Afrikaner, nevertheless: Stigma, shame & the sociology of cultural trauma

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Notes

Prologue

1 The constitutional negotiation process dealt with many controversial issues such as substantive equality, language and education, self-determination and minority rights. For the government of the National Party it was important to be able to secure certain things for the future and limit the “damage” of giving up political power. The debate about the negotiations, the new constitution, and its repercussions for society is still ongoing. However, apart from the provisions on which the new affirmative action laws are based (which I deal with extensively in part 2), the new constitution and its effects is not the focus of this study. But see for instance the interesting PhD study by Kristin Henrard which is published as “Minority Protection in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Human Rights, Minority Rights, and Self-Determination” by Praeger in 2002.

2 The total number of white people in South Africa is 4 million, out of which there are 1.5 million English whites. Afrikaners are descended from almost equal numbers of Dutch, French, and German settlers.

3 For a more extensive definition of Afrikanerdom and a description of its ideology and discourse, see: (Norval, 1996, Giliomee, 2010).

4 Melissa Steyn points at the sizable movement of white South Africans across the borders into other African countries, especially in the Southern African region. The South African media speaks of a “brain drain”; an ironic inversion of historical terminology, where “brain drain” was originally used for black slaves being shipped off the African continent. FutureFact, a polling organization, found that the desire to emigrate is pretty even across races. In 2007, 42% of coloured (mixed-race) South Africans, 38% of blacks, and 30% of those of Indian descent were thinking of leaving, compared with 41% of
whites. This is a big leap from 2000, when the numbers were 12%, 18%, 26%, and 22%, respectively. However, as The Economist noted, “It is the whites, by and large, who have the money, skills, contacts, and sometimes passports they need to start a life outside—and who leave the bigger skills and tax gap behind.” Source: White flight from South Africa: Between staying and going. Violent crime and political turmoil are adding to South Africa’s brain drain. Briefing, 25-08-2008. The Economist, Accessed September 2011.

5 The question of what it means to come to terms with the past had lingered in Adorno’s mind after a massive empirical study of German opinions about the legacies of the Nazis, which he executed together with his colleagues in the early 1950s (Adorno, 2010; Friedrich Pollock, 1955). Adorno was interested in how the spell of the past remains in the present paradoxically through the suppression of guilt, forgetfulness, or the desire to “forgive and forget” and to put one’s past behind them and “get on with life.” In this study, Adorno presents a psychoanalytically informed analysis of the rhetorical and conceptual mechanisms with which postwar Germans most often denied responsibility for the Nazi past. Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, a few years later, found similar forms of denial among Germans about the Nazi past. They claimed, also using psychoanalytical theories, that Germans were unable to mourn about what they had lost when the Fuhrer died (Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich, 1975).

6 In his essay Was bedeutet die Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit? Adorno is actually surprisingly critical of the term “coming to terms with the past.” He rejected the idea of “coming to terms” for its double meaning of reconciliation and receiving articulation. To come to terms with the past was for the past also to come to terms even if, in the end, no terms could ever do justice to that sort of past (Adorno, 2005). Adorno was interested in mass pathology or social psychology, and in particular what he called the unarticulated or suppressed thinking of the public sphere. He scrutinized what was not said, the kind of unpublicized or “not-so-public” thoughts that cannot be explained away by reference solely to privately held opinions (F. Pollock, Adorno, Perrin, & Olick, 2011).

7 What Nussbaum calls “primitive shame” originates in early infant life around ideals of omnipotence (Nussbaum, 2006). The pain of this shame is connected to fantasized ideal states of (infantile) omnipotence, the denial of neediness, and (inevitable) narcissistic failure.

8 The work of Nancy Chodorow shows how the demand to be without need, the demand not to be a needy child, is implicit in the developmental history of males in many cultures of the world, but particularly in patriarchic cultures (like the Afrikaners) (Chodorow, 1999).

9 Some warn for the “banalization” of the concept of trauma; such liberal and confusing use of the concept that the concept becomes meaningless (Withuis & Mooij, 2011). Others argue that one should never confuse the “traumatic” silence of victims, with superficially similar behavior of perpetrators or bystanders (de Haan, 1997).
Chapter 1

1 Nearly 28,000 Afrikaners and perhaps 20,000 black Africans died in British concentration camps during the war, many of them women and children. Their suffering is a central theme in Afrikaner nationalism. Van Blerk’s song is set in the trenches of that war. In the music video, a blooded and beleaguered Afrikaner soldier sings of “a handful of us against a whole big force” and “a nation that will rise again.”


3 The Democratic Alliance referred to the song “Bring Me My Machine Gun,” the personal anthem of Jacob Zuma, the then-deputy president of the governing African National Congress. It was an anti-apartheid song that was sung by Zuma supporters and that would be part of a very similar media spectacle and court case three years later.


7 The Voëlvry Movement (Voëlvry means “free as a bird” or “outlawed”) reflected a new Afrikaans artistic counterculture hostile to the values of the National Party and conservative Afrikanerdom. Spearheaded by the singer-songwriter Johannes Kerkorrel and his Gereformeerde Blues Band, the movement (which was named after Kerkorrel’s 1989 regional tour) also included musicians Bernoldus Niemand (James Phillips) and Koos Kombuis (André le Roux du Toit). Voëlvry tapped into a growing dissatisfaction with the Apartheid system among white Afrikaans speakers, and thus Voëlvry represents the musical branch of opposition that was paralleled by literature and the arts (Hopkins, Du Preez, Kombuis, & Ross, 2006).

8 Two years later, in 2009, Kombuis published an autobiography in which he specifically explored his own conflicted feelings and the relationship with apartheid, A Short Drive to Freedom. Not only is it a playful reference to Nelson Mandela’s autobiography but also a critical commentary on the limited price Afrikaners paid for the crimes of the past. In this second memoir, Kombuis explores his memories of the Voëltyv movement, the Afrikaans rock rebellion he lead at the end of the 1980s against the National Party. Kombuis published his first autobiography almost a decade earlier, but in Seks, Drugs and Boeremusiek, he hardly mentioned his history in the anti-apartheid music movement. Troubled by this, he returns to “take note of this history and to spend some time
contemplating it, in order to properly integrate it into the present” (Kombuis, 2009, p. 7). Truscott points us particularly to the passage in which Kombuis elaborates on the theme of loss when he recalls how, before a gig during the Voëlvry tour in 1989, he walked through the streets of Potchefstroom (Truscott, 2010). “During this stroll, I realized to my amazement that Potchefstroom is actually a pretty place. The old buildings and houses seemed to gleam in the slanting rays of the late sun. I felt as if I was witnessing the end of the colonial era. I wondered how long it would be before these churches and majestic buildings would become museum pieces of the past, relics of Nationalism. I could not understand why this made me sad … I felt a profound sense of irretrievable loss, which I could not explain” (Kombuis, 2009:138).

9 Antjie Krog, De La Rey: Afrikaner absolution. 1-4-2007. Comment. Mail and Guardian. Accessed June 2011. Krog felt that the ANC government and the media were far too eager to condemn Afrikaners. As if the temptation to reinvoking Afrikaners as the historic enemy was too big to pass on too, in the ambivalent moral times of the post-apartheid period. Young Afrikaners were not interested, much less capable of resurgence. They were wrestling with a different problem. She found no reference in Van Blerk’s music and lyrics to grudges against the new South Africa. Even Nelson Mandela participated in a song.

10 Krog notes that Bok van Blerk sings about his forefathers, his grandfather, and male friends, but never about his father. Why this silence, she asks? What does it indicate? At times, however, Bok van Blerk also puts it blatantly in his song about the grandfather: “He [my grandfather] doesn’t need to say it, because it is in his eyes; a pride that makes me ashamed, a pride from above.” The lyrics are obvious torn between loving the grandfather and dealing with the fact that he belonged to and is still defending the Broederbond.

11 In Empire of Trauma, Didier and Rechtman sketch how trauma has achieved universal acceptance around the world as a descriptor of experience. They narrate a history of the concept of trauma based on developments in the professional circles of psychiatry and psychology, which as they show have been substantially influenced by social movements demanding rights, particularly for veterans and women who have suffered violence.

12 In support of appraisal theories, research has found that people exposed to comparable events, either in the laboratory or in a naturalistic setting, will display a wide variety of emotional reactions depending on their appraisals of the event.

13 Marris argued that the ability to reconstitute meaning after loss—the process of coping—is influenced by four sociological conditions: (1) our childhood experiences of attachment; (2) the nature of the meaning that has been lost: the more conflicted, doubtful or unresolved the meaning of what has been lost, the harder it is likely to reconstitute the meaning in a way that successfully disengages emotion and purpose from irretrievable circumstances; (3) the predictability of the loss: the less opportunity to prepare for loss, the
less predictable or meaningful the event itself, the more traumatically the meaning structure will be disrupted; and (4) the conditions after the loss: events after the loss may either support, encourage, or frustrate them.

14 Like many of his contemporaries building on Freud, Marris was most afraid that people would deny grief. Marais wrote: “If we deny grief, we deny the importance of the meaning each of us has struggled to make of life” (Marris, 1974, p. 103).

