

# **THE SLAVE, THE NATIVE, AND THE SERF: THREE SITES OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN ETHNIC SPACE 1652 - 1996**

by Hjalte Tin, Centre for Cultural Research, Aarhus University, Denmark

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## **'Bantu area'**

During the 1970s the apartheid government of South Africa consolidated the so-called "Bantu area" in ten 'homelands' called Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Gazankulu, KwaZulu, Lebowa, KwaNdebele, Qwaqwa, Kangwane, Transkei, and Venda with a total area slightly larger than England or about 13% of South Africa's surface area. In this paper I will address two related questions. First, what is the genealogy of the 'Bantu area', that is from the early colonial period down to the present? Second, if a structural continuity, and not just a long time span, is implicit in Braudel's concept of the *longue duree*, what, then, was the structural continuity of the "Bantu area"? I will try to answer these questions through a spatial analysis<sup>1</sup>.

You'll need a very detailed map to find the exact borders of the homelands; KwaZulu alone comprised over hundred separate blocks of land. The homeland borders in places had the contorted shape of a Berlin-wall; for example the Ciskei-border curving around and through the

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<sup>1</sup> This paper builds upon my PhD-dissertation *Space of Civil War. From a Global Typology of Civil War to a Critique of Violence in South Africa, 1976, 1986, 1996*. Aarhus University 1998. Theories of space (*inter alia* Foucault, Lefebvre, Soja) are brought into play with theories of violence and power (Arendt, Althusser, Foucault, Keane, Feldman, Poole) and state-formation (Højrup, Mann, Anderson, Tilly, Mamdani).

twin towns of Bisho (in Ciskei) and King Williamstown (in the 'white' Republic)<sup>2</sup>. Nonetheless, any road map would inform the motorist on the homeland borders and, incidentally, show that no homelands existed in the whole western half of South Africa, while they were particular prominent in the Eastern Cape, Natal, and North and North Western Transvaal<sup>3</sup>. Travelling, for example, on the Cape Town-Durban N2 highway you would encounter substantial border-post like the one on the river Kei, separating Eastern Cape and the Transkei. In other places, like the narrow back-road R 726 snaking through the mountains from Zastron in the Orange Free State to Sterkspruit in the Transkei, you would just pass a humble sign in the roadside and rattle over a cattle-grill. But no matter where you crossed from 'white' South Africa into a homeland you would notice that the barbed-wire fences of the white farms abruptly ended right on the border. Inside the homelands the cattle were free to stray on the communal land, whereas land outside the homeland was private property and fenced. In fact, the fences are crucial to an understanding of the border of the 'Bantu-area'. But it is not clear *what* the border divided: properties, races, ethnic groups, or something else?

First of all is it important to notice that the borders of the 'Bantu' spaces were much older than apartheid. It was not apartheid that created these territorial divisions, but apartheid used older borders and changed their meaning. Bantu area was predominantly rural <sup>4</sup> and the only

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<sup>2</sup> See the map in Christopher 1994, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Ecological as well as historical dynamics had produced this distribution. The dry, sparsely populated West with Cape Town was the centre of colonial expansion, and during the eighteenth century it became populated with whites settlers and their slaves, largely displacing the indigenous Khoisan hunter-gatherers in the process. A total of 63.000 slaves were imported, 26,4% from Africa, 25,1% from Madagascar, 25,9% from India, and 22,7% from Indonesia (Shell 1994, p. 41). In the eighteenth and nineteenth century the fertile East became the centre of sedantary populations and expanding Black states. The Whites pushed eastwards as Boers into Transvaal clashing with the Tswana and Sotho states, as English settlers on the Eastern Cape clashing with the Xhosa states, and as British planters in Natal clashing with the Zulu state.

<sup>4</sup> The intersection of ethnic and *urban* spaces falls outside the scope of this paper.

definition of 'Bantu-area' offered in the two key Land Acts from 1913 and 1936 and still in force during apartheid, is an inventory of rural spaces, written up as a long 'Schedule of Native Land'. I quote, "East London District: Newlands Location; St. Luke's Mission; Portions of farms 12S. and 11S. falling in this district and forming part of the Moiplaats Location; Kwelea Location, comprising Farms 2W, ... ..".<sup>5</sup> 'Missions' and 'locations' were areas set aside by the white missionaries and local administrators for Black habitation. The tracing of barbed-wire fences continued in the 1936 Land Act, "District of Vryburg. Description. From the north-eastern beacon of the farm Havant generally westwards, southwards, south-westwards and south-eastwards along the boundaries and including the following farms: - Havant, Campden, Ilkley, Burnley, Burford, Upton, Hythe, Devizes, Exeter, Belper, Esher, Mars, Leinster, Abbey and Tweed, to the south-eastern beacon of the last-named farm; thence along the boundaries of but excluding the Madebing Native Reserve to its south-eastern beacon on the Mashowing River."<sup>6</sup> Every locality listed was a *property* (of a person, a trust or the Crown) and added sectors to the long, meandering front of land possessed by 'Europeans' and dispossessed by 'Bantu'.

