  
 I won't be on my barstool – I'll be dancing.  
 Dolly Parton – what a heroine!  
 She's right when she says that love is a butterfly.  
 What do you do when you are feeling low?  
 Read a book? I don't think so.  
 I play my Hank Williams tapes.  
 I'm so tired of alternative angst  
 Play me some Willie Nelson.  
 Give me a country-and-western song  
 Make it catchy and not too long  
 And please, no more eight-minute guitar solos.

### III

The moment of euphoria around 1994 was short lived. It was in jeopardy from the beginning, and moribund within little more than two years of the election. At the heart of this decline was sustained pressure from the US and some of its partners (Britain, Germany, Italy and Japan) that the ANC, and after 1994 the new government, should abandon the socialist elements in its economic policies, give up on nationalisation, and submit to the imperatives of neo-liberalism and the West's idea of the free market. In macro-economic terms, the left was in serious retreat by as early as 1994; the rout was confirmed in June 1996 when the government announced its neo-liberal economic programme, known as Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). ('Just call me a Thatcherite', Mbeki quipped at the time [Saul 2001, p. 28]). John Saul, one of the most eminent commentators on South Africa, has analysed the implications of this shift, and described its consequences. He calls it a 'tragedy'. While not denying the country's signal achievement – a peaceful transition from racially based authoritarianism to liberal-democracy – he argues that there is

absolutely no reason to assume that the vast majority of people in South Africa will find their lives improved by the policies that are being adopted in their name by the present African National Congress (ANC) government. Indeed, something quite the reverse is the far more likely outcome. (Saul 2001, p. 2)

These reversals have many facets, but they certainly include the current unemployment rate, recently estimated to be 45 per cent (Norwegian Institute for Applied Social Science, 2002),<sup>8</sup> as well as the number of jobs lost – more than 500,000 in the formal sector since 1994, and 700,000 in the informal sector during 2001 alone, according to estimates by the research wing of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Currently 50 per cent of all school-leavers are unable to find jobs; the country's biggest labour consultancy has calculated that this figure will rise to 60 per cent (*Mail & Guardian*, 30 March–5 April 2001). Unsurprisingly, crime has escalated to almost anarchic proportions: South Africa's rates of rape, murder, car hijacking and violent crime are now among the highest in the world. A further twist in this unfolding tragedy is that while the ANC government has done little to prevent the HIV/Aids epidemic from spiralling out of control and has regularly blamed its own lack of financial resources for not doing more, it decided in 1999 to procure armaments on a massive scale – despite evidence from its own Finance Ministry that the bill would seriously impede its ability to address the urgent needs of the poor. (The bill recently amounted to more than R50-billion; some economists estimate that it will rise to R500-billion within ten years [*SouthScan* 17/2, 25 January 2002].) For many, this has been one of the government's most serious moral failures. 'Nothing', argued one labour commentator,

serves to indict the government more than the fact that while it said it could not afford to provide HIV-positive pregnant mothers with anti-retroviral drugs, it could afford to purchase arms at a staggering cost. To prioritise arms over the lives of children is an inexcusable evil that will be one of the biggest blights upon this government. (Ebrahim Harvey, *Mail & Guardian*, 16–22 March 2001)

It's a blight that is inseparable from Mbeki's notoriously perverse views on the Aids epidemic and his refusal to acknowledge the causal link between HIV and Aids; in consequence, as an editorial in the *Sunday Independent* argued, the Aids crisis has become 'the new apartheid: pernicious, genocidal, and bureaucratic' (22 April 2001).<sup>9</sup>

Another 'inexcusable evil' arguably comes to light when one looks at the cost of the arms deal alongside the situation in South African schools, the vast majority of which are black. In 2001, more than 45 per cent of all schools still had no electricity, 80 per cent no libraries, 27 per cent no clean water, 34 per cent no telephones, 60 per cent no adequate sanitation, and 11.7 per cent no sanitation at all (*Mail & Guardian*, 11–17 January 2002, and 15–25 April 2002). Indeed, the country's biggest-ever cholera epidemic occurred in 2000, six years after the ANC came to power. It is no surprise, then, to discover that public disappointment at the quality of life in the new South Africa has reached alarming levels. A recent report by Statistics SA revealed that fewer than one in five South Africans think that life has improved since the first democratic elections. More shockingly, one in three South Africans feels that life has actually got worse – a perception that cannot be ascribed to the fact that some have lost their unfair (racial) advantage, as there is little difference in the figures for each 'race' category (*Mail & Guardian*, 3–9 August 2001). As someone who had been disadvantaged under apartheid and had hoped for a better future put it in a letter to the press: 'What we thought would be the Promised Land has become Babylon' (*Mail & Guardian*, 16–22 March 2001).

This is a disappointment of vast scale, but in the history of the postcolonial era certainly not a singular event. In trying to understand it, Saul and others have had recourse to Frantz Fanon's notion of false decolonisation, in which 'the rising African middle-class, both entrepreneurial and political and bureaucratic in provenance,

merely [slides] comfortably into their political positions as, yes, intermediaries of global Empire' (Saul 2001, p. 24). And Saul identifies another feature found both locally and elsewhere on the continent: that of the government coming to 'resemble a club of old party militants who are more concerned to reap the rewards of their own earlier sufferings than to effect major changes in society' (p. 29). Not only is the 'coolly self-satisfied, self-righteous, and profoundly ideological thrust' with which this has been carried out 'the single most depressing attribute of South Africa's transition'; more to the point, it amounts to the squandering of 'an opportunity of world-historic proportions' (p. 33). What has occurred, in short, has been mainly a project to fast-track a new, racialised 'African' capitalist class. As recent reports on income and labour have revealed, a huge and growing gap has opened between this new black elite and the vast majority of the black population. Members of this relatively small group almost trebled their incomes within five years; by 2001 they were earning twenty-one times as much as those in the poorest stratum of income-earners (*SouthScan* 16/6, 23 March 2001; Norwegian Institute for Applied Social Science, 2002).<sup>10</sup>

