NOSTALGIA FOR THE FUTURE

Gendered violence, post-apartheid spatiality and the male gaze: The troubled 'new' South Africa in *Like Clockwork*, *Daddy's Girl* and *Water Music*, three crime novels by Margie Orford

PhD Thesis
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I dedicate this work to the survivors of sexual violence who entrusted me with their experiences, and to the police officers and forensic experts who work so tirelessly to ensure that victims of violence are afforded justice.

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ABSTRACT

The Clare Hart series consists of five crime novels. Submitted as the creative component of this PhD by publication are *Like Clockwork*, *Daddy's Girl* and *Water Music*, the three novels that have gendered violence as their primary subject. The critical component is this essay. Through a consideration of the critical reception of my crime novels and trauma theory, I discuss the ways in which these novels represent the gendered violence of the new South Africa, and trouble the frameworks and assumptions through which such gendered violence is put into writing. At stake in this discussion are the parameters and possibilities of the crime genre; and the blind spots and assumptions informing some influential theories of trauma. A discussion of the representational strategies of my work elicits an argument that South African crime fiction has introduced a new iteration of post-colonial nostalgia, which can be termed a nostalgia for the future.

Keywords: South Africa, gender, sexual violence, crime fiction, nostalgia

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Introduction

'To know a society one must know its crimes.'

Emile Durkheim

On 27 April 1994 the first democratic, non-racial elections were held in South Africa. The 'old' South Africa, a racist pariah state, defined since its colonial inception by violence and great differentials of power and wealth, was reconstituted into the new South Africa – a human rights-based democracy. The hard-won future, in which all would be equal before the law, was ushered in by the newly elected president, Nelson Mandela. 'Each of us,' he proclaimed in the first month of presidency, 'is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country … a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world' (1994).

By the time I returned to live in Cape Town in 2001, however, that vision was threatened by the overwhelming violence that plagued the new South Africa. Violence, including violence against women, defined South Africa during its long history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. In the post-apartheid era, it seemed as if the political violence, which raged from the Soweto Uprising in 1976 to the end of apartheid in 1994, had not so much ended as been displaced from the public spaces of township streets into the private spaces of the home and the body.

The particular locus, in the form of sexual violence, was the bodies of women in the widely reported but statistically hard to quantify crime of rape (Wilkinson 2016). In order to understand this apparent locational shift as well as the nature of this gendered violence I set to work as an investigative journalist and as an author of crime fiction. I

was determined to answer a deceptively simple question: why was South Africa so violent?

Sexual violence in the new South Africa

'One begins investigating already invested in an ongoing historical process and positioning towards which one may attempt to acquire some transformative perspective and critical purchase', writes Dominic La Capra (2013: 13). His statement was true of how I wrote as a journalist on the political transition, organised crime and sexual violence. I excavated beneath the surface of the fear to disinter the facts in an attempt to grapple with the disorientating feeling that, despite the disjuncture between the past and the present, nothing had changed while everything had changed. The belief was that in the 'new South Africa', a term used from the 1994 transition until the 2008 global economic crash, the past was over and that everything was new because it had been declared so (Goodman 2017). Of this confused and conflicted temporality, Jean and John Comaroff write:

> It has long been argued that social disorder, expressed in elevated rates of criminality, is in the nature of transition itself, that it inevitably follows epochal changes in the order of things. Our times, like many before … are commonly described in the language of historical disjuncture … Little wonder, then, that the ruptures of the ongoing present, real or imagined, are often associated, in collective consciousness as well as in social theory, with transgression, liminality, and lawlessness (2006: 2).

To get to grips with the pervasive sense of lawlessness that was manifest in the prevalence of so much violence, I worked with the police, perpetrators and victims in an attempt to trace the intersections between poverty, race and gender. As a journalist, I wrote numerous articles about organised crime, corruption, rape and the murder of

women in the post-apartheid era.[1] Narratives of sexual violence and rape were central to South Africa's narrative about race. Stories of sexual violence and rape, which fed into racist tropes of purity and innocence, of culpability and pollution, were luridly reported in the press. However, comparative crime statistics for apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa were hard to come by and unreliable, though Lucy Graham writes that, 'Rape statistics have remained consistently high in South Africa's transition to democracy, but post-liberation South Africa, particularly in the last decade, has been characterised by increased discourse on sexual violence' (2012: 16).

In an attempt to distinguish the facts from fear-driven and often racist fictions about this gendered violence, I sought to understand the central role that sexual violence plays in determining a gender hierarchy despite the egalitarian ideals of the new South Africa, where the constitution, introduced in 1996, specifically guarantees women equal rights. 'Prior to 1994,' writes Rosemary Jolly, 'women, and black women in particular, were not regarded as subjects in their own right legally' (2010: 82).

The complex nature of women's testimony to their own experience of violence was brought into sharp relief during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Victims of 'gross human rights violations' who testified before the TRC sought ways to have their experiences of violation officially recognised, not least for the purpose of restitution. A special Women's Hearing was set up because it was felt that women's voices and experiences were not or could not be adequately heard.

Jolly writes that, 'for women the enforced reading of human rights violations [was] sexual,' while men, who were in fact also sexually assaulted in a number of instances, were 'not called to testify about sexual violation' (2010: 93–94). For women, their testimony about sexual violence ended up defining them as women. It was, however, the one thing that could not be spoken of directly and

[1] 'Murders of women and children made up 19.3% of the total murder count in South Africa in 2017/18' (Africa Check 2018).

publicly. This impasse leads Rosalind Morris to conclude that, in the new South Africa, 'The fact that sexual violence can be read, simultaneously, as a possible form of political activity and as the absolute limit of the political suggests that the most fundamental institutions and principles of social order in this newly liberalizing state are currently in question' (2006: 57).

As Morris suggests, the refiguration of the relationship between personal and political meant that sexual violence could be understood simultaneously as intimate and personal *and* political. The personal, as the feminist adage asserts, is always political but it was the nature of that personal politics that I wished to describe. Specifically, I sought to comprehend how the politics of the personal was experienced in the private spaces of body and home and how this shaped, and was shaped by, what happened in public spaces.

Although my research would inform the novels I went on to write, the complex truth about the origins and the meaning of the gendered violence in South Africa eluded me. The trauma of sexual violence was difficult to express directly within the confines of journalistic reporting; the truth was, I sensed, dark, tangled and complex. It was the complexity of this entanglement of the public and private, the personal and political, that prompted my turn to fiction.

Writing violence

Literature, always deeply entwined with politics in South Africa, played an important social and moral role in the apartheid era by bearing witness to injustice. There is a long tradition of protest literature in South Africa, from Alex la Guma to Nadine Gordimer, writers whose work is testimony to the violence of apartheid (Morve 2015). In some senses, my writing continues this tradition in that I wrote to protest against gendered violence and what is done to women.

The urgent question, however, was which form was best suited to investigate and to bear witness to what was happening in a

putatively post-apartheid South Africa. The enduring effect of violence and its concomitant trauma on individuals and on society as a whole was incontrovertible after the TRC. To account for the trauma caused by violent crime and structural violence I set out to make visible in my writing the social organisation that produces and reproduces both, to examine the links between gendered violence in the present with the apartheid era, as well as the legacies of colonialism and slavery.

The novel, with its distillation and condensation of aspects of the truth, held out the possibility of a fuller expression and understanding of sexual violence in the new South Africa in both its exceptionalism and its shocking everyday ordinariness. I needed an investigative, interrogative form that would enable me to account for what happened to women in post-apartheid, post-TRC South Africa. To do that I needed a form that would enable a protagonist to move through the strata of the highly segregated society because of the work they did and to ask questions on my behalf. The only people who can plausibly do so are the police and journalists; the form that these professions most comfortably inhabit is the crime novel, which is the form I chose.

Samantha Naidu and Elizabeth le Roux establish, in their comprehensive 2017 survey of South African crime fiction, that the genre has a long history in South Africa.[2] However, a distinct iteration

[2] Naidu and le Roux (2017) state that although the flourishing crime genre found new modes of expression in the twenty-first century, it was first published in the nineteenth century (for example, the Rider Haggard-influenced Ernest Glanville and Bertram Mitford). Crime fiction continued intermittently in the twentieth century. One of the earliest Black writers was Arthur Maimane, whose stories were published in *Drum* magazine in the 1950s. As Naidu and le Roux make clear, 'South Africa's colonial history has left a unique imprint on its publishing and cultural history, which lingers even in the postcolonial and post-apartheid period' (2017: 161) and most crime fiction until very recently has been by white writers. This includes writers like June Drummond, whose first novel, *The Black Unicorn*, was published in 1959. In the 1970s, James McClure published acclaimed police procedurals, including the award-winning *Steam Pig* (1971), which featured a white and black cop duo. This would become a staple for many post-1994 crime novelists, including Jassy McKenzie, Richard Kunzman and my own work. Wessel Ebersohn, who published novels from the late 1970s, critiqued apartheid ideology, which led to the banning of some of his books. Naidu and le Roux note that, although 'the number of black writers remains low' (2017: 163), there is some diversity in crime authorship. Meshack Masondo published crime fiction in isiZulu in the 1990s, and there are a number of short stories in sePedi. Notable black crime writers include Diale Tlholwe (*Ancient Rites*, 2008), the award-winning Sifiso Nzobe (*Young Blood*, 2010), Angela Makholwa (*Red Ink*, 2007) and the Liberian-born H.K. Golakai (*The Lazarus Effect*, 2011).

of crime fiction by writers like Deon Meyer, Andrew Brown, Mike Nicol and Roger Smith emerged about five years after the first democratic elections in 1994 (le Roux 2013). This post-apartheid crime fiction, characterised by a high degree of social realism, addresses the violent crime that blighted the new South Africa, attracted considerable critical attention from the outset as 'serious literature, offering social commentary' on the state of the new nation (Warren 2012: 581). In retrospect, Geoffrey V. Davis writes that, 'crime writers in South Africa are writing during the transition from apartheid to a post-apartheid society. This transition and the complexities attendant on it naturally inform their writing' (2018: 13).

