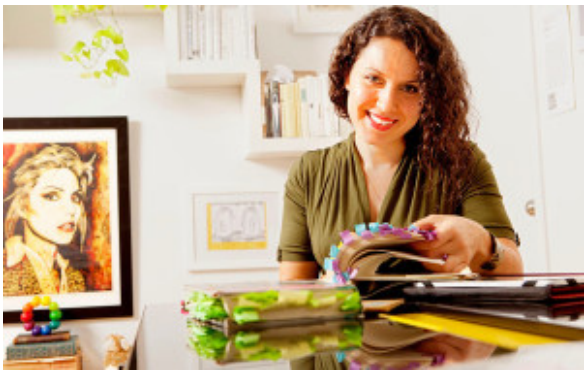
Brain Pickings



Maria Popova. Photograph by Elizabeth Lippman for The New York Times

Brain Pickings is the brain child of Maria Popova, an interestingness hunter-gatherer and curious mind at large, who has also written for *Wired* UK, *The New York Times*, Harvard's Nieman Journalism Lab, and *The Atlantic*, among others, and is an MIT Futures of Entertainment Fellow.

Brain Pickings is a human-powered discovery engine for interestingness, a subjective lens on what matters in the world and why, bringing you things you didn't know you were interested in — until you are. Founded in 2006 as a weekly email that went out to seven friends and eventually brought online, the site was included in the Library of Congress permanent web archive in 2012. Here's a little bit about my 7 most important learnings from the journey so far.

Most of all, *Brain Pickings* is a record of my own becoming as a person — intellectually, creatively, spiritually — and an inquiry into that grand question of how to live, of what it means to lead a good life.

Enjoy: http://www.brainpickings.org/

African Activist Archive Project

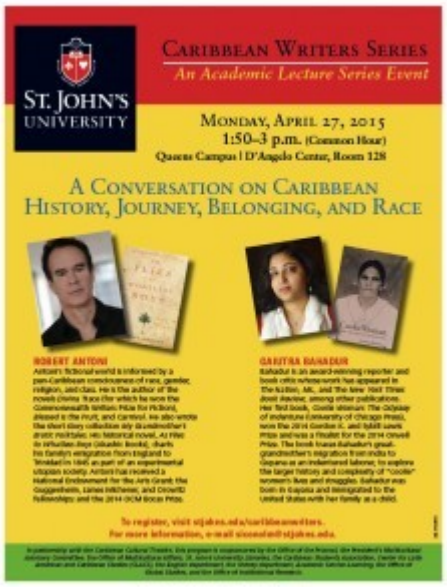
The *African Activist Archive* is preserving and making available online the records of activism in the United States to support the struggles of African peoples against colonialism, apartheid, and social injustice from the 1950s through the 1990s. The website includes:

– growing online archive of historical materials – pamphlets, newsletters, leaflets, buttons, posters, T-shirts, photographs, and audio and video recordings
– personal remembrances and interviews with activists
– an international directory of collections deposited in libraries and archives

The African Activist Archive Project is collaborating with activists across the U.S. who supported African liberation struggles to create this online archive of more than 5,000 items. The project also assists individuals and groups to deposit their collections in public repositories, including the African Activist Archive collections in the Michigan State University Libraries.

Read more: http://africanactivist.msu.edu

The Caribbean Commons



Welcome to the *Caribbean Commons* blog. Begun as part of the Caribbean Epistemologies Seminar at the CUNY Graduate Center, this blog primarily announces Caribbean Studies CFPs, events, and publications of interest to those in the Northeast US. It also archives information from the CE Seminar. Blog run by *Kelly Baker Josephs*.

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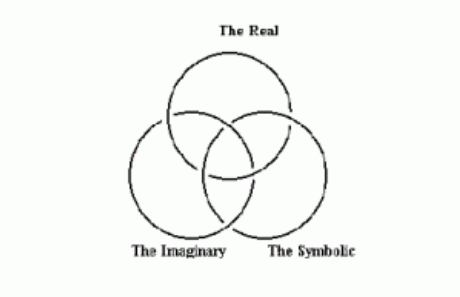
Reconfiguring Apartheid Loss: Reading The Apartheid Archive

Through A Lacanian Lens



Lacan's Three Registers of Human Reality

Abstract.
This paper, the first of two focussed on the topic of libidinal attachments between white children and black domestic workers in narratives contributed to the Apartheid Archive Project (AAP), offers a series of methodological insights derived from a Lacanian type of psychoanalytic reading practice. A Lacanian reading practice is one which emphasizes the importance of symbolic juxtaposition, of recombining different facets of texts, and of attempting to locate what I term the "absent mediator" implied by tacit conjunctions and associations within texts. In this paper I focus particularly on a puzzling aspect shared by a series of contributions to the AAP, namely the role of animals in the narratives of white participants, which appear to emerge precisely when the question of a loving relation for a black person is posed. I argue that this narrative device is an attempt to make sense of a prospective relationship, particularly when such a relationship is effectively prohibited by the prevailing rules of interaction. In response to pressing questions of inter-racial loss and love, and in respect of an ambiguous inter-racial relationship, recourse to an animal provides a fantasmatic "solution", a model of how to manage a relationship that otherwise difficult to understand.

Keywords: Absent mediators, Apartheid Archive, Lacan, psychoanalysis, racism

Introduction
One of the unintended consequences of apartheid's massive injustices of social division and inequality was – paradoxically – the production of relations of *racial proximity*. This pinpoints one of apartheid's internal contradictions: as its white

beneficiaries came increasingly to rely on the domestic labour provided by an oppressed black population, so a series of intimate white spheres – the site of the home, and more particularly, the care of children – were effectively opened up to "inter-racial" contact. It is for this reason that, psychoanalytically, the literature discussing the relationship of white children and black – childminders ("nannies") (Cock, 1980 & 2011; Motsei, 1990; Ally, 2009) is so crucial to an understanding of the libidinal economy of apartheid. This literature speaks to the presence of intimacy within structures of power, to the factor of affective attachments, sexual and familial alike, occurring across seemingly impassable divisions of race.

Mbembe (2008) uses the phrase "disjunctive inclusions" in his description of those figures that were, as we might put it, "included out" of the structured inequality of apartheid. His interest are close to my own, certainly inasmuch as he uses this term to refer to the ambiguous inclusions of black subjects in apartheid's cities, such as, precisely, "black nannies" who were permitted, to live on white properties. This poses the general question of racial intimacies in apartheid, and it directs us to childhood reminiscences produced by contributors to the Apartheid Archive Project (AAP), a collaborative research undertaking that has collected and analysed a corpus of narratives on the experience of apartheid racism see: http://www.apartheidarchive.org/site/.
The AAP aims not only to record such narratives, itself an important aim in remembering history, but also to engage thoughtfully and theoretically with the narratives. As such the AAP encourages both acommitment to personal remembering and a joint intellectual commitment to interrogating narratives rather than taking them at face value (Hook & Long, 2011).

The first of the key topics of this paper can thus be specified by means of a question: how were such "disjunctive inclusions" managed, psychologically, by children, and, more precisely, by white children in particular**[i]**? A second key objective follows on from the first, as its pragmatic methodological consequence: how we might contribute to aform of psychoanalytic discourse analysis suitable to the task of analysing narrative texts of apartheid. It is in reference to the emerging area of Lacanian discourse analysis (see Glynos & Stavrakakis, 2003; Parker, 2005; Pavón Cuéllar, 2010; Neill, 2013) that I hope to make a contribution. Before moving on to the first of the narratives that I want to consider, it helps to provide a little more detail on the scope of the narratives, and how they were collected. The AAP is comprised of a group of some 25 local and

international researchers from a variety of backgrounds. All of the researchers have themselves submitted narratives to the project.

Narratives have also been solicited from other academics, students and members of the South African public. The AAP offers an unusual richness, both in terms of who has contributed to the corpus of narratives and in view of the heterogeneity of the researchers writing about the archive. All working from the same bank of narratives, the researchers have "offered a range of analyses aimed at understanding apartheid history and its sometimes enacted, sometimes denied resonance in the present" (Hook & Long, 2011:3). Let us turn then to one of the texts prepared for inclusion in the AAP, a text of particular relevance given our current concerns:

A man named Dyson worked for my parents. He was affectionate and good-willed man, generous, and he was loved by the family. I remember him always at work in the kitchen. He was considered a good man, trustworthy. In the racist codes of the time he was a "good African" by which was meant that he was faithful, self-sacrificing and big -hearted. He was no doubt, in colonial parlance, a "kitchen boy". I guess that for significant periods in my first years I was under his care. Perhaps there were carefree times before an awareness of race came into play and I was genuinely effusive and natural with him. I can only hope so. I don't know how and when a change occurred – even for sure that one did– but I do remember at a certain point becoming excessively formal with him, avoidant, distanced, as if a type of enacted superiority and distance had become necessary.

Try as I might I cannot think of touching him, of any loving physical contact, although I am sure that there must have been. This still puzzles me: at what point was it that I became rigid, aware of the need to keep myself apart, to be aloof. These were the appropriate behavioural codes, the implicit rules of contact that I had assimilated. I was aware that Dyson, despite his smiling and forgiving nature had registered the change in my behaviour and was, I think, saddened by it, yet nonetheless respectful of the stance I had taken.

The time came when the decision was made to leave Zimbabwe. It was a difficult parting; new homes had to be found for the dogs – a particular focus of tears and disbelief for me on the eve of our departure – and a reliable family needed to take over the mortgage of the house that couldn't be sold under such short notice. The most awful moment in all of this for me, the most poignant and irreversible, was to see Dyson crying, distraught, seemingly inconsolable, on the day we left. Worse

yet than this heartbreaking feeling for me was the sense that I could not now break the façade and run up to him and hug him goodbye. I needed now to maintain the self-conscious role of distance and coolness that I had imposed.