Significantly, black workers and intellectuals themselves have made many of the sharpest criticisms of the ANC government's economic and social policies. Both the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party have consistently blamed those policies for the massive job losses, creeping poverty and poor economic growth. Putting the matter particularly acutely, a leading black intellectual, Mamphela Ramphele, has argued that the government's vaunted black economic empowerment strategy has in fact targeted black men, 'some of whom have become instant millionaires': with the result that, as the disparities between rich and poor increase, 'the poorest sectors, who missed out on education and skills training in the apartheid era, continue to bear the largest burden of poverty' (*Sunday Independent*, 22 April 2001). Academic and columnist Sipho Seepe has considered the scale of the Aids pandemic and the depth of the associated human suffering, and made the point that 'if African lives were cheap under apartheid, they are certainly cheaper under the ANC government' (*Mail & Guardian*, 11–17 January 2002). He has also drawn attention to the 'callousness' of the government's decision to spend R600-million on buying a jet for the president: money that could have been used

to purchase the desperately needed anti-retroviral drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmissions. Instead the president's comfortable travelling arrangements take precedence over saving babies' lives. . . . Those who fought valiantly for democracy are not immune to betraying and sacrificing the masses on the altar of political expediency and power. (*Mail & Guardian*, 7–13 September 2001)

Such observations have led Seepe to comment that

not even the most sceptical could have foreseen that a mere seven years later, the very masses that Mandela thanked for bringing the new dispensation would be questioning the government's commitment to a 'better life for all'. . . . Instead of the struggle achieving the liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressor, it has simply replaced the oppressor. The oppressed are assuming the role of the oppressor. (*Mail & Guardian*, 30 November–6 December 2001)

In similar vein, another prominent black academic and commentator, Xolela Mangcu, has asked why billions should be spent on arms 'when our population is being devastated by unemployment, hunger and homelessness, when poor black children walk long distances to dilapidated schools; when babies are being orphaned by the

scourge of Aids?’ The answer, he says, is that ‘lies have become the truth in the halls of power’ (*Sunday Independent*, 7 October 2001). Even Winnie Madikizela-Mandela has joined the ranks of trenchant critics of the government: ‘Today’, she has said, ‘when I walk in the squatter camps, I see more hungry people than I did during the apartheid era’ (*Sunday Independent*, 24 June 2001). Her observation appears to be corroborated by recent research showing that, between 1989 and 2001, the proportion of black households living below the breadline rose from around 50 per cent to almost two-thirds (Schlemmer 2002, p. 21).

How has the government justified this new agenda? Since it cannot really do so, any more than it can reconcile it with earlier revolutionary promises, it has sought to conceal the new thrust behind populist calls to ‘race’ solidarity. As black unemployment and poverty have worsened, the Mbeki government has diverted attention by racialising the immense problems it faces – certainly a powerful strategy, given the racial character of South Africa’s past. In short, the government and some of the new elite have sought to organise what has been called a ‘blood bond’ and to line up a ‘blood enemy’: all ‘Africans’ – racially defined – against, in particular, all whites.<sup>11</sup> As the *Washington Post* observed in February 2001, any black who supports the opposition is now branded a ‘race’ traitor, and any criticism of the government is equated with racism. This, an editorial in the *Mail & Guardian* commented, is ‘Mbeki’s most shameful contribution to our society over the past 22 months . . . [W]hat Mandela made a country of hope, confident it could overcome its tremendous difficulties, Mbeki has, in just 22 months, rendered a land of fractiousness and despair’ (April 26–3 May 2001).

Many of these issues are picked up in the work of white popular musicians. The theme of betrayal of the poor is articulated in, for instance, a song which goes: ‘We love Madiba . . ./but we don’t trust no politicians./Politicians sold us down the drain/They ride on the gravy train/But for the poor there’s nothing gained/Except the chance to vote again’ (*White Trash* 1997). Bands have criticised the selfish, anti-social, scheming, money-driven lifestyles that have accompanied the rise of the new elite; or they’ve attacked crime (in the words of Buckfever Underground [1998/99], ‘if you sit still for long enough, they’ll steal your kidneys’). Trans.Sky meaningfully named one of their albums *Killing Time* (1998); on it they sample local idioms such as *isicathamiya* and the *toyitoyi* protest genre from the anti-apartheid era, and blend these into a song about ‘living in a country that’s blown apart’. Or in a gentle manner they rap powerful, critical lyrics about a place of ‘looting and burning’, where ‘the future is no longer filled with certainty’ and where the poor must still build shacks:

running from the cities from the fires and the shouting  
looting and the burning through the night they’re taking everything  
confusion driving everybody mad from dusk to dawn  
come with me together we need shelter from the storm  
we need some flimsy apparatus to pull over our heads  
watch your back  
let’s build a shack

walking through the rivers of the dying and the dead  
shooting and shouting that is happening ahead  
there was a time before the war when we were being drowned  
by the sound of diesel engines from the garden next door  
collapsing shelters redesigned existing over years  
at the back

let's build a shack  
 picture of the future is no longer filled with certainty

Powerful musical criticisms have come, *inter alia*, from Afrikaans-speaking singers, including several – such as Johannes Kerkerrel – who first rose to prominence during the 1980s as leaders of the anti-apartheid *alternatief* song movement. Kerkerrel's 1996 album *Ge-trans-for-meer* (Transformed), for example, presents a sharply critical perspective, its celebratory references to Mandela and to transformation notwithstanding. Nowhere is this clearer than in 'Sê-sê' (Say say): the song is a litany of pain, where the gospel overtones help signify the suffering of the people addressed in the lyrics – the starving, those made homeless by the demolition of squatter camps, those with Aids, exploited prostitutes, and others. The singer blames '*die vet sotte op die rooi tapyt*' (the fat fools on the red carpet) and, in a gesture of solidarity and support, identifies with those who suffer:

*o sê 'n gebed  
 sê dit vir almal in pyn  
 ons verloopte skepsels  
 wat nie meer kan luister  
 na mekaar se droewige gefluister*

oh say a prayer  
 say it for everyone in pain  
 for us down-and-out creatures  
 that can't listen anymore  
 to each other's mournful whispering

In a later album (2000), Kerkerrel's criticism of the new South Africa erupts in vivid images. The song 'Die stad bloei vanaand' (The city bleeds tonight) suggests everything that was beautiful has burnt to ash ('*alles wat mooi was, het tot as verbrand*'); a dream has been spoiled, debased, even stolen:

*Die hemel word daagliks in advertensies beloof  
 Gooi jou geld in die gleuf by die munt-outomaat  
 Die droom was beloof, ja, maar net nog 'n leuen is verkoop  
 Stoot jou kaart deur die gleuf dit kan help die pyn verdoof*

...

