Bounded Spaces: Demographic Anxieties in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg

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ABSTRACT: *This paper attempts to shape a way of thinking about race, crime and the increasing privatisation and enclosure of space in contemporary Johannesburg, through the concept of terror. It examines the ways in which terror fuses with the figure of the criminal to create a city of new, post-apartheid exclusions and segregations. It argues that the figures of the criminal, the boundary wall and the house are the symbolic objects of the new city, through which its internal and external geographies are being reconfigured.*

Introduction

Psychoanalysis is, after all, a spatial discipline. (Pile, 1996, p. 77)

In an attempt find new ways to think about race, crime and the increasing privatisation and enclosure of space in contemporary Johannesburg, this paper interrogates the city through the psychological concept of terror, and its geography as an externalisation of defensive object-relationships, as posited in the psychoanalysis of Klein, Bion and Winnicot.

This contributes to the body of research that, since the early 1990s, has explored the interface between fear of crime and the city (Bannister and Fyfe, 2001). By drawing on the work of Klein, notions of fear and anxiety and their relationship to the figures of the criminal, the house and the boundary wall in contemporary Johannesburg are conceptually developed.

Terror and the City

I begin with an account of the ancient city and its origins.

The most precious collective invention of civilisation, the city … became from the outset the container of disruptive internal forces, directed towards ceaseless destruction and extermination. (Mumford, 1961, p. 67)

In his monumental work, *The City in History*, Lewis Mumford (1961) established the relation, at the inception of the city, between sovereignty, war

and urban development. He proposes that war and domination, rather than peace and co-operation, lie at the heart of the original structure of the city (p. 57). From its inception, both its physical form (a walled citadel) and its institutional life (sovereignty) were structured to bring together and keep in a state of dynamic tension and interaction many functions that had been formerly scattered and unorganised throughout the countryside.[1] The ancient walled city was not just a large village, but a complex and unstable configuration structured around and kept together by the 'heavily armoured personality' of the king (Mumford, 1961, p. 52). The power of this god- or priest-king was activated by frequent exhibition through human sacrifice, enslavement, forced labour, mass destruction or by expeditions to control, subdue, or exterminate neighbouring or competing god-kings. Under the aegis of the city, violence was normalised. The city, in Mumford's words, was and still is, the 'durable, concrete form of war' (p. 58). No matter how many valuable functions it has furthered, it has, throughout its history, served as a container of organised violence and a transmitter of war.

Mumford argued further that, given this constitution, the city 'transmits a collective personality structure whose more extreme manifestations are now recognised in individuals as pathological' (p. 60). The city gives shape to a collective structure that is paranoid, suspicious of difference, and hostile, combining the maximum amount of protection with the greatest incentives to aggression.

This collective personality structure of city corresponds with what psychoanalyst Melanie Klein called the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1952), in which a human subject sees itself as persecuted by threatening and evil forces and protects itself by shutting out and projecting onto those forces all that is bad, malign or threatening. The world is constituted as a primitive one of me versus them, good versus evil, inside versus outside, black versus white.

Central to this view of the human psyche is the concept of terror. Terror, for Klein (1952), is something inherent to the human condition. 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' (Hoggett, 1992, p. 346). Fear that was imminent within our selves becomes the danger imminent within the Other. Objects which might, indeed, be threatening or violent are configured as doubly so. Others that, on the face of it, are non-malignant, different or alien, are fantasised as violent or threatening. 'I fear' becomes 'I am frightened of'; the danger within becomes the danger without. Boundaries are established and policed. Defensive violence is mobilised. The threatening Other is exiled or incarcerated, colonised or exterminated. Our fear is identified, named (albeit incorrectly), and excised, and in this way, subdued.

This internal geography of boundary and space, mapped onto that of the ancient city portrayed by Mumford, provides the starting point for my analysis of the socio-spatial and architectural processes underway in contemporary Johannesburg.

Contemporary Johannesburg

> It is the threat to the social medium of a given community … which brings about, at the social level, the experience of catastrophic anxiety which inaugurates the dynamic of defensive object relations. (Hoggett, 1992, p. 353)

In Johannesburg's transition to democracy every aspect of its social life – economic, political, spatial, cultural — is being remade. Ten years ago, the city was still a précis of apartheid. While already somewhat porous, its political geography still followed apartheid delineations, its economy was based on apartheid divisions of labour and its citizens' lives were determined by the significations of race.