Premised as it is on investigation, the crime novel, with its diagnostic quest to understand the criminal violence that plagued the new South Africa, allowed me to traverse in literary form a deeply segregated society in order to ascertain to what extent gendered violence is in fact central to the organisation of social power and space in South Africa. Naidu and le Roux consider the post-apartheid South African crime novel as the 'new political novel' because it is 'representative of a turbulent and crime-ridden society, and a relevant means to interrogate a rapidly changing democracy' (2014: 292).

The Clare Hart series

The crime novel enabled me to describe the reality of sexual violence in South Africa: the wounds that scripted rage on the body, the ballistic evidence of guns and knives and fists that spoke of an uncontained fury, the spaces where these violations took place in a plausible way. In order to determine what Morris understood to be the political dimension of sexual violence, I placed sexual and gendered violence at the centre of my investigation.

Like Clockwork (2006), my first novel, was written at a distinct political moment: Mandela's presidency was long over and the new South Africa's democracy was established, but the TRC's promise of

restitution and justice had not held up to social expectation. In the face of endemic sexual violence, the fragile state structures tasked with implementing the much-vaunted rainbow nation were struggling. After the publication of this novel in South Africa, the international rights sold quickly and the rest of the roughly arced novels with Dr Clare Hart as the protagonist were commissioned.

The series, an imaginative analysis of violence and trauma in post-apartheid South Africa, comprises five novels: *Like Clockwork* (2006), *Blood Rose* (2007), *Daddy's Girl* (2009), *Gallows Hill* (2001) and *Water Music* (2013). Each novel focuses on a different aspect of the complex entanglement of structural and interpersonal violence that have shaped South Africa's present.

The primary subject of *Like Clockwork*, *Daddy's Girl* and *Water Music* is gendered violence and its relation to the body politic. Each novel stands alone in terms of plot, but they have as their starting point violence done to the body, particularly the female body, onto which a range of social, political and sexual fantasies are projected. I used the crime novel's investigative eye as a diagnostic, confident that I could put my shoulder to the genre and shift the questions sufficiently to make them work also for a woman. To do this the novels had to hinge around a character that would be the vantage point from which to view – and to process – the gendered violence about which I was writing.

Clare Hart, my lead character, had to plausibly traverse the racialised and all too frequently racist social hierarchy of South Africa. Clare is white and, because of her economic and educational privilege, is implicated in South Africa's historical violence. The contingency of her birth ties her to the Soweto uprising on 16 June 1976, the day the police killed 176 people. This locates her within South Africa's violent past because, as her doctor notes in *Water Music*, she can never forget that she was 'born as those children were being shot in the streets' (2013: 101).

Clare is an investigative journalist but, because of her specialisation in sexual violence, she is hired as a profiler on a case-by-case basis by the police. She has thus engaged with the challenges

of the new South Africa from the start as 'she's profiled for the police since 1994' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 28). Clare is independent of the police, however, and she embodies many of the attributes of the Private Investigator (PI): she is independent-minded and a loner. Her single-mindedness is disruptive, as Colonel Phiri, the man who hires her to investigate crimes against women, says: 'She pisses off everybody she works with.' Riedwaan Faizal, the man she works with, disputes this, as he perceives that within the sexist domain of a police force operating within a patriarchal society, it is her gender that is troubling: 'Maybe because she's a woman and she's good' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 28).

That Clare is a woman is key. She embodies what it feels like for a woman to inhabit spaces that are rigidly codified by gender and often threatening. She has made this threat her specialty. Clare's doctorate in criminology makes her a recognised expert in the subject of violence against women. This gives her the authority to examine the violated bodies of women, judge what happened and speak truth to powerful men, despite them wanting 'her to make her data tell a different story. One of success, rather than social failure' (*Water Music* 2013: 29).

The belief that the South African state was both origin and arbiter of justice for its citizens, particularly its female citizens, was difficult to sustain. However, there is scepticism towards Clare's expert views that it is sexual violence that is corroding the new South Africa. This is expressed by Colonel Phiri when he says, 'I'm not sure I agree [with her] that because we averted a civil war in South Africa that the "unspent violence was sublimated into a war against women. A war in which there are no rules and no limits"' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 27–28).

Because the novel form allows the expression of multiple points of view, Clare's academic arguments about gendered violence are framed by the gendered and racialised context of the police force. So, when Captain Riedwaan Faizal, Clare's partner, and Colonel Phiri discuss her suitability, Riedwaan can persuade Phiri of her bona-fide expertise: '"This is her area, sir. Femicide and sex crimes … There's

her doctorate." *Crimes against Women in Post-Apartheid South Africa* … "It's very good, meticulously researched," conceded Phiri' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 27).

Clare is aware of her subject position as a white woman in a society in which she is historically a beneficiary, and she uses her position of social power to speak out for women who cannot give testimony because they are missing or murdered. On the one hand, she is a professional, modelled on a number of real women who do this work in South Africa, whose expertise in sexual violence is important as it allows her public speech to be *about* the acts of rape and femicide – the social patterns of crime, the number of women and children missing, for example – rather than speaking *for* victims of violence by an appropriation or ventriloquising of the voices of silenced (through trauma or murder) female victims. On the other hand, Clare has elements of the heroic in her construction as the lead character who drives the momentum of these crime thrillers.

A key aesthetic convention of the crime thriller is, as Jerry Palmer argues in *Thrillers: Genesis and Structure of a Popular Genre*, that, 'suspense derives from the adoption of a single perspective that is associated first and foremost with a hero' (1978: 61). The hero is, therefore, in genre-related terms, the saviour who defeats evil-doers and saves the vulnerable victim. This genre imperative, however, does not obviate the fact that in these South African-set novels Clare Hart speaks out for and comes to the rescue, as per the diktat of the genre into which she is inscribed, of gendered subalterns, including women of colour. These aesthetic conventions of the crime novel, where the centrality of the 'saviour' – a white saviour – to the narrative, have ethical implications, as this representational trope dovetails with a long history of white writing on Africa. Clare's subject position as a white woman of considerable social power and privilege is, therefore, narratively and politically complex to navigate as a writer.

Clare's gender is a key element in disrupting and complicating her position as a 'saviour' because she is at times vulnerable to violence and to being raped, as are the female victims for whom she

seeks redress. Clare shares with the women for whom she seeks redress what Pumla Dineo Gqola calls 'female fear' in *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015). Gqola argues in the essay 'The Female Fear Factory' that 'the threat of rape … is an exercise of power … that teaches women who witness it about their own vulnerability' (2015: Kindle location 1220).

Clare has intimate knowledge of this vulnerability, which disrupts the all-powerful 'saviour' figure of the crime thriller and places her in a subaltern and silenced position, at least on occasion. This is achieved by the fact that she enters unsafe circumstances knowingly and willingly. In *Water Music*, her self-abjection is arguably comparable to that of Rosa in Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter* (1979) and Lucy in *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee (1999). Part of Clare's motivation is to bear witness to the crimes done to women, to use her expertise to elucidate the fact of these crimes and their wider meaning.

Gqola argues that 'the female fear factory is a lesson in subjugation. Yet it does not fully succeed because it is sometimes interrupted' (2015: Kindle location 1233). Clare's work is, in effect, to not only solve crimes and find missing women and girls but also to disrupt what Gqola calls 'the manufacture of female fear' (2015: Kindle location 1214) by drawing attention to how pervasive it is and, as an investigator, by intervening and thus interrupting these brutal acts even when this is done at great risk to her own life. Gqola argues that the 'female fear factory is as theatrical as it is spectacular' (2015: Kindle location 1203).

Clare utilises her social power as best she can to interrupt the manufacture of fear by challenging both perpetrators and the social structures of gendered power. The spectacle of gendered violence is staged in the novels and then disrupted through shifts in narrative point of view. She is aware of the protection that her race and class afford her but she has an ethical imperative to find ways to bear witness to gendered violence. Clare is both an investigator and a journalist and one narrative method used in the novels is to represent through sound

and video recordings the testimony of characters who speak for themselves about being subjected to gendered violence.

This is evident in Clare's Persephone Project, which grew out of her investigative journalism, in which she seeks redress for the girls who are the collateral damage of a dysfunctional society and a stretched justice system. This gives her a public platform that is broader than the usual role of the crime investigator: 'Clare stepped onto the stage … without notes, or a lectern to shield her … [and] clicked the remote in her hand. A series of faces appeared on the screen behind her … only two did not have crosses next to their names. Two found alive. Just. "Ours is a nation of missing girls," she said' (*Daddy's Girl* 2009: 61–62).

Here, Clare's public role on stage literally exemplifies her attempt to stage, or represent, the multiple experiences of the nameless and violated missing girls, a fictional representation of the refiguration of the public and the private as described by Morris in relation to the TRC. Clare's ability to narrate and represent the anonymous victims is juxtaposed with her role as witnessing observer who has, because of her gender, an intimate and somatic access to victims of sexual violence.

In *Water Music*, Clare's body itself offers a place of refuge to an abused girl who is terrified of the male doctor who has saved her life. As he explains, 'she is terrified of me,' [the doctor] said to Clare. 'It's because I'm a man … The child was curled against her chest. Clare's body was a sanctuary, though she herself was a stranger' (2013: 174). The physical trust Clare can elicit from victims of violence, some of whom experience her as maternal, as this little girl does, gives her access to information about what they endured that is inaccessible to the men she works with. The child can enter Clare's physical space, which enables her to access the child's experience.

Clare is prompted to act as she does because she is disturbed by what she witnesses; her identification with the victims drives her sense of justice. In *Like Clockwork*, she is called upon to investigate a series of rape-femicides that recall the brutal attempted murder of

Clare's then-teenage sister, something that she has split off as much as she can from her consciousness:

> The dead girl froze the blood in Clare's veins … [she] was slipping back into her nightmare. It took an immense exercise of will to bring herself back into the present. To this body. Here. Today. Then her mind made the switch to trained observer and all emotion was gone. She scanned the placement of the body … with forensic precision (2006: 14–15).

Clare adopts, at a psychological cost, a position of professional remove in order to read women's displayed bodies for information. Samantha Naidu's question, in her trenchant feminist engagement with my fiction, is apposite: 'How can a literary category which relies on voyeurism, graphic violence and hyperbole be afforded the status of an academic object of enquiry?' (2013: 126). This and the subsequent novels have this question at their heart. The obvious response is that in the South African context sexual violence *is* hyperbolic and that the novels reflect this. That, however, only answers one part of the question. The other part is to do with representation. In this scene, my strategy was to depict the violence done to the body and then allow Clare to reveal the emotional impact of witnessing later.

