

The Sound of War: Apartheid, Audibility, and Resonance

A dissertation submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape.



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Declaration

I, Aidan Erasmus, declare that ‘The Sound of War: Apartheid, Audibility, and Resonance’ is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Aidan Erasmus
28 May 2018



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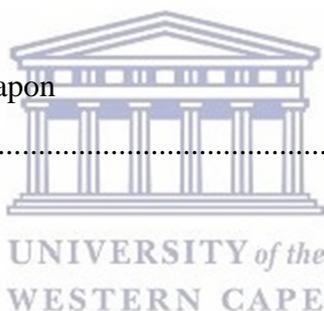


Abstract

This study approaches the field of military history with approaches to the study of sound in order to interrogate the concept of war that underpins military historiography as a disciplinary formation. It delineates the notion of the phonographic attitude with which to think about the ways in which technology, war, and the senses coalesce in broader historical writing about war, colonialism, and apartheid in South Africa. In so doing, it suggests that an attention to what it calls the warring motifs is necessary if a reorientation of a reading of war and apartheid away from a politics of deadness is to be achieved. It does so through a methodological approach that attends to various objects in South African historiography that may be attended to differently through an emphasis on the sensorial. These include the state-sponsored Walkman bomb that killed ANC lawyer Bheki Mlangeni, a record produced by artist Roger Lucey in memory of the death of activist Lungile Tabalaza, the supposed whistle or shout that led the indigenous Khoikhoi to victory over the Portuguese in 1510, a lithographic print by William Kentridge named after a radio programme for troops engaged in South Africa's border war, the bell of sunken troopship SS Mendi, and the first recording of the hymn 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' by intellectual and key figure in a history of nationalism in South Africa, Sol T Plaatje.

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Introduction: Anacrusis

Asking what it means to constitute a historiography that takes as its object the problem of the history of capitalism, and what that would mean for a critique of phonocentrism as the structuring dynamic of the Western philosophical tradition, William Pietz inquires to what the stakes are of placing the phonograph anywhere other than Europe:

What happens when the non-signifying phonograph which reinscribes a regime of phonocentrism within itself is placed in the non-capitalist geography of Africa, that territorial ear that listens and records in a massive silence which is not at all the silence of the phonograph?¹

Pietz suggests that if the subject determined by a phonocentrism is key to capitalism, it is a subject marked not by language and speech but rather the phonograph, or what Pietz calls the language machines of capitalism. In Pietz's argument, Africa is figured as the site of an encounter between the linguistics of capitalism and the territory that has escaped such inscription. The reasons for this question and its attendant assertions are twofold: Pietz is interested in historicism's reliance on the particularity of the written document and the spectre of structuralism on twentieth century historiography. Through a reading of a newspaper article published in 1885 titled 'The Phonograph in Africa', Pietz draws out the ways in which the apparatus of the phonograph was deployed in the moment of the scramble for Africa embodies 'a fantasy of a new politics of language', a fantasy of 'inscribing 'Africa' itself within 'techno-colonial dream' of 'the phonograph'.²

What does it mean to place a technology of sound recording at the core of a historiographical inquiry? Pietz's question is one that is at the heart of this dissertation's inquiry, and it is a question that draws together the technical, coloniality, and the sonic in ways that beg further consideration. In the pages that follow, I seek to understand what it is about the coalescing of technology, war, and the senses that unfolds at the disciplinary site of South African military

¹ Peitz, William., "The Phonograph in Africa: International Phonocentrism from Stanley to Sarnoff". *Post-Structuralism and the Question of History* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), 263-264.

² *Ibid.*, 269-270.

historiography that produces a conflation of war and history. This conflation – which reads a historical teleology and associated notions of progress as well as a certain technological determinism as inescapably bound to conflict, war, and conquest – is critical for how we understand not only the soldier but also the nation through the aesthetic objects that, as I shall show in this dissertation, have been conscripted in the service of such a conflation. Through such an interrogation, I am interested in bringing a disciplinary formation such as military historiography into contact with the senses, technology, and sound more directly, asking what that would mean for how it is we encounter the category of war and all its attendant conceptualisations in the aftermath of apartheid and colonialism. Put briefly, this dissertation is interested in the sound of war.

The Study of Sound and the Question of History

Such a study matters for several reasons, as any inquiry that must take sound as its object must at some point reckon with the fact that the very technological objects that sound in South Africa are intimately connected with war and all its attenuated conditions. Even the very idea of war is implicated in coloniality and all that would follow it, as Adam Sitze reminds us in his study of the notion of imperial war, giving us reason to assume that the technical would feature in the very conceptualisation of apartheid as well as in its state apparatus.³ In addition, as I will point out later, it is often because of the disciplinary weight and history of intellectual formations such as musicology and ethnomusicology and their implication in questions of war and colonialism that a

³ Sitze, Adam., 'The Imperial Critique of Imperial War'. *Filosofia Politica*, 25 (2): August 2011. This argument will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Verwoerd's doctoral thesis was titled 'A Blunting of the Emotions', and his postdoctoral research in psychology at the University of Leipzig would draw out his fascination with the technical apparatuses of the laboratory as well as the method of the experiment, as Roberta Miller points out: 'After his study in Germany, Verwoerd's work became more sophisticated and he began to explore the applications of his findings. His interest in the technology of laboratory experiments was stimulated by his access to new types of equipment in the psychological laboratories in Berlin and Leipzig. In particular, he conducted experiments using what was called an 'Attention- and Fatigue-meter' developed by H. Piorkowski in Berlin. But more importantly, his publications after this period show that he was becoming aware of possible biases that might be introduced by the experimental apparatus itself and that he had become more sensitive to the need for statistical analysis of his findings. In articles published after his study in Germany, he compared quantitative summaries of individual performance rather than merely reproducing selected narrative accounts by his subjects. He used statistical measures of central tendency and correlation coefficients in his analysis, even providing some sense of the confidence limits of the coefficients.' Miller, Roberta Balstad. "Science and society in the early career of HF Verwoerd." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19 (4) 1993: 639.

different approach to the question of sound and technology is necessary.⁴ It is in this sense that this study advocates for an interrogation of what it is calling the *warring motif* as indispensable to an inquiry into sound within the confines of the South African academy.

When I draw attention to the sonic in this dissertation, I understand such an assertion is now more than ever interwoven into the disciplinary forms and conditions of knowledge. Sound studies as a formation of late cultural studies has only recently been named as such and its growing importance in the scholarly arenas committed to an encounter with the sensorial is clear. The auditory turn as it has been termed has been characterized by a 'boom in writings on sound by authors in the humanities and social sciences, whose work is distinguished by self-consciousness of its place in a larger interdisciplinary discussion of sound'. It is a relatively new but actively growing field, with 'dozens of monographs on one or another aspect of sonic culture hav[ing] appeared since the early 1990s, alongside countless journal articles, book chapters, and a growing list of anthologies'.⁵ But, as John Mowitt has put it, 'many scholars are making noise about sound but often in ways that feel resolutely empirical', and we are reminded that as the auditory turn began to take hold, it could not resist becoming disciplined itself.⁶ Part of what sound studies has had to contend with has been a need to demarcate its object, or define it as an object, and we are reminded that it is the disciplinary object that dwells between what it is the discipline refers to and that which it is its aim or purpose. It is a debate that asks what the belated disciplinarity of something like sound studies is, as James Lavender suggests in asking what exactly the object of sound studies is:

We might ask then, on this basis: what is the object of sound studies? The answer is, of course, contained within the question, at least as regards the first sense: the object of sound

⁴ We are reminded of Percival Kirby's machine used to transduce and record the physiognomic response of the language of the San which forms part of an early ethnomusicological inquiry in South Africa. On the formation of ethnomusicology and musicology and how the discipline has had to reckon with its own complicity, see, Zimmer, Niklas. "Percival Kirby's wax cylinders: elegy on archiving a deaf spot." *Social Dynamics* 41 (1) 2015: 101-123, Mhlambi, Thokozani Ndumiso. "The early years of black radio broadcasting in South Africa: a critical reflection on the making of Ukhozi FM." PhD diss., University of Cape Town, 2008, Lambrechts, Lizabé. "Performing the aporias of the archive: Towards a future for South African music archives." *Historia* 61 (1) 2016: 132-154. These and other issues pertaining to sound, ethnomusicology, and the technological will be addressed in Chapter 5.

⁵ Sterne, Jonathan., 'Sonic Imaginations'. *The Sound Studies Reader*. (Routledge, New York, 2012). 2.

⁶ Mowitt, John. *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities*. (Univ of California Press, 2015). 59.

studies is ‘sound itself’. But difficulties beset us immediately: do we mean sound *qua* physical/material phenomenon, a vibration passing through a given medium, conceived ontologically as an element within a broader conception of nature or the real, as Steve Goodman and Christoph Cox have argued? Or, do we rather hold that sound is only conceivable in relation to the perception of such vibrations *as sound*, as Jonathan Sterne and Seth Kim-Cohen have claimed, albeit for different reasons, thereby making the auditory phenomenon, rather than ‘sound in itself’, our object? And this question is only the beginning of our problems – to take sound as object of and for perception, for instance, is to immediately raise the question of the nature and capacity of sense perception, its scope and its limits and its relationship to conceptual thought.⁷

As Lavender alerts us to, key to the debates in sound studies has been how to respond to the long-standing hegemony of the visual, the relation between technologically produced sounds and their listeners, the politics of space and sound, and the phenomenology of sound.⁸ In doing so, we might paraphrase Lavender and say that it has been searching for sound as much as it has been searching for a definition of a disciplinary object that sounds. Approaching this key worry at the heart of sound studies from the academic vantage point of Southern Africa is particularly productive, as what dominates inquiries into the question of sound is a register inherited from the discourses of musicology, ethnomusicology, popular music studies, and anthropology.⁹

Jonathan Sterne, a prominent scholar in the development of the field of sound studies, has argued that it was the process of reproduction offered by the phonograph that produced a modernity marked by sound, and acousmatic sound.¹⁰ In *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Sterne tracks the history of how the fact that sound itself became an object corralled

⁷ Lavender, James. "Introduction: Sounding/Thinking." *Parallax*, 23 (3), 2017. 245.

⁸ One example of how inquiries into sound has been John Mowitt's critique of the emergent discipline, suggesting that what sound studies has not accounted for is how to figure its own object. Mowitt offers the notion of the audit as a response to visualism's gaze. The notion of the audit will be addressed in Chapter 5. See Mowitt, John. *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities*. (Univ of California Press, 2015) and Mowitt, John. "Like a whisper." *differences* 22 (2-3) 2011: 168-189.

⁹ There is a large body of literature on popular culture and performance, as well as protest music in South Africa (under apartheid as well as popular culture as it emerges in the post-apartheid) as well as on the continent. See for example, Moorman, Marissa. *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times*. (Ohio University Press, Athens: 2010), Martin, Denis Constant. *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*. (African Minds, Somerset West: 2013), Haupt, Adam. *Static: Race and Representation in Post-apartheid Music, Media and Film*. (HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2012), Meintjes, Louise. *Sound of Africa! Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio*. (Duke University Press, Durham: 2003), Coplan, David. *In Township Tonight!: South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), Ballantine, C., *Marabi Nights: Jazz, 'Race' and Society in Early Apartheid South Africa* (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Press, Durban: 2012).

¹⁰ Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. (Duke University Press, Durham: 2003). This is particularly important if we are to consider the history of radio in Africa, a point I address in Chapter 3.

by the technology that would reproduce it would produce a sound culture that inaugurated an age of transmission and preservation of sound.¹¹ It is in tune with the focus on technology and sound in much the same manner that Sterne underscores a history of sound reproduction technologies that this study turns to the phonographic as a technical motif with which to attend to the objects it intends to think about. The phonographic, as I will delineate in more detail in Chapter 1, is particularly resonant as a conceptualisation with which to think not only the problem of sound, but also the problem of the problematisation of sound. This question drives the desire to turn to the phonographic as a way of thinking the objects in question in this dissertation. The phonograph, or to write a phonography, is therefore to invest in a writing of sound as a technological practice as much as it is an elaboration of a sonic inscription entirely caught up in the process of its own making. In fact, the act of phonography is one that defines sound as sound, that creates sound, a practice that has ‘come to be associated less with writing sounds down than fixing them repeatedly *as* sounds’.¹² More telling is its function as a conceptual framing in that it provides us with notions of auditing, and other modes of ‘taking account’ that we find resonant in the discipline of history, anthropology, and other areas of study in the humanities.¹³ In lieu of the aforementioned, to take account in the form of a phonography is to make sound, and as such it is both a recording of the field as it is a field recording, and allows us to think the role of the auditor in more precise terms.¹⁴

It allows the project to weave together a process of thinking about the writing of sound as something that resonates. Such a move alerts us to, for example, the ‘ontologies and epistemologies

¹¹ Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Duke University Press, 2003.

¹² Feaster, Patrick. ‘Phonography’ in David Novak, Matt Sakakeeny (eds), *Keywords in Sound* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2015), 140.

¹³ In fact, it is the mode of auditing historical records and sources that have dominated the use of sound and its place in the discipline of history. This stands in contrast with the field of sound studies, which has proven to be multidisciplinary. If anything, sound has been the object of a specifically historicist inquiry and has as its organizing theme a teleology that seeks to augment narrative with new aural actors, arguing that ‘it is precisely because sound studies entails more than simply the privilege of “hearing” in its purely physiological sense that histories of sound must extend backward in time, however fraught our attempts to recover soundscapes from ancient, medieval, or early modern sources might be’. Bender, Daniel, Corpis, Duane J., and Walkowitz, Daniel J. (eds), “Editor’s Introduction”, in *Radical History Review* (Issue 121: Sound Politics: Critically Listening to the Past, January 2015), 3.

¹⁴ Crucial to thinking the auditor is John Mowitt’s suggestion that audit might be a concept analogous to visualism’s gaze, staging the audit as ‘the methodological effect that enables a text to sound along the unraveling seam where sound and sense traverse one another’. See Chapter 5. Mowitt, John. *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities* (University of California Press, 2015), 17.

of the acoustic, particularly the voice, produced by and enmeshed in different audile techniques, in which sound appears simultaneously as a force that constitutes the world and a medium for constructing knowledge about it'.¹⁵ The phonographic produces sound objects. Thus, a phonographic attitude is concerned with these sound objects.

War and Military Historiography

This dissertation is neither bound to the intellectual protocols of sound studies nor is it located entirely outside of it. Rather the present study attempts to place its needle on the groove of the disciplinary formation that is slowly but surely taking hold. It is in the act of borrowing and sounding off that this dissertation lodges itself. The methodology is lodged in this register too: it is an attempt to work at the tension that exists between sound studies and military history and the objects they purport to understand, know and produce. It is imperative to make explicit that this project is not interested in writing a history of the sense of hearing as it appears in moments of conflict, or a history of auralty alongside a history of war, but rather it is interested in – to think with Viet Erlmann's argument regarding a history of sound – 'a more dynamic elaboration of the concept of modernity through hearing'.¹⁶ Following Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier's work on voice, writing, and the colonial apparatus in Colombia as it marks postcolonial listening, I seek to read particular practices as they appear in South African military historiography as 'formation[s] and...force[s] that seep[...] through its crevices demanding the attention of its listeners, sometimes questioning and sometimes upholding, explicitly or implicitly its very foundations'. In order to draw together the phonographic and the *warring motif*, we might return to Pietz, who reminds us

¹⁵ Ochoa Gautier, Ana Maria. *Auralty: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2014), 3. The term 'audile technique' is a term coined by Jonathan Sterne and comes to mean techniques of listening that at once determines how sound is received but also how the listener is produced in that process. It is particularly important in relation to technologically mediated sound, where isolation of both sound and listener is crucial. See for example, Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2003).

¹⁶ Erlmann, V., *Reason and Resonance: A History of Modern Auralty* (Zone Books, New York: 2014), 15.

that the acceleration of a long history of colonialism and capital in the late nineteenth century coincides with the history of sound reproduction technologies:

The investment of desire and narrativity in the new communications machines that began to appear in the late nineteenth century, such as is evident in ‘The Phonograph in Africa’ article, is thus in many ways a continuation of a centuries-old colonial discourse characterizing the savage’s experience of civilization through an anthropomorphic apprehension of its technology.¹⁷

By pointing out the ways in which in this moment the phonographic reconfigured what it meant to encounter the technological at the site of Western imperialism, Peitz directs us towards what can be thought of as a convergence of warring and the phonographic. Notably, it is in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century that a growing African nationalism particularly in South Africa begins to emerge, and it is also a moment in which the circumstances that would become the focus of South African military historiography takes hold.

It is also in this moment that military history and broader South African historical writing would find its concept of war. This concept might best be thought of along two tendencies in historiography which cut across one another as much as they run parallel. Firstly, as I will show later in this dissertation, there is a configuring of conflict born out of a conceptualization of imperial conquest and juridical emergency. This configuration manifests in attempts to think South African war efforts as both worldly and of the continent, both anti-colonial and imperial. Secondly, there is a historiographical tendency to favour a reading of war as either matters of technical pragmatism – or ‘tactics’ – and as such overlook the nuances of what becomes a complicated relationship between colonialism, apartheid, and the act of making war. Consequently, this historiographic anxiety has been imprinted upon the sensorial objects such historical would seek to deploy in its writing. This uncertainty – clear in a desire to declare a concept of war that would extend across the teleological breadth of South African history – is explored in Chapter 2. A texture, notion, idea, figure or

¹⁷ Peitz, William., “The Phonograph in Africa: International Phonocentrism from Stanley to Sarnoff”. *Post-Structuralism and the Question of History* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), 273.

element (aesthetic or otherwise) that returns and repeats to produce objects that abide by this concept of war is what I shall call a *warring motif*, and it is through attending to and analyzing these warring motifs that I argue we may understand the ways in which the notion of war as tactical is deployed by specific historiographical formations in South Africa. It is in the site of military historiography and a historiography that would make a claim to histories of war in South Africa and how it constitutes its object as *warring* that I contend resonates with the technological infrastructures that would come to reorient a notion of sound. It strikes me as critical that a shift in what we would call imperial war and the relation between South Africa as a colonial dominion with its own imperial desires manifests more or less at the moment of a shift in how it is we would think the relationship between the sense of sound, its technological reproduction, and what Pietz marks as a specific relation to colonial and anthropological discourse. It is this resonance – a notable sympathetic vibration – that I want to draw attention to in thinking about war and its historiographical afterlife.

The concept of war is a contentious one, and in South Africa, it has largely been thought along three trajectories, which reveal to a certain extent the nature of the historiographical anxiety I referred to earlier. The first and most recent, is that the notion of ‘total war’, following the move by the apartheid state from largely police repression to a state driven by military power as a tactic of survival under the principle of ‘total onslaught, total strategy’ during the presidency of P.W Botha in 1978.¹⁸ The state of emergency as the structuring motif of state power in this case is essential to aligning it with a notion of imperial war, and to argue for a military industrial complex that is particular to South Africa. What marked this period specifically was a debate around whether South Africa was at war, a debate that continues to haunt military history, if not South African historiography more broadly. For radical historiography it would seem that the question of war and

¹⁸ I trace this notion and debates surrounding it in Chapter 4 through a series of texts, namely Leonard, Richard. *South Africa at War* (AD. Donker, 1983), Davis, Stephen M., *Apartheid's Rebels: Inside South Africa's Hidden War* (AD. Donker, 1987), Frankel, Philip H., *Pretoria's Praetorians: Civil-Military Relations in South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, London: 1984), Cock, Jaclyn, Nathan, Laurie. (eds), *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa* (David Philip, Cape Town: 1989).

the military was kept at a distance, due most likely to the ways in which the military was a key part of the state apparatus.¹⁹ As will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4, the question of the military was largely taken up by scholars through analyses of the state apparatus of the 1980s, when South Africa was christened as a society at war.²⁰ However, the formative moments of war in South African history are intertwined with the formative moments of African nationalism that is an integral part of the birth and ideological development of what becomes the African National Congress, and it is to this I turn in Chapter 5.

The second is associated with scholarship on World War 1, World War 2, and the South African War of 1899-1900, with a distinct focus being placed on the question of how to speak of these historical events after the end of apartheid and colonialism. As a result, much of this scholarship as it emerged the midst of the state of emergency in the 1980s in South Africa deals with black combatants and African involvement in what are largely European wars in the early 20th century in South Africa.²¹ The case of the South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC) is one which forms a large part of the discussion, and which I track in Chapter 4. Questions of inclusion, representation, and how one might constitute a black soldier under colonialism and apartheid is a large part of the literature that makes up this historiography with scattered attempts to account for the growing African nationalism at the time. The third trajectory is related to the second in the sense

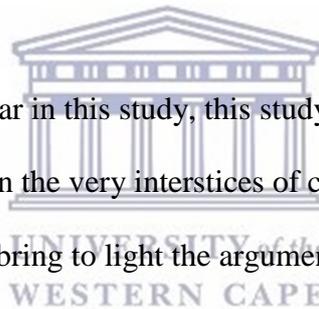
¹⁹ An exemplary text in this regard, which brings together military historiography and the radical tradition of social history in South Africa is Bill Nasson's *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*. (Cambridge University Press, 2003). I will engage literature on this topic in detail throughout the dissertation.

²⁰ For example, debates around censorship and the role of the military in every day life is a common theme in the scholarship. See Kristen, Frederik Fouche, "A critical analysis of the relationship between the South African Defence Force and the South African Media from 1975 – 83". Masters thesis, Rhodes University, 2015, Addison, Graeme Norris, 'Censorship of the Press in South Africa during the Angolan War: A Case Study of News Manipulation and Suppression'. Masters Thesis, Rhodes University, 1980. On militarization see Warwick, Rodney, 'White South Africa and Defence 1960-1968: Militarisation, Threat Perceptions and Counter Strategies', PhD Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2009. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 4.

²¹ For example, see Chetty, Suryakanthie, 'Our Victory Was Our Defeat: Race, Gender and Liberalism in the Union Defence Force, 1939 – 1945', PhD Dissertation, University of Kwazulu Natal, 2006, Benneyworth, Garth Conan, 'Traces of Forced Labour – a history of black civilians in British concentration camps during The South African War, 1899-1902.' PhD Dissertation, University of the Western Cape, 2016, Kleynhans, Evert Philippus, 'Armoured Warfare: The South African Experience in East Africa, 1940-1941', Masters Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2014, Constantine, Rodney James, 'The Guerrilla War in the Cape Colony During The South African War of 1899 – 1902: A Case Study of the Republican and Rebel Commando Movement' Masters thesis, University of Cape Town, 1996, Mahosi, Nkadimeng Theodore, 'The Influence of the Second World War on Black Labour in the Witwatersrand Area, 1941 – 1947', Masters Thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, 1998.

that both are concerned with what an inquiry like military history — enveloped in the state apparatus as a crucial arm of the Nationalist government — would account for its new role under a democratic dispensation. Here the literature is concerned with questions of transformation and the changing role of the military. It is a debate that draws in the discussion around ‘total war’ seen in the 1980s because of the process of transforming the South African Defence Force into the newly constituted South African National Defence Force.²² This is a debate I return to in Chapter 4. It is also the site of a discourse on what the South African infantryman looks like and what his/her inheritance is after a history of colonialism and apartheid. Much like the attention given to the beginning of the 20th century in South Africa, social history is often deployed to speak to that historiographical tension, a tension I pick up on in Chapter 2. It is also here that we find an overlap with the traces of a historiography that attempts to speak to the colonial wars of the 1700s up until the late 1800s.

To broaden the definition of war in this study, this study takes its cue from Peitz, and sets out to articulate war as imperial war, in the very interstices of colonial jurisprudence and emergency. Locating war here would bring to light the argument that law’s demand for obedience is one secured by a threat of harm, and we can argue that what threatens the tonal and rhythmic harmony of colonial governmentality is precisely the threat of dissonance.²³ Such a discursive



²² See Tshabalala, Khanyisile Litchfield, ‘Transformation in the Military Police Agency of the South African National Defence Force’, Masters thesis, University of South Africa, Matloa, Abbey Oupa, ‘The Formation of the SANDF: Integration Experiences of Former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei Defence Force Members’ Masters thesis, University of South Africa, 2015, Jordaan, Evert, ‘South African Defence Since 1994: A Study of Policy-Making’, Masters thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2004. Swart, J.A.B, ‘Die Integrasie van Umkhonto We Sizwe in die Suid Afrikaanse Weermag’, Masters Thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, 1993, Erasmus, Willem Driesse, ‘Development of Military Leadership: A Proposed Model for the South African National Defence Force’, PhD Dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 2009.

²³ In a discussion of H.L.A Hart’s *The Concept of Law*, Nasser Hussain asks what it is about law as constituted by modernity that finds its limit in the practice of colonialism. Hussain suggests that it is the work of a certain duality in the sense that ‘we have both the notion that the essence of law cannot be grasped absent an understanding of its social aspect *and* the notion that law itself cannot exist without an establishment of officials and institutions’. It is this duality that reminds us that modern positivist jurisprudence has at its core a command, one portrayed by John Austin as ‘essentially a command for compliance backed by a threat of harm’. If this is the case, then “law as a complex structure of legitimate authority would be forced to identify with its horrifying double — the example of a simple bank robbery, as in ‘the case of the gunman who says to the bank clerk, ‘Hand over the money or I will shoot’”. Hussain, Nasser. *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 35 - 37.

move, as I show in Chapter 3, would allow a delineation of the relation between the military industrial complex that characterised the ‘total strategy’ of P.W. Botha, state president in the 1980s, that of the radio show ‘Forces Favourites’ and the severed heads of William Kentridge’s printmaking. It would also be here that we would encounter the pervasiveness of a concept of war inherited from colonialism, and when deployed in the terms of apartheid, would produce a Walkman bomb as a method of dispatching, which is the concern of Chapter 1. More importantly, it would allow war to be elaborated along the contours of the ‘questions of law and emergency [that have] shaped the conceptualisation and practice of colonial rule, and how these concepts in turn affected the development of western legality’.²⁴

The Phonographic Attitude and History

This study suggests that we must avoid reading the objects that form the core of the dissertation within the discursive traces of military historiography or seek out that which makes them evoke sound in whichever way they might. Instead, we must read military historiography along the lines of a phonographic attitude. If, as Michel Foucault would have it, an attitude would be to redirect the historical periodisation of modernity towards a relation to the present and contemporary — an ethos of critique, in Foucault’s terms — and such an attitude would be attuned to critique as that which must seek out limits, then what I am calling the phonographic attitude would amount to being aware of the moment of actualisation. Indeed, as Foucault puts it, ‘[t]he point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression’.²⁵ If we define the phonographic as that which produces the episodic by virtue of its technicality and its propensity for education, then a phonographic attitude would attend to the object by addressing its very perceptibility for critique.

²⁴ Hussain, Nasser. *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 3, 5.

²⁵ Foucault, Michel. “What is Enlightenment?” in P. Rabinow (eds), *The Foucault Reader* (Pantheon Books, 1984), 45.

The idea of the phonographic attitude therefore aims to provide a framework adequate to thinking about the relation between sound and war; one that accounts for a definition of war that is not reducible to combat or conflict *through* sound as category. As such, it seeks to establish a theoretical and conceptual framework that stages a conversation between notions of war and empire as articulated by South African historiography and the unfolding of terms by sound studies that overlap with such discourses. In other ways, this dissertation also aims to intervene at the site of sound studies and military historiography. In that sense, the project seeks to locate itself in neither, but argues that thinking along the edges of these formations offers an occasion to account for its limits as it purports to know its object.

While traversing the discourses of both sound studies and military historiography, this dissertation is ultimately located in the field of history. Such a positioning demands that as this study attempts to intervene in a set of debates in sound studies and military historiography it must also align its impetus in relation to the work of history. I find such orienting in a borrowing of a response by Premesh Lalu to critiques of *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts*, where it is underscored that the aim of the book was not to recover a lost history, or to reinterpret a misinterpreted event, but rather to understand what he calls ‘the cut of history’.²⁶ Such a move is instructive in destabilising the very concept of history at work in the colonial archive and readings thereof, and it is this move that this dissertation holds dear to its conceptualisation of what is being called the phonographic attitude. In asking what the *warring motif* is, the question of what constitutes the polemological object as it appears in military history and what a consideration of that object as technical sonic object might bring to the epistemological grounding of military history after apartheid is foregrounded, this dissertation asks what a slippage in the conceptualization of a relation between war, technology and the senses tells us about the

²⁶ Lalu, Premesh. "Thinking Ahead!." *South African Historical Journal* 63, no. 4 (2011): 581-593. See also, Rutledge, Brian. "Premesh Lalu's Post-colonial Push: Is it Time to Dismantle the Discipline?." *South African Historical Journal* 63, no. 1 (2011): 148-167.

work of history.²⁷ If what James Parker has called an acoustic jurisprudence would be concerned with how law is lived both in sound and by it, a phonographic attitude would consider the *warring motif* as that element which demonstrates how imperial war and its subjects is lived both in sound and by virtue of it.²⁸

I suggest that we take Pietz's question seriously and pursue an attitude to sound that is textured by the phonographic as opposed to an inquiry that would produce the structuralist tendencies of a rigid polemological historicism, a yearning for a phenomenological account of sound, or an archival strategy.²⁹ As such, we must approach military historiography with a mode of inquiry whose allegiance is not so much to sound studies as it is to show how sound is '(re)presented' as opposed to '(re)produced', or educed as Patrick Feaster argues.³⁰ I ask for a reading of sound as it permeates and provides grounds for disruption and reorientation in our figuring of the conceptualization of war in South Africa through a reading of events that both mark a historicist impulse while producing an object and event that sounds as the locus of their historicization. The dissertation therefore places several objects before the reader, asking that these objects be considered as emblematic of a war-ring motif, but also that call into question how it is these objects and their associated histories are produced or mediated discursively. These objects and events mark key instances where the politics of sound and technology brush up against the question of war in the context of colonialism and apartheid and provide an opportunity for a reorientation. These include the state-sponsored Walkman bomb that killed ANC lawyer Bheki Mlangeni, a

²⁷ Polemology refers to the study and analysis of conflict and war, and specifically as it pertains to global conflict, and is used interchangeably with war studies, a discipline that is distinctly multidisciplinary and draws into its ambit matters of law, philosophy, ethics, psychology, economics, sociology, anthropology, and international relations. The term itself emerges in the wake of the Second World War by French scholar of war Gaston Bouthoul and by the 1970s, had given way to formations such as war studies, peace studies, security studies, and international relations proper. It is invoked in this project to indicate a historicism or a set of inquiries that are premised on a study of war, and how it is such an approach has particular consequences for the sound object it seeks to think through or about.

²⁸ James E. K. Parker, *Acoustic Jurisprudence: Listening to the Trial of Simon Bikindi*, First edition (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²⁹ South African historiography has already responded to the auditory turn in the form of a special issue of the journal *Social Dynamics*. See for example, Hoffmann, Anette. "Introduction: listening to sound archives." *Social Dynamics*, 41, (1) 2015, 73-83.

³⁰ Feaster, Patrick., "'A Compass of Extraordinary Range': The Forgotten Origins of Phonomanipulation", in *The Journal of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections*. 42 (2), 2011. I will elaborate on education in more detail in Chapter 1.

record produced by artist Roger Lucey in memory of the death of activist Lungile Tabalaza, the supposed whistle or shout that led the indigenous Khoikhoi to victory over the Portuguese in 1510, a lithographic print by William Kentridge named after a radio programme for troops engaged in South Africa's border war, the bell of sunken troopship SS Mendi, and the first recording of the hymn 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' by intellectual and key figure in a history of nationalism in South Africa, Sol T Plaatje.

Chapter outline

This study is divided into five chapters, each devoted to particular objects. Chapter 1, titled Dispatch, takes as points of departure the relationship between the image and sound, and specifically how that unfolds in relation to the object and violence. Concerned with questions of spectrality, deadness, silence and visualism, it tracks the events including and following the deaths of Bheki Mlangeni and Lungile Tabalaza, and how they have been scripted because and through specific objects that speak to the phonographic. It is where we cannot actualize a sound that constitutes a limit at which we are invited to account for war differently, and where I argue we encounter a different rendering of the violence of apartheid than what we have inherited through the juridical vocabulary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Through Patrick Feaster's notion of eduction, I ask what it means to play back such events and what it would mean to dispatch — to discharge of, to communicate, to settle — the question of the image in relation to sound and its attendant objects as they come into contact with and are impinged upon by a concept of war as it is figured through the technological and the tactical.

In 'Warlike Sounds', the second chapter of this dissertation, I explore the question of the acousmatic as it would appear in the techniques of military historiography, and ask what war does to subjectification of the non-speaking body that is constituted as a secret weapon. Through examining the ways in which a whistle or a shout in 1510 is heard and misheard, I suggest that the non-vocal vocalisation sits at the heart of a slippage between the aural and the oral in the

conceptualisation of social history that drives the historiographical construction of the South African soldier. Simultaneously, it is the sound object as constituted polemologically that allows it to be conscripted in the service of a historiography of anti-colonialism and resistance through the violent scripts inherited from a warring motif that is perpetuated in the field of military history. In attending to this inconsistency through the work of J. Martin Daughtry and others, I attempt to complicate how it is military history approaches what Hayden White would call its employment through what I am calling a belliphonic soundmark.

After having complicated the notion of how it is we constitute a sonic technical object through attending to the whistle or shout, in Chapter 3 I turn to how it is we think a transduction of sound into a medium that is not necessarily sonic. By examining how it is a radio message becomes the name of a print, 'Face to Face' attempts to trace the radio as a point from which to think military history's core categories such as the border and the frontier. I point out in this chapter that thinking the print and the radio together offers us a more productive way to reconstitute the border as the site of mediation and underscore the ways in which a concept of war in military historiography could not account for the technical as it would impinge upon the senses. Additionally, I suggest that by inverting the technological rationality of apartheid's war, we may invite other readings at the site of sound studies.

The penultimate chapter, titled 'Discipline', takes the return of the bell of the SS Mendi as an object of sonicity, or that which — following the work of Wolfgang Ernst produces chrono-technical sound knowledge. By positioning the bell of a troopship destined to only carry black unarmed soldiers, I suggest that the bell (as opposed to the death drill which is the defining moment through which the event is remembered) grants us a sense of the time of war. This notion of wartime as figured through the bell shows us the ways in which military historiography has disciplined its own timing, a timing that haunts a debate around total war near the end of apartheid and how the military has constituted itself thereafter.

The last chapter takes a nationalist text and asks what kind of listening it implores us to inhabit. In ‘Stereophony’, I track the ways in which two texts — an essay titled ‘The Essential Interpreter’ by Sol T Plaatje which deals with interpreting in a colonial court and the first recording of what becomes part of South Africa’s national anthem also made by Sol Plaatje — might offer us a language of audition with which to think its absence in military and radical historiography. ‘The Essential Interpreter’, a text by South African intellectual, politician, journalist and writer Sol T Plaatje is a text that introduces into our lexicon the notion of the trialogue, while the recording offers us a way to think the trialogue as caught up in the distinction between the telephonic and the phonographic. Through a reading of these texts through literary criticism and ethnomusicology, I suggest that what the concept of the audit as John Mowitt delineates it offers is an opportunity to combine the role of interpreter and the listener. This, I argue, offers as much to what has been overlooked in military history as it must make audible what has been misheard in sound studies.



Chapter 1: Dispatch

It's only educed audio while you are playing it.¹

Who could resist the invitation of those dainty headphones?²

Unlikely Resonances

I begin with two cases where we are met with sound that is given to us as an image. This chapter asks what it means to actualise a sound whose actualisation has been denied technologically or otherwise by taking the failure of play back as an invitation to read. With the deaths of Bhekisizwe Mlangeni and Lungile Tabalaza in 1991 and 1978 respectively the chapter asks what a dual perceptual rendering of the two events does to how we understand the relationship between two seemingly diametrically opposed sensorial modalities. In so doing, it deploys the concept of education. It asks to what extent the reason these moments are available to both the visual and the sonic is related to the conceptual and technical genealogies of those very sensorial modalities. The chapter argues that the visual and the sonic are intimately connected by the idea of education and that the resonance between the two events in relation to deadness, silence, and the technical is precisely due to the dialectic between image and sound, particularly as it is caught up in the notion of sound we have inherited through a history of technological sound reproduction. This observation has implications for how we think sound and image, render these events on the terms of these sensorial modalities, and what their resonance is in histories of apartheid, colonialism, war, and the senses. It has resonance for how we might think these kinds of violent acts after the juridical vocabulary given to us by the discursiveness of the TRC.

¹ Feaster, Patrick. "What Is Education?", 11 Feb. 2015. <http://www.griffonagedotcom.wordpress.com/2015/01/17/what-is-education>. Accessed on 25 Feb. 2017.

² Siegfried Kracauer and Thomas Y Levin, *The Mass Ornament* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 79.

In 1989, following an exposure of the apartheid death squads by journalist Jacques Pauw in Afrikaans newspaper *Vrye Weekblad*, Dirk Coetzee was sent by Jacques Pauw and others to join the ANC in exile in the interest of his safety.³ In 1990, Coetzee exposed the actions of the South African Security Police and the Civil Co-operation Bureau while appearing before a hearing of the Harms Commission of Inquiry into Certain Alleged Murders in London.⁴ His testimony was rejected through a defensive move by the Security Police and the state instituted Harms Commission that declared Coetzee an unreliable witness.

Later that year, Coetzee received a package while in exile in Lusaka, Zambia. The package which had been clandestinely sent by former commander of Vlakplaas, Eugene De Kock, had been marked as being dispatched in May 1990 by Bhekisizwe Godfrey Mlangeni, who was a human rights lawyer working for the ANC and based in Johannesburg. Mlangeni had been working on evidence that would later surface at the Harms Commission and had presented evidence to the commission countering the claim that neither the army nor the police were implicated in political assassinations.⁵ Given Coetzee's knowledge of the activities and practices of Vlakplaas as the former head of the unit, he recognised the package as suspicious, and, upon delivery, promptly returned it to sender.⁶ On 15 February 1991, the package arrived at Mlangeni's office which he proceeded to take home. The package contained a Unisef SZ10 stereo cassette player with

³ Dirk Coetzee was a founding member and commander from 1980 to 1981 of the South African Police Force's counterinsurgency unit based at Vlakplaas west of Pretoria, a unit infamous for the torture and murder of anti-apartheid activists like Griffiths Mxenge and Sizwe Kondile. The unit became known in the media and the popular imagination as the apartheid death squad. Jacques Pauw was a journalist working for *Vrye Weekblad*, an Afrikaans newspaper that actively criticised the state.

⁴ The Harms Commission was set up by then State President F.W. De Klerk to investigate the allegations surrounding Vlakplaas, and Civil Co-Operation Bureau was a South African Defence Force unit tasked with eliminating ANC-aligned activists.

⁵ "The ANC said Mlangeni and Coetzee, now a member of the ANC in exile, had exposed the activities of both the Civil Cooperation Bureau, a secret army unit that allegedly carried out surveillance and attacks on anti-apartheid leaders, and "other assassination gangs in the employ of the Pretoria government." Scott Kraft, "Bomb Kills ANC Lawyer Who Tracked Hit Squads: South Africa: Explosive Is Hidden In Headphones. Colleagues Say Attack Was Intended For Someone Else.", *Los Angeles Times*, 17 February 1991, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-02-17/news/mn-2173_1_hit-squad. Accessed on 8 April 2016.

⁶ Letter bombs were infamous as a mode of targeted assassination by the apartheid state, the most renowned of which was the death of Ruth First in Mozambique in 1982 as well as that of Jeanette Schoon and her daughter in Angola in 1984, both who were killed by a parcel bomb ordered by the South African Police. Similarly, Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest and anti-apartheid activist, was severely wounded in Zimbabwe by a letter bomb in 1990. Other examples include incidents in Botswana and Zambia in 1975 (Ongkopotse Abraham Tiro and Boy Mvemve), and in Mozambique (Philemon Mahlako in 1979 and Enoch Reginald Mhlongo in 1989).

earphones rigged with explosives and two cassettes: one marked 'Evidence: Hit Squads' and the other an album by musician Neil Diamond. The right earphone was designed to explode upon pressing play on the cassette player. When Mlangeni placed the earphones in his ears (despite a final request by his wife to "connect to the hi fi, so [she] could also listen"), it killed him instantly.⁷ The bomb ended up within earshot of Mlangeni because Coetzee's colleague failed heed instructions to inform Mlangeni.⁸

Mlangeni's death recalls an earlier killing at the hands of the apartheid security apparatus. In an earlier episode in the long history of political deaths under apartheid, we encounter the death of Lungile Tabalaza. In 1978, Tabalaza became the 23rd person after March 1976 to die in police custody in South Africa.⁹ Arrested by South African security police on suspicion of arson and robbery involving a delivery van on 10 July 1978, Tabalaza was taken into custody for questioning. Later that day at around 14h40, Tabalaza 'fell' from the fifth floor of the Sanlam Building in Port Elizabeth, the same building that had seen the torture of Steve Biko who had also died in police custody in 1977.¹⁰ The official response by the police regarding the cause of Tabalaza's death was that he committed suicide having jumped out an unbarred window, and an inquest held between September and October of 1978 was inconclusive in finding anyone responsible for his death.¹¹ This was despite photographs and other evidence suggesting that he was tortured, assaulted and suspended by his feet from the window from which he fell prior to his death.

⁷ Mlangeni, Seipati. Human Rights Violation Hearing, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Johannesburg, 2 May 1996, <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Cmethodis/mlangeni.htm>, accessed on 6 April 2015.

⁸ I use the term colleague here because it is difficult to ascertain whether it was an ANC member (as Jacques Pauw suggests in his book) or a journalist (as Peter Harris insinuates in his version of events, which implicates Pauw as the person Coetzee asked to pass on the message). In the Amnesty Hearings involving Eugene de Kock, Pauw is implicated again in a question to de Kock. Amnesty Hearings, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Day 1, 15 November 1999, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/originals/amntrans/1999/9911151210_pre_991115pt.htm, accessed on 6 April 2015.

⁹ Murphy, Carlyle. 'Black man held by S. African Security Police Dies', *The Washington Post*, 12 July 1978, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/07/12/black-man-held-by-s-african-security-police-dies/0fce7727-5cd9-4c0c-b04a-4ae09cd900d8/?utm_term=.1cc5c9422724, accessed on 7 March 2013.

¹⁰ "Opposition members of Parliament called for an urgent investigation of Tabalaza's death. Opposition spokeswoman Helen Suzman termed it "particularly significant" that the death had occurred at the place Biko had been detained." Ibid.

¹¹ The official inquest headed by Magistrate L. A Coetzee came to the verdict 'that no one was to blame for his death, though the government pathologist acknowledged that several bruises and lacerations could have happened before the fall'. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/magistrate-la-coetzee-rules-no-one-blame-prison-death-lungile-tabalaza>, accessed 07 October 2013. See also the TRC report, Volume 3, Chapter 2, Subsection 12 at <http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/reports/volume3/chapter2/subsection12.htm?t=%2Btabalaza+%2Blungile&tab=report>.

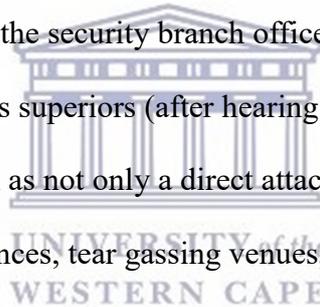
These two events which share the fact that both figures died at the hands of the South African security apparatus also shared several other similarities, the first of which can be related to the question of sound. In the case of the death of Mlangeni, this relation to the sonic is clear: it is the earphones of a portable cassette player that takes Mlangeni's life and this is what produces his death as a political assassination. During the official inquest proceedings in 1992 explicit mention is made of the explosives in the earphones, noted in a discussion around the 'microdetonators stuffed into the earphones of the fatal cassette recorder'. This particular technology, the chemicals, and the revelation during the investigations that due to a lack of stock availability from *Nasionale Chemicals* (Naschem) these items could only have been procured from the military, is what links the SADF (and by extension the state apparatus) to the murder of Mlangeni.¹² It is also the emphasis on the request made by Mlangeni's wife (Abigail Mlangeni) to play the cassette through the hi-fi system rather than through the supplied earphones that defines the event as one marked by sound and marked by the act of listening. This is obscured in the forensic inquiry that is focused on the device as one that is rigged with explosives. The focus on the mechanism of the bomb is given a fair amount of attention not only in the TRC hearings into Mlangeni's death, but also during the inquest proceedings in 1992. It warranted an article in *The Sowetan* newspaper at the time titled 'If Mlangeni had listened to his wife...', with ellipsis in place. In the Sowetan article, Mlangeni's wife Abigail Mlangeni is quoted by Warrant-Officer Robert Brockway as saying that "she had asked Mlangeni to play the cassette, 'Evidence on hit squads', on a bigger cassette player so that she could also listen".¹³

In the case of Lungile Tabalaza, the sonic resonance only emerges in the aftermath of his demise at the hands of the Security Police. In 1979, folk musician Roger Lucey released *The Road is Much Longer*, a folk-rock album containing several songs that questioned the apartheid state. One song was named after Tabalaza, and it was especially direct in its criticism of apartheid and deaths in detention through its narration of Tabalaza's death. Lyrically, there are deliberate accusations

¹² Modisane, Kenosi, 'SADF link to lawyer's murder', *The Sowetan*, 3 June 1992

¹³ Modisane, Kenosi., 'If Mlangeni had listened to wife...' *The Sowetan*, 2 June 1992.

against the police as well as against apartheid policies such as those pertaining to education, which had been the driving force behind the Soweto Uprising of 1976. Because of 'Lungile Tabalaza' and other direct accusations regarding abduction and murder by the government in the song, *The Road is Much Longer* garnered the attention of the Security Police. Lucey and producer David Marks after much legal opinion decided that it was best to edit some of the tracks and to leave in its place a minute of silence in the recording for 'Lungile Tabalaza'.¹⁴ "We needn't have bothered [editing and removing certain tracks]...the album caused a shitstorm anyway', Lucey remarks in his biography recounting his career as a 'South African troubadour who lost his voice and then set out on an unbelievable journey to find it'.¹⁵ The album was banned by the state soon after its release in February 1979, being deemed 'dangerous to the safety of the State' by the Directorate of Publications.¹⁶ Lucey subsequently became the victim of a sabotage effort to end his musical career by the Security Police. Paul Erasmus, the security branch officer who was asked to investigate Lucey's activities was instructed by his superiors (after hearing 'Lungile Tabalaza') to 'stop this filth', and 'Lungile Tabalaza' was 'seen as not only a direct attack on the state but also on the security branch'.¹⁷ Through stopping performances, tear gassing venues, and intimidation, the security police succeeded in grinding what looked like a promising musical and political career for Roger Lucey to a halt.¹⁸ On the original record, the track can be played back, delivering only silence.



¹⁴ "One track, "Lungile Tabalaza", about the death of a detainee in police custody, had been excised from the vinyl and, bizarrely, replaced with a minute's silence. The album was deemed "dangerous for the safety of the state" and banned." Donaldson, Andrew, 'To Bottom and Back: Andrew Donaldson Interviews Roger Lucey About Back in from the Anger', *The Sunday Times*, 26 November 2012, <http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2012/11/26/to-bottom-and-back-andrew-donaldson-interviews-roger-lucey-about-back-in-from-the-anger/>, accessed on 7 March 2013.

¹⁵ Lucey recalls meeting Clem Tholet, a folk musician famous for his songs which 'rallied white Rhodesians around campfires during what they called their "war against the terrorists"', and notes Tholet's reacting to their meeting, commenting to Lucey that 'that song of yours, Lungile Tabalaza, it's the most powerful fucking thing I've ever heard'. Lucey, Roger., *Back In From The Anger* (Jacana, Johannesburg: 2012), 136, 161.

