

Memory's Future: Affect, History, and New Narrative in South Africa

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Abstract

Focusing on the literary unit of genre as a mappable unit, one whose flows invite analysis on a global scale and a practice of memory in which the past finds itself sedimented into the present, this paper explores the work that the novel does in coming to terms with foundational violence, with a particular emphasis on postapartheid South African fiction. The paper considers affect as a useful category not only for the literature of apartheid but also for the literature emerging from the historical experiences of slavery, empire, and global terror. "Affect" thus lends itself both to national literary approaches and to a clearer understanding of world literature.

Keywords

novel, affect, South Africa, world literature, memory

The History of Feeling and the Form of the Novel

Affect is in one sense deeply local, experienced at the level of the body and skin and abstracted from larger categories of shared social identification. In another sense affect is prototypically global, constituted by flows that run over and through individual subjects and singular sites of identification to comprise a larger network. In its most extreme Deleuzian variant, affect flows *without* the individual, without subjectivity, and even without the body as its center, over the larger field of matter itself, “a sensed-sensing energy with multiple centers” (Thrift 18). As what is claimed as most one’s own (intimate feeling) and what is frequently thought *without* that “one” as its origin or destination, affect situates itself in productive tension between the placed and mobile, the attached and the free-flowing, the local and global, subjective and non-subjective modes of analysis. Defining affect as “the powerful charge of emotions that lies at the centre of the process of identification,” the social sciences have understood the term to reorient us to political feelings and public symbolic codes through which social identities, such as ethnicity, religion, nation, and region, are manifested and transformed (Campbell and Pew 11). A feminist critical tradition has elaborated a “traffic in affect” at work in political struggles and a larger “feeling politics” articulated in relation to reparation for the pain and suffering experienced by citizens, thus making traumatic affect the origin and index of national subjectivity in “the sentimental national contract” (Berlant, “The Subject of True Feeling” 314-15; also see Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*). Affect has sometimes been seen to be most present in spatial topographies, such as the nomadic movements and rhizomatic structures of Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, or the “roiling maelstroms of affect” Thrift detects in modern cities, bubbling along an emotional equivalent of the “networks of pipes and cables that are of such importance in providing the basic mechanics and texture of urban life” (171). In contrast to these geographies, and distinct from the bodily zone of affective experience that has been productively linked to structures of political temporality or becoming (Berlant, Grosz, Massumi), I will be concerned with form, specifically novelistic form, as a locus of affect. In a useful formulation, Karyn Ball asks: “How might we think about form both as a product of history and as a response to or deflection of the affective ‘excess’ of catastrophic events without any recourse to a theory of consciousness or to the unconscious as its supplement?” (xxxviii). While the function of the novel in relation to the unfinished

catastrophic event that is South African apartheid certainly invites psychoanalytic theory into the study of formal structures of national feeling, it also suggests a need to supplement that theory with an emergent critical orientation—I'll call it global comparativism—for which affect's own spatial and temporal movements provide a map. In this encounter with affective geography it is not the city that concerns me so much as nation and world. Linked together in a network connection of their own, nation and world also constitute particular event horizons for the histories whose affective excess the novel works through.

Identifying the novel as the form in which a newly bourgeois and nationalist Western European culture registered its loss of a folk past, communal practices of storytelling, archaic genres such as epic, and the gods understood to inhabit them, Georgy Lukács spoke of the inner melancholy of the novel. Writing in *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács deemed the novel "inconsolably sad" yet nonetheless capable of issuing a "song of comfort" (123). The "affirmation of life that seems to emanate from it [the novel] as a mood is nothing other than the resolving of its form-conditioned dissonances, the affirmation of its own, form-created substances." Novelistic form comforts by registering some historical loss in all the shock of a felt immediacy and subsequently absorbing that sense into the form itself. The process by which immediate apprehension turns into a broader historical consciousness or sensibility places the novel in history as, to borrow Ann Cvetkovich's term, an archive of feeling (*An Archive of Feelings*).

Since Ian Watt's foundational *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) it has been a truth universally acknowledged that the novel emerged in tandem with capitalism, individualism, and nationalism. Michel De Certeau uses affect to generate an alternative theory of "the Freudian novel." Working on the assumption that "Freudianism dismantles individualism, destroys its truth-seemingness," De Certeau turns to the realm of passions and affects, understood as the elementary drives that provided the basis of Freud's economic analysis of psychic mechanisms (26). The emergence of an affect situates the psychoanalytic subject in relation to its own history, the set of circumstances and relations that first gave rise to a particular passion and that persist in the secondary experience of it. "Wounded by otherness," De Certeau's Freudian novel discovers its historicity in its affect, the affect that marks or specifies some deeper relationality. Freud's assumption, De Certeau explains, "is that the speaking subject's place is decisive in a conflicting network of abreactions and

that it is specified by the affect. This allows reintroduction of that which the objective utterance hides: its historicity—that which structured relationships, and that which changes them. To make this historicity reappear is the condition of analytic elucidation and of its operativeness” (4). With regard to the Freudian novel, the task is to bring into focus a historicity that is not the presumed life history of a novelistic character or author (the subject of speculation in earlier Freudian theories of the novel) nor the history of the novel (the historicity implied in genre’s constant repetition and transformation of its own codes) but rather the history of the larger movements, events, and ideas that structured relationships among systems, subjects, and others and changed them, all within some larger network of exchange.