*Slaap liggies vanaand, wees waaksaam vanaand  
 Die kriminele kom sag soos 'n dief in die nag  
 Steel die huis rot en kaal en hardloop weg in die nag  
 Met die droom van ons nuwe Suid-Afrika*

Heaven is promised daily in advertisements  
 Put your money in the slot of the vending machine  
 The dream was promised, yes, but just another lie is sold  
 Push your card through the slot and it can help ease the pain

...

Sleep lightly tonight, be watchful tonight  
 The criminals come softly like thieves in the night  
 Steal the house bare and run away in the night  
 With the dream of our new South Africa

Similarly, another prominent member of the old *alternatief* movement, Koos Kombuis, has corruption and crime in his sights, but he emphasises the cynical avoidance of

accountability that accompanies such features. A hard-driving rock song, 'Blameer did op apartheid' (Blame it on apartheid) is the sarcastically named title track on his 1997 album:

*Belê jy geld in Masterbond  
Verloor jy dit te gou  
Pos 'n brief by Telkom  
Dan verwyn dit in die blou  
Die regering gee nie om nie  
Die ministers bly stil  
Selfs die Matie-rektor  
Het sy vingers in die till*

*Blameer dit op apartheid  
Blameer dit op de Klerk  
Blameer dit op Satan  
Of blameer dit op die kerk  
Die hele land vol onrus  
Fokkol werk en fokkol kos  
Die Here is op holiday  
En die duiwel is nou los*

If you invest money in Masterbond  
you lose it too soon  
post a letter at Telkom  
then it disappears into the blue  
the government doesn't care  
the ministers keep quiet  
even the Matie-rector  
has his fingers in the till

blame it on apartheid  
blame it on de Klerk  
blame it on Satan  
or blame it on the church  
the whole land full of unrest  
fuckall work and fuckall food  
The Lord is on holiday  
and the devil is loose<sup>12</sup>

Now one of the country's most prominent Afrikaans singers and songwriters, Valiant Swart can stand as an example of a typical, younger, white-Afrikaans musician. Too young to have been a member of the *alternatief* movement, he nevertheless shares the current, critical perspectives of his older, anti-apartheid colleagues. In a bleak song about corruption, for instance, Swart (1999) likens the country's two, big northern cities (Johannesburg and Pretoria) to Sodom and Gomorra. And the Biblical metaphor continues:

*pandemonium  
in die gange van Babylon  
brabbel almal in brabbeltaal  
en niemand wil luister nie . . .  
en daar's niemand wat verstaan  
hoekom alles vergaan  
langsamerhand*

pandemonium  
in the passages of Babylon

everyone gibbers in gibberish  
 and no one wants to listen . . .  
 and there's no one who understands  
 why everything decays  
 gradually

Criticisms such as these are further evidence of the theme of disappointment and betrayal that white singers developed so arrestingly after the mid-1990s. Yet it is worth noting that some musicians who strongly supported the new order had nevertheless – even in the heady moments of the decade's early years – seen the omens suggesting the possibility of corruption and failure. One of these, again, was Johannes Kerkorrel. *Cyanide in the beefcake* (1994) was recorded shortly before the first democratic elections; but the title suggests that the food is already poisoned. Indeed, while the album firmly sides with the need for an end to the apartheid order and for fundamental social change, it is not optimistic about the capacity – or even the commitment – of the post-apartheid government-in-waiting to make a fundamental difference: capitalism and greed, Kerkorrel suggests, remain deeply entrenched. In 'Waiting for Godot', as in Samuel Beckett's play, the longed-for future is endlessly postponed: 'No job, no hope, no mercy, man/No read, no write, no way to speak,/No way to let out all the rage inside/And I'm waiting, yes, I'm waiting'. The tragic side of this predicament is evoked in 'Speel my pop' (Play my doll), a rock song that is also a powerful, funereal dirge with features of both heavy metal and soul. The song signifies its historico-political moment, and the contradictions within that context, by inserting samples from well-known statements by famous politicians: avoidance from former white cabinet minister Pik Botha ('We can make a list of the wrongs of the past; I'm interested in the future'); progressive exhortation from Nelson Mandela ('Go back to school'); and a rabidly ethnic form of white resistance from Afrikaans Weerstandsbeweging leader Eugene Terreblanche ('You see, I'm not a white man, I'm a *boer* [right-wing white Afrikaner]'). Meanwhile, passionate melismata, redolent of soul music, add a culturally 'black' sensibility.

In the work of some groups, these sentiments are projected within more 'selfish' perspectives: with feelings of personal bitterness, anger or alienation. Battery 9, for instance, an Afrikaans group working in an 'industrial dance' genre, have an album called *Wrok* (1998), a word connoting grudge, hatred, spite or resentment. The song 'Blaas hom' (Blast him) begins with the familiar South African city sounds of sirens and barking dogs; in Afrikaans the singer raps about his rage at being robbed again, and about taking his revenge by shooting the two burglars he finds at his home. (The disc went on to win a South African Music Award in the annual 'Best Rock Album' category.) A quite different example is the powerful 'Special Agents', a track by Matthew van der Want and Chris Letcher on their remarkable album *Low Riding* (1999). In a complex song that nightmarishly connotes an invasive investigation of the personal, there is deliberate ambiguity as to whether the 'special agents' are state officials or mere criminals busy with a night-time burglary. The point is that it makes little difference: their judgement of the 'guilt' of those they are investigating is a foregone conclusion. There is no escape: against a background of ominous walkie-talkie or police-radio sounds, the melody's tendency towards fixity and repetition enhances the feeling of being trapped; and the predominance of falling melodic lines underlines not only a deep personal melancholy, but also the bitter foreboding of the lyrics:

the truth is I'm

cut-up all  
sheep-faced got  
caught by the snipers  
i'm hurt . . .

lights down there're  
killers in the house –  
special agents  
checking sentence