Part of what shames me about this episode is that I went beyond the explicit prescriptions governing racial interaction; I enacted a more extreme type of coldness and detachment than was required. The distance I affected could not have been derived from my mother, who always seemed far more at ease, natural in her interactions with Africans. My lack of demonstrativeness may simply have been a case of not knowing how. Not just a willed aloofness, but perhaps also a sense of simply not being able – certainly not within the codes of white racist masculinity – to express love for Dyson. That is what continues to disturb: the fact that I was responsible for this. I had not merely mimed a "white man's bearing", that is, a deportment of racial superiority, I had taken it upon myself to exaggerate it, to exceed what may have been expected of me by my parents and grand-parents. The words "I loved Dyson" seem both historically true and yet not subjectively real; factual, and yet difficult to personalize. What is far easier to imagine is that my parents had loved Dyson. This poses the question: where in my childhood unconscious did I place Dyson? Did I ever question his role – as surely I must have – as a member of my family …? An uncle …? Was Dyson my "other daddy" (conceivable perhaps as the good, ever-present daddy relative to the strict white daddy who seemed at times less approachable)?

Was there ever a time that I addressed him as such? How would I have been corrected? What other faux pas might I and other white children in such racially – charged situations have made on the way to assimilating the rules of racialized existence? More significant perhaps was the fact that such mistakes – so I would guess – were very infrequently made. Perhaps if and when they did happen, they were so vigorously repressed that they were never repeated. Perhaps this was the missing antecedent to my reserve and distance in respect of Dyson – a faux pas of the heart? Why is it, however, that I feel so sure that I never made any such mistake with him?

It is worthwhile offering a few brief analytical comments on the above text. There is an echo of a key signifier in the first few lines; the word "good" is repeatedly attached to the figure of Dyson (this is even more apparent in the longer version of the text from which the extract is drawn). Psychoanalytically we may pose that there is a form of idealization occurring here which functions both perhaps as a

defence (against knowing Dyson, against a more fully – rounded, non – stereotypical view of him …?) and as an element in the racist logic of "one good native", that is the praise of the rare trustworthy black man who is the exception that proves the rule.

More immediately evident perhaps is the indecision exemplified in the text, the vacillation between direct assertions and equivocation. The author claims not to have known how and when a change occurred, even if one did, despite going on to discuss, in definitive terms, the change itself ("I do remember …"). The framing of key postulates in terms of questioning, doubt, even negation is, psychoanalytically, a potential indication of repressed material. There are many such examples in the text: "perhaps there were carefree times …"; "I cannot think of touching him", "I never made any such mistake with him", and so on. The tacitcont radictions in the text – which, like much of white post – apartheid writing adopts the genre of a confessional (Nuttall, 2010) – are instructive. Take for example the repeated argument that the author may not have known how, or was simply unable, to express affection for Dyson, despite the suggestion that at an earlier time this had indeed been possible. Such evasions are then followed by an admission of responsibility for "racist deportment". One of course needs to allow the author the latitude to develop and (re)consider a position within the course of a narrative. That being said, the movement of the text between these subject – positions – as determined by, or agent of racism – suggests that a "get – out clause" has been retained, that the issue at hand (a confessed responsibility) has not as of yet been fully resolved.

Notable too are the apparent *absences* on display, particularly apropos the subject's apparent love for Dyson, qualified as not real but true, factual but not personalized, and seemingly delegated to his parents, all of these are potential markers of repression. Here the gaps, the missing pieces in the text, speak powerfully. As in the case of negative hallucination, there is a strong declaration that something is not there, yet this apparently non – existent object nonetheless needs to be carefully avoided, denied. Such conspicuous evasions point to the prospect of a latent belief. In the same vein, we might ask whether the question: "did I ever call him [daddy] …?" reveals something of fantasy, which is not of course to assert that the child ever said anything of the sort, but merely to aver that such a relation had been the topic of fantasy. That is to say, this relationship begged a response, a degree of imaginative speculation. It posed the question of

how the subject might understand himself relative to the opaque social relationship he is presented with. Such a relationship in which both familial bond and racialized "master" and "subordinate" roles are invoked, is difficult to comprehend, it begs a type of formalization which fantasy might provide.

A further point of interest concerns something of only peripheral importance at first glance, the author's brief mention of the dogs that will be left behind. This is clearly a narrative laden with affect, shot through with questions of emotional expression and reserve; nonetheless this is the single moment in the text where the narrator gives his emotions free reign ("a particular focus of tears"). We might risk the interpretation that what cannot be openly shown toward Dyson is expressed elsewhere, in the form of a substitute object. An additional line of questioning is sparked here, one which points to a puzzling aspect shared by a number of the narratives contributed by white South Africans. What is the role of the animals that are so frequently introduced into these texts; what is their narrative function; at what precise point do they appear within the narrative?

Bridging disjuncture

In earlier discussions of psychoanalytic discourse analysis (Hook, 2011), I have tried to emphasize how it may be necessary to employ a matrix of latent meanings to make guesses at what is "repressed" within a given utterance. There are of course many ways in which we may go about doing this; many of the suggestions I made in respect of the above narrative aim to develop just such an array of latent meanings. One of the richest possible sources of methodological inspiration for such an undertaking is, of course, Freud's (1900) approach to dream analysis. While a detailed mining of the various "methodological" principles offered in *The interpretation of dreams* for the particular purposes of Lacanian discourse analysis has not yet, unfortunately, been undertaken, Lapping's (2011) elaboration of guidelines for psychoanalytic social research has yielded a series of important methodological suggestions. Discussing how Freud's idea of the overdetermination of images, symbols and signifiers in dreams may be applied to discourse analysis, Lapping (2011: 68) notes that "details that appear as insignificant or as having little psychic intensity may in fact be covering over the most intense psychical … forces". She (ibid: 71) stresses the need to identify associative tugs against dominant narratives, and emphasizes the importance of "attending to elements that connote symbolic relations outside the linear narratives of a dominant discourse". Crucially, she also remarks: [A]pparently

cohesive accounts cover over a set of more complicated relations, and they pose questions that invert the obviousness of what they are seeing … [D]ominant discourse is unsettled by the construction of a symbolic juxtaposition (ibid:72).

How might we expand upon this methodological speculation? More precisely, how might we utilize a strategy of symbolic juxtaposition to trace the unconscious of a text?
One answer: by staggering two or more seemingly discontinuous elements within a given narrative. The idea of overlaying apparently disconnected scenes as an interpretative tactic is something familiar to students of psychoanalysis. A personal example suffices. I started a session (as an analysand) complaining about a work colleague who had, I thought, unfairly snubbed me. I discussed some other banal events of the previous day, and then suddenly recalled an incident in a prison where I used to work as an honorary psychotherapist. A prisoner had recently told me how he never lost his temper. Should someone do him an injustice he would bide his time, wait till the person was totally at ease, and then, when he l east expected it, stab him in the back. No great analytical nous is needed to pose an interpretative hypothesis here: I, presumably, wanted to do just this to the work colleague: to stab him violently in the back.

This is of course a crude example, and the tentative reading I have suggested remains open to different interpretations. One might speculate that the desire in question was far more paradoxical or masochistic in nature, that, for example, I may have wished to be stabbed in the back. There certainly is room to go further here, particularly if we take seriously the idea that a successful interpretation should surprise the analysand. The assumption here of course is that a successful interpretation touches precisely on repressed material, on ideas that a subject disavows, that they cannot "own" as pertaining to them (hence the surprise factor). The above interpretation might be seen as less than surprising – although it did in fact produce a mild shock in me – as in need of further, more developed interpretation.

Here it is worth noting that, from a Lacanian perspective attentive to the role of the signifier, the verbal formula "stab him in the back" is an idiom with various metaphoric extensions. This formula – an effective shorthand for betrayal – could be the persistent signifier underlying the generation of a dream image or, as in this case, the seemingly spontaneous recollection of a memory. It is worth emphasizing the poly-vocal, overdetermined and, indeed, *re-interpretable*, quality

of the signifier in question so as to avoid the pattern of formulaic interpretations that the worst of psychoanalysis is infamous for. I am thinking of course of the endless regurgitation of a finite series of conceptual motifs – castration anxiety and penis envy would be two classic and not unproblematic Freudian examples – and superimposition of a series of caricatured themes as explanatory scripts for virtually any situation**[ii]**. The Lacanian emphasis on signifiers rather than merely symbols would help then move us away from any one single reductive sexual reading of the formula in question (the sexual connotation of "to be stabbed" is clear), without of course definitively ruling it out.

What the stabbing example brings home – if for the moment we credit the first interpretation as valid ("I want to stab my colleague in the back") – is the need to attend to the form of what is being said. Unconscious desire, that is to say, is never simply stated, afforded first-person propositional form. It appears instead as the result of the combination of elements, as an implicit but not obvious relation between them. Leader (2003: 44) puts this as follows: "when a wish cannot be expressed in a proposition ('I want to kill daddy'), it will take the form of a relation, a relation in which the 'I' is missing" . This is one way of understanding Lacan's (1992: 126) insistence that "half -saying is the internal law of any kind of enunciation of the truth", namely that we need to ask what hypothetical idea emerges "in between" two apparently unrelated narrative fragments once juxtaposed.

We might offer this as a methodological maxim for psychoanalytically – informed types of discourse analysis: treat the effect of intercalation – that is, the posited insertion of an implicit connection, a posed relation between two disconnected narrative elements – as a modality of unconscious expression. Freud's description of dream – pairs proves a helpful means of expanding upon this idea. If a dream – wish has as its content some forbidden behaviour towards an individual, says Freud, " then that person may appear in the first dream undisguised, while the behaviour is only faintly disguised" (1932: 27). In the second dream however we would expect that "[t]he behaviour will be openly shown … but the person made unrecognizable… [or] some indifferent person substituted for him" (ibid:27). Commenting on this passage, Leader (2003) points out that Lacan's thesis, following the influence of Lévi-Strauss, advances upon Freud's.
It is not simply then the case that a forbidden thought would be disguised, hidden via means of substitutions of subject, object or indeed act itself – although

presumably one would want to keep such a possibility open – it is rather that the forbidden thought "only exists … as a slippage between the one and the other" (Leader, 2003: 44).
Leader (ibid: 44) continues: "A man has two dreams … In one, he loses a blood-soaked tooth and stares at it in absolute horror. In the other, his penis is being examined in a medical test and no problems are found. Neither of the dreams represents castration as such, but it is in the relation between the two that the reference is to castration is situated."