In contrast to literary histories of the sort occasioned by and summed up by a novel like Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (central to Watt’s thesis and recast in De Certeau’s as “a ‘mythic novel’ of postulate that takes individualism as the historical trope for occidental modernity” (24)), the reading method of the Freudian novel might direct our attention instead to J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe* (1986). In *Foe* Defoe’s novel occupies the place of a historical source that is occupied, reanimated, and recirculated, thanks to a different story that is written by a woman, preoccupied with the silence of Friday, and ultimately unfolds a quite different affective stance towards history and the historical subject, what Simon Durrant calls “an inconsolable work of mourning” (431). In contrast to the mimetic project of representing history and the version of a psychoanalytic project that would recover history, either individual or collective, Durrant understands *Foe* and other early novels by Coetzee as refusing to translate a difficult history “by representing it as untranslatable” (434).¹ *Foe* simultaneously supplements literary history, as the inheritor remakes the original, and embraces a nonadditive stance before national history. The refusal to add certain abjected voices constitutes a refusal to render the national novel more mimetic of the nation. In this double dealing Coetzee’s novel extends beyond the compass of de Certeau’s Freudian novel, which ultimately refers back to the drive, the object on which the drive focuses, and the subject

¹ On the ways in which the representational work of witnessing articulates the specific losses of a historical past, see Felman and Laub; Caruth. For arguments that query the universalization of trauma as history, and explore alternative histories in which testimonies constitute a troubled medium and the novel emerges as a possible supplement to the work of historical memory, see LaCapra’s *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma, History and Memory After Auschwitz*, and *Writing History, Writing Trauma*.

assumed by drive and object as the grounds for the novel's historicity. In Coetzee's project, by contrast and especially as in his later fiction, affect is detached from the subject as such.²

The theory that takes affect as its major phenomenon focuses not on what is encoded within the political unconscious of a text but rather what is unleashed across it. While affect can be attached to subjects, nations, institutions, bodies, and other affects, it is the movement or infinite circulability of affect among its various points of attachment and affect's regular exceeding or escape from containment that offer the most provocative invitation to rethink the work of novel form and novel history. Affect's network of forces and intensities spread wide across the social field offers quite another snapshot of social life than the mimetic project of the realist novel, with its intimate bonds to the prototypical national individual and the society he or she represents. As non-signifying intensities, affects have been understood, as Marco Abel puts it, as "a matter of doing, not signification" (53). Affects thus oblige us to ask different questions vis-à-vis the objects of our analysis: in Abel's words, "not what they mean and whether they are justified but *how* they configure our ability to respond to, and do things with, them" (xiii). As a *doing*, how might affect shape an approach to the novel, understood as a holding place for historical feeling, a technology for working through it, and sometimes even an unfinished living with or living through the sheer plurality of political affect? To pursue this inquiry, it will be helpful to consider two additional models.

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) Sara Ahmed explains that affects do not exist *in* themselves or *in* particular entities (*in* a subject, *in* an object, *in* a sign) but instead emerge as "an effect of the circulation" among them. Affect, in other words, is a network economy. Signs "increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more signs circulate, the more affective they become" (8). Affects and emotions (Ahmed uses them interchangeably) acquire their value through circulation, exchange, and movement. In a sense affects sediment into the present the accumulated, hidden history through which they have emerged and which remains alongside them. Distinguishing her project from psychoanalysis, Ahmed explores the sign systems of particular "affective economies" (phobic racial hatred, projects of

² The distinction between the aim-directed, object-focused theory of the drives and an understanding of affect as ranging across many aims, even taking the production of itself (autotely) as one possible aim, is central to Silvan Tomkins's model. For commentary, see Thrift, Sedgwick, and Ngai.

national guilt and reconciliation, queer feelings) and locates the subject not as the central destination but as “simply one nodal point in the economy” (46). Some of this decentering of the subject is at work in Coetzee’s *Foe*, alongside the work of an intertextual circulation that sets some prior history into play, effectively de-originating it.

Of course, affect is not exactly history. For theorists of the Deleuzian tradition, what is distinctive about affect is precisely its nontemporal, nonhistorical nature; its registering of the shock of an experience on a visceral-bodily level. Nor, for these theorists, is affect interchangeable with passions and emotions. Brian Massumi’s argument for the “autonomy of affect” distinguishes emotions, understood as captured, subjectified, narrativizable, meaning-laden affects, from the nonlinear, nonhermeneutic shock of affect itself. Even when captured as emotion, affect lingers on beyond the point of capture, opening itself to potential liberations, escapes, and freedoms. Inspired by Deleuze, Massumi explains how the body “infolds *contexts* . . . the *trace* of past actions, *including a trace of their contexts*” even as it opens to that realm of potentiality that Massumi calls the *virtual* (30). In the virtual, “past and future brush shoulders with no mediating present” (30). Affective intensity operates “in excess of any narrative or functional line” (26). It trembles with a state of incipient becoming, remaining in some crucial sense *unnamable* and always at the level of the body as it carries forward, infolds, or embeds some past it pushes into future becoming.

As a network economy of perpetual circulation and a trace discourse of the past infolded, how might affect shape a reading of a particular historical event? Postapartheid South African literature foregrounds guilt, shame, anger, and forgiveness. Are these more properly emotions (defined by Massumi as “a narrative element that moves the action ahead, taking its place in socially recognized lines of action and reaction” (26)) than affects? The distinction between captured emotion and affect’s registering of bodily intensity that has not been routed through the semiotic and semantic pathways of meaning is certainly useful in the context of postapartheid literature. For if this literature regularly traffics in emotion in order to work through the past in some linear form, it also registers the uncertain project of living with the past, infolding it and exceeding it, holding on to it and moving through it. The theory of affect can help us to understand the cultural work that postapartheid literature performs along certain “recognizable” lines (liberation, reconciliation, nation-building), as well as the unique capacity of literature to do something beyond

the discourses of the state, to bring us into contact with experiences not entirely subsumed to representation, not fully plotted or placed into the narratives of meaning, and so to push us into the imagination of a freedom always to come. Could the novel's proffering both of "songs of comfort" and those of disquiet, defamiliarization, and shock craft something like an affective record of historical violence and what lies after it?

