

FOREWORD

Early in February 1998, the photographer and I arrived in Paris to photograph and document Breyten Breytenbach's paintings and drawings. We stayed in the district of Saint Germaine, right opposite the Procop, in an extended roof room, which would serve as a kitchen, bathroom, lounge and a separate bedroom. There was a supermarket around the corner where we could buy food that would, later, back at the "apartment", be transformed into a meal in a black pot. Breytenbach's apartment near the Pantheon, was within walking distance.

Looking back over his work, Breytenbach writes that he can usually ascribe a geographical location to his paintings. An experimental situation as well. In earlier years he worked in a studio in a wooden house, north of Paris. The quarter was poor and unpretentious. Facing the studio was a building that despite the large windows in the one wall blocked out the view outside. The paintings came out in tones of grey and brown. Often the works depicted figures isolated in a largish room and blinded by the exterior light. An Afrikaans writer, Chris Barnard (1939 -) who visited him there, described him as a restful man with a soft voice, vulnerable goat eyes and a shy smile. He stood between dozens of unframed paintings – a series of disturbing intimidating images in oil. Breytenbach had converted one room into a studio. Yolande headed off each morning to an office job to support his art. He was producing perverse, fetid northern imagery. By turn dreamlike, fevered, whimsical or crass, involuted or blatant, his work began to garner a certain reputation in Paris, but even more in Amsterdam, where the Dutch sensed a distant kinship with the Afrikaner and saw an affinity between his work and the, then reigning CoBrA¹ expressionists' sensibility. Examples of his

1

CoBrA is the acronym for Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam. It was initiated by an international group of painters and writers in Paris during 1948. These were Asger Jorm from Denmark, Dotremont from Belgium, Appel, Corneille and Constant from The Netherlands. The movement was a reaction on the theoretical aesthetics of the surrealism – the group made spontaneous, experimental paintings related to Abstract Expressionism. Binding elements were preference for the northern emotional aspect and anti-aesthetics.

work from this period, are the *Opus Series. (FW-1)*.²

One of his studios was a wooden one on the Porte de Clignancourt, just below that of the Dutch painter Corneille³(1922-), in the Rue de Grenelle. Another studio was near to *Les Invalides*, where Napoleon was buried (Brink 1967: 29-31). Breytenbach also painted for years in the studio of Christian Boltanski(1944-), whose art concerns the concept of memory, an important theme in Breytenbach's work. Pierre Skira, whose father was an important figure in the publishing business in Paris, introduced Breytenbach to stone lithography. With Skira, he worked on a lithograph of flowers in a vase, which he would later transform, into the watercolour and gouache work, *Pink Dream (FW-2)*. At the foot of *Pink Dream* we find a row of figures which can be interrelated to the work of the Pop artist, Andy Warhol (1928?-1987). Breytenbach used the lithograph, changing it into a face (during the Sixties, lithography was an important medium in Paris). The Pop movement was incorporated in the New Realists' movement of which Breytenbach was part.

The following day we went to his most recent studio which lies on the tip of the tongue of the *Chinese Quarter*. This is an area where all the pharmacies, banks, video shops, restaurants, cafes and bric-a-brac shops are Eastern, also low East-European flats. In this living *quarter*,

2

Reproductions of the paintings and drawings are stored on CD. Each chapter is stored in a separate folder and each painting or drawing is indicated by chosen capital letters and a number. The letters representing the different chapters are as follows:

Foreword - FW

Chapter One: Fire and Water - F&W.

Chapter Two: The Movement of Bodies - MB

Chapter Three: Movement and Inscription - M&I.

Chapter Four: Memory - M.

Chapter Five: The Chameleon - C.

Chapter Six: The Mirror - BM.

3

Corneille (Cornelis Guillaume van Beverloo)

Breytenbach told us, people look after each other. He would like to grow old here.

The studio was a light-drenched space. We left immediately again, undertaking a labyrinth-like walk through China Town. Breytenbach was continually conveying information on the area's history and customs, pointing out the colours and smells of markets, where we would later have a midday meal of traditional food at a Vietnamese restaurant. Meanwhile Breytenbach, wearing his "red leather shoes of revolution" for the occasion, made certain suggestions about the menu and explained the different dishes, mentioning that sometimes they had come here for a meal with Yolande's family. During the meal, he talked about the brutality of Francis Bacon's (1909-1992) paintings, mentioning stages of personal interest. He would mention that he learnt the Buddhist way, through imitation. Breytenbach stated that his artistic "ancestors" were Pieter Bruegel (c1525-69), Hieronymous Bosch (c1450-1516), Francisco José Goya Y Lucientes (1746-1828), Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), Max Ernst (1891-1976), René Magritte (1898-1967), Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978) and Bacon. Art movements of interest were New Realism, which he and a few Dutch artists initiated, and also Surrealism.⁴

After a day's work, walking back to Saint Germaine, we returned to the studio with a view onto the low East European apartment building with gray doves walking on the roof. Our task was to catalogue and photograph more than a hundred paintings and drawings. One important space in an artist life, is his studio. In a monograph, *Notes of Bird*, Breytenbach (1984a:16-18) writes about his studio in Paris on returning to it after a period of seven-and-a-half years of incarceration:

4

Surrealism is a 20th century literary and artistic movement which (under the influence of Freudian psychology) attempts to express the workings of the subconscious: characterized by fantastic imagery and incongruous juxtaposition of subject matter. The word Freudian is derived from the Austrian physician Sigmund Freud whose notions about the impact on the "unconscious" by unresolved psychosexual conflicts revolutionized early 20th century psychology. The notion of the "unconscious" had a profound seminal influence on the art and literature of the 20th century.