Most commonly, however, white musicians deliver these critical sentiments with a sharply satirical edge. The group Sons of Trout (1998), for instance, place a premium on originality and humour; when they think of crime, as they do in 'Siren', they don't think of revenge, guns or disaster, but simply of the fact that 'I cannot sleep, I've got monsters under my bed, I cannot dream/Sirens comin' from the hills' – and they associate this, in the song 'Mercedes Benz', with elite lifestyles: 'You're living in your golden palace, your little castle on the hill./So strung up in your automatic wealth, watcha gonna do with it, watcha gonna do'. In the context of tracks such as these, a third song, 'Kom Psalm', is a deeply ironic assertion of a triumphalism easily associated with the posture of the present government. For a start, the Afrikaans title is a pun: it invokes the spectre of the old politico-religious order, offering both a religious invitation to join in congregational Psalm-singing and a political exhortation to '*kom saam*' (come together). But then in deft, clever parody, the song references a number of musical symbols that remain at once culturally potent and contradictory in the new South Africa: the patriotic strains of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika', *boeremusiek*, the bent-tones of black South African 'traditional' music, and Pentecostal song. The musical interpellations are conflictual, unreconciled. Read on their own, the lyrics use the language of victory ('I feel that I have been shined upon. I know that all my bad days have gone. So stand up, rise up, get out. Stand tall!'); but heard in this setting, the music tellingly voids the lyrics of any superficial or simplistic sense of triumph. And 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' occurs also in Danny de Wet's 'New National Anthem', which appears on an album (1998/99) abrasively critical of the rampant consumerism of the post-apartheid order. In satirical juxtaposition, parts of the anthem sound alongside the relentless blare of all-too-familiar burglar alarms and sirens.

Wittier still is the satire of Boo!, an immensely talented group that has enjoyed chart-topping success. Their quicksilver lyrics conceal more than they reveal, feigning a strange dialect of English, a kind of doggerel, nearly every word deliberately misspelt, hovering on the edge of sense:

i herd a wsl of a brd koment ovr luvng  
an wot it sed was that my luv had had enuf  
and sumbodi sed that soon i wood reseev my letter  
2 tell me that another brothe went 2 get her

o.o.a.a.

i herd a rsl in the wind wspr its over  
an that the lyt of our luv was a supernova  
i'm getting nervis bout the stait of my posishin  
is it worri or is it an intuishin

o.o.a.a.



i herd the brd but i don't by that  
 i reed the papr but i don't by that  
 i saw the news but i don't by that  
 i reep the graipvyn but i don't i don't by that

o.o.a.a. ('Monki Punk', 1999)

Boo!'s lyrics are supported by a lively panoply of musical styles that move in unpredictable directions and make deft use of parody and humour. Their work points to the difficulty of a stable reality to depend on, or a reliable truth to believe in, or even a meaningful way of being: which seems fitting for a society where 'reality' is apparently so easily redefined, or where priorities that affect life and death can so quickly be re-ordered. I referred earlier to comments by Njabulo Ndebele: Boo!'s music seems an exemplar of another recent observation by Ndebele – that despite our new constitution, with its bill of rights and its recognition of our rich diversity, something important is missing. 'When', said Ndebele, 'I pose the questions today, "Who are we?" and "What drives us towards co-operative action?"', silence stares back at me. It is not the silence of emptiness, it is the silence of too much sound yielding little meaning' (*Sunday Independent*, 25 February 2001). The music of Boo!, it seems to me, helps us to make sense of that silence.

Much less subtle, more populist, but arguably no less meaningful in this context, are the satirical songs of famous white comedian and film-maker Leon Schuster. *Gautvol in Paradise*<sup>13</sup> (1997) is a humorous criticism of the new order and its failure to deal adequately with issues such as crime, minority rights, the provision of equality of opportunity, and the brain drain. (It is, incidentally, also a hilarious satire of the attitudes and prejudices of some whites in the new era.) Schuster uses sing-along *boereliedjies* (Afrikaans folk songs) and the melodies of famous local and imported popular songs – tunes so well known that they are now virtually community songs – to evoke a musical idiom with a strong implication of 'tradition' among conservative white Afrikaners. 'Gautengeleng', co-authored by humorist Gus Silber, is an example. The song's title, a play on the provincial name 'Gauteng', is an onomatopoeic alarm bell; the music itself is a parody of a *boereliedjie*; and the song is yet another in the long line of recent South African tracks that incorporate the sounds of barking dogs and sirens – but here there are also shouts and the noise of breaking glass as a hijacking takes place:

Hello good morning  
 Thank you please  
 Wind down your windows and give me your keys  
 Put up your hands as I open the door  
 Of your luxury vehicle  
 Or your four-by-four

The most politically astute satirist, however, is the veteran singer-songwriter Syd Kitchen. In booklet notes accompanying his 1999 album, *AmaKoologik*, he sets the scene by referring explicitly to the 'veneer concealing the deep divisions still perennial to a South Africa . . . [W]hile political democracy has been won by the majority voice in this country, economic democracy is non-existent in the retention of the county's wealth by the minority'. The title track is a somewhat bluesy piece in which elements of rock are crossed with traces of *maskanda* – a synthesis that is highly apt for the biting satire of the political lyrics:

Step up, we got violence in the air, hijacking in the street,  
 anger and despair in everyone you meet,  
 polarisation, marginalisation, keeping it going on  
 we got rape for fun, kids with guns, paedophiles  
 with sickly smiles  
 in Heaven  
 'Does anyone know who won the game?'

This way for bourgeois fears, the electric fence, 'neighbourhood watch',  
 middle-class defence  
 patrol-car cruising, the fear of losing, keeping them going on  
 we got guard dogs, battlements, social testaments, sounding an alarm  
 that all's not calm  
 in Heaven  
 'Do you need any more sauce with your chicken?'