If this question can be asked of the postapartheid South African novel, it is equally pertinent to the novelistic record of slavery and colonization. Achille Mbembe has identified the necessity to "conceive, creatively and in their heteronomy, the all-purpose signifier constituted by slavery, colonization, and apartheid" ("African Modes of Self-Writing" 241). While these events, as Mbembe explains elsewhere, are part of a general "terror formation" or "necropolitics" constituted by the confluence of biopower, the state of exception, and the ideology of race ("the ever present shadow in Western political thought and practices"), slavery, colonization, and apartheid are not the same thing ("Necropolitics" 22, 17). Referencing Dominick LaCapra's 1999 essay, Mbembe observes, with regard to the single signifier of slavery, that there is a "distance that prevents the trauma, the absence, and the loss from ever being the same on the two sides of the Atlantic" ("African Modes of Self-Writing" 260). Affect may help to attune critical practice further to this difference. Insofar as affect registers some point where the world registers into or onto the body of some subject, it captures the intersection of what we think of as *out there* with what we think of as *in here* and thus models a networked relationality that invites us to put things together, to link subjects and objects, individuals and socialities, the novel and history, perhaps even distinct orders of historical experience and the groups understood to be constituted by them. But where trauma theory, as LaCapra also suggests, is analogical, identifying across different historical scenes a similar structure of trauma, repetition, retelling, secondary trauma (for teller and witness), and eventual recovery, affect theory keeps returning us to distance and difference, that which cannot be entirely contained but always spills out to traverse the network or system itself. Without a sense of these unassimilable horizons, the act of comparison becomes mere annexation. With its partial inaccessibility to representation on the one hand, and partial registering of some larger histories on the other, affect may provide a useful tool in the comparative literary history of histories of violence. If in the second part of this essay I explore only one small part of

this canvas, I nonetheless hope to raise a series of questions with the potential to flow outward.

Mimesis and Affect after Apartheid

Apartheid's end places a peculiar burden on the novel, which must simultaneously evoke memory and banish it, dwell within the affect of a particular political time of violence, loss, terror, and struggle while simultaneously seeking for *other times*, *future times*, in a phrase, look back and move forward. Since democratization in 1994, South African national narration has been ghosted not only by the historical past itself, the actual events of apartheid, resistance, terror, violence, liberation, transformation, and disappointment, but also by the various forms and codes, styles and genres through which that past laid claim to presence. So overwhelming still is the raw presence of the past and so unfinished the business of coming to terms with it, redressing it, memorializing it, and changing it that many postapartheid works of art find their necessary form in entanglements, both temporal and formal. Such entanglement may be characteristic of the postcolony, as Mbembe argues in a study notable for its attention to the plurality of bodily sensation through which the state violence exerted on citizens is taken in as fear and regurgitated as mockery, through jokes, cartoons, songs, rumors, and novels (Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* 14, 16). Some South African works of the postapartheid period register these ludic intensities, while others turn to more mimetic modes modeled on the juridical discourses of the state (memory, truth, confession, reconciliation, and forgiveness).

Commenting on the politics of shame, apology, and reconciliation surrounding Australia's treatment of Aboriginal inhabitants a generation ago, Ahmed writes: "The projection of what is unjust onto the past allows shame to be represented here as a collective shame that does not affect individuals in the present, even as it surrounds and covers them, like a cloak or skin" (102). To build a nation through a collectivized affect such as shame or guilt necessarily erases distinctions between different subjects and different histories, as well as the ongoing present of an inequity that also has to be redressed. The danger of what Ahmed calls "testimonial culture" is that it fetishizes wounding narratives of pain, injury, and loss as what is required for every citizen to know, thus making wound synonymous with nation and effectively producing a melancholic nation that holds on to its past. Texts that mime and mine the

memories and memory processes of “real victims” of a “real past” are a dominant strain of postapartheid South African literature, and an urgent one, given the need to tell what apartheid kept unknown, secret, and disavowed. For example, *Red Dust* (2000) by Gillian Slovo, daughter of the murdered freedom fighter Ruth First and the late exiled revolutionary-turned-ANC minister Joe Slovo, embeds a Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing in a small Eastern Cape town as its organizing narrative event and unfolds a storyline of crime, investigation, confession, and forgiveness. A black freedom fighter-turned-Member of Parliament confronts his police torturer with the aid of an expatriate white South African lawyer and slowly uncovers the story of his own crime in indicting a comrade while under torture. For this story, a “beginning, a middle and its own neat ending” is impossible: “there was too much history here, too much bad history, for that kind of completion; all that South Africa could aspire to was a general moving on” (Slovo 337). Courtrooms and confessions loom large in another iconic work of the national literature of “moving on,” Antjie Krog’s *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* (1998). Beyond modeling the processes of national memory, a work like Krog’s mixed-genre compilation of testimonial narratives and her own responses as a liberal white Afrikaner covering the TRC hearings, presents the memories of others as assimilable to the work of a single self’s “moving on.” Krog’s narrative certainly questions its own claim to truth, casting a veil of imprecision and fungibility over the very term. Some readers have nonetheless questioned Krog’s use of the testimonies as tantamount to a corrosive boundary-crossing that turns other people’s histories into instrumentalizable material. For Claudia Braude, *Country of My Skull’s* “promotion of relativized ‘truths,’” and “refusal to unambiguously differentiate fact from fiction” did something of what the TRC itself did—“generally diminished our national capacity to differentiate right from wrong, truth from falsehood, fact from fiction” (292, 290). Braude refers to the TRC’s decision to grant amnesty for the crimes of apartheid’s agents and liberation’s fighters alike, a compromise formulation that has haunted other diagnoses of the unfinished nature of liberation. If, after Ahmed’s notion of testimonial culture, we understand TRC literature to organize and reproduce national affects of shame, guilt, anger, and forgiveness, the narrative codings of this literature take on the further dimension of *testimonial form*. The “victims,” understood as distinct from the witnesses who access their experience vicariously, deliver affect for working through on an individual and national level, ultimately turning the

victim to a kind of raw material, the source for proxy experience but not, in the end, for the unsettling work of realizing the historical conditions that keep one individual's experience partially unknowable to another individual.