Leader's conclusion? "When something cannot be expressed as a meaningful proposition, it will take the form of a relation between two sets of elements" (2003: 47). There is a more direct way of making the same point, as applied to the task of discourse analysis. When confronted then by an instance of narrative disjuncture – or, clinically, by a sequence of ostensibly disconnected thoughts – we should ask: what implicit link between these elements has been "subtracted"? Or, put slightly differently: what is the absent mediator which would need to be reconstructed if the connection between scenes is to be understood? The factor of "what is not there" is hence vital, much as is the case in Freud's famous (1919) discussion of beating fantasies, also discussed by Leader (2000), where the various permutations offered by the patient ("my father is beating a child", "a child is being beaten", "my mother is beating a child") never includes the crucial formulation "I am being beaten by my father", which of course, pinpoints the unconscious fantasy. Freud is only able to arrive at this missing element via a construction, that is, by positing what is the missing formula in a sequence might be, a formula which can be deduced from but is by no means contained within the variants which precede and follow it.

Let us now turn to a second Apartheid Archive narrative, one in which the effect of narrative disjunction is apparent:
It is a lazy Sunday afternoon … I am bored, and I need to ask Phyllis something. I burst into her room. The door was half shut I think, but I have no respect for her privacy, there are no boundaries between her space and mine. The scene on the bed is a surprise to me, I live in the sexually repressive days of apartheid. These scenes are "cut" from the movies that I watch at the cinema. The beautiful tall man enmeshed with Phyllis becomes the hero of my novel written into a lined exercise book in the long hours of the weekend and evenings before lights out.

Of course I am the heroine, but I am myself, not Phyllis, a bit older though as I

want to be enveloped in his arms too. We are having a relationship across the "colour bar"; he is a young activist, organising… a stone – throw away from where I live. It is 1976, he is becoming increasingly politically active. He is a leader. I am in love with him, and of course I am against apartheid. He is murdered, like so many other young men of the time, at the brutal hands of those masquerading as public protectors. I survive, to join the struggle, to tell the tale. Phyllis also plays a role in the book, a small part. I am ashamed now for walking into her room.

Notions of "us" and "them", difference and "otherness" are central to my early constructions of the world. But it is complicated. The community I grow up in is so tightly woven, based on notions of a shared history, religion, culture, we only know each other. I am at preschool with the same children that I matriculate with. I hardly ever meet or even speak with a member of an "other" community. Of course apartheid and other discriminatory practices are woven into the fabric of our day – to – day lives, but my primary sense of difference is about who is part of my community and who is not. There are always Black women living with us. Not a part of the family, but living on the premises of our home. They perform the submissive role of servant, yet I know they have power too. Since my mother is absent, all of us know where we can get our comfort, enfolded in the large warmth of our "nanny's" arms.

In our house, in an area reserved then for white people only, there is a separate unit for domestic workers attached to the house. Two rooms with a bathroom between them. Phyllis lives in one of those rooms. Besides my sister, she is my favourite person in the world in those years – she is young, beautiful, full of fun. When she is angry with us, she knocks us on the head with her third finger, it is so painful we shriek, but it passes very quickly, unlike some other pains I know. She brought the chicken to our house, which became our pet as it raced around our garden clucking. When it disappeared one day, only to reappear on our dinner table, my long commitment to vegetarianism began!

Sometimes, as we rough and tumble, which I catch a hint of the sweet-sour scent of Phyllis's addiction to alcohol. She also died young, just like my hero, ultimately a consequence of the same violence. I found this out much later. I never knew her story. I never asked her. Just wrote my own.

The narrator in the above extract bursts in on a sexual scene, a scene which prompts an imaginative foray into Phyllis's world. The aspect of fantasy seems in

this respect clear: the description has a noticeably cinematic aspect ("I am the heroine"), it is clearly indexed as fictitious (he becomes "the hero of my novel"), and it maintains a masturbatory quality. This projection of the author into an "other scene" appears however to stop short of identification. The author sees herself, a little older, as the beautiful tall man's lover, and plainly states: "I am myself, not Phyllis".

Crucial also is the element of appropriation; the beautiful man is now her lover and Phyllis is reduced to a minor character ("Phyllis also plays a role in the book, a small part"). That is to say, the predominant mode of identification here seems to be the hysterical identification with the place of another which is to be distinguished from identifications based on a loving bond that entails an internalization or replication of the other. To reiterate the elementary psychoanalytic qualification: hysterical identifications are essentially opportunistic; one can be wholly indifferent to the figure of identification, who proves merely the vessel of identification by means of which the identifying subject attains a desired object or position. Phyllis, in short, becomes the imaginative vehicle that enables the narrator to live out the romantic vision of a heroic woman against apartheid. It is via Phyllis and her lover that the narrator becomes able "to join the struggle, to tell the tale".

The mid-section of the narrative provides some of the socio-historical context (a "tightly woven" white community in which "we only know each other") explaining why difference becomes such a fantasmatic (and indeed sexual) preoccupation. What also becomes apparent here is the necessity of a mediator – an object of sorts – to manage a relationship between the narrator and the black domestic worker. This is a relationship which is both intimate ("all of us know where we can get our comfort") and yet nonetheless contractual ("They perform the submissive role of servant"); it is simultaneously "familial" and yet decidedly not. I made this point at the outset of the paper, that the conditions of apartheid led to such contradictions, the prospect of loving attachments ("comfort, enfolded in the … warmth of our nanny's arms", "… she is my favourite person in the world"), indeed, even of erotic attraction, occurring within a oppressive, hierarchical, racially-structured social relations.

The problem that is constituted by the relationship with Phyllis is underscored by the narrator's comment that her "primary sense of difference is about who is part of my community and who is not". This is a puzzling relationship to make sense of.

Phyllis, who is both a part and not a part of the narrator's family (or, as she puts it, of the "premises of our home") is difficult to place in the given set of symbolic familial roles. I should add here the obvious qualification that the nature of this relationship and Phyllis's potentially ambiguous status within it were of course very well defined within the framework of apartheid itself which provided the discourse and associated social norms of "nannies", "domestic workers". As many of the Apartheid Archive narratives make abundantly clear, apartheid rationality was thoroughly ingrained within white South African children who understood their prerogatives all too well (as in the narrator's admission: "I have no respect for her privacy"). Crucial to grasp however is that apartheid ideology nonetheless exhibited clear social contradictions that could not always be explained away, and that inevitably sparked a type of fantasy, which we can understand as an attempt to make sense of incongruous social roles and identities.

These considerations go some way perhaps to explaining what at first seems an anomalous element in the unfolding narrative: the chicken that becomes the family pet and that abruptly turns up on the dinner-table, igniting thus the narrator's commitment to vegetarianism. Although this may appear a relatively arbitrary component of the narrative, there is, as Freud warns in respect of dream interpretation, much of significance in this seemingly trivial element. The chicken is a *pet*, a designation that places child and animal in appropriate domestic roles and that affords a familiar and thus stable familial "object-relation". The chicken is owned and yet – so it would seem – loved. There is a proprietal relationship in place that has not precluded the development of ties of affection. The text implies that the narrator was saddened by the loss of the pet, although this loss nonetheless benefits her. The animal serves an important purpose even in its demise: it becomes the basis of the narrator's ideological commitment to vegetarianism.

The link between Phyllis and the chicken is not only metonymic (the chicken is an extension of Phyllis who "brought [it]… to the house"). "Phyllis also died young" the text tells us, introducing an ambiguity: who might the "also" refer to (the young hero no doubt, but also, given its proximity in the text, the chicken?). There is a parallel between Phyll is and the pet here in view not only of their sudden deaths, but in terms of how each benefits the identity of the narrator; each is an object of appropriation. As noted above, Phyllis provides the materials of a story that the narrator crafts about herself, a story which would appear to be crucial to

her formative political identity (as “against apartheid”). This, obviously enough, is a non-reciprocal and an unequal borrowing. Phyllis provides the imaginative basis for the narrator’s story about herself; she becomes essentially a device in the narrator’s own self-fashioning, her own perspective, her own “real” story never being involved (“I never as ked her. Just wrote my own”).

What does such an associative link tell us? Is this a case of the disguise – by – way – of – substitution that Freud discusses in dream pairs? Or are the narrative elements in a Lacanian manner as suggestive of an unconscious idea that exists only as a possible intercalation between components? The task then is to consider what the result would be of superimposing these narrative pieces. Such a conjunction, I think, provides one way of telling us something about the relationship to Phyllis that cannot otherwise be admitted. As is by now evident, Phyllis is “owned” by the family, the narrator has certain “rights of privilege” over her as a condition of such an unequal relationship. Phyllis cares for, gives happiness and love to these children, yet seems ultimately to be discarded by the white family (“she … died young … I found this out much later”) who appear to have known little about her life (“I never knew her story”).

This is not to cast doubt on the love felt by the narrator for Phyllis. The affective dimension of these relations should not be dismissed; there was no doubt a degree of quite genuine love, although, then again, one can love quite sincerely in a fashion that consolidates a relation of condescension, as one loves a child, or indeed, an animal. We might say then, extending this point and following the implication of overlaying of overlaying these narrative components, that Phyllis’s relation to the family is akin, in many ways, to that of a pet. Shefer’s (2012) discussion of black domestic service in white (post)apartheid households highlights many of these issues. Domestic service, she notes, was a prime site not only for racist ideology, but of black submissiveness (a point affirmed also by Cock, 1980; Motsei, 1990; Ally, 2009). Such domestic practices, in short, allow for the engendering of “normative white privilege and authority through the … control the white child is granted in relation to Black adults” (Shefer, 2012: 308). Echoing the point made above, Shefer (2012) observes that while in a fundamentally unequal sense the domestic worker is, nominally, a member of the family, she remains nonetheless, “owned” and controlle d by adults and children alike.

One might be tempted to draw a line under our analysis at this point, concluding

that our investigations have led us to an “unconscious of the text” that is summarily racist inasmuch as it extends a longstanding colonial trope in which black person and animal are equated. It is true that the animal – human link is, even if only implicitly, apparent in both of the narratives cited here; both may be critiqued as extending a racist theme on exactly this basis. That being said, such an apparent finding does not exhaust all that can be said, psychoanalytically at least, about these texts.