Kitchen's satirical theme – a disintegrating social fabric and an escapist middle-class recoil that accompanies it – is one he brilliantly amplifies in the more recent 'Africa's Not for Sissies' (2001), a stylistically original, bluesy piece with a *marabi* harmonic foundation:

Well I dunno 'bout you – feel like I'm living in a zoo  
 I don't go out any more  
 I just sit by my TV – with my poodle Evie  
 And we bolt up the door  
 I'm an ordinary man – I got a wife and a life to keep  
 Yes I'm an ordinary man – but I take a gun to bed every night when I sleep  
 Well my friend Stan – they hi-jacked his van  
 Just the other day  
 Put a gun up his nose – told him to take off his clothes  
 Then they drove away  
 Well well I'm an ordinary man – got a wife and a life to keep  
 Yeah I'm an ordinary man – but I think I'll go to Australia and maybe raise some sheep

#### IV

Yet perhaps nothing in the democratic era has stung white South Africans as deeply as the government's re-racialisation of the public sphere: the steady emergence of a new racial typecasting and, with it, a rising chorus of slurs aimed at whites in general. As indicated earlier, the propensity for this derived in part from an historic weakness in the ANC's own theoretical stance – a weakness that resulted in a failure to transcend race-thinking, or to give real meaning to non-racialism. Gerhard Maré has argued that this failure is prefigured in the ANC's own historical analysis of the old South African state as an instance of 'internal colonialism' or 'colonialism of a special type' (CST). According to this theory, the economic and political relationships in South Africa were similar to those of colonialism, but without any territorial separation between the colonisers and the colonised. However, as Maré points out,

because the organising principle of the CST-approach is 'race', democracy has also been inadequately theorised and hence remains racialised – the achievement of democracy in South Africa . . . is the inclusion of *races* within a common political process, a common argument within various positions over the years, 'fixed' strongly within the Freedom Charter . . . ; or else, within the notion of the national democratic revolution, the achievement of a racialised majority and the advancement of a racialised bourgeoisie. Within this argument democracy will reflect the 'demographics of society', and not political choice – unless, of course, political choice has been racialised effectively. (Maré 2003, p. 9)

Thus, within this paradigm, democracy is the victory of a 'race' majority – the coming to power of a racialised bloc. Furthermore, as the political order founded on this paradigm unfolds, its intrinsic racial and cultural essentialisms come into stark relief. Zimitri Erasmus has shown this vividly, particularly with respect to 'coloured' identities in the new South Africa. One of the 'dominant discourses of national identity in South Africa', she argues, is

an emergent discourse of African essentialism. In its terms blackness is understood in terms of Africanness, and black or African identity is simply associated with authenticity, resistance and subversion, while whiteness is associated with Europe, in-authenticity, domination and collusion. This discourse denies creolization and hybridity as constitutive of African experiences, thus excluding coloured identities from those defined as black and African. It has shaped the ANC's continued inability to successfully articulate a broader black identity able to include and mobilize coloured people, particularly in the western Cape. (Erasmus 2001, p. 20)

So indiscriminate has the recidivist tendency to essentialist racial typecasting become, that not even anti-apartheid activists have been exempt from its 'blanket insults', as one white activist called them. Noting her deep resentment about this, she went on to say that this 'racial profiling of all white South Africans as "morally depraved" . . . comes dangerously close to racist hate speech' (*Sunday Independent*, 1 September 2000). Other commentators have looked at this tendency in the grim light of recent world history. One of these is Rhoda Kadalie, anti-apartheid activist and former member of the Human Rights Commission. 'Has [Mbeki] not learned', she asked, 'that when one uses race as a political rallying point, racial conflict gains a momentum of its own that is often difficult to reverse in times of crisis? Has ethnic conflict in Bosnia, Rwanda, Burundi and Serbia not taught him anything?' (*Mail & Guardian*, 1–7 September 2000). For another commentator, the tendency was 'potentially fascist' and reminded him of the Nazis, who set an 'allegedly united *volk* against an allegedly alien minority, the Jews. In both cases', he went on, 'the rhetorically alienated minority was thus denied its legitimate claim to the same nationality' (*Sunday Independent*, 17 September 2000). In somewhat similar vein, leading newspaper editor John Battersby warned of the real danger that these trends could lead to 'greater and greater racial polarisation and, ultimately, to an explosion of racial hatred which, given our history, has the potential to be the worst the world has ever seen' (*Sunday Independent*, 17 December 2000).

For many observers, the first serious consequence of the politics of re-racialisation is that whites seem to be denied a birthright. Writers have noted, for example, that 'on the simple argument that every white is a crypto or blatant racist, nearly five million people have been illegitimised' (*Sunday Independent*, 10 September 2000); that, if a recent ANC document was to be believed, whites 'are incapable of a non-racist and, so, a constructive contribution to the future' (*Mail & Guardian*, 14–19 April 2000); and that 'if we continue to stereotype whites, we effectively silence their right to democratic citizenship' (*Mail & Guardian*, 5–11 January 2000). There are also the more personal responses: such as one published as a 'letter to the editor'. 'I also want to feel part of the future', its author wrote. 'A continued reference to colour . . . perpetuates a sense of hopelessness in me . . . Gather us, rather than separate us' (*Mail & Guardian*, 20–26 October 2000). And in a statement that doubtless also arose from personal conviction, Mandela himself has attacked what he termed 'an arrogant black elite', blaming them for breeding insecurity among South Africa's minority groups (*Sunday Times*, 22 April 2001).

For yet other observers, the deeply uncomfortable analogy is with apartheid itself. 'I'm a South African coloured', wrote one. 'Currently, though, all the messages one gets from government is that we are all different. . . . [A] new social cancer is the fact that these differences are being highlighted as unbreachable. New walls are being built. Ironically that is exactly what apartheid did' (*Mail & Guardian*, 9–15 March 2000). Similarly, leading columnist and editor Howard Barrell noted that '[t]oday, . . . six years into ANC rule, a person's racial identity is – as it was under apartheid – again often a vital determinant of his or her job prospects or life chances' (*Mail & Guardian*, 24–30 March 2000). He also noted that '[i]t's a long time since I've heard anything along the lines of: "We are all South Africans, we have to assert our nationhood and not think of ourselves as black or white, but rather work towards making a better future for all"' (*Mail & Guardian*, 27 October–2 November 2000). And in an impassioned editorial, that same newspaper commented that '[w]hereas apartheid sought to make blacks feel unwelcome in the land of their birth, we are in danger of making white South Africans feel unwelcome' (*Mail & Guardian*, 23–29 March 2001). Indeed, a prominent judge and former anti-apartheid lawyer, Dennis Davis, had made a similar point some months earlier. Recalling the exclusion of an eminent colleague from a position in the Constitutional Court, apparently on the grounds that he was white, Davis protested that 'his rejection sends a clear message to whites that race has indeed become the only factor. That is not the inclusive society that we had hoped for' (van Rooyen 2000, p. 112).