Perhaps the most striking example of the sway of testimonial narrative in new South African culture lies in the *security anecdote*. Essentially traumatic in structure, this genre of political truth-telling emerges from the rumor, the dinner party conversation, the family phone call. The security anecdote relates and repeats (relates so as to repeat) an event of sudden violence: a robbery, a break-in, a car-jacking, a rape, a shooting, that touches some person directly known by or a few degrees separated from the narrator. *This is what happened, just last month, just last week, just yesterday, to my sister or my neighbor, to my sister's neighbor's sister*. As an event both unexpected and expected, given widespread conviction that violence defines the postapartheid present, the security anecdote stages a problem of closure and makes a predictive claim about the truth and failure of a political system. In the security anecdote the system that fails is not apartheid but its aftermath, the democratic state that has failed to deliver on its promises, failed to redistribute and redevelop its resources, failed to keep safe and make better the lives of its citizens. This is part and parcel of an older, realist, now intensely mimetic tradition of South African writing whose first burden was to decry the present and whose present task is to mourn the past, returning to it so as to work through it. The security anecdote further effects a melancholic holding on, an incorporating of or becoming one with the losses of the past, such that a repetitively structured, endlessly additive story of loss (one's own, another's, no matter) is all the present or future seems to be.

Perhaps a literature of affect may do what a literature of trauma, testimony, and truth-telling sometimes does not, namely, preserve the distance between different orders of experience. As Jill Bennett argues with reference to visual art produced from violent historical events, the most mimetic art is not necessarily the most affective. So, for example, the postapartheid play *Ubu and the Truth Commission* by the artist William Kentridge and the playwright Jane Taylor alights only occasionally on narrativized characters, the mimetic flytraps that solicit sympathy and absorb emotion. Instead *Ubu* prefers a discontinuous array of embedded testimonies, intertextual reanimation of Alfred Jarry's nineteenth-century French play *Ubu Roi*, puppets, and animation. Affect flows here, in Bennett's words, "not as a stimulus to promote an emotional response, but as a far more diffuse mechanism, playing on the bodily perception of aesthetic operations" (123). These are, in Bennett's words, "affective state[s]

the juridico-political cannot approach, much less appropriate," where we encounter Derrida's notion of "the enigma of the forgiveness of the unforgivable" (Bennett 110; Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* 55). We can also recall Derrida's speculation that "while literature shares a certain power and a certain destiny with 'jurisdiction,' with the juridico-political production of institutional foundations, the constitutions of States, fundamental legislation, and even the theological-juridical performatives which occur at the origin of the law, at a certain point it [literature] can also exceed them, interrogate them, 'fictionalize' them: with nothing, or almost nothing, in view, of course, and by producing events whose 'reality' or durations is never assured, but which by that very fact are more thought-provoking, if that still means something" ("This Strange Institution Called Literature" 72).

These statements have often illuminated the work of Coetzee. More than any other South African novelist of the late apartheid and postapartheid period, Coetzee has rejected the imperative to produce literature as national history in some national mimetic mode. Nadine Gordimer urged the South African writer of the late 1980s to take up Chekov's demand "to describe a situation so truthfully . . . that the reader can no longer evade it," and charged Coetzee with preferring "to hold himself clear of events" and embracing "allegory as a stately fastidiousness" ("The Essential Gesture" 299; "The Idea of Gardening" 139). Coetzee announced his preference for the more Kafkaesque form of a narrative that does not record historical truth but instead offers a surreal, distorted, destabilizing version of its own—a version whose literary form exceeds its political purposes (Coetzee 1988).³ Could what Durrant calls Coetzee's "work of unconsolable mourning," a refusal to fully represent history and so move on from it, derive not only from the allegory that dominates Coetzee's novels but also from affect? Could the novels that hold back from history, forebear to know it, take it on and take it in, do so in part by lingering on the more slippery terrain of affect? Insofar as affect does not exactly erase temporality but instead layers and punctures it, simultaneously sedimenting the past and blasting it away, affect reorganizes the reading of national narratives around a set of questions for which historicism alone cannot provide the plot or the answer. It's not a question of simply moving on or living after but of *living with*, a state of

³ For discussions of this period and its tensions, see Clingman; essays by Mphahlele, Chapman, Green, Rabkin, Strauss, Visser, Ndebele, and Kunene in Chapman, Gardner, and Mphahlele; Kossew, Attwell, Attridge, and Penner.

coexistence for which the network, with its mobilities and intensities, provides a guiding image.⁴

Becoming, that key term in the Deleuzian philosophy of affect, can be deeply historical, especially in the context of new nations and new national literatures. One could, for example, trace the affective intensities at play in such works as Achmat Dangor's *Kafka's Curse* (1997) and *Bitter Fruit* (2001), Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying* (1997) and *The Whale Caller* (2005), Zoe Wicomb's *David's Story* (2000), and Ivan Vladislavic's *The Restless Supermarket* (2001). Lingering on the silences within private relationships, transgressive desires that cut across the body politic, and spaces that register several competing claims as history combines and reconstellates, these novels craft a non-mimetic mode of postapartheid writing in lush, hallucinatory prose that exceeds the burdens of memory. The codes of TRC testimonial literature (think of the future through the past, disclose the truth, make art mirror life, even the obligatory setting in the Gramscian interregnum between an old that is dying and a new that cannot be born) are present, but more as incorporated elements, mimetic pockets or passing truth-claims within a literary project that seeks its plot lines and its politics elsewhere. It is in the body and its several sensations, the uneven registering of touch, sound, and smell as the body traverses old and new spaces of sociality, that many of these novels find the affective record of postapartheid life.