Until you found these 35 square metres, perched high from where you can watch the clouds silently avoiding any collision or definition. And the space is gradually taking on its rhythm; it is starting to move. From the ceiling is suspended the plaster cast that used to encase the broken knee; and the skull – because it is vital to have the mind exteriorized and visualized and localized. Part of the skull has been cut away for new ideas to circulate. The walls have been painted white. On one shelf is the trunk, with head and two disconnected arms, of a display model who when young and varnished, must have lived in a shop-window somewhere. She is better off here – although the legs-and buttocks are standing separately on the floor; at least you don't insult her virginity by draping clothes over her. No tits. The head has a hole in it, large as a fist, its edges eaten away by the gray rotting of paper maché. Inside that there's a dark nothing. Big as the fist opened. She has stiff blue eyes (one is peeling) like those of a Saxon maiden. Her name is Joyce O' Foyles. In the corner Horse sits with patients knees, waiting for his tot of Brandywine. You have the work table (3m x 1m) which you and Loufoit went to fetch in some dead master's stilled, dust-stifled studio (it was too long to enter the workroom in one piece; you took it apart on the pavement outside and brought it upstairs to be reassembled; it fell on your foot and broke the skin; you have the obsession of playing Christ). Now it is loaded with material with possibilities. You have another, smaller table, painted red. On this you write the lines for a monograph. You have Bonhomme looking at you with his hat of blackness hiding the black hat of his blank thoughts, which are thinking the thoughts of all hats. You have the stuffed head of the green parrot, born far away in Africa, decapitated and emptied of all imitations and echoes and illusions, far away all the visions of Africa's green hills too, and put up for sale among old men's teeth and boots and coughs and mirrors and other knickknacks on some flea market. You have had it for many years now. It was always dead but never as dead as now. You unearthed it again in Loufoit's cellar in a battered suitcase (the traveller's desire) with paint-tubes that had gone dense-eyed and hard and photos of Mao and Ché, and posters in many tongues clamouring for **FREEDOM FOR NOMANDSLAND NOW**. The imitation of an eye had fallen out. The green feathers are moth-eaten. The orange beak no longer glistens it is blobbed and ungainly like a brain. It cannot stand on its own

either. You have brushes and rolls of canvas and rags and music (Mozart, Dollar Brand, Bach, Chris Bignaut, Lemmy Caution, Chopin) and a book in which the words of Master Eckhart are written: **Only the hand that effaces can write the true thing. It is also written: L'oeil était dans l'anus et regardait Cocteau. C'est cac de le dire. You don't have any idea. You don't have time. You do have the cracks and the ruptures and the knee.**

This echo-space must now secrete the paintings, which will endlessly and futilely attempt to occupy the space, to put a term to the void. Outside the window, entirely in the day, birds are going to the emptiness of trees. Clouds are sifting the light, shifting the eye.

For four days we browsed through a collection of the paintings, colourful canvases with surrealist images, sometimes lyrical and sometimes unbearably confrontational. Focussing his Zeiss lens the photographer began the mammoth task of photographing the paintings and drawings.

After three days of hard work, I took the train to Amsterdam, staying in a small hotel near the *Koninklijke Konsertgebou*, near to the *Stedelijke Museum* and within walking distance from the Galerie Espace, on the Keizergracht, where Breytenbach had exhibited for many years. I had an interview with Eva Bendien (who has since passed away) and Rutger Noordhoek Hegt, curators of the Espace. They discussed influences in Breytenbach's work and provided catalogues and newspaper clippings, and addresses of collectors of Breytenbach's work.

Galerie Espace and the long relationship with the Netherlands

In 1958 Breytenbach had enrolled at the Cape Town University's Michaelis School of Art for a course in visual arts. Work done during this period: *Man met Rooi Fles (FW-3)*, *Selfportrait (FW -4)*, *Man met Vis (Man with Fish)(FW-5)* and *Untitled (FW-6)*, depicting a labourer's cottage. In Cape Town he befriended young liberals like Marius Schoon, with whom he later shared a "flat" in the Pretoria Central Prison. He became acquainted with established writers like Jan Rabie (1920 - 2001) (his mentor), Jack Cope (1913 - 1931), Uys Krige (1910 - 1987) and, possibly, Ingrid Jonker (1933-1965). He met foreigners like Rabie's Scottish wife, Marjorie Wallace, and the Hollander, Cees de Jong. People like Michael Tapscott, Jobst Grapow and Heleen Raath introduced new and radical political thoughts to him – he later shared a house with them. Together they gave interracial parties and, in 1959, they took part in protest against legislation for separate universities. Invigorating as art school was Breytenbach was even more entranced by Cape Town itself. Evenings he spent in jazz clubs, listening to the likes of Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim), or else tracking down such luminaries of an earlier generation of Afrikaans poets. He steeped himself in Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), in Frazer and Graves, but especially in the New Beat literature. Kerouac, Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1919 -), Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder (1930 -) were just emerging. Through Alan Watts one could learn about Zen Buddhism. At the end of 1959, Breytenbach boarded a Portuguese boat bound for Europe via Tangiers in Morocco and then hiked through Spain. Breytenbach writes that he spent a year bumming around, spending nights in flea-bag hotels or under bridges, rushing to London to catch up on events back home (the Sharpeville massacre), teaching English in Norway and playing street artist in Cannes. Arriving in Paris in the early sixties, Breytenbach, who probably got addresses from Schoon when commencing his world tour, had befriended black exiles, like Ezekiel Mphahlele(1919-). He began seeking out the company of more activist-orientated South African exiles (Galloway 1990:1-2).

The sixties could be seen as a decade of rejection of conventional, “straight” values; closeness, peacefulness, and trust of the hippie community; the freedom of communal nudity; expansion of consciousness through psychedelics and meditation. It marked also the awakening of political consciousness. Paris itself, meanwhile, was about to erupt in a political drama of its own. In May 1968, revolutionary students, workers and artists almost succeeded in toppling the administration of Charles de Gaulle. Militancy was rampant, some nonviolent and some less so. There were long discussions at the Science faculty at Orsay, during which the students not only analysed the Vietnam and the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, but also questioned the power structure within the university and discussed alternative, non-hierarchical structures.

In May 1968, finally, all research and teaching activities came to a complete halt when the students, led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, extended their critique to society as a whole and sought the solidarity of the labour movement to change the entire social organisation. For about a week, the city administration, public transport, and businesses of every kind were completely paralysed by a general strike. People spent most of the time discussing politics in the streets, and the students, who had occupied the Odeon, the spacious theatre of the Comédie Française, transformed it into a twenty-four-hour “people’s parliament”. In the evening, Cohn-Bendit and others aired their highly idealistic but extremely stimulating visions of a future social order (Capra 1990:64).