15 Freud famously introduced the metaphor of work in the science of bereavement (Freud, 1922). He argued that we bond with objects—a person or an idea—by investing it with psychological energy. Such investments are a problem when we lose something, because our attachments and memories of things work a lot like glue. By loss, he believed we could only reclaim our psychological energies through the painful work of mourning: by reviewing each memory and longing for the lost object. Maybe Freud’s suggestion of the necessity of this “work” would not have been so problematic if Deutsch had not consequently argued that there is a problem if such “work” is absent (Deutsch, 1937). She argued that if there was an “absence of grief” this suggested a pathological condition, an idea that is still influential in cultural approaches inspired by psychoanalysis. Maybe the most famous example of this is the book *The Inability to Mourn* by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich (Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich, 1975). They argued that Germans suffered from a pathological condition because they failed to grieve the loss of the leadership of the Fuhrer and the Nazi era.

16 Bonanno argues that Freud’s idea had little to do with the actual working of our emotions after loss. Instead, it created rigid parameters in our culture for proper behavior that do not match what most people go through.

17 Pride was long classified as a “secondary” emotion, an emotion that is constructed by society without a strong biological basis (Frijda, 1986). However, psychologists like Tracy and Robins show that pride has its own universal, nonverbal expression, which is characteristic of “primary” emotions; the emotions with a strong evolutionary background (Tracy & Robins, 2007). Tracey and Robbins found that when someone is proud of something, he wears a low-intensity smile, expands his posture, tilts his head slightly and places his hands on his hips or raises them above his head in fists. Even congenitally blind people show this behaviour, indicating that it is innate. In addition, they found that the expression of pride is reliably recognized by 4-year-old infants and adults over different cultures. This included a highly isolated preliterate tribe.

18 Development psychologists like Piers, Wurmser, and Morrison have shown that the trouble with shame starts with the measure with what we consider as adequate selves. In other words: where our “sense of failure” of the self in shame comes from. Often we hold ideas of completeness or perfection—some type of ideal state—that are questionable to have. This is particularly true for pervasive primitive shame originating in early infant life that often will have a continuous influence in later life, even if children develop their own
autonomy and separateness in later life. It is a type of shame that arises from the primary narcissism of a typical human infant as the infant encounters inevitable narcissistic defeats. The pain of this shame is thus connected to fantasized ideal states of (infantile) omnipotence and (inevitable) narcissistic failure (Nussbaum, 2006).

19 Collective guilt has been mostly studied by sociologists who concluded it was absent; for instance among the Germans after World War II (Adorno, 2010). Maybe they should have looked for collective shame.

20 Scheff argues that shame is the primary social emotion and that it is ubiquitous in social life. Shame arises, he claims, when there is threat to the social bond; every person fears social disconnection being adrift from understanding and being understood by others. Scheff defined shame as a large family of emotions that includes many cognates and variants, most notably embarrassment, humiliation, and related feelings such as shyness. In his work, Scheff not only built on sociologists like Elias but also on work by psychologists like Lewis (Nathanson, 1987). She argued that “the experience of shame is directly about the self, which is the focus of evaluation. In guilt, the self is not the central object of negative evaluation, but rather the thing done or undone is the focus. In guilt, the self is negatively evaluated in connecting with something but is not itself the focus of the experience” (H. B. Lewis, 1971, p. 30). Strangely, given that he built on Lewis, Scheff argues that shame arises when there is threat to the social bond. Every person, he argued, fears social disconnection being adrift from understanding and being understood by others. Although it is true that shame involves reactions to feelings of failure or inadequacy, as Scheff argues, the emotion is not merely (or even primarily) about rejection or the threat to the social bond.

21 Stein, for instance, argues that in the narratives of Christian conservative activists, the emotion of shame plays a prominent part. She shows how organizations of the religious right frame their appeals in order to mobilize shameful emotions toward political ends.

22 Following Lamont, I make a distinction between upper-class Afrikaners and lower-middle-class Afrikaners (Lamont, 2000). However, I have used different criteria. The lower-middle-class Afrikaners were selected for being employed in a blue-collar or low-status white collar job in formerly public companies, having a high school but not a college degree, and a union membership. I do not use the term working class because the lower middle class Afrikaners occupy jobs that are still far better regarding circumstances and financial compensation than the majority of working-class jobs occupied by blacks in South Africa. For the upper class, I use the criteria of the attendance of an elite school (for the young) or having a four-year college degree (for adults) and living in an elite gated community.

23 Feminist scholars traditionally pointed to male dominance as the source of female oppression. Studies revealed that men do all kinds of “manhood acts” to claim male
privilege, elicit deference, and resist exploitation by women (and other men) (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009, p. 281).

24 Although such masculinity ideals and fantasies are more aspirational than lived reality, young men are socialized in and aspire to these ideals, as they act out their manhood. Nevertheless, how men conform or resist to such ideals psychologically is not always clear (Jefferson, 1995, p. 73). Wetherell and Edley studied this process as a discursive practice. They suggest that boys and men choose those discursive positions that help them ward off anxiety and avoid feelings of powerlessness (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 337).

25 Mannheim defined the “social phenomenon of generations” as “nothing more than a peculiar kind of identity of location, embracing related ‘age groups’ embedded in a historical-social process.” Nevertheless, Mannheim believed that generations, radicalized by traumatic experiences, could transform society by challenging customary thought and offering new political and cultural visions (Mannheim, 1998).

Chapter 2

1 The debate about why these neoliberal policies were adopted is still ongoing. Patrick Bond argues that the Afrikaner business elite, together with their Afrikaner political counterpart, steered the economic transition (Bond, 2000). In his version, “white” capitalism did not need the apartheid project anymore and therefore the white business elite negotiated a political transition in which they gave up political power in return for the continuation of economic and cultural power and privilege. But MacDonald posits that the ANC was neither weak nor seduced by the white business elite—they simply opted for neoliberalism based on economic principles, as they believed that poverty is solved by growth and that growth results from giving capital incentives to investors (MacDonald, 2006). Most likely a combination of these factors played a role.

2 Initially, the right wing’s most important debate revolved around participation in the democratic process. Once this was decided, they started reframing Afrikaners as a “subjugated ethnic minority” and an “indigenous people” to align themselves with other minorities around the world, to deracialize the meaning of their chosen identity, and to claim membership in a group sanctioned by the United Nations (Courtney Jung, 2000, p. 141).

3 It dates back to far before the political transition of 1994 to the period of Afrikaner nationalism. Afrikaner nationalists have worked hard to present a unified image of the Afrikaner people. But this was a political project, not an empirical given. Historical studies on the Afrikaners in the early 1900s show the fragmented base of the nationalist project at its beginning, with the white working class waging a violent battle in between the black masses and the small white capital elite (Lange, 2003). The economic policies of the National Party did create a solid middle class that experienced consisted growth of income
between 1948 and the late 1980s, but at the end of apartheid this coalition of race and class was already unravelling, politically and economically (Dunbar Moodie, 1980; H. B. Giliomee, 2010; Le May, 1996; O’Meara, 1996, 2009). The transition from apartheid to a neoliberal democracy has reconfigured the link between race and class. In academia, the first studies on Afrikaners in the 1950s and the 1960s presented Afrikaners as a unified Volk, or people (Le May, 1996). This, of course, had much to do with Afrikaner nationalism and its political success, which became a favourable topic of historians and sociologist alike in the 1960s and 1970s. The wave of comparative studies in the 1980s on the emergence of white supremacy in South Africa, Brazil, and the United States treated Afrikaners also as a homogeneous people (Fredrickson, 1982; Marx, 1998). Only with the emergence of the new political economy school did the attention shift from “the people” to competition between classes of ethnic groups (F. Johnstone, 1976; Wolpe, 1976). But as the end of apartheid seemed near, the focus on ethnicity and ethnic conflict again reaffirmed a perspective that treated Afrikaners as a unitary, single-minded group (H. B. Giliomee, 2010; Horowitz, 1985).

4 Bauman writes that “(O)ne thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioral styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around him would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other’s presence. “Identity’ is a name given to the escape south from that uncertainty” (Bauman, 1996, p. 19).

5 Rather, a small black elite is co-opted by the white upper class and the corporate world, and nowadays endorses neoliberal policies both at the macroeconomic level and at the level of urban services and urban planning (Marais, 2011).

Chapter 3

1 Nevertheless, attributing the term “coming to terms with the past” to Adorno is problematic. The term became popular after one of his German lectures on the topic was translated in English and published as an essay 20 years later under the title “What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?” (Adorno, 1986). “Coming to terms” is a flawed translation of the term 
Aufarbeitung, which means something like “working through.” Already at the time, the translator acknowledged that Aufarbeitung only colloquially meant “coming to terms,” but that the translation in an academic text was inappropriate (Lüdtke, 1993, p. 542). A recent translation of Adorno’s text in English has the title: “The Meaning of Working Through the Past” (Adorno, 2010). Aufarbeitung in German also has psychoanalytic connotations, which are lost in the English translation.

2 As Olick and Perrin write, “To come to terms with the past was for the past also to come to terms even if, in the end, no terms could ever do justice to that sort of past” (Adorno, 2005, p. xv).
When the concept of “collective trauma” was originally introduced by Kai Erikson into sociology, it aimed to account for the effects of the loss of communality after a natural disaster; communality as in the web of familiar social relationships of people’s daily life. Erikson defined collective trauma as “a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality” and a condition that “works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it” (Erikson, 1976, p. 154). Erikson claimed that one can speak of traumatized communities as something distinct from assemblies of traumatized persons. Cultural trauma theorists do borrow Erikson’s language but focus on culture. Each cultural trauma theorist defines cultural trauma slightly different. Sztompka defines cultural trauma as the damage inflicted by major social change on “the cultural tissue” of a society. For cultural trauma theorists, the damage is done to culture, not to the social bonds of community (Sztompka, 2000a, p. 450). Equally, when Eyerman refers to cultural trauma as “the tear in the social fabric of society,” he uses Erikson’s terminology to refer to threats to collective identity, and not to social relationships (Eyerman, 2008, p. 22).