The laws did not define the 'European', which is highly significant, but only the non-European called 'Native' (c. 1955 changed to 'Bantu' and c. 1975 to 'Black' in official apartheid discourse). The definition of 'Native' in the 1913 law is rather short: "'Native' shall mean any person, male or female, who is a member of an aboriginal race or tribe of Africa"<sup>7</sup>. In 1936 'ethnic group' is added to race and tribe in a strangely negative way, (perhaps aimed at refusing the Khoisan tribal status?): "Native' means - (a) any member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa, other than a race, tribe or ethnic group in the Union representing the remnants of a race or tribe of South Africa which has ceased to exist as a race or tribe; - "<sup>8</sup> "Bantu area" was an *ethnic* space constructed by classifying every human body according to its *essences* such as language, skin colour, hair type, and decent, and then postulating that it belonged to a specific space. Violence at the border of ethnic space hits human bodies both ways: people identified by essentialistic marks

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<sup>5</sup> Native Land Act of 1913, p. 448.

<sup>6</sup> 1936 Land Act, p. 142

<sup>7</sup> 1913 Land Act, p. 446.

<sup>8</sup> Native Trust and Land Act, 1936, p. 136-38.

as 'Bantu' was forced to move out of 'white' South Africa; at the same time people with the 'wrong tribal essence' were forced to move from one homeland to another. Ethnic space is defined by the essentialistic relation of body and space worked out historically and socially by violence and discourse. There is no necessary correlation between ethnic space and individual identity.

The Land Acts called upon territories of *properties* are to map the spaces of racial and ethnic *essence*. This is the first problem in understanding the homeland border; the second is the contradictory discourse of the essence itself. The duplication of a racial ('aboriginal race') and an ethnic ('tribe of Africa') definition of 'Natives' in the 1913 Act, kept in all subsequent South African racial legislation, reflects a fundamental ambiguity in the official view of the relationship between the Native and space. In my view this ambiguity is of central importance for interpreting the difference of racism and ethnicity in contemporary South Africa and for a discussion of the response today to the legacy of colonialism.

### **The Native and the Slave**

On the eve of colonialism on the Cape of Good Hope the non-European was cast in three different roles by the European invaders: as the native, the slave, and the serf. "At the beginning of the slave society at the Cape, there were two overriding rules: neither a European nor a native person could be enslaved. The former was custom, the latter law. While the law was not observed, allowing for the gradual and yet almost total enserfment of the Khoi by 1828, the custom of not enslaving people of European descent became more powerful than any law." <sup>9</sup> I will suggest that the three roles however blurred they were on the ground may serve as a point of departure for a discussion of ethnic space in South Africa in the *longue duree*.

From a spatial perspective the positions of European, Native, Slave, and Serf point to two borders: the border of the colony, with Europeans inside and *native* peoples outside the border, and the

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<sup>9</sup> Shell 1994, p. xxxvii.

border of the house<sup>10</sup> with Europeans and *slaves* inside, both of them members of the family. The 'tribes of Africa' were states outside the European colonial state, albeit of a different kind and certainly not nation states (which the colony too was not). Accordingly the colonial-tribal border was a state border, marked by war, the quintessential state activity. On the contrary the border of the house, of domestic space. had both slaves and Europeans on the same side, both of them inside the house, with the wilderness/public space on the outside.

The colonists thus initially had two very different relations to non-Europeans: as *native* members of states (tribes) not conquered, and as *slave*-members of their own houses. Inside the patriarchal house the slave was subject to racial inequality, just as women were subject to gendered inequality, and the children were subject to generational inequality, with all the power relations of patriarch, wife, children and slaves inscribed in the *domus*. This leads Shell to a very important suggestion, "Could not the property relation in slavery be considered a derivative of the owners 'possession' of his own family, a relationship apparent in Roman Dutch law?... In the Roman Dutch legal system, the free woman's minor status and the sanctioned usage of her body by men implicated that she, too, shared some of the powerlessness and property status of the chattel slave and that perhaps that circumstance was the true legal antecedent to slavery. The distinction between a wife and a slave in the early Cape was by no means obvious." <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I use the term 'house' in its physical, spatial meaning. Inside the borders of the house space patriarchal domination is the norm. To me, the house space is not peculiar to certain societies, but a basic structure in every society; on the other hand the house alone cannot define a society. My use therefore differs from the use by Lévi-Strauss in his combination of house-lineage and house-architecture; see Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Shell 1994, p. 398. It is indeed interesting to go back to the source of Roman Law, *Justinian's Digests*, Book 1 with three sections (5,6,7) devoted to a discussion relations of power in the house. The *pater familias* ruled over minors and slaves alike. "Gaius, *Institutes, book 1*: ...Slaves, then are in the *potestas* of their master, this form of *potestas* being in virtue of the *jus gentium*. For we can observe that equally among all nations masters have had the power of life and death over their slaves....Also in or *potestas* are our children whom we have begotten in lawful wedlock...Heads of households