The European student movement, which was largely Marxists oriented, was not able to turn its visions into realities during the sixties. But it kept its social concerns alive during the subsequent decade, during which many of its members experienced profound personal transformations. Breytenbach at this time was exhibiting in Amsterdam, a wondrous city in those days. The hippies were tourists of a new kind. They came to Amsterdam from all over Europe and the United States, not to see the Royal Palace or the paintings of Rembrandt, but to be together. A great attraction was the fact that smoking marijuana and hashish was tolerated to the extent of being virtually legal in Amsterdam, but this beautiful city’s attraction

went far beyond that. There was a genuine desire among young people to meet one another and share radically new experiences and visions of different cultures. One of the most popular meeting places was a large house called “The Milky Way”, which contained a health food restaurant and a discotheque, and also an entire floor laid out with thick carpets, lit by candles and scented with incense, where people would sit in groups, smoke and talk. The Milky Way: there you could spend hours discussing Mahayana Buddhism or the teachings of Don Juan, the mystical Yaqui sage, as described by Carlos Castaneda. Breytenbach probably chose his painter’s pseudonym, *juan breyten*, after reading Castaneda’s book (Capra:1990:65).

During 1997, the *Galerie Espace* published a commemorative book (*Galerie Espace* 1997), on the history of the gallery and the artists who exhibited there. There is a section devoted to Breytenbach. He has had a long and intense connection with the *Galerie Espace*, which is situated on the Keizersgracht between Spiegel Street and de Leidestraat, and its two curators, Bendien and Hegt. This gallery was first opened on 4 November 1960.

Felix Valk from Paris discovered Breytenbach, while exhibiting at the *Galerie 20* in 1963 in Arnheim. This first exhibition went unnoticed, but even at that stage certain controversies were surrounding his work. During December 1966, *Galerie Espace* celebrated its tenth year of existence with an exhibition of more than forty artists. The CoBrA artists and Anton Haber were the most important exhibitors, with the sculptors, Tajiri, Couzin and Perlmutter. Although the gallery had concentrated on exhibitions of the CoBrA artists, an important movement for the gallery was the issuing of an invitation to a group of young artists who reacted to abstraction and who would later become known as the *New Figuratives*. In 1964, these were Reiner Lucassen (1939 -), Pieter Holstein (1934 -) and Breytenbach, who then exhibited under the name, *juan breyten* in 1965. In 1968 he exhibited with the Belgian painters Roger Raveel (1921 -) and Etienne Elias (1936 -) . The Dutch newspaper, *De Telegraaf*, coined the term *nieuw figuratief* to describe this new generation of artists. Rederker had stated, in the *Algemene Handelsblad* (1966) that there was a definite movement

towards recognisable representations. During the same year, the term *nieuwe figuratie* was used in the catalogue at the exhibition *Nieuwe Realisten* in The Hague Community Museum: this not only included the younger generation Dutch artists, but American and British Pop Art, represented by Bacon and Willem de Kooning (1904 -).

New friendships and new influences were formed. Maryan of Polish Jewish origin, received his art training in Paris and from 1962 exhibited in New York, where he gained an international reputation. Breytenbach engaged in a conversation with other painters, like Maryan who also exhibited at the Espace, especially with Maryan's "Personage" (1972). In a private conversation with the artist in his studio in Paris, Breytenbach mentioned that he would, one day, like this gruesome death mask *Untitled (FW-7)* on his coffin.

In 1966 he worked on his second one-man exhibition at the Espace under the title *Le singe peint* and the Groningen Museum bought his self-portrait, *Old King Breyten*. Art critics in The Netherlands reacted violently and Rederker (1966) wrote:

Hij schildert de protest sang van zijn poëtisch en gevoelige hart als deel humoristische, deel beangstigende en schokkende horruurs. (He paints the protest song of his poetic and sensitive heart, partly humorous, partly anxious and filled with shocking horrors).

During 1968, Breytenbach again exhibited at the Espace. He received a great deal of attention from the newspapers for his political stance against *Apartheid*. The reception of his work reflected both repulsion and fascination by his viewers. *Elsevier Dagblad* (1968) writes that Breytenbach's imagery comprised monstrous images, growths, intestines, all leading their own life, gripping in their fever-like colours as repugnant as orchids. Although art critics were reacting against his work, it was regarded as important. The press was positive about the direction the Espace was taking; there was the fierce revolt of the CoBrA and the

Experimentals were moving in the direction of the revolutionary. Later that year, the Espace again housed one of Breytenbach's exhibitions and critics used the opportunity to compare the poet with the painter. Visser from the *Financieel Dagblad* (1972) wrote: *toon om wat de mens word aangedaan vooral in zijn vaderland; toon om de onvolwaardigheid waartoe de mens word gedoemd.* ([The work] is a reflection of the suffering of people in his country of birth). Ten years later Breytenbach was compared to Lucebert (1924-)⁵ and the reception in the newspapers thus read:

In zeker opzicht is Breytenbach te vergelijken met Lucebert. Ook Lucebert is van huis uit schilder; hij is net als Breytenbach pas op aandringen van anderen als dichter gee gaan werken. Net als Lucebert is Breytenbach een (lyrich) een wraaksuchtig auteur, een woedende schilder. Het onzichtbare geweld neemt in de gevolgen konkrete, fysieke vormen aan. Trekts een spoor van gehavende lichamen over het teken- of schrifblad. Hun werk word bevolkt door wanstaltige gedrochten, loerend misbaksels, ijzervretende heersers, bloeddorstige heren met meer dan twee vangarmen. (Breytenbach can be compared to Lucebert. Lucebert is also a painter and a poet. Like Lucebert, Breytenbach is a (lyrical) [poet] and full of revenge – an angry artist. The invisible violence takes on a physical form and mutilated bodies are drawn over the drawing paper or the canvas. Misshapen monsters, peering mis-happenings, iron-gorging rulers, and bloodthirsty gentlemen invade his work with more than two arms for catching.)

Both poets/painters confronted their contemporaries. The Forum poets of the thirties did likewise – with the old dispute of social involvement, on the one hand, and literary isolation, on the other. There is a strong involvement with the body in the work of both Lucebert and Breytenbach. Where bodilessness with Lucebert and other artists of the fifties embraces exuberance and liberation from petty bourgeoisies, however Breytenbach's strong involvement with the body is inherently in the polarity between life and death. He takes the standpoint that writing poetry and painting or drawing is comparable to a normal bodily function. He would

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Lucebert (Lucebertus Jacobus Swaanswijk)

paint and draw many words in which the word *turd* [sic] would be used to deliver commentary on social realities.