Later, people like Cathy Caruth also pointed to alternative indirect (cultural) causes of trauma. Caruth argued that it is not the experience itself that produces traumatic effects, but rather the remembrance of it, through representation and imagination (Caruth, 1995, p. 17; 1996).

Perhaps, this tension is explained by the fact that the theorists disagree among each other. This is most evident in Alexander’s structural account of cultural trauma, inspired by Durkheim, which defines a “cultural trauma” as a collective end condition. Smelser, Sztompka and Eyerman waiver between individualistic and collectivistic accounts; Smelser, in particular, troubles the “collectivization of coping processes” implied by a term like cultural trauma. He emphasizes continuing contestation about the meaning of the past; a process that rarely reaches a definitive settlement. In Smelser’s definition, cultural trauma has to do with a memory that is “laden” with negative affect and represented as “indelible” (Smelser, 2001, p. 62). Eyerman likewise emphasizes the role of emotions and the experiential mediation of the past (Eyerman, 2001). He remarks that “while a sociologically informed performance methodology can help us understand how actors call upon narratives and images in the performance of social life, emotions are what give this force, providing the energy for the performance and the reaction/response on the part of the observers” (Eyerman, 2005, p. 54).

This tension within cultural sociology is certainly not limited to cultural sociology or cultural trauma theory, but speaks to a general concern in sociological explanation. Sociologists after Durkheim constantly make the leap from individual-level phenomenon to the collective level. For instance, Olick asked what is collective about collective memory and described the tension between collective memory as aggregation of socially framed
individual memories versus collective phenomena *sui generis* (Olick, 1999). As Collins argued, detailed microsociological studies of everyday life activity raise the challenge of making macrosociological concepts fully empirical by translating them into aggregates of micro-events (Collins, 1981).

7 In South Africa, in the study of Afrikaners, such an approach to cultural sociology can be found in several studies of Afrikaners before 1990. For instance, in the ethnographic study of Vincent Crapanzano of white South Africans in the late 1980s (Crapanzano, 1986), he was interested in the effects of domination on the dominating and how the anxieties of Afrikaners and their prejudices shaped their world view. He argued that white South Africans were governed by a state of eternal arrest: the idea that they were waiting for some apocalyptic turn of events that they felt they could not influence. This cultural structure would explain their anxious psychic state. Aletta Norval’s discourse analysis in *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse* paints a complex picture of the formation of the Afrikaner *Volk* mythology. She claims that the obsession of Afrikaner nationalist ideologues with the uniqueness of the Afrikaner people was in the end a hollow claim. But although rooted in the social constructivist tradition of discourse analysis, she also assumes a one-on-one relationship between cultural ideological discourse and cultural identities (Norval, 1996). Even a thorough journalistic ethnographic account like the *Hearth of Whiteness* by Goodwin and Schiff assumes similar cultural explanations. Goodwin and Schiff argue that the apartheid culture of Afrikaners was shaped by hate of the blacks and fear of being overwhelmed by the black majority, and that in the post-apartheid period the fear of black rule is still very much alive (Schiff & Goodwin, 1995, p. 79).

8 Distinctions are expressed by normative interdictions, taboos, cultural identities, attitudes, and practices, but also through patterns of likes and dislikes. Lamont shows how the common psychological process of making distinctions is dependent and bounded by the cultural repertoires to which people have access, and also the structural conditions in which they live (Lamont, 1992, 2001). The concept of symbolic boundaries builds on insights from social identity theory in psychology that has revealed that the psychological pressure “to evaluate one’s own group positively through in-group/out-group comparison leads social groups to differentiate themselves from each other” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

9 Other differences could be noted too: one difference is in the preferred level of analysis and the studied data. The theory of culture as a seamless web studies culture often at the macro level, by studying rhetoric and discourse at the national level. A cultural toolkit approach often relies on individual interviews at the micro level. The first approach prefers to study public rituals and discursive scripts at the macro level, while in the second approach the focus is on conversational and rhetorical analysis at the micro level. There is possible overlap too. A macro approach could clarify the possible content of the toolkit (and its limitations) (Sewell, 1992). For example, Bellah and colloquies showed the
limitations of certain cultural vocabularies, like individualism, to express and convey the 
meaning of social solidarity (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 2007).

10 Their cultural analysis emphasizes the social and cultural patterning of public and 
personal memory, while they say less about the origins of the resulting subjective condition 
of “trauma.” Cultural trauma theorists actually offer a combination of constructivist and 
structural cultural explanations. They emphasize the constructivist and contested aspects 
of the “meaning struggle” between different groups after a traumatic event; a mediated 
process of collective representation in the media. However, they also represent cultural 
trauma as a tear in the social fabric and a threat or mark on the collective identity.

11 In psychological accounts of trauma, the connection between identity and trauma 
was made in the 1990s, when LaCapra connected trauma to distorted identity formation 
(Dominick LaCapra, 1996). LaCapra argued that where “certain subject-positions maybe 
become especially prominent or even overwhelming, for example, those of victim or 
perpetrator. But a subject-position becomes a total identity only in cases of extreme 
“acting out” wherein one is possessed by the past and tends to repeat it compulsively as if 
it were fully present” (Dominick LaCapra, 1996, p. 12).

12 Recent sociological research defines stigma as the concurrence of the components: 
labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001). In 
psychology, the identity threat model of stigma posits that collective representations of 
one’s stigma status, situational cues, and personal beliefs and motives shape appraisals of 
the significance of stigma-relevant situations for well-being (Major & O’Brien, 2005).

13 There is a long debate within sociology and anthropology whether culture is 
psychological, but I believe Geertz was right to argue that culture can only be understood 
through thick descriptions and cannot be equated with psychological structures (Geertz, 
1973). However, this does not mean that emotions do not influence cultural discourses.

14 According to Alexander, cultural sociology aims to “trace the moral textures and 
delicate emotional pathways by which individuals and groups come to be influenced by 
them” (Jeffrey C. Alexander, 2003, p. 5). His idea of cultural sociology makes “collective 
emotions and ideas central to its methods and theories precisely because it is such 
subjective and internal feelings that so often seem to rule the world” (Jeffrey C. Alexander, 
2003, p. 7).

15 Maybe that is why Alexander and colleagues fall back on the structural definition of 
culture that locates emotions awkwardly “within” culture and not within individuals when 
they talk about the emotional impact. Trauma is defined by Alexander as a mark upon “the 
group consciousness” (Jeffrey C Alexander et al., 2004, p. 10). Sztompka defines cultural 
trauma as the damage inflicted by major social change on “the cultural tissue” of a society 
(Sztompka, 2000a, p.450). Eyerman refers to the tier in “the social fabric” (Eyerman, 2008, 
p.22). Culture is also presented in conflicting ways in their theory. They not only speak of
culture as a process of social construction but also as “cultural tissue,” “group consciousness,” and “social fabric.” Such terminology builds on metaphors that represent culture as a “web,” or rather a “cloth”—as something pre-existing. Thus, collective identity and culture in their theory is both presented as something structural (thing-like) and a construction. This double representation becomes problematic if the connection between culture and emotions is considered.

16 Eyerman, in this sense, is exemplary when he talks about historical events as traumatizing incidents that trigger an “emotionally charged response,” and in order to “repair” the collective, the process would involve “deeply rooted emotions” (Eyerman, 2008, p. 166).

17 In the sociology of emotions there is no shortage of theories of emotions and efforts to integrate emotions into cultural analysis (Ahmed, 2004; Archer, 2000; Barbalet, 2002; Craib, 1998; Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001; Sayer, 2005; Scheff, 1983; Turner & Stets, 2005; Vogel, 2000; S. J. Williams, 2001). The challenge is how to connect the two strands of analysis, without collapsing the emotional into the cultural—or the other way around.

18 People do not analyze our feelings and emotions in abstraction, Hochschild says, but in relation to their “social appropriateness.” But this juxtaposition is partly misleading. The alternative to her suggestion that we analyze our emotions only in relation to the “social appropriateness” of the situation is not to do so, then, “in the abstract,” but rather that we also take into account their “personal appropriateness” (Hochschild, 1979, p. 560).

19 Thoits spoke of emotional defiance for the difference in quality or degree of feeling, between what is expected in a given situation, according to the feeling rules and the actual experiences (Thoits, 1989, p. 181).

20 What is “managed” in Hochschild’s theory? Social constructivists like Hochschild, Kemper argues, do not define what emotions are. Kemper writes that because they exclude biology they fail to provide a “category scheme” for different emotions and their various effects. Any sociological theory that includes emotions “cannot be indifferent to the psychophysiological theory with which it must ultimately link in any complete theory of emotions” (Kemper, 1981, p. 339). However, if we study the work of Kemper and Collins for answers, it is evident that this definitional problem is a much larger issue in the sociology of emotions. They both work with unspecific definitions of what emotions precisely are (for Collins, see for instance Kemper, 1990, p. 30). Maybe an overreliance on the sociological tradition at the expense of work in psychology has hampered full integration of a theory of emotions. Another explanation could be that emotions are often taken together as a general category, which seems to have let go of theorizing on the particulars of certain emotions (Although see: Barbalet, 2002; Scheff, 2000).
In the last 20 years, research on emotions in various disciplines, including psychology and neuroscience, has provided a much more precise definition of what emotions are and what they are about. Here, I built mainly on the definition given by cognitive appraisal theorists. What is striking about appraisal theory is how it is amenable to concerns of sociologists. It is through and through sociological. Emotions are always about the relation between people and their surroundings. Emotions tell us a great many things about how we relate to our surroundings and how this in turn relates to how we see ourselves. They tell a complex tale about how we value our relationships and attachments, and how they impact on our well-being. Lazarus says emotions are by definition relational and we should find a language to attest to it: “We should say that since both person and environment are important factors in emotion and adaptation, the oscillation can be ended only when we adopt a truly relational (or transactional) approach and find a suitable language for it” (Lazarus, 1991, p. 12).