Initially racism did *not* segregate white and black, on the contrary racism was a differentiation born out of the proximity of work, and the patriarchal house, the Casa-Grande<sup>12</sup> was the paradigm of the racist world. The roots of this paradigm goes back at least to Antiquity and was part of the mental luggage the colonialists carried with them to Africa. But to implant racism on The Cape the Europeans had to build slave-houses where they could live together with the imported slaves and exploit them. Racism is a discourse explaining by 'natural' arguments why people living *together* in an exploitative relation must be master and slave. It is a discourse which can generate *herrenvolk* ideas at one pole and simultaneously at the opposite pole an inferiority complex. Just as sexism and 'age-ism' may explain why men and women or older and younger generations living together *naturally* must be unequal. To me, the all-important corollary of locating racism in the house is suggesting why master and slave most of the time *shares* racism (and women sexism and children age-ism): most of the time the slave was a good Uncle Tom, the wife devoted to her husband and the children respectful of the older generation; what J.M. Coetzee has called 'the embedded patriarchal order'<sup>13</sup>. The shared Janus-faced racism of master and slave was the explosive point of departure for Fanon's critique and later for the Black Consciousness Movement.

The roles of native and slave therefore *cannot*, I suggest, define the ethnic and the racial meaning of 'Native' as it is used in the Land Acts to decree segregation. The barbed wire fences seem not be for slaves nor for natives. To understand the segregationist meaning of 'Native' we must look closer at the third role, the 'serf'.

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are those who are in their own power... For whoever is born of me and my wife is in my power: likewise, whoever is born of my son and his wife, that is my grandson or granddaughter, is by the same token in my power... and so on down the generations."

<sup>12</sup> A brilliant exposé of the racist world set in the house is the famous work by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre *Casa-Grande & Senzala* from 1933.

<sup>13</sup> The New York Review, Nov 6, 1997.

## The Serf

When Shell, in the quote above, talks about the enserfment of the Khoi, he is registering a third position: not slave inside the house but neither native outside the colony. Serfs were living inside the colony together with the Europeans, but in a liminal position: often inside the house but not fully slave and often outside the house not fully free<sup>14</sup>. 'Serf' in South Africa should thus not be understood with the historiographic connotations of European feudalism. The abolition of slavery on the Cape in 1838 in no way ended racism, and the status of Non-Europeans that continued to live inside a white master's house remained slave-like in everyday terms; only later the serf position outside the house shaded into that of a wage labourer. What happened, I will argue, was the merger of two different ordering principles in colonial society: first, exploitation in the slave house producing and reproducing racist marking of bodies, and second, the colonial frontier wars produced ethnic marking of groups ('tribes')<sup>15</sup>. *Labour* was the reason d'être in slavery: you'll work for me! while *land* was the point of colonial expansion: I'll take your land!

In the middle of the nineteenth century 'the frontier started to close'<sup>16</sup>, the final dispossession of the natives and destruction of their states had begun. In 1850 the 8th Frontier War was launched against the Xhosa. "For black and white alike it was a war of race, perhaps the first of its kind.. It was to be the biggest single conflict between black men and white men south of the Sahara

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<sup>14</sup> This was the position of the Khoisan which never was constructed as belonging to state outside the colony; see Magubane 1996.

<sup>15</sup> The nexus of conquest and slavery is clearly stated in Digestas, Book 1; Florentinus, *Institutes*, book 9: "Freedom one's natural power of doing what one pleases, save insofar as it is ruled out either by coercion or law. 1. Slavery is an institution of *jus gentium*, whereby someone is against nature made subject to the ownership of another. 2. Slaves (*servi*) are so-called, because generals have a custom of selling their prisoners and thereby *preserving* rather than killing them: and indeed they are said to be *mancipia*, because they are captives in hand (*manus*) of their enemies." This connection is also the starting point for Orlando Patterson's work on slavery; for an early introduction see his, *On Slavery and Slave Formations*, *NLR* 117, September-October 1979.