Lucebert and Breytenbach likewise shared a strong involvement in Zen Buddhism and the transformation of Western aspirations. On the 23 April 1997, from the *Centre for Creative Arts*, at the University of Natal, in Durban, where they bestowed an honorary professorship on him, Breytenbach writes a contribution for the publication of a review on the history of the Espace that also provides a further picture of his involvement with the gallery:

I can't remember now when we first met Eva and Rutger. It must have been early in the 60's. In fact, according to records, I first exhibited at Galerie Espace during 1964. What a lifetime ago!

Martin Engelman was still alive. He, together with Mark Brusse and Klaas Gubbles, was one of the guides who took me over River Lethe into the grey light of Holland where the canals glint and windmills wave noiselessly at the congregation of clouds. Yolande and I were living in Paris. I had a wooden studio near the Porte de Clignancourt, just below Corneille, another friend of Espace. There I was painting impossible pictures, or at least things that were difficult to exhibit. To be more precise: crude screams and whispers that were totally impossible to sell.

At regular intervals – the list of exhibitions will show it was at least once every two years – we travelled north. Some of the trips were epic experiences, traversing Belgium in a pea-soup of coal-smudged fog, having to make detours in the night to smuggle artworks across the border, having exhibited catalogues confiscated as 'obscene material' by dim-witted customs officials, or having a breakdown with friends in an over-loaded 2CV.

In reality, we went north when there was not even the excuse of an exhibition. Espace was, and is, a magic space. We knew it from the time when it was still heated by fuel stoves right up to its present central heating system. That was the only change. The paintings and drawings and sculptures were always chosen with the same sure, timeless taste. All along Espace remained a haven for a small

number of artists – Lucebert, Heyboer, Raveel, Lucassen, Huymans, Alechinsky, and Gubbels. ... No fancy tricks. Just this friendly and right space of appreciation (the inner space made evident) with its fine light, overlooking the Keizergracht, its two fat housegods disguised as cats, its Henri Rousseau garden at the back, its hospitable kitchen with ready coffee and food and wine. My only regret was that I could never smoke there since both Eva and Rutger were tee-totallers.

One would arrive to be welcomed by the owners. We used to be accommodated upstairs from the gallery under the eaves where, when in bed, one could watch the light reflected from the canal lapping the ceiling. Rutger would make sure that we had enough guilders, maps, bus tickets, instructions, recommendations and reminders before we risked it outside on Amsterdam's wild streets.

If I had brought works, Eva would wait before looking them over at length and giving me her incisive and always true evaluation. If they were to be hung, Rutger would do so with much groaning about hammers and screws. At night there'd be a fine home-cooked meal enjoyed around the kitchen table, accompanied by erudite theological discussions on the Pope's infallibility, abandoned children, the art of writing postcards (and reproaches pertaining thereto), and the state of the Queen's household. Also literature. To be followed, perhaps, by a game of chess.

At that table we spent many an evening with good friends – Frida and Laurens van Krevelen, Adriaan van Dis who came to share the latest information about the conditions of his back, Henk van Woerden. ...

And now much time has passed. Many springs came and went away on the blackbird's call, with Eva still planning to control her garden. The canals froze over a few times. People we used to know together passed away. Fashions arose, flourished furiously, and faded. Maybe Rutger has lost a few hairs over the years.

But the two of them are still there, as generous and understanding as ever. And the gallery has remained that privileged space where aesthetics and real experiences intersect. The light comes in through the windows to enhance the quiet illumination and the need for images on the walls becomes woven into memory's cloth. Only such cloths can protect us against the cold of eternity.

For now, the Pope is still infallible. And the Queen still young.

(Juan) Breyten. Durban, April 1997

In the same book commemorating the fortieth birthday of the Espace, van Dis wrote:

My first litho. was bought from you – ‘AAP met Fez’ by BREYTEN. The painter called Juan, the one wearing red shoes. Through Breyten I got acquainted to that bastard language from far off Africa. A friendship started and you were the mediators where I met friends of Yolande and Breyten; Mazini Kunene, who propped twelve tea bags in a tea pot, only stirring it after an hour, Jobst Grapow, the wandering *Ashoop*. Africa on the canal (Galerie Espace 1997:65)

As a member of the *Sestigers*, Breyten was one of a group of writers whose influence extended the traditional “borders” of literature, so that their work became a political phenomenon. Also, in his art, Breytenbach went way beyond the traditional. Brink (1967:29) stated the following about his art:

The well-know collector, Marc Moyens, who exhibited his collection in New York, shipped five enormous canvasses by Breyten. In an interview Breyten states that he paints ‘de stoornissen rondom de communicatie, de afstomping, en de brutaliteit om door die afstomping, heen te breken. Er spreekt ang en weerzin uit de aapachtige mannetjies, de gewachtelde lichaamsdelen de organische vormen, dermachtige slinges die in holen kronkelen en ergens anders weer te voorschijn kome. Een krijtwit gezicht staart met ‘n verbrijzeld en een helder oog; er zijn zwarte scaduwen, er zijn onwezenlijke portretten tegen een psychedelische achtergrond.’ (He paints to break through the disturbing and stultifying patterns of communication, the blunting and a wish to break through the brutalities of that blunting. He conveys his anxiety and revolt by painting ape-like men, swollen bodily parts, organic forms, intestines-like loops plaited through holes, crawling through nothingness to appear again at some other hole. One shattered single eye stares from a chalk-white face, there are black shadows, there are disturbing portraits against a psychedelic background.)

The reporter was referring to the exhibition, *le Singe Peintre*, at the Galerie Claude Levin, 9 Rue du Mont – Thabor, Paris. This 1969 exhibition was host to works like *le Conquérant de Byzance*, *Singe de Mer*, *Plieurs*, *la Joie de Peintre*, *Ice-cream Monk*, *je vous aime*, *Il nous faut une certaine perspective* and *Majo desnudo sous un nuage vert* (FW:8-15). At this stage he had become part of the new realistic movement in Paris and leaned towards the derisory art of which Jean Dubuffet (1901 - ?) remains the master. In Paris, Breytenbach exhibited at The Galerie Girardon, Claude Levin, Tournesol, Lahumière, Legenre, Salon de la Jeune Peinture, Peintres du Monde, le Soleil dans la Tête and la Roue. During 1965, he participated in the Biennale de Paris.