After documenting this violent crime scene, she takes a shower but when she glimpses herself in the mirror, instead of seeing her own body she sees her wounded sister's. This surfacing of a partially repressed trauma dissolves the separation between past and present, self and other. The distinction between investigator and victim, between Clare and her scarred sister blurs: 'The body she saw when she was naked was the body of her sister, Constance … Criss-crossed with scars, her thighs and breasts carried the knife emblems of the gang that had used her to initiate two new members … this was the ghost-body Clare saw in her mirror' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 51).

For a moment, this collapses the distance between Clare, the investigator, and the victims on whose behalf she seeks justice. Clare who, just a few hours previously photographed the body of a murdered

girl, imagines the wounds of other women mark her body. This disrupts the voyeurism inherent in the conventional positioning of the crime fictional gaze in which the investigator's gaze is directed at the murdered woman's naked, damaged and dead body. In this scene, Clare embodies the question that was in the forefront of my mind: how to look at and then how to represent the raped or murdered woman's body?

To represent sexual violence in a crime novel within the constraints of the genre requires both a representation of that violence and an aesthetic mediation that disrupts the potential pleasure in viewing violence that is frequently sexualised, if not pornographic, in nature. As my writing practice is to storyboard each scene, as one would do for a film, there are a number of overlapping areas of cinematic representation I carried over from a visual depiction of violence into a written one. One of the ways to disrupt the voyeuristic gaze that privileges the perpetrator, investigator and reader with a pleasurable sense of bodily integrity, safety and power, is to collapse the distance between viewer and victim, between subject and object.

In this example, the prose is cast in the close third person, which locates the point of view firmly in Clare's consciousness. This perspective can unsettle the reader's sense of bodily integrity, as the reader inhabits, for a moment, Clare's experience of identification with the bodies of the women that she must document forensically, as an investigative profiler, or film as a documentary maker. The reader can, as Clare does, see herself in the subject position of the wounded girl, a transitory identification that is interrupted for Clare and the reader when she is screened off from view, when 'She let[s] her hair go, and its curtain fall ended the familiar hallucination' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 51).

Antoinette Pretorius suggests that Clare's ambivalent and doubled bodily identity makes her able to both inhabit and be inhabited by the pain and suffering and trauma of the 'other' or 'victim'. Pretorius reads this as therapeutic for the social body under investigation, arguing that the 'representation of Clare's embodiment allows her to

investigate alternate ways of positioning the female detective figure in relation to South Africa's discourse on violence against women' (2014: 9).

The crime novel was, then, a way in which to engage a South African audience numbed or desensitised to violence as is reflected in Clare's distress at her lack of response. 'That little girl on Friday' [said Clare] 'When I saw her, I felt nothing … like she was just another piece of rubbish' (*Water Music* 2013: 157). The paralysing or dissociative effect that the frequent exposure to the trauma has on South Africans is mirrored in Clare's numbed response to a brutalised child. My endeavour to bear witness to the trauma of gendered violence was framed by the question that Cathy Caruth, an eminent trauma theorist, poses: 'Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it?' (1996: 7).

Crime fiction and trauma theory

Trauma theory offered fertile interpretative ground for my focus on the ethics and the aesthetics of the representation of violence and violation. The first wave theorists, Cathy Caruth (1996), Dominic La Capra (1994 and 2001), and Shoshana Felman and Dori Loeb (1991), were my initial frame for writing about the intractable gendered violence and its concomitant trauma in South Africa. Caruth, drawing on Sigmund Freud's work with battlefield survivors that focused on a pattern of suffering that is inexplicably persistent in the lives of certain individuals, writes that, 'Trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available' (1996: 4).

Central to the theory of trauma, which originates in attempts to address and to bear witness to the Holocaust through the testimony, is the premise that trauma is caused by a catastrophic but singular event. The trauma theorists, whose intellectual references and experience are

located in the North, foreground the impossibility of memory in the wake of the experience of catastrophic events, in which the essence of the resulting trauma is premised on a deferred telling that can only be partial, because the pain of the wounding – physical and psychic – eludes both apprehension and language.

This resonated with my experience of South Africa as did Caruth's formulation of voice. She argues that we can 'Read the address of the voice … as the story of the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another' (1996: 8). My fiction is an exploration of how South Africans – white and black, men and women, perpetrators and victims – are 'tied up with the trauma' of each other. However, my novels are based on my reporting, so they are fictional composites of actual crimes committed in contemporary South Africa and are informed directly by the testimony of victims, as I wished to bring their experiences of devastating private pain into the public realm. In *Like Clockwork*, for example, I included aspects of the testimony of a woman I interviewed in a shelter who had been trafficked from the Congo to Cape Town, weaving her experience into a wider story of cross-border trafficking and organised crime.

I sought to use crime fiction as a way of representing the complex truth of gendered violence in South Africa. This made the proximity of fact to fiction difficult to navigate at times. In *Water Music*, I included the verbatim testimony of a girl held, together with a toddler who was the daughter of her captor, underground in a chamber dug beneath an orchard near Cape Town for eighteen months. The child's account, one that was stripped of emotion, was already in the public realm, so I wove my novel around the child's harrowing story:

> [The girl] looked directly at the camera, at Clare, said her name, said she was now nineteen. And then she told her story … *When I was kidnapped. I was twelve … He held me tightly by my arm. I had to walk with him … When we came to the reeds he said I must lie down and take off my pants. I did what he said. When he was finished we carried on walking.* Her voice was low and urgent; it was as if a pause, even drawing breath,

> might make her lose the thread, burying her again in silence. When the interview stopped and the camera cut to the social worker, Clare herself could at last breathe (2013: 187–189).

As their incarceration and discovery was the inspiration of the novel, it was important for and reflective of my practice to have her testimony present as an anchor of fact within the layered truth of fiction. Clare is moved by the strikingly quotidian language with which the girl enumerates the criminal acts perpetrated against her. The break in the bodily identification expressed in the last sentence, where 'Clare herself could at last breathe,' re-establishes the distance between victim and investigator, releasing Clare so that she can act on behalf of the victims.

In terms of the trauma theory that framed my thinking it is notable that, although the girl expressed almost no feeling, she was *not* at a loss for words. Her experience of trauma is not 'unclaimed', the word Caruth uses in her seminal book on the subject, *Unclaimed Experience*. She gives a detailed account of her abduction and rape to her interviewer, as my fictionalised characters give to Clare in many places in the novels. Because Clare can take in and assimilate what the victims are saying, she provides a platform in which trauma can be converted into testimony, which Clare can, to some extent, convert into redress.

The model of trauma theory developed in the northern academy did not fully address the effects of the persistence of trauma, which frequently originates in poverty and inequality in the global south. Slavery, colonialism and apartheid are systemic forms of violence that continued for centuries and shape the present. In the case cited above, the abducted girl, like many of the victims in my novels, is poor and part of a community that endured centuries of exploitation only to be subjected to the forms of post-colonial lawlessness identified by the Comaroffs.

As South Africa's trauma is durational and structural as well as individual, Lauren Berlant's trenchant critique of trauma theory in the

United States as a response to a singular and catastrophic event can be usefully transposed onto the South African context. Berlant argues that 'Crisis is not exceptional to history or consciousness but a process embedded in the ordinary that unfolds in stories about navigating what's overwhelming' (2011: 10).

Berlant's notion of 'crisis ordinariness' is a useful lens through which to examine quotidian long-term social and individual trauma in the post-colonial, post-apartheid and post-TRC situation in South Africa. Most victims of violence I interviewed knew exactly what had happened to them and why. They were, however, helpless in the face of the structural violence to which they have been subject. In taking the gendered nature of this ordinary South African trauma as my subject, I interpreted repeated reports of traumatic events – sexual violence and the murder of women – as violence done to the body politic that could be spoken but not easily heard.

The reality of crime and its relation to the fiction I was writing are entangled in complex ways, as is apparent in *Daddy's Girl*. The novel is about the race to find a missing six year old. The missing child, the kidnapped daughter of police captain Riedwaan Faizal, is held as a pawn in the territorial battles between rival gangs and the police. The novel depicts a violent conversation between men, the police and the gangs, about control of urban territory, property and income where girls are chattels, easily sacrificed.

In preparation for writing *Daddy's Girl*, I clipped newspaper reports about the rape and murder of young girls. In a two-week period there were nine unrelated killings. I gave the question that haunted me to Mrs Adams, the mother hunting for her missing daughter, when she asks of Clare: 'Tell me, Doctor, what does one more little girl mean, in a war?' (*Daddy's Girl* 2009: 20). The answer to this question, in truth, was very little. The evidence suggested that society itself was the serial killer.

This was a chilling indication of the limits of crime fiction in South Africa. Crime novels, with their imaginary serial killers, conventionally offer a certain comfort in that the ending of the novel will

usually see the monster captured and cast out, thus restoring social order. As Riedwaan tells Clare, 'There is no pattern. But I know why you look for one. To give this some coherence, some sense of order' (*Daddy's Girl* 2009: 200). In my investigation of crime in South Africa I found none of this, which created a tension in a genre that relies on a form of plot closure as one of its pleasures.

The killings I was using as source material for the novel were not patterned because they were not the result of an individual or a single event. Instead they are indicative of the on-going nature of durational and structural trauma that has continued over a lifetime, over many lifetimes. This is trauma not as a singular catastrophic event; rather it is dispersed across space and time for the entire duration of a nation, as Ewald Mengel and Michela Borzaga contend when they argue that, 'By looking at the South African situation through the lens of trauma, [it is] clear how the psychic deformations and injuries left behind by centuries of racism and colonialism cannot be automatically mended … by a reversal of economic and political power structures alone … The psychic dimension is inseparable from institutions and structures' (2012: ix).

In the post-colonial and post-apartheid context the wounds of the past continue to be lived in the present. Stef Craps, in his critique of the Euro-centric nature of trauma theory, writes that, 'The founding texts … marginalise or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures, they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery' (2013: 2). The end of apartheid, like the end of empires and of centuries of colonial rule, did not mean the end of the structures of power that left such deep social and psychic wounds in former colonies.