Today, apartheid has ended and its boundaries have been redrawn. The city that has emerged is one that very few recognise. While, on the one hand, it is taking shape according to a political discourse whose objective is the construction of an egalitarian, integrated, non-racial future, on the other, its social and physical environments are being shaped by a new politics of closure, by new divisions and separations, new cleavages and fault lines. Rather than seeing these as part of opposing or different trajectories, they should be seen as intertwined components of the ways in which the city is emerging from its divided past.

Us and Them

> The city was still really a camp in the middle of Africa ringed by hostile tribes and the bush. (Jurgens, 2000, p. 164)

Writing in his autobiography, *The Many Houses of Exile*, of his experience of living in Johannesburg in the 1980s, Richard Jurgens (2000) articulates many of the tensions and fears then felt by white South Africa. 'It was a kind of a hell', he writes,

> the middle class hell that everyone thought was heaven … Keeping all that going, all that belief in a way of doing things, all those smaller and bigger sacrifices along the way, in the teeth of the total onslaught coming at them nightly from their TVs, the necklacings in the townships, the strikes at work, the bomb attacks — just keeping the faith in normal life, it seems was as great an effort as any religion could have demanded. (Jurgens, 2000, p. 156)

Jurgens articulates the growing sense of imminent collapse experienced by white South Africans in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Fed by images of the black townships surrounding white areas exploding in apparently irrepressible violence, of a war being fought against an unspeakable evil along the country's borders, of the brutality whereby the state machine upheld civilised values, white South Africans were in a state of persecutory anxiety alleviated only by a religious faith in the seemingly innocuous, innocent details of daily life — the

> white paradise that our forefathers journeyed, struggled, fought and died for — a pleasant suburban house, a swimming pool, two cars in the

> garage, and two servants to keep it all bright and clean. (Jurgens, 2000, p. 133)

For white South Africans, 'we' were domestic, respectable and undemanding, enjoying simple homely pleasures, good, diligent and hardworking. Against 'us' were waged the forces of evil — the savage, demented, hysterical mob we saw on television every evening. Rejoicing in destruction, hands held aloft in defiance, hurling stones or home made bombs, 'they' were young, defiant, angry, fearless, and violent.

The effect of the images was intensely physical, an affront to an orderly white paradise. While no longer able to justify the more uncomfortable of apartheid's brutal excesses, these images, for white South Africans, at least explained it — the native was indeed brutal, irrational and uncivilised.

This portrayal of blackness, this fantasy of the heartless savage, has roots deep in the imaginary of South Africa's colonial past. Low (1993) describes an image of Cetshwayo, Zulu King at the time of the Zulu Wars in the late nineteenth century, drawn for white audiences on the front cover of the *Illustrated London News* of 22 February 1879. The despot is portrayed as bloated, swathed only in a loincloth and adorned with a string of beads. He is frowning, uncompassionate, unmoving, staring directly ahead, his hands resting aggressively on his thighs. He exemplified the naked 'power and savagery' of the 'black beast/nation' against which colonial discourse asserted its 'moral superiority' (Low, 1993, p. 208).

Henry Rider Haggard, writing of his experiences in southern Africa at the same time, extended this figure in his descriptions of the orgiastic pleasure of killing by Zulu warriors on the battlefield.

> The slaughter was truly awful … and from among the shouts of warriors and the groans of the dying, set to the music of clashing spears, came a continuous hissing undertone of 'S'gee, s'gee,' the note of triumph of each victor as he passed his assegai through and through the body of his fallen foe. (Haggard, 1885, p. 254)

This Other was not human, he/she was deformed by centuries of barbarism and war and was quick to display the 'brutal excesses of the animal world' (Mbembe, 2001, p. 33). Between the native principle and the animal principle, there was hardly a difference (Fanon, 1986; Mbembe, 2001). To assert him/herself as human, the coloniser relegated the native to the status of animality.