This exhibition moved to the Galerie Espace in Amsterdam. There he uses the word obscene when commenting on the provocation of his work. From June 1966 till June 1967, one-and-a-half million black Africans were arrested in South Africa for violating the pass laws. Under such circumstances, intellectual provocation becomes obscene. It should be taken much further. His work, *Old King Breyten* (FW-16a) was quoted in newspapers to express these views.

Since the publication of the poetry, *Die ysterkoei moet sweet*, Breytenbach has confronted his readers with the fact that he is also a painter. Before that, most South Africans had to be satisfied with the unusual drawings and, later, glowing paintings, serving as text covers. “In South Africa, Breytenbach has always been known and celebrated as poet, writer and activist. Not until his first exhibition entitled “Painting the Eye” (Cape Town, December 1993 and Pretoria, February 1994), however, had he been considered as an artist as well. The South African public had largely ignored the many exhibitions of his art in Europe, the first dating back to the early sixties. Yet, the fact that he has had ten one-man exhibitions in centres such as Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Antwerp and Stockholm, since 1983, and that some works have been selected for the state collections of France, and Belgium and the Netherlands, reflects the extent of his success. A large mural of his, *Here is the forest – like eternity*, *Guard it* (FW-16b), commissioned by the Poetry International Foundation, graces the wall of a building in

Gaffel Street, in Rotterdam” (Sienaert 1996:102).

He is also the most recent recipient of the prestigious Jacobus van Looy Award (1995), which entails a retrospective exhibition (covering thirty-five years of work) in the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, and the publication of a monograph of his work as an artist: *Uit de Eerste Hand* (1995) Jacobus van Looy (1855-1930) also was both writer and painter. In commemoration of his talent, they award this prize every five years to a painter-writer. In 1985, they awarded it to Armando (1929 -)⁶, in 1990 to Lucebert. The jury for the van Looy Prize for 1995 comprised Nop Maas, Cornelis Mooij, Ella Reitsma, Joost Swarte and Mabel Hoogendonk. For this occasion, they published a monograph and a retrospective exhibition of his paintings and literary work was held in *de Verweyhal*, which comes under the auspices of the Frans Hals Museum. Breytenbach was known in the Netherlands initially for his political stance as voluntary exile. Recognition of his literature and work as an artist would follow later. Numerous prizes were to be bestowed on him. From 1964 he gained the reputation of being an artist at the Galerie Espace in Amsterdam, and BBL-Galerie on the Keizerlee in Antwerp; from 1969 he published regularly in *Raster*. Breyten addressed meetings, participated in Anti-Apartheid rallies and attended the Netherlands PEN-congresses. He performed at festivals of Poetry International.

Breytenbach dedicated his first recital of poems at the Poetry International Festival to the ten thousand political prisoners in the country of his birth. By that time, he had lived ten years in exile in Paris. He was the first person to use this festival as a forum. In 1972, Breytenbach presented his own programme: Protest in Poetry. “Poets do not initiate revolution, the revolution shapes poets,” he said. A theatre group from Uruguay sang South American resistance songs, the Greek actress, Aspasia Pappathanassiou, recited poems from the work of Yannis Ritsos (1909-1990), Jorge Enrique Adoum and poems from Ecuador. Mazisi

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Armando (Herman Dirk van Dodeweerd)

Kumene from South Africa, Wole Soyinka (1934 -) from Nigeria, the Palestinian Mahmoud Darwish (1942-) and Shrinivasi from Suriname, all recited resistance verses (Mooij 1974:54-59).

Van Marissing (1980) wrote in *de Volkskrant*:

De drijfveer achter hun politiek poëzie is een sociale beweging tegen de onderdrukking door een zichtbare vijand. (The driving force behind his political poems was a social movement against the oppression by a visible enemy).

A few months later, Breytenbach's volume of poetry *Skryt* (1972) was published, in which he writes:

since 1963 the following
prisoners
under surveillance of the security
police
gave birth to their death:

Bellington Mampe

Looksmart Solwandle Ngundle

Sipho James Tyita

Suliman Salojee

James Hamakwayo

Hangula Shonyeka

Leong Yum Pin

Ah Yan

Alpheus Maliba

Tubakwe

Nicodimus Kgoathe

Solomon Modipane

James Lenkoe

Caleb Mayekiso

Michael Shivute

Jacob Monakgotla

Imam Abdullah Haron

Mthayeni Cutshele...

We will remember.

Another long and intimate relationship of Breytenbach was with Poetry International. On 20 June 1994, he opened the twenty-fifth Poetry International Festival. He writes:

This room is too small to accommodate all the shades gathered here with us: ancient Chinese sages with wind in their empty robes and wine mixed with poetry on their breaths; drifters over snowy plains with frost tinkling in their beard; those living in prison and camps and forest and exile who listen to the thud of axes on wood; women through the ages shaping the heart's freedom; Dutch poets and publishers who had the grace of never taking themselves seriously; those who knew the intimate lining of night and others who could look into the sun until their eyes were black holes digesting experience; those who wrote flowers with amateur bodies; they who lived in an imaginary Europe which is now of stone, of sea and of a sensation of overwhelming exhaustion; those who spat flames and then tasted the ash of their tongues; those who made love with death so as to give birth to words; the young ones who dreamed of visiting a country so young it hadn't yet decided on its name and its flag; and those who die as figs die in autumn, shrivelled and full of themselves and sweet. We greet them all.

During one of these festivals a verse from Breytenbach's pen, *jy leef asof jy onsterflik is*, (you like as if you are immortal), was painted on a waste removal truck.

During 1977 (Breytenbach's time of incarceration) an exhibition titled *Amitié à Breyten* (To Breyten in Friendship) was first held in the Paris gallery, La Derive, before it moved to the Cultural Centre of Rotterdam, de Doelen. In this Centre, Breytenbach had participated in the *Poetry International* week during 1971, 1972, 1974 and 1975. Several European Galleries,

like Le Derive in Paris, Galerie Espace and T in Amsterdam, also Galerie Delta in Rotterdam, had exhibited works of Breytenbach's. Now, however, they exhibited his work in the international circle of his artist friends, Lucebert, Corneille, Boltanski, Delfino, Hiquily, Klink, Lindström, Sekoto and Velickovic.