In such a climate, many white South Africans have opted for exile. They have done so in one of two ways: literally, by emigrating – polls indicate that 63 per cent of young whites expect to emigrate (*Spectator*, 31 March 2001) – or metaphorically, by withdrawing from the forums of civil society. These trends have themselves been the subject of considerable discussion. The *Mail & Guardian* put the matter crisply: 'Many whites caricatured as racists in these attacks felt unable just to shrug off the insult; they concluded there was no place for them in South Africa and packed for Perth, Plymouth or Winnipeg – taking with them desperately needed financial and human capital' (*Mail & Guardian*, 22 December–4 January 2001). And one of that paper's own correspondents spelled out this point with particular attention to the economic implications:

Significant sections of the white population, the main owners of the economy, have been demoralised, in some senses destabilised, as a result. Repeated criticism of whites by President Thabo Mbeki and the ruling party have had direct economic costs, and have contributed to the fragility of sentiment both inside the country and abroad about the prospects for South Africa and its economy. Moreover, while many whites continue to emigrate – notably the young in possession of sought-after skills – others are 'semigrating', as the business leaders put it. That is, they are . . . 'withdrawing, opting out of being citizens' . . . convinced . . . that they can never be anything other than second-class citizens in the present government's eyes. (Nawaal Deane, *Mail & Guardian*, 20–26 October 2000)

Recent 'white' South African popular music deepens and extends our understanding of such responses.<sup>14</sup> It gives subjective substance to what we might think of as 'fugitive' identities. The Honeymoon Suites, for example, are one of a number of bands whose music, lyrics and stage performance make play on the idea of identities as concealed, or in hiding. Here *dress*ing is a central image: 'If you could go what would you wear?', ask the Honeymoon Suites ('glamorous gals', after all, 'ain't what they seem'). Unfashionably, what they desire is just 'luminous anonymity' (1999). Using a different figure, several bands project the idea of a journey, or

flight – undefined in route, indefinite in length and of ambiguous destination. Sons of Trout, for example, sing: 'I don't care, I don't mind/I just want to leave it all behind/Break new ground' (1997). Valiant Swart often writes songs dealing with restlessness, homelessness, a sense of being uprooted, moving into the unknown. His songs offer bleak stories of loss and spoliation, of finding oneself in a strange place – a metaphorical foreign country where identity is no longer secure and where, in a revealing phrase, you have to '*gaan vra vir die mense in die strate/waar kom jou nuwe naam vandaan*' (go ask the people in the streets/where your new name comes from) (1999). In one of his most popular songs, 'Die Mystic Boer' (1996), the very notion of Afrikaner identity itself comes into question. For forty days and nights the protagonist searches for the 'Afrikaner', figured here as a kind of mystic – '*maar soos die swart perd van middernag gedagtes/bly hy op sy hoede en loer oor sy skouer*' (but like a black horse of midnight thoughts/he stays on his guard and peeks over his shoulder); finally he vanishes without trace.

Other white groups have placed identity in question without making 'fugitive' identities a central concern. Though anti-white sentiment and the politics of racialisation remain an inescapable backdrop to their work, it seems impossible to decide whether their work should be thought of as being *determined by* this climate, or occurring *in spite of it*. What characterises this work is a sense of intense creativity, in which open-ended self-reinvention becomes the most compelling feature. For these groups, remarkably, the subjective structure of identity radically resists fixity or closure. Here, musical styles are ironic and unpredictable, assume self-conscious postures, resist genre definitions, are often difficult to classify. For this very reason, the identities configured in the songs are explorative, shifting and inconclusive: they often place performativity itself at the centre. Lyrics may turn around issues of self-definition; or as Boo! seem to ponder in one of their biggest hits ('Gud 2 b tru', Oppikoppi 1998): Who am I, what am I worth, and who are you? The group Not My Dog (2000) are a compelling instance. The name itself is a negation; their music is challenging, adventurous, chaotic; and at one moment of surprise they suddenly incorporate the 'coloured' South African rap group Brasse vannie Kaap. The music is vested in multiplicity and disjuncture. As each chosen style is 'unsettled', space is opened for the importation of other – extraneous – musical sources: what is thus conjured into audibility, in the most striking way, is the sound of the group searching for other and different identities. As stylistic distinctions start to collapse, categories such as 'us' and 'them' begin to merge, or at least to draw closer together. If not yet quite transformed, identity appears as unsettled and changing: the music takes to heart the potential diversity of contemporary South African experience and revels in the confusion and potential of this multifarious, multilingual, multicultural and multimusical dystopia.

Related claims could be made about some of the songs written and performed by Sons of Trout. 'Luscious lipstick lady' (1998), for example, is a satirical, humorously mocking song that once again interrogates and unsettles identity – the identity of the familiar, the established. It 'plays at' a song of seduction, without ever 'being' one, as though the conventional roles are no longer credible or coherent. An important aspect of this is the song's self-conscious parody, in different sections, of three different idioms. The first is a jazzy section using close-harmony vocalisations, a scratchy '78 r.p.m.' surface, the quiet hubbub of bar talk and, as melodrama, a strange, unreal dialogue between a white South African man and a woman who replies only in German. The second is a rock-like guitar-and-close-harmony ballad with

mock-seductive lyrics ('Luscious lipstick lady, can I tempt you with my love? You're my kitty kat, fancy that, on a platter of cheese. Come into my bathroom, won't you drive my limousine?'). And the third, quite incongruously, is a Latin dance section. Ingeniously, the song switches restlessly back and forth between these, unable to settle on – to identify with – any.

One could make exactly the same sort of case about the work of the award-winning, chart-topping Springbok Nude Girls, the country's leading rock group for several years before their disbanding in 2001. The most immediately striking feature of their 1997 album, *Afterlifesatisfaction*, for example, is the sheer disparity of the musical material – both across the album's duration and within each of its eighteen songs. Nothing here turns out as we might expect it to: not the musical implications of the wayward material, and certainly not the meanings to which these give rise. So what is going on here? As much as anything, this CD seems to be about invention (riotously so), about the transcendence of reified barriers, about imagining the unimaginable, bridging the incommensurable, realising the impossible. What enables this is an attitude of playfulness: more precisely, of playing at, of posturing: a ludic stance that creates ironic distance from the real. And the postures are not 'merely' musical; they also play at, or with, ways of being. Coming from a white band addressed in the main to a white audience, these postures seek also to liberate: to re-invent ways of being white and South African. These are musical images that represent identity as malleable, and as a quest – even if this sometimes puts coherence itself at risk.