Such a conceptualization of emotions seems compatible with the new relationalism of sociological thinkers, for instance with Mustafa Emirbayer’s work (Emirbayer, 1997a, 1997b, 2004; Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005). It is of little surprise that Emirbayer is one of the few mainstream sociologists who has concerned himself with the implications of emotions.

Fanon was the first to ask the question how racism troubles the emotional lives of the (post)colonial black subject. It was Fanon’s training and experience as psychoanalyst in Algeria, and his concern with racism and the violence to the colonial subject that lead him to explore the debilitating personality and identity effects of trying to understand oneself as a black subject within the system of values of white or European culture. He wanted to explain the strong emotions this identity search (or rather crisis) invokes.

Ambivalence in psychoanalysis is used very specifically to refer to the coexistence of contradictory affects and/or impulses. Hence, for psychoanalysis, powerful emotional reactions typically contain—even if at a predominantly unconscious level—what would seem to be their emotional opposites. Powerful currents of love also contain elements of hate. Responses of fear contain within them elements of attraction. It is something that is very counterintuitive.

Whites’ opinions about many racial issues seem to have liberalized. The old Jim Crow ideology has disappeared and many people argue that, as a rule, integration and equality should guide black-white interaction

Anthropologist Ruth Benedict originally defined racism as “the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority” (Benedict, 1945, p. 87).

The term “racism” reflects the hypothesis that symbolic racism includes underlying prejudice toward blacks. The term “symbolic” highlights both symbolic racism’s targeting
blacks as an abstract collectivity rather than specific black individuals and its presumed roots in abstract moral values rather than concrete self-interest or personal experience (Sears & Henry, 2003, p. 260).

28 Importantly, these ingredients do not operate separately but rather converge into a single perception that blacks violate certain traditional values. Symbolic racism is thus posited as a political belief system whose content embodies four specific themes: the belief that (a) blacks no longer face much prejudice or discrimination, (b) blacks’ failure to progress results from their unwillingness to work hard enough, (c) blacks are demanding too much too fast, and (d) blacks have gotten more than they deserve.

29 Although negative emotions play an important role in the theory, they are usually measured simply using the distinction between “hot” and “cold” feelings and do not distinguish between different emotions.

30 Progress in reducing racial inequality in South Africa is certainly slow and highly uneven, leaving especially large racial gaps in employment, housing, wealth, health, and criminal justice (Wasserman & Jacobs, 2003; Westhuizen, 2008).

Chapter 4

1 The different approaches vary in their claims from seeing discourse as an element of all social processes, events, and practices (Fairclough, 1992 (a), 1993) to claims that everything in the end is discourse and language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). My emphasis on the importance of emotions makes clear my position is closer to Fairclough, even though methodologically I am more inspired by Potter and Wetherell.

2 Epistemologically, discourse psychology is based on the social constructionist premise that the individual self is not an isolated, autonomous entity. Rather, every individual is in a constant, dynamic interaction with the social world.

3 This is a debate that has its roots in the definition of critical theory as the interpretation to understand the meaning of human texts versus critical theory as reflexive knowledge and understanding to reduce entrapment in systems of domination or dependence.

4 Foucault warns that there is no great “unsaid” or great “unthought” beneath discourse. In other words, he argues that models of discourse analysis that allude to a truth as “repressed” or “held back” do not work. The goal of discourse analysis is not the search for truth but the search for an answer to the question how discourses operate as truthful.

5 Institutions are not a place or a thing, as the definition affirms, nor is an institution as a term an equivalent for an organization.

6 In Closing the Book: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective, John Elster argues that transitional justice is a fertile area for the study of the role of emotions in politics. Elster’s specific interests are with the mechanisms by which emotions may shape the legal
proceedings of transitional justice. This is not work on transition justice, but it is also not unrelated to it. Elster’s approach to define specific emotions and mechanisms is helpful here too. I argued in chapter 1 that sociological analysis could benefit from an exact emotional language that moves beyond the terminology of trauma, and to make a distinction between cultural and emotional mechanisms.

7 This study combines a case-study approach with a discursive analysis. The majority of discourse studies is based on interviews and detailed analysis of discursive data. It analyzes and presents interview data without paying much attention to the context, other than the characteristics of the individual. On the other hand, most studies based on case studies do not include detailed discursive analysis of interview excerpts. They use interview quotes predominantly as illustrations without detailed analysis of what is actually said. I had to strike a balance between presenting the full context of the case and proving a detailed analysis of interview quotes.

8 Initially, the research project focused on young Afrikaners in schools. But as the study evolved, and questions related to the influence of culture and emotions came into full view; two other institutional spheres were added for a comparative perspective.

9 In the case of the two schools, the union Solidarity, and the gated community, I have done extensive observations during my visits to the research sites. At the schools, I sat in on classrooms, observed at the school square, and sat in the teachers’ room. At Solidarity, I participated in meetings and events, joined the staff on business trips, and observed day-to-day interactions. In the gated community, I lived there for two months and observed the day-to-day life, participated in meetings and events, and joined security patrols.

Chapter 5

The reason why this happened is still broadly debated and explanations range widely from a crisis of capitalism, to the ANC’s failure to wrestle the economy away from white control, to pressure from the international community. Patrick Bond, for instance, argues in his book Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism that the Afrikaner business elite, together with its Afrikaner political counterpart, that steered the transition. However, MacDonald also argues that the ANC was neither weak nor seduced, but simply opted for neoliberalism based on economic principle. He posits that the ANC believed that poverty is solved by growth and that growth results from giving capital incentives to investors. Most likely, a combination of these factors played a role.

2 Leibbrandt et al. Note that the overall white income share of total income has hardly dropped since 1996.

3 From 1975 to 1996, the national Gini coefficient was close to 0.66, but since 1996 it has actually grown to 0.7 because of the growing intragroup differences among blacks. As Leibbrandt et al. explain: “All of the census-based empirical work makes a consistent case that between-group inequality declined over the period 1975 to 1996. Clearly, the forces
driving a widening inequality within each racial group over the last 40 years have been strong enough to increase the overlap between the within-race distributions. Some of the declining between-group inequality is due to the fact that the African share of the population has increased significantly over the period. Between 1970 and 2001, the African population share increased from 70 percent to 80 percent. This increased share was matched by the declining shares of the white group, which fell from 17 percent of the population in 1970 to 9 percent in 2001. Clearly such demographic change gives increasing importance to the intra-African distribution in driving the aggregate distribution.”

The Gini coefficients by race show widening inequality within each group as shown by each census from 1975 to 2001. Regarding the white groups, the Gini coefficient rose from 0.43 in 1993 to 0.50 in 2008. On average, the rate of white unemployment remained low but it did grow 200 percent. In 1995 it was 4.79 percent and in 2002 it was 9.17 percent, and has hardly dropped since.

For instance, the BEE program was first joined on a voluntary basis by corporate boards appointing black non-executive directors and various businesses being sold to black empowerment groups. In particular, a few well-connected ANC members became incredibly wealthy during this short phase. The official aims of the BEE policy included the development of a visible black middle class, the improvement of skills within the black population, and increasing black business ownership and management in the economy.

After the Civil Rights Act of 1994, the United States had numerous affirmative action programs that pursued redress for the disadvantaged black minority. Since then, countries like Tanzania, Kenya and Malaysia have also initiated extensive affirmative action programs, although there—just like in South Africa—the majority is the target of the redress programs.

In the act, affirmative action is justified as “corrective steps” meant to create an equitable environment, which will benefit those who had been “historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.” The latter refers specifically to black people, women, and the disabled.

Schlemmer finds that about 90 percent of Afrikaans-speaking whites and almost 80 percent of English-speaking whites see affirmative action and black economic empowerment as racist (Schlemmer, 2001).

Van Zyl Slabbert said the ANC has deviated from its long tradition of nonracialism with these policies (Slabbert, 2006) and Pick Botha even concludes that “the National Party would not have been party to a negotiated settlement that brought about a constitutional dispensation in South Africa if the ANC had insisted that affirmative action legislation—particularly the way it is currently being implemented—be enshrined in the constitution.” (Pik Botha cited in The Weekender, 17 July 2007.)
The few empirical studies on the impact of affirmative action, for instance in the public sector, have focused on the successful empowerment of blacks measured by the increase of Africans and women at senior management level positions (Ndletyana, 2008). Studies note that the benefits have fallen largely upon upper-class blacks and that there are still difficulties relating to new public management (market-oriented management of the public sector), high turnover of personnel, trouble filling vacancies, and bad service delivery (Chipkin, 2008; Naidoo, 2008).

Survey researchers emphasize findings that show that all groups since 1998 actually think that race relationships are improving and that whites are more satisfied with their lives than blacks.