One tenet of trauma theory as it developed was Caruth's notion of history itself as trauma, a history 'that seems constantly about to vanish' (2013: xi). However, there was a sense in the global South that history was, after a long suspension, just beginning. Writing into the particular moment it seemed that post-colonialism, post-apartheid and post-TRC South African history was not about to disappear. Instead it

was a history that was expected, invited, desired and then deferred. The structural poverty of apartheid, and the brutally extractive form of capitalism it produced, made the implementation of a human rights-based democracy impossible, as is evidenced in this scene from *Daddy's Girl* where Clare and Mrs Adams, whose daughter has disappeared in a dirt-poor area ravaged by gang violence, discuss this in their own terms:

> 'Harry Oppenheimer has gold mines. Voëltjie Ahrend and his gangsters have this.' [Mrs Adams] waved her hand at the warren of matchbox houses and backyard shacks. 'A gold mine too. They own the police. If I go to the police then my baby is dead, for sure. They're not going to watch so much power get sold out from under them.'
>
> 'Who's buying?' asked Clare.
>
> 'Buying, selling. Gangsters, police, politicians … For us that lives here, it's all the same … We're the ones who pay in the beginning and in the end. It's the women, our little girls, who pay the men's price' (2009: 19–20).

In this scene Mrs Adams is unable to protect her own daughter so she calls on Clare, in her role as an investigative journalist with a public voice, to find her daughter and the truth. She does this because the state, in the form of the police, represents neither succour nor justice. The continuity of poverty and the violence by which men abrogate public space is starkly rendered by Mrs Adams, who views this from the private space of her besieged home, which reveals the relatedness of gender, space, sexual violence and the complexity of finding a voice for trauma in South Africa. Sabine Binder argues that 'crime thrillers can be read as trauma novels that process through fiction the trauma of past and present real violence against women.' This indicates, in her view, a move away from notions of 'a uniquely event-based notion of trauma towards an inclusion of the effects of long-term structural or systemic violence emanating from conditions such as patriarchy, colonialism or apartheid' (Binder 2017: 102).

Mrs Adams' predicament makes it clear that the constitutional promise of full citizenship rights for women at the end of apartheid,

remains unrealised. The novel thus navigates the gulf between the newly constituted woman-as-legal-subject and the failure of the enactment of those rights. The series contrasts the dangerous public realm to the interior, embodied private realm to which women are assigned, a place where the woman and the violence done to her stand in for the body politic. This aspect of these novels has not been lost on commentators. As Andrew Pepper suggests, the series reveals 'connections between individual cases of abuse and exploitation perpetrated against women and children and the larger structures of power that govern social relations and safeguard patriarchal dominance' (2016: 219).

The politics of the crime novel

'Clare gathered her notes. No lynch mob ever wanted facts, but she was going to give them some. She listed the few that she had and then the questions machine-gunned' (*Water Music* 2013: 36). In this vignette from *Water Music* I explore through interior monologue Clare's attempt to allay public anxiety about murdered girls and social disorder by presenting the facts that are available to her without minimising the effect of violence and trauma. It is reflective of my own writing practice. This might be in part why post-apartheid crime fiction has attracted sustained critical attention. Samantha Naidu, for one, argues that there is hermeneutic and literary value in understanding both the genre and its popularity because it takes on the thorny issues of sexual violence, urban dystopias and the daily ravages of crime on people's lives (2013).

Clare's desire is to restore order through the political realm. She acts here as if the apparatus of the state (the police) and factual information (her notes) can counter the rage and despair of the people she is addressing. Hers is an attempt to implement the vaunted 'rainbow nation' where the rule of law rather than the mob held sway, one in which people had imagined they would be safe in the post-

apartheid order. It is in this context that the crime novel addresses anxiety about bodily harm and the more diffuse anxiety created by rapid social and political change. As Chris Warnes argues, 'the post-apartheid crime thriller should be read as negotiating – in the ambivalent sense of the word – the threat and uncertainty that many feel to be part of South African life' (2012: 991). Leon De Kock, who describes South Africa as being 'haunted' by crime, emphasises the phantasmagoric aspect of the paradigm of order versus disorder. It is between these positions that, in his view, 'The crime writer often takes up the position, on behalf of an entrapped citizenry, of the galled civil subject observing dirty doings in a newly created "democratic" order that seems to belie in its (reported) behavior every tenet of its underlying (liberal-democratic) ethos' (De Kock 2015: 38).

This breakdown in the democratic order is evident in *Like Clockwork*, where corruption, crime and neo-liberal notions of capitalist entrepreneurship are increasingly less distinguishable. This novel, which investigates the crimes of a serial rapist and murderer shortly after South Africa's transition to democracy, makes the link between sexual violence, the exploitation of women and the dysfunctional politics of the new South Africa: 'Landman … had moved rapidly up the ranks of a street gang … the porousness of South Africa's post-democracy borders had been a license for Landman to print money … Trafficking was risk free for the trafficker … Lately, Landman had become notorious for insinuating himself into the highest echelons of business and politics' (2006: 17–18).

The transition from the criminal apartheid state to a democratic state plagued by crime and stories of crime has raised questions about the putative connections between criminal violence and democratisation. The opening of borders after the end of sanctions against South Africa in 1990, coinciding with the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the beginning of globalisation, had a profound effect on post-apartheid South Africa. The distinction between what was licit and what was illicit, what was criminal and what was entrepreneurial, was

increasingly blurred in ways that were similar to the frontier capitalism of post-Perestroika Russia. Jean and John Comaroff, who posit that these troubling complexities are created by a rapid transition to neo-liberalism, write that they are:

> Part of a much more troubled dialectic: a dialectic of law and dis/order, framed by neoliberal mechanisms of deregulation and new modes of mediating human transactions at once politico-economic and cultural, moral, and mortal. Under such conditions … criminal violence does not so much repudiate the rule of law or the licit operations of the market as appropriate their forms—and recommission their substance (2006: 5).

Trade, legal and illegal, could more easily traverse the borders of South Africa after they opened in 1994. The country became open, permeable, even defiled – like the bodies of women. The extractive forms of exchange that underpin the forms of capitalism that colonial power distributions produced, and which have continued in a variety of post-colonial iterations, provides the wider context of *Like Clockwork*. The novel examines the gendered violence that is part of this profitability in the trade in people, their desperation in the face of war and poverty, and the failure of the law to protect them:

> 'How do we prove it when so many of these girls are desperate, to start with? Fleeing wars, fleeing poverty, believing that they are being offered a better life. With women, or children, there is almost no risk. The return on an investment that requires the smallest capital outlay – a plane ticket or a taxi ride and a bribe. It is limited only by the number of clients a body can service.'
>
> 'What proof do you have?' asked Clare.
>
> 'None that will stand up in court. The women are too terrified to testify' (2006: 42).

The series of brutal sexual crimes foregrounded as the subject of Clare's investigation reveal that the law, which should protect the vulnerable, breaks down in the face of a disordered and corrupt economic exchange that manifests in the trade in women. As Jonathan Amid and Leon De Kock argue in the context of the social fractures of

liberalism, ‘the crime novel has become South Africa’s most readable form of address’ because it ‘dramatises most potently what the Comaroffs call the “deregulation of monopolies over the means of legitimate force”’ and ‘an unraveling of the fabric of law and order’ (2014: 62).

This is apparent in *Daddy’s Girl* when news of the escape of a dangerous prisoner from Victor Verster, the prison from which Nelson Mandela was released in 1990, is suppressed. A prison official cannot help Clare trace this rapist, who goes on to attack several women, including the rapist’s daughter, whose testimony resulted in his incarceration years before the end of apartheid. As the official describes it, ‘A group of ex-political-prisoners-turned-Joburg-empowerment-billionaires will be unveiling the statue of some struggle hero who was careless enough to die before he got rich’ (2009: 154). These men are heedless of the dangers posed by their presence. Their performance of a cynical memorialisation of a heroic past in a public place is in stark contrast with the dystopian present where the political violence has been displaced into private or sequestered spaces and, as is reflected in the novel, is acted out on the bodies of women.

Locations of violence

The headline-grabbing violence in contemporary South Africa is so frequent and so shocking that it can distract from the structural and intersectional nature of inequality that has endured spatially after the legal end of apartheid. This spatial aspect of the experience and perception of crime is at the heart of how I represent crime in my novels. Apartheid, built upon the structural violence of colonialism, was a system that was premised on the segregation and disciplining of bodies in carefully policed spaces. Colonial societies are organised and segregated spatially as was apartheid South Africa, where it was a crime for black South Africans to be in designated white areas.

This historical criminalisation of space, and a citizen's movement through it, has had enduring, but often obscured, effects. This is key to the set up and the resolution of the crimes that are at the centre of my last novel, *Water Music*, where the segregation of space endures in the form of, 'Razor wire, electric fences, Alsatians, armed guards in Kevlar. Sylvan Estate residents spent a lot keeping themselves in, and the poor out – unless, of course, they were cleaning, or tending the manicured grounds' (2013: 45).

The crime novel proved useful for exploring space and its relation to crime, which affects people of different races profoundly differently. Caitlin Martin and Sally-Ann Murray place the political and social importance of space at the centre of their argument that crime fiction can reveal ambiguity and that the representation of space in my fiction re-orientates the reader, thus making connections that counter historical amnesia by addressing difficult spatial truths (2014).

In *Daddy's Girl*, the endurance of South Africa's past is made apparent in this description of the journey made by an escaped prisoner, jailed before 1994, as he slips like a ghost through the new South Africa:

> A taxi pulled over with its cargo of late-shift workers. He settled down next to a window and watched the new housing developments whip past. Villas hiding behind security booms; an empty soccer stadium where armed guards with leashed Alsatians patrolled the encircling razor wire; a shopping mall offering discounts.
>
> He'd been gone for years.
>
> Things had changed for the rich.
>
> The roads became clogged arteries. Factory shift workers hurried home in the dark. Young men swaggered on street corners.
>
> He got out where the land was flat and the southeaster howled around huddled houses that stretched as far as the curve of False Bay. Government boxes for the people.
>
> Nothing had changed for the poor.
>
> He breathed in the smells of the place that had been his home. Car fumes, a dead dog, the tang of salt from the distant sea.
>
> The outside.