A Dutch critic wrote about Breytenbach's work, saying that it was exceptional for its figures floating through the air, and its other surrealist elements. The erotic also provided a comic aspect in his paintings. In his drawing, he showed preference for boxers and wrestlers, for groups in situations filled with irrational meaning.

During 1977 a literary evening was arranged by the *Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* – a few years earlier Breytenbach had received their important P.C. Hooft Prize. They recited his poetry, and two well-known Dutch poets, Rutger Kopland (1934 -)⁷ and H.C. ten Berge (1938-), recited their own works and dedicated it to him. Aard Nuis, treasurer of the Breytenbach Committee in the Netherlands and well-known television director and a poetry critic, stressed the importance of keeping up the public support for his work. Although he wrote in Afrikaans, Breytenbach was a pre-eminent writer on the Dutch Literary scene (Jansen 1977).⁸

7

Rutger Kopland (Rutger Hendrik van den Hoofdakken)

8

Further readings for the reception of Breyten in the Netherlands: Büch, Breytenbach. 1984. Breytenbach: een roman lukt me niet. Het Parool. 20 Juni; Dewulf, Breytenbach. 1987. Poëzie als ontsnappingspoging. de Morgen. 17 Oktober; Ety, E. 1989. De afwezige ruiter. NRC Handelsblad. 2 Juni; Holtkamp, R. 1989. Alles een paard. Leeuwarder Courant. 15 Mei; Kuipers, W. 1984. T is vol van schatten heir II. Amsterdam: de Bezige Bij; Leistra, G. 1989. Breytenbach wil de verloren tijd weer ongedaan maken. Tubantia. 27 Mei; Lucebert. 1965. Gedichten 1948-1963. Amsterdam: de Bezige Bij; Nuis, A. 1986. De Volkskrant. 21 Mei; Offermans, C. 1980. Mijn land mijn bloederige anus. de Groene Amsterdammer. Des; Oudtshoorn, M. 1985. De uitdaging van Breytenbach. De ontoereikendheid van het woord. De Nieuwe. 13 Des; Sanders, S. 1989. Sporen van de kameleon. de Groene Amsterdammer. 27 September; Sporr, C. 1989. De smaak van verbrand hout in de mond. de Tijd 20:57 26 Mei; Ten Berge, H.C. 1975. De dichter zonder taal, schilder zonder oogen. de Gids. 138(9) Tolhuis, M. 1985. Spelen in de herinnering. Vrij Nederland. 1 Junie; Van Marissing, L. 1980. Met de geheime politie door het paradijs. de Volkskrant. November; Van Montfrans, M. 1986. Oude en nieuwe teksten van

Until the dismantlement of Apartheid, Breytenbach had problems with receiving visas entering South Africa. Although independent publishers published his writing, he could, for logistic reasons, not exhibit in his country of birth. Now, in the new century, the idealistic Breytenbach is politically disillusioned with the process of transformation in South Africa. The old ways of the former government are reflected in the new government. Violence, murder, rape, the proliferation of aids, homelessness, poverty, lust for land, the exodus of whites leaving the country, are some new problems facing the present government. Peripheral vision reveals a sub strata-culture of “transparent corruption” which they daily inscribe on the South African society.

As a relentless critic of the South African society, Breytenbach, who is truly an international figure, has in a reciprocal way experienced great pain in his “new” country of birth. Although he has since 1964 been one of the most important intellectuals and has contributed to open new vistas for them, the conservative society with its preference for barbeques and sport, is deeply disturbed by his writing, dramas and painting. A cycle of repulsion and exuberant embracement has been part and parcel of Breytenbach’s long involvement with South Africa – politically and as revolutionary artist. He has received numerous prizes.

Breytenbach’s paintings and drawings were photographed in three stages. The first occasion was at the UNISA Art Gallery and the second at the Frans Hals Museum, the Verwey Halle, in Haarlem, during the retrospective exhibition of Breytenbach’s work and the presentation of the Jacobus van Looy Prize on his birthday. Literary friends, colleagues from the art world and other dignitaries attended the ceremony. His wife, Yolande and daughter, Daphné, accompanied him on the formal presentation of the prize. There were congratulatory messages and, as a reminder the presentation of a pumpkin that had forever been a motif for his birthday. Many *Pumpkin Evenings* were held by his friends back in South Africa who had celebrated his

Breytenbach. NRC Handelsblad. 9 Mei; Vanriet, J. 1989. Zie hoe het lichaam rilt van het woord. de Morgen. 12 Mei.

birthday in his absence. Henk van Woerden again presented him with a pumpkin. A second pumpkin had come from South Africa, a present from Francis Galloway. Later, back in his studio in Paris, he would paint these pumpkins, presenting them as a still life on a red table, with his lifelong studio fetish of a parrot head beside them. In this painting, tears blinded his eyes and he had lost a left hand. A third pumpkin is placed at the top of the painting accompanied by the typical writing hand and, in front, a note with a burnt corner *Untitled* (FW-17). Other pumpkin paintings would follow.

At this exhibition, he exhibited his hanging scrolls, nomadic canvasses for traversing the desert of consciousness, for the first time. A moving art film, *Visions From the Edge*, based on the painting process of these scrolls (the leitmotiv in the film was Breytenbach's two fingers wearing tiny red shoes walking across an open space), was produced and directed by Mary Stephen and, during 1997, entered for a European Art Film competition at the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Other exhibitions that were documented were Breytenbach's first solo exhibition in South Africa, *Painting the Eye* (1993), exhibited at the Metropolitan Gallery in Cape Town. Other paintings and drawings were catalogued and photographed at Breytenbach's solo exhibition in Durban, *Portraits, Prints and Paper* (1998), *Woordword* (1999) exhibited at the Metropolitan Gallery in Cape Town, *Lappesait* (2001) exhibited at the Gencor Gallery RAU and *Dancing The Dog and Other Pornographics* (2001) again at the Metropolitan Gallery in Cape Town.

A South African exhibition and an interview.