Other business organizations, including white English ones, that submitted to the TRC were the Council of South African Banks (COSAB), the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) (Nattrass, 1999).

The rapid disillusion of the leading Nationalist Party, after its initial relative success at the first democratic elections, is of course a case in point. But also the all-powerful Broederbond has shrunk to a powerless group of old pensioners. The Dutch Reformed church has lost a lot of its members to the new charismatic churches. Many organizations lost their legitimacy to outsiders but equally to potential members.

The majority of the men and woman interviewed for this chapter are middle-aged (between 30 and 50 years old). They actively participated in apartheid and consciously experienced the changes during the end of apartheid and the birth of democracy between 1990 and 1994. The lower-middle-class men have, on average, worked for 20 years at their respective companies. They started working for these companies when the organisations were still owned by the state. Various men followed in the footsteps of their fathers and mothers, who also worked at these companies.

A parastatal is a legal entity created by a government to undertake commercial activities on behalf of an owner government.

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are companies that employ between 50 people (small) or 200 people (medium). Small white-owned businesses are not obliged to have black (co-)ownership or black management but need to have a certain BEE score. However, medium companies must have black ownership or management to qualify for BEE. BEE qualifications are consequently used in assigning government contracts. The rules for medium and small firms are set in the Codes of Good Practice on BEE for Qualifying Small Enterprises by the Department of Trade and Industry. While medium companies are scored just like larger companies and must fully comply with BEE rules, small companies are only obliged to keep a “score card” that assigns points for five of the following seven factors: black ownership, management control, employment equity, skill development, preferential procurement, enterprise development, and social development. Small companies thus do not necessarily need to have black ownership or management. Nevertheless, a company must score a minimum set of points to qualify and its BEE rating can vary.

Chapter 6a

1 The finance house, the *Federale Volksbeleggings*, was the most important. It was controlled by Sanlam and encouraged Afrikaners to invest in “sound” Afrikaner enterprises. One of the first to receive a loan of this investment fund was the young entrepreneur Anton Rupert, who within two decades built up the Rembrandt group, one of South Africa’s largest conglomerates.


5 In this eastern Witwatersrand Township, Africans held a well-organized protest against sharply increased rental prices. But a nervous police force opened fire on the black protesters, thereby killing 69 Africans. Business associations, including the AHL, proposed to reform the laws controlling the influx of black people in “white areas” to reduce friction between Africans and the police, but President Verwoerd wanted to know nothing of it and called them “traitors” who put “white privilege” ahead of the needs of the Volk.

6 He was a farmer from Nelspruit (Malaland) who was actively recruited by De Klerk in 1989 as a verlichte (enlightened) businessman who, because of his few ties with the ruling National Party, could be an effective transformational manager. Nevertheless, he had for many years been on the Transvaal Landbouw Unie (Transvaal Agricultural Union), a farmer organization with a very conservative constituency. De Villiers occupied several
minister posts like minister of agriculture but he also minister of development aid and minister of public works (Openbare Werken).

7 For instance, Theo van Wijck, a former president and AHI board member, likes to joke to his black colleagues in other business organizations that they can better cooperate as separate organizations, because then they agree in 95 percent of the cases. While if they would merge, they would only bicker about the 5 percent on which they disagree.

8 Of all the parties that were invited to submit to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee and to reveal and reflect upon what they had done wrong during apartheid, the business world was not the most important. Most serious crimes were committed by the army, the police and the security forces. Most responsibility for those crimes was carried by the politicians.

9 While the TRC offered an opportunity for people who had committed crimes during apartheid to obtain amnesty, this option did not pertain to the crimes and criminal nature of the acts of the business community.

10 The document goes on to state: “There were those who supported separate development because of the “separateness”; i.e., apartheid, in its crudest form. Others supported it for the promise of development, i.e., people could develop to their full potential but as different ethnic groups in their own areas. Hence, from the idealistic to the cynical, from the intellectual to the lay person, from the courageous to the threatened, from rich to poor, from agnostic to Christian—many found something in the collective thinking of separate development they thought worthy of support.”

11 The period between 1976 and 1983 were the years of the Soweto uprising and the growing tensions between the Nationalist Party and the Western world. Here, AHI summarizes the developments in a distant and impersonal way. Sometimes, consequences are dislodged from their origins. For instance, international sanctions are mentioned but statements are equally made like, “Boycotts and sanctions had a devastating effect on a number of companies and industries.” The source of the Soweto uprising is summarize as follows: “Increasing internal tensions resulted in the Soweto uprising of 1976.” Increased resistance from the ANC, inspired by communism, is presented as follows: “One of the greatest tragedies for South Africa developed during this period. Activities that one side saw as legitimate resistance to apartheid were countered by the other side with actions that were considered a legitimate defense against a communist onslaught.” It is a way of writing history that tends to deflect concerns over historic causality and moral culpability.

12 During apartheid, the submission acknowledges, blacks could not own land, and jobs were restricted. As a consequence, blacks could not use their “latent entrepreneurship, potential skills, and hidden talents.” Note how the document stresses the impediment to entrepreneurship over the use of black labour by white-owned companies.
13 The decision for reparation is ultimately left to the TRC while AHI suggests macroeconomic prudence and the use of funds formerly allocated for the effects of political unrest.

14 In her book *Country of My Skull*, Antjie Krog gives a fascinating account of the TRC hearings of the business community. Within a timespan of three days, she writes, the business community moved from complete denial of any responsibility (Anton Rupert said: “we hardly ever met with the government about economic affairs”) to a full-fledged admission of their culpability for black oppression by economic means. Krog cynically writes how the “public relations people on the back benches quickly took note of the impossibility to look completely innocent, and how their denial was damaging their image.” They quickly saw a qualified admission of their culpability could do little harm and would be seen as a great sign of humility.

15 Currently, the CEO of Barlo World, Lambrecht is a successful businessman but with a slightly different biography than most successful Afrikaner businessman. In contrast to many, he had not gone to a prestigious Afrikaans university, but spent his student days in the 1980s at Rhodes University, where he studied law. At the time, Lambrecht says, this was a hotbed for opposition to apartheid, and student leaders often were in the forefront of this struggle.

16 If one now enters the meeting room in the AHI building of the board of trustees, you see a picture gallery of all the presidents of the AHI. There is a long line of old white men, but from 2000 on you suddenly see some coloured faces, but in the same odd classic way their predecessors are portrayed.

17 As part of his presidency, the AHI in 2000 honored former president Nelson Mandela, who praised the AHI for its work. Minister of Finance Trevor Manual, the former anti-apartheid activist, is also honored. Lambrecht says: “When Franklin, Trevor, and I were walking off stage, Franklin said ‘I never thought I would be part of this organization, I certainly never thought I would be president, and I never thought I would do so with pride!’ Upon which Trever Manual answered, ‘I never, ever thought I would get an economic price from the AHI, and I never ever thought I would accept it with pride!’” (Lambrecht, interview.)

18 Given on 24 October, 2001, in Bellville. Sonn’s address was presided by a speech of Jacob Zuma, the then-vice president of South Africa, and Sonn remains amazed how it is possible that a former anti-apartheid activist is now seen through new eyes and listened to with dedication.

19 A rather odd reference to the words used by Afrikaners for the ANC’s attack on South Africa.

20 Botha also notes the AHI has to keep shrinking its headquarters.
The macroeconomic outlook is good, and Botha reiterates AHI’s endorsement of the neo-liberal economic policy doctrine of low inflation, low foreign debt, a strong currency, steady rent, and high business trust. He notes extended service delivery to the poor, but without mentioning that their numbers have hardly changed. He tentatively notes the growing concern about service delivery of local government.

Andre Lambrecht is eloquent in his defense of BEE: “Of course every process has, at the end of the day, its problems and how it can be bettered. But in principal, BEE is for me absolutely necessary. You can’t say overnight to people who have been historically and structurally excluded from the community, ‘Now you have to participate on a basis of equality but there is not structural equality.’ We have created the structures that create the opportunities. But this has to bring the community back to an equal footing. And you should not part from otherwise healthy principles for a community so that you run the risk of repeating the mistakes of the past.”

Steenkamp was president of the division in his home town, Brits, a small city near Pretoria, and in 2005 he was also president of the board of directors of AHI, a function you occupy for one year after being vice president for a year.

Interestingly, whenever AHI board members mention Phosa, they do not talk about his political past. They will mention that he published two volumes of poetry, including one in Afrikaans. It is obvious this token of cultural competency gives him great credit with the AHI community.

The impression Phosa gives in his speech is that of a visitor to AHI. He says that he only “visited” AHI meetings and people, without becoming fully part of the organization. This impression is countered by equally flattering words when he says that, although he will move on, he remains with the AHI “in spirit” because he feels “at home” with the organization.

Phosa also quotes a study of Haasbroek and Giliomee on the “Ekonomiese bemagtiging van Afrikaners.” He underwrites their view of the culture, values, and attitude matters for economic growth, as well as their “willingness to save, work hard, patience, and willingness to sacrifice.” Such a culturalist view of the economic empowerment of Afrikaners is of course debatable but would naturally find a willing audience among Afrikaners.

AHI remains an organization consisting of “corporative members” and many local businesses—often Afrikaans-owned businesses that form the backbone of local communities. In cooperation with the Department of Planning and Local Government (DPLG), the AHI focused on improving local service delivery. The AHI initiated pilot projects on several villages to improve service delivery, it produced a blueprint on local economic development for the DPLG, and it performed an audit of the financial status of 283 municipalities of South Africa in cooperation with the local AHI branches.
Other members also mention the new division in Soweto as a sign of progress. But it must be said that of the more than 100 local chambers, this is the only one that probably has a significant black membership.