¹⁶ As mentioned, "Lungile Tabalaza" was not the only song to incite security police interest in Lucey's activities. Others like "You Need Say Nothing At All", with lyrics like 'and there's teargas at the funeral of a boy gunned down by cops/they say that there are too many mourners and this is where it stops/and the moral of the episode/is to do what you are told' carried a similar critique of the apartheid state. Korpe, Marie. *Shoot the Singer! Music Censorship Today* (Zed Books, 2004), 226.

¹⁷ Erasmus, Paul. as interviewed in *Stopping the Music: A Story of Censorship in Apartheid South Africa* (Freemuse, 2002). The interaction between Paul Erasmus, who directed the efforts to end Roger Lucey's musical career and silence what they deemed as a threat to the state, and Roger Lucey, is well known, and is the subject of books by both Lucey and Erasmus and the above documentary film on state censorship.

¹⁸ In a chapter that uses the final verse of 'Lungile Tabalaza' as its epigraph, Lucey recalls how at 'one of [his] appearances at Mangles [a venue in Johannesburg], the place suddenly filled up with tear gas...it poured into the tiny

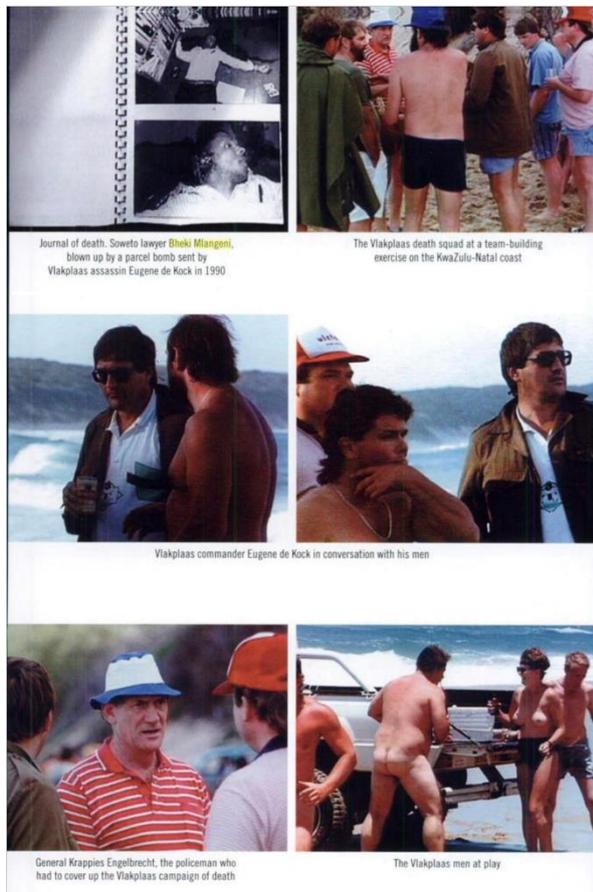


Figure 1: Image spread in Jacques Pauw's *Dances With Devils: A Journalist's Search for Truth*. Top left: Mlangeni.

Aside from their entanglement in the experience of sound, the figures of Mlangeni and Tabalaza also bear a relation to the visual. It is in images that we are also asked to reflect upon and encounter the significance of these events as was hinted at in the opening sentence of this chapter. Upon reading Jacques Pauw's *Dances with Devils: A Journalist's Search for Truth* (a detailed account of the activities, absurdities, and achievements of an anti-apartheid journalist) for what might be said about the egregious circumstances that resulted in the taking of the life of Mlangeni in February of 1991, one is

confronted with an image of Mlangeni in a

selection of photographs (Figure 1) of South African Security Police officers at 'team-building' exercises, recorded in images of bare-chested men and women on a beach consuming alcohol.¹⁹ The picture of Mlangeni is one of two photographs affixed to the left side of a page that is part of what looks like a ring-bound notebook. It is clear from the graphic depiction of Mlangeni that this image was taken at the scene of the explosion. The first image appearing on top depicts a medium close-up shot of Mlangeni looking left as he is sprawled across the floor surrounded by shelves. The second image, positioned below the first, is a close-up shot of Mlangeni, depicting his face looking left once again. It is clear that this picture was also taken while Mlangeni lay on the floor, as we can see the shadow of the pool of blood that surrounds his head. Surrounding his head and following the direction of his outstretched right arm is a trail of blood, clearly distinguishable due to its dark

basement through the air conditioner, and [everyone] spilled into the street, coughing and wiping [their] eyes'. Lucey, Roger., *Back In From The Anger*. (Jacana, Johannesburg: 2012), 140.

¹⁹ Pauw, Jacques. *Dances with Devils: A Journalist's Search for Truth* (Zebra, 2006).

edited, and more specifically, 'Lungile Tabalaza' had been removed, and replaced with one minute's silence as a replacement (Figure 3). It is the note and the artwork that indexes the visual in this case, standing in for Lungile Tabalaza and any other representation of him.

It is the combination of image and sound in both events that produce the effect of a presence of absence. Mlangeni died of a bomb made from a device designed to 'reproduce' recorded sound that did not 'reproduce' any sound, while Tabalaza is immortalized through his visual and aural representation on a material recording of sound. While Mlangeni is visualized after his death through a photograph, Tabalaza's death is also visualized through Mason's artwork and a note explaining his (musical, aural, and oral) absence. Mlangeni meets his death while attempting to listen to a cassette labeled 'Evidence, Hit Squads', while Tabalaza dies during interrogation in an attempt by security police to attain evidence to use against him. The similarities are haunting and plenty. In the case of the image of Mlangeni, the gaze that one is granted is from above: we are looking upon him, down on him, and it is a view that is bereft of any opportunity for mourning or reverence. Tainted with the bureaucratic texture that is a crime scene photograph, it is inaccessible beyond the merely indexical. Its call is inaudible, and a response unspeakable. We cannot know Mlangeni any further than his inscription as absence in the journal of death alongside the very men that orchestrated his demise. Mlangeni's placement alongside the other images on the page seems out of place, a situating that begs for re-situating. A similar inscribing is visible in the case of Tabalaza. When we read Mason's artwork it is not that Tabalaza's presence is erased but rather that his status as absence is presented: his falling body from the fifth floor in the third frame is figured as negative space, and the presence of his missing body under the street lamp in the final frame is rendered as absent through the crowd gathered around the scene of the crime. In both, we are met with a monochrome image. The silence on Roger Lucey's album and the note that accompanies it captures the relation between the two events most poignantly: where the cassette player could not be played and where the recorded track cannot play, we are left with only silence.

Phonography, Eduction and the Event

In both cases under consideration we are not only faced with the question of sound through the audio player that kills Mlangeni and the record in Tabalaza's name, but more particularly we are asked to reckon with a regime of phonography and an intelligibility premised on the notion of technologically mediated sound because of the very mediums of the cassette player and the record. The question of sound reproduction is one that weaves its way through the recent scholarly turn to the auditory, due to the ways in which the advent of the phonograph and other technologies such as the telephone and the radio that proliferated with the recording of sound in the late nineteenth century and the possibility of recording sounds for playback (as well as manipulation in its playing-back) allowed for a new relationship to sound.²⁰ Through the phonographic, there is a tendency to simultaneously call forth that mode of inscription that we know as the image, as well as a notion of sound that is rooted in a technics of reproducibility, something akin to what Fred Moten has elaborated as a phonographic *mise-en-scène*, and something that sound studies would call the modernity of the recorded voice.²¹

At the time of Edison's invention of the phonograph, this new tethering of sound to the technology that must 'reproduce' it was a relationship to the object that was expressly technical, in the sense that it produced the tool of the recording device to mediate between object and subject, simultaneously producing the sound object proper. Technologies of sound reproduction, or the writing of sound as inscription, groove, and materiality are considered by authors such as Jonathan Sterne to be 'artifacts of vast transformations in the fundamental nature of sound, the human ear, the faculty of hearing, and practices of listening that occurred over the long nineteenth century.'²² With this in mind, I turn to eduction as a category through which to attend to the resonances of these

²⁰ Consequently, it is particularly generative to note the fact that it was the need identified by Thomas Edison to transcribe telegraphic messages that led to the invention of the phonograph proper, and as such was the result of work on two other devices involving the transduction of signal – the telephone and the telegram.

²¹ Moten, Fred., "The Phonographic *mise-en-scène*." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 16 (3), 2004, 269-281.

²² Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2003), 2.

events but also to draw attention to the conceptual frameworks that sound studies as a disciplinary formation asks us to engage with.

Eduction as a methodology is therefore intertwined and emerges from phonography as a technical modality implicated in both a history of sound and a discourse premised on the sensorial. Phonography comes to mark a relation to inscribing and writing sound that is best captured by the term 'recording', and, as Alexander Weheliye reminds us, it was the technology of the phonograph that 'worried the complex intersection between orality, music and writing'.²³ It is precisely writing – inscription – that therefore underscores and drives phonography as a mode of *reading* sound. At the outset it is through a drive to write sound that the phonograph as technology emerges and it is the terms set out by this drive and its manifestation in the technical that enacts a disciplining of thinking on and around sound, characterizing the content and momentum of what has become known as sound studies. Moreover what the phonograph as technology offered was transduction: a materialization of sound, a move to preserve and materialize the ephemeral nature of the sonic for the sake of the senses, and the ability to transcend the fleeting impermanency assumed in the sonic was integral for a changing relationship with sound.²⁴ As Thomas Edison remarked in 1878, the phonograph as device was able to reproduce sound waves 'with all their original characteristics at will, without the presence or consent of the original source, and after the lapse of any period of time',²⁵ and it has been argued that this captures clearly the 'founding dreams of phonography: fidelity, manipulability, distantiation, and the overcoming of death'.²⁶

Eduction – in its use as a term within the technical lexicon of phonography – has a claim to the term recording in a very practical sense. Removed from its use in those applied utilitarian

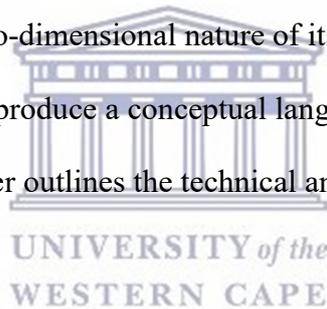
²³ 'By drastically re/constructing the flow between sounds and an identifiable human source, the technology of the phonograph worried the complex intersection of orality, music, and writing.' Weheliye, Alexander G. *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2005), 7.

²⁴ Feaster, Patrick. 'Phonography' in Novak, David, Sakakeeny, Matt (eds), *Keywords in Sound* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2015), 140.

²⁵ Edison, Thomas A. "The Phonograph and Its Future", in *North American Review*, 126 (May-June 1878), 530. See also, Feaster, Patrick. "Speech acoustics and the keyboard telephone: Rethinking edison's discovery of the phonograph principle." *ARSC Journal* 38 (1), 2007, 10-43.

²⁶ Rothenbuhler, Eric W., Durham Peters, John. "Defining Phonography: An Experiment in Theory", in *The Musical Quarterly*, 81 (2), 2007, 245.

scenarios, it is also useful in teasing apart the conflation between recording, reproduction, sound and phonography as it has been produced in attempts to understand a shift in the changing nature of sound as an object of inquiry. Media archaeologist Patrick Feaster notes that the concept of eduction emerges as a response to what he notes as the failure of the now all-encompassing term of reproduction, as well as a desire to account for the technicality of phonography.²⁷ By arguing that the phonograph (and by extension all sound media/technologies that would make the claim) '(re)produces' sounds in the sense that there is a process of reiteration in the act of recording and playback, Feaster suggests that what is missed is how the phonograph *represents* sounds. Rather than producing a copy of the original sound – the gist of the statement, 'to reproduce' – the phonograph merely (re)presents sound that has been inscribed onto a phonogram that must be played back, or educed. In this case, the loudspeaker becomes the source, and the three-dimensional quality of sound is replaced by the two-dimensional nature of its transduction through the phonograph.²⁸ Recognising a need to produce a conceptual language with which to speak of the technics of sound reproduction, Feaster outlines the technical and conceptual terms of phonography, noting that



any inscription in which one dimension represents a time base and another represents fluctuations in the amplitude of a sound wave will be a *phonogram*. The practice of recording and actualising phonograms will be *phonography*, and any device that effects phonography will be a *phonograph*. I will refer collectively to the range of creative techniques available for manipulating phonograms – cutting and splicing, montage or collage, changes in speed and direction, and so forth – as *phonomanipulation*. Like photomanipulation, phonomanipulation makes use of 'recorded' raw material but foregrounds its transformation, sometimes beyond recognition.²⁹

A concept of eduction in this framework would be defined as analogous to the act of displaying or projecting an image; it is the activity of 'bring[ing] out, elicit[ing], develop[ing], from a condition of

²⁷ For a detailed reorientation of the technical practice of phonography, see Feaster, Patrick. "The following record': Making sense of phonographic performance, 1877–1908" PhD Diss, Indiana University, 2007.

²⁸ It is no surprise that this sounds very similar to the act of writing or recording in written form. The question of how phonography changes the relation between sound and source will be elaborated in more detail in Chapter 2. Feaster, Patrick. 'What is Eduction?', 17 January 2015, <https://griffonagedotcom.wordpress.com/2015/01/17/what-is-eduction/>, accessed on 25 February 2017.

²⁹ Feaster, Patrick. "A Compass of Extraordinary Range': The Forgotten Origins of Phonomanipulation", in *The Journal of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections*, 42, (2) 2011, 164.

latent, rudimentary or merely potential existence'. In relation to the phonogram, it 'entails generating a sound wave based on micro chronic patterns of amplitude fluctuation specified in it...that is [using the analogies offered by cinema], to cause its latent program of moving images to unfold over time and become perceptible'.³⁰ Feaster terms the exact kind of eduction related to the phonograph *tympanic eduction*, referring to the membrane of the speaker from which the sound would emanate.

Eduction is therefore, put simply, *output transduction*. The term itself is premised on the idea that the contents of media objects are not physically accessible to the senses and as such need to be made available in ways that the senses might be able to process. It is therefore the act of making inscriptions perceptible to the ears or eyes that closes the distance between the inscription and sensorial stimulus. Such a definition opens up the idea of eduction into a field that may not necessarily be an auditory one, and Feaster notes that 'the distinction between visual and aural media objects ultimately lie not in the inscriptions themselves, but in how they're educed.'³¹ What is essential to eduction is that the causal link between the stimulus and the inscription is not broken, even if it is interrupted, and Feaster gives the examples of serial eduction where the original inscription or signal is not directly educed but its content is present in another form which is actualised. In this sense, eduction allows for a media history, or a history of mediations, an idea resonant with the concept of remediation (which I shall attend to in another chapter in more detail), and these steps of eduction are termed by Feaster as *intermediary educations*. As educations, they still need to be made accessible to the senses and will need to be put into some other external system in order to be available. Eduction can be thought of as a technique through which to produce something other than absence where an absence is present. Eduction helps us to reorient mediation by eliciting a different response.

The Walkman Bomb

³⁰ Ibid., 164.

³¹ Feaster, P., 'What is Eduction?', 17 January 2015, <https://griffonagedotcom.wordpress.com/2015/01/17/what-is-eduction/>, accessed on 25 February 2017.

When we approach the event of the death of Mlangeni, we note it was in the act of education that the bomb was detonated. By producing the letter bomb as a media object caught up in a discourse of actualisation, the cassette player becomes available to techniques of reading that only such a media object would allow. Mlangeni's attempt to play back whatever was on the cassette should be thought



Figure 4: The UNISEF SZ10, pictured here with a set of headphones rather than earphones which is said to have accompanied the device that was received by Mlangeni.

of as an attempt to educate – to actualise, to elicit a response, to bring into existence the latent data inscribed in the magnetic tape of the cassette – and it is even more telling that the detonation happens in the earphones, which is the exact site of output transduction as Feaster would have it. This demonstrates that Mlangeni should be thought of as inhabiting both of the roles which Patrick Feaster has

demarcated as distinctly enveloped in the practice of phonography, namely an

educationist and a listener, for who's hearing the cassette was being educated.³² Noting this is a reminder that the event is profoundly phonographic and simultaneously asks us to consider what it means to deploy a cassette player to do the work of a letter bomb.

The title of this section reveals a term that allows us to answer this question. Until now, I have refused to call the device that took Mlangeni's life a Walkman, its more popular naming, and instead have referred to it by its technical model name and number (Unisef SZ10) or as a portable cassette/audio player. This is deliberate, as the term 'Walkman' is used colloquially to refer to the cassette player, in line with the popularity of Sony's personal audio device, while the exact model used to dispatch Coetzee is the Tokyo manufactured Unisef SZ10 stereo cassette player (See Figure

³² Ibid. For Feaster, the agent responsible for manipulating the phonograph to produce the desired sound is the educationist, whereas the agent for who's hearing the phonogram is being educated is the listener.

4). In Peter Harris' account of the trial of the Delmas Four in the late 1980s, In A Different Time: The Inside Story of the Delmas Four, there are sections titled 'The Bomb' which interrupt the narrative at multiple points in the narrative. It is here that a variety of descriptions detailing the process of making, disseminating, and testing the bombs made by the Security Police are listed, and these descriptions culminate towards the end of the book tracking the Walkman bomb that killed Mlangeni.³³ One of these sections, from which the exact model of the cassette player can be gleaned, reads as follows:

Sergeant Steve Bosch receives a phone call from the man making the bomb, Captain Kobus Kok. He is instructed to buy two of the items that will house the bomb, each no bigger than the palm of a man's hand. One is for testing purposes and one is for the bomb that will go on to the target. Sergeant Bosch claims the money to buy the items from a secret fund available to the Vlakplaas squad and goes to a shop in central Pretoria where he buys the two items. They come in lightweight cardboard boxes on which are printed in bold coloured lettering 'Unisef SZ10'. The machines are manufactured in Japan.³⁴

In addition, a reference to Neil Diamond can be tracked via Harris' account to the fact that a Sergeant Bellingan, who is noted as knowing the target (Dirk Coetzee) well, as 'in earlier days, they'd listened to a lot of music together – particularly Neil Diamond, one of the target's favourite singers'.³⁵ In Peter Harris's account, naming the audio player by its actual name may have been to retain the bureaucratic tone of these particular interjections in the text, but here to call the audio player a Walkman is instructive for relaying the discussion through the disciplinary frame of sound studies and to underscore the phonographic. It is important to note that it is not the audio player as device that eventually takes the life of Mlangeni, but rather the headphones themselves which fitted with the micro-detonators that are merely activated by the circuitry held inside the cassette player's casing, and (as has been noted earlier) if Mlangeni had listened to his wife, he may not have died.

³³ In fact, there is enough evidence and insinuations in these sections to believe that each excerpt titled 'The Bomb' refers to a different stage of construction of the very bomb intended for Dirk Coetzee but that would eventually take the life of Mlangeni. In the Amnesty Hearing on the attempted murder of Dirk Coetzee and Bhekisizwe Mlangeni, it is revealed through reference to the packaging that it was indeed a UNISEF SZ10. Amnesty Hearing, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 26 November 1999

http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/1999/9911151210_pre_991126pt.htm, accessed 25 March 2017.

³⁴ One of the two devices was tested on a pig's head, an image that has been referenced by William Kentridge in the production *Ubu and the Truth Commission*. William Kentridge's work will be addressed in relation to radio in Chapter 3. Harris, Peter. *In A Different Time: The Inside Story of the Delmas Four* (Cape Town, Umuzi: 2008), 245, 230

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 245, 230.

However, it is the device as reconstructed ensemble that we must consider, given that the terms of education demand that a device such as the Walkman includes earphones or some or other output structure. By using the ubiquitous term Walkman, we are invited to consider the discursive contours of how inquiries into sound have considered this device. Just like the phonographic, following the discussion offered above, grants us a different relationship with sound, the portable audio player or the Walkman proper is thought to transform this relationship further.

The Walkman has become a large part of how media and how sound media is thought of as structuring the everyday. Michael Bull, for example, has noted how the concepts of distance, proximity and the production of space and place has been influenced by both the mobility and intimate nature of the experience of the Walkman. The device along with the car radio and the mobile phone combined the ways in which sonic experience became a domestic affair with that of the movement and overstimulation of the urban environment, aligning itself somewhat with the idea of media consumption which was increasingly being marked by media such as the television.³⁶ Bull suggests that what mobile privatisation offered was a response to a desire for proximity, and 'for a mediated presence that shrinks space into something manageable and habitable'.³⁷ In this assemblage of media experience, sound offered the most unrestricted experience of them all, due to the ways in which the phonograph had shifted the consumption of music. Bull's reference to the idea of the 'sound world' as that which the walkman produces is a useful one, and Bull employs the technicity of the Walkman to read the case of the Sirens' song in Homer's *Odyssey*. The sound world

³⁶ What is striking is that this domestication of sound and by extension music, is precisely the fear and anxiety that Adorno expresses around the phonograph. We might locate this in Theodor Adorno's reflection on the German use of the term "plate", which takes on the same meaning in both photography and phonography. Adorno delineates the term as 'the two-dimensional model of a reality that can be multiplied without limit, displaced both spatially and temporally, and traded on the open market'. For Adorno, the form of the phonograph record has no aesthetic value: 'The only thing that can characterize gramophone music is the inevitable brevity dictated by the size of the vinyl plate. Here too a pure identity reigns between the form of the record disc and that of the world in which it plays: the hours of domestic existence that while themselves away along with the record are too sparse for the first movement of the *Eroica* to be allowed to unfold without interruption. Dances composed of dull repetitions are more congenial to these hours. One can turn them off at any point. The phonograph record is an object of that "daily need" which is the very antithesis of the humane and the artistic since the latter cannot be repeated and turned on at will but remain tied to their place and time.' Adorno, Theodor. "The Form of the Phonograph Record", translated by Levin, Thomas Y., in *October*, 55 (Winter, 1990), 57, 58.

³⁷ Bull, Michael. "Thinking about sound, proximity, and distance in Western experience: The case of Odysseus's Walkman." in *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening and Modernity* (Berg, 2004), 177.

is both produced by and produced for the listener, and 'just as sound colonises them, so they use sound to re-create in their image the spaces they inhabit.'³⁸ By suggesting that what the walkman inaugurates through its mode of 'aesthetic colonisation', Bull employs the phrase 'aural solipsism', invoking a sense of the self that withdraws into itself. Didier Anzieu's 'sonorous envelope' is an appropriate term here, one which captures the ways in which the Walkman produces a sense of space that is located in the mediation of the exterior through a mediation of the newly sonically inaugurated interior space.

From this, it becomes clear that the Walkman is a device that appeals to the self, or the ways in which self may be mediated through and because of sound. Such a statement gains import when we consider the reasons why a device such as a portable cassette player becomes a Walkman bomb designed to dispatch Dirk Coetzee. Although Peter Harris's account is largely a fictionalised one, we can see that one reason would be that Coetzee might recognise the letter bomb because of his familiarity with the procedures of its makers.³⁹ It is ironic that it is from a misspelling of the sender's address on the parcel that Coetzee and others realise that it could be something other than what it appears to be, an observation that would have been part and parcel of the educative process to identify a letter bomb proper.⁴⁰ The packaging itself was left in Mlangeni's office at the time of the incident, and becomes unavailable to the juridical processes of the TRC and the evidentiary paradigm it would appeal to.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid.,180.

³⁹ The reasons are given by Eugene De Kock and Steve Bosch in their testimonies to the TRC in 1999 and range from an inability to reach Coetzee physically to 'want[ing] to keep it as quiet as possible'. The latter is particularly interesting given that the letter bomb – an object that does not sound – is replaced with sound media which cannot sound. de Kock also mentions that he 'foresaw that the package had most probably been identified as a bomb by Mr. Coetzee'. de Kock, Eugene. Amnesty Hearing, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Day 1, 15 November 1999, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/originals/amntrans/1999/9911151210_pre_991115pt.htm, accessed on 6 April 2015.

⁴⁰ The ANC released an extensive document offering guidelines on how to recognise a letter or parcel bomb, and how to avoid being dispatched by one. See <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/letter-bomb-and-car-checks>

⁴¹ In the TRC's Amnesty Hearings with Eugene de Kock, a Mr. Rautenbach notes that 'it would appear that [Mlangeni] was hasty to get to his offices and when he arrived at his office and found the package, he basically looked at the package and removed the packaging to see what was inside and left the packaging in his office in the wastepaper basket and took the cassette player home with him.' Rautenbach, Amnesty Hearing, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Day 1, 15 November 1999, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/originals/amntrans/1999/9911151210_pre_991115pt.htm, accessed on 6 April 2015.

Perhaps more telling however is the inclusion of a Neil Diamond cassette in the package allows us to understand the appeal of the Walkman as the appropriate device through which to destroy the so-called enemy. Eugene De Kock does note that this was the overarching reason for the construction of the bomb as a cassette player, because of Coetzee's love for music – especially Neil Diamond – and equally cynically because anything larger than that would cause harm to those around him.⁴² The idea was to *only* take Coetzee out, a decision that would also lead to the microdetonators in the earphones as opposed to the explosives being included in the body of the cassette player. To destroy Coetzee, the appropriate sound world would need to be educed by Coetzee, and thus the appropriate device would need to be constructed. If Mlangeni had betrayed what makes the Walkman's cassettes educible – the output transduction that must take place through the earphones – he may have averted the explosion that took his life. Such an appeal to familiarity and the self is interwoven into the technicality of the Walkman more than a letter bomb.

It is in the sense of the interior sound world of the walkman that has allowed Chris Hardman to constitute something like walkmanology. Through such terminology, the spatiotemporal function of the walkman is deployed as a kind of theatrical experience. The walkman brings to the theatre a very specific intervention: it reconstitutes the audience, much the same as the phonograph did by taking music into the living room. While the phonograph imploded the concept of the audience and

⁴² De Kock explains that he spoke to Sergeant Bellingan to assist him with this as Bellingan was 'the only one, he was the only one that I knew of at Vlakplaas at that time, who had worked with Dirk Coetzee and was familiar with his habits and his manners as well as his various tastes and dislikes and he was therefore quite an important person for me to assist in determining how to approach this task.' He also adds that 'ultimately when it was decided and it was mentioned to me by Bellingan that he loved music, particularly Neil Diamond and we first examined a radio cassette player, then we examined the option of a Walkman' and that 'according the Bellingan this was the sort of music that Coetzee enjoyed and as we believed, it would have substantiated the fact that this was for him, it was his package and we reckoned that it would also set his mind at ease, that this was for him, that it was meant only for him.' On the reason why a Walkman was decided upon rather than a radio cassette player, de Kock notes the concern around proximity and closeness noting that 'we could have prepared the radio cassette player but then the entire vicinity would be blown up and everybody else who was in that vicinity' and that the headphones were crucial to achieving this, noting that 'one would only go for the target and even with the cassette player or with the Walkman, we went to the extent of not making a bomb of the device itself, only of the head phones, So in other words, one would go for the person who would be listening to one of the two tapes[...]', and that 'the discussions regarding how we would approach somebody that I didn't know and then the various options and the inherent dangers that it would hold for bystanders and also the minimisation or marginalisation of danger for bystanders, which ultimately led to the choice of the Walkman and I approved it.'. de Kock, Eugene. Amnesty Hearing, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Day 1, 15 November 1999, http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/originals/amntrans/1999/9911151210_pre_991115pt.htm, accessed on 6 April 2015.

gave birth to the collector, the Walkman in turn through its growth in popularity produced the audient.⁴³

It is not only Dirk Coetzee as prospective audient that informs the production and development of the Walkman bomb, but also the ways in which Coetzee has become an autonomous mobile political subject through exile. We have already established that it is the work of the Walkman to promote a sound world that allows the listener to educe audio for the listener's ears only, but it is also the mobility and the ability to navigate the 'outside' world that the Walkman affords that is important. The mediating work of the walkman as a mobile sonic device is best described by Shuhei Hosokawa's notion of the 'autonomy-of-the-walking-self', whereby 'the walkman is neither cause nor effect of [a specific] autonomy [born out of the 1980s as a time of a changing relation to communication technologies and] neither evokes nor realises it'.⁴⁴ For Hosokawa, the walkman represents a change in the history of what is defined as *musica mobilis*, or a 'music whose source voluntarily or involuntarily moves from one point to another, coordinated by the corporal transportation of the source owner(s)'.⁴⁵ The walkman listener is the figure who seeks an experience of the individual in the midst of all of this. In this shift, the walkman produces a mobility of the self that is premised on the ability afforded by the device to construct an autonomous head space between the self and the surroundings as an act of distancing rather than

⁴³ By replacing the passive and docile figure of the audience with the mobile, private and agentive audient, Hardman envisions a theatre where the roles of actor and audience merge, and where the device of the Walkman facilitates a negotiating of the text that produces an entirely different theatre experience. Hardman, Chris. "Walkmanology." in *The Drama Review: TDR*, 27 (4) 1983, 43-46.

⁴⁴ Hosokawa, Shuhei. "The walkman effect." *Popular Music*, 4 (1984), 166.

⁴⁵ *Musica mobilis* is marked by four steps in its history, with the walkman listener embodying the final and ultimate realisation of that history. In the context of urban life, there is no distinction between music and noise and the city and its listeners 'live together' as Hosokawa suggests. Attendant to this are the roles of the street musicians, who alongside those who would pass them by, constitute a bi-directional communication whereby a sense of a woven social life is produced. Similarly, there are those in the city who do not play musical instruments but play devices that educe music, such as a portable radio or cassette player. The urban environment, according to Hosokawa is one that is marked by a listening to music together. This can be thought of as a precursor on conceptual grounds to what would become the MP3. *Ibid.*, 166-168.

familiarisation. It introduces a different kind of listening act, a listening that is grounded in the technological specificities of the device itself.⁴⁶

Perhaps most generative for our discussion here is the idea of the walkman as secret theatre. For Hosokawa, the walkman listener combines what Hardman would call the audient and the habitation of what Bull would describe as a 'sound world'. Through the headphones, it is clear that the walkman listener is listening to something, but it is not as apparent *what* the walkman listener is listening to. The walkman allows secrets to be kept, and through the mobility of the walkman listener as someone who 'neither refuses communication nor is isolated from reality',⁴⁷ the world around the walkman listener knows that there are secrets that are withheld:

a secret is always perceived as a truth, as factually sound - the walkman offers the form of a secret in so far as its social function, but not the content, as the secret is never revealed. The second confession is never made. The point is that the walkman holder and the walkman by association revel in the cryptic; walkmans hide what is known but is never made known - the walkman holder 'neither knows the content of others' secrets nor cares about them. He just knows that others have secrets *as he does* and that they will know that he himself also has something different with respect to the content, but similar in its form: the cryptic.⁴⁸

The walkman effect is therefore caught up in the theatricality of the aestheticisation of spatiality, of the act of making audiences and being audiences, of listening to secrets never revealed. In this way, Coetzee is the Walkman listener *par excellence*, even in his refusal to handle the package or know that it could have been a Walkman. Coetzee by virtue of the fact that his mobility is based on the secrets he carries which would expose the Security Police inhabits walkmanology more than he would know. In this arrangement, Mlangeni as the educationist and listener of the rigged walkman can only sound out silence.

⁴⁶ Hosokawa notes four of these technical aspects; miniaturisation, singularisation, autonomy, and the universality of the contexts it produces, all of which constitute every act of listening to the walkman as a unique musical event. *Ibid.*, 169-171.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 178.

Educing Tabalaza

The death of Lungile Tabalaza is educible too. This is a point made particularly poignant in the aftermath of his death. We shall return to the obvious auditory education as it appears in the case of Lucey's song that shares Tabalaza's name later. For now, I wish to focus on how we can educate the other actualisations of his death. These take the form of two juridical events, namely an inquest into his death in the latter part of 1978 and testimony from Tabalaza's mother at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996. Turning to the juridical reckoning with the death of Tabalaza is crucial not only to demonstrate how we might take education as a methodology that brings the phonographic in contact with that which might not be considered sonic in phenomenological terms, but also to obliquely ask how sound with all its determining categories can be deployed to think that which is not ostensibly sonic.

The inquest and the commission as institution are peculiar in the case of South Africa. As Adam Sitze has noted, both apparatuses come to share a concept of indemnity marked by the tragic that is inherited from a much longer tradition of South African juridical thought and practice born out of a colonial legal discourse. In *The Impossible Machine: A Genealogy of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Sitze tracks the ways in which commissions of inquiry and truth commissions have a common juridical and conceptual ancestor in coloniality and how this produces a grid of intelligibility through which truth commissions – specifically the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission – act upon their mandates and how they are acted upon.⁴⁹ In a much more illuminating argument that has much to bear on the stakes of what is presented in this chapter, Sitze also marks out the contradictory liminality which textures the relationship between transitional justice as an academic pursuit and the TRC as (at the time) a new modality of juridical practice in

⁴⁹ Sitze, Adam. *The Impossible Machine: A Genealogy of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (University of Michigan Press, 2013).

the field of human rights law. It is here, Sitze argues, that transitional justice and the TRC are both compatible and incompatible.⁵⁰

Sitze argues that transitional justice as a discipline cannot account for the genealogy of the TRC for it searches for it elsewhere – in categories such as 'victims', 'perpetrators', 'voices' and 'testimonies' – or it merely seeks to subsume the TRC and what it may offer in terms of an understanding of juridical forms in transitory societies.⁵¹ What Sitze draws out of the contradictions surrounding Diceyan jurisprudence, indemnity/amnesty, and the disciplining function of transitional justice, is a modality of the tragic that dominates and figures both how one talks about truth commissions and the ways in which they themselves speak. Put differently, truth commissions must have recourse to the tragic for amnesty – or, indemnity as before – to take hold both as a juridical form and a societal good. Tragedy, as it were, becomes a poetics of indemnity that has a much longer genealogy intimately connected to colonial discourses of power, and for Sitze, 'tragedy...emerges as a discourse of power; it becomes a poetics of government, a mode, at once graceful and profoundly euphemistic, by which institutions vested with considerable administrative and discretionary power might "humanize" themselves by "regretting" or "lamenting" the circumstances that led to inaction on their part.⁵²

There is one specific aspect of the inquest into Tabalaza's death that I would like to consider briefly, namely the testimony of Mabulu Jali. It is a small but significant set of discursive moments in the inquest proceedings, producing mechanisms that are at once sonic but also expressly political, in the sense that it drives the inquest towards the inconclusive verdict expressed in the final

⁵⁰ Sitze uses the metaphor employed in the title of his book to articulate this more carefully, arguing that: 'to understand the TRC outside the horizon of transitional justice – or, in what amounts to the same thing, from the standpoint of the genealogy that is internally excluded within its horizon – does not, to be clear, entail a despairing interpretation of the TRC...Quite the opposite: the melancholic consensus today that the TRC was an impossible *machine* (a frustrating machine, a machine that didn't work) is the deflated double, and dialectical counterpart, of the inflated expectation, produced in no small measure by transitional justice, that the TRC would be an impossible machine (a machine that made miracles).' The metaphor of machine is instructive. Ibid., 251.

⁵¹ While this is attributed to the fact that the South African TRC is seen as unprecedented, novel, and particularly reinvigorating to the discipline, Sitze offers a different reading, suggesting that 'the language of transitional justice not only functions to stifle the emancipatory politics that the TRC was designed to serve; worse; it's also a new name for the old colonial theory and the practice of "trusteeship", of western humanitarian experts presuming to speak for and this save otherwise helpless, powerless and voiceless non-western victims'. Ibid., 2.

⁵² Ibid, 148.

judgment. There is also something generative in 'interrogating' the key witness in an inquest who is poised to speak on behalf of the deceased. In some sense, it is caught up in the act of inscription that cannot produce voice, but only the presence of absence. In this case, this presence manifests as silence, and spectrality.

In the inquest, as with the mediated presence of Tabalaza in the artwork of Andy Mason and the silent track included on Roger Lucey's album, we brush up against the very visceral presence of absence. Tabalaza is educed not through any cross-questioning of a witness, but rather rendering of a witness as mute through the questioning of testimony. Throughout the inquest, co-accused Mabulu Jali (who had been arrested alongside Tabalaza after they had allegedly robbed and set a delivery van alight) is persistently questioned and the validity of his testimony dismissed.⁵³ This takes a variety of forms in the proceedings of the inquest. At a particularly tense moment, the attorney representing the Tabalaza family sparks a debate around whether the affidavit of a doctor who had examined Jali after the latter had complained about being assaulted by the police while being interrogated should be admissible,⁵⁴ calling into question a regime of truth that the inquest itself as apparatus rests upon. Elsewhere, a protracted discussion around Jali's proficiency in Afrikaans ensues, a discussion which becomes the grounds upon which to dismiss Jali's own faculty of memory with regards to the specificities of the events that led to their arrest and their time in police custody. A particularly charged moment is when Jali notes that he had told a police officer 'of the wire that the police had, of the tears in the deceased's eyes and of the gripping of the collar', referring of course to initial interrogation of Tabalaza. Magistrate Coetzee dismisses Jali's testimony and expresses that it is 'unthinkable that a high officer of Colonel Van Der Merwe's [the officer in

⁵³ Inquest into the Death of Lungile Tabalaza, 3 (Port Elizabeth Magistrate's Court 1978).

⁵⁴ In fact, it is this particular moment that sets off a discussion around the difference between a criminal trial and an inquest, with the attorney representing the Tabalaza family asking 'is there such a thing as cross-examination in an inquest?' and citing the case of Ahmed Timol who had met a similar death, noting that 'at an inquest there is no accused person and even if there is a suspected person, he may be absent and not represented and he should not be prejudiced as may be the case in a criminal trial by his silence.' Inquest into the Death of Lungile Tabalaza, 3 (Port Elizabeth Magistrate's Court 1978).

question] stature would have hid something like that'.⁵⁵ In this moment, it is not so much the silencing of Jali's testimony but rather the presence of Jali as mute that is crucial. In some sense, the discursive erasure of Jali might be thought along the lines of how Idelber Avelar conceives erasure, as 'an operation that at the same time hides and shows that it is hiding', thus constituting what Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier has expressed as a spectral presence and resonating with what Hosokawa has suggested of the Walkman and secrets.⁵⁶ Jali therefore, like Tabalaza, and much like Mlangeni too, becomes spectral, a sinister resonance, despite his discursive erasure.

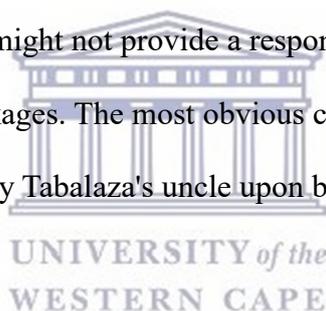
There are multiple likenesses here with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission which one can use to draw comparisons, such as in the fact that Jali becomes a voice for Tabalaza, a practice that is at once juridical but also seeps into the practice of the TRC out of sheer necessity. Some of the victims of apartheid violence did not survive and as such must be 'spoken for' by friends and family. Without slipping into a language of trauma or resorting to a reductive concept of voice, we must call attention to the discursive mode of the inquest as that which allows the indemnification of the perpetrators, perhaps most prominently heard in Magistrate Coetzee's praise of Colonel Van Der Merwe as a method through which to dismiss Jali. After all, it is in the argument around 'amnesty' and 'indemnity' that the crucial move by Sitze regarding truth commissions and their form is made and it is in the content of this move that we not only understand the TRC as an apparatus that has a much longer genealogy wound up in specific jurisprudential as well as political discursive moments, but also insists that we re-encounter the

⁵⁵ We witness a similar motif emerging in the grappling with Mlangeni's death. Eugene De Kock – commanding officer of a 'counter-insurgency' unit based at Vlakplaas which specialized in the killing and torture of opponents to the Nationalist government – mentions in his testimony at the Amnesty Hearings at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1999 that the package was intended for Dirk Coetzee, and that he did not know Mlangeni at that time. Most importantly, the Security Branch was assured that there *was no conceivable way in which* the package could end up in the wrong hands and its rigged headphones in the wrong ears – 'if [Coetzee] had identified it as a bomb, it would have been removed from the system because no person in the world would send a bomb back'. de Kock, Eugene. Amnesty Hearings, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 15 November 1999, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans%5C1999/9911151210_pre_991115pt.htm, accessed on 6 April 2015. See also,

De Kock, Eugene. *A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State* (Contra Press, 1998). Emphasis added.
⁵⁶ Avelar, Idelbar. *The Letter of Violence: Essays on Narrative, Ethics and Politics* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan: 2004), 137, as cited in Ochoa Gautier, Ana Maria. *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth Century Colombia* (Duke University Press, 2014), 118.

form and the content of the hearing with a more careful ear. It is in the colonial articulation of indemnity as articulated by Alfred Venn Dicey that Sitze locates the kernel that gives rise to the notion of indemnity in South Africa in the twentieth century. It is a form of indemnity that, as Sitze points out at length, gave rise to the notion of amnesty functional in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but it is also a form of indemnification that is expressly colonial. It was only used in the colonies, and embodied what Nasser Hussein has called a 'jurisprudence of emergency'.⁵⁷

In much the same way we could rephrase the question of whether there is a mode of cross-questioning in the TRC that recalls the inquest, and what that would mean for how we think of voice, silence, and a juridical claim to truth. In the testimony given in 1996 by Tabalaza's mother for example, there are moments of silence which resonate with Lucey, as well as with the sounds of the inquest proceedings, and while these might not provide a response adequate to the rephrased question, it may suggest sonorous linkages. The most obvious connection we can hear is in how Mrs. Tabalaza recounts the response by Tabalaza's uncle upon being requested to identify Lungile's body:



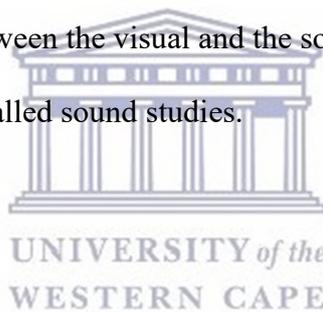
Yes [the police] did come at home. I was taking my mother to the hospital for her checkup and the boers came in, they asked for Lungile's ID [identity document]. My mother asked who they are, and the white men said they wanted Lungile's ID. At that moment the mother asked where the ID was, and we called our brother and again my mother asked what was happening, and he said he doesn't know. The boers were outside, they took my brother. They went up Mount Road. At a distance my brother felt that there is something that happened about Lungile. When they went to Mount Road, they found a lot of corpses who had just been left on the ground and the cement. Lungile was amongst them and blood issued through his nose and ears. They asked my brother to identify, but he was unable to answer. It took him 18 seconds. He became mute and they took him outside and back home. He was shocked and said, "My mother, we must not mourn for Lungile because he was deliberately murdered", and he went out.⁵⁸

Here, a failure to actualise the death of Tabalaza – to make it perceptible – is clear. While Tabalaza is physically absent, his presence as absence can be felt in the very consistency and grain of the

⁵⁷ Hussain, Nasser. *The jurisprudence of emergency: Colonialism and the rule of law* (University of Michigan Press, 2009).

⁵⁸ Tabalaza, Catherine. Human Rights Violation Hearing, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, East London, 17 April 1996, <http://sabctrc.saha.org.za/originals/hrvtrans/hrvel1/tabalaza.htm>, accessed on 1 August 2016.

inability of identification. It is a presence that is marked by mediation: the request by police for Tabalaza's identity document may have been a request for the photograph hidden within. The image enclosed within would have allowed police to identify Tabalaza without recourse to calling upon his uncle to see the body, and subsequently be rendered mute. It is striking that what connects the album artwork by Mason for Lucey's album, the minute of silence, and the mutism in the TRC testimony is precisely the inability to produce a sound other than silence upon encountering the image (be it sonic or visual) of Tabalaza. Mason's artwork does the work of identification, but as was made clear earlier, can only present Tabalaza as negative space and as absence. It is not surprising therefore that Lucey and producer David Marks decided to include the note proclaiming the silent minute. The two juridical moments discussed above lead us to consider the ways in which the inability to educe Tabalaza (and Mlangeni) as anything other than silence might be enveloped in the discursive traces of the debate between the visual and the sonic, a debate that seems to sit at the very core of that which comes to be called sound studies.



Sound and the Image

Somewhat ironically, it is in a visual register and in a discourse of visualism that the terms of engagement for a reading of sound has been delineated. That said and with considerably less irony, it is in a dislocation of visualism that the terms for sound reading has been arguably centred. By this I mean that it is not so much the visual and the ways in which sound has deviated from it, but rather that I am interested in staging a conversation at the intersection of what is heard as the phonographic, at what Alexander Weheliye has carefully articulated as 'the poetics of relation that mark the node where the phono joins the graph and/or optic'.⁵⁹

In an entry in David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny's *Keywords in Sound* – a recent book among a few others⁶⁰ seeking to provide a scholarly mapping of the emergent debates in sound studies, and

⁵⁹ Weheliye, Alexander G. *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham, Duke University Press: 2005), 23.

⁶⁰ See for example, Sterne, Jonathan (eds), *The Sound Studies Reader* (Routledge, 2012), and Pinch, Trevor, and Bijsterveld, Karin (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* (Oxford University Press, USA: 2012).

to a certain extent aiming to mark out the terrain of the trans-disciplinary formation that is sound studies – John Mowitt charts the image. The essay is peculiar, as Mowitt notes in the opening line which notes that 'surely there is some mistake' and asks why 'sound studies would have necessary recourse to a concept more typically to be found in the disciplines of art history or literary studies'. Mowitt clarifies by pointing out that 'if the image belongs fundamentally to the problematic of sound studies, it is because it designates a problem'.⁶¹ This problem is, as Mowitt delineates via Don Ihde, visualism.⁶² Through a set of concepts in Saussurean linguistics (particularly the sound-image and its relation to the linguistic sign), Mowitt suggests that 'the delicate and disturbing point that any effort to think the "meaning" or "sense" of sound (to experience it as some sort of "signifying" event) imports willy-nilly into the sound in question the status of sound within language as grasped within the discourse of "visualism"'.⁶³

To paraphrase Mowitt for my own ends, I would say that to summon death when reading the image is not so much because we are looking at that post-mortem image of Mlangeni or at the artwork of Andy Mason, but rather that the image evokes a sense of spectrality that marks and textures our reading of the event. Precisely because the representation of the event is given to us in a visual form, we already assume its content, as it has already been constituted within a set of signifiers that the visual lays claim to. The relationship between the image and sound and how it is that a discourse of visualism mediates our perception of what we might call a visual event and a sonic event is perhaps most markedly evident in the case of Mlangeni, where we are aware that his death is the result of a sonic device but we are given only an image to account for his death. We cannot account for Mlangeni in the image precisely because of the ways in which the relationship between the visual and the sonic is figured in relation to that which we are attempting to gaze upon.

⁶¹ Mowitt, John. 'Image' in Novak, David, Sakakeeny, Matt (eds), *Keywords in Sound* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2015), 78.

⁶² See Ihde, Don. *Listening and voice: Phenomenologies of sound* (SUNY Press, 2007).

⁶³ Mowitt, John. 'Image' in Novak, David, Sakakeeny, Matt (eds), *Keywords in Sound* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2015), 81.

We see and hear Mlangeni's death simultaneously because we cannot see or hear Mlangeni's death.