The song 'Spaceman', for instance, playfully sets in motion an exhilarating feeling of controlled wildness. Rhythmically, melodically and texturally it keeps changing tack, discovering as it does so a range of original and memorable new timbres, while the lyrics hover on the edge of sense or nonsense, seeming to conjure myriad new meanings:

Jeri won Jeri Bom Bom  
 Beware I'll be talking about  
 ya feel one square  
 we a cold a we on fire  
 I'm up be setting on I feel entwined  
 I'm a feeling on my feel one square  
 If a feeling this getting more square  
 I'm coming again, I'm coming again  
 Yeah, Yeah, Yeah

Oooh, I rather tell a spaceman  
 Oooh, I rather tell a spaceman  
 Oooh, I rather tell a spaceman

Another song, 'Genie', transgresses from the familiar to the unexpected, and from the gently seductive strains of the beginning to those of burning intensity at the end. It opens with a warmly lyrical vocal part that moves in a very contained range; but a quite unexpected trumpet obbligato introduces a freer, more ecstatic sensibility ('uh oh, a little bit of money, /yeah yeah, from a little bit of hurry') and liberates the passion that in retrospect seems to have been there from the beginning. Tension builds; the timbre of the voice changes as the music grows more unsettled; and during the song's unpredictable course, untapped potential seems to be set free. In the song 'Rabbit', the incommensurable – or rather, its surpassing – is the central concern. The music is again unsettled, constantly shifting, full of contrasts of style, idiom, groove, rhythm,

texture, melody and mood (including, at one moment, an egregious parody of a church organ-like cadential passage); and its lyrics are bizarre. The very question of coherence itself seems at issue: will this piece make sense? And yet it does: as the illicit and the utterly extraordinary come playfully into the range of the audible, our sense of a new expressive order, of new subjective possibilities, begins to take shape:

We must try and live together  
Cause the rabbit is a carrot  
And I am the rabbit  
Out of time I get no

Babies fall out of the rabbit's bum  
When I come, when I come  
And the little boy run, and the little girl run  
But she's the only one, she's the only one

I can't go, I must stay  
A visible future's not my way  
I'm coming back man  
Hand over the jack fan  
I'm the rabbit head man  
Myth of an old school

Giggling I'm so happy I'm giggling  
Cause the children are fighting  
And the weakling bleeding  
In a shaded corner Mama sits  
In great despair of her sixty kids

No, no, no

In common with many other groups – though perhaps more luminously than most – the Springbok Nude Girls quite simply seek transcendence. And for a group that sings predominantly in English, this is nowhere more striking than in their invocation of an Afrikaans idiom typically associated with white conservatism: *boeremusiek*. Signifying the idiom principally by means of the piano accordion, 'Beautiful Girl' (1997) is a parody that so extends the idiom's boundaries through interaction with rock that it is quite recast, re-emerging as a hybrid. More dramatically still, 'Pappa ek wil 'n popster word' (1996) is hard 'white' (and Afrikaans) rock – rock premised upon *boeremusiek*, signalled here most directly by a metrically off-beat piano-accordion-and-guitar style. 'Daddy I want to be a pop star': the desire expressed in the title puts on the agenda nothing less than performativity itself, and the idea of identity-as-performance. Articulated as if to a traditional Afrikaans elder, the song's desire is also a scandalous challenge which the music itself *performs*, stretching *boeremusiek* beyond its conventional idiomatic limits so as to display the outlines of a new style of 'white' music, and to present, therefore, the sonic image of an emergent social identity.

## V

To return to my graffito writer: None of this may yet answer the demand to 're-release Mandela – the disco version' . . . or any version, for that matter. But post-apartheid white South African music, as I've tried to suggest, is full of surprises: for instance, not

only an articulate sense that the new state has in some important ways turned its back on its own people, but also – and perhaps more strikingly – a sense of a radical, questing, openness. In its deep playfulness (doing after all what popular music does best), in its creativity, its self-invention, and above all its resistance to premature closure, much of this music suggests to me that the future of white South African identity is open to inscription, busy reinventing itself, and impossible to predict.<sup>15</sup>

## Endnotes

1. An early version of this article was given as a paper at the 11th Biannual Conference of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, in Turku, Finland, 6–10 July 2001. I gratefully acknowledge the help I have received from my research assistants, Chantel Oosthuizen, Astrid Treffrey-Goatley and Kathryn Olsen – all recent graduates of the University of Natal. I also thank the University of Natal and the National Research Foundation for their financial support for this project. I am also indebted to the relevant publishers for permission to quote lyrics. In the case of two copyright holders, however, all my assistant's efforts to obtain a reply failed: her repeated written and telephonic requests were left unanswered. Should these copyright holders see this article and desire a formal resolution of the matter, they are invited to contact this journal.
2. 'Madiba' is Nelson Mandela's affectionate clan name.
3. Among the other influential white 'protest' musicians of the apartheid era were the youthful Afrikaans *alternatief* singer-songwriters who challenged hegemonic Afrikaans culture during the late 1980s – for example, Johannes Kerkorrel, Koos Kombuis, and Bernoldus Niemand (James Phillips by another name). Various English-speaking rock musicians and rock groups also made an impression – among them Bright Blue with, for example, their moving hit 'Weeping' (1988), voted the South African 'song of the century' in a 1999 Internet poll held by the *SA Rock Digest* and *Amuzine* ([www.sarockdigest.com](http://www.sarockdigest.com)); and Trevor Rabin, whose powerful 'Sorrow (your heart)' (1989) fuses rock with the cyclical guitar licks, rolling bass line, electric organ and backing vocals of *mbaqanga*, includes a black female quartet, and has lyrics that refer to the harsh life of a migrant worker. For more on the social and political significance of the work of white musicians – whether English or Afrikaans speaking – during the apartheid era, see, for instance, Andersson (1981), Kitchen (1995), van der Meulen (1995), Byerly (1996), Jury (1996) and Muller (2000).
4. In the racial ontology of apartheid South Africa, the classification 'coloured' was applied predominantly to those people deemed to be of 'mixed-race' (white-and-black) heritage. Far from withering away, this term – like many

others – has enjoyed a new lease of life as a 'race' category in post-apartheid South Africa. Because it continues to be pertinent to South Africans (including popular musicians) and the choices they make, I use the term in this article – but in scare quotes. (That a specific 'coloured' identity has developed over time is incidental to the point at issue here.)