<sup>16</sup> du Toit 1995, p. 23-37; he uses 'frontier' with the American frontier connotations.

during the nineteenth century.”<sup>17</sup> Mostert reproduces the discourse congealing race and tribe which became dominant as the African states were destroyed. However, it is incorrect, I think, to portray the Xhosa-war as racial. Of course black and white fought against each other, but they did so as members of states, leading to the wholesale *inclusion* of the natives as *groups* into the colony. The conquered became at the same time subject of the *individual* othering of racism radiating from the slave-house and the ethnic *group* othering of the African tribes perceived to be ‘outside’ the colonial society. J. Bowker of Grahamstown, arguing in favour of Vagrancy Ordinances forcing the Khoikhoi to work for the settlers, fuses the tribalism of the uncivilised savages with the patriarchal tropes of the house, “Savageism would long ere this been fast fading away before civilisation, the animal propensities would have begun to give place to the moral; filial attachment, gratitude for parental care, sense of propriety, domestic honour, charity, love, piety, might possibly have been developed among men whom that system [the scrapped Vagrancy Ordinances] would have sternly taught to distinguish between right and wrong, to respect life and property, and to work for their own maintenance.”<sup>18</sup> Civilisation and domesticity mapped out two different spaces, each with their own discourse; colony and empire was the locus of civilisation, while the house was the realm of domestic virtue. The point is, however, that confronted with the conquered natives the discourses of ethnic group and racial individual got mixed, producing a liminal position between the slave in the house and the native outside the colony.

With slavery was abolished and all African territory brought under the Crown the basic question for the Europeans became how to rule large groups of natives inside the colony. After c. 1850 they saw two options, the racist option to assimilate and the tribal option to segregate, both, it must not be forgotten, fundamentally premised on exploitation. Right up to the present time the conflicts of Europeans and non-Europeans/Blacks have oscillated between these two poles. In the Western Cape the abolition of slavery in 1838 was the first crucial step to wards assimilation,

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<sup>17</sup> Mostert 1992, p. 1077.

<sup>18</sup> J. Bowker, *Speeches, Letters, and Selections from Important Papers* Grahamstown 1864. p.209, cit. in Magubane 1996, p. 8.

the next step the colour-blind, but not property-blind! franchises of 1853 and 1872. It is important to note that the whites were a majority<sup>19</sup>, and that assimilation in no way was non-racial, but a continuation of patriarchal racism, as the words of Father F.W. Fuller arguing *against* segregation and *for* assimilation in 1886, make clear. "It is a great blessing ... that the Cape Town Kaffir can be tamed, and trained and taught,"<sup>20</sup> Assimilation broke down for various reasons, however, and the first segregated black location was established in Cape Town in 1901<sup>21</sup>, and in 1936 the last black voting rights were abolished.

If the space of assimilation on the Cape c. 1850-75 was the house, with the 'Cape Town Kaffir' admitted into respectability as property-owner and rate-payer, (and poor whites excluded on the same basis), the space of segregation was the reserve. Urban locations and townships were also segregated, but under firm white municipal control<sup>22</sup> and without the important function of sites of indirect rule found in the rural areas. The option of segregation was pioneered in the Eastern Cape and Natal where the whites were a minority. Around the middle of the nineteenth century Sir Theophilus Shepstone set out to map the divisions between white farm lands and the proposed African reserves in Natal. Shepstone's titles reflect the shift in the position of Natives from peoples outside the colony to subjugated groups inside the colony, first he was 'Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes in Natal' and later he became Governor of Natal ruling the Native tribes. In his instructions from London to effect this shift we read, "The natives appear generally to understand that their present occupations are on sufferance, and that the lands on which they may permanently reside have still to pointed out to them... and such natives as do not remove themselves from lands about to be measured, to one or other of the settlements you may point

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<sup>19</sup> The 1875 population of Cape Town was 25,567 'Europeans or Whites' and 19,236 'Other than Europeans or Whites'; Bickford-Smith 1995, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup> Cit. in Bickford-Smith 1995, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> See Bickford-Smith 1995 and Maynard Swanson, *The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic plague and urban native policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-09*, 1977; in Beinart & Dubow 1995.