This reads: “there is clearly a dichotomy between two alternative approaches to empowerment—one is to enable everyone to compete freely and on an equal footing, within the context of their own capabilities and available opportunities; and the other regulates the outcome of processes. History has shown the first to be the more effective approach to empowerment and it should be the ideal after the initial backlogs have been made up.”

It is only two years before he will become treasurer of the ANC, one of the liberation organization’s most powerful political positions.

Chapter 6B

1 They often thereby contrast their generation with the older generation. Sometimes they do so in general; sometimes they do so specifically. Like Korf, they will recall the intense debates they had with their parents. It is as if they want to say that they were the real agents of change.

2 Of course, there are some men who critique BEE and affirmative action in less sophisticated argumentation, but this is a minority. They argue that BEE is discriminatory against whites; and wasn’t the promise of the transformation of 1994 that everybody would be equal? In this interpretation, restorative measures are indicative of a broken promise and evidence that today discrimination is just as prevalent among whites as it was among blacks in the past. In its most extreme form (but certainly not exceptional) the new situation is depicted as “reversed apartheid.” The claim of being discriminated against is often framed in a larger narrative of victimhood on Afrikaners who are betrayed after they voted for change. While blacks said they just wanted to be equal, now, “everything has become worse.”

3 A system where those who are deserving are valued.

4 This last point can of course be interpreted in several ways. Most likely, it suggests that most white entrepreneurs share the impression that most blacks are appointed unfairly, that is, without the right qualifications or deserving the specific position. Hence, as a white entrepreneur, you have to defend to other whites the appointments of blacks in your company, and answer questions whether they are legitimately there.

Chapter 7a

1 However, the president or any of his assistants are not willing to accept the letters. Solidarity says “this feels like a slap in the face of thousands of South Africans.”
2 Political parties affiliated with Solidarity, like the Freedom Front, have even participated in international conferences and demanded that Afrikaners are included in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

Chapter 7b

1 How this precisely is achieved often remains unclear in their stories but the suggestion is that affirmative action was to benefit black workers but not necessarily to disadvantage white workers. Johan Faurie also argues this: “But I believe that affirmative action should be executed in a way that we all have benefits. And this is what causes me heartache. We try to make right a wrong with a wrong. You cannot put two wrongs together to get something positive. You have to take something negative and something positive, and then you will make it right.”

2 The companies are aware of these racial tensions and provide specific programs. Telkom for instance provides lessons in “cross-cultural learning” for its workers. During these courses, the men are taught a rather essentialistic take on culture: it is presented as something whole; as having habits and practices rooted in different values and cultural understandings. For example, Afrikaners learn that black men enter an open door before others, not out of impoliteness but out of the cultural tradition that black men enter first, to assure everything is safe on the other side. Cultures in these courses are neatly summarized as a number of bullet points in which everyone of that culture abides by. Yet, various Afrikaner men speak approvingly of what they have learned on these courses. Schalkwyk for instance has picked up from the course that black people often talk loud and stand away from each other, not because they do not want to get closer and talk softly, but because otherwise others think “skinder van die ander,” or worse of the other.

3 What is maybe most remarkable is that every Afrikaner had a different kind of taboo list, of topics that are off-limits at work. There does not seem to be a particular pattern or division guiding them. Always, a few topics like race, culture, religion or politics were depicted as “taboo.” All seemed to balance the demands of integration at work through keeping particular topics to themselves.

4 The examples he draws on to point out these differences are waiting in a store to be helped, while the (black) shopkeepers do not attend to you as a customer and let you wait and the example of meetings always starting late today. Yet, he nevertheless connects it to a “problematic attitude” and the impression he has that there is just “more order” among white people. Crucially, he confesses to getting “highly irritated” in these instances, that he simply “does not understand this because it does not make sense,” and that he finds it hard to “adjust.”
1 Scholars have pointed at supply-side factors to explain their emergence, like financial benefits for developers, builders, and municipalities that would drive the success. To municipalities, for instance, they are attractive because they transfer the debt liability, building of infrastructure, and provision of services to private corporations, while at the same time the municipality collects property taxes from residents. Other academics focused on demand-side factors, like home buyers’ preferences, new lifestyles, and fear of crime. Academics also noted how such communities bundle very different goods and how housing, community, security, and amenities were marketed and sold as a “way of living.” Social critics focused on the new means of regulation and controlling resident and nonresident behavior through subtle and not so subtle mechanisms as security measures, house type, and taste culture.

2 Bremner builds on Klein’s psychoanalytic concept of terror and the work of Archille Mbembe to explore the link between race, crime, and privatization of space in Johannesburg. Klein argues that terror is something inherent to the human condition. Bremner writes, “It is a nameless anxiety, a fundamental vulnerability, a basic, existential fear of imminent catastrophe. In our attempts to escape this terror, we visit it upon the Other – the Jew, the Negro, the foreigner, the female—who all share one essential quality: the quality of Otherness, of being not me” (Bremner, 2004, p. 456).

3 Lemanski also researched an experimental urban development that constructed a gated community adjacent to a much poorer community. In turns out that social relationships between the two communities are very bad. Overall, the poor neighbors feel emotional rejected by the rich and the walls only affirm that (Lemanski, 2006a).

4 Their primary emphasis is on the “unarticulated class reproduction practices” (J. S. Duncan & Duncan, 2001, p. 390). For instance, Duncan and Duncan, in their study show the negative consequences of seemingly innocent aesthetics on conflicts between the large Latino communities that find employment in the wealthy suburbs but have to reside in neighboring communities.

5 Blokland argues, rethinking the study of communities in the Dutch context, that for too long communities were equated with social relationships. Communities should be seen through the prism of relations, institutions, identity, and symbolic imagination. Her research suggests that neighborhood relationship only distinguish themselves from other social relationships by physical proximity and not social characteristic. Physical proximity is an unreliable indicator to predict the potential of social identification (Blokland-Potters, 2003, p. 13). Neighborhood does not equal community, she says. Social communities make use of locations to varying degrees.

6 Low’s argument that this nostalgia for homogenous, safe, white neighborhoods contrasts with the fact that they often know few neighbors. Then, this is only remarkable if one thinks of communities in the classic sense, as close-knit social communities. My argument actually fits well with Low’s finding that ideals of community harmony are often
associated with childhood and the past. I also agree with Caldeira’s suggestion (on the basis of her study of advertisements) that elite enclaves promote ambiguous values such as security and order with positive values such as ecology, health, and nature. Indeed, when Caldeira frowns at leisure presented as freedom, the seduction and boundlessness of this imagination becomes evident. Surprisingly, maybe, there are few references in her study to the resurgence of interest in community values, so central in the American literature.

7 Other studies have called themselves ethnographic, like Setha Low’s excellent *Behind the Gates*, but never relied on actually living “inside” the gate. With Low, I do share a similar fascination of how people make sense of their experiences and emotions, and how these thoughts and feelings ultimately have moral consequences.

8 None of the women showed any evidence of “splitting,” “purification fears,” or anything else that supports fancy psychoanalytic theories. People’s knowledge is practical and naturalized, rather than discursive. The women’s desires and motivations, their hopes and fears, were pretty normal. They experience “relief” and “normalcy” inside the estate, because of order, beauty, and the absence of crime, and fear outside the estate.

Chapter 10

1 The number of foreigners that either own or rent properties is estimated at around 20 percent.

2 The HOA is a Section 22 Nonprofit Company, which, simple put, means that all levies and fees need to be reinvested in the estate. On the board there is a chairman, vice-chairman, security trustee, financial trustee, and environment trustee. Being a trustee on the board used to be a voluntary job but since early 2000, trustees are paid a monthly fee. The trustee supervises different committees, like the security committee, levy determining committee, aesthetics committee, environment committee, social responsibility committee, the estate agents committee.

3 Although the security company is by law not allowed to prevent anybody from entering the estate, they can, in such cases, make a “citizens arrest.” The police are then called in to do the arrest. Security personnel receive special training at Home Affairs on identity documentation. As the security manager said, “There is a fine line between access control and control of movement.”

4 There are rules and restrictions for the type of materials, the height of walls, the plot size, and the wall surrounding the golf course. Apart from rules pertaining to the architecture of buildings, there are various other regulations. They deal with such diverse issues as building and house maintenance, house-selling practices, garden and road maintenance, but also with pet animal rules. Residents can complain to the committee about violations of the rules or other disputes with their neighbors, and the committee deals with these matters. Matters are further complicated because of the golf course and a game park on the estate. Particularly the golf course is a source of community friction, as
only 40 percent of the residents use the golf course for golfing, while the other residents enjoy the course as a recreational area. The environment committee regulates aesthetic concerns at the estate.

5 This committee has only recently, in 2010, obtained a legal status. Before, the municipality ultimately decided on building plans and licences, and many residents who got negative advice were able to continue their plans through obtaining licenses from the municipality.