To clarify this point, I turn to art historian Paula Carabell, who notes that

[u]ltimately, the visual and the auditory are separated yet linked by their unique relationship to the Other that is brought about by the conditions of transparency and essentialist considerations. But while the photograph makes static a once-lived moment, and produces an object composed of past and present moments with which the viewing subject can identify, the auditory trace can provide no such article of comfort and contemplation. Rather, the transient voice of the Other attacks the integrity of the listener by virtue of its radical difference and thus makes its existence as fetishized object an impossibility. Despite the existence of recorded material, sound does not lend itself to the idolatry offered by the existence of the photograph; when heard, its temporally fleeting nature denies the right to possession. As it passes through the subject, the voice disallows the possibility that the Other can ever be regained. It is, however, the mutability of sound that fully establishes it as the embodiment of loss. The ephemeral nature of the spoken word makes clear that, despite its ability to invoke the Other, the object of desire will remain unattainable. It is a presence that will always exist as absence.⁶⁴

Alongside and through these assertions, is a close reading around what it means to constitute the subject at the level of the visual, and similarly what the subject might look like when articulated through the sonic. Carabell suggests that while both the sonic and the optic 'share a privileged relationship to the referent, that is, of equivalence', it is important to note that what is at stake in sound is temporality.⁶⁵ The image is static, it freezes, and the sonic is always in flux, fleeting, moving. As she reminds us in the words of Slavoj Žižek, 'the gaze mortifies', while 'the voice vivifies'.⁶⁶ Through a necessary detour via Jacques Lacan, Carabell tracks the Object as it 'appears' in the image, and how it offers an alternative configuration of desire when routed through the voice. The Other is constituted through the voice, but it is also where difference is to be located, where the Object becomes 'the embodiment of desire'.⁶⁷ This is where 'for the subject, mending the schism between self and Other becomes the ultimate goal', and where the sonic 'functions as the primary vehicle for recovery of the lost object, the Other that is now fully recognised as independent

⁶⁴ Carabell, Paula., 'Photography, Phonography, and the Lost Object', in *Perspectives of New Music*, 40 (1) 2002, 186-7.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 176.

⁶⁶ Žižek, Slavoj., 'I Hear you with My Eyes, or, The Invisible Master', in Saleci, Renata., and Žižek, Slavoj. (eds) *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1996), 94.

⁶⁷ Carabell, Paula., 'Photography, Phonography, and the Lost Object', in *Perspectives of New Music*, 40 (1) 2002, 185.

entity'.⁶⁸ What is especially productive about Carabell's essay on photography, phonography, and the lost object is precisely the question of spectrality and its relation to temporality, and how the sonic dislodges any narrow (re)membering of this relation. Attached to this is the ever-present question of silence, made most prominent in the notion that there is an absence which persists as the condition of an impossibility of possession; an absence that persists precisely because it is temporal, ephemeral, and *en flux*.

What is important and perhaps less emphasised in Carabell's delineation is how a displacement of a discourse of visualism would allow one to have a grasp on what it does to our reading of sound objects. This discourse of visualism as an 'epistemological motif',⁶⁹ is what orders our thinking on sound. Jonathan Sterne has famously elaborated the stakes of this relationship between audio and the visual through the employment of what he calls the audiovisual litany: that which 'idealises hearing (and by extension, speech) as manifesting a kind of pure interiority'. As Sterne notes, the audiovisual litany – or the binary between sight and sound that marks modernity proper – 'alternately denigrates and elevates vision: as a fallen sense, vision takes us out of the world'.⁷⁰ Crucially, and of particular importance to how we might work with sound, is the notion that the audiovisual litany as a sensory modality 'posits history as something that happens *between* the senses', rather than 'offering us an entry into the history of the senses'.⁷¹ Ultimately, what we see is what we get. This is the undergirding frequency that drives a reading of sound.

If, as Carabell reminds us, the image is static, and if Zizek notes that the gaze 'mortifies', what can be heard in the graphic? I want to suggest that what we hear is the spectre, the spectral, the silent. It is precisely the presence of absence that constitutes silence in the image that

⁶⁸ Ibid., 186.

⁶⁹ Mowitt, John. 'Image' in Novak, David, Sakakeeny, Matt (eds), *Keywords in Sound* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2015), 79.

⁷⁰ Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2003), 15.

⁷¹ Ibid., 16.

gives it its haunting quality. Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier offers us a way to think about silence along this logic:

On the one hand, silence invokes a type of plentitude most commonly associated with contemplative techniques of quietness as a means to bring about a transformation of the self...on the other hand, silence is often associated with a "sinister resonance"...that invokes a haunting; the dangers and fear of the unknown; the insecurities produced by the ungraspable and by the profound irreversibility of death.⁷²

To reiterate, in the case of Tabalaza, it is the 'sinister resonance' that we might locate in the artwork of Andy Mason, but also in the proceedings of the inquest in 1978. If the graphic can be thought of as writing, then we can en-voice⁷³ the silence in the image as a letter from the dead, as what Fred Moten might call the process whereby 'sound comes back but only by way of graphic overwriting, underwriting'.⁷⁴

To conclude, we can say that the images and sounds in question are (phono)graphic.

Mlangeni was invited to listen to a recording of sound, whether deliberately or not, and this is undoubtedly central to the fact that he could not listen, could not respond to the invitation. Tabalaza was represented visually to account for an absence of sound. While the image locks in place the fate of both Mlangeni and Tabalaza as casualties of the apartheid state and thus constituted as the epitome of death in Pauw's collage of images and Andy Mason's artwork, what the phonographic offers is an opportunity to (re)play, to educe. What this means is that rather than a juxtaposition between the visual and the aural that would automatically give rise to the notion that sound brings the dead back to life while the image keeps them in the grave, the phonographic offers us the

⁷² Ochoa Gautier, Ana Maria. 'Silence' in Novak, David, Sakakeeny, Matt (eds) *Keywords in Sound* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 183.

⁷³ Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier uses the term en-voicing to account for the ways in which vocality might be thought of as a mode of intelligibility caught up in aurality rather than orality, in the sonic rather than solely within the linguistic parameters that the phonic might connote. It is therefore in a concept of en-voicing that the visualism in linguistic theory (De Saussure's sound-image) might be displaced. En-voicing is a way of thinking about the voice as vocalisations; as that which can be 'conceived as a multiplicity rather than embodying a sound that represents an entity', and that the voice 'is not so much a mechanism that permits the mediation...between the signifier and the signified...but instead it permits the manifestation through en-voicing (in-vocation) of relational multiplicities – a capacity to manifest "bundles of affect" of the type...that imply different things for the different entities that produce or hear them.' I employ en-voicing here because it offers a resonant mode of reading both image and sound. Ochoa Gautier, Ana Maria. *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth Century Colombia* (Duke University Press, 2014).

⁷⁴ Moten, Fred. 'The phonographic mise-en-scène' in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 16, (3) Performance Studies and Opera (2004), 271.

spectral in a different light. It also allows us to reorient the finality of the photographic document towards the palimpsestic scraping and reiteration of the phonographic. The visual and the focus on the image therefore should not be read as a detour on the journey to arrive at the technicity of the sonic that is the texture of the event of Mlangeni's death but rather be heard as an encounter – anacrusis, before attack, perhaps, much like the opening drum roll on 'Lungile Tabalaza'. Instead, it is through the image that we can arrive at the phonographic: a modality of the sonic that is at once expressly technical, expressly modern, and expressly temporal. To solicit phonography is to mark out a conceptual terrain upon and through which to educe apartheid's violence as well as to subject it to the sonic as disciplinary object.

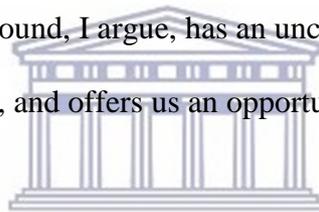
We turn now to sounds that we can neither hear nor see.



Chapter 2: Warlike Sounds

Precolonial Shrieking

In this chapter titled ‘Warlike Sounds’, I consider the whistle or shout as a polemological sound object that impinges upon military historiography the politics of acousmatic sound. It would seem here that it is the sound that produces no sound, or the sound that is not technologically mediated (save for its mediation through writing) that is one that demonstrates several tensions useful for this dissertation’s inquiry. The whistle or shout inaugurates a sounding out of war that signifies a specific discourse and is what I am calling a belliphonic soundmark. The belliphonic soundmark – a *warring motif* – consequently manifests a distinct mode of listening and intelligibility. In naming the whistle or shout as a belliphonic sound mark, the contours of such a mode of listening can be delineated. Sound, I argue, has an uncanny way of unsettling and delegitimising military historiography, and offers us an opportunity to reconfigure the scripts it perpetuates.



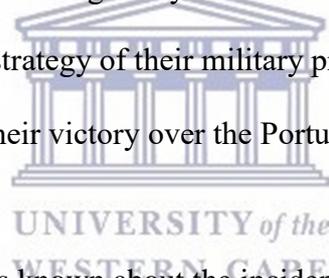
Willem Steenkamp writes of the process by which the South African soldier emerged and tracks the development of what he calls a uniquely South African military strategy since 1510 up until the present day. He delivers his unmistakably nostalgic account in a meandering synthesis that stretches from conquest through the history of the armed forces of the apartheid state to the more recent reconstitution of the South African National Defence Force of 1994.¹ Steenkamp begins this historical narration on 29 February 1510, with an altercation between Portuguese outgoing Viceroy of India, Dom Francisco d’Almeida, and members of an indigenous Khoi community near present day Salt River, Cape Town. As Steenkamp explains, following a disagreement about food and water the Portuguese had decided to venture into the coastal bush on 1 March 1510 in search for the Khoi chief who had offended them. Upon reaching the *kraal*

¹ The question of integrating the defence forces of the apartheid state, the resistance movements, and the new defence force that would emerge after the democratic transition in 1994 will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 4. Steenkamp, Willem P., ‘The Shaping of the South African Soldier, 1510-2008’ in *Journal for Contemporary History* 34 (1), 2009, 207-222.

(homestead) which they found mostly empty except for a few calves and children, Almeida's men pillaged whatever they could and set back off to the beach.² It was at this point, Steenkamp exclaims, that 'the [Khoi] headman made his move'. As the story goes,

[the headman's] men burst out of the bush and flung themselves on the Portuguese. At first glance it might seem that the Khoina were unduly disadvantaged, but they were armed with re-hardened spears and poisoned arrows, and they made use of a veritable "secret weapon" that surprised and disconcerted d'Almeida's men: trained fighting oxen that could be controlled by whistles or shouts. The Portuguese were hit by a phalanx of oxen, the Khoina spearmen running behind and between them, effectively protected by the animals from any crossbow bolts that might be fired at them before they could close in to stabbing range. The Portuguese, their lethal but slow-loading crossbows almost useless against this sudden and controlled close-quarters onslaught, set off in pell-mell retreat back to the beach. The Khoina kept up the pressure, harassing them with further coordinated attacks.³

The Portuguese lost several men, including d'Almeida, who died on his way to meet the group as they retreated in what Steenkamp calls a 'sanguinary defeat'.⁴ Steenkamp praises the Khoikhoi, and goes on to provide an analysis of the strategy of their military practice, noting numerous tactical decisions that were indispensable to their victory over the Portuguese. Steenkamp writes that



[w]hat is relevant is that what is known about the incident indicates that the battle plan evolved by that forgotten headman, untutored though he was by the European military standards of the time, exhibited a sound grasp of what we would now call the principles of war. [The Khoi headman] fought at a time and place of his own choosing (avoiding the beach, where the Portuguese distance weapons would have had an advantage); achieved complete surprise; made good use of the bushy terrain; attacked with maximum violence and speed; did not disengage at any stage but maintained the momentum of the attack; and

² The word kraal means 'enclosure' and is used here analogically to mean homestead, settlement or village. I retain this particular word for the sake of consistency with Steenkamp's retelling of the event. It is also the language used elsewhere to speak about the event, possibly with the intention of inscribing a local specificity to the occurrence, seen here in a newspaper article whose title resonates with Steenkamp's reading: 'The invaders, after a skirmish with the locals on their first day in Table Bay, as an act of revenge apparently travelled up the Liesbeeck River and came upon the ancient Gorinhaiqua kraal which was situated at what is now known as Oude Molen.' Similarly, what is entangled in the invocation of the word kraal is a concept of sovereignty, one that is often used to dismiss the argument that no concept of property existed in indigenous societies. Khoisan, Zenzile. 'Invaders received a lesson in warfare', *Weekend Argus*, 27 February 2016, <https://www.iol.co.za/weekend-argus/lifestyle/invaders-received-a-lesson-in-warfare-1990598>. Accessed on 14 April 2017.

³ I have retained the spelling of 'Khoi' as 'Khoina' and 'Khoena' in Steenkamp's original text for this and other quotes that appear in this chapter. Steenkamp, Willem P., 'The Shaping of the South African Soldier, 1510-2008' in *Journal for Contemporary History* 34 (1), 2009, 207.

⁴ It is ironic that Steenkamp would use a word which in its etymology speaks to a relation to blood, and one could argue for a biopolitical reading of this event. *Ibid.*, 207.

skillfully deployed and coordinated his combat assets, namely his infantry (the spearmen) and his "armour" (the oxen).⁵

Despite such a lengthy and detailed analysis of the intricacies of the event – details deemed important enough to name the headman as a military strategist of international standing – Steenkamp prefaces this entire episode, rather hastily, by noting that while these points are fascinating, they are not relevant.⁶ Contrary to Steenkamp's gloss, I would argue otherwise to stress that this 'sanguinary' event and its details – sometimes referred to as the Battle of Goringhaiqua/Goringhaicona, the Battle of Salt River, and the first war of resistance against colonialism – is important, for several crucial reasons that are at the heart of the overall inquiry of this dissertation. At one level, the event itself is said to have prevented the Portuguese and indeed other Europeans from visiting and pursuing a more permanent settlement at the Cape, and the death of Viceroy d'Almeida is one that comes to influence the historiography at the time in Portugal.⁷ At another, it is in discussions around land and indigenous rights in South Africa that the same event can be found, often to dislodge a settler colonial mythology around an uninhabited South Africa which Europeans encountered.⁸ To a certain extent, and more importantly in my view, the story that unfolded in 1510 has become an unofficial moment of 'first contact' in a military sense between what would later become known as South Africa and an expansionist Europe. If we take our cue from Steenkamp, we may suggest that it begins a historical trajectory of warfare in South Africa and subsequently underscores the historicism of South African military historiography. This is most apparent in the Military Museum at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town, a memorial to Dutch

⁵ Ibid., 208.

⁶ 'The details of that ancient clash are fascinating but not relevant to this discussion. Suffice it to say that an early spirit of cordiality turned sour and the Portuguese landed a punitive expedition armed with swords, lances and crossbows to teach the headman a lesson.' Ibid., 207.

⁷ 'For eighty years after the event, this disastrous image of the Cape kept Europeans away from the land. It was only dispelled when Lancaster, an English captain, landed in Table Bay in 1591 and found what real bargains he could get by trading metals for livestock.' Boonzaier, Emile et al. *The Cape Herders: A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa* (New Africa Books, 1997), 60. In relation to Portuguese historiography, see Johnson, David. 'Remembering the Khoikhoi Victory over Dom Francisco De Almeida at the Cape in 1510: Luís de Camões and Robert Southey' in *Imagining the Cape Colony: History, Literature, and the South African Nation* (University of Cape Town Press, 2012).

⁸ See for example, Pheko, Motsoko. 'Desperate colonial madness', *The Witness*, 23 February 2012, accessed at <https://www.news24.com/Archives/Witness/Desperate-colonial-madness-20150430> on 14 April 2017.

settlement in the seventeenth century, where an artist's impression of that very incident welcomes one into the exhibit that introduces the mythic founding figure of Jan Van Riebeeck and the soldiers who secured the fort are depicted through elaborate dioramas of the Castle. This is not the only representation of the event. A popular image being a painting by Angus McBride in 1984, titled 'The

Massacre of Viceroy Francisco d'Almeida'

(Figure 1), repeats the

significance of this

inaugural moment of

warfare. Beyond its

appearance in the specific

record of a national public

institution of memory,

Steenkamp treats the

image as a template essential for a history of military tactics, the development of 'veldcraft', and the moulding of this tactic into what he conceives of as a uniquely South African way of making war.⁹

Returning to the 1510 war as an originary event and despite the dismissal of its details earlier,

Steenkamp notes how this altercation would come to mark the onset of a long history of practice of



Figure 1: 'The Massacre of Viceroy Francisco d'Almeida', Angus McBride, 1984.

⁹ It must be noted that it is not only Steenkamp to lay claim to the importance of what is called 'veldcraft' as crucial to a history of South African war-making, and Steenkamp is merely echoing the historiography within which he finds himself. Elsewhere, it is articulated as the technics of hunting, a trope that has emerged directly out of the encounter with indigenous San and Khoi traditions. Without producing an extensive literature review, it seems crucial to note that one of the key interlocutors in this debate – Timothy Stapleton – is a figure well known in the historiography of the Eastern Cape, a region in South Africa marked by a language of frontier both in the historiography but also in its landscape which is one littered with settler colonial monuments. Stapleton is the author of an extensive military history of South Africa, one that does not begin in 1510 but rather in 1652 with the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck and the ensuing Khoikhoi-Dutch Wars of 1659, 1673, and 1674-77, as well as a three volume series on a military history of Africa. See Stapleton, Timothy. "'Tracking, Tracking and More Tracking Was Their Motto:' Bush Tracking and Warfare in Late Twentieth Century Southern Africa," *War and Society*, 34.4 (2015), 301-327, Stapleton, Timothy. *Maqoma: The Legend of a Great Xhosa Warrior (1798-1873)* (Amava Heritage Publishing, 2016), Stapleton, Timothy. *Warfare and Tracking in Africa, 1952-1990* (London: Pickering and Chatto/Routledge, 2015), Stapleton, Timothy. *A Military History of South Africa: From the Dutch-Khoi Wars to the End of Apartheid* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2010). We might also read this turn to hunting as part of much larger genealogy of power and violence, as Gregoire Chamayou has offered in *Manhunts: A Philosophical History*. See, Chamayou, Gregoire. *Manhunts: A Philosophical History* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

war that cut across the political positioning of competing military forces in the history of conquest and colonialism, resulting in a military practice that draws its key aspects from both colonized and colonizer. It is a tactic that underwrites the Dutch *Staatse Leger* (State Army) doctrine, the commando system of the Boers during the South African War in the early 1900s, the regimental system of the Zulu army in the nineteenth century, Basotho horsemen and the modern South African soldier - all subsumed into a single narrative of a national and geopolitically specific military strategy.¹⁰ Steenkamp begins this long history with the interaction between the Khoi and the Dutch in the early years of colonialism at the Cape, suggesting that it was predestined:

Inevitably a symbiotic blend of Khoina mobility and Staatse Leger orthodoxy began to emerge. The Khoina contributed the concept of veld-craft, the use of terrain and ultramobile warfare, on foot or on oxen. The Company soldiers introduced better distance weapons – early flintlock muskets – and horses, and the virtues of structure, training and discipline. So arose the prototype of that quintessential South African soldier of later times, the mobile, quick-thinking mounted rifleman, who was to exercise a fundamental influence on the evolution of the South African soldier, regardless of his race, creed or colour.¹¹

The detail that Steenkamp misses in his disregard for all things irrelevant are the whistles or shouts that apparently herded the phalanx of oxen and that enabled the Khoi to dispose of Almeida and his men. Although sometimes not named as whistles or shouts, the idea of oxen being controlled by aural signals appears in other texts too, such as O.J.O Ferriera's *Die Roemryke Lewe van Francisco De Almeida en sy sterwe aan die Kaap Van Goeie Hoop*, where Ferriera notes that 'as the Portuguese moved forward, the Khoikhoi ran quickly between the oxen and brought the animals to a standstill with calls', and there is also mention of 'whistling sounds and other signs [being used to]

¹⁰ Steenkamp also notes the ways in which due to the fact that Xhosa had more exposure to British colonialism, their access to and proficiency in distance weapons – aside from their less militarized and politically centralized structure in comparison to the Zulu army – was marked in the ways in which they waged war. Steenkamp, Willem P., 'The Shaping of the South African Soldier, 1510-2008' in *Journal for Contemporary History* 34 (1), 2009.

¹¹ Note here the relation between mobility and what was highlighted as the ultimate secret weapon in the previous chapter, the Walkman. Ibid., 209

train for battle'.¹² Another instance can be found in *The Cape Herders: A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa*, where the entire episode is described by the chronicler of the time as follows:

‘[We, the Portuguese] were already some way from the village, bringing some cattle, and some children which they had found in the houses, the blacks...began to come down from where they had assembled in their first fright, like men who go to risk death to save their sons...And although some of our folk began to let the children go...the blacks came on so furiously that they...came into the body of our men, taking back the oxen; and by whistling to these and making other signs...they made them surround our men...like a defensive wall, from behind which came so many fire-hardened sticks that some of us began to fall wounded or trodden by the cattle.’¹³

We can discern a language of military strategy in the description above which Steenkamp clearly extrapolates upon. Marking these whistles or shouts as part of the 'veritable secret weapon', Steenkamp underscores its importance, but fails to consider them any more than inconsequential murmurings. It is notable that Steenkamp ignores this 'secret weapon' in the first part of his argument but raises the point later that for Shaka's army 'secure battlefield communications' in the form of 'the transmission of orders by whistling instead of voice commands' is one item on a long list of the innovative organisational and managerial characteristics – indeed ‘secret weapons’ of the Zulu military force.¹⁴

There is more to these murmurings than just their importance as secret weapons. It is the sound produced in the wake of historicism, if not by historicism, that invites us to address the tension between the aural as sonic and the oral as phonetic, and discourses of listening and intelligibility associated with each. This tension is a factor that can be observed not only through the complication of voice produced by social history, a complication that comes to mark a certain historico-political understanding of orality and which I will extrapolate upon later in this chapter. It

¹² The title of the book may be translated as ‘The Illustrious/Glorious Life of Francisco De Almeida and his death at the Cape of Good Hope’. Ferriera, Ockert Jacobus Olivier. *Die Roemryke Lewe van Francisco De Almeida en sy sterwe aan die Kaap Van Goeie Hoop*, (Castle of Good Hoop Military Museum, 2002), 122, 123.

¹³ Boonzaier, Emile et al. *The Cape Herders: A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa* (New Africa Books, 1997), 59-60.

¹⁴ These elements of the Zulu regimental system are presented in Steenkamp’s paper as a bulleted list and range from ‘strict discipline’ and ‘a psychological “depressurizing” process for [Shaka’s] troops after battle’, to ‘good battle leadership’ and ‘detailed, firmly instilled battlefield formation drills’. Steenkamp, Willem P., ‘The Shaping of the South African Soldier, 1510-2008’ in *Journal for Contemporary History* 34 (1), 2009, 214.

is also a tension that is made more critical in how the whistle or shout is constituted as non-vocal vocalisations. Through the invocation of the whistle or shout as both important and inconsequential, captured in the naming of it as a 'secret weapon' by Steenkamp and his cohort of military historians, and its absence in other accounts as a whistle or shout, we witness a tension that uncovers the concept of history deployed to think the problem of the whistle or shout. It is through Steenkamp's accentuation of the event and its criticality to a narrative of South African history after apartheid that would invoke war that would help us constitute this specific sound object as a warring motif. A central question here is how it is that this event – which appears in precolonial, colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid narratives of nationhood and history – might grant us insight into the relationship between aural and orality as it comes to script voice and gesture in the post-apartheid present.

Vocalisations

We must note that the whistle or shout is caught up in the tension between orality and aural, in the sense that these sounds signify that which is neither entirely phonetic and not entirely sonic, and both have no linguistic nor phonemic value. However, what is striking is that it is in an implicit invocation of indigeneity that this ambivalence plays out on Steenkamp's stage. The Khoi, we presume, cannot speak, only howl and shriek as they are hailed by Steenkamp, or click, as a large body of scholarship on the relation between anthropology, colonialism, and concepts of the primitive and the savage reveals in relation to the figure of Khoikhoi language and the 'Hottentot'. It is at this intersection that we may grasp the stakes of delimiting with more precision what we mean by the oral and what we are listening for when the aural is brought into discussion. David Johnson in a chapter which follows one that attempts to locate the events of 1510 within a discourse of anti-colonial reclamation, notably also turns to the indigenous to make a series of claims about the political valence of the event and marks the ways in which the figure of the 'Hottentot' and the Enlightenment are intertwined. Johnson has much to say on physiognomy and the inscribing of the body as a marker of how the figure of the 'Hottentot' is scripted in the Cape, but does not mention

language, let alone any sort of reference to the importance of the sounds that would be read as those of nature (we are reminded that many early commentators referred to the sound of the Khoikhoi language as the ‘clucking of turkeys’, a sound that would also grant the name ‘Hottentot’).¹⁵ As a device with which to close his chapter, Johnson appeals to Thabo Mbeki and the turn to the inclusion of a Khoi motto in the coat of arms of the newly inaugurated democratic dispensation in South Africa.¹⁶

To inhabit the mode of reduced listening and to ask what the sound object is at work in the historicisation of the events of 1510, I want to name the whistle or shout as non-vocalised vocalisations.¹⁷ By invoking this terminology, I am arguing that the whistle, or shout, is culturally resonant sound that bears no phonemic or linguistic value. I name them as such deliberately, because it is these sounds that show 'how the relationship between practices of listening and vocalisation [are] central not only to configurations of knowledge about music or language but also to the politics of differentiation between the human and the nonhuman', and how the whistle or shout is also entangled in a history of colonial encounter and governmentality.¹⁸ By articulating them as such, I am arguing that in this case there are a set of specific audile techniques that produce a certain kind of legibility – a legibility that produces a sound object that persists. This sound object can be thought of as a soundmark, as that in which a 'sound appears simultaneously as a force that constitutes the world and a medium for constructing knowledge about it'.¹⁹

¹⁵ See for example, Hudson, Nicholas. “‘Hottentots’ and the evolution of European racism.” *Journal of European studies* 34, no. 4 (2004): 308-332.

¹⁶ I shall return to Johnson’s reading of the events of 1510 later. Johnson, David. ‘French Representations of the Cape ‘Hottentots’: Jean Tavernier, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Francois Levallant’ in *Imagining the Cape Colony: History, Literature, and the South African Nation* (University of Cape Town Press, 2012).

¹⁷ For the criticality of this categorisation for what has been called sound studies, see Mowitt, John. *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities*. (Univ of California Press, 2015).

¹⁸ Ochoa Gautier, Ana Maria. *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2014), 209. It is in this sense that the category of ‘veldcraft’ should be thought alongside ethnographic histories of indigeneity in South Africa, where the relationship between the Khoi and the San (often referred to by the derogatory term ‘Bushman’) to land and nature is one marked by a conflation which is at the heart of the exclamation that the San are historically the closest to humanity’s earliest ancestors. With this in mind, a caution against reading the strategy of the phalanx of oxen as born out of strategies of herding cattle is noted, lest a conflation between indigeneity and a warring/warlike nature be made. Other concerns around the term have been noted in footnote 9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3. Derived from the term landmark, a soundmark denotes a sound particular to a particular area, community, or group and comes to represent the specificity of that which it hails. It also inscribes the technological mediation of sound and all the accompanying categories of technical inscription. Although constituted initially in relation to sound ecology

The impetus behind such a naming lies in the fact that the dismissal of the whistle or shout as irrelevant might be symptomatic of a much larger discourse pertaining to indigeneity, language, voice, aurality and sound, a discourse formed through and with colonial anthropology and later the birth of the South African ethnomusicological tradition and as well as with the birth and development of phonomusicology in South Africa. For example, a case can be made that because the whistle and shout are the only sounds that the Khoi make, d'Almeida is freed from his shameful defeat at their hands, and it is this that drives Steenkamp's genealogy of the triumphant South African soldier that emerges out of the defeat of d'Almeida as well as a condensing of what seems to be conflicting histories of war into one elaborate narrative of progress culminating in the post-apartheid period. Steenkamp's history, it would seem, is posited upon that very tension between orality and aurality that – in the process of producing a subject that cannot speak but can only whistle or shout – negates voice as that which must produce the subject. It can also be suggested that to position the whistle or shout as the soundmark for a history of cultural production sutured together with the threads of tribe and nation is to open a sonic undercurrent to a structure of voicing providing the basis for apartheid's construction of the black subject, perhaps best heard in the arenas of segregated radio. We might recognize this in the shape of phonomusicology in South Africa, which is both the study of and the development of the intertwining of the music recording industry based on the technology of the phonograph and the figure of the collector. In South Africa, the categories of the collector and the ethnographer merge in the figure of Hugh Tracey, who also acts as a catalyst for and crucial interlocutor in what becomes ethnomusicology in South Africa.²⁰ This is to say that the invocation of the whistle or shout – whether factual or not – is indicative of a rendering, disciplining, and education of sound (technological or otherwise), one that is inevitably and inescapably marked by the colonial encounter. It is no surprise that it is the *Khoi* who whistle

and the environment by Murray Schafer, I am using here in the sense of a landmark sound; a sound that comes to stand for a specific trope or discourse. See Schafer, R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994).

²⁰ See, for example, Felber, Garrett., 'Tracing Tribe: Hugh Tracey and the Cultural Politics of Retribalisation', in SAMUS 30/31, and Cottrell, Stephen J., 'The rise and rise of phonomusicology' in Bayley, Amanda (eds.), *Recorded Music: Performance, Culture and Technology* (Cambridge, 2010), 15-36.

and shout, or that a sound symbolic of their military intelligence can be produced without any disciplinary backlash. The whistle or shout can be considered as a soundmark that casts a shadow over understandings of foundational concepts such as voice, nature, tribe and many others as they manifest in the historiography around war, the soldier, and colonial encounter.²¹

Before addressing the historiographical specificities of the whistle or shout and the event in question in relation to orality, I want to draw together the different threads that link the whistle or shout, the sound object, and colonial war. The concept of the soundmark with the notion of the belliphonic is at the heart of my interest. The belliphonic – a concept introduced by J. Martin Daughtry – attempts to speak for 'the spectrum of sounds produced by armed combat', taking into its fold 'the agglomeration of sounds that are generated by...weaponry...and the motorised vehicles that carry weapons into combat...[but also encompasses] the sonic material that is less directly or conventionally associated with warfare...sounds, live and recorded, that were connected, through causation or inference, to the war'.²² What Daughtry offers is a way to think about the ambience of war through the literal and visceral sounds of war and in ways that do not reduce it purely to the sound of conflict. As he states, 'the belliphonic [...] is the imagined total of sounds that would not have occurred had the conflict *not taken place*'.²³ Steenkamp's underscoring of the shrieking that accompanied the encounter resonates with Daughtry's assertion that the belliphonic incorporates all sound that is dependent on the event of war and that would not exist otherwise. In the context of our discussion here, the belliphonic allows us to access what lies between orality and aurality as it permeates the theatre of colonial war. While the definition of the belliphonic is very particular to war marked by vehicular acoustics – Daughtry's analysis is based on the United States's invasion of Iraq in 2003 – it is still applicable to thinking through how we consider those sounds that emanate from war, as well as how those sounds facilitate and inaugurate different listening practices. The fact that the belliphonic steers us away from thinking the sound of war as merely the sound of

²¹ I will attend to the question of radio in more detail in Chapter 3.

²² Daughtry, J. Martin. *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq*. (Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 4.

conflict also allows us to face colonial war as a juridical category from the vantage point of approaches to thinking sound.

In this sense, we might steer our discussion along the lines of Nasser Hussain's argument that 'colonial rule must be read as the "limit case" of the modern attempt to formulate a coherent relation between the rule of law and political sovereignty'. The relation between colonial legality and sovereignty is central to the question Hussain poses when he suggests that the relation between 'a rule of law and an instance of emergency' can only be theorised through 'the relation between general rules and particular commands and the relation between modes of violence and legal control in positivist theory and colonial discourse'.²⁴ It highlights the relation between the constitution of emergency, as that which articulates the underlying tension embodied in colonial jurisprudence, and that which stands in suspension of a rule of law, as the negation of western legal thought as it appears in empire.²⁵ To broaden this definition and to constitute it in relation to the soundmark more specifically, we can think of the belliphonic as being at once influenced by what is located in the interstices of colonial jurisprudence and emergency. Locating the belliphonic here would not only bring to light the argument that law's demand for obedience is one secured by a threat of harm,²⁶ and that what threatens the tonal and rhythmic harmony of colonial governmentality is precisely the threat of dissonance. However, it can also augment (in more productive ways than merely a teleological development) the relationship between apartheid, colonialism, and war as Adam Sitze has suggested recently in relation to the TRC (as discussed in Chapter 1), and what is meant by the category of imperial war.²⁷

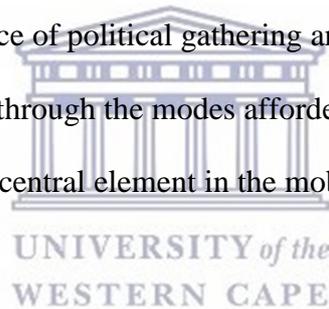
²⁴ Hussain, Nasser. 'Towards a Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law' in *Law and Critique*, 10 (1999), 96, 95.

²⁵ See also, Pillay, Suren. *The partisan's violence, law and apartheid: The assassination of Matthew Goniwe and the Cradock Four*. PhD Diss. Columbia University, 2011.

²⁶ Hussain, Nasser. *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 35 - 37.

²⁷ As he reminds us, 'imperial war, it would seem, is not simply one among many parts of empire; it is that part of empire that exemplifies empire as such'. I will discuss Sitze's argument in more detail in Chapter 4. Sitze, Adam. 'The Imperial Critique of Imperial War' in *Filosofia Politica*, Vol. 25, 2 (August 2011), 316.

The question of orality and aurality might best be captured in reading a debate around voice and gesture. Given that the social and oral historiography of South Africa is indelibly textured by debates on voice and orality, I want to discuss two texts that emerge from this scholarship which sketch how the subject constituted by the discursivity of orality intersects with the politics of the gesture.²⁸ These texts resonate with how we think the whistle or shout as belliphonic soundmark and lend plausibility to the claim that the modes and discursivity of social history are at the heart of what allows Steenkamp to invoke the whistle or shout, but also that such modes are central to the historicity that military historiography would inscribe. Ari Sitas, in a paper titled 'The Voice and Gesture in South Africa's Revolution: A Study of Worker Gatherings and Performance Genres in Natal', considers how the subject as constituted by social history would – in his painterly and sonically resonant words – 'strike defiant chords' and how 'workers [would] trumpet their messages'. Through an analysis of the performance of political gathering and protest, Sitas attempts to think voice, gesture, movement and orality through the modes afforded by popular history, and ask 'how all this noise and posture, finally, is a central element in the mobilization of social movements'.²⁹



²⁸ The literature referred to here can be found implicitly in the work of Belinda Bozzoli, Luli Callinicos, Charles Van Onselen and others, and particularly in the revisionist historiography of intellectual moments such as the Wits History Workshop. Nicky Rousseau's careful reading of the intricacies of popular history in South Africa in her piece titled 'Unpalatable Truths and Popular Hunger: reflections on Popular History in the 1980s' is particularly resonant here. Through an engagement with Luli Callinicos' idea of popular history being far from a recent phenomenon in South African historiography, Rousseau probes questions around location, discourse, authorship, and the production of knowledge. She disrupts Callinicos' notion that the process of popularization was a teleological one, effectively progressing as 'given or as a natural part of political activity', and that it fitted in within a larger tradition of 'liberal, national, and radical popular history, as well as a vigorous right wing tradition', by arguing that those working with and in the process of popularization in the mid-1980s operated within certain locations; namely those of historically white liberal universities, and other independent research structures. Crucially, Rousseau argued that those writers which Callinicos claims as her predecessors 'wrote primarily from within political and working-class movements', and others 'within the dominated classes as well as within the popular movements themselves'. Rousseau, Nicky. "'Unpalatable Truths" and "Popular Hunger": Reflections on Popular History in the 1980's', Paper presented to the South African and Contemporary History and Humanities Seminar, 1995. See also for example, Bozzoli, Belinda. 'Intellectual, Audiences and Histories: South African Experiences, 1978-88', in *Radical History Review*, 46/7, 1990, Callinicos, Luli. 'Popular History in the Eighties', in *Radical History Review*, 46/7, 1990, Bozzoli, Belinda. 'History, Experience and Culture' in Bozzoli, Belinda. (ed.), *Township and Countryside in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), Posel, Deborah. 'Social History and the Wits History Workshop' in *African Studies*, 69, 1 (April 2010), Van Onselen, Charles. 'Introduction', in *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914: Vol. 1 New Babylon* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), Nieftagodien, Noor. 'The Place of 'The Local' in History Workshop's Local History', in *African Studies*, 69,1 (April 2010).

²⁹ Sitas, Ari. 'The Voice and Gesture in South Africa's Revolution: A Study of Worker Gatherings and Performance Genres in Natal', paper presented at *Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid*, conference held at University of the Witwatersrand by History Workshop, 6 - 10 February 1990, 2, 3.

Through a study of political gatherings in Kwazulu-Natal, he suggests that cultural events provide an organic alternative to what he terms 'bourgeois scripted poetry' in the sense that it offers a 'communion between audience and performers which does not separate art from life but which affords people the opportunity to be *active* participants in the work itself'.³⁰ Whether he is referring to specific debates around the work of artists under apartheid (especially as it emerged at the meeting of South African artists in Botswana in July of 1982), the role of the cultural worker in the struggle against apartheid or merely the tangible ways in which the apartheid state produced a sterile society, Sitas more provocatively attempts to collapse the relationship between aesthetics and politics. In fact, this is made more evident in the final sentence of the paper, which suggests that 'the voices, sounds and gestures from worker gatherings will continue as long as the South African revolution propels people to gather, or to gather in different ways'. What is evident here is that Sitas attempts to situate voice as inherently political, or rather that the relationship between the body and voice is one that is inseparable from how the working class is constituted. If we consider this move alongside the assertion by Luli Callinicos that 'popular history is alternative history and has a radical aim', we notice how it is Sitas is situated within a specific tradition of social and popular history. The tension inherent in Sitas' paper comes to a head at the point when Sitas has to articulate orality through art as a way of producing the 'public voice' outside of the constraints of social history but instead reifies the production of black working class voice, seen in Sitas's rendering of oral performativity as uniquely tied to both a longer oral tradition and the politics of the moment. Inadvertently, such a reading invites a rather anthropological rendering of the problem, with Sitas often returning to describing how new forms of performance and gesture differs from older, traditional forms.³¹

³⁰Ibid., 3.

³¹ Ibid. Surprisingly, for Sitas, the sound object at work in the text is the labour of orality and is not a technological object that is necessarily associated with sound. Instead, by using the failure of the camera to capture 'aura', photography becomes that which marks the text as one concerned with what he calls a 'continuum of sound and movement'.

Another text to consider is one by Brett Pyper on the aurality of film. Pyper is interested in what possibilities emerge when we think the field of sound and the discipline of history together, with a much broader interest in what aesthetics might offer to the work of history. In these ways, he echoes Sitas, asking for what the work of history would be in attending to the question of the aesthetic. In particular, echo and resonance are categories which for Pyper come to enable for historiography what he terms 'alternative epistemological perspectives' for historiography.³² Through the analysis of a film that formed part of the installation *Red* by Simon Gush, Pyper draws out the political and sonic resonances of an instance of 'shrill whistling' that appears in an interview in the film that is the focus of his attention. In doing so, Pyper underscores the importance and critical nature of aural performance as it relates to social and public memory, but also through a filmic language of diegesis draws attention to what constitutes a political vocalisation.

Where Sitas was interested in how it is orality comes to mark a specific mode of political vocalization – or the sound of mobilization – Pyper is more interested in the ways in which aurality comes to underscore a practice of memorialisation related to political organisation. For Pyper therefore, the performative aspects of resistance to apartheid and capital are emphasised differently. While there is still an acknowledgement by Pyper that the 1980s were marked by performance as a strategy of resistance, the suggestion is that the whistling offers a different sense of discontent, one that is caught up in aurality rather than orality.

Pyper highlights the shrill whistling in the interview as an expression of displeasure, 'an idiosyncratic mode of sonic resistance' and an example of sound enables a sense of community to coalesce and to be experienced.³³ Moreover, a parallel is drawn between the shrill whistling and what Pyper calls 'various vernacular archives, particularly those that relate to histories of public shaming and insurrectionary noise', with the argument that these 'with their attendant 'aural histories' have been mute despite the fact that the shrill whistling resonate with 'longer sonic

³² Pyper, Brett. 'Hearing Red: Aurality and Performance in a Film by Simon Gush', *Kronos* (42, 2016), 143.

³³ One might argue here that Pyper is implying that the move from aurality to orality is a political one. *Ibid.*, 147.

repertoires of resistance'.³⁴ Through a reading of E.P. Thompson's account of 'rough music', Pyper grants the vocalisation a much longer history of cultural struggle. Most strikingly, Pyper's observes that the 'shrill whistling' emerges not in the soundtrack of the film but in an interview with a participant of the workers strike at the Mercedes-Benz factory in the 1990s. This resonates with the question of the whistle or shout under discussion in this chapter, where the whistle or shout emerges is non-diegetic but comes to inhabit a diegetic function.

How one can invoke the whistle or shout as that which escapes the event and undermines any act that would subsume it under the banner of either a military history or merely a mishearing (what we can term polysemy), is a question that should be posed in relation to how we might consider the whistle or shout to be a sound object. Beyond a whistle or shout, or both, the whistle or shout evoked above carries with it the characteristics of acousmatic sound: sound where the source is not visible to the listener. This is an important point to underscore, for a variety of reasons. Because of the ways in which the acousmatic, and by extension the practice of acousmatic listening, is entangled in the technologically mediated sonic experience brought into being through the phonographic, the whistle or shout can be considered marked by a certain articulation of causality that is at once pre-phonographic *and* effectively phonographic.³⁵

Brian Kane's propositions in this regard are helpful in locating and delineating a model of sound that gathers together an understanding of the acousmatic as well as causality as it pertains to the sonic. According to Kane, sound has three necessary components: source, cause and effect. This formulation is supported by the argument that "every sonic effect is the result of the interaction of a source and a cause" and that "without this interaction, there is no emission of

³⁴ This might be better characterized as a moment where South African historiography attempts to account for sound beyond a conception of the voice as inherited by traditions of oral and social history and a conflation between war and history, a move that military historiography has made at its peril. It is that move that has produced the foot soldier as the subaltern proper. Ibid., 147.

³⁵ We can extend this argument further by proposing that since writing was the technology used to record the event, the whistle and shout are phonographic objects.

sound".³⁶ Kane posits the formulation in favour of the acousmatic that the source and cause cannot necessarily determine the effect and that "the sonic effect, by itself, undermines its source and cause".³⁷ This is made clear in the fact that the certainty of the relation between source, cause and effect does not translate directly into the certainty of the listener: hearing the effect on its own does not provide immediate comprehension of all the components of sound. More importantly, Kane marks the underdetermination of the source and cause in relation to the effect as the point at which the effect is reified:

The underdetermination of source and cause motivates a reification of the sonic effect. By bracketing an effect from its source and cause, I transform a sound from an event into an object. The autonomy of a sonic effect is constituted only when the gap between the effect and its source or cause is disregarded. In the aesthetic orientation of acousmatic sound, that is precisely the point. The autonomous sound, bereft of its source, is then integrated into the virtual world of musical composition; shedding its source, it can fully participate in the virtual connection of tone to tone, in the metaphorical gravity of tonal-harmonic organization, or in the expressive analogies of musical sound with emotional states. The autonomous sonic effect becomes a sound object.³⁸

The experience of listening to a sound with its source not directly locatable or visible is that articulation of causality by which a *specific* mode of listening is inaugurated. Experimental music composer and scholar of sound theory Michel Chion outlines four listening modes, all coupled together according to their relation to one another with regard to association or competition, and against which the concept of reduced listening is posited where one is forced to listen to sound *as* sound.³⁹ These four groups would be constitutive of what Chion calls 'direct listening', which is a

³⁶ These three components exist in relation only insofar as they allow a phenomenological understanding of sound, and one does not determine the other. Kane, Brian. *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 7.

³⁷ Ibid., 8. It is worth noting that the genre of acousmatic music also gives rise to the idea of the sonic image, representations produced by the kind of listening practices the acousmatic asks one to enact and embody. See for example Barreiro, D., 'Sonic Image and Acousmatic Listening', in *Organised Sound*, 15(1), 35-42.

³⁸ The moment at which the source and cause are removed from the triad is the moment at which the acousmatic emerges. Ibid., 8.

³⁹ The naming of reduced listening is credited to Pierre Schaeffer and *musique concrete*. There is of course a wide and constantly growing literature on listening practices, ranging from theoretical treatises to ethnographic analysis and my use here of reduced listening is not to discount or ignore those approaches to the question of sound and listening. As will become apparent in Chapter 3, the use of reduced listening as a technique specific to the phonographic through which to attend to the question of sound in the case I unravel here is one that can be read alongside others. In terms of this broad literature, authors such as Jean Luc Nancy, Michel Chion, Pierre Schaeffer, Roland Barthes and Roland Havas, Salome Voegelin, Murray Schaffer, Veit Erlmann, Julian Henriques, and David Goodman, (to name but a few) address the question of listening in more detail and with specificity. See for example, Chion, Michel, and Claudia Gorbman. *Film, a sound art*. Columbia University Press, 2009, Nancy, Jean-Luc. "On listening." *The Improvisation*

situation wherein the source, cause, and effect are clearly present and visible. The first grouping contains ordinary listening and specialist listening. Ordinary listening refers to the act of immediately attending to the cause of the sound and its accompanying meanings, but with no sense of how it is such an act of listening functions. Such a mode of listening grants what Chion calls an 'imprecise automatic response' to its subject. Specialist listening is a term used to describe a manner of listening associated with a specific understanding of that sound's meaning – Chion uses the example of a galloping horse which can be heard by an acoustician as a physical signal and by a musician as a rhythmic grouping – and is a form of listening that closes itself off to certain meanings or possibilities. The other coupling is natural and cultural listening, in which the former refers to the use of sound purely for information while the latter is the act of using the sound event as a means to understand specific meanings, messages or values.

The important distinction here is that under the conditions of reduced listening, we are listening to sound for its own sake, removed from any other external information that may provide some sort of context for a reading of it. Michel Chion, who elaborates on the term in relation to *musique concrète*, explains what is named the acousmatic situation as follows:

The acousmatic situation changes the way we hear. By isolating the sound from the "audiovisual complex" to which it initially belonged, it creates favourable conditions for *reduced listening* which concentrates on the sound for its own sake, as *sound object*, independently of its causes or its meaning (although reduced listening can also take place, but with greater difficulty, in a direct listening situation).⁴⁰

Studies Reader. Routledge, 2014. 35-44, Szendy, Peter, and Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Listen: A history of our ears*. Fordham University Press, 2008, Kane, Brian. "Jean-Luc Nancy and the listening subject." *Contemporary Music Review* 31.5-6 (2012): 439-447, Chion, Michel. "Guide To Sound Objects: Pierre Schaeffer and Musical Research, trans. John Dack and Christine North." (1983), Schaeffer, Pierre. *In search of a concrete music*. Vol. 15. Univ of California Press, 2012, Barthes, Roland, and Havas, Roland. "Listening." *The responsibility of forms* (1985): 245-60, Voegelin, Salomé. *Listening to noise and silence: Towards a philosophy of sound art*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2010, Voegelin, Salomé. *Sonic possible worlds: Hearing the continuum of sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014, Voegelin, Salomé. "Ethics of Listening." *Journal of Sonic Studies* 2.1 (2012), Erlmann, Veit. *Hearing cultures: Essays on sound, listening and modernity*. Berg, 2004, Erlmann, Veit. "Reason and resonance: A history of modern aurality." (2010), Erlmann, Veit. "But what of the ethnographic ear? Anthropology, sound, and the senses." *Hearing cultures: Essays on sound, listening and modernity* (2004): 1-20, Henriques, Julian. *Sonic bodies: Reggae sound systems, performance techniques, and ways of knowing*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2011, Goodman, David. "Distracted listening: On not making sound choices in the 1930s." (University of Melbourne, 2010).