<sup>22</sup> In 1972 transferred to the central state with the establishment of the Bantu Affairs Administration Boards.

out to them, must be distinctly told, that unless they secure the consent of the proprietor (the white settler) they will be prevented from cultivating, and their cattle will be impounded.”<sup>23</sup> Shepstone moved 90.000 ‘tribal Africans’ into reserves; not without resistance, one leader, chief Langalibalele, was sentenced to life-imprisonment on Robben Island for insubordination. By 1905 the division of rural land between the Black and White communities had largely been made; reserves covered 128 miles<sup>2</sup> in the Orange Free State, 2120 miles<sup>2</sup> in Transvaal, 13.892 miles<sup>2</sup> in Natal, and 21.000 miles<sup>2</sup> in the (Eastern) Cape, or 7,8% of South Africa. The 1913 Land Act was introduced *after* 92% of South Africa’s total area had already fallen into possession of Europeans.

From the beginning the reserves were not in any way intended to be self-supporting black societies, but simultaneously convenient pools of labour power for the expanding mining and other industries, and sites of indirect rule. Outside the reserves various forms of ownership and land-use such as share-cropping and various tenancy agreements blurred the race-land division, and an expert on rural South Africa cautions, “There never was a ‘white man’s country’ nor ‘white farms’ in the sense that these were zones of numerically predominant white occupation, only in the sense that whites, through their economic and political power, exercised control over the people on them.”<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, “Africans tended to retain reserves in the heartlands of their old, conquered chiefdoms - the areas most suitable for their systems of agricultural and pastoral production... over 20 per cent of the land which they had effectively used was initially reserved for them.”<sup>25</sup> Once a tribal state had been conquered it did not go away; it remained in memory, customs, and shadow authorities invested in a place defined by an autonomous discourse.<sup>26</sup> For local ethnic resistance to state rule the degree of ‘tribal roots’ was essential. Attacks on the state on the ethnic front only seemed to be possible if the name of the ethnic

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<sup>23</sup> Parliamentary Paper 1848, cit. in Maasdorp, p. 59.

<sup>24</sup> Beinart 1994, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Beinart 1994, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Nelson Mandela’s tribute to the importance and social vitality of his tribal roots and royal ancestry, Mandela 1994, p. 4.

space created by the state could be appropriated by local groups and imbedded in their autonomous discourse.

We can now return to the meaning of the barbed-wire fences. Everybody in the reserves were in the position of serfs: neither real Natives outside the colony, nor real slaves inside the house, but exploited individuals caught in the double-bind of assimilationist racism and segregationist tribalism. It is important to note that no fence was erected to enclose the reserves. The barbed wire fenced white properties and only by addition made up a fence circling the reserves, and, in a manner of speaking, turned its back on the reserves. What the fence divided were two ambiguous oppositions, a racial and an ethnic ("aboriginal race and tribes of Africa"). The meaning of the fence depended on which way you looked.

First, from the point of view of the black person pushed into the reserve after two centuries of colonial expansion the fence divided the possessing race in 'white' South Africa from the dispossessed race in the reserve. Indeed the key provision in the 1913 Land Acts sought to make this dispossession irreversible by racialising private property: Blacks could not buy land outside the reserves, and Whites could not buy land in the reserves (which was less of a problem since the reserves were put on the least attractive agricultural land). The fence as a racial divide is also a site of migration and contact, a bond of exploitation and violence, just as the door dividing Senzala from Casa-Grande. Looking at the fence in this way has given rise to interpretations of the reserve as a labour-pool with the migrant worker as the nexus between modern capitalism and 'traditional' Africa, between town and land etc.<sup>27</sup> However, the reserves was only very partially the home of the total black workforce in white mines, farms, factories and homes. In

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<sup>27</sup> One of the classic texts of this interpretation is Harold Wolpe, *Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From segregation to apartheid*, 1972; in Beinart & Dubow 1995.

reality the reserves never housed more than half of all blacks in South Africa<sup>28</sup> and only a small minority lived from working in the reserves<sup>29</sup>. 'White' South Africa was a racist fiction.

Second, a farmer standing in 'white' South Africa with the Land Acts looking into the reserve would see a tribe with communal land and customary law. The fence as an ethnic border divided tribal space from a space marked by floating signifiers such as 'modern', 'non-traditional' etc. This is the meaning of the fence fundamental to indirect rule. 'White' South Africa was never named ethnically in positive terms the way the reserves were, for reasons I explain below. Ironically at the time of the law (1913) the whites used the expression 'the race-question' about their *own* antagonism between Afrikaners and English, and "far more feared [by the Union government] than a Native Uprising was a Republican Uprising, a third Anglo-Boer War."<sup>30</sup> Space on the 'white' side of the fence was racially marked while space on the reserve side of the fence was ethnically marked. Mahmood Mamdani elegantly traces this dichotomy of citizens and subjects peculiar to the 'bifurcated' colonial state in Africa<sup>31</sup>. Yet to me, he seems to overlook that citizens and subjects were not polar opposites. White racial space was not opposed to a Black racial space, but several ethnic African spaces ; by the same token the African tribal spaces were not opposed to white tribal spaces, but to a white racial space.