It proves profitable to compare the two narratives featured here, both of which, like a number of the narratives contributed by white South Africans, share an initially puzzling feature: the sudden appearance of an animal in their discussions of racism. Although the animal in the first narrative appears only briefly, it has, arguably, a crucial role to play as a mediator, a means of linking the white and black characters in the narratives.
Interestingly, the animal in the two above texts, despite obvious contextual differences, occurs at a similar moment in the narrative. It appears when the question of a powerful affective and loving relation for a black person is posed for the white subject. More importantly perhaps – especially for a Lacanian approach that does not prioritize affects over symbolic considerations – an animal emerges when the difficulty, indeed, the impossibility, of a certain symbolic relationship becomes pressing. The problem is precisely that of symbolic positioning, of how to make sense of a prospective relationship – or find an analogue for it – particularly when such a relation ship is not socially viable, is indeed effectively prohibited by the prevailing rules of interaction.

What is so notable in the above narratives is not only that the libidinal relation in question appears to lack an obvious framework of comprehension, but that a material component is involved as a means of mediating the symbolic relation. There is an effective adjunct to the personal relationship, an “operator” of sorts which provides an effective frame of comprehension for the relation in question. The spontaneous recourse to an animal enables the narrators, however temporarily, to bridge an impasse. In response to pressing questions of inter-racial loss and love, and in respect of an ambiguous inter-racial relationship, which is as much that of familial tenderness as that of effective “ownership”, this operator provides an answer. This makes for an interesting experiment, to ask how the given “animal mediator” presents a solution of sorts for the problems evinced in each of the situations. The puzzle of the ambiguity inherent in the

relation with a loved domestic worker results in a tacit equation: Phyllis – as – pet. In the first narrative, we might venture that the loss of the dog provides the paradigm for how to deal with the loss of Dyson. What is intriguing about this hypothesis – perhaps as in the case of Winnicott's notion of "healing dreams" – is that the unconscious labours to provide a solution.

I would like, before closing, to include a few further reflexive comments on the methodological undertaking attempted above. My aim in analysing the foregoing material is not to pin the charge of racism on the above authors. It pays here to refer to Silverman's (2008: 124) comment that to judge someone's unconscious fantasy ultimately misses the point, for such ideas would not have been repressed "if they were not as abhorrent to that person's consciousness as they are to our own". Furthermore, a discourse analysis is by definition focussed on the broader discursive currents animated within the language productions of the speaker, not on the singular speaker themselves. My objective is to show how the text might be said to speak beyond itself, to extract something that is implied but not explicitly said by the text. These methodological provisos in place, it is nonetheless necessary to stress again the problematic epistemological status of what I am asserting of the text (take for example, the extrapolation that, in respect of the third narrative, Phyllis's relation to the family is akin to that of a pet). This idea is nowhere stated in the text; it cannot as such be ascribed to the author. The argument could just as well be made that this idea exists more in the mind of the interpreter than in the author of the text. As Pavón Cuéllar (2010) warns, this is often the lure of imaginary understanding in attempts at discourse analysis, that one's "findings" are essentially a projection *of the analyst's* own reading.

We may offer a slightly different perspective on the same issue, by stressing how interpretation itself often engenders an impasse. In Lacanian terms, we could say that interpretation is, in many instances, precisely what causes the unconscious to close.

This, more precisely, is a twofold problem concerning both the heavy-handed imposition of the discourse of psychoanalysis and the factor of the over – eager interpretations of the analyst which impedes the flow of material. This is a point well made by Lapping (2011) in her exploration of what Lacan (1991: 228) has in mind with his counter – intuitive notion that within psychoanalysis "there is only one resistance, the resistance of the analyst". She (2011) crystallizes Lacan's underlying point: resistance is the product of the analyst's interpretation.

Although of course the situation of text analysis is different, the same conclusion may be drawn: inertias of analysis, resistances in analysing, are typically the result of the analyst's impositions. The clinical strategy here would be to align oneself with whatever opens the horizon of further interpretations, "to bring this desire into existence", to encourage and facilitate its expression, in often differing and multiple forms, rather than close it down by virtue of the need of the analyst to impose authority, mastery, understanding.

To read for the "unconscious " of a text is then perpetually to risk "wild analysis". Textual interpretations of this (psychoanalytic) order are potentially ethically problematic, and not only for the reason that they very often are more a function of *the reader* than of the discourse of the text itself. Such interpretative attempts utilize a set of clinical strategies for material over which the reader has no clinical warrant. If such interpretations were to be utilized in the clinical context they should not – I would hope – take the form of definitive declarations on the part of the analyst. If such an interpretative association were to be eluded to, it would presumably be hinted at far more gently, enigmatically perhaps, in such a way that the analysand could take it up, respond to it. This then poses a series of ethical challenges for the prospective use of Lacanian discourse analysis, challenges that need be considered and responded to within the life of any given research project.

Desire without end

By way of conclusion, I would like to offer a comment on the second narrative cited above which responds to the earlier distinction between Freud's theory of dream-pair substitutions and the Lévi-Strauss idea (1963) that one needs to look for a relation between elements . What emerges in the above text is not simply a case of substitution.

Yes, there are a series of telling parallels between Phyllis and the pet, and questioning what such a substitution might mean or imply would perhaps be a useful analytical exercise. As in "stabbing in the back" episode cited earlier, such an initial substitution (the prisoner's actions as my own desired actions) opened things up, it enabled further questioning of what might be repressed. Other possible extrapolations of desire were made possible. To fix upon a single substitution as the key would, very possibly, have closed down additional interpretative possibilities; my own possible desire to be "stabbed in the back" would not have come to light in this way. A further interpretative leap was

required here; the initial substitution was just the springboard for a hypothesis that required elements of both apparently disconnected narrative components, but that ultimately proved greater than the sum of their parts.

Levi-Strauss's (1963) emphasis on *the relation between elements* within the study of myths proves so important to psychoanalysis because it suits an engagement with the over-determined nature of psychical material. Levi-Strauss famously asserted that there is no one totalizing version of the Oedipus myth; there are only variants, and the only regularity we can trace within the matrix of versions we might plot is that of certain types of relations between components. The link to the work of psychoanalysis seems clear: the prospects of re-interpretation of any over-determined psychical material means that there is never one singular, triumphant interpretation. This provides an important ethical guideline for Lacanian discourse analysis: we do an injustice to the complexity of the material in attempting to extract a single over-arching message.

NOTES

[i] My approach may be criticized for prioritizing a white a perspective. It is worthwhile stressing two issues here. Firstly, I took my lead from narrative material contained within the Apartheid Archive, where white childhood reminiscences of apartheid featured prominently. Secondly, given the circumstances of apartheid in which white children were frequently cared for by black domestic workers, and where many black children would have had only infrequent access to white adults, it is unsurprising that such white experiences should be disproportionately featured in the material.

[ii] It could be countered that what makes these motifs such effective interpretative tools is the resonance they have over so wide a variety of surface phenomena. In short, echoes of such concepts might be used not so much as interpretations, but as mechanisms to prompt the flow of further material.

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About the author:
Derek Hook, Reader in Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck College, UK and Extraordinary Professor of Psychology, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

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Refuting Melancholia: Postures Of Melancholic Identification In The Apartheid Archive

Abstract.
This paper, the second of two focussed on the libidinal attachments of white children to black domestic workers in narratives contributed to the *Apartheid Archive Project (AAP)*, considers the applicability of

the concept of social melancholia in the case of such "inter-racial" attachments. The paper questions both the psychoanalytic accuracy, and the psychic and political legitimacy of such an explanation (that is, the prospect of an "inter-racial" melancholic attachment of white subjects to black care-takers). By contrast to the political notion of ungrievable melancholic losses popularized by Judith Butler's work, this paper develops a theory of compensatory symbolic identifications. Such a theory explains the apparent refusal of identification which white subjects exhibit towards black caretakers and it throws into perspective an important conceptual distinction regards loss. On the one hand there is the psychotic mechanism of melancholic attachment, which expresses absolute fidelity to a lost object, even to the point of self-destructive suffering. On the other, there is the neurotic mechanism of compensatory identification, in which the original object is jettisoned and a substitution found, such that a broader horizon of symbolic and ideological identification is enabled.

Introduction

The companion piece (*see: Rozenberg Quarterly*) to the current paper investigated a series of Apartheid Archive narratives via the means of psychoanalytic reading practice. That paper and this one share a similar aim: of shedding light on certain of apartheid's "lost attachments". The analytical undertaking of a mode of psychoanalytic discourse analysis is not, of course, a-theoretical, and at least one crucial facet of the texts considered – their ostensibly mournful as aspect – begs further conjecture. In supplementing the foregoing article then, I am shifting here from a focus on specific strategies of textual reading practice to a critical exploration of the usefulness of a key psychoanalytic concept in the illumination of these texts. The first of these two papers engaged with the "dathow one might psychoanalytically read the repression of libidinal attachments via certain absent mediators. The current paper comprises an extended theoretical development of psychoanalytically reading a political situation of loss and how this should be conceptualized.

The Apartheid Archive, a collaborative research project that collects and analyses narratives of early experiences of apartheid racism, features a significant number of white contributors speaking tentatively of bonds of "inter-racial" intimacy between white children and black child-minders. A number of these narratives are characterized by a melancholy tone, and I want to pose the question here as to whether such lost attachments might be understood via the notion of melancholic

loss that has become so popular in the postcolonial literature (Eng & Han, 1996; Chen, 2000; Khanna, 2003; Gilroy, 2004). I want to question the usefulness of the notion of melancholia as a mode of social formation in the context of the Apartheid Archive texts.

The forerunner to this paper, the companion piece with which it is paired (*see: Rozenberg Quarterly*), contained two lengthy textual extracts from narratives contributed to the Apartheid Archive that I will again refer to here. In the first of narratives, reference was made to a man called Dyson, of whom the narrator recalls:

I don't know how and when a change occurred – even for sure that one did – but I do remember at a certain point becoming excessively formal with him, avoidant, distanced, as if a type of enacted superiority and distance had become necessary … This still puzzles me: at what point was it that I became rigid, aware of the need to keep myself apart, to be aloof … The time came when the decision was made to leave Zimbabwe … I could not now break the façade and run up to him and hug him goodbye. I needed now to maintain the self-conscious role of distance … My lack of demonstrativeness may simply have been a case of not knowing how … not being able – certainly not within the codes of white racist masculinity – to express love for Dyson … The words 'I loved Dyson' seem both historically true and yet not subjectively real; factual, and yet difficult to personalize … [W]here in my childhood unconscious did I place Dyson…. Was Dyson my "other daddy" (conceivable perhaps as the good, ever-present daddy relative to the strict white daddy who seemed at times less approachable)?