⁴⁰ Chion presents a series of confusions that often arise when considering the nature of the sound object, and the most appropriate set of distinctions for our discussion here is the fact that the sound object is not equal to the physical signal, it is not a recorded fragment, it is unchanging regardless of the different listening modes, and it is not a notated symbol on a score (or commensurate with that symbol which represents it). The crucial point to comprehend in an

What reduced listening produces is the sound object proper insofar as they share a mutual relationship.⁴¹ It goes without saying therefore that acousmatic sound together with the act of reduced listening is precisely the mode in which sound is encountered after the advent of audio recording in the late 19th century, and more so in its popularisation in the 20th and 21st century. It is the mode of audition that marks the radio, the telephone, and the phonograph. It is also the mode that marks the walkman discussed in the previous chapter. Despite their very different technological statuses, a concept of audition in this sense allows us to attend to the whistle or shout as well as the walkman as part of the same apparatus of aurality. Both induce reduced listening through the acousmatic as the mode of their intelligibility – whether as written inscription or a technics of education – and both produce and are produced as sound objects available for historiography.

Unsettling Historiographies

Willem Steenkamp's book *Assegais, Drums & Dragoons: A Military and Social History of the Cape, 1510 - 1806*, which synthesizes much of the argument and content that inaugurates this chapter, also pays some attention to the events of 1510. It is therefore worth returning to it with the clarification of the conceptual terrain in the discourse on aurality and its historiographical consequences.⁴² It is here that Steenkamp extends and hardens what reads as a grand history of the South African infantryman that begins at the Cape with the Khoi in 1510 and ends with the modern South African soldier after 1994. Steenkamp's narrative strategy can be encapsulated in the preface to his book by the President and Chairman of the South African Infantry Association, where it is stated that 'what [Steenkamp's book] is about...is the genesis of the South African foot soldier of today – that small, usually dirty, frequently over-tired and often hungry figure – without whom an

understanding of the sound object is that it comes about as an idea 'precisely from the radical distinction between the sound and its real or imagined causality'. Chion, Michel. *Guide to sound objects* (2009), 11.

⁴¹ Ibid., 33. See also, Chion, Michel. "The three listening modes." in *The Sound Studies Reader* (2012): 48-53.

⁴² Steenkamp, Willem. *Assegais, Drums & Dragoons: A Military and Social History of the Cape, 1510-1806* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011).

army cannot ring the gong of victory and in warfare there is no second prize.⁴³ If we are to take this preface seriously, it would seem that for Steenkamp and the entire field of military historiography, the infantryman is the subaltern, the subject of social history, and he who must be granted a voice in the midst of the voicelessness induced by the discipline of war and its machinery by historicism.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the occasional sonic metaphor in the preface, the book is also inserted into a post-1994 South African national imaginary, where its aim is 'to foster the respect that real fighting soldiers often conceive for one another after they have laid down their arms, a respect that transcends differences of race, religion and beliefs that politicians, propagandists and others seek to keep alive to serve their own base purposes.⁴⁵ Beyond the commentary on the transcendence of political difference through the flattened figure of the soldier, the final paragraph of the first chapter invokes the *longue durée* of encounter directly, narrating the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck in the seventeenth century at the Cape, the ensuing confrontation with the Khoi, and the genesis of the South African nation as being inextricably part of the same national narrative. Shorn of any sense of political disagreement, the narrative holds that:

on the morning of 6 April 1652 Van Riebeeck stepped ashore for the first time after his arrival in Table Bay, accompanied by a small party which included several musketeers carrying the cumbersome matchlock muskets called arquebuses. Their arrival was witnessed by some of the local Khoi, armed with their spears and bows and arrows. The nation of South Africa was about to be born.⁴⁶

⁴³The South African Infantry Association commissioned Steenkamp to write the book in 2006. Steenkamp had previously written extensively on South Africa's military presence in Angola and Namibia in the 1980s in South Africa. Steenkamp, Willem. *Assegais, Drums & Dragoons: A Military and Social History of the Cape, 1510-1806* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011), viii. See also, Steenkamp, Willem. *South Africa's border war, 1966-1989*. (Ashanti Pub., 1989), Steenkamp, Willem. *Borderstrike!: South Africa into Angola*. (Woburn, Mass., 1983), Steenkamp, Willem. "The citizen soldier in the border war." *Journal for contemporary history* 31, no. 3 (2006): 1-22, Steenkamp, Willem. "Politics of Power• The Border War." *Challenge: Southern African Within the African Revolutionary Context—An Overview* (Gibraltar: Ashanti Publishing, 1989), Steenkamp, Willem. *The soldiers*. (D. Nelson, 1978).

⁴⁴ The language of the foot soldier, men and women on the ground, history from below, etc share similar invocations in military, popular and social historiography.

⁴⁵ Steenkamp, W., *Assegais, Drums & Dragoons: A Military and Social History of the Cape, 1510-1806* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2011), viii

⁴⁶ Here it is clear that Steenkamp conflates what he calls veldcraft with the idea of an inherent warlike nature, a trope that is very easily transposed onto the Khoi. See footnote 2, 9, 14 and 16 for more detail on the question of veldcraft and warring. Steenkamp, Willem. 'Chapter 1: A Golden Thread is Woven', in *Assegais, Drums and Dragoons: A Military and Social History of the Cape* (Jonathan Ball, Cape Town: 2012), 15.

This narration bears a striking resemblance to the historiography of the arrival of Portuguese sailor and explorer, Bartolomeu Dias in 1488 on the shores of Mossel Bay.⁴⁷ It is of course surprising that Steenkamp pays attention to the encounter in 1510 and marks it as the chronological first of four events that he argues 'bind the era of the assegai to that of today',⁴⁸ but pays no such attention to the earlier encounter between Dias and the Khoi. We find a series of similarities here that we also find in the incident in 1510, such as the aggressive actions of the Portuguese, seen in the violent attack on the Khoi resulting in one casualty by the crossbow of Dias. If the discipline of history abides by Steenkamp's historicism as well as his general argument, a history of the South African soldier lodged in the larger historical narrative extolling the history of European encounter should begin twenty-two years earlier on the southern coast rather than on the Atlantic seaboard. Such a history would also place the incident in relation to the complicated settler historiography of South Africa, which seems to be connected here with the inaugural event of South African history being the landing of Jan Van Riebeeck in 1652.⁴⁹

The displacement of Dias by D'Almeida in Steenkamp's story might better be explored through a more precise account of the relationship between Dias and Van Riebeeck. Cousins in settler historiography but distant relatives in the ways in which they are invoked, these two figures and their voyages constitute an unlikely pairing in the grand scheme of Afrikaner nationalism, where both figures were objects of festivals cementing a narrative of colonial encounter and settlement.⁵⁰ We witness a similar narration emerge around the interaction at the Dias Festival in

⁴⁷ The event of Dias' arrival in Mossel Bay in 1488 marks an important moment in settler mythology and is connected to the arrival of d'Almeida in the sense that both are accounts of encounter with the nomadic pastoralist indigenous people of South Africa.

⁴⁸ Steenkamp notes that 'historical beginnings can be obscure because they are so often a influence of events, large or small, but here we can find four such events which bind the era of the assegai to that of today'. The other three events include the rise of Dutch unification against Spanish imperialism that produced a particular kind of military practice called the *Staatse Leger*, the amalgamation and emergence of the Dutch East India Company that resulted in the adoption of the *Staatse Leger* tactical practice in order to defend the route to the East via the Cape, and the wrecking of the *Nieuw Haerlem* in 1647, which necessitated the building of a refreshment station at the Cape in 1652. *Ibid.*, 1.

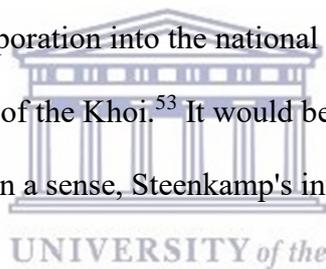
⁴⁹ Ironically, Van Riebeeck also makes a feature in the narrative Steenkamp presents, and is drawn into the grand sweep of history Steenkamp proposes through an encounter between the Dutch commander and the wrecked *Nieuw Haerlem*, whose crew had convinced Van Riebeeck of the 'peace-loving, rather than hostile or warlike' nature of the indigenous peoples of the Cape. *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁰ Dias Festival held in Mossel Bay in 1988 on the quincentenary of Bartolomeu Dias' rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, as Leslie Witz argues, was an occasion which faced the salient questions of reform and multiculturalism

1988, where the reconstructed arrival of the Portuguese mariner is welcomed by actors in blackface to represent the Khoi.⁵¹ The commentator provides a poetic yet strikingly similar account of the reconstruction of that moment in comparison to Steenkamp:

On the morning of the third of February, the Khoikhoi tribe woke sluggishly, sated with food and cool, sweet water from their water hole. *Who could know that this day, this hour, would be the beginning of a new age.* An era not without conflict and fear, but an era of new ideas and wider horizons. [inaudible], a ship, a caravel, a nameless sea monster. Eager strokes bring them nearer and nearer, and the gap closes... [inaudible] Soon Europe and Africa would meet, however hesitantly, and then this mariner from Portugal, Bartolomeu Dias, will fall on his knees on the soil of Africa and thank God. And as many after him would sing, Ave Maria, God shall leave thee never, God with thee forever.⁵²

If we are to ask why it is that Almeida is allowed on the stage of Steenkamp's narrative and Dias is disavowed it is also to ask why it is that the whistles or shouts do not emerge as a motif in histories that invoke Dias? It is without question that Almeida represents a history of encounter other than Dias, seen in the failure of Dias' incorporation into the national mythology of the apartheid state, and the death of Almeida at the hands of the Khoi.⁵³ It would be more productive to ask what is the belliphonic soundmark at work here. In a sense, Steenkamp's invocation of voice and gesture



bedeviling the apartheid ideological infrastructure at the time, as opposed to the tricentenary Van Riebeeck festival held in 1952 only a few years into the implementation of the apartheid policy and intended to construct a united white citizenry. He argues that while 'in 1952 events of history were constructed by festival organizers, negotiated between different European narratives and authorized by historians at universities for public display, in February 1988 denial, suppression and substitution were the basis of the commemorative activities on the beach at Mossel Bay.' Witz, Leslie. 'Eventless History at the End of Apartheid: The Making of the 1988 Dias Festival' in *Kronos*, 32 (2006), 164. See also, Witz, Leslie. *Apartheid's festival: contesting South Africa's national pasts*. Indiana University Press, 2003, Witz, Leslie. "History Below the Water Line: The Making of Apartheid's Last Festival." *Settler and Creole Reenactment*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2009. 138-155.

⁵¹ 'After the dramatic moment when Captain de Sousa and his crew landed, a small tableau of Dias' landing was re-enacted. Written and directed by Marie Hamman, the festival's deputy director, it contained scenes of Dias (Manuel Escorcio) accompanied by Pedro (?) and an unnamed sailor. To meet them were actors representing the indigenous inhabitants, who had gathered around a fire. As they saw Escorcio land they backed away, allowing him to proceed to a nearby spring for a drink of water and then move to a stage where he took hold of the microphone and sang Ave Maria accompanied by a youth choir. What really made spectators gasp in astonishment was that the actors who portrayed the indigenous local population were a 'group of whites' in black masks. In a most astonishing reversal 'whites' had to masquerade as 'blacks' in order to perform late apartheid's festival.' Witz, Leslie. 'Eventless History at the End of Apartheid: The Making of the 1988 Dias Festival' in *Kronos*, 32 (2006), 188.

⁵² Commentary on the depiction of indigenous Khoi reacting to the arrival of Manuel Escorcio (performing in the role of Dias) in Mossel Bay. SATV footage, 3 February 1988, Maritime Museum Collection, Dias Museum Complex, Mossel Bay. Emphasis added.

⁵³ It would seem ironic that the 1980s would see Dias occupy an important role in the politics of reform by the apartheid state as well as witness the rise of the Wits History Workshop with its attendant conceptualisations of voice and social history, along with notions of a radical popular history. It would also see the military actions of the SADF in Angola (for example, Cuito Cuanavale in 1987), a series of events crucial to the formation of the South African military strategy and policy in the late 20th century. Steenkamp overlooks these details in his grand archetype that is the South African soldier, which begins with Almeida.

through the whistle or shout despite his rendering of it as irrelevant is precisely what allows the genealogy of the South African soldier to begin with the death of Almeida as opposed to a figure like Dias. The focus on the infantryman as the subaltern of the military hierarchy makes it seem that what drives a narration of 'that small, usually dirty, frequently over-tired and often hungry figure' is both the inability to speak – to only whistle or shout, to only produce non-vocal vocalisations – as well as the fact that it is the *Khoi* who are the protagonists in the account.⁵⁴ Put differently, it is the *whistle or shout* as soundmark that authorises Steenkamp's social history.

It is worth discussing another text which inserts the event and its ramifications into a different genealogy at this point. David Johnson provides a comprehensive reading of the altercation between the Khoi and Portuguese as it appears in various iterations over the last 500 years. Johnson tracks early Portuguese literary retellings (which ignored the defeat and instead proliferated narratives around the mythic figure of Adamastor), British accounts from 1770-1830 which portrayed the Portuguese as increasingly marginal in the larger imperial desires of the West, and South African accounts which emphasize the insertion of the episode into a larger political narrative of resistance.⁵⁵ Here, the event is marked as polysemic and politically important: a crucial historical moment that is produced through the literary and thus becomes available to post-apartheid South Africa as a device for what Johnson calls 'post-independence political ends'.⁵⁶ Johnson opens his reading with its mention in a speech by Former President Thabo Mbeki, a tribute which Johnson

⁵⁴ It is also interesting that the Khoi or generally the concept of the indigenous has largely been relegated to the disciplinary murmurings of anthropology and not history. See Forte, Jung Ran, Israel, Paolo, Witz Leslie, 'Epistemological Restlessness: Trajectories in and out of history', Forte, Jung Ran, Israel, Paolo, Witz Leslie (eds), *Out of History: Reimagining South African Pasts* (HSRC Press, 2016), 12-13.

⁵⁵ There are four Portuguese chroniclers from the era that cover this event and its ramifications for Portuguese geopolitics in the 16th century: João de Barros (1496-1570), Fernão Lopes de Castanheda (1501-59), Damião de Góis (1501-73) and Gaspar Corrêa (d. 1562). Some such as Barros and the poet Camões in their own way show disagreement with Almeida's actions, with some arguing that he had dishonoured Portugal by focusing on financial gains. It is through these authors that Almeida loses favour and honour in Portugal after his death. There are also other South African encounters with this historiography of this event that do not fall within the ambit of a resistance narrative, most which deal with a couple of factual inconsistencies – for example, whether the site of the incident was in fact Hout Bay and not Table Bay – and the influence of this altercation on the geopolitics of Africa and Europe. These include works such as Theal, George M. *History of South Africa before 1795*. Vol. 3 (C. Struik, 1964).

⁵⁶ Johnson, David. 'Remembering the Khoikhoi Victory over Dom Francisco De Almeida at the Cape in 1510: Luís de Camões and Robert Southey' in *Imagining the Cape Colony: History, Literature, and the South African Nation* (University of Cape Town Press, 2012), 10.

invokes in order to underscore how the event has escaped both popular memory and official historiography. The reference to the incident, as Johnson argues, is 'unusual', but 'exemplifies [the] impulse to rebel', and as such is used as part of projects such as Mbeki's African Renaissance.⁵⁷ Johnson notes later that it is the repositioning of Almeida in the place of Da Gama in a history of encounter in South Africa that is Mbeki's primary interest, noting that 'by recounting the history of the Khoikhoi victory over Almeida rather than the literary tale of the engagement between Adamastor and Da Gama, Mbeki replaces a white settler myth of the first encounter in Southern Africa with the indigenous history of the first moment of black anti-colonial struggle.'⁵⁸

It is of equal importance that we not only note Johnson's definition of Mbeki's project, but also particularly the tone in which Johnson describes it. Distinguishing it as an act of reclamation, Johnson explains how 'Mbeki's African Renaissance strove to reverse the destruction wrought by colonialism and apartheid by recovering and revaluing Africa's cultural riches and histories of resistance'.⁵⁹ Through an analysis of the re-narration of colonial acts of violence and intrusion as moments of resistance, Johnson argues that the event is part of an anti-colonial strategy employed by much of political leadership on the continent, seen in what he draws out in his analysis as the presence of 'approving quotations from the works of more recent anti-colonial intellectuals' in more recent invocations of the event.⁶⁰ As evidence, Johnson dismissively provides a statistical review of the amount of instances in which quotations of figures such as Fanon, Marx, and wa Thiong'o appear in the speeches of Mbeki, so as to contrast it with the mention of figures such as Mark Zuckerberg in the hope of demonstrating the ANC's support for neoliberal capitalism. Johnson notes the following that captures the broad sweep of his argument regarding the polysemic nature of the event suggesting that

in the last five centuries, the lessons drawn from the Khoi Khoi victory over Almeida have mutated remarkably – that the Portuguese failure to value honour above money caused their

⁵⁷ Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance was a concept borrowed from Cheikh Anta Diop, and given new life under Mbeki's tenure as president of South Africa, arguing for an intellectual renewal of Africa. *Ibid.*, 10, 29.

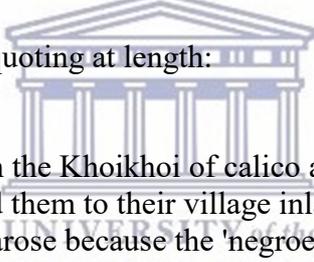
⁵⁸ We might draw a link here to histories of nationalism and underscore rather early a link to Sol Plaatje, who will be addressed in Chapter 5 in more detail. *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

deaths at the hands of 'bestial negroes' (Barros, Camões); that the Portuguese pursuit of military glory rather than commercial profit resulted in them being killed by 'barbarians' (Mickle); that the Khoikhoi were noble 'insurgents' justified in resisting Portuguese tyranny, but ultimately best served by accepting benevolent British rule (Southey, Philip); that the 'guileless friendliness' of the Portuguese enabled uncivilised indigenes to murder them (Welch); and that the heroic Khoikhoi overcame great odds to defeat 'belligerent' Portuguese aggressors and inaugurate South Africa's tradition of anti-colonial resistance (Mbeki).⁶¹

Other than the account of the Portuguese and Mbeki's reversal and reinsertion of this founding narrative of colonial violence, the British accounts tend to stress the increasingly marginal standing of the Portuguese in the colonial world. South African historical writing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mirror this, with a liberal tone that emphasises the benevolent paternalism of the British regarding the Khoi.⁶² Outside of the aforementioned, the appearance of whistles or shouts to which Steenkamp alludes to is not mentioned anywhere in Johnson's reading, at least not as something to which we should pay attention. Johnson's narration of the event as read through Portuguese literary accounts is worth quoting at length:



After successful exchanges with the Khoikhoi of calico and iron for cattle, a group of about twelve Portuguese accompanied them to their village inland. What then transpired is unclear. According to Barros, a quarrel arose because the 'negroes took [the Portuguese's daggers], and also other things that pleased them'. In condemning the Khoikhoi, however, Barros is in the minority, as the other accounts blame the Portuguese. Castanheda records the Portuguese leaders recognizing that 'very likely their own people were at fault', and Corrêa goes even further, conceding that the Khoikhoi legitimately 'feared we might wish to build a fortress there also and take their watering place, and thus they would lose their cattle'. Describing the conduct of Almeida's sailors, he notes that 'as it is always the character of the Portuguese to endeavour to rob the poor natives of the country of their property, there were some sailors who tried to take a cow without giving what the negroes asked for it'. The Khoikhoi chased the sailors back to their ships, where they at once begged Almeida to exact revenge. Almeida duly conducted a council of war in which (according to De Góis) he acknowledged that 'the fault lay with our people, whose habit it is to be disorderly and ill-conducted in strange countries'. Despite these reservations, a reluctant Almeida and 150 men marched on the village, armed with swords, lances, and crossbows. Upon reaching the village, the Portuguese seized a number of children and cattle, when 'the Hottentots, about one hundred and seventy in number, attacked them with stones and assegais of fire hardened wood, against which their weapons proved useless'. The Khoikhoi deployed their cattle as moving shields, hiding behind them and accurately throwing assegais and stones at the Portuguese. Retreating in disarray to their ships, sixty-five Portuguese were killed, including Almeida and eleven senior officials.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., 30-31.

⁶² Ibid., 30.

⁶³ Ibid., 11.

Through an analysis of these Portuguese accounts, Johnson notes that any mention of the Khoi and their 'characteristics' remain vague and unclear, and that much of the retelling of Almeida's death is intertwined with prophecy and poetic license. In addition to attributing this absence to the particularities of the genre of the epic poem and the historical chronicle, Johnson also notes that specific ideological differences in Portuguese society regarding exploration and conquest drive a criticism of Almeida's actions and the causes of his death at the hands of the Khoi. Overall, Johnson provides a much-needed comparative reading of the historiographical and ideological landscape upon which the event unfolds, but somehow overlooks the details that are indicated by the whistles or shouts.

Irrelevant Details, or the Secret Weapon

The idea of the secret weapon as it is deployed by Steenkamp invites us to think of the whistle or shout as a technology of the state for the state and for the state's history. Such a sonic apparatus is, if we are to read its irrelevance closely, enveloped in the work of constituting the nation proper for Steenkamp. It is, after all, the locus for an argument around the syncretic and hybrid nature of what Steenkamp calls veldcraft and the implicit catalyst for the birth of the quintessential South African soldier. It is also a marker whose absence reveals aspects of the relationship between aurality and orality, nation and history, and sound and image as it appears and disappears in narrations of the Battle of Salt River. We can begin addressing this through a reading of the text that has thus far been ignored in this chapter; namely the speech delivered by Thabo Mbeki at the opening of the second democratic parliament over which he presided as a successor to Nelson Mandela. In his widely celebrated 'I am an African' speech, Mbeki inserts Nelson Mandela into a long history of resistance beginning with the battle on the beach in ways reminiscent of the observations of Johnson. For centuries, Mbeki notes that

our own African sky has been dark with suffering and foreboding. But because we have never surrendered, for centuries the menace in our African sky has been brightened by the

light of our stars. In the darkness of our night, the victory of the Khoikhoi in 1510 here in Table Bay, when they defeated and killed the belligerent Portuguese admiral and aristocrat, Dom Francisco de Almeida, the first Portuguese viceroy in India, has lit our skies for ever.⁶⁴

While Steenkamp does not mention Mbeki's reversal of the 1510 story in his version of a national narrative, Johnson describes it as 'unusual', [exemplifying] the impulse to rebel' and renders it a device made available to the post-apartheid state. This particular quote is the only mention of the event in a delivery that also mentions the Khoikhoi leader Autshumato and many other 'kings and queens and generals and warriors who resisted Africa's colonisation'.⁶⁵ For Mbeki, the encounter of 1510 is significant because it posits another historical moment from which to track an alternative history of resistance to colonialism and apartheid fitting to the resistance by a nascent African nationalism distinguished from an earlier Dutch, British and Afrikaner nationalism. It is in this sense that it is made available to a Pan-African nationalism that Mbeki has so carefully attends to in his opening to the second democratic parliament. There is another tension in the speech however, one that is not necessarily related to the soliciting of the event in the service of the post-apartheid. This tension is best expressed through the relation between the photic and the phonic, a tension that implicitly alludes to the audiovisual litany discussed earlier.⁶⁶ In Mbeki's speech, we read of dark skies that are lit by the actions of anti-colonial resistance, horizons that would deny freedom, and a celebratory turn of phrase that brings together voice and vision in the image of the reconciled nation:

You have to convince your enemies to believe a story difficult to believe, because it was true, that your burnished spear glittered in the rays of the sun, not to speak of hatred and death from them, but because you prayed that its blinding brilliance would tell them, whose ears would not hear, that you loved them as your own kith and kin.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Mbeki, T., 'A Farewell to Madiba!', Speech delivered in the National Assembly, 26 March 1999. Accessed on 20 March 2017, at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/farewell-madiba-national-assembly-cape-town-march-261999>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ By photic here, I am referring to a photon: the particle that is constitutive of all light. In this sense, I am speaking to the nature of the photographic to capture that which photons constitute. Similarly, phonic here would refer to phonemes, that which would constitute a distinct unit of sound in language. The audiovisual litany would attach to the photic and the phonic specific connotations.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Mbeki's emphasis on light is not one made in passing, and his mention of the sun of hope is best understood within the confines of the project of cultural rejuvenation that is the African Renaissance, as well as the history of that which has been called the dark continent. It is an emphasis on light that we see in Sitas too. The whistle or shout, similarly absent in Mbeki's account, seems both in and out of place in a much broader allegory about anti-colonial resistance, one which is marked by the photic. This absence can be read as a marker of how the relationship between sound and image as it plays out on the stage of a certain anti-colonial historicization of the Battle of Salt River and the tension between aurality and orality in how Steenkamp would articulate the place of indigenous military technicity are interlinked. When we attend to the kind of nation that is produced by the anti-colonial tradition and that which is presented by a military historiography that must produce syncretism as its defining trait, the whistle or shout in its deployment as a secret weapon or irrelevant detail is critical.

This criticality lies in the fact that we are dealing with acousmatic sound when we consider the whistle or shout as a belliphonic soundmark. As mentioned at the very outset of this chapter, what I am concerned with is not necessarily a recovery of a detail forgotten. In fact, what I have hoped to accomplish is precisely to constitute the whistle and shout as acousmatic, and to produce it as a sound object to subject it to an act of reduced listening very different to the mode of listening it has been subjected to in the work of Steenkamp, and perhaps, Mbeki. Such reorientation of the senses is intended to draw out the ways in which a supposedly minor detail that has been rendered inconsequential to history comes to constitute the very questioning of the historicist drive of a post-apartheid speaking as it pertains to the structure of war.

At the very core of my concern in asking us to listen to whistles and shouts is its association with the phonographic. By the association between whistling, shouting and the phonographic, I am calling attention to the shifts in the historical imagination when we attend to a mediation that comes to stand for what is mediated. The whistle or shout is the sound that produces sound without sound. point to stress here is that the difference between aurality and orality emerges through the whistle or

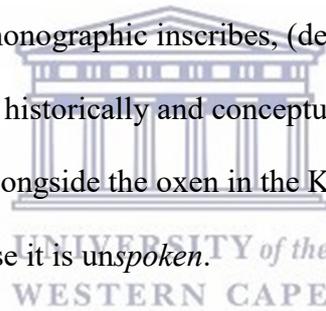
shout that sounds without sound in the texts under discussion, and particularly through its absence in Mbeki's text. For Mbeki, the whistle or shout is the non-vocal vocalisation – it has no linguistic nor phonemic value precisely because it has been scripted as aural, and not oral. Despite Mbeki's efforts to recuperate and undo a colonial history through the insertion of the event into a different genealogy, Mbeki cannot reconcile the conceptual separation of the aural and the oral as constituted by the traditions of social history. We might also note that Mbeki's African Renaissance echoes the need to synthesize the legacies of colonialism and resistance that epitomizes Steenkamp's grand narrative of the South African soldier.

What is important to note is that the subject of the event – namely s/he who produces the whistle or shout – is both a subject who cannot escape both orality and aurality *and* whose positioning is determined by the tension between the photic and the phonic. Sitas and Mbeki are equally instructive at this juncture, as they each have some recourse to visuality in their attempts to think through events that are profoundly aural. We can observe this in a comparison between Sitas' move towards the aural to think a way out of a mode of visuality in considering popular movements and that of Mbeki's focus on the binary between light and dark to proclaim a different set of power relations vis a vis colonialism and the post apartheid state.

These points come to rest in the oscillation between the importance and insignificance of the whistle or shout in Steenkamp's narration. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Steenkamp names the whistle or shout as a 'veritable secret weapon' but does not attend to it with any detail for the rest of his account of the event. If we consider that the belliphonic would only encompass those sounds produced in the theatre of war and are dependent on the event of war as its source and cause, then the whistle or shout is the war-ringing event that both determines and undermines the historicisation of the encounter. It is both sonic and polemological, in the sense that it is a warlike sound and invokes a very particular warring motif. It may be the very fact that the "battle on the beach" in 1510 is figured by both the sonic and the polemological that it becomes available to both Steenkamp and Mbeki, along with entirely different political motivations, but it is also the fact that

it is both sonic and polemological that Johnson, Mbeki, and Steenkamp are able to ignore it simultaneously. If Johnson would have us read Mbeki's deployment of the event as merely another instance affirming the polysemic nature of the event, we would miss an opportunity to think the ways in which the belliphonic soundmark as acousmatic sound object functions alongside the tension of the aural and the oral to produce a non-vocal vocalisation. It is this double-bind – that which must bring forth language without phonetics, produce sound without elocution or education – that allows such a polysemy to exist in the first place.

Here, it is more useful to reiterate phonography as a structuring motif. By constituting the whistle or shout as a phonographic event, we are positioning the event along the lines of two very particular formulations: the soundmark and the acousmatic. In doing so, we are also engaged in the act of disentangling the phonographic from its very specific history with technology and sound recording. As recounted earlier, the phonographic inscribes, (de)scribes, and (re)scribes, and posits a different relationship with sound both historically and conceptually. If Steenkamp considers the whistle or shout and its deployment alongside the oxen in the Khoi defense against the Portuguese as a secret weapon, it is indeed because it is *unspoken*.



Chapter 3: Face to Face

A Shout-out

How does one think the relationship between a print-work and a radio programme, and why is it necessary to engage such a relation between the two mediums? In this chapter, I propose to develop two lines of argument that would draw attention to this relationship and why it is important. Firstly, I argue that to approach print and radio together compels a different reading of apartheid through a purposeful displacement of the grounds of military historiography on the terms of the phonographic. Secondly, I suggest that by turning apartheid's warring against its own instrumentalizing rationality, the necessary displacement may produce a worry at the site of the disciplinary form of sound studies.

A drypoint etching produced by South African artist William Kentridge as part of a group of works between 1988 and 1989 titled *Casspirs Full of Love* (Figure 1) is a work that depicts a set of severed heads positioned on shelves in a cabinet like crate.¹ Alongside this structure, on the right side of the image, the title 'Casspirs Full of Love' appears in cursive handwriting vertically from top to bottom. A number of inscriptions also feature in some impressions of the piece aside from the additional line work, such as the words 'NOT A STEP' above the first shelf/partition, and a quotation in the top right corner from Ryszard Kapuściński's *Travels with Herodotus* (2004) which

¹ The group featured a drawing, an encaustic painting and a screen-printed banner alongside the drypoint under discussion here. One of these works appears in the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. The work is said to represent the corporeality of death under apartheid, and as suggested by Schoeman, 'In the etching *Casspirs full of love* (1989) the decapitated heads, piled into a makeshift shelf cobbled together from what appears to be an upright standing coffin, are metonymies and synecdoches of the corpse.' Elsewhere, it has been thought to form part of a discourse on Kentridge's filmic and animation work, noting that 'Kentridge's graphic images contribute to his depiction of time and space and become both reality and the subject of his film[s]' as well as speaking truth to power as a warning, as Wesley Miller describes the work and Kentridge's own inheritances: 'Kentridge's intellectual resistance to oppression and violence through art-making is a continuation of a tradition within art history, heralded by the likes of Käthe Kollwitz and Francisco Goya. Goya's graphic, nightmarish accounts of war crimes in *Atrocities of War* are a direct ancestor to Kentridge's gory *Casspirs of Love*. Horrifying and vile, Goya reproduces scenes of war – rape, pillage, torture. He is a war photographer in an era before photography. *Casspirs of Love* functions in a similar way – a reminder of what war does to a people, and into what creatures regular men can mutate if allotted sufficient power.' Schoeman, G. "Felix in exile: William Kentridge's self reflexive allegories of art and history." *Acta Academica* 36.2 (2004): 38, Oppermann, Johann. "Drawing and mark making in Johannesburg 2nd greatest city after Paris." *South African Journal of Art History* 27.3 (2012): 203, Miller, Wesley. "Painting Connections." (2013), 7.

reads: "Where are they all now? Smoke, ashes, fable? Or perhaps they are no longer even fable?" According to Kentridge, *Casspirs Full of Love* is inspired by works by Giotto encountered by the artist in Florence, and other pieces by Tony Cragg, such as *Inverted Sugar Crop* (1986) and *Untitled (Sugar Beet)* (1989), the latter which comprises of a set of 'sugar beets with Hallowe'en faces gouged in them [...] cast in a green patinated metal [...] laid along [...] shelves made by a stack of three I-bar girders'.²

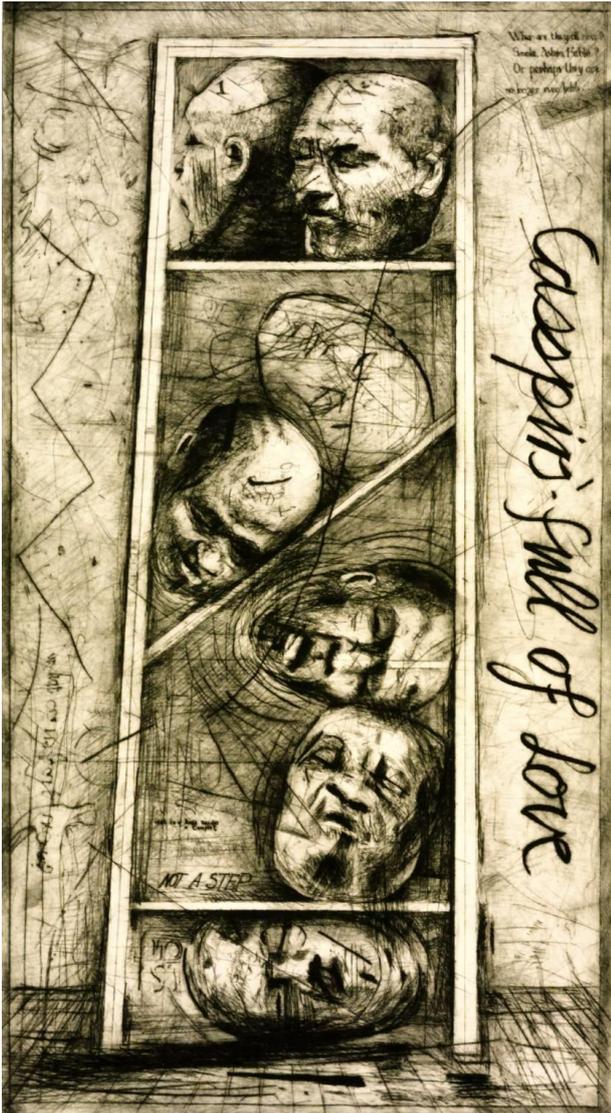


Figure 1: 'Casspirs Full of Love', William Kentridge, 1989.

The title *Casspirs Full of Love* is drawn from a radio dedication (what in common parlance, would now be called a 'shout out') on 'Forces' Favourites', a popular South African radio programme hosted on Springbok Radio from 1969 to 1989. 'Forces' Favourites' had two iterations: one on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) English Service hosted by Patricia Kerr and an Afrikaans version with the same name presented by Esmé Euvrard. Both versions were listened to eagerly both inside and outside of South Africa, specifically by white South African conscripts serving on the border of Angola and Namibia and their families back home at the height of the Cold War.³ The message from which the artwork takes its title echoes a message

² Lubbock, Tom. 'Metaphorically speaking: Tony Cragg picks up prosaic things and hammers out a kind of poetry. Which is more than can be said for John Bellany' in *The Independent*, 1 August, 1992, accessed at <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/arts-exhibitions-metaphorically-speaking-tony-cragg-picks-up-prosaic-things-and-hammers-out-a-kind-1537731.html> on 12 May 2017.

³ It was admired so much, that many soldiers who served during that time refer to Afrikaans host Esme Euvrard affectionately as 'Bosmoedertjie', or 'bush mother'. A similar appreciation was granted to English host Patricia Kerr, who was described as a 'true radio legend in her time'. The idea of the 'bush mother' returns us to the question of veldcraft discussed in Chapter 2. I will focus more specifically on the English service in the discussion in this chapter.

from a mother to a son who was on that very border. She had wished him a good tour of duty and a safe return, and generously sent the message 'with Casspirs Full of Love'. A Casspir is a South African military personnel transport vehicle, lauded for its landmine resistance and ambush protection qualities, and was used extensively in the policing of townships during the various states of emergency in 1980s South Africa.

What are we to make of the title *Casspirs Full of Love*? We might turn to an explanation offered by Kentridge:

I'd had the title *Casspirs Full of Love* in the back of my head for a year, trying to work on what the image would be to go with it. [...] The full phrase of the title had come from a radio program I heard when South African troops were fighting on the borders and in the townships. There was a "forces' favourite", in which mothers and fathers would send messages out to their sons in the army. One of the messages came from a mother who said, "We hope you got the food parcel. Looking forward to having you home for Christmas. This message comes from your mother with Casspirs Full of Love." So, this work had started off with drawings after Giotto, and then became its own piece.⁴

The explanation offered by Kentridge deserves closer attention, especially since it is at the source of how we might approach the print and the radio as relational objects that displace that concept of war in military historiography prefigured by a relationship to imperial war and juridical emergency on phonographic terms. The title to the print appears alongside other terms such as 'NOT A STEP' and the phrase taken from Kapuściński's text, "Where are they all now? Smoke, ashes, fable? Or perhaps they are no longer even fable?". A closer reading of Kentridge's explanation offers us some insight into how we might attend to the work as well as its relation to the radio show, 'Forces' Favourites'. In what can be called an act of grammatical transduction/intermediary education, Kentridge replaces the proper noun ('Force's Favourites') that is used to name the radio programme with a common noun ('a 'forces' favourite'). We ought to read this switch as an effort to refer to the radio message as a medium of relay. This transposition and its implication demand to be read, in part because it reveals a kernel of that transductive potentiality that the medium of print and radio

⁴ Kentridge, William. "William Kentridge Talks to The Associates of The Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, the Museum of Modern Art", The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room, January 14, 2009, in Hecker, Judith B., *William Kentridge: Trace: Prints from the Museum of Modern Art* (Museum of Modern Art, New York: 2010), 65.

hold but also that which the concept of remediation alerts us to. Merely through the semiotic misstep from proper to common noun, we are alerted not only to media itself, but specifically the relation between media. This slippage is a moment at which to pause on the relation between the print and the radio. We are dealing with media that are seemingly incompatible, or more precisely, two ostensibly dissonant forms of media that share the same content. In noting this, it is also necessary to point out that this dissonance rests on the very dichotomy that haunts sound studies (and radio studies, for that matter): a division of the senses that underscores the irreconcilable relationship between visuality and aurality. We might even say at this point that the print educes the radio message.

As we have seen (and hopefully heard) in previous chapters, this irreconcilability sits at the center of how we figure the interconnections between technology, the senses, and indeed how South African historiography, and specifically military historiography, has articulated the problem of medium and mediation, a problem which I turn to now in more detail.⁵ It is in this division that we can perhaps begin to see the relation between print and radio where I propose to locate the central inquiry of this chapter. Stated differently, this chapter asks what it means to think the print and the radio together as a staging of an encounter with a theoretical working out of a concept of mediation.

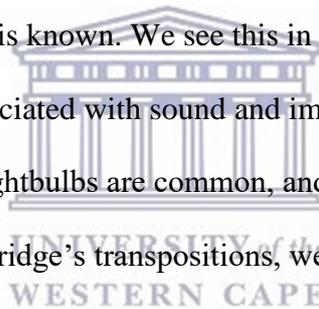
Gray Matter

The grammatical transposition that Kentridge perhaps unwittingly undertakes strikes at the heart of how we might approach the question of mediation or, as Richard Grusin and Jay Bolter propose in complicating the notion of mediation, how we might read the relation between radio and print as one exhibiting all the characteristics and inconsistencies of remediation. For Grusin and Bolter, 'the ultimate purpose of [media] is [...] to transfer sense experiences from one person to

⁵ In Chapter 4, I will address the question of war-time and the relationship between apartheid and war.

another'.⁶ The relationship between media presumed in this understanding is at the core of what they name as remediation. We might say that remediation is the process by which we arrive at the representation of one medium in another. It is the fundamental and specific characteristic of digital media as such.⁷ In such a formulation, not only is media as we know and interact with it as the digital constructed very much on the terrain and interface of older media, but it also subsumes that genealogy into its very workings *as* media in the present. Remediation is therefore an attempt to account for the dialogical correlation between immediacy and hypermediacy.⁸ For Grusin and Bolter, nothing can or does exist outside of the medium. In their articulation, mediation might be read as a synonym for representation. Remediation as method, process, and concept intends to reveal this tendency.⁹

If we turn to Kentridge, we are able to discern such a media history at work, through the practice of transposition for which he is known. We see this in the transformation of objects in his work and where these objects are associated with sound and image pervasive in use of animations. Megaphones, tripods, cameras, and lightbulbs are common, and in *Ubu Tells the Truth*, a cat transforms into a radio. Through Kentridge's transpositions, we witness mediation, or in the terms



⁶ Grusin, Richard, and Bolter, Jay. *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (MIT Press, 2000), 3.

⁷ Constituted in the entwinement and interplay of the double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy, remediation jettisons any suggestion that there would exist such a thing which we call 'new media', and instead that what we call new and old media are constantly 'invoking the twin logics of immediacy and hypermediacy in their efforts to remake themselves and each other'. *Ibid.*, 5. See also, Bolter, Jay David. "Remediation and the Desire for Immediacy." *Convergence* 6.1 (2000): 62-71.

⁸ According to Grusin and Bolter, this double logic functions along three fundamental principles: (a) that remediation emphasises the dependability of media upon each other, or 'remediation as the mediation of mediation', (b) that remediation, through acknowledgement that media mediate the real, produces a conflation between mediation and reality, and (c) that the term 'remediate' draws its etymology from the notion of reform encapsulated in 'remedial', highlighting the refashioning function of remediation. Remediation is also, to a large extent, an attempt to account for the ways in which these two logics embody a contradiction in modernity; a contradiction wherein there is a desire to both 'multiply [the] media [of modernity] and to erase all traces of mediation: ideally [modernity] wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them'. Grusin and Bolter use the word 'culture' where I have used modernity. I replaced it to avoid the specificities of the term culture. *Ibid.*, 55-56, 5.

⁹ As they argue, '[it] would seem, then, that *all* mediation is remediation. We are not claiming this as an *a priori* truth, but rather arguing at this extended historical moment, all current media function as remediators and that remediation offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well. Our culture conceives of each medium or constellation of media as it responds to, redeploys, competes with, and reforms other media. In the first instance, we may think of something like a historical progression, of newer media remediating older ones and of digital media remediating their predecessors. But ours is a genealogy of affiliations, not a linear history, and in this genealogy, older media can also remediate newer ones... No medium, it seems, can now function independently and establish its own separate and purified space of cultural meaning'. *Ibid.*, 53. Emphasis in original.

of remediation, we are enmeshed in the hypermediate when we encounter such transformation of media. Hypermediacy is true to its naming: it is excessive media existence. Primarily concerned with media opacity, it seeks to make the act of representation at the heart of media apparent to those who come across it. As Grusin and Bolter express, a history of western visual representation *and* digital media show that what is core to hypermediacy is multiplicity: 'if the logic of immediacy leads one either to erase or to render automatic the act of representation, the logic of hypermediacy acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible.'¹⁰ In this sense, and in the sense that 'hypermediacy makes us aware of the medium or media and... reminds us of our desire for immediacy', the double logics apparent in remediation interact with one another in a rivalrous fashion. This is an element most visible in the uncanniness of Kentridge's transpositions.

In *Casspirs Full of Love* however, these usual tropes of transposition are somewhat absent, with a turn towards the figure of the severed head as a structuring motif that both determines the image as well as connects it to Kentridge's *oeuvre*. A rather obvious and reductive move at this point, which I make somewhat hesitantly, would be to draw attention to the fact that the ear is, for better or worse, part of the head, and that to think sound and the print would eventually lead back to this crucial conjuncture. It would also vindicate the assertion that it is not surprising that Kentridge should find the title *Casspirs Full of Love* ideal and compelling as a name for the work. This is so purely because the phrase received in its capacity not as a message but as a broadcast stresses the structure of the internal auditory meatus: it is now a transmitted message. It is equally telling that albeit through an idiomatic turn of phrase, Kentridge guarded the name 'in the back of [his] head for a year', while searching for the appropriate image to accompany it.¹¹ What we are 'faced' with in *Casspirs Full of Love* is transmission rather than transposition. To imbue this observation with a little more complexity, it is worth turning to Gregory Whitehead's observation that 'sound, then, is

¹⁰ Ibid., 34

¹¹ Kentridge, William. "William Kentridge Talks to The Associates of The Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, the Museum of Modern Art", The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room, January 14, 2009, in Hecker, Judith B., *William Kentridge: Trace: Prints from the Museum of Modern Art* (Museum of Modern Art, New York:2010), 65.

actually *a material for the whole body conducted through nerves and bones by way of a hole in the head*¹², and to extend Whitehead's concept of the radiobody in order to negotiate this pile of heads. For Whitehead, the radiobody is couched in an analogy of the ear as being 'not just another hole in the body':

The human *pours acousticus* is not just another hole in the body; it's a hole in the head, a hole that permits sound waves to pass first through the tympanum, wind through a tricky labyrinth into the brain, and finally migrate as residual electric impulses throughout the body. While it has become commonplace to talk about sound as the medium of the imagination (a gray area), the ear also opens up a path for acoustic vibrations to travel through the spine and skeleton. Sound, then, is actually *a material for the whole body conducted through nerves and bones by way of a hole in the head*.¹³

The analogy of the human body as receptor for sound, and thus a receiver for the radio broadcast, is what allows Whitehead to constitute what he calls radiophonic space via an emphasis on the vibration of the vocal cords and the frequency it produces. This space, which radio waves produce by amplifying the voice as body, permits a kind of sympathetic vibration between utterances. It is important to note here that the radiobody is precisely the voice without body, the utterance as object, and that which comes to a head when attempting to think of radio as a phenomenon.¹⁴ In fact, the severed heads are an example of the technicity of radio itself, in the sense in which Whitehead remarks 'how radio is actually at its most lively when most dead' and 'each radio transmission embraces the post-mortem recollection of beings that have been physically dispersed across multiple generations of media abstraction', a rendering which echoes the process of remediation.¹⁵ It would seem the removal of the body from the head constitutes an entirely different body.

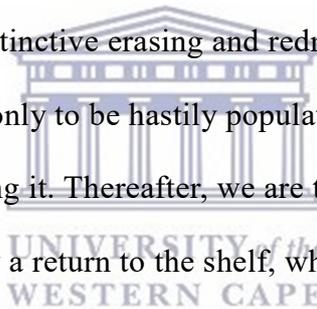
¹² Whitehead, Gregory. 'Holes in the Head: A Theatre for Radio Operations', in *Performing Arts Journal*, 13 (3) (1991), 85.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁴ Whitehead explains it as follows: 'Radiowaves turn up the juice on the oral/vocal body due mostly to the misplaced and unnameable identity of radiophonic space. Radiophonic space defines a *nobody* synapse between (at least) two nervous systems. Jumping the gap requires a high voltage jolt that permits the electronic release of the voice, allowing each utterance to vibrate with all others, *parole in libert *. Or, as fully autonomous radio bodies are shocked out of their skins, they can finally come into their own.' *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 87, 90.