Out of the violence and violation of this imaginary, two traditions of colonial domination developed, characterised loosely as the Hegelian and the Bergsonian (Mbembe, 2001). On the one hand, the native as animal could only be related to through violence and domination that coerced, forced, compelled, authorised, punished and rewarded. The native was the property of power. On the other, the native as animal could be domesticated. A sympathising, familiarising, domesticating violence protected, groomed and made the Other useful, ensuring nevertheless that he/she was never quite permitted to 'accede to the sphere of human possibility' (Mbembe, 2001, p. 28).

These two technologies of power, producing what Mbembe (2001, p. 175) calls an 'omnipresence of violence', permeated every space in the colonial city — from its constitution, its structures, its geography and its institutions to ordinary, banal situations in which daily acts and rituals accumulated to form what could be called the violence of everyday life.

The apartheid city was an extreme form of this colonial rationality. Not only the native, but every sub category of native was relegated to a specific zone of the city, circumscribed with barbed wire fences and check points, and presided over by barracks and police stations. Living in a permanent state of siege, his/her movements were policed and he/she was subjected to the daily violence, terror and humiliation of inspection and identity verification.

If permitted to reside or work in the white zones of the city in some or other bond of servitude, the native's experience daily reiterated the shame and self-contempt of not being fully human, of being close to the animal. For it was in the intimacy of domestic space that the colonial, in this case, the apartheid vocabulary of the native as naturally indolent, lazy, untrustworthy, incapable of thinking, of having no needs, of having no self was developed (Cock, 1989). 'When I was young', says Pumlani,

> my mother was working for a white lady and she used to tell me how her dishes were not put in the same place as her madam's dishes. They were put with the dog's dishes. It simply means the black man is a dog. (cited in Segal, Pelo and Rampa, 1999)

Apartheid's violence, like colonialism's in general, was an intimate one, an 'enterprise of domestication' (Mbembe, 2001, p. 237). Its power was enacted, not only in spectacular displays of commemoration, but in the intimate, domestic spaces of the home, the workplace, the farm, the factory. It was here that the category of the native, as both the subject and object of apartheid rule was maintained.

Imminent Catastrophe

> In every society that is composed of antagonistic groups, there is an ascent and descent of groups. It is my contention that persecutory anxiety … is produced when a group is threatened in its prestige, income or even its existence ie. when it declines and does not under-stand the historical process. (Neumann, 1960, p. 286)

One of the structural conditions of the post apartheid city is that former categories (black/white, clean/dirty, good/bad, suburb/township, order/dis-order, human/inhuman, safe/dangerous), and the geographies of boundary and space in which meaning and anxiety were contained throughout the colonial and apartheid periods have been, in the space of a mere decade, overturned. The Other, the stranger, the mob, the beast, that against which the entire edifice of apartheid had been erected, is within. Urban spaces have been rendered permeable, open to infiltration, intervention and contamination. All that apartheid so vigilantly preserved and kept at bay — wildness, brutality,

laziness, madness has entered the city. It has become, in the Bakhtinian (1984) sense, grotesque — an unbounded, uncontained, openended body. A site of violent intimacies. Where do 'we' begin and 'they' end? A deep seated anxiety prevails.

> Fear is probably the major emotion that runs the lives of white people in South Africa. The whites are scared. They are scared of all sorts of things. They are scared of a democracy under a black majority. They are rattled by the prospect of their children sitting at the same desk with black children. They are scared of black townships that sprawl menacingly outside their suburbs and the reach of comprehension … Holding the heart of the economy in their sweating palms … They agonise at the chances of a balaclava-ed thief, black like me, using the night as camouflage coming to peep into the serenity of their jewelry cases, just for the sake of revenge.

> Behold their fear for the garden boy who, despite the fact that they now call him by his birth name, prunes the roses with the same rhythmic action and uses the same amount of poisonous pesticide on the bugs that devour their blossoms. (Dikeni, 2002, p. 71)

This unsettling of boundaries, both social and spatial, is not unique to South Africa, despite being marked here by its own set of co-ordinates. Periods of similar social uncertainty have been evident in the transition from dictatorship to democracy in many Latin American countries, in the former communist states and in parts of the United States of America subject to high levels of immigration (Caldiera, 2001). In fact, they are characteristic of all periods of structural adjustment within capitalism (Hoggett, 1992).