> A forgotten dream that he had buried when he'd first gone to prison (2009: 9).

Martin and Murray, drawing on Henri Lefebvre's argument that '(social) space is a (social) product … also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power' (1991: 26), find that my novels reveal an awareness that space is relational and created through flow and movement (2014). They argue that the novels, rather than offering spaces as being discrete 'settings' or backdrops against which the events of the novel might take place, disrupt established arrangements of power through the use of hidden places and obscured movement. These dissolve or disrupt, in their reading of them, hierarchies of class and social order. Drawing on the work of Michel de Certeau who posited that 'stories … traverse and organize places' (2011: 115), they argue that this narrative mode enables an exploration of the hidden crimes of apartheid, while revealing that the contemporary and the modern are built on buried histories and displaced violence.

This is key to the spatial structuring of power and class, which remains racialised in South Africa and which largely determines levels of threat and, crucially, perceptions of threat. In none of my novels do I describe the colour of a character's skin because race was key to notions of power (white) and criminality (black). In order to work against racist assumptions about behaviour and the origins of crime, I endeavour to create an understanding of a character in terms of space – where they live and work. This is done through an evocation of the space or spaces that a character could inhabit because the fixity of the segregation of apartheid and of the economic divide that resists most attempts at cooperation and social integration. Even when a community is besieged by crime it is impossible for the social gulfs that segregated space to be bridged, as is apparent in this scene from *Water Music*: '[Before] her were bemused Neighbourhood Watch members and others who had tried to stitch connections between the economic gulfs that divided Hout Bay. In front, a group of mothers who campaigned for the right-of-way for horse riders, and at the back three

women whose children had vanished in the dunes above Hangberg' (2013: 35).

Space is represented in socio-economic terms as these have endured post-apartheid as the crime form enables the exploration of a society rigidly stratified by class and race. Although Clare Hart can move through all social strata because of her profession, she is not exempt from scrutiny and threat as she is highly visible in the poverty-stricken black areas where many of the crimes depicted take place:

> Clare looked up at the pockmarked buildings; three-storeyed walk-ups. The Flats. The buildings were named after battles fought long ago by people who'd lived far away. Waterloo, Hastings, Agincourt, Trafalgar, Tobruk.
>
> The people who lived in this place called it Baghdad …
>
> the shabby buildings were pitted. In a fortnight, five children had been killed in a surge of gang warfare. Small white coffins were brandished at funerals by grim-faced uncles and brothers promising revenge; in tow were the resigned mothers, who sobbed when they went home to wait for the next convulsion of violence, the next lot of casualties (*Daddy's Girl* 2009: 15–16).

The buildings, named after English wars, signal the colonial marking of architectural space. The lived reality has led to its renaming – Baghdad – as a sign of its current violence, which renders it a war zone where the collateral damage is women and children. This situates the displacement of the undeclared civil war against the apartheid regime into lethal and highly gendered social violence into its historical context, something I explored in this series.

Space, in how it defines and organises race and gender, is crucial for an understanding of the patterns of insecurity and violence that mark South Africa. The connection between place and power are important in all three novels and the socio-economic as well as the psycho-geographies of the city of Cape Town are central to plot. The focus in the novels on acts of violence against women and children address the experience of the enduring effects of spatial apartheid, which is reflected in the reverse of the journey cited below:

> [Clare] drove back. As she got closer to town the pavements became less cracked, then they sprouted trees, and the houses were set further and further back from the road. There were walls instead of wire fences, and soon she was back in the oak-lined avenues of the suburbs that sheltered in the grey skirts of Table Mountain … the sea sparkled in the afternoon sunlight (*Daddy's Girl* 2009: 21).

This passage highlights the importance of the boundaries of space for the privileged – the marking off of one urban space after another – where the public realm is marked by huge, racialised disparities of wealth and 'drifts of young men gathered at street corners, hoping against forlorn hope for some work for the day' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 41). Clare's visibility is not only racially marked; it is gendered too. She is a woman so she is conspicuous in public space. The threat that women feel is expressed in her body, 'Clare walked faster, as most women did … Her arms were hugged close around her body, as if she was carrying something heavy' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 35–39).

Women's relationship to and placement within public and private space is central to the novels, where my focus is the private realm of the body, the family and the home – that supposed sanctuary, an intimate and personal space – that can also be prison or torture chamber. The space where, for women, the gendered politics of everyday life are played out, as in this scene from *Like Clockwork*, where Clare interviews a housekeeper during her search for India King, a missing (and murdered) girl:

> 'You … asked about that lock.' [said Portia].
> 'Yes,' said Clare.
> 'I put it there for her. So she can be safe.'
> Clare looked up at the house. Security beams were discreetly positioned everywhere. Portia shook her head. 'The danger in this house – it is right inside' (2006: 213).

Women's social and spatial mobility in the public realm is limited by the threat of violence and expressed in the body. The inside is both

physical – the house – and psychological in terms of the internalisation of experiences of intimate trauma. The depiction of private space, however, imbues traditionally safe spaces with menace. In *Daddy's Girl*, this is made most directly apparent when Graveyard de Wet, whose walk through the new South Africa is quoted above, arrives at his destination: his daughter's small house. His intention is to seek revenge because it was her testimony against him that sent him to jail:

> The voice she'd believed she'd never hear again, sitting that day in the gallery when the judge sentenced him to life … the sinewy body tilted against the doorframe. The nightmare of her childhood, returned.
>
> 'What does Pa want?' The ingrained manners of a child, betraying her … He was in the room now, bringing the cold with him. The door was open onto a sandy patch of yard … Outside. The illusion of safety. All outside was a place from which you'd be dragged inside. Inside. Where she was now, Alone with him. How it'd always been … Pearl knew what was coming. She'd fight, of course. She would fight to the end, a sacrifice that would protect her Hope [the daughter she'd conceived from her own father], forever oblivious in her white bed (2009: 272–275).

In this scene, De Wet confronts his daughter, Pearl, in language that mirrors his experience of the contrast between being inside prison and outside. This draws the reader's attention to the fact that the justice system frequently fails women because Pearl had given the testimony that sent her father to prison from which he had escaped. Crucial, however, to the overall project of my novels is that this chilling scene makes clear that all too often it is a woman's own home, which should be her sanctuary from the threat of the street, that is dangerous. For a woman subjected to domestic violence, her home very quickly becomes her prison, if not her grave.

Pearl's vulnerability to sexual violence and rape, despite her best efforts to protect herself and her daughter, parallels the vulnerability of India King, a white girl in a wealthy household who, despite the fact that her house is expensively secured against intruders, puts a lock inside her bedroom door. As the housekeeper at

India's house tells Clare, 'the danger in this house – it is right inside' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 218). Pearl and India exemplify the extreme economic differences that race continues to determine in post-apartheid South Africa.

Pearl is, in South African racial parlance, Coloured, and belongs to a group that suffered greatly during South Africa's history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. Pearl's poverty and social precarity are evident in her home – a makeshift and flimsy backyard shelter in an impoverished township that makes apparent the enduring nature of spatial apartheid. India, on the other hand, lives in a suburb, white as it was prior to 1994, and her luxurious house is surrounded by burglar alarms and security cameras.

In terms of property, class and race, these two young women could not be more different. However, they are both women and their gender is the intersection of their experiences of the intimate danger of sexual violence, in their cases at the hands of their respective fathers and in their own homes.

This awful commonality is not intended to elide the vast economic and social differences between them. Rather, it is a way of making apparent that, as Pumla Dineo Gqola argues in *Rape: A South African Nightmare*, 'Rape is a crime of power, and in patriarchal societies, all men can access patriarchal power … Wealthy white men … Black men' (2015: Kindle location 214–242).

As Portia, the housekeeper, tells Clare, 'the danger in this house – it is right inside'. This is meant literally in the case of India. However, in the framework of my novels I mean this more broadly – that the danger to women is within South Africa, the symbolic home of the people who live there. For both these young women, the privacy of their homes – their bedrooms – is inverted so that their homes become prisons and their bedrooms threaten to become torture chambers. Gendered violence and misogyny, what is often called 'rape culture' in South Africa, transects the spatial and racial segregations of South Africa.

Although the delineation of the differences of race and class is key to my understanding of crime in South Africa and it informs the social realism with which I have imbued these novels, I have also sought to elucidate the nature of patriarchal power, with its entitlement of sexual access, and the particular forms of violent masculinity it produces. These attributes are evident in Pearl's father, Graveyard de Wet, and in India's father, Brian King. Although these men could not be further apart in terms of property, race and class, they share a propensity to gendered violence that is socially and historically produced in the society in which they live.

My rendering of Pearl and India, as with other racialised female characters in the novels, is done not with the intention of collapsing differences of class and race, but in order to explore how women of all races and social classes have been subjected to gendered violence in specific ways in South Africa and have sought ways to defend themselves (Pearl's court testimony, India's amateurishly installed lock). This is central to my endeavour to make women matter in my fiction, not only for their mythic or narrative significance as catalysts of violent conflict between men over power, property and access, but as the repositories for the worst that men can do.

The novels have at their heart the intimate politics of sexual violence, in part as response to a query in J.M. Coetzee's celebrated novel *Disgrace*, which is centred on David Lurie, a professor accused by one of his students of rape. Lurie, fleeing this social and professional disgrace, seeks sanctuary on the farm of his daughter, Lucy. Some time after his arrival he is assaulted and Lucy is gang raped by three intruders. Afterwards his daughter refuses to go to the police or speak of what was done to her in her bedroom. Lurie, trying to make sense of these traumatic events, muses that, 'there must be a niche in the system for women and what happens to them' (Coetzee 1999: 98).

My literary endeavour has been to find that niche, legal and spatial, and to reveal what is done to women in it. A preoccupation with the hidden spaces, which by law or by custom could not be spoken of

and in which obscene violence takes place, is certainly not a new one for South African writers. In an essay in the *New York Times* in 1986 Coetzee wrote that 'torture has exerted a dark fascination on many other South African writers.' He asks why this should be so:

> There are, it seems to me, two reasons. The first is that relations in the torture room provide a metaphor, bare and extreme, for relations between authoritarianism and its victims. In the torture room, unlimited force is exerted upon the physical being of an individual in a twilight of legal illegality, with the purpose, if not of destroying him, then at least of destroying the kernel of resistance within him (Coetzee 1986: 13).