In Coetzee's postapartheid fiction we see a similar unleashing of affect beyond mimetic codes, thanks to (1) a minimalist variant of sensate writing and (2) intertextual networks that ghost individual texts with the co-existence of others. From early works such as *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) through *Disgrace* (1998) and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), Kafka has provided Coetzee a densely allegorical scene or syntax whose refusal to completely mirror the time

⁴ The network has been associated with what we might think of as the nomad problem, the setting up of particular experiences and subjects as emblematic of the free flows of intensity across a network, to the point that both the experience and the subject disappear into mere metaphor, leaving no sites of attachment, no sense of locality and particularity (Miller; Lionnet and Shih). But local attachments, including national ones, need not always be understood to disappear into the network. In a useful reading of affect's network along the lines of global flow *and* local-ethnic-national attachment, Chow argues that "the sentimental, instead of being equated with the occurrence of affective excess per se, can more fruitfully be rethought as a discursive constellation—one that traverses affect, time, identity, and social mores, and whose contours tend to shift and morph under different cultural circumstances and likely with different genres, forms, and media" (17).

and place onto which it is overlaid actually opens the place of the future, the place we know primarily in the guise of a break. Consider *Disgrace*'s lingering consideration of perfective time; *Michael K*'s progression through the war-torn, allegorized spaces of city, country, and camps in late apartheid South Africa and the novel's larger debt to the "repeatedly broken, interrupted iterative present" (a tense Coetzee claims to have discovered in Kafka); and *Elizabeth Costello*'s final scene "straight out of Kafka" as the novelist awaits judgment before a gate in a replay of "Before the Law" (Coetzee, *Doubling the Point* 227-28; *Elizabeth Costello* 209). All are forms of novelistic futurity that resist the mourning time of "moving on" and imagine a different, non-mimetic relationship of literature to the state. If *Disgrace* sounds the perfective tense ("signifying an action carried through to its conclusion" 71) as a kind of death knell, it also lingers on what Coetzee earlier characterizes as Kafka's tense of a "repeatedly broken, interrupted iterative present." "I am giving him up," says David Lurie of the dog he has bonded with, even loved, but will nonetheless put to sleep with the others, causing them to be "burnt-burnt up," as he was himself "burned, burnt" after his daughter's farm was attacked, she raped, and he set on fire, and as he earlier "burned-burnt-burnt up" with desire for a student of his, causing him to lose his job "explaining to the bored youth of the country the distinction between drink and drink up, burned and burnt" (Coetzee, *Disgrace* 71, 97, 220). Against these perfective acts, the progressive phrasing of Lurie's final "I am giving him up," Mark Sanders reminds us, "leaves its meaning suspended between an anticipatory affirmation and a statement about action that is under way" (Sanders, "Disgrace" 368). Only through the break of the discontinuous, happening present, which offers no guarantees, does newness emerge. When it comes, it is small and simple, hard to hold on to, made to give up, far indeed from the stories told by states or the university disciplinary hearing that, as Sanders notes, mimes the TRC in miniature but fails to extract from Lurie the requisite confession of guilt for sexual harassment (370). If *Disgrace* speaks to the centrality of the emerging narrative genre of the security anecdote as an unavoidable passage through which much postapartheid South African writing goes, it also points to the poverties of that form to secure much at all, to give truth to history, or meaning to loss, or hope to the future. As a novel of political transition and transformation, the coming of the new South Africa, *Disgrace* does not make newness contingent on any one affect—shame, guilt, forgiveness, atonement—but instead circulates through and alongside them, not moving on but just moving.

Elizabeth Costello explores Kafka less as a state of linguistic, temporal, and affective being marked by broken emergence into an interruptive present (what Deleuze and Guattari call *becoming*) than as a source of a series of imprisoning allegorical scenes: the court of law, the prison cell, and the gate. These are of course the privileged locales, along with the bourgeois domestic home, of those “themes” from which Deleuze and Guattari claim we must free Kafka, namely, the transcendent power of the law, the interiority of guilt, and the subjectivity of enunciation (*Kafka*). Just as other South African writing of this period weaves TRC testimony and confession into its narrative, Coetzee’s novel embeds his own previous addresses and essays—“What is Realism?” (a reading of Kafka’s “Report to an Academy” as evidence that literature does not always point to reality), “The Future of the Novel,” “The Lives of the Animals,” “The Humanities in Africa,” and “The Problem of Evil.” These are collectively presented as “lessons,” lectures delivered by an Australian novelist caught in a celebrity circuit that stretches from the United States to an Antarctic cruise ship to Cape Town back to the United States to Amsterdam to the final no-place, or every-place, of allegory. The place in which Elizabeth Costello finds herself on trial for her life’s work is uncannily familiar, “straight out of Kafka . . . reduced and flattened to a parody” (209). With its scene “out of a book” and its door made “of the tissue of allegory,” the place could be, in her words, “in any of the gulags . . . in any of the camps of the Third Reich” (196-97). Like allegory itself, the place lends itself to equivalencies, the taking of one thing for another thing and the closing of the gap between one time and another. This is the imprisoning style of thought that the novel and Coetzee’s *oeuvre* generally seek to contest, working, in Derek Attridge’s phrase, in excess of and against allegory (49). In the end it is the telling of what she calls a “lamentably literary” story that counters the death grip of a style of allegorical interpretation for which Kafka serves as the sign and the state (totalitarian or Nazi) as the referent. Elizabeth Costello’s story of hibernating frogs on the Dulgannon river of her childhood is, she insists to her tribunal, “no allegory,” no “embod[iment] of the spirit of life,” but simply “the thing itself” (217). With the literary story as her final statement she is allowed to approach the gate. Unlike Kafka’s protagonist, who learns as the door closes that it existed only for him, she is told, “We all stand a chance [of passing through]. . . . We see people like you all the time” (224-25).