6 At Golden Sun, race is a difficult topic on which to do research. Many blacks living in the estate refused an interview. The HOA refused to provide data and names on inhabitants. And many people were reluctant to talk about any racial conflict within the estate. Nevertheless, while I was there, there was a case of a (white) golfer who had hit a (black) golf caddy. The mistreatment was not reported to the police. Unfortunately, there are no statistics of the inhabitants of Golden Sun and there are no numbers of black people living in the estate. Nevertheless, their numbers are increasing, most people of the HOA and real estate agents say. In the past, real estate agents say, blacks would not be allowed to buy a house, even when they offered more than a white buyer, but this has changed. The HOA has no control over the real estate agents and who is working where, as long as the agencies stick to the rules of the HOA. But until recently, the real estate agencies still seemed firmly in white, mostly Afrikaans hands. There are 30 agencies working in the estate which employ a total of 80 agents. Of those 80 agents, only 3 are black.

Chapter 11

1 In the education literature, formerly Afrikaans schools are mostly called “former model-C schools.” This reference is to former state schools (all formerly white Afrikaans schools) that were labeled ‘model-C’ in 1992 by the government of the National Party in their efforts to restructure the educational landscape. They gave former public schools the opportunity to obtain and organize, to a large extent, self-government of the school through decentralizing school policy and school maintenance.

2 The number of schools that remain single-medium Afrikaans has dropped from 1,800 in 1994 until a little less than 300 in 2008 (See Lemon, 2005).

3 In Chapter 4 of Crain Soudien’s book, The Trouble with Privilege: The Making of New Identities, Soudien distinguishes three groups among the privileged white youth. The first group, of Global Whiteness in general, feels undervalued, marginalized, and increasingly not at home. Turning away from their family’s white history, they orient themselves toward a global image of whiteness. A second group that emerges is the Old-New South African Whiteness. This is a group characterized by confusion. They recognize blacks as equal but find it difficult to think nonhierarchically about race. The third group, the New South African Whiteness, shows a commitment to a united South Africa and an awareness of their privilege status and histories. They oppose racism, are involved in their social
They are, Soudien writes, “somehow more inclined to introspection and their narratives are much more self-conscious” (Soudien, 2007, p. 95). This group consists mostly of white, English, privileged youngsters who are mostly girls, but Soudien does not stress the gender aspect. He does acknowledge they can still be paternalistic and patronizing, and often have a limited conception of social justice but they are aware of the need to give something back. He also acknowledges it is hard to prove how much of their discourse is positive self-representation (Soudien, 2007, pp. 72-100).

4 Jansen proposes an explanatory theory that is built around the concept of “indirect knowledge.” Indirect knowledge is a form of paradoxical knowledge—knowledge of something you did not witness. Our historical knowledge mostly consists of this type of knowledge. He derives his conceptualization mainly from the work of Evan Hoffman who studied second-generation Holocaust survivors in her book After Such Knowledge (Hoffman, 2005). Similar to Jansen, she was concerned with the question of how historical knowledge is transmitted across generations. Jansen builds on Hoffman’s explanatory framework and especially applies it in the institutional context of the school and the university, of course, primary sites of knowledge reproduction.

5 Interviews for this research were conducted over a six-month research period in 2007 and 2008 at two secondary schools in the greater Cape Town metropolitan area in South Africa. Semistructured interviews were conducted with over 40 students in both schools. Although the focus was on white Afrikaner youth, interviews with other students of other ethnic groups were included. Ten teachers were interviewed, as were other members of the staff at the school. Next to interviews, participatory observation was done in and outside the school, including visits to home residences and school parties. I've opted to use fictionalized names for the schools researched, as not to compromise children who have spoken to me willingly and openly about many private issues.

6 The classes H and D are the top classes of grade 11, while class R is considered the worst—the difference between these classes academically being quiet strong. I found that these students were not only the most articulate but also the most isolated from the few coloured students at Hoërskool De La Rey. They present, in a way, the view of the elite of the elite. From the interviews with students in these classes, I have chosen to focus in this chapter mostly on girls, although I will every now and then refer to the boys. I found that females in general most clearly articulate their position of privilege and their guilty feelings. The reasons for this are partly the topic of this chapter, and will be further discussed in the conclusion.

7 Grade 11 was chosen also because it is the year before the students’ final year but also the year from which their grades will be used by universities for selection.
Chapter 12

1 This, by itself, is an unlikely outcome, as recent educational reform has made it into one of the last such schools in the country. Although tellingly, its best students take English as a first language in the higher grades.

2 Traditionally, the head boy has been an honorable function for the most successful male student, chosen by the students. Organizationally the school has its own tradition in student representation. The school has a student cabinet, which consists of 12 members. They are the prefect of their class. Every prefect chairs a committee that focuses on a particular topical issue—like culture, drama, hockey or dancing—and is assisted by two other students. Prefects are voted in every year, with a system of weighted votes. The votes of the students in grade 11 count the most, and the votes from teachers, and from students in grade 12 and 8 count the least. Each year, the school chooses a hoofseun and a hoofmeissie of grade 12, matriek.

3 The school does not want to provide numbers of the totals of students from different ethnic groups.

4 In most cases, a similar scenario developed. Initially, such schools saw the number of non-white students slowly increase after their official admittance in the early 1990s. At the same time the intake of white students decreased, there was an influx of white South Africans moving to the suburbs. There are simply less white kids to go to these schools. But there is another dynamic at work as well. In response to the drop of white students, formerly Afrikaans-speaking schools were forced to attract non-white students. To protect their standards, formerly white schools often focused at first on attracting the best non-white students with academic and sport bursaries. Nevertheless, with numbers of white students decreasing, many formerly Afrikaans schools had to shift to dual-medium, attracting even more non-white students and further shifting the racial balance. It seems that at certain points, such schools obtained a bad reputation among white parents and students. Such schools were said to suffer from “a drop in standards” and “violence and drugs.” Often based on myth rather than reality, the damage done to these reputations pushed schools over the edge, with many losing their entire white student population. But that is a story we will explore in the next chapter.

5 Central to the school’s image to the outside world is the performance of sports. The school is in competition with other (elite) schools in the Western Cape that are often much larger—up to 2,000 pupils—and often equally or better endowed. Rugby is the most important sport, at least for boys, while netball is for girls. Athletics also stands in high regard, with the school investing a considerable amount of time and money to recruit the best coaches, often the same who are responsible for the training at the provincial level. It is in sports where the changes after 1994 are most visible. The competitive nature of school sports, and the prestige invested in it by schools, has—after the desegregation—opened up a market where students are lured to schools based on their athletic abilities.
They will receive a scholarship and housing in the school’s hostel. At De La Rey, scholarships are mostly awarded to top-performing coloured athletes, who are being drafted from all over the Western and Northern Cape. That such students perform poorly academically seems of less concern.

6 By law, the school is obligated to file the number of students of different ethnic groups. However, the headmaster has challenged the provincial department for many years about these regulations. He argues that today, all students are “South Africans” and obstructs the release of numbers about the student population.

7 A few subjects will be given in mixed classes, because there are just too few students for the course.

8 Even in the mixed R class, coloured and white students will sit on opposite sides of the room. In 2007 class R had about 7 white students and 23 coloured students. White students who sit in this class will still refer to coloured students as “being loud” and say coloured students are different as they “joke and laugh a lot.” Exemplary for the lack of knowledge with the students is that even coloured and white students from class R fail to explain why there are so many students of color in their class while in other classes there are hardly any.

9 Yet, boys will inform you that they have “authority” and nobody dares to “mess with them.”

10 Apart from a few exceptions, like the school head boy, there are almost no academically successful coloured students. Whether they have less chance to perform according to the school’s standards or whether they were from the start already substandard, is an open question.

11 This is not to say that the students of class R are always unpopular. Many perform strong in sports for the school and are praised by both students and staff for this. But overall they are routinely described as deviating from the norm, as troublemakers and as rebels who needed to be reined in.

12 Here, however, we are not so much concerned with the well-being of coloured students at a white school, although the consequences will be profound, but with the question of how this situation is seen by the white students of the other classes—if it is noticed at all.

13 During my time at De La Rey, I have not heard one explicit discriminating remark.

14 But some boys equally express strong antiracism, although in a different way. They would say the get “angry” at people being racist and for “being so stupid.”

15 Their race talk is also factually often inaccurate. None of the interviewed students knew approximately how many coloureds were in the school. They also lacked specificity in their thinking on ethnic groups and the distinctions between groups.
Here, we see the echo of older colonial stereotypes, and the long history in which obsession and disgust with the exoticism of the racial other is mixed with fascination and liking.

Again, there is much ambivalence in such value judgments. Some boys speak admirably of coloured boys being “tough” and “standing their ground.” There is a certain level of admiration and respect for their strong masculinity and their macho performance. Boys note how coloureds will “stand together,” both physically and socially.

He is also the only boy who says he often jokes with his coloured friends about race and racial stereotypes.

Because of crime, students are hardly allowed out of their quiet suburbs. Crime is not an abstract thing for the students. Most have had experiences with crime, both large and small. Houses have been burgled or they have been robbed on the streets. It is a combination of crime and fear of crime that is the main factor in limiting their living space. The daily living world of most white Afrikaans-speaking students is very small. The places they are not allowed to go are numerous, and include almost all areas outside their own neighborhoods and the direct location of the school: the townships and the city parks. Students are forbidden to walk there. Female students are often not allowed to go anywhere by themselves. Some students are allowed to go downtown during the weekends, but only in groups and transported by taxi. Their spatial lives are limited to the City Bowl and the northern suburbs, where half of the students have their homes. Nevertheless, students refer to their neighborhoods as “quiet” and “not much going on.”

At the time of my research, the school underwent a large renovation project. For this, there were dozens of black painters, builders, and electricians working in the school. The presence of such a large number of black male workers produced commotion among the students. After a number of crime incidents, the working personnel had to check in through the front gate and write their name every time they went in and out of the school, a laborsome system. During my second visit, in 2008, I myself was subject to the same procedure.