### **The construction of ethnic space after 1948**

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<sup>28</sup> In 1970 51,6 % of all blacks lived in 'white' S.A.; in 1980 after massive de-urbanisation of blacks the figure had fallen to 48,3%. Graaff 1986, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Exact figures are hard to get. Graaff 1986 'stresses the minimal role played by agriculture' (p. 1) the rest lived from private income generated outside the homeland (by migrant workers etc.) or state transfers (pensions etc.) from 'white' S.A.

<sup>30</sup> Seegers 1994, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Mamdani 1996.

Two decades of academic research brought the still primitive notions of the 1936 law <sup>32</sup> forward to the fully fledged plan for de-nationalisation of South Africa's black population enshrined in Verwoerd's 'Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act' of 1959. *Bantoekunde*, as the new science of anthropology was called at the Afrikaans universities, produced *ethnic* definitions of the Native essences and draw mainly linguistic maps for the tribal segregation of the African population. The Bantu linguistic families were fragmented into ten subdivision or 'national units', Pedi or North Sotho, Basutho or South Sotho, and Tswana or West Sotho; Nguni were divided into Xhosa, Zulu, Swasi, Shangaan, North Ndebele, and South Ndebele; the tenth group was Venda<sup>33</sup>. Apartheid claimed exclusive identity between each tribal (linguistic) essence and space. But where? Even when accepting the (untenable) essentialism of the ten languages and ignoring all uncomfortable details such as multi-linguism, it was only possible to draw boundaries around the essentialised bodies, as they were scattered, mixed and moving throughout South Africa by the use of massive violence.

Colonial violence and the original dispossessing of blacks had produced the borders set down in the Land Acts; continuously the Native areas was reproduced by forced removals and other violent means. Apartheid developed the reserve border as a national ethnic space and the discourse of violence shifted from segregation to 'independence'. From 1960 to 1983 1.7 million people were removed from white South Africa and dumped in 'resettlement camps' in the homelands of their imputed ethnic essence; yet only 41.8 per cent of the Black population lived in its designated state (homeland).<sup>34</sup> Yet, for all the violence and suffering unleashed by the White governments along the ethnic border, in 1976 the majority of all Blacks still lived in the

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<sup>32</sup> "A recognized tribe means a tribe or portion thereof which the Governor-General may from time to time constitute or declare to be such under any law." Land Act 1936, p. 100.

<sup>33</sup> The new 1996 constitution states the same languages (less one isiNdebele language) plus English and Afrikaans are the 11 official languages of South Africa. Constitution of South Africa, p.5.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher 1994, p. 69; see also the Surplus People's Project 1985.

area supposed to be white, despite draconian attempts to remove them<sup>35</sup> and most of those living in 'black' South Africa lived in the 'wrong' homeland. Except for minor amendments and inventions, such as Gazankulu and KwaNdebele, the ancestry of the homeland borders remained the consolidation of white farms before 1913.

The discourse of the homeland rested on the double fiction of race and tribe, (i) a true white man's land, and (ii) a true tribal, African land. Seen from white South Africa the border of serf-space was delineated by the tribe, but seen from the Native area the border of serf-space was drawn by the farms, racialised property. Strangely this meant that apartheid discourse could point out the spaces of African tribes, but not of their own *volk*, and logically they could point out the space of the white race, but not of the black race. The National Party, therefore, was confronted with a surprising problem: to map the true land of the Afrikaner *volk*. 'As far as I am aware, the Nats have never tried to explain *positively* why their God-given territory exactly follows the borders of the nation state of South Africa less the reserves, as they happened to be defined by colonial expediency long before apartheid. It was only argued *negatively*, as the territory which was left over when the *other volk* had got their homelands. "The unity of the *volkseie*, can only be apprehended in negative terms," Aletta Norval writes, in, what I think, is one of the most important analyses of the political project of apartheid, "...exclusive Afrikaner nationalism was an obsessional quest for a core authenticity which could, however, not be found. It could only be produced, and, hence, constantly had to be reproduced, by differentiating itself from competing conceptions of ordering: an exclusive Afrikaner nationalism was what was left when once British liberalism and imperialism, communism, doctrines of equality, and so forth, were all externalised as foreign to the tradition of the *volk*. It thus forged itself in terms of a series of negative operations in which the truly *volkseie*, while remaining invisible, could be inferred *a contrario* by the alleged visibility of the 'other': the non-true Afrikaner, the English, the Jew, the black, the coloured, and so forth. That process created a series of hierarchically