It helps to stay with the gray matter for a moment while drawing attention to the heads as they appear in Kentridge's work. The theme of decapitated heads in a box-like/cabinet structure with shelving is one that is also found in Kentridge's other work, particularly in two animated films, namely *Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After PARIS* (1989) and *Mine* (1991). The former is the first in a series of short animated films *Nine Drawings for Projections*, a series that is thought to have inaugurated Kentridge's combination of charcoal drawing and animation and one that combines an interest in and depiction of apartheid South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s with what is seen in *Casspirs Full of Love*.¹⁶ Without presenting a synopsis of the film, we might attend specifically to the scenes in both *Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After PARIS* and *Mine* where the motif of a pile of heads is presented to the viewer. Towards the end of the film following a confrontation between the two protagonists in the film Soho Eckstein and Felix Tietlebaum, a shelf appears in the distinctive erasing and redrawing that has become the signature style of Kentridge's films, only to be hastily populated with severed heads, both on shelves and on the ground surrounding it. Thereafter, we are treated to a scene depicting a tussle between Soho and Felix, followed by a return to the shelf, which is reduced to an unassuming frame as it is erased by the shawl of one of two female characters in the film (Mrs. Eckstein) walking by, which can be thought of as a moment of hypermediacy where we witness Kentridge's filmmaking method. The backdrop is a desolate landscape, reminiscent of the aftermath of the mining industry in Johannesburg. In the first few scenes of *Mine* (which also appears in the *Nine Drawings for Projection* series), heads appear in the shelf-like sleeping compartments of a mine worker compound and is similar to the heads we see in *Casspirs Full of Love* and in *Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City After PARIS*. Later in the film, severed heads depicted in the sleeping compartments as well on their own also appear in the earth alongside



¹⁶ Fleming, David H. 'Charcoal Matter with Memory: Images of Movement, Time, and Duration in the Animated Films of William Kentridge' in *Film-Philosophy*, 17, 1 (2013), 403.

Soho Eckstein's coffee plunger, which emulates a mining drill descending underground to provide a shaft.

Tuning In

Let us turn momentarily to the radio, and the interface of the apparatus that we call the radio as correlate medium of the print. We are compelled to think of the radio through the dial with which one ordinarily selects a frequency. It is the object that marks the radio in many senses; it is the locus of an act that is a sonic experience as much as it is also a tactile/haptic experience, and one that in one sense or another gives us the most visceral sense of tuning in. It is also an experience that is sometimes reproduced digitally, similar to the on-screen knobs of digital synthesizers. In addition to these identifications, the development and subsequent use of the dial on the radio is also for all intents and purposes also a mode of 'seeing' sound. Put differently, using a dial to navigate the world of radio engaged the eye *and* the ear, and as such produced the radio as not just merely a listening experience, but also as an act of locating oneself in space through the senses. While the radio dial emphasised a combination of the haptic and the acoustic, it also mapped itself and its practices increasingly analogically on travel, transport, and a knowing of the world.

To tune in was to travel, and scholar of television, radio and transnational infrastructures of the mediative Andreas Fickers alerts us to this through a history of the development of the dial. Working through the evolution of the radio dial and frequency regulation in Europe in the early twentieth century, Fickers turns to mediation to address a set of relations between 'the rise of a European regime of frequency regulation, the materiality of the radio set, and the symbolic appropriation of the European broadcasting landscape'.¹⁷ Fickers notes that:

The appropriation of the radio [...] involved the appropriation not only of a technology of communication but also of an imagined space: the ether. What I refer to as the

¹⁷ Fickers, Andreas. 'Visibly Audible: The Radio Dial as Mediating Interface' in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*, p. 411

"visualisation of the hearing experience", which resulted from the introduction of the station scale as a map of an imagined voyage through the ether, downgraded the previous practice of explorative listening in search of audible radio stations (tuning) while simultaneously prioritising our "first sense" (seeing) as a new aid in radio set operation. This deeply changed the human/machine interaction with the receiver and provided the user – who turned from a pure listener to a view of a topographical representation of European station names (mainly names of cities) – with a new and highly symbolic media interface. Interacting with this new interface – as suggested by the iconography of advertisements and reported in many literary reminiscences to the station scale – innervated the user's imagination of travelling the European broadcast landscape while turning the dial from one station to another.¹⁸

The metaphor of mapping is worth holding onto for the purposes of the effort to link print to radio because as it has specific repercussions for how we think the event of the encounter between the two dissonant but linked mediums. Through the discovery of the right frequency, users were able to tune into a different world, and as such reconstitute existing borders. In a sense, what Fickers does not adequately come to terms with is that radio produced not only a European broadcasting landscape, but Europe itself. It is also the moment through which radio is transformed from an object into a medium, and it is not surprising that the development of the radio dial also inaugurated the radio as a mass medium proper. The radio produces the world.¹⁹

It comes as little surprise therefore that Fickers would ask us to move closer to the loudspeaker, or to what is named as the 'contact person' for the listener. Listening to the radio meant looking at the loudspeaker, in anticipation of the sound that would be broadcast whilst mediating — or rather, educating — the texture of that particular sound through the haptic.²⁰ It is this that underscores the role of the eye in allowing the radio to (a) enter the home, and (b) stay

¹⁸ Ibid., 412

¹⁹ Pausing here would alert us to the ways in which the apparatus of radio is figured in Africa, as radio is proclaimed as 'Africa's medium'. We notice here a similar language around the ways in which radio produces a conflation between soundscapes and spacescapes, how it is radio enables the creation of publics, and 'how radio's soundscapes lend themselves to the mediation of people's imaginings of themselves as subjects at the multiple levels of local, national, and trans-national communities'. Additionally, it has been argued that it is radio as technology that 'makes possible the imaginings by radio audiences of possible states that struggle to exist in any meaningful way'. Often, these conceptions of soundscapes and the emancipatory function of radio as medium on the continent is routed through a language of orality. Gunner, Liz, et al. 'Introduction: The Soundscapes of Radio in Africa', in *Radio in Africa: Publics, cultures, communities*. (Wits University Press, 2012), 1, 8.

²⁰ Fickers notes how it is the development of the single-knob radio dial unfolded alongside the radio industry's drive to produce a loudspeaker that would integrate seamlessly into the domesticated ideal of the cabinet, which he reminds us mirrors the process of making the phonograph an appliance of the home (and eventually, the walkman). We might also draw a relation here to the discussion of the acousmatic in Chapter 2.

there, as a mode of encountering the world in a medium that is familiar. The radio also embodies the culmination of a collection of interwoven media encounters: phonography and the advent of recorded sound, telegraphy and the shrinking of the world, and technology and mass communication. The radio message more specifically calls into being a set of connections with that very history of writing, through perhaps an unsophisticated example that is the posted letter. Merely through its genealogical coupling to the telegraph, we can draw a direct link to media theorist Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* or reiterate Adorno and Horkheimer's oft cited phrase, 'the radio as a sublimated printing press'. In a similar way through McLuhan and others, we might draw a link to those technological infrastructures which made colonialism possible.²¹

While it is unclear whether the message that inspired Casspirs Full of Love was transmitted via the English or Afrikaans service of 'Force's Favourites', it is important to consider the structure and content of the programme of dedications to better understand why it proved so important to Kentridge. While it did feature some music, the programme was an orchestrated reading of posted letters sent to the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) from families in South Africa and from soldiers in the battlefield in the frontline states. The SABC was a public broadcaster that was entirely controlled by an apartheid communications ministry. In the case of Forces Favourites, the envelope dispatched from the border of Namibia and Angola that would end up at the SABC's offices contained one song request, and a message to loved ones. In an almost mechanical fashion, the host would read these messages of love and concern, reassuring reports on national service, and numerous repetitions of the phrases 'vasbyt, min dae' and 'two years, not so long'.²² The radio programme was thought to have had such an important place in the South African military and social imagination that Kerr was awarded The Order of the Star of South Africa Knights Cross

²¹ See for example, Siegert, Bernard. *Relays: Literature as an epoch of the postal system*. (Stanford University Press, 1999).

²² An Afrikaans phrase, meaning 'hold tight, few days'. The 'few days' refer to the two-year compulsory service that young white men would need to serve under apartheid. One song refers to a soldier whose 'min dae is nog lank' (his few days are still long).

(Civil Division) in 1981 by the then State President, P.W. Botha, in recognition of her 'service to the armed forces'.²³ The radio serial 'Force's Favourites' shares its name with another instance of border sound: an End Conscription Campaign sanctioned compilation of protest songs of the same title, released by Shifty Records in 1986, featuring artists such as Kalahari Surfers, Simba Morri, and James Philips.²⁴ One review gives us a sense of both the show and the compilation, and the ways in which they are semiotically interdependent and cross-referenced:

For those of you who don't know/remember, "Forces Favourites" was a radio programme for "tannie en sussie to stuur groete to boetie who was doing his bit op die grens. (Or in English for the benefit of our international readers a dedications programme for family to send greetings to the boys fighting on the borders of South Africa). The ironically titled "Forces Favourites" compilation was an album put out in the 80's with the support of the End Conscription Campaign and features some of the strongest political songs of the time.

'Force's Favourites' — and by extension Kentridge's *Casspirs Full of Love* — can and should be thought as part of a much larger genealogy of South African radio, which exhibits its own set of idiosyncrasies. As is evident in the fact that there was an English and Afrikaans service of Force's Favourites, a discussion of radio in South Africa should not be divorced from the ways in which frequency both as infrastructure of the ether and cultural discourse was invariably governed by state policy at the time.²⁵ Its early broadcasts served solely the ears of the white minority, and in later years adopted the core tenets of separate development into its content organisation and structure.²⁶

²³ This was despite the fact that as an announcer Kerr did not project much of a persona, as the programme consisted mostly of the relaying of messages and requested songs. Often, Kerr did not manage to read all the messages, and had to announce at the beginning or end of a broadcast that those that she did not attend to would have to wait for the next iteration of the service.

²⁴ The compilation was also a response to censorship and to the cultural apparatuses of the state and positioned itself against the state broadcaster's propaganda. Such debates were often voiced through a need to reconstitute the 'border' elsewhere. See Drewett, Michael. "Battling over borders: narratives of resistance to the South African border war voiced through popular music." *Social Dynamics* 29.1 (2003): 78-98. This has a resonance with Roger Lucey as discussed in Chapter 1.

²⁵ See for example, Hamm, Charles. "'The constant companion of man': Separate Development, Radio Bantu and music." *Popular music* 10.2 (1991): 147-173, Van Der Merwe, Schalk D. "'Radio Apartheid': Investigating a History of Compliance and Resistance in Popular Afrikaans Music, 1956-1979." *South African Historical Journal* 66.2 (2014): 349-370, Lekgoathi, S. P. "Bantustan Identity: Censorship and Subversion on Northern Sotho Radio under Apartheid, 1960s-80s." *Radio in Africa: Publics, cultures, communities* (2011): 117-134, Lekgoathi, Sekibakiba Peter. "'You are Listening to Radio Lebowa of the South African Broadcasting Corporation': Vernacular Radio, Bantustan Identity and Listenership, 1960-1994." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35.3 (2009): 575-594. This process was one that impinged upon notions of tradition and culture, as Louise Meintjes argues in her sketching of the conditions of music production in South Africa in the late 1980s. See Meintjes, Louise. *Sound of Africa!: making music Zulu in a South African studio*. (Duke University Press, 2003)

²⁶ However, the beginning of radio in South Africa was different, and as Thokozani Mhlambi puts it, 'it was the meddling of amateurs that gave birth to radio in South Africa'. This underscores the introduction of radio broadcasting

It should be stressed that 'Force's Favourites' formed part of a much larger ideological effort by the apartheid government to produce the 'border', and South Africa's military efforts as that which is essential to the protection and preservation of the state. Briefly stated, Forces' Favourites offered much more than merely a relay system for communicating via the ether. One such example might be seen in the relation between Forces' Favourites, the End Conscription Campaign compilation of the same name where a parody of the radio programme was a direct response to the construction of the border as part and parcel of a mythology that legitimated the militarisation of the apartheid state.²⁷ Forces' Favourites should be thought of a structuring motif for apartheid nationhood, against which the compilation as well as other manifestations such as a poetry bundle, acted to undo this discursive technical and sensorial infrastructure.

Impressions and Transmissions

We should therefore ask the question: is it possible that print can reveal what radio cannot about itself, its structure, and its attendant practices, particularly as it pertains to the specificities of apartheid radio? Some consideration of the print as medium allows for a series of observations. The print is the quintessential image, enveloped in various histories of aesthetic practice, but it is also much like the radio textured through its associated practices of production with writing and typography, or what McLuhan named the Gutenberg Man. In many ways which we can invoke merely by saying 'framing', the medium of print and the practice of etching/drawing/painting precedes and prefigures the technology and conceptual apparatus of the camera as well as the phonograph.

in the 1920s and subsequent development as a process largely governed by forces outside of the state or any centralised regulatory structure. We might also link this to the work of Hugh Tracey and the birth of ethnomusicology, a factor that will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 5. Mhlambi, Thokozani. 'Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa: Culture, Modernity and Technology', PhD Dissertation, (South African College of Music, University of Cape Town: 2015), 11. See also, Stokes, Martin. The social biography of ethnomusicological field recordings: eliciting responses to Hugh Tracey's 'the sound of Africa' series. Diss. University of Oxford, 2010.

²⁷ See for example, Conway, Daniel., 2008. 'Somewhere on the Border of credibility': the cultural construction and contestation of 'the Border' in white South African society. IN: Baines, Gary, and Vale, Peter. (eds). *Beyond the Border War: new perspectives on Southern Africa's late-Cold War conflicts*. (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press), 75-93.

While Kentridge has become renowned for the work he has done in animated movement, it is print that he claims as his primary endeavour, arguing that 'over the last thirty-five years, printmaking has been close to the center of the work I have done...[and that] prints have never been a side journey or in the margins'.²⁸ Judith Hecker provides a reading of Kentridge's printmaking practice that is worth outlining here. In a Derridean concept of the trace, Hecker reminds us that print is an enterprise that has been conceptualised as both standard and as exception; it is considered an edition art form, but also as a supplementary practice for artists due to its requirement of a master printer and dedicated publisher. Despite this, Hecker notes that 'in the contemporary period — when divisions between mediums have blurred or disappeared and the notion of the artist working in isolation has become obsolete — prints are an integral, if unsung, force in many artists activities'.²⁹ For Kentridge to make printmaking his primary medium is a subversive move when it is placed in relation to the structuring dynamics of art practice which ordinarily relegate printmaking as only an ancillary tool to the process of visual art, and not an art practice in and of itself. This yields a specific methodology which Hecker names as improvisation; an operation that combines the layering of etching with the constant reworking which the practice demands. Hecker invokes this in order to understand Kentridge's prints as palimpsests, and in order to emphasise the ways in which they 'function as witness and record – in other words, as a means to address the cultural amnesia that results from a passing of an event or period'. For Hecker, Kentridge combines method and concept. Hecker notes that

if we regard Kentridge's film animations and his theatrical works as time-based, then the prints he makes alongside those works offer instances of temporal suspension, or pauses, defining as they do moments in the larger narrative. This slowing down, or halting, of the story allows the artist and viewer to consider a specific action or scene more carefully and in greater detail, particularly given the typically small size of prints. [...] In [...] [Ubu and the Truth Commission, Zeno at 4am, and The Nose], Kentridge presents time in a nonlinear sequence: there is no specific logic or order to the acts and scenes of the Ubu prints; unlike Kentridge's typical unidirectional processions, the figures in Zeno at 4am wander every which way; and the Nose prints reconstitute the opera's narrative. These works, like much of

²⁸ Hecker, Judith B., and William Kentridge. *William Kentridge: Trace: Prints from the Museum of Modern Art*. (The Museum of Modern Art, 2010).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

his printmaking, reconceptualise time and subject in a way that is inextricable from the malleability, the seriality, and the intimacy of the medium.³⁰

This is a key observation by Hecker which has an impact on how we understand the relationship between Kentridge's prints and his animation, the relationship between time and printmaking, the prescriptions and prohibitions of the medium, and how Kentridge produces printmaking as a viable medium in and of itself. What is more telling however is how Hecker outlines the importance of temporality for understanding Kentridge's work. It may be temporality, and indeed the nonlinear sequence that cannot be divorced from the medium which bears a striking resemblance to the notion of the radio programme premised on dedications.

How can we read the print in a manner that allows it to *feel* like a broadcast? Can the print be read as a radio broadcast? We can indeed feel *Casspirs Full of Love* hailing us much the same way in which radio allows us to vibrate sympathetically with mediation. We listen to the heads that speak and to those that do not. Theodor Adorno similarly enables us to delineate what he calls time-coincidence as he works to describe the difference between the radio and the phonograph. Put in rather crude terms, what makes this difference is the fact that the 'radio voice creates a strong feeling of immediate presence [and that]...it may make the radio event appear even more present than the live event'.³¹ Adorno suggests that that particular feeling of presence is a feeling of immediacy as well, and that immediacy is one that acts much like the concept raised in remediation: 'radio tends to make us forget that it gives us in other respects a mediated phenomenon'.³² Adorno's reflections on the time-coincidence of radio stresses that the radio is closer to the telephone than it is to the phonograph precisely because of the sense of time invoked. To give more substance to the concept of time-coincidence and the stakes for radio, I quote Adorno at length on the matter of liveness and radio:

In the categorical structure of the phenomenon [of time-coincidence] we can already find the root of problems which later become decisively important for the radio phenomenon and its effect, namely that it *appears* to be a live phenomenon, whereas actually it is very much

³⁰ Ibid., 11-12

³¹ Adorno, Theodor. 'Radio Physiognomics', in *Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory* (Polity Press, 2009), 74.

³² Ibid., 74.

different from the live event to which it is connected by the abstract element of time-coincidence. The time coincidence and the swiftness by which radio can chase events in time brings the listener into closest possible touch with what he listens to: in other respects, namely in terms of space and specific sound qualities, the 'radio voice' keeps him far distant from the very same events.³³

If we are to further elaborate on this point to ask what kind of listening is called for when we consider the print, we might turn to John Mowitt's reading of Grusin and Bolter's remediation. Mowitt, through an analysis of Michael Curtiz's 1947 film *The Unsuspected*, offers us a different way into remediation, one which draws us once again towards sound. After a lengthy discussion of the acousmatic and Chion's reduced listening, Mowitt appends three types of listening to a reading of Roland Barthes' and Roland Havas', of which he draws particular attention to the third.³⁴ This third type (which Mowitt highlights is not named by Barthes and Havas but later proceeds to call it 'transferential listening') is one for which signifying *is* its object, and is best thought of as Theodor Reik's 'third ear' which Mowitt defines as 'the organ by which the hovering attention of the analyst sifts the discourse of the analysed for traces of the unconscious'.³⁵ Such a move foregrounds an approach which augments the notion of reduced listening as well as the acousmatic with a particular psychoanalytic bent useful to thinking media. This also allows Mowitt to propose a specific argument around remediation, one that not only attends to a point made somewhat in passing by Grusin and Bolter regarding the notion of the 'rivalry' between media in the process of remediation

³³ Ibid., 75.

³⁴ The other two types as explained by Mowitt and which are given names by Barthes and Havas in the original text are the alert (linked to indices) and the decipherment (linked to signs). Mowitt stresses that 'to further tease out the importance of reduced listening it seems crucial to hear behind Chion's three modes' these three types, which 'anticipate directly what Chion calls causal and semantic listening'. In Chapter 2, I offered a reading of Chion's delineation of listening, but from the perspective of a text specific to sound art and the work of Pierre Schaeffer, whereas Mowitt derives his reading of Chion from another text named *Audio-Vision*, one wholly devoted to thinking the question of sound and film.

³⁵ Mowitt also argues that 'by situating this listening in the space of the transference, Barthes and Havas direct it at the differing deferment between two utterances: "I am listening" and "listen to me". If, as the pronouns imply, this listening listens to the shift, the play that articulates the listener as both subject and object, then not only does it "open our ears" but it puts a rather different spin on our resistance to reduced listening. Neither a resistance to novelty nor a resistance to analysis, reduced or transferential listening, in its attunement to the crisis of splitting, of being, or listening from, two places at once, provokes a resistance indexed to the structural displacement of the speaking subject. Not throwing one's voice, but listening to oneself from the place of the other.' Mowitt, John. 'Avuncular Listening: The Unexpected' in *Semiotic Inquiry* 29, 2-3 (2009), 84-5.

by reading it through Raymond Williams' concept of the residual, but also offers up remediation to the sound object proper:

[...] it seems crucial here to point out that remediation is, at one level, precisely this structure of being in two places at once. If a radio broadcast is depicted in a film, the transmission (the speech, the noise, the music, etc.) is both "on" the radio, and "in" the film. If, as [Charles] Acland has insisted, remediation must countenance the residual dynamic of its functioning, a dynamic that foregrounds the rivalrous tension between a dominant medium and those media it has displaced, then Chion, Barthes and Havas are urging us to treat this rivalry as active *within* the listening solicited by various media. Moreover, and this is the crucial point, residualism may find its defining acoustic expression in the problem of reduced, or transferential listening, in the splitting contained in the meta-critical gesture of listening to listening. Put differently, listening to listening may impose itself on our attention, whether hovering or not, with unique, even telling force in and around those residual media addressed to our ears.³⁶

A slippage on the part of Mowitt in the above quotation is revealing. The conflation of transferential listening and reduced listening allows one to make the argument that Kentridge is enacting precisely a combination of that third type of listening that remediation might offer. What would make the naming of the print *Casspirs Full of Love* translucent is precisely the mode of listening to the radio that is a type of transferential or reduced listening. Indeed, Mowitt's analysis and the example of the film with the radio host as character bodes well for such an analysis and is surprisingly mirrored by our own engagement with *Casspirs Full of Love* and 'Force's Favourites'. By introducing the notion of proximity in the sense that 'remediation is, at one level, precisely this structure of being in two places at once' into this discussion, we also invite a host of connections and resonances to avail themselves outside of the theoretical observations regarding radio itself: the act of radio producing a 'borderless' closeness between soldiers and families; the print drawing influence from a Western tradition of visual representation and combining it with a very particular African and South African rendering of the everyday; and perhaps most striking the fact that the print and radio might mediate the same experience of being in two realms of the social at once. To reiterate a point made earlier, it would seem that in a very reductive but corporeal sense, transferential listening — and by

³⁶ Ibid., 85.

extension, the entire radio apparatus — to radio in the context of both Force's Favourites (and similarly Radio Freedom) was precisely to be on the border: to be neither in or out of war.³⁷ It may be that when Blade Nzimande in a speech at the memorial of Chris Hani in 2018 notes that 'the AK47...its sound and its melody is a unifying sound, not a divisive one', the reference is not the weapon but to its mediation as the identifying opening jingle of many a Radio Freedom broadcast.³⁸

A concept that traverses disciplinary realms such as media studies, sound studies, philosophy and the science of electromagnetism and electronics and helps reorient and augment remediation as has been articulated this far is transduction, and its various points of contact prove central for thinking about not only the relation between different media, the question of individuation, but also begins to pick at what sound studies deems to be its object and how it comes to constitute itself in relation to that object.³⁹ In fact, as I will argue in more detail later, it is transduction — because of its reliance on questions of technicity — that undoes sound studies' division of the senses that produces what Jonathan Sterne called the audiovisual litany, or the dichotomy of the visual and the sonic which coalesces when one attempts to think the sound object. Transduction asks how it is one makes sense of sense, and for this reason it is indispensable for our inquiry here into what is being called a phonographic attitude.

Without dwelling on the scientific definition of transduction and to simultaneously provide a somewhat rudimentary understanding of the term, it may suffice to say that to transduce is to

³⁷ See for example, Davis, Stephen R. "Voices from Without. The African National Congress, Its radio, its allies and exile, 1960-84." *Radio in Africa: Publics, Cultures, Communities* (2011): 223-237, Lekgoathi, Sekibakiba Peter. "The African National Congress's Radio Freedom and its audiences in apartheid South Africa, 1963-1991." *Journal of African Media Studies* 2.2 (2010): 139-153, Davis, Stephen R. "The African National Congress, its radio, its allies and exile." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35.2 (2009): 349-373.

³⁸ 'We want to appeal to all MK veterans that your division into MKMVA and MK council is not right and it must be fixed. The best way to remember Chris [Hani] 25 years after his cowardly assassination is to unite the soldiers of uMkhonto [Umkhonto We Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC]. We don't want factionalism among the soldiers that were members of uMkhonto. Don't position yourself factionally in the movement. The AK-47 is known for one thing - that its sound and melody is a unifying sound, not a divisive one.' Dlamini, Penwell. 'Tripartite alliance should have a say on government appointments: Nzimande', *Times Live*, 10 April 2018 <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2018-04-10-tripartite-alliance-should-have-a-say-on-government-appointments-nzimande/> accessed on 16 May 2018. I thank Samuel Longford for pointing me to this reference.

³⁹ Another concept that deserves some mention is seriality, a term which finds itself woven into the form of radio broadcasting as well as in the practice of printmaking. An attendant formulation would be sequencing; a term that has specific resonance with the various practices of digital media and computing.

convert energy from one form to another.⁴⁰ While we are partly familiar with the concept because of the idea of eduction, it is worth unpacking it further here in relation to the technical. The term has a strong resonance in biology and engineering, but also in sound studies and sound engineering, with sound as vibration being defined as that energy which travels across media. More specifically, it is the technological mode that converts sound into that which is no longer sound and that which 'turns sound into something accessible to other senses'.⁴¹ At the core of any intervention into sound and its mediation one finds transduction, which underscores the fact that the notion of a sonic modernity is constituted on the assertion that through the advent of recording technology sound — apart from music in this instance — has become an object which in turn has become available to inquiry. If we recall some of the observations noted in the first chapter of this dissertation — most importantly the concept of eduction — we must note that what the phonographic does is come to mark a specific definition of sound in its relation to technology. Additionally, we must also be aware that that definition comes to underpin the intellectual interrogations of disciplinary formations such as sound studies. Scholar of radio Stefan Helmreich offers a reading of Jonathan Sterne's *The Audible Past* and demonstrates the ways in which that very history of phonography becomes intertwined in how it is that transduction finds its way into sound studies, noting that

[in *The Audible Past*], Sterne described transduction – and particularly its mechanical manifestation as tympanic oscillation in the ear (that is, as the vibration of the eardrum) – as the originating principle for modern sound reproduction. Prior to the emergence of the transductive idiom, sound was understood through its production (in vocal articulation, in vibrations of strings) rather than through its reception (in ears). Sterne's recognition of this transductive shift set the concept on its way into sound studies. He went on to say that "even

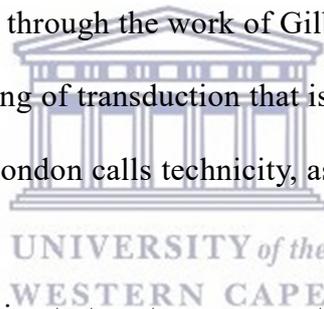
⁴⁰ Adrian Mackenzie offers a scientific and technical definition of transduction: ' We could also approach transduction starting from technical elements known as 'transducers'. The terms 'transduction' and 'transducer' have technical meanings in biology and engineering. In electrical and electronic engineering, transducers convert one form of energy into another. A microphone transduce speech into electrical currents. For the process of transduction to occur, there must be some disparity, discontinuity or mismatch within a domain; two different forms or potentials whose disparity can be modulated. Transduction is a process whereby a disparity or difference is topologically and temporally restructured across some interface. It mediates different organisations of energy.' Mackenzie, Adrian. *Transductions: Bodies and Machines at Speed* (Continuum, London: 2002), footnote 3, p. 25

⁴¹ I quote this specifically and with some irony because it is found in a sound studies reader, a text meant to offer an overview and provide a map of an emergent discipline or area of study. This is also a nod to the phonographic. Pinch, Trevor. and Bijsterveld, Karin. 'Keys to the New World of Sound' in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 4.

though transducers operate on a very simple set of physical principles, they are also cultural artefacts".⁴²

Similarly, Helmreich also draws out the relationship between the disciplinary texture of sound studies with transduction offering a link between the humanities and science, a move which inadvertently works to legitimise the emergent field of study that names itself sound studies. In the same breath, Helmreich draws attention to the impulse towards the symbolic inherent in the interdisciplinarity of sound studies, an impulse that simultaneously produces an anxiety around technology while attempting to draw the technical into the fold of the disciplinary inquiry.⁴³ If we follow Helmreich's caution, we find that the productivity of a concept such as transduction is precisely the ways in which it has been deployed in that which we are calling sound studies.

Outside of the concerns and disciplines which Helmreich notes, transduction has a rich resonance in philosophy, particularly through the work of Gilbert Simondon. Through the work of Simondon, we find an understanding of transduction that is indispensable to understanding the relation between being and what Simondon calls technicity, as well as the notion of individuation.⁴⁴



It may at this point be suggestive to turn to an account of transduction as set out by Adrian Mackenzie, a scholar of technology who has drawn together several different articulations of the term towards constituting what he names as 'thinking transductively'.

⁴² Helmreich, Stefan., 'Transduction' in Novak, David, Sakakeeny, Matt (eds), *Keywords in Sound* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2015), 223

⁴³ Helmreich argues that 'the growing popularity of [transduction] is reinforced by its promise to unite the material with the semiotic, an aspiration of science and technology studies, media studies, and anthropology (at least) since the 1990s, when scholars began to worry that the symbolic and linguistic dimensions of cultural practice were eclipsing attention to the material, physical and technological world. Transduction, a term of art within the science of sound itself, has also been an appealing concept because it narrows the distance between cultural analysis and technical description, offering a conceptual language partially shared between scholars in the humanities and in engineering and science circles. Such overlapping terminology has afforded to sound studies scholars a productive complicity with the worlds they seek to describe – as well as a way to critique such worlds on something like their own terms.' *Ibid.*, 223

⁴⁴ Simondon defines transduction as follows: '[Transduction] denotes a process – be it physical, biological, mental or social – in which an activity gradually sets itself in motion, propagating within a given domain, by basing this propagation on a structuration carried out in different zones of the domain: each region of the constituted structure serves as a constituting principle for the following one, so much so that a modification progressively extends itself at the same time as this structuring operation...the transductive operation is an individuation in progress; it can physically occur most simply in the form of progressive iteration. However, in more complex domains, such as the domains of vital metastability or psychic problematics, it can move forward with a constantly variable step, and expand in a heterogeneous field.' Simondon, Gilbert. *The individual and its physico-biological genesis* (1995), 30-31, as cited in Mackenzie, Adrian. *Transductions: Bodies and Machines at Speed* (Continuum, London: 2002). 16.

Mackenzie's argument rests upon three particular theses: firstly, that technology cannot be thought outside the cultural, political, or ethical context of its technicity, secondly that technicity read via Simondon highlights the issue of how one represents the mode of existence of contemporary technical ensembles, and thirdly how it is this focus on technicity allows the posing of a range of questions pertaining to individuation and the intersection of diverse domains. By positing the concept of transduction as a mode of navigating the prevailing despair around technology — 'everyone has heard that technology will make the future better, [...] everybody has heard that it could make it a lot worse' — Mackenzie reminds us of the double bind of technology as being both immanent and inaccessible, and that we should consider technology as a 'discursive reality generated by the historical processes of modernity'.⁴⁵

Transduction — read through the likes of Simondon, Heidegger, Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler — is a way of thinking the technical object on its own terms, or to think technicity directly as Simondon would have it.⁴⁶ As Mackenzie notes:

The concept of transduction answers directly the problem of thinking about diverse interactions and resonances between the elementary technicities present in a technical ensemble. At the same time, it also extends to the emergence of resonance and coupling between diverse realities. It occurs around singular points, and it is a process that highlights *metastability* rather than stability in a given context. The problem of the technicity of a technical ensemble feeds directly into the broader problem of thinking through the conditions under which anxieties and expectations about technology arise.⁴⁷

Through Mackenzie's account of transduction, we arrive at a way of addressing some of the apprehensions that arise when encountering the technological through an acknowledgement that what we consider to be non-technical is always already technologically determined.⁴⁸ We are

⁴⁵ Ibid., x, 5

⁴⁶ Mackenzie, in what he notes is a 'drastically summarised anticipation of the consequences of [Simondon's] approach', explains what is meant by technicity as that which 'refers to a side of collectives which is not fully lived, represented or symbolised, yet which remains fundamental to their grounding, their situation and the constitution of their limits...Technicity interlaces geographic, ecological, energetic, economic and historical dimensions without being reducible to any of them'. Ibid., 11.

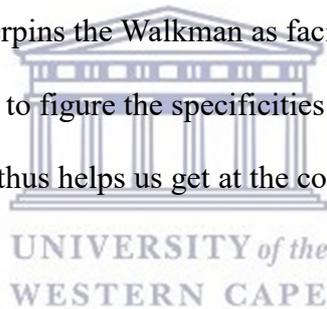
⁴⁷ Ibid., 15-16

⁴⁸ Mackenzie reads Stiegler, Derrida, and Geoffrey Bennington to suggest that 'rather than treating technology as textual, all of these deconstructive treatments suggest that textuality, discourse, meaning and life more generally, is already technical without being, for all that, technologically determined. The line they mark between the technology as discursive entity and technology as globalising ordering of communication and production is complicated, unstable and divisible.' Ibid., 6-7.

also made aware of why it is transduction might be available to an assemblage such as sound studies. Such an approach proves helpful when thinking not only the relationship between the radio and print, but more broadly what has been called the phonographic attitude.

Etchings in the Ether

Thus far, we have established that it is indeed possible to think of the voice of radio as itself an object and corroborate Whitehead's assertion that possibilities abound when utterances become things. Once we tune into the head not only as a structuring motif but more specifically as that which attaches print and radio in the perplexing relationship we observe here, we also come face-to-face with the concept of the acousmatic again. As extrapolated earlier, the acousmatic is central to a reading of both the whistle and shout of the previous chapter as fashioning specific listening techniques, as well as that which underpins the Walkman as facilitating the head as resonating chamber.⁴⁹ It is also that which comes to figure the specificities of a sonic experience brought about by the advent of the phonograph, and thus helps us get at the concept of the phonographic that weaves its way through this project.



One text that might help bridge the gap between radio and the print as well as allow us to get (a)head in terms of thinking a phonographic attitude that is the major provocation of this dissertation, is Theodor Adorno's "Radio Physiognomics" of which John Mowitt grants us an attentive reading in two particular texts. The first is a return to "Avuncular Listening", where Mowitt draws out the arguments made by Adorno in relation to film and the remediation of radio in *The Unsuspected*. Here, Mowitt deploys Adorno to address the ways in which the aforementioned modes/types of listening unfold within the film under analysis. In order to arrive at the particularities of the radio voice, Mowitt foregrounds Adorno's assertion that the self-determining nature of the voice we ascribe to radio belongs *to* radio because of its function 'as a filter for every sound'. This filter, Mowitt goes on to argue, produces the radio as a bodily experience, one 'is a

⁴⁹ An attendant question here would be what happens to Whitehead's dead bodies when the resonating chamber explodes, as with the case of Bheki Mlangeni.

voice that is, as it were, inside our heads, or at least in our ears, and as such it seems to hail listeners as "owner-victims"...addressed by relatives who are not our parents.⁵⁰

The second text which helps us get at radio more specifically is *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception*, where Mowitt offers a reading of Adorno as part of a larger project attending to what it is that we call radio studies.⁵¹ This text also helps us to get at physiognomy with more intensity, which bodes well for how we might think of the pile of heads and its transductive connotations. Before turning to Mowitt, a reading of what Adorno calls the 'illusion of closeness' and its centrality to both Mowitt's argument about spectrality as well as the argument pursued here around proximity and being in two places at once is necessary. Adorno unpacks an assertion by Robert Havighurst that the closeness produced by radio where 'direct impressions of a speaker's personality' can be formed 'makes the listener feel that he is actually present at the place where the broadcast originates — or purports to originate' as that which is caught up in the technicity of the radio itself, an argument that returns us to Fickers' arguments around the loudspeaker and one that mirrors Mowitt's emphasis on the familial and familiar.⁵²

Such a move allows us to rethink remediation and transduction, as well as how we might think the print and radio together. Adorno's emphasis of the 'illusion of closeness' is not so much about proximity as it is about transduction; in a sense the collapsing of immediacy is what produces the presence of the 'radio voice' proper, whether it be in a dedications programme or a drypoint

⁵⁰ This formulation leads Mowitt to posit via Claude Levi-Strauss, structural anthropology, the maternal uncle, and kinship the notion of 'avuncular listening'; 'a mode of listening that listens to the radio voice as such, that hears not only the victimising approach of the uncle, but that listens for the rivalrous circuit of watching listening from within a film itself designated as "the unsuspected"'. Mowitt, John. 'Avuncular Listening: *The Unsuspected*' in *Semiotic Inquiry*, 29, 2-3 (2009), 93.

⁵¹ Mowitt, John. *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception* (University of California Press, 2011).

⁵² Adorno argues that 'the 'illusion of closeness' is as intimately associated with the 'radio voice' as the subject matter of radio physiognomics. The obvious reason for this illusion of a speaking radio is that the listener directly faces the apparatus instead of the man who is playing or speaking. Thus the visible tool becomes the bearer and the impersonation of the sound whose origin is invisible. No matter how easily this experience may be corrected by the slightest afterthought, it still may very possibly affect our relation to radio much more deeply than most people realise. Attributing the sound of the radio to the real, present radio set may make people who are not concentrating attentively forget the unreality of what they are hearing. Thus they may be inclined to believe that anything offered by the 'radio voice' is real, because of this 'illusion of closeness'. This voice can dispense with the intermediary, objectivating stage of printing which helps to clarify the difference between fiction and reality. It has a testimonial value: radio, itself, said it.' Adorno, Theodor. 'Radio Physiognomics', in *Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory* (Polity Press, 2009), 47

etching.⁵³ It would seem that the head may be more of a technical sounding object than the loudspeaker, the megaphone, the tripod and the camera as they appear in Kentridge's work. To return to the border with 'fond memories', or rather, to return to border sound, recalls sublimation as much as it does the activity of listening to radio. This, I would argue, is precisely why the print *Casspirs Full of Love* imprints on us a sense of the radiophonic, and why it is it *feels* like a broadcast.

Even more so in a time of war.



⁵³ In a return to the acousmatic in *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception*, Mowitt is especially suggestive, arguing that 'in other words, what the radio *is* includes the irreducible acousmatic character of what lies behind it, the missing subject whose absence is compensated for in the listener's attribution of voice to the radio. Because this very dimension of radio arises only in reflection, it is otherwise essentially unconscious; indeed, it is through this unconsciousness that the human and radio belong to each other.' Mowitt, John. *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception*, (University of California Press, 2011), 35.

Chapter 4: Discipline

Reappearance

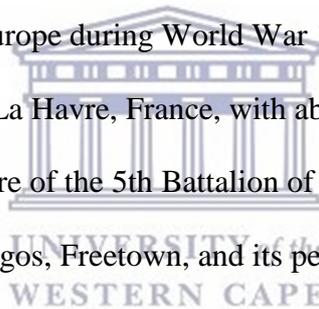
In the preceding chapters, the major concerns have been to show how it is the question of sound has implicitly appeared in particular technological infrastructures – the Walkman, the whistle or shout, the radio show – that are the concern of South African historical writing as well as being objects caught up in a history of war in South Africa. In doing so, I have drawn attention to the concept of war that permeates these readings and how such a conception invites us to consider warring motifs as central to the work of military historiography and broader historical writing but also how these motifs contribute to how that historiography produces its subject. In this chapter, I wish to turn to an instance that has become iconic in the history of South African history and its place in a global imaginary, particularly one concerned with war. The narrative relates to the sinking of the SS *Mendi*, and its memorialisation. Critical for our purposes is the ways in which its commemoration is forced to encounter an object that returns, namely the ship's bell, and how its return as a chrono-technical sound object invites us to consider the *time* of war as that which has evaded military historiography. By tracking the unfolding of debates surrounding the formation of a labour contingent in the First World War, the question of militarisation during apartheid's states of emergency, and the transformation of the South African National Defence Force in the mid-1990s, I suggest that what disciplines the figure of the infantryman in South African military historiography is war-time.

Slightly more than a century after the sinking of the South African troopship SS *Mendi* (*Mendi*), the bell of the sunken was anonymously left at Swanage Pier in southern Britain (about 56 kilometers from the wreck that was discovered in the 1970s) for BBC TV personality Steve Humphrey to 'discover' on 15 June 2017.¹ Thought to have been recovered from the wreck in or around 1980, the bell was found wrapped in plastic inside a tarpaulin sack secured with string and

¹ For a video of the actual 'discovery' by Steve Humphrey, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPwjKWXckdQ>

tape. A letter attached noted the historical importance of the bell for South African heritage and expressed the fear that if given to anyone other than Humphreys, it might fall into the wrong hands. The wreck itself was declared a War Grave by the British Ministry of Defense in 2009, and is a Protected Place under the UK Protection of Military Remains Act of 1986.² The donor may have left it anonymously for this very reason, in that it is a criminal offence to remove anything or damage the wreck.³ Steve Humphrey noted that he would prefer that the bell to be returned to South Africa so that the descendants of those who died aboard the *Mendi* might hear it.⁴

In what is often referred to as the greatest maritime disaster in South African history, on the morning of 21 February 1917 the *Mendi* was struck by the Royal Mail cargo ship *SS Darro* (*Darro*) off the southern coast of Great Britain.⁵ The *Mendi* was a converted passenger steamship half the size of the *Darro* chartered by the British Ministry of Transport, and was used to transport members of the SANLC, to the war effort in Europe during World War 1. The *Mendi* had left Cape Town on the 16th of January 1917, en route to La Havre, France, with about 860 personnel on board. Amongst those on board, 823 men were of the 5th Battalion of the South African Native Labour Contingent.⁶ Having made stops in Lagos, Freetown, and its penultimate stop in Plymouth on



² Kelly Munro notes the following: 'The Wessex Archaeology Desk based assessment of the *Mendi*, commissioned by English Heritage in 2007, mentioned the bell's existence and noted that "according to Admiral Söderland (SA Navy retired) the bell of the *Mendi* is reported to be in a pub somewhere on the south coast", but there was no verification of this assertion. The salvage of the bell was simply a rumour without confirmation (see pg 70 of the Wessex report). Söderland's story would fit with the rediscovery of the *Mendi* bell in Swanage. The bell could have been removed any time between 1974 and 2007 but, as a highly desirable object, it is more likely to have been taken by a diver fairly early after the identification of the wreck.' Munro, Kelly. 'The Brass Bell of the *SS Mendi* has been returned!', 19 June 2017. Accessed at <http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/brass-bell-ss-mendi-has-been-returned> on 11 February 2018.

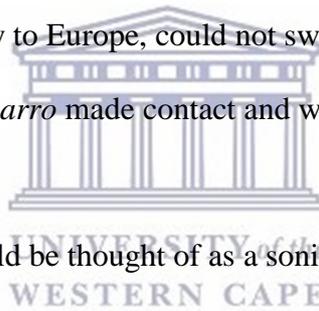
³ Szabo, Chris. 'SS *Mendi* bell recovered after 100 years', 19 June 2017, accessed at http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48220:ss-mendi-bell-recovered-after-100-years&catid=32:military-art-a-science&Itemid=112 on 10 February 2018. See also other reports, such as Morris, Michael. 'SS *Mendi*'s bell surfaces', 17 June 2017, accessed at <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/ss-mendis-bell-surfaces-9827949> on 10 February 2018, and 'SS *Mendi*: WW1 shipwreck's bell 'recovered' in Swanage', 15 June 2017, accessed at <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-hampshire-40293225> on 10 February 2018.

⁴ Humphrey also notes that the 'best place for it would be the South African parliament'. Szabo, Chris., 'SS *Mendi* bell recovered after 100 years', 19 June 2017, accessed at http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48220:ss-mendi-bell-recovered-after-100-years&catid=32:military-art-a-science&Itemid=112 on 10 February 2018.

⁵ The story of the *Mendi* is one that is well known, and the number of retellings of the event are many. As such, I have focused on one account of the event from and have clarified and specified any other information through footnotes.

⁶ Gribble, John and Scott, Graham. *We Die Like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi* (Historic England, 2016), 84, 87.

February 18th, the *Mendi* waited for the fog and German submarine activity to subside before leaving for France on the 20th of February at 4:30pm. Just before 5am on the 21st of February, the *Mendi* was struck by the *Darro*. Travelling at what was called a 'dangerously high speed in thick fog' close to the Isle of Wight, the 11,000 ton *Darro* collided at a speed of 14 knots with the *Mendi*'s starboard quarter, severely breaching the troopship's forward hold, where many sleeping men would have been awoken by the loud bang that tore a 6m hole in its side.⁷ Having not noticed the oncoming ship due to the *Darro* failing to sound its horn – a legal requirement in inclement weather and during times of war – the collision meant that the *Mendi* sank in 20 minutes. The resultant tragedy took 616 South African troops (of which 607 were black troops of the South African Native Labour Contingent) and 30 crew members. Those who were not below deck died due to hypothermia and subsequent drowning exacerbated by the fact that many, having not seen or encountered the sea before the journey to Europe, could not swim. Most of the losses are said to have occurred in the hold where the *Darro* made contact and where most of the men lay sleeping when the impact occurred.



The bell of the SS *Mendi* should be thought of as a sonic object that produces a sense of time which we can name war-time. It also signifies an aspect of war unaccounted for in military historiography. The sonicity – or chrono-technical sound knowledge – of the bell produces a kind of listening because of its relation to time, a kind of listening we might name as a form of discipline or regulation of time. Because of the proximity produced by this kind of object and its return, I would argue that the bell might be the most appropriate object for responding to the question how it is the time of war in the context of South Africa has been 'disciplined' as well as what it means to inhabit that kind of discipline both inside and outside the terms of military historiography. Through its return as a missing object, the bell produces a certain temporality that is dependent upon its technicality and its sonicity, and that forces us to think with war-time. In other words, what the

⁷ Grundlingh records a hole of 20 metres wide and 20 metres long. Grundlingh, Albert. 'Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering the SS Mendi Disaster, 1917-2007', in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2011), 20. Gribble, John and Scott, Graham. *We Die Like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi* (Historic England, 2016), 95.

death drill cannot provide (and consequently what the bell does provide) is an experience of war-time as a problem for military historiography and for how we think what we call war in South African historiography.⁸ We are invited to think about time and war rather differently when we approach the event of the Mendi through the bell as belliphonic timepiece.

The Death Drill

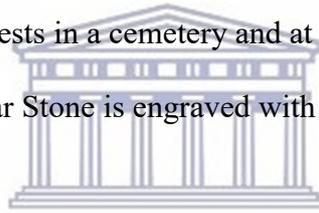
For many years after the tragic loss of the servicemen aboard the *Mendi*, its tale persisted, imbued at times with honour and bravery, but also marked by convergent histories of colonialism, apartheid, and race. To say that the story has captured the imagination of many is an understatement, as it figures in multiple reinterpretations, retellings and reinvocations, and as the historian Albert Grundlingh suggests, while 'the grim details are easily verifiable, the subsequent afterlife of the incident is more complex'.⁹ In the literary its story has not only been re-imagined most recently by Fred Khumalo's *Dancing the Death Drill*, but is also the inspiration for a play by Lara Foot titled *Did We Dance: Ukutshona ko Mendi*, which adapts a book which details the contribution of black servicemen by Norman Clothier titled *Black Valour*.¹⁰ In the field of visual art, a painting depicting the tragedy in heavy seas titled *The Loss of the Mendi* by Hilary Graham is held by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum of Art in Port Elizabeth (figure 1). The ship and its tragic sinking has also been used as the name for South Africa's highest award for courage, *The Order of the Mendi Decoration for Bravery* and two ships in the South African Navy bear witness to the event in their names. These are the *SAS Isaac Dyobha* and the *SAS Mendi*. It has also been the subject of a documentary film by Marion Edmunds titled *Troopship Tragedy*, following South African

⁸ Its temporality stretches further that its technicality however, in the ways in which it figures in the memorialisation of the event of the sinking of the SS Mendi. The bell, even though it marks the return of the event into popular memory, is not the object invoked in remembering the sinking of the Mendi. Rather, the death drill becomes that locus around which the event is memorialised.