At school, students have contact with coloured workers. Many of them, people who work in the gardens or as security guards, have only received limited education.

Boys, on the other hand, sometimes firmly defend being Afrikaner. They stress that an Afrikaner is “not bothered by who he is.” Markus says that Afrikaners “do not care what people think of them. An Afrikaner person does not mind.” He specifically relates this to a younger generation: “We do not care what others think of us. We do things we want to.”

Even if students argue that they in principle agree with the goals of affirmative action, they say current programs affect them disproportionately. The programs are not “fair” to them and should be executed based “on merit.”
24 Male students also say that because black and coloured people have the advantage, they do not work as hard and start to expect to be treated differently. They say that blacks expect to receive “handouts” from the government. Such statements echo the old racism of the past, but are also justification of their continued privilege and a growing anti-state sentiment.

25 Boys on the other hand sometimes use hyperboles to state their dismay. Whether it is because they are harder hit by affirmative action or whether they just respond more aggressively, they say they have “no opportunities” in the future.

Chapter 13

1 Today a former military officer still practices air rifle shooting in the school’s main hall with the youth, but none of the attendants come any more from Die Groot Trek.

2 The school has not kept records of students’ ethnic origins. It is therefore difficult to assess what the exact trend has been in enrollment numbers of students of color at Grote Trek. But I think the pictures of the metric class do provide an indication of changes, if only an indication of a trend. The pictures on the school walls, which depict the metric classes of the last decennia, tell the story. We see that in 1992, the school accepted its first coloured students. In the years between 1994 and 2007, the number of coloured students has been fluctuating, but never increased rapidly or decisively. It hovered anywhere between 13 and 46—a number that was reached in 2002 when the school had a total of 69 metric students, and thus only 23 whites in metric. But even in the metric class of 2006, there were still 21 white students, for a total of 44.

3 Scattered through different grades we find a handful of exceptions, but inquiry confirmed that the white kids’ presence at this school is marked by their lack of other options given their troubled background.

4 The teacher corps at the school has been more resistance to change than the students. In 2007, there were only three teachers who were coloured; the others are all white-Afrikaans. Among the more recent hired staff, there seems to be a quick turnover, with the average new teacher only staying one or two years. The headmaster has been in charge of school affairs since 1994. Many teachers have been teaching at the school for decades, some even for more than thirty years. While their experience of this rapid change deserves equal study, the focus in this article is on the youth.

5 In terms of sections 39(4) and 61 of the South African School Act, 1996 it was ordered that no student could be refused if the family was not able to pay for school fees. As a consequence, schools like Grote Trek that are unable to apply strict selection attract many of such students.

6 Explanations can help the students adjust to the changes and give them a sense of control of the situation.
7 Alex compares his own behavior as linked to his upbringing with a boy who attacked him at school. Through this comparison he not only tries to distance himself from these new “others,” but also to place himself above them. He places the changes and their consequences in a moral framework or rather, looks through a moral frame that makes him stand out positively.

8 Victor is the most active in this way. He says: “Well … maybe like … ‘if it’s not white it’s not right.’ That’s a joke, and everybody in our group laughs and even my coloured friends laugh. But then some people take it seriously and so we’re racist; so we just explain the situation, and say ‘sorry if we offended you’ … A coloured guy will sometimes reply, ‘Once you go white that ain’t right’ and I laugh but other white people take it serious and stuff like that, so yeah … it’s mainly the grumpy people who moan.”

9 Ironically, it are the new coloured teachers who are most aware of what has happened. And they are the ones who celebrate the last white students for their achievements.

10 The double use of “they” in the last sentence points in a different direction: the first “they” points to the older group of Afrikaners and the second “they” points to non-Afrikaners who blame his generation for the mistakes of the past. But that he mentions them here in one sentence signifies how the responsibility for the past and his current stigma are meshed together in his anger.

Chapter 14

1 I say specifically not neighborhoods because the members of the lower middle class are hardly concerned about their neighborhood. They perceive their neighborhoods to have changed very little, except maybe for the rise in crime and the degradation of urban services.

2 Note that the question of why these schools followed such a different trajectory was not at the heart of this study. Instead, by contrasting the different processes of desegregation at the two schools, I wanted to highlight the impact of institutional change on youth identity, and how alterations in institutional praxis mediated the process of racial integration.

3 They define race trouble as “the individual desires and preferences and social forms that are constituted by the coordinated activity of people who act in race-relevant ways.”

4 The Gini coefficient for the white population in 1975 stood at a relatively low .36, signifying the success of the apartheid government in bolstering the position of the poorer members of the Afrikaner community. In 2005, the Gini coefficient was at .45 (Bhorat & Westhuizen, 2007).

5 For instance, entrepreneurs are able to control the number of black employees in their firm. They can also partly circumvent Black Economic Empowerment by using
constructions like joint ventures. For Solidarity members, on the other hand, affirmative action is imposed from above. The men working in Telkom and Eskom are forced to work together with their new black colleagues.

6 There is a long debate within sociology and anthropology whether culture is psychological, but I believe Geertz was right to argue that culture can only be understood through thick descriptions and cannot be equated with psychological structures (Geertz, 1973). However, this does not mean that emotions do not influence cultural discourses.

7 It is not that Afrikaner women do not feel a similar sadness about the problems and struggles at work or school, but they do seem to have a better language for it, and that eases the tensions.

8 This was already true for Afrikaner nationalism, with its ideals of self-sufficiency and portrayal of Afrikaners as independent from everything else. However, it is still true for groups like Solidarity that fantasize about being independent and self-sustaining from the ANC government and black South Africans.

9 Feminist scholars like Nancy Chodorow and Gail Gilligan, and psychologists like Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson have argued that is particularly true for men and the socialization of boys. They are often told to be self-sufficient and have shame about their failures and need for others. They hide their need for others, and consequently, as Nussbaum writes, “avert their own gaze from their inner world” (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 193). While they fail to understand their own emotions, they are at the same time pushed to appear as a controlling adult. In this way, a vicious cycle of shame is triggered that leaves their emotions unexamined and underdeveloped at an infantile level, while they suffer from great difficulty to understand their own feelings and those of others. Society and culture thus has great influence on the harm that shame can inflict.

10 Patriarchy is symbolized by a perfect and merciless father who rules supreme. Familial and cultural norms, Nussbaum writes, often prescribe the child to be without need. Ideally, when the child is growing up, he will learn to relax this omnipotence and his urge to control, predominantly through parental guidance. He will learn morality and start to accept his incompleteness, lack of control, and in the end, his mortality. Dependent on the trajectory of this process, shame (and his narcissism) will be more or less harmful.

11 In their study, they did not measure collective shame (but see Lickel et al., 2004). Moreover, their research is based on controlled experiments outside of the normal societal context. In all fairness, they do argue that given a negative group history, emotions might shift over time. Group members could tend to experience shame upon initial public exposure of “dirty deeds,” but later might feel guilt when moral responsibility for permitting those acts to occur is accepted. It might also shift with generations from shame to guilt.

Epilogue
1 A comparison between South Africa and post-war Germany in their dealings with the past is fraught with difficulty for issues of historical particularity (N. Alexander, 2002; Dominick LaCapra, 1999). Nevertheless, to compare is not to equate and I believe I draw a legitimate parallel.

2 In her book, Nussbaum gives examples of American cultural traits for which they can feel shame: the love of luxury, the common resentment of redistribute taxation, or the belief that the poor cause their poverty.

3 Krog is livid and desperate when former President De Klerk only gives a half-hearted apology. She writes: “When De Klerk walked out, it was as if something slipped through my fingers forever. Speechless I stand there for the Archbishop. Whence will words now come? For us. We who hang quivering and ill from this soundless space of Afrikaner past? What does one say? What the hell does one do with the decrowned skeletons, origins, shame and ash?” (Krog, 1999, p. 194).

4 Vice writes that she wants to explore not what white people should do, but how they should be.

5 At the heart of the problem is Vice’s unclear definition of shame. A difficult emotion, as I have argued, that easily is connected to narcissistic tendencies, disconnection from others, and denial of guilt. Vice’s aim is to encourage self-examination, like Krog and Nussbaum, but she never makes a distinction between “moral shame” and “primitive shame.” Vice is unaware of debates in psychology and philosophy about the nature of shame. She does suggest that solutions can be found for the white South African in becoming politically active and socially engaged, and that a commitment to self-examination is itself an attachment to justice. She is aware of the dangers that a focus on the self can become egocentric. But precisely because she does not stipulate which aspects of white selves should be scrutinized, this becomes a problem. Her suggestion that self-examination can do without public debate and instead should be related to silence seems wrong. Vice writes: “My argument for the appropriateness of feeling shame and of responding to it with silence and humility depends not on some ancient wrong done in our name, but of our own ongoing wrongdoing and their visible effects. Once again, then, the best moral response is to accept shame as both appropriate and troubling, and to turn one’s attention to the self with silence and if possible, humility.”

6 In response to Vice, some argued that we shouldn’t cultivate the right emotions, because emotions are an unreliable moral guide. Some argued that whites should instead engage more vigorously with the public debate. Repairing the past, they say, means taking the time and energy to engage in conversation. Others argue that privileged whites, precisely because of their power and position, should challenge the economic and social policies that lead to current injustices. Again, others dismiss Vice’s focus on whites, when the real issue is black empowerment.