For Jacques Derrida, the import of Kafka’s parable is the staging of “an event that succeeds in not happening” (*un événement qui arrive à ne pas arriver*)

("The Strange Institution Called Literature" 208). Giorgio Agamben understands Derrida to turn to a time of messianic waiting in response to the force of a law that acts in violence to close the door. Agamben also understands Walter Benjamin, in his reading of the door, to "propos[e] a messianic nihilism that nullifies even the Nothing and lets no form of law remain in force beyond its own content" (*Homo Sacer* 52-53). Agamben proposes an alternative reading, focused on the possibility of there someday being a law that ends its life as force. The normalization of law as force, force as law, is what distinguishes the state of exception. And Kafka's characters, Agamben adds, "have to do with this spectral figure of the law in the state of exception; they seek, each one following his or her own strategy, to 'study' and deactivate it, to 'play' with it" (*Homo Sacer* 64). Kafka's characters become for Agamben the locus of a peculiar "liberation," the liberation that comes from a play that, unlike the continuous *fort-da* loop of loss and restoration, instead plays with its object (here law) in order to play with time and thus exit the loop of dead repetition. It is in this sense that Agamben elsewhere imagines how "[o]ne day humanity will play with law just as children play with disused objects, not in order to restore them to their canonical use but to free them from it for good . . . this new use, to the extent that it cannot be used, 'appropriated, or made juridical,' is law for just action" (*State of Exception* 88). Coetzee, I want to suggest, "plays" with Kafka in a similar way, opening a body of work more usually subjected to fixing interpretations to open-ended explorations about politics, futurity, and writing that are activated by what we may think of as Kafkan affect rather than Kafkan allegory. Coetzee's several Kafkas offer a version of what Sianne Ngai calls "a noncathartic aesthetic: art that produces and foregrounds a failure of emotional release (another form of suspended 'action') and does so as a kind of politics" (9). Coetzee's Kafkas, in other words, touch the political by going around the mimetic-realist imperatives of a national literature of reconciliation in which affect is called up so as to be put down or put away.

Initially known mostly in surrealist circles after his first translation, into French, in 1928, Kafka emerged with particular resonance in the shadow of World War II, when his atmosphere of anguish, subdued terror, and despair, and his anatomy of inhuman bureaucracy, state terror, and rationalized torture all seemed a prophetic anticipation of the concentration camps. Drenched in the hegemony of allegorizing interpretation and a short list of affective correlatives—sorrow, anxiety, despair, grief, melancholy, terror—Kafka seems always on the verge of not just coming back but *coming true*, closing the gap

between his early-twentieth-century vision of ghetto, state, colony, and cell and some later one, be it Nazi death camp, Soviet gulag, apartheid homeland, Charleston brig, or Guantanamo. The problem with Kafka now is that there is too much of him in too many places, as Coetzee, resisting Gordimer, famously said of truth in the 1980s in South African literature: “There is too much truth for art to hold, truth by the bucketful, truth that overwhelms and swamps every act of the imagination” (“Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech” 99). Coetzee’s own incorporation of Kafka argues against the dead equivalencies of a strictly allegorical reading, what I have characterized as Kafka’s *coming true*, in favor of what could be described as a disaggregating replay of the affective structure of Kafka so as to allow something else to emerge. If there is such a thing as a Kafkan affect, it would entail both the melancholic posture identified by Eric Santer, a gaze into some place where there is no transcendent time (20); and the act of standing before power that writes itself on a subject, as in the infamous torture machine in “In the Penal Colony,” yet not being entirely caught by the system. Something in Kafka always escapes confinement, as Benjamin intuits in his definition of Kafka’s “tribe” as “beings in an unfinished state . . . neither members of, nor strangers to, any of the other groups of figures, but, rather, messengers busy moving between them” (798). The unknown alternative, the future Kafkan affect trembles to become, is accessed via a language, a scene, a tense, a time, and a set of distinctly Kafkan feeling states. It is also accessed by the textual economy or circulatory network that links Coetzee and Kafka, national literature and world literature. Both the affect and the network play a part in Coetzee’s unfixing of the operational codes of national literature and putatively national states of feeling. When asked about the relationship between Kafka and *Michael K*, Coetzee replied, “I don’t believe that Kafka has an exclusive right to the letter K. Nor is Prague the center of the universe” (qtd. in Penner 83). If Kafka is not center, he is also not absent. This simple fact calls for a model of literary influence that thinks outside a proprietary economy of influence and imitation, outside a traditional literary history of sequence and succession, and perhaps even outside the author-text economy itself, which often works to reterritorialize affect in literature.