In almost all these contexts, the consequence has been the adoption of a new politics of closure, the identification of new figures on which to project and expel unbearable psychological material, and the emergence of new techniques of exclusion and withdrawal. These remake the cognitive map of social segregation in the city and construct new references through which everyday life and social relations can be lived (Caldiera, 2001).

The Figure of the Criminal

During the apartheid years, crime in Johannesburg was confined largely to black townships. White South Africa was immunised against it by the violence of the state, designed to protect it. The criminal justice system was directed towards the policing of apartheid. Criminality, from the breaking of pass laws, to the political violence of the 1980s and early 1990s was defined largely as a negative relation to apartheid. A multitude of petty offences were criminalised through racially discriminatory laws. To be black was, almost by definition, to be a criminal, or at least potentially so. Criminality was apartheid transgressed. To be a criminal, it was sufficient to merely not know one's place in the world.

During the 1980s states of emergency, when the apartheid state faced its strongest challenge, crime in black townships increased significantly, through

politically inspired violence, state repression, state-sponsored vigilantism and third force killings.[2] The rate of increase in levels of crime peaked in 1990, the year in which political transition began, and then showed absolute increases over the next four years, with increases in the recorded levels of all crimes except murder (due to declining levels of political violence).[3]

Between 1994 and 2000, decreases in the reported levels of certain crimes occurred (bank robbery down 35%, cash in transit heists down 69%, motor car theft down 4% and murder down 23.5%) while others (hijacking up 14.7%, burglary up 32% in residential properties and 1.9% in business properties, robbery up 181% and robbery with aggravating circumstances up 39.3%, rape up 28%) have increased. South Africa still experiences one of the highest levels of violent crime in the world (Bremner, 1998; Hamber, 1999; *et al.*).

As a consequence of this and in the context of socio-economic processes that few are able to make sense of — for instance political democratisation, the transformation of institutions of law and order, economic restructuring, high levels of unemployment — crime has not only been the experience through which, for many, the transition has been lived, it has also become the imaginary through which it has been interpreted. Feelings of anxiety, impotence, loss, social decay, frustration and anger have been re-ordered through the rubric of crime. Crime has replaced race in the ordering of the city.

In her ethnographic analysis of similar processes in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Caldiera (2001) argues that the experience of crime, particularly violent crime, disrupts or ruptures experience and changes life forever. It divides time and personal history into a before and after, a then and a now, a past and a present. What was familiar and intimate then (the home, the driveway, the street, the neighbourhood) becomes alien, strange and threatening. Many victims of violent crime move house, neighbourhood, city or even country. 'The city, the house, the neighbourhood, all acquire different meanings' (Caldiera, 2001, p. 28), of which the structure is rigidly binary — familiar/unfamiliar, before/after, good/bad, certain/unstable.

Far from being an obstacle to social coherence, this permits a stable, albeit uneasy map for a world that has been irrevocably shaken to be redrawn. Ambiguities are eliminated, new boundaries created and new social identities and certainties constructed. 'I can now proudly say that I have become a genuine Jo'burger' says Sandile Dikeni (2001, p. 99), after his experience of armed robbery in the city. 'I am part of a new inside; I belong.'

In this way, crime provides a generative symbolism with which to talk about contemporary experiences perceived as alien, threatening, chaotic or bad — a black majority government, deteriorating social services, dysfunctional traffic lights, a disloyal domestic worker etc. Through the experience of crime, uncomfortable processes of social change are coded and defensive mechanisms and projections against them mobilised (see Hale, 1996, p. 84). Terror becomes the trope through which the transition is lived and made sense of.

All of this converges around a new container and embodiment of terror, the criminal. In the contemporary city, where old definitions of place and race have lost their meaning, and where 'the native' and 'ourselves' have passed into one another, it is the criminal who reestablishes boundaries, whose body

re-configures the categories of good and evil and in whose actions democratic anxieties are contained.