Kate Every, writing with Coetzee's essay as the frame for her reading of *Disgrace* and *Like Clockwork*, describes the 'new South Africa being … [In a] "crisis of crime" in the wake of the TRC.' Every draws on Coetzee's discursive prism of 'the torture room' to argue that these novels 'work together to form an aesthetic of violence' that draws particular attention to 'the locations of violence' (2016: 30, 31). Coetzee, writing four years before the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, states that this 'dark chamber', off limits to the writer under apartheid, would be accessible after liberation:

> It will once again be meaningful for the gaze of the author … to be turned upon scenes of torture. When the choice is no longer limited to either looking on in horrified fascination as the blows fall or turning one's eyes away, then the novel can once again take as its province the whole of life, and even the torture chamber can be accorded a place in the design (1986: 13).

If, as I have argued, the private realm is a political one then the lacuna at the heart of Coetzee's novel implies that the bedroom-turned-torture chamber cannot be 'accorded a place in the design' of post-liberation South Africa. In *Disgrace,* however*,* Coetzee does not enter into Lucy's bedroom, which is turned by the men who rape her into a torture chamber; nor does Lucy give an account of her assault. The evidence of her rape is a pregnancy rather than testimony, as

Lucy refuses to speak about it. Every contrasts *Disgrace*, where the rape of Lucy happens behind closed doors, to *Like Clockwork* where the reader is made present, and uncomfortably complicit in the rape and torture that opens the novel. Every argues that, 'Whereas Coetzee's victim's torture room is left inaccessible, Orford's is exploded open, literally, as Clare Hart frees the victim by blasting open the door (Like Clockwork 305). The torture chamber is opened up to the outside world, and loses its violent potency; it is just an opening onto the beach, the danger is overcome' (2016: 33).

I sought to enter that dark chamber of violence against women. Blasting open the private torture room – a gendered space that is literal and metaphorical – was a central strategy to expose gendered violence and to represent female agency. In *Like Clockwork*, the imprisoned girl and Clare work together to escape but it is Clare who blasts open the torture chamber: 'She aimed at the bottom lock of the boathouse door. The sound of the shot deafened her, but she steadied her hands and took aim. The second lock exploded off the padlock just as the inner door burst open … The cool air welcomed them' (2006: 307).

Through my lead character, Clare Hart, I found a way to bear witness to sexual violence in part because the form of the crime novel dictates that crimes be exposed. In a country where gendered violence is so pervasive as to be both the weft and the warp of the social fabric, I could not exempt myself from knowing what happens in there.

The project of unlocking the torture room in which women are sequestered – a gendered space that is both literal and metaphorical – was central to the representation of gendered violence in the intimate setting of the family and the home in these novels, taking this intimate sphere as the blueprint of social and political relations of the public realm. In *Water Music*, the focus is the perversion of the sanctuary that, in fantasy, is provided by the private and enclosed space of the home.

In this novel, it is made explicit that the intimate setting of the family and the home is the blueprint of social and political relations of

the public realm. In it I turn Clare Hart's eye onto the dysfunction of the patriarchal family and the power of men who arrogate the role of head of the household in order to examine the relationship between fathers and father-figures and daughters and daughter-figures. The novel pivots around the case of an abandoned child of whom no record can be found and who has never been reported missing. This inverts the notion of the family as automatic sanctuary, as a paediatrician who specialised in abused children comments, 'Family. Sometimes the most dangerous people a child can meet' (*Water Music* 2013: 21).

All three novels considered in this essay have dark chambers in which women are trapped. In *Water Music*, this is the central motif through which to examine the psychosexual desire of the patriarchal family and how this acts as a driver of gendered violence. In order to do this I collapsed the distinction between female investigator and female victim: Clare Hart is imprisoned. Instead of momentarily identifying with the victims, she is the victim, immured in a chamber where other women have been held before her. The chamber functions as a perverted form of the private realm of the home; it is a contemporary interpretation of the story of Bluebeard in which women who are disobedient and interrogative face death. This dark room at the heart of the perverse patriarchal family echoes the torture chamber J.M. Coetzee evokes: it is a space where all limits are stripped away so that all resistance can be crushed:

> It was silent, no light at all to hold the darkness at bay. Blackness all around and especially above her. Clare felt the earth pushing down on her. Above that the weight of the night. Or the indifference of the day, perhaps. Clare had no idea where she was, but she sensed she was underground … She felt below the mattress, Braille-read the ridges with her fingertips … the marks, enigmatic as runes, signifying perhaps the passing of days, weeks, years … She heard it then. A whimpering. She opened her eyes; it was her own voice (*Water Music* 2013: 274–275).

This scene carries an echo of a kind of violence that is done to the body. The language – 'hold', 'above', 'pushing down on her',

'weight', 'indifference' – could be describing a rape. This sense is heightened by Clare's disorientation and her struggle, a feature of trauma, to find a language through which to represent the experience. She reaches for a language of touch – all she can do is Braille-read the enigmatic marks the women who came before her left behind. The experience of this trauma makes her unrecognisable to herself. Her own voice, usually so analytical and clear, is reduced to 'a whimpering.'

Her captor subjects Clare, as he has other women including his wife, to horrific acts of violence. Apart from brute force, the key element of his power is his surveillance of the women he keeps captive, as the underground chamber where he keeps them is monitored by CCTV cameras. It is, however, possible in *Water Music* for Clare Hart to vanquish the male gaze with all its scopophilic power because, rather than occupying the position of analyst of gendered violence, she is its victim.[3] Trapped in a space that is beyond the reach of the law, a law that has proved indifferent at best to the gendered nature of violence and its social and personal consequences, she has no choice but to fight for her own life and, because she is pregnant, for that of her unborn son:

> Clare's head snapped back, her hair coiled around Stern's fist … He pulled her up, into a bloody embrace. Forcing her body to lie flaccid in his arms. The porcupine quill protruding from her pocket pricked her fingertip … lifting her arm in a sudden parabola she stabbed at his face. The quill plunged into his right eye, piercing the eyeball. She stuck two fingers into his gushing eye socket, and with a thrashing movement he released her. She was free (2013: 325).

Subverting that representation, with its accompanying pleasure in the consumption of the spectacle of sexual violence, lies at the heart of this final battle scene. The male gaze – voyeuristic and sadistic – is key to how violence is represented and consumed and it is an

[3] 'Scopophilia is a term that Freud … associated with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling gaze' (Mulvey 1975: 8).

essential component of masculine power vis-à-vis gendered violence. When Clare blinds her assailant in an act of retaliatory violence, she liberates herself because he loses his power over her when he can no longer see her. Clare stabs her attacker with a quill, a symbolic violent use of the pen (writing) to pierce, disarrange, expose and change his perspective. Contained in this symbolism is the idea that writing itself enables a certain kind of freedom.

Returning the gaze

Clare Hart, who makes documentary films about sexual violence, is in the business of image production. The camera I put in Clare's hands makes transparent the difficulties I had in making decisions about what to represent and what to elide. While the question of what it is that writing can represent is central to trauma theory, this was a particular challenge in the writing of these novels, as it foregrounded and problematised the pleasure of viewing sexual violence that is inherent to crime novels where the investigation of sexual violence is central to the narrative.

Clare's camera enabled me to foreground the process of looking/representation while disrupting this imbalance of power between a male perpetrator/viewer and silenced female victim/viewed object. Her woman's eye, a feminist one like mine, functions as a politically engaged perspective from which to view, without flinching or looking away, the results of gendered violence. A discomforting ambivalence is evident in the first description of a woman's corpse in *Like Clockwork*. The old man who finds the dead girl is appalled but, at the same time, he cannot avert his gaze:

> Her throat had been precisely, meticulously sliced through. But that was not the first thing he noticed. She lay spread-eagled on the promenade in full view of anyone who cared to look. Her face was child-like in death … Her exposed breasts gestured towards womanhood … Harry pulled his

> coat closed. When I'm not so cold, when I regain my strength, he thought to himself, I'll cover her (2006: 9–10).

The fact that the dead girl is spread-eagled shifts the gaze from her brutal death and onto her sex, which is pornographic in this public display. The point of view of the crime novel is Clare's position because, as an investigator she is required to turn her trained eye on the woman's exposed body. This forensic gaze, however, is implicated in the voyeuristic and sadistic gaze within an economy of scopic power: 'Clare instinctively switched on the camera of her cell phone and snapped a rapid series of pictures. She zoomed in on the girl's hands, but an old man stepped forward and covered the girl before Clare could stop him … The message encrypted in the broken, displayed body was obscured' (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 15).

Clare Hart, who functions as my prosthetic eye in this examination of gendered violence, is implicated in this complex positioning. Situating myself in this position and bearing witness to sexual violence, writing the woman's body as it were, was an essential aspect of my literary project in which I set out to examine how the gaze – and representation – works in relation to sexual violence.

For Samantha Naidu, the reader of crime fiction is simultaneously voyeur and sympathiser in regard to the violated female body. Present in the writing, therefore, is 'a complex and contradictory relationship between author, text, reader, fictional representation of crime and real-life crime and that what binds these elements is a shared abjection' (Naidu 2014: 74). Naidu situates her reading of my fiction within Helene Cixous' conception of *écriture feminine*, in which Cixous exhorts 'woman to write her self.'[4] However, Naidu warns that, 'In crime fiction this project of écriture feminine is extremely risky, especially when it involves representing the violated female body. On the one hand, the representation elicits horror,

[4] 'Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies' (Cixous 1976: 875).

condemnation, and empathy but on the other hand the reader is attracted to this spectacle, aroused even, by this display' (2014: 72).

To bear witness to trauma one must attempt to give an account of what happened, even if it is unbearable to both look at it and to look away. It is for this reason, through a feminist appropriation of the genre, I sought to disrupt the gaze that is directed at the spectacle of a brutalised female body. In order to write crime fiction as a counter narrative to gendered power, I set out to disrupt some of the conventions of the genre by exposing the way power (and pleasure) is structured by the gendered nature of the gaze.