It is intriguing to note the similarity between certain of the words chosen here and Butler's (1997) description in her now canonical account of melancholy gender. The relevant phrase in the extract, to recall, is: "The words 'I loved Dyson' seem both historically true and yet not subjectively real". The relevant section of Butler's account comes when she addresses the predicament of living in a culture which can mourn the loss of certain (homosexual, or, potentially "cross-racial") attachment only with great difficulty. I have made several key substitutions in the following quotes, "cross-racial"**[i]** for "homosexual", "racial" for "sexual", etc, so as to further underscore the pertinence of her argument to the present case (the structure of Butler's argument remains, of course, unchanged):

"[I]s [a cross-racial attachment] regarded as a 'true' love, a 'true' loss, a love and

loss worthy and capable of being grieved … of having been lived? Or is it a love and a loss haunted by the spectre of a certain unreality, a certain unthinkability, the double disavowal of the … *'I never loved him, I never lost him*'. Is this the 'never-never' that supports the naturalized surface of … [the life of racialized difference]? Is it the disavowal of loss by which [racial] formation … proceeds?" (Butler, 1997: 138, emphasis added).

It is the disavowing refrain, "I never loved him, I never lost him", which most pertinently echoes the words in the Apartheid Archive narrative. In order to appreciate this resonance one needs to combine the content of the narrative, the words "I loved", with the author's apparent relationship to them, namely the apparent sense of non-reality. It is only in this way, juxtaposing, the content of the statement with the author's *position* of enunciation, that one grasps the stuckness of these lines, the aspect of simultaneous affirmation and denial, the fact that there has been an actual loss, which has nonetheless, been held in suspension, not fully processed.

If one accepts then that a prohibition on cross-racial ties of love and identification operates within racist culture – I am paraphrasing and adapting Butler (1997) here – then the loss of cross-racial love would appear foreclosed from the start. Of course, one needs to bear in mind that what counts as the start would be retroactively constituted at a point following initial foreclosure. Butler (1997: 139) makes precisely this point, remarking that her use of the term "foreclosed" suggests "a pre-emptive loss, a mourning for unlived possibilities. If this love is from the start out of the question, then it cannot happen, and if it does, it certainly did not. If it does, it happens only under the official sign of its prohibition and disavowal."

It is worth stressing the factor of an after-the-fact effacement, that is, the retroactive capacity of the foreclosure Butler alludes to. This is important not only in view of the above example – where clearly there was an initial experience of loss – but also so as to make the point that despite their seemingly "impossibility" within apartheid, such cross-racial ties and desires most certainly did exist, even if subsequent forms of psychic erasure ensure that, effectively, they did not.

Butler (1997: 139) specifies the location of the melancholia in question which exists always in tandem with societal proscription:
"When … [such] losses are compelled by a set of culturally prevalent prohibitions,

we might expect a culturally prevalent form of melancholia, one which signals the internalization of the ungrieved and ungrievable [cross-racial] cathexis. And where there is no public recognition or discourse through which such a loss might be named and mourned, then melancholia takes on cultural dimensions."

To think melancholia as cultural formation is to appreciate how psychical operations and social structure combine in ways which cannot be reduced to the singular level of the individual subject. Formations of cultural melancholia would thus appear – in this adaptation of Butler's (1997: 140) argument – to go hand in hand with strident demarcations of racial difference:
"it is not simply a matter of a individual's unwillingness to avow and hence to grieve [cross-racial] attachments. When the prohibition against [cross-racial attachments] is culturally pervasive, then the 'loss' of … [such] love is precipitated through a prohibition which is repeated and ritualized throughout the culture. What ensures is a culture of … melancholy in which … [categories of racial difference] emerge as the traces of an ungrieved and ungrievable love."

Butler's (adapted) formulations seem particularly apposite in (post)apartheid contexts within which white children have formed significant if subsequently foreclosed bonds of attachment with black child-minders. While one may have expected a lessening of racial difference by virtue of such proximities, it seems, more often than not, that exactly the opposite was and is the case (Ally, 2009, 2011; Shefer, 2012). What makes little intuitive sense – the fact that the development of loving ties does not necessarily minimize notions of difference, but somehow appears to consolidate them – is apparently given a dynamic explanation in Butler's work.

An important amendment needs to be made before we progress. As is by now perhaps apparent, we cannot simply transfer Butler's notion of melancholy gender to the domain of racial difference. In Butler's model, crucially, the lost yet unconsciously retained object is itself the basis of a powerful identification. The melancholic object shines through; it propels identification: the more I cannot have a given (homosexual) object, the more I identify with, and become like them. For this reason "it comes as no surprise that the more hyperbolic and defensive a masculine identification, the more fierce the ungrieved homosexual cathexis" (Butler, 1997: 139). This, incidentally, is a thoroughly orthodox Freudian idea, as is the notion that the object of failed love relation can be retained and internalized as the basis for an enduring identification (this is what Freud (1921),

in his *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*, dubs "regressive identification"). This factor is shared in the prospective "melancholic" inscription of heterosexuality and racial difference alike: the operation of a *refused identification* (be it with the opposite sex, or with a "different" race) is crucial in substantiating an exclusive identification (with the same sex or race). However, while in the case of foreclosed cross-racial ties, a prospective avenue of identification is likewise refused, the "ungrieved" object *does not itself become the model of an identification* but supports instead a compensatory identification of a different order. In other words, the idea of foreclosed cross-racial attachments involves not an unconscious identification with, but the very opposite, a refusal of identification with, the lost object.

The responses to loss are different in each case. In the first instance (the melancholic inscription of heterosexuality) what has been loved and lost is carried within the subject as a loss that blocks any further attachments of the same kind. The route to new attachments of a similar sort has been barred. The melancholic remains one with its lost object which by now has been folded into the ego, and that object, kept in place, effectively voids the possibility of particular loves. (It is this element of Freud's account – the barring of further attachments on the basis of an unprocessed incorporation – that Butler's conceptualization of cultural melancholia depends on). One appreciates thus the elegance of Butler's argument: what could be a better way of ensuring subjective compliance to social prohibition than by securing such proscriptions on the basis of unmetabolized losses? What results from this operation is a series of libidinal embargos which effectively designate a field of ineligible objects. The intractability of this interweaving of social prohibition and unconscious foreclosure provides us with a profound instance of the psychic life of power. As a possible strategy of recovery, this response to loss cannot but be considered a failure, for the very obvious reason that it permits for no recovery at all: rather than loss being gradually assimilated into reality, reality itself is assimilated into loss.

I will return shortly to the distinction between two different modes of loss. Although I do borrow facets of Butler's theorization in what follows, I will stress different psychical mechanisms underlying the "cross-racial" attachments and refused identifications being discussed. What I propose is not that we dismiss Butler's account, but that we extract both what is most psychoanalytically defensible, and most helpful in respect of an analysis of the Apartheid Archive

narratives in question.

Doubting Melancholia

The question of how reliably this conceptualization of melancholia may be applied in the present case is a tricky one. Before entering into such deliberations it is worthwhile stating a series of critical arguments that beg the question of whether such a notion of societal melancholia is in fact psychoanalytically viable. I want to follow a dual type of analysis here, simultaneously pursuing and questioning the line of analysis Butler offers in *The psychic life of power*. Indeed, as pertinent as Butler's account is, it does, I think, suffer from a discharacterization, as does much of the work which takes up the Freudian topic of melancholia as a means of understanding socio-cultural conditions.

Bluntly put, in most cases what are taken to be societal instantiations of melancholia are, quite simply, not cases of melancholia at all, certainly insofar as we remain faithful to Freud's (1917) initial clinical formulations. Freud's account of melancholia cannot be reduced to a state of ungrieved loss; such a conflation appears frequently in Butler's (1997) discussion. Melancholia is more than just the failure of mourning, more than a prolonged non-resolution of loss, states which, incidentally, can be easily romanticized. It is for this reason that Crociani-Windland and Hoggett (2012: 165) observe that "Sometimes writers in [the] post-colonial tradition appear to confuse melancholia with melancholy". Whereas melancholy "is part of the sweet sadness of loss", melancholia is by contrast "the bleak, visceral, agitated, desperate existence of a loss with no name" (ibid).

Freudian melancholia necessarily involves hostility towards a lost object that has been withdrawn into the ego. It entails the sufferer's assault upon this lost object which, via the means of narcissistic regression, has been incorporated into the ego. These then are the conditions under which a relation to the lost object may be maintained, conditions which amount to a crippling state of internalized aggression. A constituent component of melancholia – far more difficult to romanticize than states of ungrieved loss – is the fact of a loathing, self-*abjecting* relation to one's own ego that has been deemed worthless and opened up to the punitive fury of the super-ego (Freud, 1932). A form of suffering tantamount to being buried with the dead, melancholia cannot be summarily equated merely with blockages of identification, with states of unending remembrance (see for example how the concept is utilized in the political writings of Moon, 1995; Muñoz, 1997; Novak, 1999). The phenomenology and clinical structure of

melancholia present a completely different picture (Lander, 2006; Leader, 2008). As Verhaeghe's (2004) brief gloss makes clear, the presiding features of melancholia – clamorous self-denunciation, convictions of inner worthlessness, the impetus to selfpunishment – seem to hold little of promise for increased political awareness or action.The melancholic subject, condemned to a type of nonexistence "takes the entire guilt of the world onto its shoulders, and this is the sole reason for … [their] existence … [The condition is characterized by] all-encompassing guilt and its accompanying need for punishment invariably display[s] a delusional character … The subject disappears, is reduced to nothing (Verhaeghe, 2004: 455-456).

Of course, many of the authors who adapt Freud's notion, transforming its destructive qualities into something productive, into the "militant preservation of the lost object" (Eng & Han, 2003: 363), do so intentionally. Muñoz (1997: 355-56) for example argues that "for blacks and queers … melancholia [is] not a pathology … a self-absorbed mood that inhibits activism, but …. a mechanism that helps us (re)construct identity and take our dead to the various battles we must wage in their names". Frosh (2012a: 7) provides an adroit summary of such re-appropriations of the notion of melancholia:

"Melancholia – severe depression – feeds on itself, consuming the person until there is nothing left … Against this unpromising backdrop, melancholia has been resurfacing as a paradigm of subversion, an instance of how what is written out as a profound negative can be reinterpreted as a call to arms … The key element in this re-reading of the productive possibilities of melancholia is not the issue of self-hatred, but rather the [preservation of the object] … In melancholia …. there is no recognition of the lost object … it exists 'in' the unconscious as something which cannot be grieved because it is never acknowledged … [Melancholia] preserves the object precisely because the object is never grieved. That is, whereas mourning deals with object loss and integrates the object into the subject's psychic life, dissolving it so that it becomes a part of the subject, melancholia can be read as an act of refusal on the part of the object to be taken up and destroyed in this way."