⁹ Grundlingh, Albert. 'Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering the SS Mendi Disaster, 1917-2007', in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2011), 20.

¹⁰ See Clothier, Norman. *Black Valour: The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918, and the sinking of the Mendi*. (Univ of Natal Pr, 1987), and August, Tyrone. 'The brave men who danced to their death' in *Cape Times*, 28 February 2012.

playwright Zwai Mgijima into the Eastern Cape to collect a dung smeared stick from the kraal of Chief Hendry Bokleni of Nyandeni (who also perished on the *Mendi*) and then to the site of the *Mendi*'s wreck, where it is dropped into the ocean in a symbolic gesture to 'bring the ancestors home'. The film begins with Mgijima travelling to New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, to visit one of the many formal monuments to the *Mendi*. Another film, titled *Let Us Die Like Brothers*, has been produced in 2006 by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the History Channel, and in the South African Maritime Museum in Cape Town, an exhibition on the *Mendi* complete with a reconstructed WW1 lifeboat retells the story amongst models of cruise vessels from the early 20th century. Outside of South Africa, the men of the *Mendi* are remembered in the United Kingdom and France. At war cemeteries such as Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton in the U.K., the names of those who have no known graves appear, and 13 other men who died aboard the *Mendi* lay in graves across Britain. In France, one rests in a cemetery and at Arques La Bataille War Cemetery where 260 men are buried, a Great War Stone is engraved with the following words:



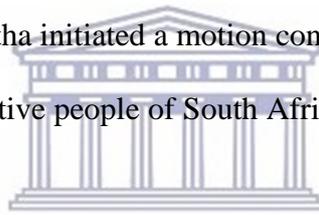
To the memory of those Natives of the South African Native Labour Corps who crossed the seas in response to the call of the great Chief, King George V, and who laid down their lives in France for the British Empire during the Great War 1914 – 1918, this Memorial is erected by their comrades.¹¹

The event is also commemorated at the Delville Wood Museum on the Somme in France. In South Africa, outside of the memorial in New Brighton, several other structures commemorate the maritime disaster, alongside several roads that also bear the name *Mendi*. A memorial in Atteridgeville, Pretoria remembers those who disappeared at sea, while another is located close to the Rosebank Showgrounds (now located on the campus of the University of Cape Town) where the men of the South African Native Labour Contingent were billeted before travelling aboard the *Mendi*. Another memorial sits at the Avalon Cemetery in Soweto. In the Maritime Museum at

¹¹ This memorial was installed by the Nationalist government in 1984 amidst growing international disdain for apartheid and a sullied global image of South Africa. Note the use of 'chief' and 'comrades', words that draw attention both to legacies of indirect rule as well as the language of counter-insurgency and communism.

Bembridge on the Isle of Wight in the UK, close to where the *Mendi* sank, the bridge telegraph from the ship can be seen.

On the day of the *Mendi*'s sinking, only 267 survived (195 black privates, two white officers, and 10 non-commissioned officers). The *Darro* survived the collision but provided no support to the *Mendi* in the moment of impact and during its subsequent sinking, refusing to engage and lower its lifeboats in aid. After the incident at a formal inquiry, the conduct of the captain of the *Darro* (Henry Winchester Stump) was found to be 'inexcusable' and that the *Darro*'s speed and navigation was not executed with 'proper and seamanlike care'.¹² Despite this, Stump would be exonerated, having only to suffer a suspension of his master's certificate for a year, defying expectations that his license would be cancelled. Two weeks after the incident, South Africa learned of the *Mendi*'s sinking. On 7 March 1917 the names of the dead and the survivors were confirmed, and Prime Minister General Louis Botha initiated a motion conveying parliament's sadness, noting that 'if we ever lived in times when native people of South Africa have shown great and true loyalty, it is in time like the present':¹³



Ever since the war broke out the natives have done everything possible in the struggle without doing anything which was in conflict with their loyalty to the flag and the King. It has never happened in the history of South Africa, Mr Speaker, that in one moment, by one fowl swoop, such a lot of people have perished, and, Mr Speaker, I think that where people have died in the way they have done, it is our duty to remember that where people have come forward of their own accord, of their own free will...and what they have done will redound to their everlasting credit. I will, therefore, move as an unopposed motion: That this House has learned with deep regret of the sad loss of life of members of the South African Native Labour Contingent, caused by the collision and sinking of the transport SS *Mendi* on 21 February 1917, and resolves to record an expression of its sincere sympathy with the relatives of the deceased officers, NCOs and men of the bereavement.¹⁴

At the time of writing, the temporary home of the bell is at SeaCity Museum in Southampton, close to where some of the men who died on the ship are buried. Britain's 'Receiver of Wreck' who is responsible for maritime wreck and salvage oversight has noted that the 'resonance' of the bell as it

¹² Gribble, John and Scott, Graham. *We Die Like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi* (Historic England, 2016), 106.

¹³ Petition to King George V, from the South African Native National Congress, 16 December 1918, accessed at <http://www.anc.org.za/content/petition-king-george-v-south-african-native-national-congress> on 12 February 2018.

¹⁴ *Centenary Retrospective: Sinking of the SS Mendi 1917 - 2017*, brochure published by The South African Delville Wood Commemorative Museum Trust, 2017, 15.

pertains to South African history would be a determining factor in where it ends up or what happens to the bell.¹⁵ The bell was 'discovered' soon after centenary celebrations in South Africa and in the UK, with numerous ceremonies taking place at some of the burial sites in the UK, a wreath laying ceremony at sea at the site of the sinking and a commemorative academic conference at the University of Cape Town. The provenance of the bell, its history, and the timing of its discovery is crucial for its invocation here and elsewhere, as Kelly Munro explains in a discussion of the find:

We would like to know something about what the experts in art and antiques call the provenance of the item. The ship's bell is perhaps the most significant artefact of the Mendi. Its find is rightly celebrated. It is extraordinary when the search has been on for at least four decades. According to John Gribble, the archaeologist who has researched the Mendi, the bell "looks right" for its time, material and size. 2017 is the centenary year of the tragedy of the sinking of the Mendi and it is particularly significant that the bell should be "found" in this commemorative year. However, the return of the Mendi's bell raises all sorts of questions about salvage, the morality and legality of removing objects from wrecks, the legal points about ownership and diving rights, what happens to artefacts when a wreck is declared an official war grave and what happens to salvage taken before the declaration of a war grave.¹⁶

Beyond concerns about legality, the bell itself is equally important simply as an object. Hours on a ship are not the same as hours spent on land and the bell is used to demarcate this 'sea' time for the purposes of determining watches and other duties for crew aboard. Thus, the bell of a ship serves as more than just a marker of time, but also as that which produces a specific disciplining temporality aboard a ship, and in particular within the time of war as is observed in the case of the *Mendi*. It is also an object which is crucial to maritime archaeology. It is often said that the ship's bell is the most coveted object to recover from a wreck because the name of the vessel would be inscribed on the bell and thus it is used to identify a sunken ship. A ship's bell holds an almost mythic presence aboard a vessel, as Steve Humphrey explains:

Asked why ship's bells were so important, [Humphrey] said they are known as the "beating heart of a ship" because hours, changes of the duty watch, which do not coincide with normal hours, are struck on the bell. Ship's bells are also used in foggy conditions and when

¹⁵ Receiver of Wreck Alison Kentucky noted that "One of the main functions of the Receiver of Wreck is to determine legal ownership of recovered wreck material. We are therefore in the process of determining who has a legal right to this bell. We do have some information on that already and I would hope that ownership can be confirmed relatively soon." Morris, Michael., 'Mendi bell's fate to be decided', 24 June 2017. Access at <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/mendi-bells-fate-to-be-decided-9953386> on 11 February 2018.

¹⁶ Munro, Kelly. 'The Brass Bell of the SS Mendi has been returned!', 19 June 2017. Accessed at <http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/brass-bell-ss-mendi-has-been-returned> on 11 February 2018.

dignitaries are taken on board. This can also be done with pipes. There is a large amount of lore associated with ships' bells. Nowadays, the bells are often recorded and played through a loudspeaker system on large ships, but ships still keep their bells as an important part of maritime and naval lore. One example is the ringing of 16 bells on New Year's Eve – by the youngest member of the crew, eight bells for the Old Year, and eight bells for the New. (Eight bells meaning "noon", the highest number in the naval watch system.) If a sailor has died, he or she can be honoured by the striking of "eight bells" representing the end of his/her watch. An interesting tradition of the Royal Navy – a custom kept by the South African Navy – is that a member of the ship's company is christened in the upturned ship's bell.¹⁷

In 2015, two years before the unexpected appearance of the actual bell of the *Mendi*, another bell had been commissioned in commemoration of the tragedy. This new bell, hanging in the Port Elizabeth Campanile in the Port Elizabeth Harbour in the Eastern Cape in South Africa, was commissioned as part of the rehabilitation of the building by the Nelson Mandela Development Agency. It was manufactured by the same company who had made the 23 bells that hang in the Campanile since 1936, then a project funded by the descendants of the British settlers who arrived on South Africa's south-eastern coast in 1820. At almost 52 metres in height, the Campanile tower is a monument proposed around the time of the 1920 centenary celebrations of the arrival of the settlers in 1820. At the time of their installation the bells that hang in its belfry were noted by their manufacturers as 'the finest carillon of bells ever turned out before for sweetness of tone and volume...there is not another in the world like it in that respect'.¹⁸ The official website for tourism in the area echoes this statement as well as emphasizing its memorializing function, noting that 'the Campanile contains the largest carillon of bells in the country in addition to its chiming clock [and] when it's song time, the tower tops ring out with a carillon of the original 23 bells, conjuring nostalgic cries of history'.¹⁹ The two new bells were constructed in honour of the *Mendi* in conjunction with additional inscriptions in Afrikaans and isiXhosa on some of the original bells.

¹⁷ Szabo, Chris., 'SS Mendi bell recovered after 100 years', 19 June 2017, accessed at http://www.defencweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48220:ss-mendi-bell-recovered-after-100-years&catid=32:military-art-a-science&Itemid=112 on 10 February 2018.

¹⁸ Smith Bodill, Tennyson., 'A Short History of Port Elizabeth's famous Campanile', 2 August 2016, accessed at <http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/short-history-port-elizabeths-famous-campanile> on 3 March 2018.

¹⁹ Campanile Memorial, Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism, accessed at https://www.nmbt.co.za/listing/campanile_memorial.html on 3 March 2018.

We recall that one of the vessels in the South African Navy was named *SAS Isaac Dyobha*, and in the retelling of the story of the sinking of the *Mendi* in 1917, its namesake looms large. It is said that as the *Mendi* sunk to its final resting place, during panic on the deck of the ship, a certain Reverend Isaac Wachope Dyobha called out to the men with the following invocation which has become the defining anecdote structuring retellings of the tragedy:

Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die... but that is what you came to do... Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers. Swazis, Pondos, Basutos, we die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries, brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies.²⁰

Dyobha led men in a death drill aboard the ship as it disappeared into the waters of the English Channel, and in many instances, it is the death drill that has become the iconic moment which the event and subsequent reorientations of it hinge upon. The literary too makes a claim on the *Mendi* through the death drill. In a narrative that aims to respond to the broad historical sweep of James Mitchener's *The Covenant*, Fred Khumalo's *Dancing the Death Drill* tracks the life of a South African soldier.²¹ Beginning with the figure of an Algerian waiter in a Parisian restaurant, the novel traces the genesis of a murder to a moment of betrayal that occurred as the *Mendi* sank in the waters of the English Channel. The protagonist Jean-Jacques Henri is also Pitso Motuang, a South African who disavows his given name Roelof De La Rey and is the progeny of a disgraced Boer general who abandoned his station during the South African War of 1899-1902. The novel recreates for the reader a glimpse into this history as well, reconstructing the life of Pitso's father as he leaves the war effort in the late nineteenth century, encounters the Basotho, negotiates cultural quandaries, and

²⁰ There have been no eyewitness accounts or other archival evidence that has provided substantiation for this incident ever occurring, and the moment of the death drill has largely surfaced in oral history and retellings of the story outside of academic historiography. It has been a thorn in the side of those committed to an empirical historicist account of the event. I will develop this question in more detail later in this chapter.

²¹ Khumalo, Fred., *Dancing the Death Drill* (Umuzi, 2017). The characters in Mitchener's novel are each set in a specific period of South African history, beginning with the Dutch colonial period and ending in the 1970s, and attempts to account for the viewpoint of every population grouping as defined by apartheid legislation. Tracking the conflicts and interactions between these groups over time, the characters in Mitchener's novel are led along a historical trajectory that attempts to account for the inconsistencies of settler colonial historiography. The novel fails at this attempt, producing what can only be called a literary tome of reverence for that very historiography. See Mitchener, James. *The Covenant* (Random House, 1980).

eventually elopes with Matshiliso, the daughter of the chief of the village in which Roelof De La Rey has found himself. Disowned by his family, Pitso's father leaves Matshiliso and young Pitso to fend for themselves in Bloemfontein. In an effort to navigate racial politics at the time as a person who would be called a 'coloured' and to avoid a repeat of his father's sins, Pitso joins the war effort in 1916 and travels abroad the *Mendi*.²² Being one of the few who survive the unfortunate events of 21 February 1917, he then travels to Dieppe in France where he is employed in many instances as a translator and mediator of conflict in the camps where the South African Native Labour Contingent is stationed. After a series of unfortunate events during World War 1 emerging from the event that is the demise of the *Mendi* – including an attack on a certain officer at a hearing – the protagonist escapes the camp and later finds himself under a new name and a new identity in France, and eventually ends up working as a waiter at a restaurant in Paris.

The narrative hinges on its opening salvo: an unprecedented violent act in the Parisian restaurant is figured as an outburst of latent anger harboured from a betrayal as the *Mendi* sank. In the restaurant, Jean-Jacques encounters the figure of Officer Haig, a character who had refused lifeboat access to many black soldiers as the *Mendi* sank and who sits at the centre of an unspoken conspiracy that weaves its way in and out of the narrative. This conspiracy that draws on the account of the captain of the *Darro* who refused help to the *Mendi* because it had black soldiers aboard is represented by the character of Officier Haig. This opening scene draws the reader into the recounting of the story of Pitso through Jerry Moloto, who is an artist approached by a journalist for more information on that very violent outburst. The SS *Mendi* and the moment that comes to be associated with it – the dancing of the death drill as the ship sank– is immortalised in the novel by Fred Khumalo not only through its title, but in the ways in which the death drill becomes the core temporal narrative device through which the novel attempts to work through the tragic circumstances of the sinking of the SS *Mendi* in 1917. Not only does the novel attempt to account for the men who died that fateful morning in February of 1917, it also reconstructs the moment of

²² The term coloured is one used to demarcate those of mixed ancestry and are a population group who within the structures of apartheid were often seen as higher in the racial hierarchy than African populations.

Reverend Isaac Dyobha inviting the men to embrace their destiny and to dance their way to their death. Although Dyobha is not a prominent figure in the novel, he is portrayed as a large, foreboding and somewhat elusive one. Perhaps this is Khumalo's way of addressing the debate in historiography and public history surrounding the accuracy and plausibility of the actual death drill. In the moment when the death drill on the ship is recalled in the novel, the anxiety of the protagonist is evident:

Pitso shouted in all the major languages of the ship, 'Reverend! *Mfundisi!* *Moruti!* We need to get on the rafts! Are you out of your mind, standing there like that? There's no Jesus here. Save yourselves! Release those men! The ship is sinking!' In his thunderous preaching voice, Reverend Dyobha cried, 'Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do...' Somebody screamed. Somebody shouted. Somebody wailed.²³

The narrative is replete with moments of cultural dissonance where Roelof relinquishes his father's given name in favour of his mother's, navigates racial politics both in South Africa both abroad and aboard the *Mendi*, and resists the classification of 'coloured' and all the privileges that come with it.²⁴ Similarly, the large arc of the event draws to a close with the ending of the novel, a moment where Jean-Jacques must face a court for the murder of Officer Haig in the restaurant. Upon entry into the courtroom, Jean-Jacques Henri/Pitso Motuang/Roelof De La Rey embarks upon a death drill, marking a relation between the juridical, death, and rhythm that has come to figure not only the event of the sinking of the SS *Mendi*, but also, to echo Adam Sitze, a post-apartheid sensibility in its figuring of the tragic through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.²⁵ We are reminded of Steenkamp's desire for a South African soldier born out of many parts, and it is perhaps in this sense that Pitso might be hailed by Khumalo to present a post-apartheid subjectivity as if it had

²³ Khumalo, Fred. *Dancing the Death Drill* (Umuzi, 2017), 207.

²⁴ The protagonist is forced to attend a 'coloured' school in Bloemfontein, and arguably it is his estrangement from his racial heritage that leads him to join the SANLC. Ibid.

²⁵ I have discussed this at length in Chapter 1. What Sitze draws out of the contradictions surrounding Diceyan jurisprudence, indemnity/amnesty, and the disciplining function of transitional justice, is a modality of the tragic that dominates and figures both how we talk about truth commissions and the ways in which they themselves speak. Put differently, truth commissions must invoke the tragic in order for amnesty – or, indemnity as in a colonial context – to take hold both as a juridical form and a societal good. Tragedy, as it were, becomes a poetics of indemnity that has a much longer genealogy intimately connected to colonial discourses of power. Sitze, Adam. *The Impossible Machine: A Genealogy of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press) 2013.

always been latent, waiting to be sounded, or rather, awakened.²⁶ This subject must be called to action through the death drill as tragic structure but also as that which disciplines time. When the death drill is called upon by the protagonist at the court hearing, it is expressed with considerably more confidence and conviction:

'I am dancing my death drill. No one can take it away from me. This death drill is my truth. They made me leave my spear, my shield, back home those many years ago. So I am going to fight with my words, turn my words into bullets. This dance is my history, my heritage, my story that they tried to suppress. This is my death drill, my dance of death, my dance of truth.' Like the men on the *Mendi*, he danced, the rhythmic slamming of feet gaining momentum with each movement. Slam-slam! Slam-slam!²⁷

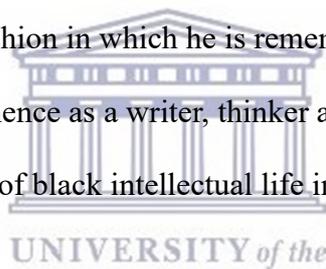
Pitso must not only come to terms with the way in which the sinking of the *Mendi* is remembered through the narrative device of the death drill, but also the ways in which he must appeal to the tragic so that he be granted any sort of historical significance. This may be why the reader is informed prior to Pitso's appearance in the courtroom, that he had just received confirmation that his biography would be published and 'his story told'.

There are other ways in which the death drill emerges as the locus around which the retellings and memorialisation of the event centres. It is here that we encounter the problem of wartime for military historiography, and in the ensuing story of the death drill and Dyobha we can observe the event's entrance onto the stage of history as one that is inevitably tied to histories of early African nationalism. Similarly, we notice a narrative saturated with tones of the heroic and the tragic. These are tones we also find in the act of the death drill and its reiterations. In John Gribble and Graham Scott's *We Die Like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi* (a book commissioned by the British governmental heritage organisation Historic England on the eve of the centenary of the event and another example of the memorialisation of the event), a biographic sketch of Dyobha and the emergence of the infamous anecdote of the death drill is offered. Dyobha's world was 'the world

²⁶ This becomes particularly evident if we consider the war memoir as a specific literary motif in post-apartheid South Africa, and the fact that many of these memoirs offer a recollection of experiences of the border war and the SADF. There exists a large literature on this topic, and Khumalo intervenes in this discourse through producing a 'memoir' of a black soldier.

²⁷ Khumalo, Fred. *Dancing the Death Drill* (Umuzi, 2017), 335.

of flux and change', as Gribble and Scott note, highlighting the fact that at the time of his birth in Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape, the Eighth Frontier War was well underway and the events and aftermath of the cattle-killing and the prophecy of Nongqawuse in 1856-7 was soon to come.²⁸ Four months before Dyobha's birth in 1852, the famous *HMS Birkenhead* en route with troop reinforcements and weapons to serve that very colonial war sank off the southern coast, giving rise to the maritime tradition of women and children first in the event of a sinking ship.²⁹ Reference is also made to the increasing Christianisation of the Xhosa in the years preceding Dyobha, underscoring the changes that Xhosa society had been undergoing in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in its encounter with settler colonialism.³⁰ In foregrounding these aspects of Dyobha's life, the Reverend is rendered as a figure who was destined to be aboard a troopship like the *SS Mendi* administering the gospel to men fighting a war on behalf of empire, and equally equipped to lead the men to their death in the iconic fashion in which he is remembered to have done. He is also given his education and public prominence as a writer, thinker and activist during his life as a figure who is included in a larger genealogy of black intellectual life in South Africa.³¹ The authors track



²⁸ See Peires, Jeffrey B. *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-killing Movement of 1856-7*. (Indiana University Press, 1989), Peires, Jeffrey B. "'Soft' Believers and 'Hard' Unbelievers in the Xhosa Cattle-Killing." *The Journal of African History* 27, no. 3 (1986): 443-461, Peires, Jeffrey B. *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence*. (Univ of California Press, 1982).

²⁹ In fact, the authors go so far as to suggest that what prompted the emergence of the myth or fiction of the death drill was precisely the conflation of the similar histories of the *Birkenhead* and the *Mendi*, both of which were troopships, but more importantly, both of which share a story of men drawing together on deck: 'Like the *Mendi*, the *Birkenhead* was carrying troops and, again, like the *Mendi*, it sank very quickly. When it became clear that the *Birkenhead* was lost, the women and children aboard were put into the available boats. To avoid a rush on the boats, the officer commanding the troops ordered them to form up on the deck and they stood together in their ranks as the ship sank, taking most of them with it.' It is interesting to note that Timothy Stapleton, a scholar I mentioned earlier in relation to military historiographies and the question of veldcraft, has too intervened in the debate around the *Birkenhead* and the Xhosa Chief Maqoma in the work that he has done on the history of the Eastern Cape. Gribble, John and Scott, Graham. *We Die Like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi* (Historic England, 2016), 121, 129.

³⁰ Extensive reference is made to the effects of the Frontier Wars and the cattle-killing as events that catalysed a change in Xhosa society. Perhaps most interesting is the ways in which Dyobha's grandfather, Citashe is figured in this biographical sketch, and the ways in which it intersects with some of the aspects of the debate surrounding the cattle-killing and the prophecy of Nongqawuse. Gribble and Scott write: '[Dyobha's] grandfather Citashe's life was indicative of the changes that placed a growing number of Xhosas at the intercept between tradition and the encroaching influences of European colonialism. Citashe was a follower of Nxele (otherwise known as Makhanda), the influential 'war doctor' of Chief Ndlambe, who combined 'Christian millenarian thinking with the military aspirations of his people to forge a militant Xhosa nationalism.' Ibid., 122.

³¹ "Dyobha's background and education – as the third generation of a family of Christian converts – gave him a 'strong stamp of colonial culture, religion and mores'. It also gave him the confidence 'to challenge some of the iniquities of colonial rule, using its own instruments – literary schooling, the legal system [and] political organisations'. Dyobha believed that Xhosa-speakers could win an equal place for themselves in Cape colonial society and that the justness of this cause would see it triumph. Ibid., 122.

the drill through an obituary to Dyobha by celebrated Xhosa poet S.E.K Mqhayi, who also wrote a poem imploring men to enlist for the war effort:

Those who were there say the hero from Ngqika's land, descended from heroes, was standing to one side now as the ship was sinking! As a chaplain he had the opportunity to board a boat and save himself, but he didn't! He was appealing to the leaderless soldiers urging them to stay calm, to die like heroes on their way to war. We hear that he said:

Now then stay calm my countrymen! Calmly face your death!
This is what you came to do! This is why you left your homes!
Peace, our own brave warriors! Peace, you sons of heroes, today is your final day, prepare for the ultimate ford!

As he spoke he burst into his people's anthem!³²

Gribble and Scott draw attention to the ways in which Mqhayi's praise of Dyobha carries a tone that would suggest that the story of Dyobha's actions on the Mendi were commonly known at the time.

A significant amount of time is spent by the authors in coming to terms with whether the death drill occurred or whether there is any kernel of truth in a historically evidentiary sense in the recounting of Dyobha's actions. What is important for our discussion here as well as for how we might read the figure of Dyobha in the memorialisation of the *Mendi* is the conclusion that 'the story was, in the most part, a fiction, a tale created around an iconic, potentially unifying event for black South Africans, to exploit for political reasons the power of the loss of the *Mendi* and what it meant'.³³

In a further way in which the Mendi is memorialized we may detect a political rallying point in the rendering of the tragedy of the *Mendi*. After the motion of sympathy by General Louis Botha in Parliament, the black press in South Africa took it as a moment through which to imagine a South Africa without segregationist and colonial policy, arguing in many instances that the men on the *Mendi* had 'died to set us free' and that 'those who had died by drowning had given their life for the liberty of all peoples of the Empire'.³⁴ In 1919, the Mendi Memorial Club was founded by Samuel

³² Ibid., 126-7. Mqhayi also penned other poems in commemoration of the Mendi. See Dunton, Chris. "From Mqhayi to Sole: Four Poems on the Sinking of the Troopship Mendi." *Cross/Cultures* 168 (2013): 135.

³³ Ibid., 128.

³⁴ Grundlingh notes the following: 'When the news of the disaster was announced in Parliament a motion of sympathy was unanimously adopted with the unusual sight of an all-white Parliament rising to pay respect to deceased blacks. Outside of Parliament, the sinking of the Mendi elicited some heartfelt responses in the black press in South Africa.'

M. Bennet Newana, and promoted in 1928 the celebration of Mendi Day on the 21st of February, a tradition that was held up until the 1970s and more recently with the commemoration becoming National Armed Forces Day.³⁵ Mendi Day also coincided with a growth in the trade union movement and in nationalism driven by members of the South African Native National Congress, which was later to become the ANC. The figure of the Reverend loomed large here, not only in terms of the now famous Dyobha, but more specifically in the class character of those involved in the efforts to remember the tragedy and link it to ongoing struggles in South Africa. Albert Grundlingh argues that the organisational leadership structures were constituted of members of the black petty bourgeoisie, and mostly clergymen, and this affected the ways in which the *Mendi* was remembered:

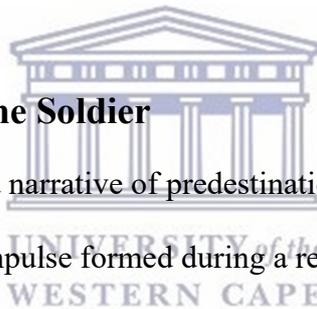
Central to this initiative was the role of the black petty bourgeoisie in providing organisational leadership. Clergymen, in particular, stood out and they dominated the various committees which were formed. Church affiliations, together with family connections, education, and ethnicity, were key elements in the social networks of the black elite and ministers of religion often assumed roles that moved well beyond religious boundaries. Given their positions of leadership, it was considered natural for them to act not only as guardians of the memories of the Mendi, but also to help shape the form and values to be associated with the historical event. In the hands of the educated elite, the Mendi project was to become part of the array of social and cultural associations through which these groups wished to express themselves in the larger centres during the 1930s: book-reading circles, debating societies, music and choral societies, drama societies and sport clubs, especially cricket and tennis. These organisations and cultural ways of self-expression had the effect of confirming identities. Those associated with the Mendi fund and annual commemorations viewed these ventures as further opportunities to enhance their claims to equality and to demonstrate that Africans too, through those who had died on the Mendi, 'placed the name of the black man in history books of the world'. The fact that this was an elite-driven initiative ensured that its shape, form, and content were also likely to reflect the preoccupations of the leadership. The concerns of the more plebeian veterans of the First World War might well have been less rarefied.³⁶

Besides lamenting the death of those on board the ill-fated ship, the newspapers also saw their demise to be of wider import in the sense that 'they have died to set us free'. Similar wishful thinking associated the tragedy with the freedom of the Empire at large and 'those who had died by drowning had given their life for the liberty of all peoples of the Empire'. Grundlingh, Albert. 'Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering the SS Mendi Disaster, 1917-2007', in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2011), 21.

³⁵ Garvey, Marcus. *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. VII: November 1927-August 1940*. Vol. 7. (Univ of California Press, 1983), 233.

³⁶ Grundlingh, Albert. 'Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering the SS Mendi Disaster, 1917-2007', in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2011), 22.

If we are to follow this historical narration, it would seem appropriate then that as a man of the cloth, Reverend Isaac Wachope Dyobha would ask the men of the *Mendi* to engage in a just war and do what they came to do when they died in the English Channel, given that the basic tenets of just war theory emerges from within the theological strictures of the Catholic church in the Middle Ages in Europe. It is also striking that the British invasion of Zululand in the 1800s was justified by a fabricated *causus belli* on the part of Sir Bartle Frere, complicating the relation between the juridical, the frontier, and the colonial administrators need to temper desires for war. It would therefore seem fitting that very eschatological impulse that comes to mark the SS Mendi's memorialisation is very much in tune with the theory which underpins the event invoked to memorialise it, and as such, it is no surprise that the day upon which the SS Mendi sank becomes National Armed Forces Day after the end of the apartheid era.



War-time, The SANLC, and The Soldier

In some sense, what comes across as a narrative of predestination regarding the figure of Dyobha and the death drill might be read an impulse formed during a reorganisation of what South Africa knows as war after the fall of apartheid and how South Africa must figure its military role in the aftermath of the previous regime's aggressive geopolitical actions.³⁷ It is also an apt moment to turn to the question of war-time, and to return to what it means to be at war. What of the notion of war-time when it is threaded through the narrative of the *Mendi* and the larger frameworks of a late cultural studies interested in the sonic and the sensory? On the one hand, war-time is called upon here as a provocation to the notion of a specific period of war and to the ways in which specifically South African military historiography has inaugurated its narratives of war. In this way, it has been attending to a set of debates around the question of a militarised society, a debate that animated not only the end of apartheid but well before, as we shall see in the South African Native Labour Contingent, which is a moment where we can see apartheid's coalescence with the liberal solution

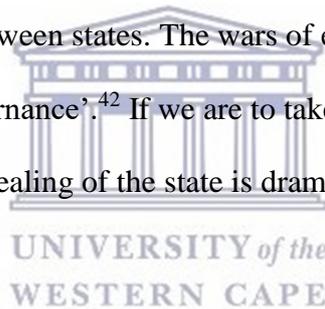
³⁷ It also goes without saying that implicit in the discussion in this chapter is the problem of what has been named the South African empire.

to the problem of the urban black subject. It is one that, I argue, is at the heart of a discourse around colonial jurisprudence and imperial war. When we invoke a state of exception as that which suspends the legal order, the question of war disrupts those neat and precise boundaries of the law, especially in the context of South Africa. On the other hand, war-time has been unreflectively deployed by military historians to naturalise and normalise the relation between the terms war and time, often suggestively connected by a hyphen, and often invoking the tragic time of the death drill, as we have seen in the narration of Dyobha and in the understanding of colonial conquest and war in the case of Steenkamp. In both cases, wartime is where a desensitisation to violence dominate, and where a reliance on a language of tactics and pragmatism is prevalent. The hyphen is important to underscore the difference between what I am calling the time of war as figured by the disciplinary apparatus of the bell as analogical to military historiography in South Africa and the actual time of war. However, they are not opposed to one another, and the time of war is also wartime in much the same sense that the bell and the drill both connote temporality, movement, and time. J. Martin Daughtry calls attention to the question of movement and stasis, of time and its unfolding, as it permeates war itself in an extension of the discussion of the belliphonic invoked earlier:

War too is all about movement. From slow-rolling vehicles to supersonic projectiles, from troops on the march to flying shrapnel, in attack and retreat, even in siege and the supposed stalemate of trench warfare – materiel, vehicles, service members, and civilians alike become meaningful wartime actors by being set into motion. The movement of people and things in wartime is often anxious, often aggressive, sometimes linear, sometimes Brownian, but always present as one of war's defining characteristics. More generally, war itself is often described as a kind of violent motion or spasm, a disturbance, an abrupt perturbation of social, political and ethical relationships. The fact that even in the best and most peaceful of times those relationships are never static does not rob war of its exceptional turbulence. Compared to combat, the 'peacetime' world appears to stand still: war is, in Paul Virilio's formulation, a timespace in which 'the static sense of the world [comes] to an incomprehensible end'. If a theoretical model for belliphonic sound is to do justice to [...] complex and kinetic listening experiences [...] then, it will need to be similarly kinetic. Models that rely on stasis will be inadequate to the task of describing the moving targets of sounds, and listening, and wartime. Belliphonic structures exist, but they do so fluidly.³⁸

³⁸ Daughtry, J. Martin. *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 36.

Like Daughtry, Mary Dudziak's reflections on contemporary U.S.A suggests that the conflation of law, politics and what we call wartime is now the only kind of time we have.³⁹ Dudziak emphasises the relation between wartime and peacetime, and how this has effects not only in the realm of law, but also on the discipline of history by considering the ways in which the onset of war marks not an event but an era that is temporary. Citing Randolph Bourne and perhaps obliquely summoning Michel Foucault, Dudziak remarks that 'it is in war that citizens see the state', and that 'it is also in war that we may witness the state in time, or that we grant the state an expanse of time: a wartime'.⁴⁰ Dudziak reminds us that the naming of a time of war both politically and legally had very different ramifications under empire, where for the British, Dudziak argues, the small wars (which are not considered wartimes but rather times of peace) were the wars of empire.⁴¹ She notes that 'the name for small wars in the British experience is the wars of empire...The laws of war traditionally focused only on wars between states. The wars of empire fell outside the law; they were instead matters of imperial governance'.⁴² If we are to take our cue from Dudziak, but also Adam Sitze's observations, such a revealing of the state is dramatically different in the exercise of imperial war.⁴³



Despite that the South African Native Labour Contingent would be deployed in the theatre of the First World War, Dudziak's assertion of the small wars of empire is an apt point of departure for thinking about how such a contingent would be configured. How can the anxiety around producing something like a native labour contingent be understood to influence what it means to partake in a war as a part of empire? What does it mean to inhabit the time of the death drill? The discussion around the soldier and the labour contingent becomes particularly important in relation to the story of the *Mendi*, where we are reluctantly reminded that black soldiers were not equipped with the firearms that would qualify and identify them soldiers as such. The South African Native Labour

³⁹ Dudziak, Mary L., *War-Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 21.

⁴⁰ Foucault here would name this progression merely the realization of a certain kind of biopolitical register that would be named state racism. *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴³ Sitze, Adam. "The Imperial Critique of Imperial War." *Filosofia politica* 25, no. 2 (2011): 315-334.

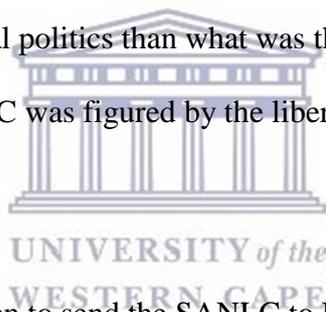
Contingent was formed precisely to deploy men *not* to fight, but to provide logistical support to the armies of Europe, and it was quite literally a reserve army of labour. They also received very little recognition upon their return, with many families in some more distant parts of South Africa not knowing that their loved ones would never return home. By figuring the black soldier of the labour contingent – who is deployed as a soldier but cannot fight – as the point at which the soldier as structuring figure in South African military historiography is complicated, we might be able to begin thinking wartime as the condition of a specific subject formation, one that is enveloped in a historicism that will seek to collapse all wartime into the tragic timeliness of the death drill. Such a figuring haunts a debate that unfolds at the end of apartheid and at the height of its military intensification, where the question of what it means to think of South Africa as a society at war is a prominent one. The subjectivity of the soldier is perhaps the locus of a retreat by military historiography to social history, a tendency that we noted in a discussion of Willem Steenkamp's work on the genesis of the South African soldier earlier, and such a retreat reveals an anxiety around how the archetypal soldier is figured.⁴⁴ Before turning to the terms of a debate that would ensue around the transformation of an apartheid military and the birth of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in 1996, we must first attend to how it is the soldier as constituted by the South African Native Labour Contingent comes to mark a relationship between military historiography, social history, and the political sensibilities that surround its formation.

In June of 1916, a contingent which would become the South African Native Labour Contingent would be suggested to the Imperial War Council, based on an expressed need for labour on the frontlines and ports in France.⁴⁵ It was not long thereafter that South African Prime Minister

⁴⁴ The recourse to social history to speak for the child that is the infantryman finds itself obliquely repeated in the memorialisation of the *Mendi*, where the voiceless souls that roam the seas are invoked as often as the whistles and shouts of the Khoi headmen that led the assault on the marauding Portuguese in 1510.

⁴⁵ The British War Office already had labour contingents drawn from both British and French civilians, or through military fatigue details, and divided into different services as per required by the war effort, such as the management of arms and munitions, food and water stores, and infrastructure related needs. Due to the sheer scale of the Great War, the British decided to bring in labour battalions from the colonies, beginning with the West Indies unit from Egypt and the Cape Coloured Labour Battalion from South Africa. Gribble, John and Scott, Graham. *We Die Like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi* (Historic England, 2016), 5-9.

and Minister of Native Affairs, General Louis Botha, took up the role of key negotiator on behalf of South Africa in the facilitation and institution of the contingent and its functions.⁴⁶ Ten thousand men were requested by the imperial authorities and arrived in La Havre, France in January of 1917. From there, members of the SANLC were dispatched to various ammunition depots across the front in France. In the camps where SANLC members were housed, segregation was enforced, amid fears of 'contamination' of both Africans and Europeans should they intermingle. In fact, it has been suggested by scholars of the period such as Brian Willan that the conditions of the SANLC in Europe was a testing ground for segregation and how it could be carried out in the attainment of certain goals pertaining to social control. It was in this way very different from the initial deployments of native labourers as seen in the German East Africa and South West Africa campaigns, coupled with the fact that labourers would be exposed to a European battlefield, which was a space with a very different racial politics than what was the norm in South Africa.⁴⁷ Willan explains the ways in which the SANLC was figured by the liberal and segregationist tendencies of the time, noting that



once the decision had been taken to send the SANLC to Europe a number of missionaries, Native Affairs Department officials and others concerned with 'the native problem' realised fairly quickly that the scheme provided an ideal opportunity for testing – in what would, it was hoped, be carefully controlled conditions – the practicability and effects of the implementation of certain segregatory devices of social control; the lessons and results of this experiment could possibly be utilised in South Africa itself. It was perceived as a test, in other words, of the efficacy of ideas that were coming increasingly to bridge the gap between hitherto rather more distinct liberal and segregationist positions. It is possible that General Botha's apparent personal enthusiasm for the raising of the SANLC owed something to his perception of the use to which the scheme could be put, and hence also the very frequent use of the terms 'experiment' or 'social experiment' that accompanied nearly every discussion of the subject.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Gribble and Scott note how uncertain Botha was in this decision, and that the fear that the British War Office would draw from their protectorates in Bechuanaland, Lesotho and Swaziland (which were important sources of labour for South Africa and thus best kept under South African control) was the deciding factor. By creating the SANLC, South Africa was also able to prescribe the conditions and hierarchy of power in such a contingent. *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 34-37.

⁴⁸ Willan, Brian P. 'The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918' in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 World War 1 and Africa (1978), 71.

The point was underscored rather boldly that the black members of the SANLC would not under any circumstances be engaged in combatant activity, and thus would not be allowed to have any weapons in their possession during their service on the front. This was, in Willan's view, 'based on the belief that if black and white were acknowledged to be fighting with and against each other on equal terms this was likely to seriously undermine the future maintenance of black/white relationships by devaluing the concept of race as an effective means of forestalling the emergence of class as an alternative, overt, basis for the organisation of social and political relations'.⁴⁹ This view found its way into law much earlier than WW1, born out of similar anxieties surrounding the role of native troops in the South African War of 1899-1902, and initially General Botha would prove reluctant to agree to the troops even travelling to the front in Europe, and refuse them guns and munitions except for those they would cart to and from military encampments.⁵⁰ Enshrined in Section 7 of the South African Defence Force Act of 1912, the fear of Africans bearing arms was one that drove their involvement in what would be a precursor to the SANLC in German controlled Namibia in 1914. This anxiety drove the delay with which the Union government came to a decision surrounding the actual deployment of the SANLC, with the first response to the War Office's request stating that 'under no condition would the Government allow a black combatant force to proceed into Europe as this would endanger white South Africa'.⁵¹

Recruiting for the SANLC faced both resistance and support from both black and white South Africans, with white South Africans fearing a labour shortage (evident in particularly strong resistance to the program from the Chamber of Mines) and black South Africans harbouring a deep distrust of the South African government. The latter is most observable in the fact that a sense of patriotism to the Crown was a driving force and rallying point not only for government recruiters of

⁴⁹ Ibid., 63.

⁵⁰ See for example, Warwick, Peter. *Black people and the South African war 1899-1902*. No. 40. (Cambridge University Press, 1983), Nasson, Bill. *Abraham Esau's war: a black South African war in the Cape, 1899-1902*. Vol. 68. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Mohlamme, Jacob Saul. "Soldiers without reward: Africans in South Africa's wars." *Military History Journal* 10, no. 1 (1995): 33-37, Warwick, Peter. *Black people and the South African war 1899-1902*. No. 40. (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁵¹ Gribble, John and Scott, Graham. *We Die Like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi* (Historic England, 2016), 24.

black South Africans but also by the educated black elite of the SANNC, with the likes of J.L Dube and S. Plaatje throwing their weight behind the cause in the hope that such loyalties would be looked upon with high regard and would improve conditions for black Africans living under colonial rule.⁵² A letter by J.L Dube to the Union government clearly portrays the loyalist stance which the predecessor to the ANC held, noting that the 'if any assistance or sacrifice is required by the government from [the SANNC] we shall be ready and willing to be on our places' and that 'in order to prove [the SANNC's] loyalty to the government, the Executive [of the SANNC] has unanimously decided to suspend all agitation against the Natives Land Act until the present unrest is over'.⁵³ Such a response was not surprising given that legislation such as the Native Land Act was at that point a very recent development. Sol Plaatje remarked that the poor response to recruiting was a result of 'the Union's method of administering native affairs' and many made the connection between the Native Land Act and the absence of men from their land as a conspiracy to take more land from black Africans.⁵⁴ The question of class mobility is also visible in these debates, with the famous statement by Plaatje that 'six months in France would teach [the recruits] more than ten years in Kimberley: it was just like a great educational institution without having to pay the fees.'⁵⁵

Militarisation and a Society at War

⁵² Ibid., 22. The SANNC was especially active in the recruitment drive, at some point offering as much as 5000 black troops for service in campaigns in German South West Africa (Namibia). See also, Nasson, Bill. "Why they fought: Black Cape colonists and imperial wars, 1899-1918." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 55-70. In relation to the Second World War, see Grundlingh, Louis. "The recruitment of South African blacks for participation in the Second World War." In *Africa and the Second World War*, (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1986), 181-203. In Chapter 5 I attend to the figure of Sol Plaatje and his relation to a political sensibility of sound that may also be a wartime of the bell rather than the death drill.

⁵³ Ibid., 22.

⁵⁴ Willan, Brian P. 'The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918' in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 World War 1 and Africa (1978), 69.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 67. Elsewhere, Plaatje would bemoan the fact that in the official casualty list that the government released to account for the dead, many families would not be notified of their dead. Plaatje, Sol T. 'Publication of the Mendi Casualty List', letter to the editor, the *Friend*, 10 March 1917, in Plaatje, Sol. Willan, Brian. (eds) *Selected Writings* (Wits University Press, 2016), 222.

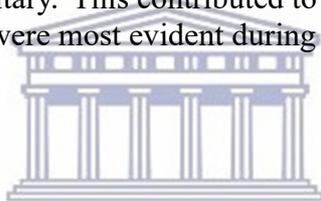
I invoke the SANLC as a way into a discussion around militarisation largely because of an impulse in military historiography after 1994 to constitute a soldier that is representative of a new democratic dispensation. It also inaugurates a discussion around the role of the military in the formulation of apartheid policy. We see in the SANLC the beginnings of a kind of tension in what it means not only to be at war. As both an event and an infrastructure of a bureaucratic and juridical relation to the imperial metropole that would influence apartheid, the SANLC introduces an uncertainty around what we would dare call a South African warfare. The scholarship that dominated a discussion on what it meant to live in a militarised state and the debate that unfolds in relation to the transformation of the military in the mid-1990s – both of which I shall discuss in more detail in what follows – share the same quandary that faced the SANLC, which is how to constitute a soldier that would have to reckon with the complex nature of war-time in South African military historiography.