In the scene from *Like Clockwork* quoted above the old man covers the dead girl's body, which is arranged and displayed like a tableau. This prevents (and frustrates) Clare's forensic gaze and the voyeuristic gaze of the crowd's voyeuristic gaze from lingering on the dead girl. It prevents these viewers from consuming her. This draws attention to the fact that the artistic (cinematic and written), the forensic, and the pornographic gaze, are inherently gendered and uncomfortably close.

The nature of scopic power and the possibility of escape from its erotic economy of gendered power was central to decisions I made about the representation of violence against women as a form of voyeuristic display. The argument made by Laura Mulvey is apposite:

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leit-motif of erotic spectacle (1975: 11).

Mulvey's analysis of how the gaze is gendered guided my decisions about the point of view from which I presented scenes or tableaus of violence against women. It also informed how I sought to disrupt the particular erotic economy of looking – sadistic and

voyeuristic – that is called, in a shorthand that references these complex sexual and visual politics, the male gaze.

Mulvey's theoretical frame is drawn from an analysis of gender, pleasure and power in narrative cinema where, all too frequently, spectacular violence performed on the female or feminised body is presented to the reader as spectacle, which distances the viewer from the experience of that violence. The prologue of *Like Clockwork*, which sets up the dynamic of the whole series, demonstrates the male subject establishing power over the female object with an emphasis on the gaze. His gaze is the vector of his dominance and is reinforced by the surveillance camera trained on the captive victim; the images captured in this scene are then distributed to other men whose pleasure is watching the beating and rape of this girl:

> She looks at him, terrified. He finds this provocative. He holds out his hand … she gives him hers … he turns the palm – secret, pink – upwards. He looks into her eyes and stubs the cigarette out in her hand … the girl sits huddled in the corner of a room, unaware of the unblinking eye of the camera watching her … She hugs her knees … unable to think of a way of surviving this. And she is too filled with hatred to find a way to die. After a long time, she lifts her head. Something that the camera does not see: to survive, she thinks of ways of killing (2006: 7–8).

This opening scene establishes the performative dynamic of masculine violence that I sought to interrogate in this series – its brutality, its need for an audience and its relationship with the gaze. It is an essential detail that, at the end of this brutal rape scene, the victim looks out at the reader who can see what the surveillance camera cannot and, for a moment, the field of gendered power is disrupted. Mulvey proposes that it is possible to disrupt the gaze of voyeurism and 'fetishistic scopophilia' of the male gaze.[5]

One way to disrupt this visual pleasure is to inhabit the position of the woman who is the object of that sadistic gaze. Writing reveals

[5] 'It can become fixated into a perversion [where the] only sexual satisfaction can come from watching, in an active controlling sense, an objectified other' (Mulvey 1975: 9).

'something that the camera does not see': her subjectivity. This gives the reader access to her rage and resilience. Her interiority allows us a glimpse of what it feels like to have this violence inflicted, as invisible to the man looking at her as it is to the camera that stands in his stead when she is alone. This paragraph starts out from Landman's perspective, then migrates to hers. This simple shift illustrates that, in the novel, whoever holds the point of view – the gaze – ultimately holds the power. The girl's interiority, which the reader has access to, holds out the promise of a reversal. At the end of the novel that promise to the reader is made good when Whitney – we know the tortured girl's name now – returns. She reverses the roles of power, gender and violence lethally when she reverses the gaze:

> [T]he voice – steady, clear – says 'Look at me,' Landman turns instinctively. A girl is standing in the doorway. Cradled in her hand is a revolver … The blind, round eye looks unblinkingly at him … She moves the steady eye of the gun slowly downwards from his face to the arrogant splay of his thighs. She fires once. He clutches at his groin. His manicured hands are drenched with the rhythmic spurt of arterial blood. She smiles, lowers the gun and steps back (*Like Clockwork* 2006: 316).

There is a subtle play between the two scenes. In the first one the girl's palm is 'secret, pink', which carries with it sexualised connotations; this time that palm is curled around a gun. The power is in her hands, a power that is represented by the revolver, which is now an 'eye' to rival the earlier 'unblinking eye of the camera.'

Sexual violence all too often places the victim outside the limits of language because of the shame associated with it, as was evident in the TRC Women's Hearings. This has the effect of separating women from the body politic. It is necessary, therefore, to find other ways of bearing witness to this on-going and often unspeakable trauma: '"This is where my story is written," [Pearl] said. "On my body. Maybe I should start here. It's not the beginning but it is all part of the same book." … She peeled back her clothes, revealing the script that bore

witness to her secret … a daughter of violence, made lean and sinewy in her refusal to die' (*Daddy's Girl* 2009: 36–37).

Pearl's way of claiming her own story is to reveal to Clare's camera how violence is written on her body. She does this willingly, thus asserting both her violation and her resilience by choosing to expose her scars. This is her language now and she wants it to be read. Clare records this embodied script of gendered violence and her point of view – her gaze – does offer in the moment of the recording an alternative to the sadistic and voyeuristic gaze of surveillance, stalking and pornography, all key elements of gendered violence and of the male gaze as it is structured in these novels. Pearl's script, however, is ultimately deemed by Clare not to be readable. When she edits the footage, 'This silent witnessing had not made the final cut. Too raw, too shocking for people eating dinner in front of their TV sets' (*Daddy's Girl* 2009: 37).

Clare's response to a violated woman's body is ambivalent. Clare the filmmaker has her viewers in mind. She, like me, knows her form and she knows her audience. She has them in mind when she censors this embodied language. This begs the question as to whether a woman's gaze can be an alternative to the male gaze; if it can facilitate a different way of viewing a woman's body, an alternative economy of visual desire. This ambivalence and these difficult questions are things, however, one can express in writing. It is here the crime novel is able, in a limited way, to offer alternative views and other pleasures – justice, for example, rather than power.

In Naidu's view my focus on the body is primarily to 'evoke the experience and the consequence of abuse,' and this leads her to conclude that my 'representations of the violated female body constitute a *bona fide* feminist sub-genre of South African crime fiction' (2014: 74, 79).

Crime fiction and the law

In *Like Clockwork* and *Daddy's Girl*, the impasse between law and revenge, as Cathy Caruth terms it (2013), is apparent. It was, however, in my last novel, *Water Music*, that it was no longer possible to navigate this gulf. It perturbed me that the extra-judicial killing of Clare's assailant was the only way for her to survive. I was concerned by what it meant to write crime fiction about a state that did not protect its citizens. It was, however, the massacre by the South African police of thirty-four striking workers at the Marikana platinum mine that brought this into stark relief (South African History Online 2013). The shock of this event, which I felt compelled to reflect in *Water Music* – the novel I was working on at the time – is expressed by Clare's partner, Riedwaan Faizal, as he watches a looped clip of cell-phone footage showing men wearing the same uniform as he did: 'Firing at fleeing men … bodies litter[ed] a dry piece of veld' (2013: 164).

This rupture in the integrity of the police was not something I could contain in my fiction. I felt compelled to reflect it in the novel I was working on. However, I stopped writing the series, as crime fiction is a form that achieves a form of liberal closure premised on the assumption that the status quo is arbitrated by the state. In the wake of this massacre it was implausible that Riedwaan Faizal, the good-hearted police captain, would remain in the police force that uses 'a government-issue rifle against men who wanted enough money to feed their families' (*Water Music* 2013: 165).

The South African state's use of lethal violence to protect the vested interests of power, both the state's and capital's that under President Zuma were incestuously entwined, meant the social fiction that the police served the interests of ordinary citizens of South Africa could no longer be sustained. This brought me up against the limits of ethical and aesthetic possibility of the crime novel as a means of elucidating and containing trauma in post-apartheid South Africa. This meant that my authorial suspension of political disbelief could not be sustained within the genre.

Nostalgia for the future

The new South Africa had promised a modest utopia: the future held out the hope of the extension of the liberal rights and values to all South Africa's citizens that had, until 1994, been arrogated by a white few. It began with a new flag, a new anthem and a new constitution and it was lost as it was to corruption and a plague of gendered violence. The post-apartheid crime novel mapped the desire for a future that was deferred for all, but particularly for women and children. This made apparent the failures of the state in the public space and the family in the private.

The new South Africa's promised rainbow future failed to appear. In the crime novel, the loss of that future and the dream of it could be expressed in depictions of the deaths of the most vulnerable citizens. In *Water Music*, the body of the little girl, found barely alive, carries marks of years of abuse. She has no identity nor has she been reported missing. This child represents the failure of the state of the 'new' South Africa to constitute itself as a place where women and children can live freely.

Where Clare, like Riedwaan, feels anger and despair at the dystopian present, this nameless child symbolises the failure of the promise of the future. Her presence makes it difficult to imagine a way forward along the trajectory of hope for the future symbolised by Mandela. With the future constantly deferred, there was no place in which to contain the yearning for an imagined place of safety. There is no way to look back, because South Africa's violent and racist history meant there was no comfort to be found in the past. This kind of longing often finds expression in nostalgia and the conventional understanding of nostalgia is of a reaching for a lost past, for a return to a lost time.

Dennis Walder makes the argument that nostalgia arises in societies that 'share a view of time as "linear with an undetermined

future" in combination with a sense that "the present is deficient"' (2011: 100). Looking back at my work, I recognise what I term a nostalgia for the future. This arises from the acute sense of loss that suffused South Africa and it permeates these novels that sought to address the nature of social violence. The longed-for future, cathected onto an idealisation of Nelson Mandela and what he symbolised, turned out to be a mirage. It disappeared largely because social inequality was never addressed and the faster 'we' as a fractured and divided nation rushed towards it, the faster it disappeared.

In the case of South Africa, and evident in its crime fiction, there is a nostalgia for the promised future that never happened. The colonial with all its violence and in its perverted iteration of apartheid – a form of internal colonialism – could not be incorporated into the body politic. This was written large on the wounded bodies of victims of violence. The reality was very different, despite radical and visible political changes.

In the quotidian reality of this everyday crisis everything was different and – at the same time – it was the same, as it had been before. Deficient. It was in the disjuncture between an imagined future and the lived reality of everyday life that the crime novel served as a diagnostic. Through it I could take a measure of the gendered and structural violence of the present by disinterring and examining the hidden trauma of the past. Unable to escape the tentacles of the past, the utopian (rainbow) future was deferred and it is in this gap that what I term a nostalgia for the future took root.