In 1994, for the first time, a one-man exhibition of Breytenbach's work, *Painting the Eye*, was shown at the Association for Visual Arts in Cape Town, and at the UNISA Art Gallery, Pretoria. A monograph was published with the support of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the paintings were transported with the cooperation of Air France. A conversation with Francis Galloway on the exhibition resulted in a publication, an extract of which reads:

MG: Does this first South-African exhibition of Breyten Breytenbach affect you as viewer in a similar way to how it affects me? Do you experience a feeling of dejection when viewing the paintings because of a lack of understanding from your side?

FG: I would not say that I feel despondent – the playfulness and fantasy of Breytenbach’s work have always enchanted me. It is not an experience that can easily be wiped from the eyes and memory. On the one hand there is a vibration of form, texture and colour on the eye. On the other hand there is a feeling of uneasiness at not being in control, at not being able to make sense in the traditional way. One feels safer when one is in control of one’s environment.

Thus – there is an activity of looking in the holders and keys to the Breytenbach working method: Surrealism, Zen Buddhism, anormalizing, metamorphosis, transformation and the grotesque. All these point to the conception of Breytenbach’s art and could in one or another way be a key for the viewing experience.

But the overwhelming nature of the paintings, the radical shifts of the visual expectation compel one to expose and submit oneself to the process, which plays itself out in your mind. As viewer, one cannot excuse one self from the responsibility of becoming involved.

MG: What do you mean by responsibility and involvement of the viewer?

FG: In the Breytenbach context the viewer cannot detach himself from a sunrise or a painting. In *Memories of Snow and Dust*, we find a painting of words, which are actually painted.

You may think you already know all transformations of the celestial space at the break of day, but it is never true. Even if you were to isolate the elements and the components – the darkness, the stars and the planets, the blinding wreckage’s of space vehicles, the moons, the clouds, the mountains, the light, the looking eye, the looker, the faculties of the observer, his frame of mind, his pre-conceptual prejudices, his memory. Even then the variations or combinations are inexhaustible, for these can never be captured. They are eternal (whatever ‘eternal’ may mean); it always is, but the essence of that is, becoming: it is forever getting to be day. And it is only in that evanescence that you, yourself, in a state of deliquescence may

capture the essential.

This involvement of the viewer is visually embodied in the painting *le Coucher de Soleil* (FW-18). The art historian could isolate aspects like form, line, medium, colour, texture, space and codes. But the viewing eye, the viewer and his baggage, become part of the creation process.

The involvement of the reader/viewer lies on two levels, as stated in the double plea in the collection of poems in ('Yk') from the poem *Isis*.

one:

**in gods name don't leave lying so
incomplete like the deceased in my bed! or**

two:

**no rather never round me off,
build always only to the point where I stay part of you, reader**

By looking at the painting, the viewer becomes responsible for his own search for meaning. Opinion-formers, like critics, however, also have a responsibility toward other viewers. Their interpretation can serve as road pointers, without robbing these viewers of their own dialogue with the paintings.

The responsibility of the individual viewer brings us back to a process of suspending one's own meaning and conception of art. It succumbs to this; understanding comes when the "walking" process begins. The "walking" process could start at any point; Breytenbach writes about this in *Memories*.

The point is to start anywhere. To continue then in the direction opened by that start. Whatever the way may be, wherever it may lead, it is important to begin. Thus to take hold of a loose thread and to unravel the pattern – for to travel is to lengthen the road, also to destroy the wholeness of it.

Numerous strings, (word-) strings, ropes, bandages, intestines and other permutations and transformations lie embodied in the paintings themselves – like in *Yellow Dog* (FW-19),

Hovering Dog (FW-20), Monddood (FW-21), Moonlight Arab (FW-22), My life and I (FW-23)

MG: Where does this “string-feeling” lead you?

FG: ... I have selected certain memory threads from the text to walk through the exhibition.

MG: What are those threads you have used while walking through the exhibition?

FG: One of those threads is Breytenbach’s concept of “The Noble Art of Walking.” He refers to it in (*Yk*). In *Memories* he describes it as “the faculty of letting go of the so-called self within a specific environment.” That is the way one becomes aware of his relationship to the environment, because the universe does not consist of a collection of loose fragments, but is a web of interconnections.

The advantage of these threads lies in the awakening and awareness of shifting relationships, but takes one through the exhibition – in any and preferably random order.

The more direct the path you take the smaller your chance of finding something at the end of it. You must walk the long way around. The labyrinth – that’s the in thing, the name of the game. It’s the dead-end that counts!

MG: Does this walkabout not lead to a dead end?

FG: Not at all. Rather by new, unexpected vistas opened up in the process of walking, the relationship changes with each new painting and the viewer engages in a completely new dialogue with each artwork.

MG: You often talk about “remembrance” and “memory.” Is that concept important for this exhibition?

FG: Yes, in itself it is a path to take. If walking is the method, then you follow the trace of memory, because “not that which you see is of importance, but that which you remember.”

There is a layered distance between the viewer and the painting – remembrance of literary texts, his literature/art approach, and the public figure. The artist-writer is also fascinated by the process and mechanism of the transference of memory from one generation to the other
...

In *Memories* it culminates in the theme of a rite of passage. With reference to the Greek tragedies, he places emphasis on the fact that the passage forms one layer of consciousness upon another, is always accompanied by a sacrifice, a fatal choice or the denial of oneself – an insight which is embodied in the paintings.

In the painting *la Famille Sainte* (FW-24), it is the angel child who brings the sacrifice for the passage of the other – like in the story of Mano/Barnum and Meheret in *Memories*. Other painful rites of passage play themselves out if one takes the historical thread through the exhibition, through landscape and life and times of the painting painter. History for Breytenbach consists of many threads, of memory and imagination – of many stories.

Painful and personal rites of passage mark earlier works. The works from the second half of the sixties testify to the price paid by being exiled: *En Afrique* (FW-25), *la Boxeur* (FW-26) and *Wooing the angel* (FW-27). The paintings from the early seventies bear the witness to the consequences of a choice for political involvement, for instance the scapegoat image in *Voici la Saison* (FW-28) and, *My life and I* (FW-29). Then there are the ten prison drawings, the pain of the trial, torment and isolation. The world from the post incarceration period, works of self-chastisement and impediment are *Yellow Dog* (FW-30), *Yaah*, (FW-31), *Hovering Dog* (FW-32), *Monddood* (FW-21) and *Totleben* (FW-33).

MG: Does the theme of the rite of passage, the movement through different layers, have any connection with numerous self-portraits in the exhibition?