5. Many clubs remain racially exclusive. Suzy Bell, a journalist who writes on popular culture, has noted this:  
Bully tactics and blatant abuse of a club's right to admission are reasons why we still have 'black clubs' (Heat, *Obsession*, the clubbing concept of Vibe 2000), 'coloured clubs' (XTC, Xanadu, Exodus), 'Indian clubs' (Angelo's Cantina, Destiny, Palladium) and 'white clubs' (3–30, Joe Kool's, Eighties, Absolute Chaos, Billy the BUMS cocktail bar) . . . [I]f you're not gay and you're black, Indian or coloured in Durban, you know there are certain no-go club zones. . . . Young clubber Ms Ravina Maharaj said there were not many clubs in Durban where she felt comfortable. . . . Maharaj said the problem lay with bouncers or club owners who 'don't want to be invaded by Indians, coloureds or blacks' (*Sunday Independent*, 26 March 2000).
6. A point once made by Albert Luthuli, ANC President-General in the 1950s, is also relevant here: 'The task is not finished: somewhere ahead there beckons a civilisation, a culture. It will not necessarily be all black, but it will be African' (cited by Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Mail & Guardian*, 15–21 September 2000).
7. Brendan Jury's (1996, p. 101) précis of the hegemonic ideology propagated by white Afrikaans-language popular music during the late apartheid era sketches a relevant background:

[The] standard formula is in the main the urbanised volkslied (*lit.* Afrikaner traditional folk-song) pop ballad form set in a disco or country and Western aesthetic. Lyrics conform predominantly to stylised sentimental romantic themes (*liefdesliedjies*, *lit.* Afrikaner love songs). To a lesser extent national sentiment, flora and fauna of South Africa, significant symbols of Afrikaner culture such as rugby and national service, religious themes or translations of European folk songs generate the lyrics of the popular mainstream. The *liefdesliedjie*, the most popular genre, is characterised by its propagation of rigid gender stereotypes. In the



lyric content, women are idealised as passive, acquiescent, and the victims of unrequited love. Conversely, men are portrayed as active manipulators of space and time, usually as farmers, soldiers or men of courage who engage in heroic struggles and quests. The patriarchal nature of Afrikaner culture is faithfully reflected in these gender stereotypes.

Typifying this perversion is Bles Bridges, currently the most successful white singer in South Africa. By 1990, Bridges had sold more than 1 million units and had released twelve albums. Bridges combines disco and some of the vastrap (*lit.* 'two-step') rhythmic style of boere musiek (*lit.* traditional Afrikaans folk music) with a Las Vegas-like kitsch packaging of glitter, sequined tuxedo and cowboy boots. Bridges states explicitly: 'Love is the only thing worth singing about. To sing about politics has never done anybody any good' (Jury 1996, p. 101).

8. The research for that study was funded by South Africa's Department of Labour and the Norwegian Development Agency.
9. As a result of a series of legal challenges motivated by an intense and sustained public outcry, the government partially backed down in October 2002 by agreeing in principle to make anti-retrovirals available to the approximately six million South Africans living with HIV/Aids.
10. Among whites, according to this Norwegian report, the income ratio for these same strata is 12 to 1.
11. The fraudulence of this strategy is demonstrated by, for example, those social tendencies that move in the opposite direction. One of these is the growing number of white workers who are moving away from historically white trade unions and signing up for membership of predominantly black unions and federations, such as Cosatu, the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) and the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa). Nactu has hailed this as 'good for the country, for racial harmony and reconciliation' (*Mail & Guardian*, 9–15 March 2001). In similar vein, Zwelinzima Vavi, the general secretary of Cosatu, has said:

I think the development is part of the normalising of society, towards non-racialism. Members of the working class are beginning to realise they belong together. Their futures are intertwined, they are dependent on each other. Whereas in the past white members were not happy to carry a placard to toyi-toyi outside an

employer's office, we are now seeing this happening. In fact, more whites are becoming shop stewards in Cosatu. (*ibid.*)

12. Masterbond' is a reference to a huge investment scheme that was undermined by massive fraud and that left many people destitute in one of the country's biggest financial scandals of the 1990s. The 'Matie-rector' is a nickname for the rector of the University of Stellenbosch, the oldest and most prestigious Afrikaans-language university. 'De Klerk' is F.W. de Klerk, the white South African president at the time of the transition to democracy.
13. The title punningly misspells the colloquial Afrikaans word *gatvol* ('fed up'). Here spelt *Gautvol*, the word alludes to Gauteng, South Africa's richest province, dominated by Johannesburg and Pretoria; but since Gauteng was one of the provinces created in the democratic era, the misspelt word also alludes to the new South Africa. The title (*Gautvol in Paradise*) is therefore deeply ironic: one possible gloss would be 'A belly-ache in the new South African "paradise"'.
14. Taste cultures – shaped by apartheid along racial lines – are changing, as this article suggests. But changing slowly: the recent music referred to here is 'white' in the sense that it is still largely made and consumed by whites – via mediations that include CDs, radio, television, festivals and clubs.
15. Writing an honours thesis in 2001 at the University of Natal, Durban, on the topic of white identities in post-apartheid South African literature, a young, white, Jewish woman made a not dissimilar observation:

[I]n recent years, I have begun to reflect on my own position as a white South African. This has led me to critically engage with my own identity. In addition, I have become attuned to the attempts of broader white South African society at large to materially re-negotiate identities for themselves in the new South Africa. I have been a part of and witness to this re-negotiation of identity. This project is thus important to me in laying bare the fraught and difficult nature of post-apartheid white identities in which I am implicated by virtue of the history of my country, where so much was invested in racialised identities. This thesis has led me on a journey of self-discovery and investigation into the attitudes and beliefs of my friends, associates and myself. (Bass 2001, pp. 4–5)

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