Walder suggests that 'we need to think about the nature of nostalgia in various embodiments or forms, with a view to approaching it as a process with the potential to reconnect the individual in a critical or reflective way to his or her past, and *to a community*' (2011: 163). A notion of community was part of my project in these novels – a community in which women would be full citizens. The crime novel, by showing the dystopian present – 'Ours is a nation of missing girls,' as Clare tells us – can offer its reverse, a 'positive' negative if you will, of

justice and morality in a society in which the restoration of order is possible to imagine.

Clare's Demeter-like attempts to retrieve the missing girls – Persephone-figures whose loss symbolises a social failure – and to restore them to their rightful places, exemplifies this. This dyad – Clare and the victims for whom she seeks justice – runs as a counter narrative to the gendered violence the novels portray. So do the women, who, like Clare, take the law into their own hands on the occasions that the state fails them.

The crime novel allowed me to pause the long sweep of history long enough to bear witness to some individual and collective trauma, and to comprehend the connections between the violence of the past, and the gendered violence of the present. Then I felt I had exhausted the form, even as it exhausted me. After five novels, the enduring asymmetries of power came into view. This required another approach, in form, genre and technique, and this is now guiding my literary practice, one hinted at in the epilogue of *Like Clockwork*, where two women, scarred and damaged, escape the tyranny of sexual violence. As they disappear from view, free, they sense a new future, one they will sing into being together:

> They turn off the tar road. The dust rises and hovers above them. It hides them. Constance Hart is heading home. To a house she has not returned to in the twenty years since Kelvin Landman began his career by carving his mark on her back. Whitney sits besides her, cleaning her stolen gun calmly and efficiently. She hums. It is not a tune that Constance knows yet, but she joins her anyway (2006: 317).

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APPENDIX ONE: A GENEALOGY OF MY WORK

My creative and scholarly practices were forged when in South Africa during the 1980s as the struggle against apartheid intensified. In 1985, when I was twenty-one and in my final undergraduate year at the University of Cape Town, a State of Emergency was declared. Then a student journalist and activist, I was arrested along with thousands of other people across the country, detained and interrogated in Pollsmoor, a notorious maximum security prison. My white skin provided me with a measure of protection, but I was charged with treason – a charge which, at the time, carried the death penalty. A sympathetic judge dismissed the charges (Orford 2011).

At the time, to consider the nature of an event such as detention as traumatic was unthinkable because to be arrested and interrogated was so common it appeared mundane. However, the violent suddenness of this incarceration, the break it made in my experience of time, was impossible to assimilate emotionally and its impact was inexpressible in the heroic political discourse of the time, which had rhetorical language only for revolution in the present and a liberation that yet lay in the future. The inadequacy of language in the face of the wordless and disruptive physical responses I and others experienced (vomiting, fainting, insomnia, migraine, disassociation), which I would later call symptoms of 'trauma', haunted me. This repressed language of the body spoke of pain and fracture, fear and rage, desire and shame. It is a somatic language that expresses experiences of inequality and physical violence. I was studying English and African literature at the time and I, through my reading and studies, concluded that the lived reality of a violent history and of trauma is best conveyed when individuals, particularly women, whose experiences of both family and history are marginalised or silenced, give their own accounts of events. This insight and these experiences are the foundation of my life's work and writing (Orford 2019).

Namibia 1990–1999: Practice

I returned to live in post-independence Namibia, where I was brought up, in 1990, where I worked as a writer, filmmaker and editor on testimony, history and trauma. Namibia was the site of the first genocide of the twentieth century when, in 1904 the German colonial government issued a '*vernichtungsbefehl*', an extermination order that declared that all the OvaHerero should be killed or driven into the desert. Some 80 percent of the Herero and thousands of Nama people were murdered. The rest were driven into the Omaheke desert (Daymond et al. 2003: 157). It was a German colony until 1915, after which it became a South African protectorate. It gained independence in 1990 after a protracted and brutal war of independence between a South African army of occupation and South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) guerillas. The north of Namibia was under martial law for decades and many people were killed or fled the conflict. The negotiated settlement that saw Namibia become an independent country in March of 1990 was met with euphoria and celebration.

However, the departure of thousands of soldiers in armoured cars and the lowering of an old flag and the raising of a new one did not erase more than a century of suffering. There was no Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Namibia, as would be established in South Africa in 1996. The new government took the decision, in the interest of national unity, that the past was best left unspoken. The experiences of conflict, of the South African occupation, of civilians and particularly women in the rural north who were caught up in that war, were silenced or elided. This did not, however, get rid of the pain, the suffering and the symptoms of trauma and there was a strong desire in many people to say what had happened, to have it acknowledged, and a perception that personal accounts of suffering would help individuals and the nation heal and move on.

Because the intimate wounds, physical and psychic, of this brutal history did not find their way into public discourse, I sought ways

to represent the ordinary lives of women and their experiences of violence, military and structural, during the war of independence in the country where I had grown up. I explored the possibilities and the limits of representation as an intentional act of witnessing in documentary film, journalism, non-fiction and scholarly writing as a way of elucidating the connections between political and intimate trauma in my search for ways in which writing could weave together a torn body politic (Orford 2011). It was only in literature that the effects of this long war were named.

From 1992 to 1999, I was a commissioning editor for a newly founded and progressive press called New Namibia Books. The urgent work was to find ways in which the trauma of war and its effects on women could be expressed. I worked with a number of Namibian writers, mainly women but a few ex-soldiers and guerillas too, who wrote memoirs or fictionalised accounts of the brutal war fought between SWAPO and the occupying South African army. We published an anthology of women's writing that included pieces on the decades-long war of independence and its aftermath. This was the start of my exploration of how women's testimony can be brought into the public realm. The reading is harrowing in its spare rendering of injustice
and pain:

> During the interrogation, I was just crying soundlessly, with my eyes full of tears. The commander said, 'Hit the kaffir terrorist and leave her.'
> Some Makakunya (SADF soldiers) said, 'She is beautiful. Let's rape her.' This word made me very confused. 'She is beautiful.' Anonymous
>
> At six o'clock my mother-in-law went to the location to buy some matches. At half past six the Koevoets came to the location … when they reached the location they began to shoot … many people were hurt. Five men were wounded. Six women were wounded. Two women died. My mother-in-law was one of those who died. 'Mother-in-law's last day' Hildegard Shilongo

> The bombing continued without a break. Like everyone else I started running in the direction of the river. Before I could reach the rock that I was heading to for cover, several bombs were dropped … I could not run anymore, my knees buckled under me … when I awoke a man we called Captain Kanhana was standing over me. He was carrying a baby of about two years old in one arm which was injured and pulling me into the bushes with the other … [he] … handed the baby to me and told me to run away as far from Kassinga as I could with the baby. I watched him as he walked back into the devastated camp. I never saw him again. ‘‘The fourth of May’ Ellen Namhila [who was fifteen at the time] (Orford and Nicanor 1996: 38, 34, 68).

The flat, almost affectless style of this writing simultaneously foregrounded and displaced the quotidian trauma of colonial racism and war. I was struck by the echoes in historical expression of protest at injustice, as well as an assertion of identity – often gendered – that was evident in the archival work I was doing as the Namibian editor on an archival retrieval project called *Women Writing Africa* (Daymond et al. 2003). This is a scholarly collection of writing and recorded testimony by southern African women, usually rendered invisible in and by the colonial archive, dating from the eighteenth century. This changed my understanding of women’s history, how women experience public and private space, and how they shape the world by speaking out and by writing. In many cases women’s voices, raised in protest, make their way into the archive through experiences of violation and of physical, familial or bodily intrusion. It was apparent in many cases that ‘the colonial officials did not find the women’s demands unacceptable in themselves. What caused their response was that the women asserted so uncompromisingly their right to speak, not only for themselves, but also for their nation – a realm of discourse colonial administrators perceived as exclusively male’ (Orford in Daymond et al. 2003: 210).

In a 1936 letter entitled ‘Nation is Going to Ruination’, a group of women protested against social disorder and hardship caused by the brutal colonial disruption of traditional life. A delegation of Herero women, who had expected compensation and a return of their land

after the 1904 genocide, demanded redress for this social 'poison' from the colonial authorities (Maherero et al. in Daymond et al. 2003: 209). One demand, among several that gesture towards the hardships caused to women by the disruption of gender roles caused by the migrant labour system, was that 'single men who … refuse to get married should be taxed. A Bachelor Tax of £1 per month should be brought into force to serve as a remembrance for them to marry.'

There are several other texts from the 1930s in which women protest against forced vaginal examinations decreed compulsory for all black women in urban areas to determine whether they had venereal disease. The archive documents make clear the anxiety felt by the colonial authorities about the mobility of women and their independence and the violence against these women – whether they protested or submitted – that their presence caused. This archival retrieval work informed several scholarly essays on these archival texts and on contemporary orature by Namibian women. One dealt with the importance of place in concepts of identity (Orford and Becker 2001). Another addressed the enduring asymmetries of gender and power during political conflict and transition (Orford 2004). This work earned me a Fulbright scholarship and in 1999 I went to do a Master's degree in Comparative Literature at the Graduate Centre of the City University of New York. On my return, I began the work on violence and trauma that resulted in the novels that are the subject of this PhD by publication.

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APPENDIX TWO: COMPLETE PUBLICATIONS LIST

Fiction

English

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Also published in English by Atlantic Books (2010), Harper Collins (2014) and Head of Zeus (2014).

—— *Blood Rose*, A Clare Hart Mystery (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 2007).
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—— *Daddy's Girl*, A Clare Hart Mystery (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 2009).
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—— *Gallows Hill*, A Clare Hart Mystery (London, Corvus, Atlantic Books, 2011).
Also published in English by Harper Collins (2014), Head of Zeus (2014) and Witness Impulse (2014).

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Fellowships

Fulbright Scholar, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 1999–2001
Honorary Fellow, St Hugh's College, Oxford
Fellow at Civitella Ranieri, Cumbria, 2015.

Visiting Research Fellow at TORCH, University of Oxford, 2016–2017.
Writer in Residence, Cove Park, Scotland, 2015.
John Tilney Writer in Residence, York, 2015.

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