This criminal is not a person. It is a beast. It knows no respect for human life, savagely maiming and killing for no apparent reason other than the pleasure of it. It has no limits other than the limits of its own body. Like an animal, it leaps over walls, smashes windows and infiltrates spaces inaccessible to normal human beings. It is anonymous, stealthy, covert, usually operating under cover of darkness. Its actions are incisive, targeted and lethal. Known only fleetingly, if at all, in the intimacy of the violent encounter, or by the traces it leaves — a dead body, a disordered house, a broken window, the criminal is an alien and terrifying figure.

An advertisement for 'Maxidoor' burglar proofing (*Homemakers Fair Magazine*, 2002, p. 96) represents the criminal as only a vaguely defined, black, menacing shadow. His/her victim is white, young, blue eyed and female, caught in alarm at her front door. She is sharply defined, her attacker only vaguely so. And yet his/her presence is that which confers definition on her and makes sense of her world.

This is the symbolic value of the criminal. He/she is the receptacle (in a Kleinian sense) for all the anxieties about lack, non-being, brutality and terror, liberated by the transition, formerly contained for white South Africa in the figure of the native. The criminal offers a new imaginary through which to establish continuity between the certainties of the past, the uncertainties of the present and the unknown-ness of the future.

In a groundbreaking piece of research by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg (CSVR, 1998 and Segal, Pelo and Rampa, 1999), the human contours of this figure are prised slightly open. Through interviews conducted with black male youth involved in a range of criminal activities (from pick pocketing and mugging to armed robbery, hijacking, murder and rape), the criminal took shape, not as the 'demonic or cruel looking individual so often portrayed on television', but as an 'often innocent looking, soft spoken and intelligent young man' (CSVR, 1998, p. 2).

Common to these young men was a fragmented sense of self, lacking in cohesion. Most, though not all, were poor. Criminal activity offered the promise, not only of lucrative economic resources, but also, a way to gather a fragmented self together, to belong, to become a man (see Campbell, 1993). It supported a lifestyle of glamour and hedonism (cars, designer clothes, women), turning the youngsters into objects of attraction in their own communities and conferring upon them success and status.

> If I steal your car and drive to a party with my girlfriend, everybody will go, 'What a car he's driving and every girl will wish to be in love with me'. (CSVR, 1998, p. 7)

Journalist Heidi Holland (2002) describes her encounter, some years ago, with a group of such youth in a cramped room in Pimville, Soweto. The youths are watching 'The Bold and the Beautiful', the Hollywood soap opera screened daily in South Africa. In it wealthy, white men and women engage in never

ending trysts in lavishly styled family settings, with no apparent need of ever having to work. The youths are mesmerised. Holland is told what is to follow.

> They will drive in the white man's streets, looking for a house or a car. They are thinking about 'The Bold and the Beautiful'; all that is going on in the beautiful houses where the whites have too much money, every-thing, and we black dogs have nothing. That is why we watch 'The Bold and the Beautiful'. It reminds us how much the whites have got. It gives us strength and courage to spin and maybe rape … We are not scared. (Holland, 2002, p. 110)

The white man's body, the white man's possessions, the white man's home, given form and meaning through the narrative and images of 'The Bold and the Beautiful', become the figures of the black youths' lack, of their non-being, of their annihilation, and, therefore the objects of both their violence and their desire.

These young men, having spent their childhoods in an environment where life was not worth a thing (CSVR, 1998, p. 3), having witnessed their parents humiliation by poverty and the violence of having been reduced to nothing (Mbembe, 2001), and having, in a sense, been so overwhelmed by this badness that they have found no means of expelling, give meaning to their lives, firstly through the senseless violence and killing of the embodiment of goodness (the white man/woman's body, his/her children, his/her homes), and secondly by appropriating this goodness through the mediation of objects (BMW's, La Coste t-shirts, RoccoBorroco sunglasses etc.), receptacles of desire for all they will never have, and for a physical and psychic space they will be forever trapped outside. Their crime is an attempt at inner reparation (Tolleson, 1997).