Lephophotho Mashike, through interviews and archival research, offers a reading of the process of transformation in the 1990s, with a critique of initial analyses that have attempted to attribute the outcome of the process that resulted in the domination of the SADF to the numerical, technological and organisational superiority of the SADF in the moment of political transition. This is, as Mashike implicitly notes, a rather obvious and superficial observation, given the fact that not only was the SADF clearly numerically, technologically and organisationally much larger and considerably better structured than other forces (because of the factors mentioned earlier around the militarised society, but also because it was a state institution) but it was also one that would draw attention to the discourse of incorporation as opposed to a radically new formation.⁵⁶ Instead, Mashike implores us to attend to the ways in which the negotiated settlement brought with it certain compromises, which had unexpected effects upon the new defence force. A central tenet of the argument that Mashike pursues is that because the ANC was preoccupied with winning a guerrilla

⁵⁶ See for example Cawthra, Gavin., *Securing South Africa's Democracy: Defence Development and Security in Transition* (London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997), Shaw, Mark, 'Biting the Bullet: Negotiating Democracy's Defence', in *The Small Miracle: South Africa's Negotiated Settlement* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1994).

war, the organisation had not put in place a policy that would account for a military takeover under the conditions of a negotiated transition.⁵⁷ This is what caused a move of incorporation rather than a more structured reformation of the SANDF and resulted in a new defence force with the same hierarchy of management, rank, and personnel as the old one. The result of this meant that in some cases during verification and training many MK and APLA combatants would be 'demobbed', or demobilised, and would leave the SANDF. This caused significant uproar, especially when combined with accusations of contract abuse, racial tensions, and unsatisfactory conditions in terms of food and lodging.⁵⁸ Mashike notes:

The view that the ANC paid little attention to military transformation was also expressed by General Siphso Binda, who argued that 'the ANC had a political strategy, had plans and ways to deal with Constitutional matters and so on, but had no strategy to deal with the military. [There was no] military strategy although our political strategy was guided by our need to have our own people in the military.' This contributed to the number of military concessions on the part of the ANC. These were most evident during the integration process to form the SANDF.⁵⁹



In an analysis of what Mashike calls 'integration as absorption', two options are highlighted as possibilities that existed in the forming of the SANDF.⁶⁰ The first was a drastic option considering the pressures of the time, and it was to dissolve all remaining military formations in favour of the establishment of a new recruitment drive with all the necessary assessment processes. The second, which was adopted for several specific reasons, was to hold onto the existing defence force which was the South African Defence Force (hereafter referred to as the SADF) as a base upon which to

⁵⁷ Mashike, Lephophotho., 'Blacks Can Win Everything, but the Army': The 'Transformation' of the South African Military between 1994 and 2004', in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2007), 605.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 609, 611-617. See also Matloa, Abbey Oupa, 'The Formation of the SANDF: Integration Experiences of Former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei Defence Force Members' Masters thesis, University of South Africa, 2015.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 606. See also, Swart, J.A.B, 'Die Integrasie van Umkhonto We Sizwe in die Suid Afrikaanse Weermag', Masters Thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, 1993, Jordaan, Evert, 'South African Defence Since 1994: A Study of Policy-Making', Masters thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2004.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 608. It would seem this debate may have begun earlier and was marked by the very same language of inclusion. See for example, Grundy, Kenneth W. *Soldiers without politics: Blacks in the South African armed forces*. Vol. 33. (Univ of California Press, 1983).

construct the new SANDF. The reasons for this were largely driven by the demands of the context of transition, which according to the Nationalist government exhibited a great deal of political violence which the police were not able to manage alone. In addition to this, the SADF was maintained due to questions of continuity with regards to structures, rules and regulations, to guarantee SADF members' loyalty to the process of negotiation, as the SADF was a crucial arm of the Nationalist government who was a key player in the political transition.⁶¹

More than an anxiety around how to produce a military for a new democratic dispensation, what Mashike's analysis makes salient is the problem of how to constitute the soldier in the wake of a war-time that produced soldiers, combatants, and insurgents was more pervasive than ever. This specific moment has a much longer history and uncovers what was missed in the debate of the 1990s around militarisation. In June of 1976, the Soweto Uprising changed the relation between the state and resistance movements fundamentally, exacerbated by the death of Steve Biko in detention the following year, causing an arms embargo to be placed on South Africa. The attendant discourses of the Cold War and the fear of communism coupled with these developments drove the move by the new administration under P.W. Botha to declare a 'total onslaught, total strategy' policy with regards to national security upon the resignation of State President B.J. Vorster in 1979.⁶² In July of that year, Botha made the now infamous 'adapt or die' speech, arguing for reform of the apartheid system if the Afrikaner state were to survive the current situation both within and beyond South Africa's borders.⁶³ These factors had a specific effect upon the military and how it was deployed within the machinery of the state, producing a certain tension as Phillip Frankel writing not too long after in 1984 explains:

⁶¹ Ibid., 608-611.

⁶² Selfe, James. 'The Total Onslaught and the Total Strategy: Adaptations to the Security Intelligence Decision-Making Structures under P W Botha's Administration', unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1987, 1-4. For more on the state security apparatus, see Selfe, James. 'South Africa's National Management System', in *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa*, edited by Cock, Jaclyn. and Nathan, Laurie. (David Philip: Cape Town, 1989), 149 - 158.

⁶³ This reform was codified in the 12-point plan Botha proposed in August of 1979. Selfe, James. 'The Total Onslaught and the Total Strategy: Adaptations to the Security Intelligence Decision-Making Structures under P W Botha's Administration', unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1987, 4.

Today the South African military is at that delicate and confounding point in its political development where its officer corps is torn between tradition and the political impulses generated by contemporary events. On the one hand, changes in leadership composition against the background of Namibia are propelling the military towards a more active and participant role in politics and the formation of state policy; on the other, the military has no real tradition or experience of political involvement with the understandable result that it approaches the world of civil politics with considerable circumspection and due caution.⁶⁴

In addition to this, the involvement in wars north of South African borders laid the groundwork for the kind of war that would be pursued within South Africa and informed the logic of counter-insurgency. At the heart of this was how to deploy the soldier and how this new soldier would need to act under these new circumstances. Frankel explains that

as the SADF has come to appreciate during its fifteen years in Namibia, the outcome of counter-insurgency operations, however, [was] determined by a combination of military and political action the purpose of which is less to defeat the enemy in decisive battle than it [was] to strangle his supply of human and material resources by denying him the allegiance of the civilian population. Mobile soldiers are generally more receptive to political communications than their counterparts in fixed bases, and, as in other theatres from Malaya to Algeria and Vietnam, the logic of counter-insurgency in Namibia has had the effect of drawing the military out of their pure and isolated fighting role to develop patterns of connexion, interaction and participation in the daily social activities of indigenous civil society.⁶⁵

A definition of militarisation in relation to South Africa's 'total war, total onslaught' strategy in the late 1970s - 1990s therefore encapsulates several factors. What is crucial is to hold onto the idea of militarisation as an ideological formation, which would include the spread of militarisation throughout a society and the expansion of the power and influence of the military as a social institution. This would also encompass the notion of war (and the preparedness of society for war) as normal, and how that would affect social practices and norms.⁶⁶ Militarisation as an ideological formation would be noticeable in an aggressive foreign policy, a military dominated state apparatus

⁶⁴ Frankel, Philip. *Pretoria's Praetorians: Civil-Military Relations in South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 44.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁶⁶ Mark Swilling and Mark Phillips argue that because 'it promoted new forms of partial inclusion of the unenfranchised into the formal, officially sanctioned institutions of political society', total strategy and the increasing militarisation of the state that it promoted 'partially restructured the citizenry's access to political society'. Swilling, Mark, and Phillips, Mark. 'State Power in the 1980s: from 'total strategy' to 'counter-revolutionary warfare'', in *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa*, edited by Cock, Jacklyn. and Nathan, Laurie. (David Philip: Cape Town, 1989), 134.

(with high defence budgets and large arms industries), and most importantly, the intrusion or encroachment of the military on the civil. What figured Botha's administration was precisely this: the ways in which the militarisation of South African society depended upon an elaborate and sophisticated security apparatus that permeated government on every level.⁶⁷ Key to this was the fact that 'by proposing that defence is more than a military matter, the military were also laying claim to their right to have a say in all public policy-making.'⁶⁸ In this formulation of militarisation, the figure of the soldier and the civilian had dramatically changed.

It is also telling that Hannah Arendt's definition of war is invoked to arrive at a conclusion on whether South Africa was at war.⁶⁹ It reveals a specific discursive tendency of that formation that is a military historiography in the wake of colonialism and apartheid, and its tenuous relationship with its own reconstitution after 1994. It should be noted that in the late 1970s what characterised the move by the South African state to introduce the strategy of 'total war, total onslaught' was in fact an implicit debate around whether South Africa was indeed at war or not. In some instances, the state argued it was facing a 'revolutionary onslaught' and in other moments,



⁶⁷ Frankel, in moving towards attending to the dynamics of militarisation, offers us a precise definition of total strategy which allows us to attach the move towards militarisation as caught up in the increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the South African state: 'In essence, the logical conclusion of total strategy is a more perfectly defined and streamlined version of South Africa's already authoritarian climate. Total strategy legitimises this development, it engenders the psychological and institutional atmosphere conducive to the growth of a garrison state and, through a series of mechanics, brings the idea of such a state into operation. It is to these mechanics, the subtle mixture of 'interior' and 'exterior' maneuvers at the center of counter-revolution as conceived of under total strategy, that we now direct our attention.' Frankel, Philip. *Pretoria's Praetorians: Civil-Military Relations in South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 70.

⁶⁸ Swilling, Mark, and Phillips, Mark. 'State Power in the 1980s: from 'total strategy' to 'counter-revolutionary warfare'', in *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa*, edited by Cock, Jacklyn. and Nathan, Laurie. (David Philip: Cape Town, 1989), 136.

⁶⁹ Jacklyn Cock offers the following reading of how it is the concept and legal definition of war brushes up against its limit when attempting to think of South Africa and the complexities of militarisation: 'While Hannah Arendt's definition of war as 'the massification of violence' implies that there is a simple relation between the two phenomena, it is clear that the violent conflict in South Africa does not easily fit into conventional definitions. For example, 'Warfare is socially organised physical coercion against a similarly socially organised opponent'. 'War is an open armed conflict in which regular, uniformed forces are engaged, on at least one side the fighters and the fighting are organised centrally to some extent; and there is some continuity between armed clashes.' MK and the SADF are not 'similarly socially organised opponents'. Nor is there 'continuity between armed clashes'. Much of the violent confrontation that occurs is episodic. For these reasons the conflict in South Africa is understood in this work as a low-level civil war, or a situation of 'low-intensity conflict'. War is viewed along a continuum of violent conflict, ranging from low-intensity conflict through conventional war to nuclear or high-intensity war.' The significance of the invocation of Hannah Arendt will be clarified in the third section of this chapter in a discussion of imperial war. Cock, Jacklyn., 'Introduction', in *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa* edited by Cock, Jacklyn. and Nathan, Laurie. (David Philip: Cape Town, 1989), 2.

stated it in plain terms that the current situation of conflict in the country 'involve[d] so many different fronts, unknown to the South African experience, that it has gained the telling but horrifying name of total war'.⁷⁰ The measures instituted to deal with what was growing resistance to apartheid involved considerable counter-insurgency strategies, was deployed within a state security apparatus that had the SADF and the South African Police working in close proximity, both on the ground and on an executive level. What is contained in this uncertainty is a recourse to describe the situation in the terms of militarisation and the notion of a society at war, rather than naming it as a state at war.

Perhaps this tension may have its genesis in an earlier moment. Adam Sitze argues that what is important about imperial war is precisely that it is a barometric structure for empire itself, and that 'imperial war...is not simply one among many parts of empire [but rather]...that part of empire that exemplifies empire as such', an assertion that deepens Dudziak's small wars of empire.⁷¹ Not only does war provide the terms upon which to determine the overall 'health' and status of an imperial endeavour, but also affects conceptual framings of justice, morality, and ultimately the goal of empire as such.⁷² Even as empire itself has lost its force as a term in relation to its centrality in contemporary political discourse, Sitze reminds us that the relation between war and imperialism is worth attending to. Arguing that there is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of imperial war – a contradiction whereby a dialectic between war and capital is both allowed and disavowed – Sitze

⁷⁰ This is captured perhaps in the most telling manner through two specific instances in 1988. The first, which occurred during a treason trial, was a moment where the South African Police noted that the ANC cannot be thought to be at war with the South African Government and that rather it should be thought on the terms that the state is facing a 'revolutionary onslaught'. This argument, according to Jacklyn Cock, was put forward simply to prevent ANC members claiming a prisoner of war status, a status which under the Geneva Protocols of 1977 is granted to those engaged in wars with colonial powers. The second is an instance where in order to circumvent the institution of an order brought by the End Conscription Campaign to restrain the South African Defence Force from harassment, the state argued that because the SADF was on a 'war footing', such an intervention was outside of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Ibid., 1.

⁷¹ Sitze, Adam., 'The Imperial Critique of Imperial War' in *Filosofia Politica*, Vol. 25, 2 (August 2011), 316.

⁷² Sitze notes that 'war regularly seems to come to the surface as that specific experience which allows us to diagnose empire's overall health or sickness, to measure its general rise or decline, to test its ultimate permanence or impermanence, to pass justice upon its justice or injustice, to decide whether empire is, in the end, a force for good or for evil. Imperial war, it would seem, is not simply one among many parts of empire; it is that part of empire that exemplifies empire as such.' Ibid., 315-316.

suggests that the imperialist (or in a more precise formulation, the imperial administrator) is the one who must assuage and negotiate this contradiction.⁷³

In arriving at this formulation, Sitze embarks upon an analysis of Hannah Arendt's notion of the 'philosophy of the bureaucrat' found in a comparative reading of *Imperialism: Road to Suicide* and a chapter in *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Here, Sitze draws attention to the characterisation of the problem of the problematisation of imperial war in both texts, and the ways in which the thanatopolitics of imperialism is figured differently in each instance. Sitze argues that in *Imperialism* the drive to suicide that characterises the imperial proper and that sets up the dialectic that must be mitigated returns in Arendt's 'discovery' of the 'philosophy of the bureaucrat' in a 1908 essay by imperial administrator Lord Evelyn Baring Cromer. By drawing a relation between Cromer's need to reconcile two inevitably destructive paradoxes, namely the philanthropist and the commercialists, Arendt argues that the aim of the imperial bureaucrat is to maintain equilibrium between these two.⁷⁴ The work of the imperial bureaucrat as well as the need to manage the demands of imperial trade also has at its core a concept of clemency, which Sitze elaborates upon through a reading of the character of Portia in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.⁷⁵

For Sitze, the criticism of imperial war is not meant to dissolve empire but rather to save imperial rule from itself and from its own suicidal drive. In a sense, the imperial critique of imperial war as developed by Arendt in a reading of Cromer is to sustain empire's inherent thanatopolitics. What one would call the contradictions of empire are essentially its 'dynamic essence', and 'for the

⁷³ In a very reductive sense, we see this dialectic emerge in the debate around the defense budgets of the 1980s, but also more recently implicitly in the conversations around white monopoly capital.

⁷⁴ These two schools (as they are named by Arendt) each have their own set of demands upon empire which threaten to undermine empire itself. In many ways too, it is precisely this dialectic that figures empire as such. For the philanthropists, their 'commitment to imperialism derives from their loyalty to its civilising and moralising mission'. However, they 'are at risk of taking their own moralising so seriously that they might actually succeed in ending the violence that is indispensable for the extension and enforcement of the civilising mission itself'. The commercial school on the other hand 'seeks in empire nothing more than an opportunity for trade and profit' but 'are at risk of pursuing profit so forcibly and brutally that their actions might cause uprisings, rebellions, and resistance – open opposition to empire the military suppression of which becomes so costly and expensive that it undermines that very profits commercialists seek.' *Ibid.*, 319.

⁷⁵ Through noticing that Cromer had used a quote by the character in opening the text under analysis by Arendt, Sitze argues that 'imperial trade should aspire to a paradigm of exchange that is so fair, so beneficent, and indeed so beautiful that it comes to resemble the 'doubleness' of Portian mercy.' reminding us of the statement 'twice blessed, blesseth him that gives and him that takes'. *Ibid.*, 321.

imperial bureaucrat, empire's contradictions are not then antithetical to its perpetuation; to the contrary, they are the very stuff out of which empire's future, its continual non-suicide, is made'.⁷⁶ Governed by a paradigm figured by that very Portian mercy (which Cromer is unable to think) Sitze reads in Cromer's epigraph as being central to the text and its argument, Sitze argues that the violence of empire is mediated by the balancing act of imperial administration. Sitze suggests that 'for Cromer, it would seem, the paradigm of Portian mercy holds out the hope that the imperial bureaucrat could exempt empire from its own 'inner law' – as if the possibility of maintaining empire, of deferring its suicide, depended on the capacity of the imperial bureaucrat to normalise the exception mercy itself is.'⁷⁷

Sonicity and the Bell

Does the bell in its return mark a collapse of time between a moment when war-time was clear and a moment when war-time was more ambiguous, driven by a debate around the difference between a militarised society or a society at war, figured perhaps in the notion of total war? We might be able to think the bell's memorialisation in the same way, and indeed the entire event that is the sinking of the SS *Mendi* and its associated calls to reconciliation. Much like the return of the bell, the moment of the birth of the post-apartheid nation can be thought of less as a transition in the discipline of military history as much as it must be thought of as an implosion: a marker of the inability to account for the tension between imperial war and militarisation rather than an inability to account for how it is one combines seemingly contradictory traditions of warfare. It is noticeable not only in the recourse to social history and its turn to the subaltern for undoing hegemonic narratives, but also in the ways in which the figure of the South African soldier as it has been produced by Steenkamp and in literature and memorialization of the *Mendi* is an elusive figure. This unravelling haunts South Africa and its markers are available to us through the warring motifs that we can identify in

⁷⁶ Ibid., 333.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 333-4.

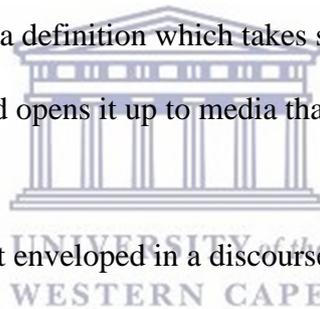
South African historiography. I argue that we might circumvent the difficulties of the question of total war through a concept of wartime.

As mentioned earlier, simply because the bell operates as a marker of time on a ship, it opens a host of questions relating to time and sound. In addition, it is the bell of a troopship, which allows one to conceptualise a temporality specific to war. It is also an object which is crucial to maritime archaeology, attached to which are processes of verification and evidentiary paradigms which work to confirm the event as historical fact and make it available to all sorts of public historical interpretations. In relation to the death drill, it also helps us get at social and oral history from a different perspective, and one informed by the technical object more specifically. It also purely through its existence as a technical object and not the quintessential social history speaking subject as is embodied by the death drill narrative allows us to make an argument around technology and history.

In order to argue for a concept of war-time, to return to the bell, and to abide by the technical object as such, I invoke Wolfgang Ernst's notion of sonicity. Sonicity also helps us to get at the ways in which time is figured by sound, how war is formative of sonic but also other media, and more importantly, how it is we can think the bell as figurative of a certain time keeping not only aboard the ship but elsewhere in the theatre of war and its memorialisation. For Ernst, sound is the object that has been mis-recognized in the hermeneutic project of the Humanities.⁷⁸ Ernst introduces a concept that marks the core import of his argument and threads throughout the text as a

⁷⁸ It is the digital, or the mode of the technical made especially apparent through the digital, that not only forces sound back into how we constitute the human, but also back into intellectual inquiry and, subsequently, undoes the humanities as academic pursuit. It is a premise that is both conceptually and methodologically distressing, as it calls not only discipline into question, but also the objects and arguments that discipline has produced. What opens the first chapter of Ernst's book is a Kittleresque separation or disciplining of the object through an outright rejection of prior and current ways of disciplining the object: "Inquiries into *sonicity* should not be confused with Sound Studies." This is not only a rejection of disciplines, but a rejection of discipline proper as a move to be attentive to the object as such. Elsewhere, Ernst marks the relation between a media-archeological approach and those approaches of other fields of study that have set their sights on sound. In so doing, Ernst names that which Musicology, Sound Studies, Anthropology, and History have missed: the question of time. Ernst's notion of sonicity provides a different articulation of temporality, named by the playful term, tempor(e)alities – or temporal realities – which features elsewhere in the book as *tempaural*, and *temp/orality*. Ernst, Wolfgang., *Digital Memory and the Archive* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 2013), 21.

methodological technique with which to engage the disciplinary object that is sound while simultaneously constituting it elsewhere. That concept, "sonicity," is what allows Ernst to think about the relation between time and technology, and grapple with what it means to account for sound that is not necessarily perceptible to the ear.⁷⁹ Time considered in the language of technicity is for Ernst what has been missed in the various ways in which sound has been apprehended intellectually, and it also provides Ernst with the foundation upon which to name the essential nature of sound as temporal. Sonicity for Ernst makes audible an understanding of the implicit nature of the sonic, or what is termed "chrono-technical sound knowledge," a neologism stressing the relation between time, the technical, epistemology, and the sonic. Through an engagement with the work of McLuhan and others, sonicity is for Ernst what constitutes the "acoustic space" of modernity. Central to the concept of sonicity is technicity, and Ernst's definition of sound as electromagnetic waves or vibration is a definition which takes sound out of its self-imposed residence in an ontology of the ear and opens it up to media that rely on the electronic, such as television and the cinema.⁸⁰



Turning to the bell as an object enveloped in a discourse of chrono-technical sound knowledge is to say that bell harbours implicit sonicity, and that if we are to posit a notion of war-time, the bell is an object that both inscribes sound as chrono-technical knowledge as well as dislodging a sound studies that would ground itself in the language of recording technology. The bell can be through to index sound symbolically – as Ernst would speak of the digital – but in a way that is not digital. This is not to say that the bell itself is not phonographic, but rather to emphasise

⁷⁹ Put differently, if sound and music are the epistemological ideograms of what we can hear, then sonicity allows us to address those effects and entities that we cannot hear. Ernst, Wolfgang. *Sonic time machines: Explicit sound, siren voices, and implicit sonicity*. (Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

⁸⁰ Echoes of the work of other texts that have been located in Sound Studies (such as Steve Goodman's *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect and the Ecology of Fear*) can be heard here, where vibration is also understood as core to a phenomenology of sound. Resonances with Simondon's concept of transduction and the relation between what Simondon calls technicity and what Ernst calls sonicity can be heard reverberating throughout the text, along with more productive reformulations of Richard Grusin and Jay Bolter's concepts of immediacy, hypermediacy and remediation. It is worth noting that a central concept for Grusin and Bolter's process of remediation namely, oscillation, or the ways in which media are engaged in a rivalrous drive between immediacy and hypermediacy, also finds itself in Ernst's text, so much so that Ernst argues that 'sonicity names oscillatory events and their mathematically reverse equivalent: the frequency domain as an epistemological object.' *Ibid.*, 22.

that the bell forces us to consider a phonographic attitude, or as Feaster would argue, to place the accent on re-presentation rather than re-production. For the bell to return, is an invitation to ask about time, war, and technology that has direct bearing on the work of sound in historiography.

We should read the sonicity of the bell alongside the sheer scale of the military industrial complex established under the auspices of the apartheid regime and is a factor that pressures the process of formation that was the creation of the South African National Defence Force. This new defence force was formed between 1990 and 2004 out of the remnants of seven different military formations active in South Africa: the SADF; the armies of the former homelands (Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana); and the military wings of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the ANC, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) and Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) respectively.⁸¹ These were split into two groups: the defenders of the apartheid regime (the SADF and the homeland armies, known as the TVBC forces); and those fighting against the apartheid regime (APLA and MK). When integration processes began in earnest three years after the negotiations towards a multiparty democracy began, the SADF was the largest force, with 82 705 active members made up of a majority of white Afrikaans-speakers, while groups such as APLA and MK kept scant records for the sake of security concerns as guerrilla armies.⁸² The question of transformation of the military in South Africa is one that is haunted by both the debate around how to constitute the South African soldier and a South African way of war (as we saw in the work of Willem Steenkamp). It also attempts to speak to the debates around total war, militarisation, and the role of the military both under and after apartheid proper. The memorialisation of the sinking of the SS Mendi and the (re)membering of the soldiers who died in 1917 echo the debate around integration and absorption that governed the transition from the SADF to the SANDF in the 1990s but redirect it towards the tragedy that the death drill embodies as its only inevitable outcome. If

⁸¹ An important point that Mashike makes and that should be underscored here again is that neither APLA or MK engaged the SADF in open combat, and thus the SADF could never claim victory against them in a military sense. In the same tone, the transfer of power that was the transition was one that happened beyond APLA and MK. Mashike, Lephophotho., "Blacks Can Win Everything, but the Army': The 'Transformation' of the South African Military between 1994 and 2004', in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2007), 602, 604.

⁸² Ibid., 606.

anything, what Steenkamp highlights as a question of praxis with regards to the formation of a South African way of war is thrown into stark relief when we look at the transition period in South Africa and the problems that an integration of the SADF into the SANDF reveals.

The process of militarisation, in which the line between what one recognises as military and what one sees as non-military becomes increasingly blurred, might be thought of as analogical to how one might think the ways in which the impulse of imperial war manifests itself jurisprudentially. In the case of South Africa, it might also be a way to account for a set of questions and debates that culminate in a discussion around the difference between colonialism and apartheid. It is telling that it is as growing opposition to apartheid begins to emerge and as it was facing its most fierce resistance both on home soil and abroad that militarisation and the debate around a society at war as well as a discussion around change enters the popular lexicon. With South Africa being declared illegally occupying Namibia by the International Court of Justice in 1971, the escalation of the guerrilla war to liberate then Rhodesia after 1972, strikes in the Durban area in 1973, and the beginning of decolonisation and the departure of the Portuguese in neighbouring Angola and Mozambique, South Africa was facing a set of developments that would fundamentally shift both its geopolitical status in relation to foreign policy but also war and military campaigns both domestic and international.⁸³

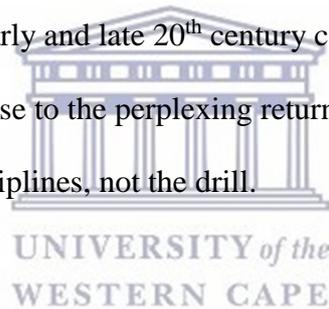
Perhaps most telling, is the argument that Grundlingh makes for the shift towards the heroic in the memorialisation of the *Mendi* after 1994, connecting it to the question of military history. Here, Grundlingh suggests that what drove an emphasis on the *Mendi* incident after 1994 was a need for a 'legitimising military history', given that 'the ANC itself could not point to a particularly heroic military past'.⁸⁴ In some sense, the reconciliation of the SADF, the homeland defense forces,

⁸³ Outside of these factors, the gold price fell in 1975, forcing South Africa to devalue the rand, and in the early part of 1976 South African troops while attempting to preempt a MPLA victory in Angola's civil war were forced to withdraw from the area and leaving South Africa in a precarious diplomatic situation with regards to the region, the continent and farther afield.

⁸⁴ Grundlingh argues the following: 'Underpinning this ready belief in, and unquestioning acceptance of, the mythological dimensions of the sinking of the *Mendi*, was the need for a legitimising military history. Such a requirement was especially acute as the ANC itself could not point to a particularly heroic military past. Although the armed wing of the organisation, uMkhonto weSizwe, had a degree of success with what they called 'armed propaganda',

and the guerrilla armies of the ANC was as much a question of integration of infrastructure as it was a need for consilience between the strategic language of the different forces. The fact that the curriculum of the SANDF had not changed up until 2004 and still contained the descriptor 'terrorist' unearths this tension rather dramatically. The question of race appears largely through the lens of ideology, drawing on debates surrounding the nationalist government's tethering of the concept of terrorist to black anti-apartheid activists.⁸⁵

With the weight of a history of militarization and the tension between claiming to be at war ever-present, we might now return to the bell. Just as the bell would demarcate the temporality aboard a ship, the desire to produce a different military structure after apartheid must contend with the shadow of a much longer sense of time and war inherited from a moment which is now reconstituted through the tragedy of the Mendi. Such a short circuiting that would ignore a set of debates around wartime both in the early and late 20th century can only produce the death drill – a rhythmic thanatopolitics – as a response to the perplexing return of a time that is not its own. It would seem that it is the bell that disciplines, not the drill.



it could not even remotely lay claim to clashing with and defeating the South African Defence Force in any battle. Its lack of military achievement, however, did not deter it from embracing military vocabulary in post-apartheid South Africa with the use of words such as 'cadres' and 'deployment' becoming commonplace in civilian life. The atavistic invocation of such terminology in peacetime can be seen as a compensating mechanism in the absence of a solid military record to underscore the transition. Similarly, the Mendi had to nurture the longing for a heroic past and accordingly it was asserted that 'as black South Africa has rediscovered its history the fame of the victims of the SS Mendi disaster has grown'. Grundlingh, Albert., 'Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering the SS Mendi Disaster, 1917-2007', in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2011), 31.

⁸⁵ Mashike, Lephophotho., "Blacks Can Win Everything, but the Army': The 'Transformation' of the South African Military between 1994 and 2004', in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2007), 610.

Chapter 5: Stereophony

Interpretation

In a text that positions itself as neither in nor out of sound studies, John Mowitt asks what a concept of the audit will do for sound studies as an analogous concept to the gaze in visualism and studies of the image.¹ What does it mean to use the concept of the audit to think about how the interpreter and the listener come together in what we might call the auditor, and how does this convergence relate the interplay between the telephonic and the phonographic? In this chapter I approach two nationalist texts, Sol Plaatje's 'The Essential Interpreter' and his recording of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' as that which affords us a conception of listening. Plaatje was a writer, linguist, journalist, court interpreter, musician, performer, and an active member of the South African Native National Congress who intervened regularly in daily political life in late nineteenth to early twentieth century South Africa. While the text of 'The Essential Interpreter' draws on Plaatje's experience in the British colonial court system and underscores the work of the court interpreter, the recording of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' demonstrates Plaatje's admiration for music and sound as well as a particular aesthetic sensibility that is often overlooked in scholarship around the early nationalist intellectual. By bringing a conception of listening to bear on these texts, and augmenting John Mowitt's concept of the audit, I propose to make the conception of listening available to our understanding of the relationship of coloniality, war and the work of interpretation. This is a perspective that military historiography has not taken up, even though it is, as I will show, central and indispensable to its construction of a field of history that overwhelms the problematic of colonialism, and apartheid that follows. We must read the texts of 'The Essential Interpreter' and 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' through (a) the mechanism of the dialogue in the former, (b) the mode of listening invoked in Plaatje's interpreting, and (c) the ways in which these two come together to constitute a particular type of audition.

¹ Mowitt, John. *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities*. (Univ of California Press, 2015).

In Brian Willan's edited collection of the writings of South African intellectual, politician, and linguist Sol Plaatje, we find a reproduction of an unpublished manuscript titled 'The Essential Interpreter'.² The manuscript tracks the important relationship between court interpreting and the dispensing of justice by the British Imperial Authorities through the case of the deposed Batawana chief, Sekgoma, who was held in detention without trial from 1906 to 1911 by the colonial authorities. Plaatje was well disposed to speak on these matters, given his employment as a clerk and court interpreter in Mafeking since 1898, and his role as an interpreter was seen as a very serious occupation by Plaatje himself. The mentorship under the magistrate Charles Bell who was fluent in English, Dutch and four other African languages including Setswana added to Plaatje's devotion to his role as court interpreter. What Plaatje called 'an art' that he would need to learn to 'cultivate' would be extrapolated in "The Essential Interpreter" as a necessity for colonial legal practice and the space of the courtroom.³ Willan offers a contextualisation and summary of the text in the introduction to a section of the edited volume of Plaatje's writing titled 'All we claim is our just dues', a telling title that instructs the reader how the text should be read:

In [the] letters reproduced here Plaatje reveals not only an ability to present a very strong case for consideration of his request, but also a clear sense of the seriousness and application he brought to his work. Such attributes come through even more clearly in 'The Essential Interpreter'. A more detailed and extended account by Plaatje of his experiences as a court interpreter, and of the views he formed about the crucial importance of efficient and conscientious court interpreting — an issue to which he was to return on numerous occasions in his subsequent public career. 'The Essential Interpreter' has a unique importance as an inside view, from a knowledgeable and experienced practitioner, of the part a court interpreter could play in the administration of justice in South African courts, and of the

² The text — written in late 1908 or early 1909 according to Willan — is split up into two parts: 'The Essential Interpreter' and 'Sekgoma - The Black Dreyfus'. For the purposes of chronology, the manuscript is split in two, with the reasoning that 'Sekgoma - The Black Dreyfus' relates more specifically to the period of 1906 - 1909 while 'The Essential Interpreter' deals with activities that took place during the period of 1906 - 1911. According to Willan, Plaatje had begun writing an account of the case of Sekgoma in his notebook and added to it some content relating to interpreting in court as it became necessary and central to the discussion which would become 'The Essential Interpreter'. Afterwards, Willan claims, Plaatje separated the section on Sekgoma from the component dealing with the court interpreter. Willan in the expected chronological biographical register also links the manuscript to some of the other qualities that Plaatje has been praised for, namely his aptitude with language and what would eventually lead to his translation and literary works, noting that 'it is clear that his experience as a court interpreter in Mafeking was to provide an ideal foundations – as he himself was to acknowledge – for his subsequent linguistic work, and in particular his translations of Shakespeare's plays into Setswana'. Plaatje, Sol., *Selected Writings*, edited by Willan, Brian. (Wits University Press, 2016), 51, 15.

³ Without the precision that Bell reminded Plaatje was at the core of the work of a courtroom interpreter ('interpreting in court and interpreting at the sale of a cow were two different things entirely'), the adequate dispensing of justice could not be realised. Willan, Brian., *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* (Ravan Press, 2001), 68.

unfortunate consequences which could so often result from the use of unqualified or inexperienced interpreters — 'amateur interpreters' as Plaatje had referred to them in derogatory terms both in his siege diary and elsewhere.⁴

Plaatje is framed here as both an interlocutor and someone intervening in a debate that is clearly not as much about interpretation as it is a discussion around what justice might mean under the auspices of the British colonial court system. Plaatje is interested in the particularities of practice and how an act as simple and overlooked as court interpreting, might impinge upon the juridical much more decisively - a concern that is made clear in Plaatje's naming of some court interpreters as 'amateurs'.⁵ The text itself opens with a qualifying statement exclaiming the particularity of the South African 'administration of justice', where Plaatje notes that in Europe 'judge, plaintiff, defendant, counsel and witnesses all speak the same language'.⁶ This statement underscores the importance not only of the interpreter to the courtroom and the critical role that translation would play in courts outside of Europe and in the colonies, but more importantly, the question of language to justice both in and out of the legal system. This is a matter that Plaatje will demonstrate throughout the text and later, also in his career as a linguist. Plaatje's claim as an interpreter in these circumstances is not only one that is woven through the infrastructure of colonial ideas of justice. In the process of making this claim, Plaatje stresses that it is in the interests of those wishing to 'enjoy the protection of a *civilised* state' that a qualified and experienced interpreter be present and functional in the courtrooms of South Africa. This attitude anticipates the nationalist politics he would espouse in the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), a precursor to the later

⁴ Plaatje, Sol., *Selected Writings*, edited by Willan, Brian. (Wits University Press, 2016), 15.

⁵ The account of Sekgoma, is contextualised rather differently, and attention is drawn to the episode as a microcosm of a much larger political landscape that was unfolding before Plaatje. It is interesting to note that 'The Essential Interpreter' does not evoke the same sense of urgency in terms of its political impetus for Willan as does 'Sekgoma - The Black Dreyfus', audible in the opening line of the following paragraph: 'There was one political issue which did particularly concern Plaatje during these years, however, and which he very probably wrote about in the issues of the *Bechuana Gazette* which were published: the treatment of Sekgoma Letsholathebe, a Batawana chief from the north-western part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Plaatje's account of the chief's treatment by the Protectorate authorities was written in late 1908 or early 1909 and sought to draw attention not only to the injustice suffered by Sekgoma, but also to the wider legal and constitutional issues raised by the episode. It amounts to a damning indictment of the way in which the Protectorate was administered and governed, and it was to be one of the main reasons why – unlike many of his colleagues – Plaatje favoured incorporating the Bechuanaland Protectorate into the Union of South Africa rather than allowing it to remain under the direct control of the British Imperial Government.' *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

political movement, the ANC (African National Congress) thereafter.⁷ The discursive texture of the text can only be perceived through an attention to the ways in which it shifts between the general and the particular, a movement that is best captured in what Plaatje calls the trialogue. In explaining the differences between 'interpreting in court and interpreting at the sale of a cow', Plaatje demonstrates the aptitude that is required of the interpreter and names the linguistic space within which the interpreter must work the trialogue. Plaatje illustrates the trialogue by noting the importance of a response that must travel via an intermediary before it will reach the judge or magistrate.⁸ Indeed, as Plaatje notes, 'it is evident that unless an efficient linguist is kept, justice may easily be miscarried in the course of this trilingual colloquialism'. This is an insistence that underscores the critical nature of the mediating function of the interpreter, a figure that we encounter not only in the courtrooms of the early twentieth century but also in the moment of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁹

Mark Sanders's study of the literary conditions of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission reflects on Plaatje's essay in the delineating what he calls a theory of intellectual responsibility.¹⁰ This recuperation of Plaatje is aimed at engaging with the question of complicity with regards to post-apartheid intellectual politics and conceptions of the social. Sanders is therefore concerned with the ways in which an intellectual is produced in relation to complicity.

Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid asks what it means to inhabit an ethico-political

⁷ Ibid., 52. Plaatje notes that 'it [seems] to [him] a lamentable state of affairs that a high court of justice should have no interpreter and it betrays a culpable indifference, on the part of the azurites, to the interests of a community which should enjoy the protection of a civilised state, in practice as well as in theory.' The question of nationalism in relation to the ANC is represented in a large body of literature. For a brief review of the particularities of the formative years of the ANC and its effects as experienced later in the 20th century, see Mark, S., Stanley Trapido, and Shula Marks. *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth century South Africa*. Routledge, 2014.

⁸ We might say, along the lines of a phonographic attitude, that the interpreter is engaged in an act of mediation, whereby the trialogue is technical. Ibid., 56.

⁹ Ibid., 57.

¹⁰ See Sanders's other work: Sanders, Mark. "Extraordinary Violence." *interventions* 3, no. 2 (2001): 242-250, Sanders, Mark. *Ambiguities of witnessing: Law and literature in the time of a truth commission*. Stanford University Press, 2007, Sanders, Mark. "Truth, Telling, Questioning: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Antjie Krog's Country of My Skull, and Literature after Apartheid." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 46, no. 1 (2000): 13-41, Sanders, Mark. "Ambiguities of mourning: Law, custom, and testimony of women before South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Loss: The politics of mourning* (2003): 77-98, Sanders, Mark. "Remembering apartheid." *Diacritics* 32, no. 3 (2002): 60-80.

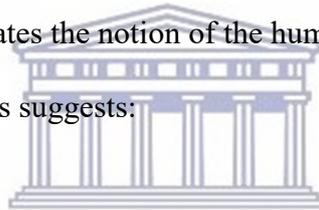
position in relation to intellectual life in the critique of apartheid. In an effort to work through the dichotomy of resistance and collaboration as necessary to the constitution of a certain forms of intellectual ethics, Sanders's goal is to 'theorise the intellectual in terms of responsibility and complicity' through 'identifying a structure of response across differences of time and location'. In doing so, he identifies complicity as that point from which figures such as Plaatje negotiate a set of political allegiances.¹¹ It is in the paradigm of the literary that Sanders discovers how argues the intricacies and complexities of complicity emerge and play out. The justification for the centrality and priority of the literary hinges on the assertion that it is the site of production for a sense of otherness as mediated in language and the self. This amounts to a structure that resonates with the role of the interpreter. It is this justificatory structure that allows Sanders to make a specific claim about apartheid as a system of legal, administrative, and psychic infrastructures that implicates intellectuals and those who would respond to it, and ultimately resist it. Such a move is easily bolstered and supported through a reading of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's injunction to 'recognise the potential for evil in each one of us that we can take full responsibility for ensuring that such evil will never be repeated'.¹² The turn to Plaatje is facilitated through such the literary and the naming of the second part of Plaatje's manuscript, titled 'Sekgoma - The Black Dreyfus'. Sanders rightly attributes this naming to Emile Zola's 'J'Accuse', a public appeal to the government of France to revise the guilty verdict delivered on Jewish artillery officer Alfred Dreyfus who was falsely accused of treason in the late nineteenth century.¹³

¹¹ Sanders, Mark., *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (University of Natal Press, 2002), 14.

¹² It would seem appropriate that Sanders would turn to the TRC as the founding moment from which to revisit the question of complicity, and the reading of the TRC by Adam Sitze would offer a different concept entirely. *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ Sanders navigates Zola's text alongside Plaatje's to suggest that it is precisely on behalf of the other that Plaatje speaks: 'The second thing to note about this assumption of complicity is that it takes place *on behalf of another* – an other whose otherness is scripted by racism. As in his "A Plea for the Jews" (1896), complicity is assumed by Zola in response to a racism directed against a people abhorred by the Jew-hater who, for want of a better reason, appeals to "the repulsion of one race for another," and "feel[s] how different and other they are". One can thus add to Jürgen Habermas's sense that the universal intellectual "intervene[s] on behalf of rights that have been violated and truths that have been suppressed, reforms that are overdue and progress that has been delayed", a history of responsibility assumed for, and on behalf of, determinate others – as is particularly apparent, for instance, when Zola's gesture is deployed by Sol T Plaatje in colonial South Africa. In this sense, "J'accuse" is first and foremost a work of advocacy. For Zola to want not to be complicit in racism is, at least tacitly, to accept and affirm a larger complicity – etymologically, a folded-together-ness (*com-plic-ity*) – in human-being (or the being of being human). When Zola writes against the authority of nationalist loyalty and militarist "esprit de corps," he does so "in the name of humanity".' *Ibid.*, 5.

Plaatje's naming of the second part of his manuscript 'Sekgoma - The Black Dreyfus' had perhaps more to do with the resonances of facing an unequal legal system and the readership it might afford such a text than it had to do with the similarities of racial othering that Sanders appeals to. However, Sanders's move does prove useful for the argument around complicity and the intellectual, given that it is after the public letter that a 'Manifesto of the Intellectuals' surfaces and begins a lengthy public debate in Europe that gives rise to a very specific conception of the figure of the intellectual in the twentieth century. Attached to this conception is what Sanders calls 'the duty to speak up [that is] linked with a will or desire not to be an accomplice', driven by the assumption that 'responsibility unites with a will not to be complicit in an injustice'.¹⁴ It is in a combination of responsibility and act manifest in a concept of the human marked by otherness that Sanders lodges his understanding of complicity. This comes to a head with the TRC's notion of complicity, which according to Sanders, further complicates the notion of the human embedded in the idea of what has been called the post-apartheid. Sanders suggests:



Complicity, in this convergence of act and responsibility, is thus at one with the basic folded-together-ness of being, of human-being, of self and other. Such foldedness is the condition of possibility of all particular affiliations, loyalties, and commitments. In the absence of an *acknowledgement* of complicity in a wider sense of foldedness with the other, whether welcomed or not, there would have been no opposition to apartheid. The history of the intellectual and apartheid – whether of support, accommodation, or resistance – can, in these terms, be deciphered, not by fixing on apartness alone, but by tracking interventions, marked by degrees of affirmation and disavowal, in a continuum of foldedness or responsibility-in-complicity. What makes apartheid exemplary for a study of the intellectual and complicity is the paradox that, while supporters disavowed or sought to limit foldedness with the other, opponents, though striving to minimise acting-in-complicity with the agents of apartheid and its policies, tended to acknowledge, affirm, and generalise responsibility-in-complicity.¹⁵

In Sanders's conceptualisation, the intellectual grappling with apartheid, colonialism and any other form of 'othering' would have to negotiate the manner in which the intellectual is in debt to the politics of a racialised subjectivity that apartheid produces in the first place. Drawing on an

¹⁴ Ibid., 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., 11-12.

intellectual genealogy, Sanders turns to Plaatje alongside his contemporary Olive Schreiner in search of what he names 'colonial precursors'. This allows Sanders to make a move that is intended to theorise complicity unbound from the theorisation of apartheid and the intellectual.¹⁶ It is in the same sense that Sanders employs Ngūgī wa Thiong'o and Frantz Fanon, arguing that while 'the concern of each is not solely with race or apartheid in the narrow sense, each shows apartness and joinedness at work in ethically significant ways.'¹⁷ In Schreiner and Plaatje Sanders argues that it is when 'once-separate traits come to be joined' that we can read these two figures. In Plaatje, Sanders suggests, we see the traits of 'advocacy, interpreting, and ventriloquism' that figure the complicities they negotiate.¹⁸

For Sanders, the work Plaatje undertakes in 'The Essential Interpreter' is an unfolding of how the relationship between complicity and responsibility figures a disappropriation of subjectivity.¹⁹ His reading hinges on reading Plaatje as envisioning a future yet to come where the juridical was, as he puts it, 'still taken serious[ly] by black Africans' as a means to access a certain kind of justice within a colonial system.²⁰ The text hinges on what he calls a 'secret encounter between two implied readers speaking different languages'; an encounter that acts as a mechanism of entry into the life of the intellectual and an intellectual life. For Plaatje, such an entry, according to Sanders, is marked by race more so than his counterpart Olive Schreiner in Sanders' text. To read 'The Essential Interpreter', the text returns to the figure of Emile Zola and the question of advocacy to argue that language and translation, specifically the issue of a multiplicity of languages as is the case with Sol

¹⁶ Sanders argues in a reading of Kafka that by calling them precursors, it is not 'simply in the sense of being earlier figures in a chronology, but as having a particular significance by virtue of what succeeds them' and that 'once apartheid is identified as the predicament par excellence for the intellectual as a figure of responsibility-in-complicity, other earlier predicaments become precursors to that of the intellectual and apartheid.' Sanders also mentions that Emile Zola had been his 'main precursor'. Ibid., 20.

¹⁷ Sanders argues that 'Plaatje and Schreiner each entertain a sense of a larger human foldedness as a way of avoiding complicity in the deepening social fissures that would, once the colonial era drew to a close, coalesce into apartheid'. Ibid., 15-16, 21.

¹⁸ It is telling that with Plaatje (as opposed to Schreiner) these traits are indicative of a focus on the law and the voice, where with Schreiner it is a focus on the body and mind ('the figure of women, the embodiedness of intellect, and the social inscription of the body'). The turn to ventriloquism to account for the work of interpretation here in relation to the voice and historiographies of biography and social history is perhaps misplaced. Ibid., 21.

¹⁹ Ibid., 23.

²⁰ Ibid., 42.

Plaatje, is fundamental to what Sanders calls 'the basic structure and dynamics of responsibility-in-complicity'.²¹ The interpreter according to Sanders is figured by Plaatje as a tool or in Plaatje's own words, a 'human tool'. It is in this way (and productively so) that Sanders invokes the idea of a technics of interpretation, or that interpretation itself is essential precisely because it is an apparatus which affords the space for a certain kind of advocacy. Plaatje's advocacy of Sekgoma is related to the important work of the interpreter, and it is at this intersection that Sanders proclaims a reworking of Zola's call for responsibility.²²

The insistence upon the work of the interpreter that Plaatje outlines does the work of claiming responsibility for countering injustice. The question of race avails itself in the problem that emerges in the case of Zola, where Sanders argues what was critical was the notion of advocating for the other. In Plaatje's work, Sanders argues that the question of the other is complicated significantly due to the fact that the imagined and implied addressee in Plaatje's essay is British and white, and that because of the privilege Plaatje enjoys as an educated enfranchised resident of the Cape Colony, a split between Sekgoma and Plaatje on the terms of racial otherness can be facilitated. This is a role and a complicity that is buttressed by the figure of the interpreter, which Sanders argues is 'essential' precisely because the text should be read as a 'locally inflected iteration of what it means to stand for justice'.²³ However, in producing the role of the interpreter as merely a ventriloquism, such a reading of 'The Essential Interpreter' fails to conceptualise the dialogue or the technicity of interpretation as an apparatus of listening, a modality of aural and linguistic perception crucial to the work of interpretation, as well as central to Plaatje's own rendering of the problem of justice at the periphery. It is in the realm of the literary that Sanders finds the intricacies and complexities of complicity. If we are to circumvent a rendering of the work of interpretation as

²¹ Ibid., 42.

²² 'What is particular to Plaatje, however, is that his advocacy of Sekgoma is intimately related in conception to what he sets out as the responsibility of the courtroom interpreter in a multilingual colonial setting. Bringing together two senses of advocacy, Plaatje's conception of the intellectual supplements that of Zola by joining to the ethics-political responsibility of "J'accuse" a responsibility to language and the language of the other. Justice is situated at the point of convergence of these two senses of advocacy, with the court interpreter as the hinge between them.' Ibid., 43.

²³ Ibid., 44.

merely ventriloquism, what are we to do with the trialogue as apparatus, the interpreter as tool for the ear? If we are to address this oversight, we must turn to Plaatje's implication in a history of sound recording, and what that would offer a reading of 'The Essential Interpreter' as text as well as a manner of speaking of the work of auditing. When so doing, we note that it is a text formed in a moment of political formation in South Africa that predates many important episodes pertinent to our discussion here. These include Plaatje's initial first trip to the UK as part of a delegation of the SANNC to protest the Natives Land Act in 1914, and prior to the formation of the ANC proper and what would become a starting point for a particular rendering of South African intellectual history.²⁴ More importantly, it is the recording of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika', the anthem of the liberation movement, that Plaatje makes in 1923, that allows us to reorient the trialogue.