There is a form of autobiographical closure that increasingly threatens to descend in Coetzee’s later fiction: self portraits that we are invited to read through the familiar, fixing gesture of closing a gap. Lurie, an old man at the end of his powers and career, adrift in a new South Africa that has no place for him, *is* Coetzee; Elizabeth Costello, a world-renowned author living in

Australia is Coetzee; Paul Rayment, the frail invalid who comes to care too much for his caregiver in *Slow Man* (2005) is Coetzee; Mr. C, the physically deteriorating celebrated South African author living in Australia in Coetzee's most recent novel, *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007), is Coetzee. These are unhappy protagonists, uneasy with their place, aged in their bodies, and unmanned in their desires. Sometimes famous, sometimes not, all of them are caught up in acts of addressing audiences that may not hear them. As the figures of author and character seem to fuse, a series of formal metafictional strategies drive them apart, from the high self-consciousness that names each allegorical resonance and so dispels it in *Elizabeth Costello* to *Diary of a Bad Year*'s occupation of the gap between things as its place of narration and the opening of affective exchange.

Diary of a Bad Year's split-screen narrative relays the author C's collection of "strong opinions" at the top of the page; his verbal exchanges with and the thought processes of the beautiful young Filipina woman who types his manuscript and slowly comes to care for him below; and, at the bottom of the page, her record of her conversations with her boyfriend, who is unimpressed by C's writing, scheming for his fortune, and both jealous of and triumphant over C's desire for Anya. The "ache" that C feels for her ("of a metaphysical or at least post-physical kind," 13) literally subtends the political feelings that dominate the opinions that unroll at the top of the page as C holds forth on terrorism, torture, the competitive jungle of globalization, animal slaughter, religious orthodoxy, genocide, and apartheid, as well as the best human acts of art and reason (the novel, music, mathematics, science). Shame is a major preoccupation of C's strong opinions, specifically the shame felt by national subjects for what is done in their name but without their knowledge. The Bush administration, he notes, "while legal in the sense of being legally elected, is illegal or anti-legal in the sense of operating beyond the bounds of the law, evading the law, and resisting the rule of law" (41). First denouncing the administration ("their shamelessness is quite extraordinary"), C then ventriloquizes it: "In the new dispensation we have created, they implicitly say, the old powers of shame have been abolished." Other experiences of national shame are referenced, including Australia's forced assimilation of its Aboriginal citizens, John Howard's and Tony Blair's support of the Bush administration's war on Iraq, and South African apartheid, before which entire generations of white South Africans, C notes, "will go bowed under the shame of the crimes that were committed in their name" (44). Apartheid's

depredations in “the name of a struggle against terror,” C writes in the most intimate expression of his synonymy with Coetzee, made its architects not the “moral barbarians” evoked in “his” early novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* but “just pioneers, ahead of their time” (171). Rather fixing national shame to single signifiers (Bush’s U.S., Blair’s Britain, apartheid’s South Africa), in an equivalent of the closing of an allegorical gap, the novel renders national shame as a political affect in constant circulation, spread out over the globe and repeated over history. To go through one locus of national shame is to access another not by historical analogy or classical one-to-one figurative allegory so much as by affective contact. Where this kind of allegory and analogy fixes, affect circulates. It’s at the breaking points within larger systems of interpretive equivalence that affect takes off, just as it is in the spaces in between captured emotion and instrumentalized national feeling, with their juridico-political containers and forms, that affect surges up.

Touching down at particular national sites and taking off again, the affect of shame exceeds the outrage and didacticism of the opinions at the top of the page in *Diary of a Bad Year*. Shame further bleeds down into C’s exchange with Anya, who recounts her own history of refusing to be shamed for having been the victim of sexual violence as a response to C’s claim that “when you live in shameful times, shame descends on you, shame descends upon everyone, and you have simply to bear it, it is your lot and your punishment” (96). Ultimately Anya’s voice comes to inflect the story told above, causing C to alternate his “strong opinions” with the “soft” ones she asks him to imagine—vignettes of small comforts and achievements such as a kiss, birdsong in the park, the music of Bach, the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, even the poetry of Antjie Krok, which C praises as “quite Russian” in the bravery of its response to life’s wretchedness (199). Never sentimental but soft for all that, these opinions offer a different way of living before and beyond (national) shame. If the novel’s split-screen narration challenges the reader to read outside the box, now following one particular character’s line of thought for a few pages at a time, now reading in a more sedimented fashion a single page from top to bottom, it also asks that the reader detach affects from characters, from authors, from histories, from fates, and from her own responses. An affect moves through a subject, a history, a nation, a moment, but it does not stay planted in it; it does not *define* it. Affect and the art that is in some way its correlative, *Diary of a Bad Year* suggests, spill out beyond such fixings.

They operate instead in the zone of transfer, circulation, and exchange that we call a network.

In beginning to collate something like the archive of feeling for postapartheid South African novels, I have been less concerned with the quantity or degree of particular affects in particular texts than with a certain notion of textual economy, for which the concept of affect provides a model. Rather than inventorying which text is most guilt-ridden, which most filled with forgiveness, which with shame, I have wanted at least to name the network that encompasses them all. This network stretches around the mimetic-mourning preoccupations of TRC literature, the transgressive desires unleashed by the nonmimetic literature of political newness, the circulation of shame and forgiveness in Coetzee's later novels, and the literary circuits of influence, allusion, and echo that subtends them. While individual texts within this network may track the emergence of a postapartheid national subject, may even work to produce that subject, I have not wanted to make that subject the center of my inquiry. Instead, I have emphasized the *circulations* through which that subject (and the affects attached to it) come to be. Affect's circulatory network suggests that a text's meaning does not lie *in* the text, *in* the new national, postracial subject it represents, *in* the reader, or even *in* the history that the text is understood to sediment, contain, or imaginarily resolve, but instead in the contact and passage among those entities and others. Just as the units of narrative (point of view, plot, voice, figure, symbol, mode) are constantly changing and reconstellating, so too is the history to which narrative, with its affective intensities and mobilities, can point. Finally, routing the reading through the affective economy, we can see a collective effort to negotiate a larger set of cultural feelings and sensibilities vis à vis some profound *event*, without taking the event as itself the cause or meaning, the inevitable referent, of the representations themselves.