Bounded Spaces

> At that edge, in between the black body and the white body, there is a tension of meaning and being, or some would say demand and de-sire … both psychic and political. (Bhabha, 1986, p. xxii)

Despite the proliferation of crime across the Johannesburg landscape, and statistical evidence that indicates that violent crime is still far higher in former township areas than in wealthy suburbs (Hamber *et al.*, 1999), it is around the violation of the white body in domestic space that the image of the criminal has been most potently deployed, that an entire security industry has been created and the space of the city has been reconfigured. The snug suburbs, tree lined streets, sprawling lawns, suburban homes, have become the new topos of violent encounter between black and white.

> In the pre-revolutionary 80s the air was sweet over Jo'burg's northern suburbs. Scents of gardenia and pool chlorine floated softly in the night … The streets and houses behind clipped hedges were so open and friendly at night. Blue gums and stone-apple pines breathed in the early dew … good times epitomised … I loved those suburbs with their

> redolent English-sounding names — Killarney, Parkwood, Saxon-wold,Houghton … these neighbourhoods were paradise on earth. But they were tainted by their innocence of their own decadence — their absurd fantasy that theirs was life as it should normally be. They were going to go. (Jurgens, 2001, p. 163)

These suburbs have indeed gone. They been infiltrated, invaded, and brutalised by acts of so called less serious crime — motor vehicle theft and burglary. Almost always, these acts have been accompanied by extreme violence and brutality — the taking of hostages, murder, rape and violent assault. The CSVR (1999) research corroborates a nihilistic attitude to violence and killing, in which 'the death inflicted on a human being is perceived as embracing nothing' (Mbembe, 2001, p. 200). Violence is enlivening for those engaged in crime.

The response by those living in targeted areas has been to mobilise every possible defensive mechanism against the violence — burglar proofing, burglar alarms, electric fencing, high walls, steel gates, automatic garage doors. Those who can afford to, move into one of the gated security suburbs on the city's burgeoning periphery. Those who cannot, demarcate their street or neighbourhood from the public realm by fencing it off and restricting access. Private security guards man the gates and patrol the suburbs. A widespread aesthetic of security prevails.

This reaction to crime is more than something tangible and visible and its meaning more significant. In fact, it often fails to achieve its objectives of protection against crime (Blakely and Snyder, 1998). It is an 'architypology of the imaginary' (Mazzoleni, 1993, p. 228) whereby the privileged are giving meaning to the changing social order around them, regrouping themselves, bringing together the fragments of their existence and reordering their threatened psychic landscape. Through the re-establishment of the boundary and the deployment of defensive technologies, the world is restructured into an us and them, an inside and outside, good and evil, black and white. 'Ordered in its fragmentariness, regimented in its chaos, safe in its fearfulness' (Hoggett, 1992, p. 346), the city is normalised. Badness is expelled and terror kept at bay.

The primary spatial/architectural figures through which this drama is being enacted are the boundary wall and the house. Johannesburg today is a city of walls, substitutes for the invisible walls of apartheid through which the Other was kept in its place (Lewinberg, 2002). The wall is, in a sense, the figure of our democracy, a reminder of the malignant object, the terror within. In Johannesburg, the violent intrusion of a real and alien Other, the criminal, into the physical space of the privileged, fuses with a fear of having been overrun by a phantasised alien Other, the native. Through the building of walls, these external threats and internal anxieties are contained. Like in the ancient city, the wall brings a sense of safety and security. It frees the world of strangers, of the Other, of disruptions and intrusions. It stabilises the world, brings peace of mind. The wall is the figure of the new political order, indicating, not that democracy has not gone far enough, but that it has been too far reaching, too unsettling, too profound.

Democracy has produced new citizens, new collectivities and new symbolic rituals of integration (sporting events, television commercials, public holidays, public private partnership deals, black empowerment business ventures, for example). At the same time, the boundary wall, with its smooth, closed surfaces, repulsive electromagnetic fields and tight, guarded openings, has become the ubiquitous ordering element of the new city. Democracy has produced fear, not as its opposite, but as its inescapable double. They are both 'irreducible to each other and inextricably interrelated' (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 13). As political, social and economic barriers have broken down, anxiety has ensured that others have been erected.