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<sup>35</sup> In 1976 the homelands amounted to 13% of South Africa declared to be the home of 85% of the total population.

defined 'others' that has to be accounted for in terms of the ever-present racial horizon within which the new mythical principle of ordering was inserted." <sup>36</sup>

### **Transkei 1976**

In 1976 the time had come for the final realisation of Verwoerd's Grand Apartheid. Transkei, a homeland the size of Denmark, was the first in the line of future 'independent' homelands, which in the end would remove all Blacks from 'white' South Africa. "All the descendants of Transkeian citizens and all persons ethnically, culturally or otherwise associated with any tribe in the Transkei are to be regarded as Transkeian citizens [and no longer South African citizens] irrespective of where they live. There is to be no choice." <sup>37</sup>. The denationalising of 'Transkeians' were contained in the Transkei Draft Constitution and Independence Bill to take effect on October 26, 1976. Defending this fragmentation of South Africa, F W de Klerk, the future President, said in the parliamentary debate on the Transkeian Independence, June 8, 1976, "Our model will result in a person having full citizenship of the Transkei in the country of his people and Government by his people - that is the basis of citizenship. Every Transkeian would have first-class citizenship of a fully independent and viable state." <sup>38</sup> People who had lived all their life in, say, Soweto, and never been to the Transkei, would become aliens, stripped of all rights, denationalised once and for all, and, when their employment was up, risking deportation from South Africa (now secessioned from the Transkei). As a way of robbing people of their South African citizenship, permission of house ownership, licence to trade, right to practice as professional, and all job application benefits would be made conditional on certificates of Transkeian citizenship. Border-controls, travel documents and strict restrictions on travel in and out of Transkei was implemented. But most importantly the very idea of a 'white' nation gracefully granting some 'African' nations their well-deserved independence was embraced by the majority of Whites.

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<sup>36</sup> Norval 1996, p. 95.

<sup>37</sup> As explained by the SAIRR in a protest-note, June 1976.

<sup>38</sup> The Cape Times, June 9, 1976.

A liberal newspaper like The Cape Times treated the denationalising of a majority of South Africans with a remarkable timid acceptance, presumably shared by most whites. In an editorial devoted to Transkeian self-determination they noted, "Heaven knows, there is enough in South Africa to divide us without our having to tear one another apart on the Transkei's independence. Heavens knows, the Transkei is going to have enough trouble establishing its economic and diplomatic viability without having to endure the harshest possible opposition at its very birth."<sup>39</sup> They only saw two temporary problems, no compromise yet on the enforced denationalising of 'Transkeians' living in South Africa and emergency rule at the time in Transkei preventing a vote on independence (introduced by Pretoria in a successful bid to get their man, K.D. Matanzima, to rule in Umtata). Of course that in itself should be enough to discredit 'independence'.

However, the significance of the accommodating editorial is the perception that South Africa was constituted by a White nation and some African nations, "There seems to be no reason why there should not be a relaxed, even helpful, attitude towards Transkeian independence *per se*... The right of self-determination must surely be accepted. And although opposition to the bill, as at present drafted, is understandable, we hope it will not imply non-recognition of this right."<sup>40</sup> Verwoerd had been able to sell the apartheid notion of a South Africa made up of separate nations to almost all whites and graft the discourse of national self-determination onto the policy of apartheid. The Cape Times obligingly disseminated the apartheid discourse of independence: "Tough measures and controls have been agreed upon by the South African and Transkei governments over the movement of citizens between the two countries," printed with large types over a long detailed article on the new border-crossing procedures<sup>41</sup>. An ultimate self-destructive schizophrenia reigned where people could discuss 'the problem of urban Blacks' while they carried on living in a 'white man's South Africa'. Only two weeks after the Cape Times wrote its apologetic editorial the complacent fiction of the two nations was shattered beyond repair by a group of persons nobody had thought of: the Black *children* The debates on

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<sup>39</sup> Cape Times, June 2, 1976.

<sup>40</sup> Cape Times, June 2, 1976.

<sup>41</sup> Cape Times, June 9, 1976.

Transkei would slip into oblivion after June 16 and Transkei quietly became independent on October 26, 1976.