What this means is that many of the constituent elements of the clinical picture of melancholia sketched above – particularly the relentless internalized self-violence – are screened out of postcolonial engagements with the topic. Such adaptations as a rule emphasize the non-digested incorporation of the lost object, and of

course the facet of ungrievable loss, but then sidestep the resultant reflexive dynamic – the broader libidinal economy – of radical self-hate which ensures that melancholia is always more than a facet of identification.

What becomes evident then is the importance of distinguishing between *forms of identification* which have a melancholic character and the pathological *condition of melancholia* in and of itself. Both such uses are of course apparent in Freud's (1917, 1921, 1923) own work. Nonetheless, this distinction, so often lacking in the spiralling literature on postcolonial melancholia, nonetheless deserves reiteration. On the one hand we are concerned with melancholia as diagnostic structure, a pathological assumption of the place of the dead which consigns the melancholic to a state of purgatory. On the other we have in mind a *mode of identification* in which lost objects are retained as a way of building the ego. Although this may sound like a small qualification it is vital, separating as it does a psychotic condition from an everyday modality of identification present in each and every ego. This clinical distinction will have important ramifications, as we will go on to see, both in respect of how we understand the social application of melancholia and in terms of how we under the question of "cross-racial" attachments as addressed in this paper.

Forter's (2003) essay "*Against melancholia*" isolates two reoccurring problems that characterize much of the literature that attempts a rehabilitation of the notion. The first pivots on a crucial misunderstanding, namely the idea that mourning entails a forgetting, relinquishing, indeed, the apparent *erasure* of the lost object which is thus consigned to the oblivion of non-memory. Once such a categorization is in place, melancholia can be pictured as the only method for the faithful preservation of the object. Brophy's (2002: 267) assertion of melancholia "as mechanism of memory" able to resist the "recuperative pressures" of prevailing prescriptions of gender, race and class, is an apt case in point. What such a view (purposefully?) overlooks is the fact that what has been lost remains unconscious to the melancholic. The "melancholic's unconscious incorporation … *prevents* the object from being remembered, in part because it confuses self and other", a confusion which makes it near impossible "for the other to become an object of memory or consciousness" (Forter, 2003: 138). Mourning, in short, is not tantamount to forgetting. Insofar as it involves a systematic work of detachment from the lost object, mourning can in fact be viewed as a precondition for the memorialisation of this object. Mourning enables a gradual differentiation

between ego and object, a state when the ego is no longer completely fused with the object; in this way it is the basis for remembrance.

The depathologizing of melancholia, furthermore, risks encouraging a misguided celebration, indeed, the collective cultivation of a state characterized by "*numb disconnection and a self-loathing whose logical conclusion is suicide*" (Forter, 2003: 139). What is in question here is not only a complete evasion of the affective reality of melancholia, but of theoretical conjecture completely over-riding the reality of lived experience in a way that encourages "a collective self-hatred whose progressive implications are far from clear" (ibid).

One may extend the above critique by posing a question to such celebratory treatments of melancholia: to what ends – ideological, self-justificatory – is this object, this proposed melancholic attachment, being used? If it has a pragmatic function, serving perhaps as a support of identity, as an argumentative warrant or some or other sort, then it would seem less than truly melancholic. This would be less a case of ethical fidelity to the object and more an instance of its instrumental use. If the latter is indeed the case, then we are most likely dealing with a fetishistic rather than melancholic object.

Frosh (2012b: 41) highlights a further drawback of such valorizing conceptualizations:
"[I]n imagining the existence of a lost object that can … be "recovered", a mythology is created … a kind of romance of origin that can be called on to establish the distinctiveness … to which the group can return". The danger is that "what is produced is something fantasmagoric and potentially reactionary, the lost object becoming [thus] … a call back to a neverland of imagined time" (ibid). Forter (2003: 163-64) adds to this the warning that "the hostile component of melancholic ambivalence is often displaced onto convenient scapegoats". This is a pronounced risk inasmuch as the ego in and of itself can, as Butler (1997) intimates, never be a wholly satisfying substitute for the lost and now hated object. There are thus, for Forter (2003: 143), serious political risks in attempting to utilize melancholia for progressive ends, particularly given the possibility of "the channelling of melancholic rage toward the socially vulnerable".

Contrived losses
Having developed this critique of how melancholia has often been applied, we may now return to a more focussed discussion of the Apartheid Archive

narratives. We might follow Butler half of the way here, accepting her thoughts on barred love and identification, but stopping short of assuming the full machinery of the model of melancholia. In light of the above critique, we might suggest that Butler most helps us to see is less a type of melancholic cultural disposition, than patterns of *refused identification*. The key here is not so much the lost relationship that remains unmourned, internalized; this fact is of secondary importance relative to *the identification it shores up*. So, rather than a given formation of identification being the outcome of a more pervasive and general condition of melancholia, I will offer that refused identification is the primary phenomenon here, which may or may not have a melancholic quality to it.

Turning back then to the narrative material discussed above, we might now pose a series of more focussed questions. Firstly, are we dealing with a properly "ungrieved" or unconscious loss, or, a thoroughly conscious, declarable loss? In the narrative cited above we are surely dealing with *conscious* losses, conscious enough that they can be explored in a form of public writing (certainly, in texts destined for an archive). Of course, one can argue that in the Dyson text there is grief, even if held in abeyance and never fully declared given the apparent absence – at the time – of any "public recognition or discourse through which such a loss might be named and mourned" (Butler, 1997: 139). The spectre of unreality that Butler speaks of seems apparent here. We need to keep open the possibility that the remorse admitted prior to this point may not have been significantly registered, hence its return here in an unresolved form. That is to say, the difficulty of distinguishing between conscious and unconscious losses is not as simple as it may appear, especially given Freud's (1917) memorable declaration that the melancholic knows full well *whom* they have lost, just not *what* they have lost in them. So, in the cases of Phyllis and Dyson, what appears to be a conscious loss may nonetheless be tied by an invisible thread to a lost quality that cannot be retrieved. This is part of what ties the melancholic so inextricably to the dead: the fact that they do not know and cannot represent exactly what has been lost. This loss, furthermore, is not delimited, differentiable in its relation to other libidinal objects, which is to say that it is effectively the loss of everything.

The counter-argument here is that what we are dealing with are contrived losses, experienced only after the fact, as a way of the narrator's attempts to rehabilitate an image of themselves not wholly reducible to the racist social relations of the

time. In this respect the double temporality of the extracts, written in a decidedly post-apartheid voice, of apartheid-era experiences, is undoubtedly a factor. Whereas, during apartheid, there was no adequate social framework or representational space to support this mourning – which, as such, was never fully processed, never supported by broad symbolic recognition – the discursive context of post-apartheid South Africa entails a very different set of imperatives. What we can safely assume is required of such white post-apartheid retellings is that the narrator invoke at least the possibility of a mourning, providing thus the "proof" of feelings of a humanity not wholly determined by racism. It seems after all true that in both cases there is a suspension of remorse an odd resignation – even, ultimately, disinterestedness – with reference to the lost libidinal attachment that, in the final analysis, appears dispensable. As such we might ask: is this attitude the result of foreclosed attachments that meant such losses did not count more significantly, or, more disturbingly, was this "foreclosure" simply due to a racist under-valuation of the person in question? More directly: is this more a case of mimed melancholia than a melancholia of an ostensibly "ethical" sort?

If there is a properly melancholic aspect to these reminiscences of Dyson and Phyllis, then it would be characterized, in clinical terms, by a blockage of retrieval that Freud (1917) described by means of his distinction between word- and thing-presentations. If there was a melancholic loss evidenced by the texts, it would not present in an obvious way, but would instead be only *symptomatically* apparent, being in and of itself effectively unrepresentable. What this means is that if there is a melancholic loss here it is probably not the loss specified (or implied) as such by the subject. Let us leave this intriguing possibility – of a hitherto undeclared loss shadowing the screen memory of a declarable loss – to one side so as to bring a series of further theoretical issues into focus.

Compensatory (Symbolic) Identifications

I want now to revisit the idea of the two responses to loss that I posed earlier on. The first of these was melancholic and it entailed an unprocessed loss blocking the making of further attachments. This delimiting of attachments would certainly pertain to sexual object-choice, the field of objects similar to the object lost would be effectively off-limits, but it would also foster an exclusive type of identification. The second response to loss, in which I stressed the factor of refused identification, involved the making of identifications of an altogether different order. Such identifications involve a point of reference beyond the domain of the

original subject-object relation. It is worth emphasizing that in this second mode of response – – by contrast far more socially-adaptive, psychically-expedient than the first – what has been loved and lost propels a need for compensatory identifications *precisely not with the lost object* itself. The trajectory of identification is directed towards a symbolic locus beyond the delimited parameters of the relation between the grieving subject and the lost object. This symbolic identification – I will provide examples as we continue – helps disavow the painful significance of the loss and it enables the location of more suitable object-investments. The logic is not "what I loved and lost I now carry within me". It is not, in other words, a form of fidelity to the lost object which is maintained even at the price of the self-ravaging subjectivity of the melancholic. It is rather the logic of rejection, of "what I have loved and lost I now leave behind". Rather than a mechanism of blockage that prevents further libidinal ties, this is a relation – perhaps akin to abjection – of repulsion, a rejection of the object whose value is now drastically diminished and denied. It is a rejection, furthermore, that accordingly compels the search for replacement objects to assume the now vacant place of the lost object. In the first – that is, melancholic – response to loss, pain is extended indefinitely. The fidelity of the melancholic, we might venture, is not only to a lost object, but also to *the pain inflicted by its loss.*

In the second (non-melancholic) response there is, by notable contrast, amelioration; there is no fidelity to the object; the object is instead demeaned, de-valued in comparison to a series of narcissistically-bound, "closer to home" object-investments. We are dealing, in this latter case, more than anything else, with a defensive operation which deals with loss by replacement, by means of a narcissistic over-evaluation of the ego and its adjourning field of objects and symbolic values. It may well entail a mournful posture, but it is by no means melancholic.