Here Coetzee's work circles back to the larger problem of comparability, the possibility of how indeed to think "creatively and in their heteronomy" the signifiers of slavery, colonization, and apartheid (Mbembe, "African Modes of Self-Writing" 241). With novelistic genre as the double of affect, that is, as yet another trace concept in which new instantiations are sedimented alongside old ones, is it possible to imagine a world literary history organized not by national borders nor even global flows but by what we might call the feeling archive of world *events*? By further tying this analysis to a history, *and a reading*, of the literary expressions, the traffic in texts, that was a byproduct of slavery,

colonization, and apartheid, we might perhaps avoid some of the raw transhistoricism that troubles Agamben's reflections on the death camp as a universal figure in human history, the global metaphor of a generalized abjection before the law that is the ground of *subjectivity itself* in a world constituted by power (Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz* 1999). The preservation of some historical specificity, experiential particularity, and even some fundamental inaccessibility of traumatic experiences to representation is crucial if we are to avoid suggesting that there is a single experience of trauma at work across diverse and differently situated events (apartheid, colonization, slavery) and legible in a single set of formal and narrative codes. Affect could offer one way to approach this task. In so doing, perhaps affect could reorient us to the ethical dilemma of that particular network economy known as world literature. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has forcefully argued, world literature's encounter with other texts, traditions, and cultures risks appropriating that knowledge to some centered, probing, and scholarly self and so turning the other to mere data (108). World literature theory might instead aspire to know in the style described by Deleuze, where one is "shocked" into thought by a moment of affective intensity precipitated by a work of art itself (Deleuze, *Cinema Two: The Time Image, Proust and Signs*; Massumi, *A Shock to Thought*). Affect is as networked as the capital traced in the world systems theory that inspires Franco Moretti's model of world literature and as haunted by invisible quantities and prior histories as the genre that preoccupies other models, including my own, which focus on networks of larger cultural and historical exchange across different geographies and temporalities, including the inheritance and transformation of past works into present ones. Affect adds to this toolbox for world literary analysis a set of questions proceeding not only from the network but from the work too, and not only from what the work derives from and what it encodes, means, and represents but from *what the work does*. Affect as a critical category for knowledge grasps the degree to which any project at knowing what lies beyond the self is bound to stop short of that full knowledge, to find itself blocked or arrested, caught up in the shock of an apprehension that is precisely not knowing but feeling. Can we read the literary history of racialized violence and terror, from slavery to colonization to apartheid, as the task of opening to a feeling that cannot be made one's own and, for that very reason, opens up another kind of relation to historical violence than that which would know its meaning, close its chapter, or move on from its happening?

Describing the “unbounded affective field” through which courses “the whole universe of affective potential,” Massumi in fact endows affect with world-scale status. “Affect *is* the whole world: from the precise angle of its differential emergence” (43). Offering “*the virtual as point of view*” (35), affect derives its worldedness from a perpetual circulation-in-waiting. In this version of worldedness, to be the whole world is not to encompass some totality, to mirror, map, know, or absorb it, but rather to traverse it. Affect cuts across some putatively unified field, weaving back and forth and carving its surface so as to be simultaneously captured at a particular point (the body, an emotion) and capable of escaping beyond it. Incipient movement contained within a point of persistence, saturation, or capture. I have begun to explore how this sense of affective worldedness might inform literary history and criticism, specifically that which traces the novel’s entwinement with the literature of foundational violence. With its flows through and across different subjects, objects, histories, and places, affect invites us to reach for new units of comparison and so to construct new histories of feeling that both recognize the force of violence and imagine a future beyond it.

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In South Africa, just like in other parts of the world, parents have a strong desire to see their children progress and have a good life; hence, families are willing to make sacrifices for education. South Africa has a lot to celebrate. It successfully ended apartheid, launched a democratic government with national participation and avoided the mass chaos that has afflicted other African countries transitioning from colonial to democratic control. Stock prices fluctuate, sometimes rapidly and dramatically, due to factors affecting individual companies, particular industries or sectors, or general market conditions. _1. Source: Corruption Watch, "Loss of Principle," October 2015. South Africa exports were never diversified by the oft-eulogised Apartheid economist, you won't find Made in South clothes in any of the 3 continents I've lived in. I often wonder if Verwoed and his supporters ever considered the future. Did they honestly think that it would turn out well? They wanted a mini-Europe, independent states of different cultures, all determining their own way of life. Apartheid South Africa looked after white people and nobody else. Now some of its white communities face a level of deprivation, or of violence, which threatens their future in the country. Everyone here, regardless of colour, tells you that white people are still riding high. According to one leading political activist, Mandla Nyaqela, this is the after-effect of the huge degree of selfishness and brutality which was shown towards the black population under apartheid. "It is having its effect on whites today, even though they still own a share of South Africa's wealth which is entirely disproportionate," he said. That may all be true. But the people who are suffering now are the weakest and most vulnerable members of the white community. Memory's Future: Affect, History, and New Narrative in South Africa. Vilashini Cooppan. In the particular historical locale of South Africa's late apartheid, J.M. Coetzee's novel *Age of Iron* (1990) assumes a narrative position that, while fundamentally impeded by sociohistorical clusters, succeeds in articulating and subverting its own impediment. The essay seeks to account for the double bind of the novel's narrator, who finds herself simultaneously subjected to and outside of