All over the city, alongside or adjacent its walls, at every access boom or gate, little pitched roofed booths provide shelter for the security personnel who control access to the precinct inside. Made of timber, providing basic comforts, these shelters house the bodies of those employed as human shields against crime to guard and protect the lives of those within. They are the rudimentary forms of the elaborate entry pavilions to security suburbs whose sprawling tiled eaves, gable walls or columned porticoes domesticate what is essentially a piece of security apparatus, configuring access pavilion as house.

Across history, the house has been seen as a spatialisation or concretisation of the body (Rykwert, 1972; Mazzolini, 1993). At moments of catastrophe, when the body threatens to become topologically discontinuous — as at birth, death, or in sexual intercourse, the house substitutes for the body, providing its continuity and ensuring that it does not disintegrate. 'The walls of the house carry the same function as … we experience in the skins of our own bodies' (Mazzoleni, 1993, p. 292). It contains catastrophe and composes chaos.

That the house is the other figure containing anxiety and giving meaning to experience in contemporary Johannesburg is no accident. It is the substitute skin for the bodies that have been violently punctured, fractured, dismembered, violated or killed, overcoming the 'gashes' dug by the criminal in the 'belly of inhabited space' (Mbembe, 2001, p. 199). The house gathers the body up, puts it back together. It is the 'archetypal idea and form that carries the energy of death back into life' (Eisenman, undated, p. 11), the figure through which the continuity of life is assured. It translates the house of the dead into the city of survival.

In contemporary Johannesburg however, the figure of the house carries additional meanings and transmits other continuities. Located at the entrance to the internal space of the new collective, the 'gated community', it is the site of a double domestication. Firstly, it controls the movements of feared and desired but dangerous outsiders. It is the site of rituals of humiliation and identification where new signifiers of segregation are mobilised ('a tie, a suit and a nice car often enough to be waved past', Blakely and Snyder, 1998, p. 141). It is where conditions of entry and definitions of acceptable behaviour are defined. The house, as it was under apartheid, is a signifier and an instrument of categorisation and segregation.

Secondly, it is the site where the most intimate of apartheid's violences — the domestication of the black person — is re-enacted. The private security

industry has, since 1980, been one of the fastest growing sectors in the South African economy, with an annual growth rate of 18% (Shaw, 1977, p. 20). In 1978 it had an annual turnover of R141 million; in 1999, this had increased to R8 billion (Schonteich, 1999). Companies provide proactive patrolling, electronic guarding and armed response functions, with the vast majority of their personnel being black. For many black men, security is the only opportunity, other than crime, for inclusion in the new economic and socio-political order.

In countless little booths around the city, these black men so employed police the boundaries between inside and outside, order and chaos, privilege and terror. In doing so, they re-enact apartheid's violence on them — they are uniformed, trained, sometimes armed, and thereby domesticated. Their bodies are made useful, transfigured as supports for the privileged. They are transformed from unknown 'Other', into domesticated protector, from potential evil into good, from criminal into guard. A new form of colonisation is instituted.

Outside these collective houses, the true vulgarities of its architectures are revealed. For there the city is uncontained, violent, carnavalesque. It disintegrates and expands chaotically. It has no measure, no limits, no inside, no outside. Its movements surge and retract. It howls, leaps, spins, quakes.

And the worst of it, for those behind the walls, is the suspicion that this vortex of passionate and uncontrolled urbanity might not be so alien, so strange, so 'Other' after all; that it might be something created by their own malignancy, and that their humanity and their society's future might only be assured when the anxiety it provokes is confronted and contained.

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Notes

1. Mumford (1961) notes that, in Spartan culture, where no cities existed and people continued to live in wall-less open villages, the ruling classes had to remain 'savagely alert' (p. 63) at all times. Walled cities economically intensified both anxiety and aggression.
2. According to police figures, over this period, serious offences rose by 22%, less serious ones by 17%, murder by 32%, rape by 24% and burglary by 31% (Shaw, 1977 in Bremner, 1998, p. 53). Ignorance, silence, guilt, distance and apartheid's networks of complicity lay between white South Africa and this inhuman reality.
3. From 1990 to 1994, murder decreased by 7%, while assault increased by 18%, rape by 42%, robbery by 40%, vehicle theft by 34% and burglary by 20% (Shaw, 1977 in Bremner, 1998, p. 54).

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