Redirecting our attention to this recording means that we must attend to the biography of Plaatje, and how it is a figure such as Plaatje finds himself in the vicinity of recording devices in October of 1923. The narration of Plaatje as nationalist intellectual figure and biographical subject *par excellence* of the post-apartheid South African nation is best exemplified by Brian Willan's republishing of his magisterial biography under a new title: from *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* to *Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist*. Plaatje has become a canonical figure, both in political biography but also in literature, where his work in translation and through works such as *Mhudi* has become synonymous with both a critique of empire and a subverting of imperialism through language. After a trip to the United States promoting a film tour at various universities, Plaatje travelled to England in September of 1922 in the hope of returning to South Africa a few months after that.²⁵ The reasons for his longer stay in England was to raise money for his translations of a

²⁴ Plaatje's travels have been marked as a moment of development in his writing and seen as a transitional point in his politics. Ironically, for Janet Remington, this ends in 1922 and overlooks his brief stint in London to record 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika'. See Remington, Jane., 2013. Solomon Plaatje's Decade of Creative Mobility, 1912–1922: The Politics of Travel and Writing in and beyond South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39(2), pp.425-446. See also, Van der Vlies, Andrew. "Transnational Print Cultures: Books-scapes, and the Textual Atlantic." *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 8, no. 1 (2007): 45-55, Limb, Peter. "Early ANC leaders and the British world: ambiguities and identities." *Historia* 47, no. 1 (2002): 56-82.

²⁵ Willan, Brian., *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* (Ravan Press, 2001), 282. This journey is well known, with it forming a point of departure for discussions surrounding the question of trans-Atlantic connections and a much broader pan-Africanist politics.

hymn book for the International Brotherhood, and he had made very little progress if any on securing funds to print the book since 1919.²⁶ However, after some brief employment stints as a guide, interpreter and adviser for a Swazi deputation in London in January 1923, an opportunity availed itself in the form of an offer from George Lattimore, former manager of the Southern Syncopated Orchestra, whom Plaatje had first met in London in 1919. A specialist in organising performances of African-American bands and stage shows in London at the Philharmonic Hall, Lattimore was preparing to produce a 'wildlife film' and invited Plaatje to assist with a live theatrical sketch that would help to illustrate the film to an audience during the interval when reels were being changed.²⁷ The film was titled 'Cradle of the World', and received mixed reviews, in which Plaatje paradoxically performed the role of a caricatured 'grotesquely attired native'.²⁸ It would be a productive experience for Plaatje, who wrote of the experience as one that had shaped his understanding of the relation between European musical traditions and those of Southern Africa.²⁹ Plaatje writes:



My work at the Philharmonic Hall brought me in contact with a different world. It gave me the facility of dictating our traditional music to the Director of the Orchestra at the London Coliseum and he arranged some beautiful orchestration for it. When the Philharmonic Band played these melodies to illustrate some of the pictures on the screen, except for their weird repetition, they were scarcely distinguishable from the works of great European masters; and

²⁶ Ibid., 282, 285. The International Brotherhood was an international Christian organization tasked with a view towards social and moral improvement of Africans living across the world. In a letter to colleagues in the US of the progress of this mission in May of 1923, Plaatje writes of his disappointment in both the lack of progress as well as his extended stay in the UK. Interestingly, Plaatje compares the search for funds to the work of transposition, suggesting that the latter was much easier: 'Perhaps you will be surprised that I am still in England. So am I and so are my folks in South Africa. Of all the things I have ever undertaken nothing has worried me so much as the task of finding the money to print the Native Hymn Book and tonic sol-fa tunes for our Community Services in S. Africa. The task of translating the metres into African was child's play compared with the job of finding the money.' The question of raising funds is an interesting one, as an argument that is made surrounding the preface to Plaatje's novel *Mhudi* suggests that at the heart of the invitation to read is an invitation to buy, invoking the network of capital as a means to an end. See Sanders, M., *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (University of Natal Press, 2002)

²⁷ Ibid., 287.

²⁸ Ibid., 289. Willan notes that Plaatje, who was 'an educated, civilised native, [had] come to England to see support for the cause of his people on the basis of their shared humanity and Christian faith, [was] now employed to project exactly the image that he had devoted so much of his life to fighting'.

²⁹ See Tsitsi Jaji. 'Sight-Reading: Early Black South African Transcriptions of Freedom' in *Africa in stereo: Modernism, music, and Pan-African solidarity*. (Oxford University Press, 2014). Of particular interest is Jaji's reading of sight-reading as a modality through which figures such as Sol Plaatje and Charlotte Maxeke 'transcribed' a certain concept of black modernity, or what Alexander Weheliye would name as a sonic Afro-modernity. Jaji's argument has many resonances here, most important of which is the rerouting of Plaatje's interest in phonetics via music. In reading transcription as a motif in the works of Sol Plaatje, John Dube, and Charlotte Maxeke amongst others, Jaji draws attention to how it is the questions of composition, projection, and pitch were musical categories as much as they were political concepts in the figuring of an intellectual history in the SANNC.

in my own songs I found the harmony of the English orchestral accompaniment very thrilling and opening up a new vision. Anglo-Africans, like Mlle Dumas and Dr Colenso, who heard my songs, informed me they could understand every word of the Sesuto and Zulu phrasing through the strains of the orchestra and the explosive clicks, which were to them a new thing on the concert platform.³⁰

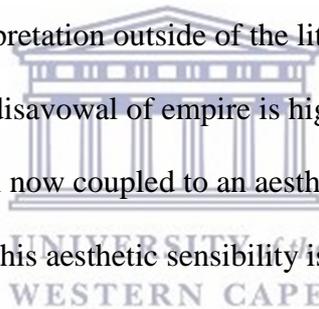
It was these experiences that would later convince Plaatje that a similar musical and cultural awakening — much like that which created the conditions for the rise of jazz in the United States — would be necessary in South Africa. Due to Plaatje's musical pursuits and the network of performers he had familiarised himself with, he proved himself worthy of some investment by members of the gramophone industry at the time. On 16 October 1923, he paid a visit to the Zonophone Company's recording studio in Middlesex where he recorded three discs. Each disc contained different recordings: on the first disc, two Setswana hymns; the second comprised of two traditional songs in Hlubi and Xhosa; and the third, also in Xhosa, had a hymn on the one side titled 'A Band of Hard Pressed Men are We'. On the other side was an arrangement of John Knox Bokwe's 'Kaffir Wedding Song' which Plaatje had occasionally sung in Kimberley in the 1890s. Interestingly, without any mention of it on the documentation and labelling accompanying the disc, Plaatje's rendition of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' accompanied by Sylvia Colenso, daughter of the famed heretic to whom Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* is dedicated. Colenso can be heard on piano towards the end of the first side of the second record.³¹ Soon after this recording took place on 26 October 1923, Plaatje departed for South Africa.

Plaatje's recording not only attracted the attention of gramophone companies to the extent that recordings of choirs and traditional African hymns and songs became a popular venture, but also laid the ground for the popularity of the hymn to take hold elsewhere in the world. David Coplan notes how around the same time as Plaatje was in London, British recording companies had realised that there was potential in the African market, and in 1925, the same company that had recorded Plaatje in 1923 began releasing a series of records by black South Africans. These

³⁰ Willan, B., *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* (Ravan Press, 2001), 289-290.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 290.

included recordings of an educated elite who visited the U.K. as well as experimental recordings on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand. Whether it was Plaatje's recording specifically that sparked a rise in attention given to black South African sound, or whether it was merely the milieu in which Plaatje found himself, these developments in the industry led British broadcaster and musicologist Hugh Tracey, based in Durban in 1929, to collect, study and disseminate indigenous southern African music. This inadvertently resulted in what can be called the beginning of the first ethnomusicological inquiry anchored in the act of the 'field recording' in Southern Africa.³² Record companies such as the newly formed Gallo Records were praised at the time for the work in preserving African musical heritage and protecting it from what was then termed 'hybridisation'.³³ It is important that it is the phonographic that mediates this relation, and after encountering Sol Plaatje and the work of the phonographic, we are compelled to think of Plaatje and his conceptualisation of the work of interpretation outside of the literary for a moment. In doing so, the ambiguity of Plaatje's allegiance and disavowal of empire is highlighted. This is also the case in the production of Plaatje as an intellectual now coupled to an aesthetic sensibility that Sanders misses. To ask how seriously we should take this aesthetic sensibility is to argue for Plaatje as an auditor.



Anthems, Recordings, and Fidelity

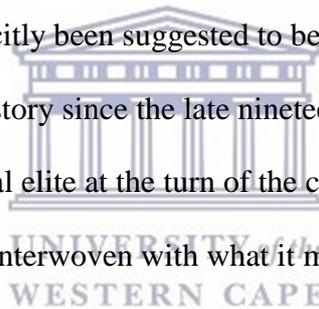
The hymn 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' has a long and complex history. Composed in 1897 by Methodist mission educated teacher and choirmaster Enoch Sontonga, it was part of a collection of songs for students at the mission school in Nancefield, Johannesburg. It was performed in public for

³² Carol Muller highlights the role of Hugh Tracey and the connection to sound recordings and ethnomusicology as follows: '...[R]ecord companies like Pathe, HMV, Columbia, Decca, Brunswick, and Polydor all established subsidiaries or Marketing channels in South Africa as early as the 1920s. Though there was only minimal recording of African traditional music in the early twentieth century, scholarly interest was sparked by the work of British-born South African Hugh Tracey. In 1929, Tracey, a musicologist, initiated his recording of African music with a field trip to Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In the next two decades he would extend his recording significantly, working for the SABC and Gallo, funded by Ford and Carnegie. Clearly, commercial and scholarly interests overlapped considerably, even in the work of a musicologist like Tracey. At one point, Gallo agreed to fund Tracey's recording projects on condition that potential "hit" recordings would be given to Gallo to exploit commercially.' Muller, Carol Ann. *South African music: A century of traditions in transformation*. Vol. 1. ABC-CLIO, 2004, 27.

³³ Coplan, David., *In Township Tonight: South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* (Jacana, 2007), 162. See also, Erlmann, Veit. *African stars: Studies in black South African performance*. University of Chicago Press, 1991, and Muller, Carol Ann. *South African music: A century of traditions in transformation*. Vol. 1. ABC-CLIO, 2004.

the very first time in 1899 during the ordination ceremony of one Reverend Mboweni, who also happened to be the first Tsonga clergyman in the Methodist tradition in South Africa.³⁴ Sontonga died in 1905, but the hymn continued to play an influential role, specifically in the intellectual and political life of what would become the ANC.³⁵ The song was spread and popularised by both Sontonga and others in the form of choirs in and around Johannesburg and Natal, and in 1927, Xhosa poet S.E.K. Mqhayi added seven additional verses to the song. In terms of its political life, it was taken into the African National Congress and performed in meetings as early as 1912, and in 1925 the hymn was taken as the organisation's official anthem.³⁶ The song became an important rallying point abroad, as many ANC activists in exile employed the hymn to raise funds and pursue the struggle against both colonialism and apartheid back in South Africa.

The hymn's importance and its relevance to the liberation struggle in South Africa has been underscored repeatedly and has implicitly been suggested to be a sonic marker of the changing political attitudes of South Africa's history since the late nineteenth century. It has also been linked to the emergence of a black intellectual elite at the turn of the century and early 1900s, an emergence which, to recall, was also interwoven with what it meant to be a black soldier.³⁷ These



³⁴ Ibid., 56.

³⁵ As Tsitsi Jaji points out, prominent figures in the early ANC were also composers and musicians, such as John Langalibalele Dube, and the question of music transcription has been linked to a certain relation to transnational and trans-Atlantic solidarities as well as to the imagining of a different kind of future. See Jaji, Tsitsi. "Re-collecting the Musical Politics of John and Nokutela Dube." *Safundi* 13, no. 3-4 (2012): 213-229.

³⁶ This is captured most eloquently in William Gumede's book, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, where in a description that opens with a droning ambient sound he describes as 'an unfamiliar buzz', an account of the founding of the ANC and its inaugural conference is given: 'Sleepy Bloemfontein woke to an unfamiliar buzz. From the farthest corners of South Africa they came, by train, on foot and horseback, to this windswept city in the middle of the veld, deep in the rugged interior. For one day, the natives were *baas* in this consummate Afrikaner capital of an erstwhile Boer republic, the Orange Free State. It was 8 January 1912, a date that would be etched into the memory of all South Africans as the founding day of the African National Congress, known at the time as the South African Native National Congress... That morning, with tears in their eyes and in full voice, they sang that stirring hymn, 'Lizalise Dinga Dingalako Tixo We Nyaniso' (Fulfil Thy Promise, God of Truth) by the seminal African composer, Tiyo Soga. The melody drifted out of the sandstone hall, past startled white passers-by, across the rolling prairie stretching towards the deep-blue African skies, before disappearing over the nearby flat-topped *koppies*. Another, more popular hymn, Enoch Sontonga's 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' (God Bless Africa), would also be rendered during the conference, with equal gusto and deep emotion. In due course, the ANC would adopt this as its official anthem, and more than half a century later, many newly free African countries would proclaim 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' the national song of their fledgling nations.' Gumede, William Mervin. *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*. Zed Books Ltd., 2008, 1-2.

³⁷ This tension was also present in attempts to navigate increasing Christianisation and the preservation of African cultural identity alongside growing discrimination and subjugation, both racially and politically. See Okigbo, Austin C. "Musical inculturation, theological transformation, and the construction of black nationalism in early South African

analyses have been put forward by historians and musicologists alike and have promoted interdisciplinary frameworks to attend to what seems to be an elusive ear worm. It also reflects an anxiety about how to call into being a specific South African musical tradition (in this case the black choral tradition). In a rather reductive sense when compared to Sanders's argument, David Coplan argues that the hymn has a 'melancholy strain' that can only be thought to relate to the growing poverty and urban life of Africans in places like Johannesburg at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁸ This 'sense of lament', according to Coplan, 'reflects not only social and economic oppression but also the religious, racial and political conflicts between white Lovedale missionaries and the AME clergy that had already surfaced when 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' was first performed in 1899'.³⁹ He further argues that the original hymn contains patterns present in both Methodist hymnody and African praise singing, noting that 'we cannot know whether, in the common practice of African composers, Sontonga might have been inspired by an existing folk melody'.⁴⁰ Coplan notes the following about the hymn:



Sontonga's original song was a plea for help and blessing in an oppressive environment. As a member of South Africa's 'suppressed' black elite at the turn of the twentieth century, he sought to give hope and dignity to his students. Melancholy and 'unswinging' it may be, yet so powerfully does the song communicate both the composer's social discontent and his desire to reverently synthesise Christian and indigenous musical and cultural traditions. More than any other piece of expressive culture, 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' has come to symbolise the struggle for African unity and liberation in South Africa, becoming over a century of resistance a musical embodiment of the thirst for freedom. Yet the song's popularity extends beyond the borders of South Africa and the confines of the liberation struggle that it so actively animated. Constructed in the form of a blessing, the hymn offers a message of unity and uplift and an exhortation to act morally and spiritually on behalf of the African continent...In Sontonga and Mqhayi's version of 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika', Africa is blessed, and its leaders – then colonial, since revolutionary, now democratic – are held accountable to transcendent goals that go beyond those of the state. This call for justice and redemption is present in both the political and more strictly religious sentiments of the song, and its 'blessing' links religion to politics as a source of transcendent morality.⁴¹

choral music tradition." *Africa Today* 57, no. 2 (2010): 43-65. In relation to how the hymn is a marker of changing political attitudes, see wa Muiu, Mueni. "The African Imagined Community, 1867–1948." In *The Pitfalls of Liberal Democracy and Late Nationalism in South Africa*, pp. 21-45. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008,

³⁸ Coplan, D., *In Township Tonight: South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* (Jacana, 2007), 56.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 58, 61.

The notion that the hymn is linked to its political climate and that it is a product of hybridisation and synthesis (both musically and ideologically) requires further consideration. Because of this understanding of the connotations of the hymn, it is thought to both fit neatly into and problematise a longstanding tradition of black South African choral music.⁴² Simultaneously however, Coplan's reductive reading here also echoes a disciplinary slippage at the time in what would become ethnomusicology proper (and in a way lay the foundation for what would be the intellectual undergirding of something like a segregated radio station network).⁴³ This kind of slippage is encapsulated in a warning by Gavin Steingo where he alerts us to the fact that the sense of spirituality and 'Africanness' in Coplan's reading emerges less from an analysis of the song than from a particular intellectual impulse that has a much longer history in the discipline of musicology. It would seem that the hymn itself acts as a disobedient object. In the 1890s, as Gavin Steingo notes, the question of how to understand black-composed Victorian music would result in a concept of race coalescing with music, so much so that it is at that time that 'colonial music critics of the late nineteenth century claimed to identify traits of "South African Native" music where none were to be found, making excessively vague and even erroneous observations about black-composed Victorian



⁴² We are reminded of Plaatje's intellectual and political contemporary Charlotte Maxeke, who travelled to England as part of the African Jubilee Singers along with her sister Kate Manye in 1891. The choir were received enthusiastically but also, as Tsitsi Jaji points out, 'their performances also fueled debate on what authentic South African voices ought to sound like, and...some listeners were disappointed by the choir's failure to perform their difference sufficiently.' Interestingly, we see some resonances here with Plaatje's experience with 'Cradle of the World', as Jaji explains: The audience's disappointment was aural for the concert was not short on visual spectacle: the costuming provided lurid caricature stereotypes contrasting "raw" (as the language of the period put it) and "civilized natives." The choir sang the first half of the program, devoted to "native songs," in purportedly traditional dress, featuring animal skins from a hodgepodge of exotic locales (including a tiger pelt that somehow strayed from orientalized Asia to savage Africa), and other signs of primitiveness. After a quick costume change during the intermission, they performed the second half's program of standard Victorian amateur repertoire pieces in "modern," which is to say English, fashions of the day. The object lesson was to demonstrate how civilization's arts could transform guileless authentic natives into modern sophisticates. In order for this lesson to hold true, the knowledge that the signs of authenticity were a transcription of metropolitan fantasies onto black bodies had to be concealed by the mutual consent of audience and performers, the equivalent of a stage whisper. The audience was to suppress any doubts over how a "native" song came to fall into four-part harmony along the lines of European hymnody, or why Southern Africans were singing of (U.S. Southern) cotton, but rather were to marvel at how wondrously transformed they looked and sounded once the ostensibly improving conventions of Victorian concert performance were transcribed onto their bodies. That this was the same decade that blacks in Britain were organizing the international Pan-African Conference only shows how outrageous the reception of these performances was.' Tsitsi Jaji. 'Sight-Reading: Early Black South African Transcriptions of Freedom' in *Africa in stereo: Modernism, music, and Pan-African solidarity*. Oxford University Press, 2014. See also, Erlmann, Veit. *African stars: Studies in black South African performance*. University of Chicago Press, 1991.

⁴³ See for example, Meintjes, Louise. *Sound of Africa!: making music Zulu in a South African studio*. Duke University Press, 2003, for the ways in which a tribalised sound was produced in the studios of the SABC specifically for radio.

music.⁴⁴ We might see a trace of this in the reviews of Plaatje and Lattimore's 'Cradle of the World'. Such a racially deterministic outlook as suggested by Grant Olwage has persisted into contemporary musicology, where a politics of refusal has been located in black South African choral works without much evidence to support such an assertion.⁴⁵ This has been characterised by Steingo as 'the attempt made by analysts to uncover an African aesthetic beneath normative European compositional practices' which 'reflects less an historical awareness of musical praxis or black consciousness than the will to make all music by oppressed peoples fit into the framework of hybridity theory.'⁴⁶ These observations govern how the structure of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika is analysed and thought about that is apparent in Steingo's comments below:

The first 10 measures of the Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika are typical of late nineteenth century European choral music. The voice-leading of the SATB texture is sound in terms of nineteenth century harmonic practice, and the harmonic motion is fairly standard. Following Olwage's warning, I suggest that a basic type of structural analysis can end with these observations, and need not be pursued further. Having said this, however, many have been tempted to hear something specifically "South African" in Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.⁴⁷

It is this temptation to 'hear something specifically South African' that Steingo discerns in the work of David Coplan, and it is a warning we might extend to Sanders in his reading of Plaatje and, more generally, a caution for intellectual history in South Africa. He also reminds us that it is important to keep in mind the fact that the hymn has changed rather significantly over time and under different circumstances, it exuded different meanings. The original hymn was very different from what has become known as South Africa's national anthem today, with its verses written in isiXhosa. Whether or not Sontonga himself was a native isiXhosa speaker — a 'Thembu Xhosa of the Mpinga clan'⁴⁸ according to Coplan, or as described by Steingo as 'a Tsonga from the north of the former Transvaal province' — the work of language in making the hymn available outside of its

⁴⁴ Steingo, Gavin. 'Producing Kwaito: "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" After Apartheid', in *The World of Music*, Vol. 50, No. 2, Kwaito (2008), 107.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 107. See also, Olwage, Grant., 'John Knox Bokwe, Colonial Composer: Tales about Race and Music', in *Journal of The Royal Musical Association*, 131 (2006).

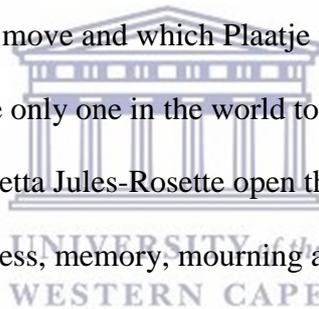
⁴⁶ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁸ Coplan, D., *In Township Tonight: South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* (Jacana, 2007), 56.

religious and eschatological context is significant.⁴⁹ isiXhosa was the language of the black intellectual elite at the time and its generally agreed that this may be why Sontonga chose to write verse in that particular language. Indeed, more recently the hymn has found itself rendered in many different ways and for different contexts.⁵⁰ After the end of the apartheid era, the hymn took on a different life, tone, verse content, and structure, with the inclusion and adaptation of the hymn to include four different languages. This included parts of Afrikaans poet C.J. Langenhoven's *Die Stem Van Suid Afrika*, which was set to music in 1921 and became the national anthem during the Nationalist government period from 1957 - 1994.⁵¹ Steingo reminds us that this melding of different languages was intended to birth the new nation through song, exemplifying the move from racial segregation to diversity. The move included a musical modulation of a whole tone between what would be considered the black part and the white part of the anthem, which 'alarms the ear' — a point that Steingo stresses is an ironic move and which Plaatje would have called a failure of interpretation — and the anthem is the only one in the world to be sung in two keys.⁵²

When David Coplan and Bennetta Jules-Rosette open their analysis of the hymn with statements relating to time consciousness, memory, mourning and reconciliation, we are invited to



⁴⁹ Steingo, Gavin., 'Producing Kwaito: "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" After Apartheid', in *The World of Music*, Vol. 50, No. 2, Kwaito (2008), 104.

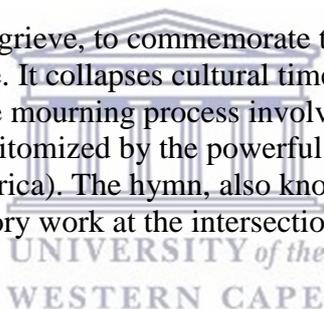
⁵⁰ Ibid., 105. Steingo gives us a brief history of how the hymn has been recorded and, in many ways, reinvented: 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika has been performed and recorded by countless groups through the decades. Notable recordings include an arrangement on the soundtrack of the 1987 film, *Cry Freedom* (dir. Richard Attenborough), a performance by the London Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Andrew Previn, and Charlie Hayden and the Liberation Jazz Orchestra's 1980 version on the album *Dream Makers*. In the post-apartheid period, white South African rock musicians have used part of Nkosi...in ironic or satirical ways, for example in Danny de Wet's *New National Anthem* and Sons of Trouts's *Kom Psalm*. In addition to these recordings, we may add South African avant-garde jazz saxophonist Zim Nqgawana's "abstract" version of the song and kwaito musician M'du's dreamy synth version entitled *Prayer* (1999).'

⁵¹ The poem was written in 1918 with only three verses, and the fourth verse with religious themes being requested by the government later. The music was composed by Reverend Marthinus Lourens de Villiers in 1921. During the 1920s, the composition was often played at the close of daily broadcasts by the SABC, with *God Save The King*. Interestingly, it was also recorded by the Zonophone record company in 1926 and was performed publicly for the first time in 1928. From 1952 it was sung in English too, with both having official status.

⁵² Steingo has also, through an analysis of a version by kwaito group Boom Shaka, shown how the hymn itself has many parts that make up its impact, both historical and social. Through this version of the hymn, which Steingo suggests was considered deeply disrespectful when it was released by much of the South African public, Boom Shaka set a different course for the future of South African youth. Arguing that the reinvention stands as testament to the creative energies of a new generation of South Africans, Steingo suggests that at the core of Boom Shaka's version is a move towards the post-apartheid. Steingo, Gavin. 'Producing Kwaito: "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" After Apartheid', in *The World of Music*, Vol. 50, No. 2, Kwaito (2008), 105. See also, Mokgoatšana, Sekgothe. "Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika:(dis)harmony or Justice (?)." *South African Journal of African Languages* 19, no. 1 (1999): 46-51.

attend once again to the technical object as well as the ways in which sonicity figures the hymn albeit implicitly. By figuring mourning as a technical process akin to the phonographic recording, we arrive at a different constellation of sound and history. In their analysis, they too draw attention to the ways in which the hymn itself has undergone many changes and has been reiterated numerous times. In their reading however like Steingo, they call attention to the ways in which the hymn represents a universal message that made it so attractive to several resistance movements on the continent. More importantly for our discussion here, is the attention they give to whether the printed or the performed constitutes the original.⁵³ I would suggest that a more productive route would be to think about the recorded rather than the printed or performed in the way Coplan and Jules-Rosette suggest. In fact, they already preempt such a reading and provide a way into this discussion in their opening paragraph:

Mourning is a solemn pause to grieve, to commemorate the past, and to acknowledge new hopes for the present and future. It collapses cultural time consciousness into an unfolding pathway of memory. Part of the mourning process involves the reconciliation of loss through a redemptive blessing that is epitomized by the powerful and multivalent hymn "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" (God Bless Africa). The hymn, also known as the African national anthem, provides an open field of memory work at the intersection between public religion and popular culture.⁵⁴



It is in this sense that we can read and produce a different account of the national anthem of South Africa. While there has been considerable critique made of the fact that the combination of Die Stem with Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika has been a musicological disaster, with a very clear dissonance being caused by the insertion of Die Stem, we might trace this move of consolidation from an earlier moment than the transition period, and one that might grant us a different sense of politics. This is evident in the warning to not seek a South African-ness in the hymn, despite our tendency to do so. Given the ways in which the hymn itself and its transformation over time draws into its fold

⁵³ We might read the issue of the original through Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier's genealogy of musical orthography in Colombia where the voice and the written come to a head through the problem of the printed. See Ochoa Gautier, Ana Maria., *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth Century Colombia* (Duke University Press, 2014).

⁵⁴ Echoes of Ernst and Adorno as discussed earlier may be heard here. Jules-Rosette, Bennetta, and Coplan, David., "'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" From Independent Spirit to Political Mobilization' in *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 173-174 (2004), 343.

the genesis of ethnomusicology, the politics of translation, and the question of cultural relativism, the hymn is uniquely South African. David Coplan and others have argued that what becomes the national anthem 'symbolize[s] more than any other piece of expressive culture the struggle for African unity and liberation in South Africa', and that its importance stretches beyond the country of its inception as well as 'the confines of the liberation struggle that it so actively animated'.⁵⁵

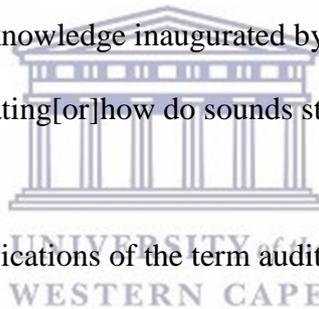
We must briefly return to a discussion that opened this dissertation. That discussion is at the core of the very constitution of sound studies as a discipline is concerned with the relationship between image and sound. The division of the senses and the audiovisual litany that haunts the formation that is sound studies is addressed by John Mowitt through an analysis of visualism and its concept of the gaze. Through an addressing of the gaze, Mowitt inquires what the stakes are about asking whether sound studies would need a similar formative concept. Mowitt suggests that perhaps the audit would be the appropriate epithet to do this work. In delineating what the problem for attending to sound is, he draws attention to the ways in which gaze as a concept has been central to and indeed governed inquiries around the visual, and how a similar kind of concept would be useful for the work of thinking about sound. Mowitt proposes the audit as a response to the discourse of visualism from the vantage point of sound, suggesting that it has many connotations and resonances, least of which is the idea that the audit would emphasise the work of perception and the crucial analogical relation that the act of listening affords comparatively to the gaze. He speaks of it as follows:

Audit? In contemporary English usage *audit* can refer to the review of financial records, as well as an attenuated form of enrolment in a college or university course. As such, a student listens but does not, at least in principle, speak or write. The former, an audit, is a noun, the latter, to audit, a verb. Etymologically, *audit* bears the semantic profile that allows us to recognise its presence in *audition*, *auditorium*, and *audience*. It is a "hearing." Beyond that, [...] this hearing, as a mode of perception, has a primordial tie with aesthetics, with what Rancière has called 'the distribution of the sensible'. Pulling these threads together, one arrives not so much at a perception or sensible event but at a fold where perception turns back or over on itself, traversing the faculty of hearing with the angle, the posture of listening. It is here that the audit serves as a coherent analogue to the gaze.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid., 344.

⁵⁶ Mowitt, J., *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities* (University of California Press, 2015), 4-5.

Simply through the definition above, the audit might be the most appropriate ‘tool’ with which to ‘interpret’ Plaatje’s intellectual labour and his own emphasis on the ‘essential’ nature of that labour. Beyond the resonances of the audience and auditorium with the court room as spectacle for the ears, and aside from references to a ‘hearing’, a legal and juridical category itself entailed in the courtroom but also in the TRC, we are invited by Mowitt here to think the posture of listening. It is this imbuing of ‘the faculty of hearing with the angle’ and the relation to aesthetics that we can think Plaatje with and think with Plaatje. It is of course listening, in its central position which Mowitt places it, which grants the audit its valence as a concept, given that it sits both inside and outside of the discourse it purports to act upon. Mowitt makes the relation here to discipline, or rather the ways in which the audit speaks directly to the relationship between sound and the work of discipline. Here the audit comes into its own, in the sense in which it produces the terms upon which to recognise what is a limit of knowledge inaugurated by sound itself. It is in this sense that Mowitt asks, 'how sounds situate situating[or]how do sounds stir us to recognise situating as a problem'.⁵⁷



In order to fully grasp the implications of the term audit, we must return to the question of transferential listening and introduce now what Mowitt calls thirdness. Thirdness, or a term used to invoke that third kind of listening where 'the organ by which the hovering attention of the analyst sifts the discourse of the analysed for traces of the unconscious', is precisely where the work of the audit rests.⁵⁸ To return to that discussion, before attending to thirdness proper, and to attend to the confusion between Chion and Barthes and Havas's different modes of listening, is necessary at this point. To bring them together rather forcefully, I quote Mowitt at length in his comparison of the two in relation to the audit as concept:

Striking here is how the third mode or type of listening brings otherwise disparate concepts and problems into proximity. For Barthes and Havas, who index listening to particular objects, the third mode of listening is distinctive in taking Lacan's concept (or, strictly speaking, the process it designates) of *significance* (as noted earlier, 'signifierness') as its object. This is a listening that attends to the other. Audited. Because they offer no explicit name for it, I am tempted to call it transferential listening. This is not an allusion to Reik's

⁵⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁸ Mowitt, J., 'Avuncular Listening: The Unexpected' in *Semiotic Inquiry* 29, 2-3 (2009), 84-5.

'third ear' per se, because it surpasses the notion of 'hovering' attention, but key in both formulations is precisely the status of the third. Chion, however, names the third mode of listening "reduced", by which he means an aural attending to the *event* of listening. Reduced listening does not seek the source or cause of a sound; it listens to how the sound takes place within our listening. If taken together, these analyses situate thirdness in sound at the point where sonic substance folds, as if deploying a spatula, the subjective field into itself. It is not the agent of listening but the agency of sound as it orients its listener, a formulation meant to call up the theoretical vocabulary of 'positioning,' while accepting the motif of 'permeation'.⁵⁹

While for Sanders a listening to the other would constitute a responsibility-in-complicity, it would be better constituted by Mowitt as a 'listening *that attends* to the other.' For Mowitt, thirdness occupies the space of mediation, and perhaps most interestingly if read alongside James Lastra is a concept that features most prominently for Mowitt in the field of cinema studies, a field concerned with a medium where sound and image collapse into one another.⁶⁰ The turn to cinema is a move meant to echo a discrepancy in inquiries attending to the question of mediation in relation to cultural works, and is a generative suggestion given the concept of remediation we are now familiar with in the work of Grusin and Bolter. Thirdness as a category also brings to bear on sound the question of the third world, a reference which Mowitt draws out through the emergence of the term "third cinema".⁶¹ The third world, as opposed to what has now become an empty term, the periphery, might also be a way to think the world of the colony or more precisely, that world that Plaatje inhabits as interpreter in the courtroom in Mafeking. Indeed, the idea of 'third cinema' as that which is 'a cinema of struggle, of emancipation, of, broadly speaking, the left' resonates equally sympathetically with the work Plaatje did before heading to the UK to record Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika: a film tour.

Plaatje, Thirdness, and the Trialogue

James Lastra suggests that two general models of sound recording emerge when tracking the history of technological reproduction of sound and its relation to cinema, namely the phonographic and the telephonic. Attached to their respective technological objects, the phonograph and the telephone,

⁵⁹ Mowitt, J., *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities* (University of California Press, 2015), 123-4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 19. I will speak to James Lastra later in this chapter.

⁶¹ Ibid., 123.

they both invite different articulations of sound for a perceived listener. For the phonograph, the concern was and is fidelity or the 'perfectly faithful reproduction of a spatiotemporally specific musical performance (as if heard from the best seat in the house)'.⁶² In this case, all aspects of the sound event that the technical object is aimed at (to use a photographic/warlike analogy) are significant and need to be recorded. These aims affect all aspects of the moment of recording, so much so that the technical requirements would be specific and would determine the recording process and final recording in its entirety. The other model of sound recording that Lastra locates in a tenuous relationship with the phonographic are the demands of the telephonic, which 'sacrifices acoustic specificity in favour of rendering speech clearly under widely varying conditions'.⁶³ This is attached to the idea that speech occupies more than just a sonic space: it is more of a social sounding than an abstract sounding with regard to narrative. Where Lastra associates the phonographic with fidelity and exactness, the telephonic is attached to notions of intelligibility and to the technicity of script and writing which the recording device is thought to emulate in its recording of speech. Lastra employs this division of sound to argue that in the case of the telephonic, 'sound possesses an intrinsic hierarchy that renders some aspects essential and others not', and it invites us to question the ways in which the phonographic and what we consider the objectivity of sound reproduction – even the idea of reproduction proper – works.⁶⁴

Lastra argues that it is in cinema that we notice these models most prominently, noting that 'the difference between a sonic space whose principal goal is the intelligibility of some sounds at the expense of others (foregrounding narratively important information against a reduced, generic background), and a space that is constructed in order to represent a particular real act of audition, embodies the basic difference between the telephonic and phonographic models.'⁶⁵ We can set Lastra's structure to work to think the relation between interpretation and translation in the case of

⁶² Lastra, James. *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 139.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

Plaatje. In 'The Essential Interpreter', it would seem that Plaatje argues for a combination of the two, a melding that hails a cinematic understanding of diegetic and non-diegetic sound. It would also seem that Sanders is more interested in what a telephonic intelligibility might look like for the intellectual as opposed to an approach that is concerned with fidelity, and subsequently reads the work of interpretation as merely a question of intelligibility. The triologue is that mechanism that allows us to read 'The Essential Interpreter' and hear Plaatje's recording of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika alongside one another. It mediates, much like the interpreter, and it produces a thirdness that is as much political as it is sonic. It is not, in Sanders terms, a ventriloquism, but rather a transposition. We see this played out in the ways in which the process of interpretation has the same demands placed upon it as would be asked of a phonographic device. These demands are be those of urgency, fidelity, and convenience:

This translation, re-translation and cross-translation is kept up by the interpreter in an audible voice so rapidly and intelligently that, although he is carrying it on through three languages, he should keep nobody waiting; the only person whose convenience is studied being the occupant of the bench.⁶⁶

Sanders already notices a move towards the phonographic in his reading of the text but turns to Plaatje's preoccupation with phonetics and the awe in which he held that technology instead. If we are to take anything from Sanders's reading of 'The Essential Interpreter' that would prove useful to our naming of Plaatje as auditor, it is the twofold assertion of the technicality of the role of the interpreter: the interpreter is, as Plaatje himself phrases it a 'human tool' and thus not a party involved in the dispensing of justice, and therefore the interpreter is the only figure in the triologue that goes unchanged by the process.⁶⁷ If we are to consider Plaatje as an intellectual, we must also take note of the ways in which Plaatje crafted a specific disciplinary specialisation in the form of interpretation, calling those who were not as experienced and qualified as him 'amateurs'. It is also important to consider the work of interpretation as Plaatje conceptualizes it as a kind of auditing.

⁶⁶ Plaatje, Sol., *Selected Writings*, edited by Willan, Brian. (Wits University Press, 2016), 57.

⁶⁷ It should be underscored that I am not interested in producing 'another' Plaatje. Rather, I am seeking to synthesize already existing interpretations of Plaatje's intellectual legacy with the very question of interpretation itself as an aesthetic sensibility we can and should call an auditing.

I would argue that what Sanders misses in a reading of Plaatje and by extension what undoes the concept of complicity is precisely the question of interpretation. The question of interpretation that underwrites 'The Essential Interpreter' is, as I will argue, the very question that becomes available when we consider the recording of the anthem in 1923, and while a reading of interpretation is useful in thinking the question of advocacy, the problem of speaking for is a problem best articulated through the relationship between interpretation and the phonographic. This link between the essential interpreter as text and the recording of the anthem in 1923 is audible in the question of auditing. The question of interpretation and translation would find its ultimate expression in the phonographic.

We would be remiss to not also account for the ways in which the courtroom that Plaatje finds himself in is a very specific kind of colonial juridical structure. On the eve of the South African war and amid growing tensions between colonial administrators and local traditional authorities, it was perhaps appropriate that the question of interpretation would play out the way it did. We must also keep in mind that Plaatje himself is caught up in the war that follows, echoing the discussion around wartime. Indeed, the manuscript that is "The Essential Interpreter" is linked in conception to that of 'Sekgoma - The Black Dreyfus', where Plaatje writes at length about the workings of the South African judicial system for a foreign audience. Put in more frank terms, we shall discover that the idea of wartime allows us to get at the ways in which war and the question of militarisation is figured by something as mundane as a recording. Indeed, it also opens the problem of wartime to the phonographic, allowing a connection to be made with the broader question of the phonographic attitude that meanders through this dissertation. It is tempting to read Plaatje's laments vis a vis the legal system of his time as driven by a desire for a more equitable juridical landscape in the face of increasingly solidifying racial sentiment. While such a reading is welcome and accurate, I would argue that it misses the fact that what Plaatje is asking for is coloured by a phonographic impulse: a tension that James Lastra would call the reconciliation of a need for intelligibility as figured by the telephonic (and by extension, the bureaucratic) and a need for

fidelity as would have been the kind desired by the gramophone industry that took up Plaatje and other African voices into its portfolio. To be an interpreter and to be essential is to be a specific kind of listener.

We can also use Lastra's structure to think the relation between interpretation and translation in the case of Plaatje. In 'The Essential Interpreter', Plaatje argues for a combination of the two, a melding that hails a cinematic understanding of diegetic and non-diegetic sound. An example of this which follows Plaatje's delineation of the trialogue as the very acoustic structure governing the colonial courtroom is captured in a mistranslation:

A familiar phrase, too often slaughtered by interpreters is one which at the close of a preparatory examination the magistrate says to the prisoner, 'You are committed for trial'. It appears that some interpreters, finding this sentence so short in the official language, consider it tiresome to explain its meaning in too many words. They prefer to cut it short at the expense of the prisoner's information. I heard one interpreter tell a prisoner what would literally be, 'The magistrate says that you will wait for the judge' – truly a serious error.⁶⁸

Here the two models are combined in order to produce what can only be thought of as a transferential listening, an auditing. This is evident in the recording of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika, where Sylvia Colenso in her role as accompaniment to Plaatje is responsible for the balancing of the phonographic demands for fidelity and the telephonic need for intelligibility, offering a call and response type response to Plaatje as he sings. We can also think of the fact that the hymn is not marked on the label of the record as less of a political move at the time and more of a move informed by a demand for the phonographic rather than the telephonic. This would offer insights into its location within a genealogy of the birth of ethnomusicology through Hugh Tracey. When Plaatje comments on the Philharmonic Band's melody as cited earlier, we see a coalescing of the tension between interpretation and auditing, between the phonographic and the telephonic. In 'The Essential Interpreter', we see a playing out and playing back of the tension between fidelity and intelligibility, perhaps more usefully that has been suggested cinema deals with this problem. It is

⁶⁸ Plaatje, Sol., *Selected Writings*, edited by Willan, Brian. (Wits University Press, 2016), 58.

much less of an 'audile' technique than it is a technics of audition. This would explain with much more clarity Plaatje's interest in phonetics than what Sanders suggests.⁶⁹ The sonorous envelope that is the echo chamber of the interpreter is one that Plaatje argues depends entirely on the interpreter's ability to navigate that tension that a recording and playback of sound (or memory) asks for. The interpreter inhabits or proposes a technology of the self which we can call the auditor.

To reiterate, what the essential interpreter therefore introduces into our lexicon of sonic terms is the idea of the trialogue: a structure figured by the intermediary. Here, the interpreter is a listener of the third kind, and this observation affords the opportunity to revisit that third kind of listening. We can read the phonographic attitude and what I am calling the work of the auditor evident in the text perhaps most saliently in this concept of the trialogue. It bears more than just in name a relation to what John Mowitt has called 'thirdness'; a concept enveloped in the idea of transferential listening we encountered earlier.⁷⁰ The dispensing of justice in Plaatje's text hinges less on the role of the human tool that is the interpreter that it does on the 'use' of this tool as it appears in the technical ensemble that is the trialogue. Indeed, what Plaatje is doing – through his work as a court interpreter, his recording of Nkosi, his interests in phonetics, his political activism as well as his aesthetic interests – is auditing, and working at the limit of where a certain kind of listening is needed.⁷¹ It is of course, a recording marked by both a sonic modernity and a colonial modernity, but it is also the recording of a man of letters, who was deeply invested in questions of translation, of language, of culture, and more importantly, of the proper interpretation of indigenous tongues in courts of law. In fact, if one reads 'The Essential Interpreter', Plaatje draws out the inconsistency of listenership *and* the failure to address the importance of interpreters as it coalesces in colonial jurisprudence. It is a deeply phonographic text, not only in the sense that it is marked by

⁶⁹ It is perhaps important for the argument of technics as well as for the question of image to hold onto the fact that Sontonga was also a photographer.

⁷⁰ It is interesting that both Mowitt and Lastra turn to the cinema to account for thirdness and to find a middle ground between fidelity and intelligibility respectively. It is indeed in this middle ground that the 'real' of sonic experience and of listening is produced, and as Mowitt notes, it is here that the concept of the audit is fixed as an equivalent to the gaze of visualism.

⁷¹ The trialogue is interesting too because it is absent as a device in the second part of the manuscript, 'Sekgoma - The Black Dreyfus'. One could argue that this is precisely because it is no longer necessary: Plaatje has already expressed his mode of listening in 'The Essential Interpreter'.

the technological, but also because it is constitutive of a sonic trajectory which is deeply political, and comes to mark a certain sound as sound, as a political move rather than merely a whistle or a shout.



Conclusion: Anacruses

In a sense, what I have done in this study was to perform a series of anacruses. In this dissertation I have asked what it would mean to subject military historiography and broader South African historical writing to a discourse on technology and the senses. In so doing, I have argued that what is overlooked in military historiography is its tendency to produce warring motifs that fail to hail its subjects as anything further than technological. In reading such a historiography on the terms of a phonographic attitude, I have suggested that the rationality that informs the concept of war in South African historiography may be reoriented away from the pernicious tropes that would produce the kind of de-subjectification that colonialism and apartheid constituted in its mobilization of technology and the senses. These tropes, which I have marked in this study through the deployment of the notion of the warring motif, are modes of not only encountering the violence of war but to reproduce this violence sensorially. At the same time, I have endeavoured in this study to meander along the edges of both sound studies and military historiography to amplify that site where the limits of both might resonate, and how we might attend to such resonance in order to consider both differently.

When approaching the deaths of Bheki Mlangeni and Lungile Tabalaza, I have asked what it meant to think of the silence that is sounded by the aftermath of their deaths as an invitation to educe, or to actualize. In deploying such technical terms, I have sought to bring the phonographic as the work of situating in contact with a rendering of these figures as merely spectral. At the same time, I have asked whether that deadness might tell us more about the relationship between the image and the sonic that we would otherwise think of as the texture of the tragic. The Walkman bomb, the silent track, and their graphic actualisations are placed in relation to that which is excruciatingly and piercingly loud: the whistle or shout. This polemological sound object, I argue, is one that demonstrates how it is the logic of military history has evasively mediated a relation to the precolonial, questions of listening, and how it is the violent scripts of warfare perpetuated in the field of military history persist well into what we would call a triumphalist post-apartheid narrative.

By thinking with studies on sound on how it is the phonographic might attend to the warring motifs that haunt the figure of the infantryman, I have suggested that the whistle or shout might be thought of as a belliphonic soundmark, that which inaugurates a distinct mode of listening and intelligibility.

The question of the phonographic comes to a head quite literally in the third chapter of the dissertation, where I have argued for reading apartheid radio and transpositions in printmaking together. By underscoring the criticality of the radio as mediating interface and the figure of the head in Kentridge's print as indicative of a radiobody other than that which would pick up apartheid's frequency, I argued that we might read a concept of the border as dominates military historiography through remediation. Following this, I addressed the difference between the time of war inscribed by the drill and the bell, arguing that when we consider a debate surrounding a society at war, we would do well to abide by the sonicity of the missing object that returns so as to escape the drive of a historiography after militarization to constitute the unarmed labourer as the soldier of the nation.

The final chapter of this dissertation deployed Sol Plaatje's triologue to augment John Mowitt's concept of the audit. If, as Mowitt suggests, sound studies should remedy its disciplinary urge for an object by finding an analogous concept to visualism's gaze, then I argue Plaatje's triologue might be a way to deploy the auditor to attend to an oversight by military historiography. That oversight, which was to disregard the aesthetic and the posture of listening that early nationalist thinkers and activists such as Plaatje embodied, may be one that produces the field of history as one that overwhelms the problematic of apartheid. In constituting Plaatje as an auditor, I have argued that we may account for the absence of this early reckoning with regimes of aesthetic sensibility and war.

Anacrusis, etymologically, derives from the Greek meaning to push back, push up, to stop short, to check. Its roots also speak of a relation to smash, strike, and shatter, as well as a distant relation in Old English and Old Norse to feeling pain or sorrow, or to make sad. By 1833, the term

had been inscribed in the language of music and literature, coming to mean an ‘unstressed syllable at the beginning of a verse’, drawing a relation to meter and rhythm. It is about anticipation, movement, interruption, the other. It is perhaps the appropriate term with which to begin such an inquiry, and perhaps a fitting way to end.



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