### **Full Circle, the White Homeland**

At least at one point did the Afrikaners vindicate Karl Marx: when history repeats itself tragedy becomes farce. After the 1976 riots some liberals became convinced that the only way to save South Africa from an all-out race-war was a negotiated partition of the country. Christopher cites the partition-plan of Blenck and von der Ropp from 1976 cutting South Africa into a western immigrant part (White, Coloured, and Asian) to be called 'Capeland', and an eastern indigenous Black part including Johannesburg and Durban to be called Capricornia. This plan was later modified by Maasdorp with a more detailed partition-line without, of course, bringing it closer to any kind of political realities (G. Maasdorp, 'Forms of Partition' in R.I. Rotberg and J. Barrat eds. *Conflict and Compromise in South Africa*, Cape Town David Phillips 1980). After 1986 apartheid started to unravel fast and black majority rule rose on the horizon. Suddenly white racists saw that the struggle of ethnic space had to be put in reverse, the question was no longer how to rule Blacks in ethnic homelands, but how to find a homeland where the Afrikaners could defend themselves. Yet, it proved impossible to answer the simple question: *where* is the land of Afrikanerdom, where is the *volkseie*, the essence of the Afrikaner people truly at home? A seamless fit between Afrikaner territory and Afrikaner bodies could not be achieved. The land of the Afrikaner *volkseie* was not congruent with white South Africa; it suddenly ceased to be the 87% of South Africa outside the homelands. The Volkstaaters scrambled in vain for suitable borders. Eugene Terre'Blanche's half-nazi AWB looked backwards to the golden age of the Boer-*republieken* and made unreal demands for Transvaal and Oranje Vrystaat as a future White homeland. In 1989 the marginal Oranjewerkers movement proposed an 'Afrikanerland' skirting Johannesburg, but including Pretoria, much of the Transvaal agricultural heartland, East Rand industry, and the coast of north Natal. By 1994 the time of indulgent map-drawing was coming to an end and the Afrikaner Freedom Foundation, linked with the old but still existing Apartheid think-tank SABRA, proposed the most politically realistic version by choosing the thinly populated north-west for their Afrikanerstaat. In a long series of publications they have

developed this idea, yet without solving the dilemma of having to locate the land of Afrikaners where there are almost no Afrikaner bodies. C.J. Jooste prefaced his advocacy for *'n Volkstaat vir Boere-Afrikaners* with the sigh "while it is true that self-determination without a country is an illusion, it is equally true that a homeland in which non-Afrikaners constitute a majority or a significant part of the population does not make sense."<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

A spatial analysis may highlight the *longue duree* of social structure. I have argued that the three positions of slave, native, and serf, forced upon the Non-Europeans in early Cape Colonial society by the invaders, framed racial and ethnic violence in South Africa down to the present time. The slave was inside the house as part of the slave-master's family. The Native was originally outside the colony, living in African states. Between these two spaces was the space of the serf, inside the colony but outside the master's house. With the closure of the colonial frontier in the middle of the nineteenth century large groups of natives were included into the colony. Segregation became the strategy of rule of Natives, and the border of private (farm) property doubled up as the border of reserves where the Native population in theory was forced to live.

The meaning of the reserve-border was double: racial at the 'white' side, and ethnic on the 'tribal' side. Reserves were serf-spaces, a liminal position not fully inside South African society, yet not fully outside the white houses of exploitation. The homeland-border rested on a double fiction of race and ethnicity: a 'white' South Africa outside the homelands, and a 'tribal' Africa inside the homelands, and so the politics of the apartheid government remained a perpetual denial of racial-exploitative *inclusion* of black people and the ethnic *exclusion* of the Afrikaner. Premier Minister H. F. Verwoerd explained it like this in a speech in Parliament, 1958, "We say that when a Native drives a tractor on a farm he is not economically integrated... Merely because he helps the farmer to produce, is such a Native who operates a tractor integrated into the farmer's

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<sup>42</sup> C. J. Jooste 1994, preface.

life and community? Of course he is not, because the concept of integration applies to people and here we do not have people whose activities are becoming interwoven. They will only become interwoven in this way if the other forms of integration, namely equal social and political rights result from these activities.”<sup>43</sup>. One may ask if the farmer and the Native ‘helping’ the farmer to produce are not tied together by the umbilical relation of exploitation, without which there would be no farmer, but certainly a Native. To privilege with social and political rights only one of two individuals thus integrated economically takes a ‘natural’ explanation of the inequality: racism, backed up by never-ending violence. The Nationalists wanted to abolish the serf, the black person living inside the white state and outside the white patriarchal house; they dreamt of going back to the earliest colonial structure of domination: push the native back outside the white state, and keep the rest as slaves.

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<sup>43</sup> Cited by John Lazar in his ‘Verwoerd versus the ‘Visionaries’ The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) and Apartheid, 1948-1961’, in *Apartheid’s Genesis*, p. 378.

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