A distinctive relation to the world of symbolic articulation is involved in each of these two cases. I have already stressed that the refused identification that I take to be the predominant factor in the above narratives – a type of "identification on the rebound" – involves a push towards symbolic identifications beyond the immediate subject-object relation. This amounts to an opening up of a broader socio-symbolic horizon. The unprocessed losses of melancholia, by contrast, are pathological losses that are denied social articulation and symbolic comprehension. Such losses are effectively shortcircuited, reflexively arcing back

upon the ego which becomes the target of its own punishment. They cannot, furthermore, be adequately expressed given that the disjunction between object- and word-presentation affords no articulation of what has been lost. It is precisely in this respect that the precision of the existing Freudian (1917) clinical model of melancholia – too easily dismissed by more celebratory treatments of the notion – proves so vital. In the Dyson and Phyllis examples we are dealing with a thoroughly *neurotic* loss. This is not a seizing up of the ego, or an inability to make further investments (libidinal cathexes) in the external world. It represents instead a flourishing of symbolic identifications – such as that of a vegetarian anti-apartheid novelist in the Phyllis narrative – that reach beyond the confines of the ego-object dyad.

To be sure, I am not suggesting that no loss has occurred, or that it is negligible. I am stressing rather that this is a type of loss that has been managed via various repressions and substitutions, that it is a non-psychotic loss which thus can be dealt with within the terms of the prevailing symbolic and thus ideological order. However, to claim that we are dealing with a neurotic loss incurs a question. Is this not a contradictory response, especially given Butler's (1997: 139) suggestive idea – accurate I think, in the context of our examples – that within the given socio-political condition, there is no adequate "public recognition or discourse through which such a loss might be named". While no adequate discourse may have existed to express the lost "inter-racial" intimacy, what certainly did exist was the broader symbolic network of possible identifications through which a relation to prevailing familial or community roles was still retained, indeed, affirmed. A case in point may be located in this paper's companion piece, in that article's discussion of animal mediators, of fantasy as a means of responding to discursive impasse. The resulting "answers" to the dilemma of how the white child is to locate themselves in such "inter-racial" relationships seemed precisely to affirm existing community roles and familial positions, neutralizing rather than radicalizing moments of social contradiction.

One further detail from the Phyllis extract proves, in retrospect, telling. Whereas a type of identification certainly does seem to be set in motion here, it is not of a melancholic sort – the prospective identification with Phyllis seems to have been thoroughly "metabolized" – but, as noted in the previous paper, of a hysterical sort, an identification with the place of the other. The narrator needs to be taken at face value when she declares: "I am not Phyllis". Phyllis as lost object is a

stepping stone, a means to an end; she enables an altogether different identification (that of the novelwriting, anti-apartheid white heroine) and is discarded in the process. This, interestingly, gives us a different perspective on a facet of the narrative that has not as yet been emphasized, namely, the fact that the narrator apparently refuses to eat the chicken. What is important in this respect is not so much what actually happened, but the fact that *it is included by the narrator in the text*. It is difficult to avoid the Freudian symbolism here, in terms of which such "cannibalistic" incorporation is considered as a primal form of identification. The message that might thus be read out of the text is thus as direct as it is counter-intuitive: an introjection is refused, or, more to the point, there is a refusal of Phyllis as object of identification.

The importance of the distinction I am drawing – between what we might call ethical as opposed to mimed forms of melancholia – is by now apparent. The ethical quality of a properly melancholic attachment is qualified by two conditions, one of which is all too easily overlooked in celebratory affirmations of the notion. Firstly, by an absolute fidelity to what has been lost, that is, by the state of suspended, ungrieved loss so often reiterated in the literature. Secondly, by the fact – less frequently stressed – that this fidelity comes at a price. The melancholic tie is one of great pain, even of destruction. The unconscious persistence of a preserved libidinal attachment is not, in and of itself, an ethical matter. (A great many attachments presumably persist in non-pathological forms; no libidinal tie is easily relinquished). When the preservation of such a tie puts one's own existence at risk however, then an altogether different order of ethical commitment is in question. By contrast, the neurotic strategy of compensatory identifications and substitute objects is at best a type of "mimed melancholia" in which attachments to the object are jettisoned in the name of recovery. So, while in such a case we are confronted with a kind of betrayal, the second killing of the object – and here I am recasting terms used by Žižek (2000) in his critique of how the notion of melancholia is often applied – the melancholic subject, by contrast, remains faithful to it, refusing at all costs to renounce their attachment to it. The importance of Žižek's (2000: 658-659) contribution is that he simultaneously underlines the unconditional ethical quality of the melancholic while castigating opportunistic recourse to the trope of the melancholic:

"[One should] denounce the objective cynicism that … a rehabilitation of melancholy enacts. The melancholic link to the lost ethnic Object allows us to

claim that we remain faithful to our ethnic roots while fully participating in the global capitalist game … what is wrong with postcolonial nostalgia is not the dream of a world … [one] never had (such a utopia can be thoroughly liberating) but the way this dream is used to legitimize the actuality of its very opposite, of the full and unconstrained participation in global capitalism."

Or, put in the terms of our current concerns: brandishing the badge of a "cross-racial" melancholic attachment allows one to mitigate to one's self the ongoing racial divisions that one continues to live by.

Unexpected identifications

In retrospect one cannot but be struck by the struggle of identification that is writ large in the above narratives. These texts are, in many respects, far less about lost attachments than about white subjectivities locating a pole of identification amidst the complications posed by apartheid's insistence on racial difference and in view of the post-apartheid declaration that such apparent differences *do not matter*. This observation allows us to return to an assertion made above with regard to a third point of identification, that is, to the topic of symbolic identification that occurs outside of the confines of the truncated ego-object relation obtaining in melancholia. Making such an analytical distinction is vital from a psychoanalytic perspective. It makes the point that identification resides not merely where we might like it to, with whom we might like to, or on the basis of an obvious affective tie; a symbolic identification may over-ride all of these relatively "psychologistic" considerations, and it may exist unconsciously, as an attachment to a symbolic frame itself.

This distinction can be illustrated with reference to the Phyllis narrative, in which, as noted in the foregoing paper, we see the interplay of various forms of identification. After an initial reading, one might treat the hysterical Phyllis-identification as primary. I would argue, by contrast, that the more substantive identification, for which the temporary and imaginary Phyllis identification is merely a conduit, is symbolic in nature, indeed, that it is an exemplary case of the opening up of a broader socio-symbolic horizon. I have in mind here of course the identification as *anti-apartheid writer*, which, like all symbolic identifications, is an identification beyond any one single person, and identification that maintains a strong historical trajectory, in the sense that it both extends into the future – providing thus a career, a vocation – and links back to a lineage. Such a symbolic identification is far more robust than the more transitory stuff of imaginary

identifications; it provides the structuring component which underlies and delimits the ebb and flow of inter-subjective identifications. Symbolic identification plays the role of the anchor that grounds the subject to a longstanding series of traditional, communal and cultural values.

Two important implications follow on from this conceptualization of identification. Firstly, this identification – identification as anti-apartheid novelist – dilutes the radicalism of the apparent identification with Phyllis and the fanciful sexual fantasies associated with it. This is not only because the identification in question is thoroughly acceptable and socially admired – it is hard to think of a more *bourgeois* and less revolutionary preoccupation than that of a novelist. but also because such an identification recontextualizes the earlier Phyllis identification as precisely imaginary, as work of fiction. Furthermore, we might contend that such an identification is essentially *an identification with the symbolic itself,* certainly so inasmuch it would allow the subject to take on the position of one able to *produce symbolic fictions*. The discomforting although by no means necessary implication here is that such a subject would be one that contributes to, rather than dismantles, the socio-symbolic conditions of the apartheid social formation in question.

We might extend these speculations on symbolic identification by turning back to the Dyson narrative. In Truscott's (2012) engagement with this text **[ii]**, he argues that there is – perhaps contrary to the narrator's wishes – no real identification with Dyson. The identification lies instead with the "strict white daddy who seemed at times less than approachable". While there is little evidence that the narrator has made this connection, namely that it is a paternal identification rather than the loss of a "cross-racial" bond that predominates in this text, a crucial facet of such an identification is clearly evident: the conferral of a trait. It is precisely the father's lamented quality of being inaccessible, unapproachable, that the narrator enacts with respect to Dyson. So, advances Truscott (2012), while the loss of the relationship with Dyson might here be negotiated in all sincerity, Dyson is in fact "a secondary cast member on stage where a[n] … identification with the father plays out", indeed, the aloofness to Dyson could be "exactly a sign of an identification with the lost white father".

Truscott's (2012) line of argument would concur with my own insofar as it suggests a more substantive form of identification occurring beyond the bounds of the relationship with Dyson. Whereas I have termed this a form of symbolic

identification activated in a compensatory manner – the assumption being that it is intensified by the loss of Dyson – Truscott rightly intimates that such an identification may have pre-empted, even caused the loss of the imagined relationship with Dyson. The text itself, perhaps unwittingly, includes reference to this point of change brought on by the identification with the father. This provides a nice example of psychoanalytic reading practice, of the double-reading of a text, because the change the author has in mind is the change of his relationship with Dyson which he appears to view as disconnected with the relation to the father. As Truscott puts it, referring to the words of the narrator: "The identification with the father is marked here (the 'change' being the onset of the loss of, and identification with, the father)":

I don't know how and when a change occurred – even for sure that one did – but I do remember at a certain point becoming excessively formal with [Dyson], avoidant, distanced, as if a type of enacted superiority and distance had become necessary.

Fully aware of the declarative force of the narrative, of what it aims to do by virtue of the admissions it makes, of how it tries to rehabilitate the white (post) apartheid subject, Truscott (2012) reiterates the non-melancholic nature of the attachment. The loss of Dyson is not a cause of "the loss that never was a loss". It is, by contrast, certainly within the post-apartheid context, "a wholly appropriate and completely declarable loss one which would enable the writer of the text to become a part of the postcolonial community". The loss of Dyson "seems like a loss the writer of the text "can only hope" was a loss". Furthermore:

"[T]he overriding wish of the text seems to be that there were faux pas made, that [the author] … did actually almost call him daddy. The most horrifying thing for the writer seems to be not that he held back sincere feelings that must, surely, have been there, but that there were none, no feelings of sincerity, that there were never 'carefree times before an awareness of race came into play', that he only ever knew him as a 'good African' … that the racist codes of the time were the only way that he knew Dyson" (Truscott, 2012).

Despite the apparently mimed melancholia of the extract, which, incidentally, might equally be understood along the lines of the promiscuous shame identified by Straker (2011) in the apartheid reminiscences of whites South Africans, one might argue that there is, nonetheless, a genuine loss evinced here. What is in

question is not simply the loss of Dyson, although this autobiographical fragment is, very possibly, the vehicle through which a more serious loss is expressed. In other words, there may be an intermingling of losses here; the loss described may be of an overdetermined sort. This more debilitating loss – and here we need read the text as produced by a post-apartheid subject in a post-apartheid context – is more probably of the discursive figure of Dyson, of "apartheid's Dyson".

"Isn't it possible that it isn't Dyson who has been lost, but … the 'Dyson' who he knew only through the racist codes of the day, not in spite of these codes. The grief that cannot possibly be professed here, the truly unmournable loss, is of these codes … [It is] grief for the loss of racist codes that helped him to know who 'Dyson' was … 'Dyson' has been lost, and, with him, not an unmediated intimacy between him and a fellow man, but an 'intimacy of apartheid'" (Truscott, 2012).

This observation shifts on its axis the perspective of our entire analysis thus far. If the consciously offered story of (Dyson's) loss does both express and conceal another, more substantial loss, then that unmourned loss is very possibly that of apartheid itself, or, following Truscott's (2012) argument, that of the "apartheid symbolic" that framed everyday interactions and identifications. We have moved thus from the topic of lost "cross-racial" attachments within apartheid to the topic of the loss of apartheid's symbolic network itself. Such a change in perspective concurs with the more general argument I have been developing in respect of identification, i.e. the need to consider not only inter-subjective ties and investments (an analysis of ego-level functioning), but to look also to the symbolic factors (the discursive codes, symbolic roles, the behavioural framework grounding everyday interactions) which play a more formidable and foundational role in structuring affects and inter-subjective relations.

This draws attention to a tenet of Lacanian theory. Rather than prioritizing a given affect or interpersonal relationship as the focal-point in the analysis of a text, look to the often overlooked "determining" role of symbolic factors which are often themselves productive of (rather than secondary to) affects. It hardly seem necessary to emphasize that the "apartheid symbolic", that is, its network of roles and reciprocal subject. Moreover, this network of relations and values provided not only a strong sense of ontological security, but a readily available social script, i.e. frame of intelligibility, for its white adherents. It is no wonder then that Steyn's (2001) study of post-apartheid whiteness emphasizes the subjective experience of dispossession and displacement particular in white Afrikaners who

have felt a loss of home, autonomy, control, legitimacy and honour.

All things considered, it would be surprising if the end of apartheid was not experienced as a debilitating – and potentially melancholic – loss for white South Africans. Such a glowing period of "white narcissism" was apartheid, enabling whites *en masse* to retain the belief in themselves as extraordinary, as deserving of privilege, that it is unlikely that its demise did not occasion an acute (if not wholly conscious) experience of loss. Apartheid continually affirmed notions of white privilege and entitlement, producing, one might assume, a *jouissance* of assumed superiority. Such a *jouissance* is akin perhaps to the jubilation of the mirror-stage (mis)recognitions in which an ego identifies with an idealized image whose capacities far outstrip its own. My attempt to couch the relation of whites to apartheid as one of narcissistic love is, of course, strategic. Having stressed how apartheid's symbolic network might itself provide an object of melancholic loss, I want to emphasize also that the libidinal quality, the *jouissance* of white investment in apartheid might equally prove an object of melancholic attachment. I underscore the narcissism of this white relationship to apartheid also for another reason. Toward the end of his famous 1917 essay Freud remarks that the object of melancholic attachment will, in the final analysis, invariably be shown to bear the qualities of a narcissistic object-choice. If then the relationship that many (if not all) whites had with apartheid was tantamount to one of narcissistic love, then a central precondition of melancholic attachment would clearly have been in place by the time of apartheid's formal demise.

Apartheid unmourned

I have spent a good deal of time in this paper outlining the potential uses and limitations of thinking melancholia as a model of foreclosed "cross-racial" attachments and refused identifications. The unexpected outcome of this critical journey is that there may be a melancholic condition apparent within such texts after all, not in view of a literal application of lost objects (lost "cross-racial" attachments) but rather in terms of certain lost ideals – far more difficult to pinpoint – of apartheid. This is not to dispute the dynamics of compensatory symbolic identification that I have described above, which are crucial in understanding how the "cross-racial" libidinal attachments are transformed into powerful forms of refused identification. It is certainly not to overturn the various critiques assembled above in respect of postcolonial rehabilitations of melancholia. In fact, it is exactly the constituent elements of Freud's model that

have been omitted by such rehabilitations (hostility towards the lost object; the inability to summon the preserved object to memory) that will need to be stressed if the idea of apartheid melancholia is to emerge as a coherent notion.

This line of discussion opens up the broader topic of the unprocessed and unmourned losses of previous historical eras. It recalls thus Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich's (1975) influential analysis of post-war Germany's inability to mourn its fascist past, and the subsequent redirections of libido, the multiple types of denial that accompanied this inability. Such losses remain unspeakable for members of the post–apartheid nation, a nation whose founding definition relies precisely on the repudiation of all that apartheid signified. Apartheid is not an object over which grief can be authorized; it is a loss that should not be a loss at all, "the end of apartheid can only be a sign of progress", those who laments its loss "become "the other from the past" against which the post-apartheid nation has constituted itself" (Brock & Truscott, 2012: 8). Herein lies the dilemma undercutting the ethico-political imperative to identify in opposition to the apartheid past: it neglects the complications of the multiple symbolic and libidinal attachments – the entanglements, to use Nuttall's (2009) evocative phrase – of past and present, conscious and unconscious identifications. It is worth noting here that the difficulty of this situation, of the unprocessed losses for (the 'ungrievable' nature of) one's history, indeed, of one's own possible – even if tacit – identifications with the past, are not only those of white but also black South Africans, as Dlamini's (2009) *Native nostalgia* makes clear.

An advantage of the Mitscherlichs' (1975) approach is that they register the breadth of responses to unprocessed loss. As Lapping (2011: 26) stresses, the disavowal of Nazi identity they trace is achieved "not through the absolutist, exclusionary mechanism of … foreclosure, but through multiple cultural, political and personalized mechanisms of denial". Their speculations about unprocessed loss in a given socio-historical location are, in other words, more varied and textured than is the case when an assumption is made, as in Butler's theorization, about a general state of cultural melancholia. This attention to the variety of historical circumstances underlying unprocessed loss is of vital importance in investigating how *differing social constituencies* within a given social mass respond to unprocessed losses. Doing so enables us to make two further critical remarks in reference to postcolonial rehabilitations of melancholia. Melancholia, firstly, as subjective condition or social state, cannot be expected to map neatly

upon given political groups. Of course, one appreciates the logic of the argument that all subaltern identities are, as Crociani-Windland & Hoggett (2012) put it, marked by the shadow of a loss that cannot be grieved. The shorthand assumption here is that "subaltern communities are constituted by melancholia" (Crociani-Windland & Hoggett, 2012: 165). Setting aside for the moment the apparently erroneous supposition that has been made here we may note simply that there is, in practice, no guarantee that so broad and schematic a view would be affirmed. Such are the complexities and ambivalences of psychical life: oppressor and oppressed alike might share a mode of melancholic (or *nostalgic*) attachment to what has gone before, just as there may be significant differences in how a given social constituency responds to unprocessed loss. As in a psychoanalytic treatment, one needs attend not only to given socio-historical circumstances but the singularity of the given subject's (or subject community's) responses to such circumstances, a set of responses which never fit the answer that theory would predispose us to expect.

In concluding, I should be as clear as possible: the unprocessed losses of apartheid need not form the basis of a melancholic formation. As in the foregoing analysis of refused identifications, the underlying mechanism in question may be less that of a type of foreclosure – – as in Butler's (1997) conceptualization – than a type of neurotic response, that seeks substitutive displacements for the lost object and the sustenance of broader, lateral field of identifications. This, I would suggest, is a less radical and perhaps more likely response. Such losses may, following the argument I've developed above, form the basis of diverse compensatory symbolic identifications with a suitably evocative yet nonetheless "empty" signifier, such as "the new South Africa". That being said, we need to keep this possibility open, namely that melancholia for apartheid may well exist, just as an unconscious fidelity to its values may persist in many post-apartheid social formations.

If melancholia can indeed be used to describe the response of white South Africans to the racist social system that benefitted them, then this usage of the concept cannot but unsettle celebratory rehabilitations of the term. The presumption of the silent ethical dignity of the melancholic, of their heroic loss, becomes extremely uncomfortable in this instance, implying as it does the possibility of an ethical fidelity to a system of massive and brutal social injustice. Such an account of fidelity to a lost and hated – and properly hateful – object

certainly does trouble celebratory treatments, but it is, precisely perhaps because of this, all the more accurate for doing so. It would make apparent something routinely overlooked in many adaptations of the Freudian problematic, namely the fact that melancholic attachment is not a question of conscious – or moral – choice.

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NOTES

[i] I am aware that in using the term "cross-racial" I risk affirming both "race" and "racial differences" as natural categories. This is certainly not my intention. I have opted to retain these terms "race" and "inter-racial" so as to reflect the force and lived reality of these constructs in the (post)apartheid context. Incidentally, it is worth noting that I view "race" as more than socially constructed in the narrow sense of textual or epistemic practices, certainly so in view of the broad array of enactments, embodiments, libidinal weightings and phenomenological and unconscious values that "race" comes to assume in such contexts.

[ii] I draw here on a lengthy email exchange between the author and Ross Truscott, discussing the Apartheid Archive narrative in question.

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About the author:
Derek Hook, Reader in Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck College, UK and Extraordinary Professor of Psychology, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

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