FG: I think so. The frequent use of the personal “I” in his work have been noted. Since Breytenbach’s debut as writer some scholars have been critical, others more aware of the deeper meaning of this phenomenon. It varies from a repudiation of the sickly use of the “I,” to arguments of the poet creating an entire œuvre on behalf of himself (because he is arguing in favour of socio-political change) and that the motivation for the “I” in the poetry is

conducted to the real “I.” In the literary text there is a continual play with the permutation of the BB name –, e.g., Bangai Bird.

The prevailing genre on this exhibition goes by the name of “auto portrait” with titles like *Autoportrait Masque* (FW-34), *Autoportrait “Nuit”* (FW-35) and *Autoportrait “Jour”* (FW-36). These self-portraits are a living structure, a growing body – manifested through the metamorphosis of the orifices and projecting parts of the body (eyes, nose, ears, mouth, the female cleft, fingers and the penis). Conversely, there is the closing up of the body in *L’emballage*, or a merging of different figures in other paintings (human being, ape, bird, dog, etc.) – it is a natural process in the ‘passage of consciousness’ of which Breytenbach writes in *Memories*.

The challenge is to make reparation to the painting painter (*Die ysterkoei moet sweet*) let him be several stories in one, several people, as we all are (*Memories*). To turn out the ‘real self’, is like catching fish or the moon with a forked stick, like in *le Pêcheur* (FW-37). The painted eye/I is just a Judas eye (eyelet and loophole) for the ‘I’.

The shifting ‘I’ (out or into a room) of the Autoportrait-painter spills over onto the viewer. In *Memories* Mano explains to Barnum that the *Mona Lisa* is also an auto portrait, because it is the viewer’s image and not that of Da Vinci.

Doesn’t it become you when you appropriate it that it only needs the act of taking possession, of recognizing it as a part of you . . . The more the viewer looks at the auto-portrait, the more it is robbed of its privacy, familial bonds and history . . . so would the true *Mona Lisa* [Breyten Breytenbach/I] please stand up . . . ?

MG: The bird, angel, dog, horse, hat, shoe, pen, mirror, moon – which role do they play in this rite of passage process?

F.G: The recurring codes function as marks on the landscape of the painting painter . . .

MG: Do you think that the exhibition is political?

FG: Yes. The exhibition is a transgression of the traditional barriers: between inside and

outside, private and public, human and animal, female and male (compare the androgynous code in *L'oiseau tombe* [FW-38]), painting and writing, freedom and bondage. Furthermore, it works subversively because of the infiltration into the viewer's consciousness and the resulting shifting of own views and concepts – the viewer has to continue his walking process and thus stall petrification.

This exhibition can be experienced as a refusal to conform to “the bringing of some new orthodoxy, some school of cultural terrorism, and atrophy, another power monopoly” (*Judas Eye*). This is the embodiment of anarchism.

MG: Do you think that both viewer and critics will convey a good reception of the exhibition?

FG: There will obviously be a disparate reaction to the exhibition – like the early reception of “Breytenbach as poet” debut. The obvious reason being those instances of the work could be isolated and then evaluated – the whole being so much more than the parts . . . meaning in Breytenbach's work is unlimited, totally free and never final. The viewer should engage in a flirtation with meaning, the undanced dance (Grobler & Galloway. 1994:31-36).

Three main periods regarding his art can be identified. The first period of Breytenbach's art is the discovery of the grotesque and absurd. During this time he is in dialogue with artists like Bacon and Kahlo. Work from this period is spontaneous and presented in an expressionistic way. Artwork dating from the period after incarceration is more formalized and in this time Breytenbach is engaged with a series of concepts which he expresses in his art. He is also engaged in an intense dialogue with different artists from Surrealism. During the second half of the nineties he began working on a series of scrolls. The more informal presentation of the work, gave him the opportunity to work more experimental. Work done after the Haarlem exhibition is more spontaneous and informal.

Recently Breytenbach has distanced himself from the public life and politics in South Africa. He remains, however, the relentless critic of the new government and social phenomena in his country of birth. An important contribution to the field of Art in South Africa, lies in the merging of different disciplines – Breytenbach elaborates on this in his philosophical essay, of the Middle World. Musical recording has been made of his poems and paintings, the choreography of his dramas was influenced by images from his paintings, philosophical ideas find their way into his novels, poems become part of hanging scrolls, a physical theatre production was performed at an exhibition of hanging scrolls and on a new CD Breytenbach, as Buddhist, chants to the sound of Native American music. The variety, intensity and controversy surrounding his work, has rocked the cradle of the conservative South Africans.

In the essay *Tortoise Step* (1987), written at *Can Ocells*, their home near Barcelona, Breytenbach says that he prefers to try to look at where the line runs between himself and other people, at what it consists of, what it defines or excludes. Working and interacting with Breytenbach can best be described by this view. Interaction with him places one on a thin tightrope stretched over a hovering void. The balance stick is intense involvement followed by detachment. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Breyten Breytenbach who allowed me to photograph his paintings and who introduced me to his work over a period of several years.

In a way the thesis, which stretched over a period of seven years, was subjected to a nomadic process, because it was written in Pretoria (where most of the research was done), Stellenbosch and Pringle Bay. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to:

- * Professor Alex Duffey, for his advice and encouragement.
- * The library staff of the University of Pretoria, who assisted me in my research.
- * Dr. Francis Galloway for walking the path with me.
- * My husband, Piet Grobler for his quiet assistance.
- * My children, Lara, Eugenie and Jan Pieter who monitored my interest as a researcher and student over an extended period of twenty-four-years.

The protection of one's purity implies the straining of one's surroundings through a simplified eye (Breytenbach 1996:15)

Genghis Khan understood nothing: he "didn't understand" the phenomenon of the city (Deleuze & Guattari 1986:5).

Nomads have no history, they only have a geography (Deleuze & Guattari 1986:73).

The footnote—the writer's self-defensive gesture —becomes an exhausting race in which the runner never reaches the finish. Every full stop demands the status of a comma, every sentence fights for a footnote. The footnote thus becomes a multiple metaphor, for the defeat of the writer and the human being. Everything that the author has written is just a footnote to the long list of names of people who have lost their lives, families, friends, homes to the homeland which was until recently shared, a footnote to the texts written by the fascists. Terrible reality carries off the victory and the author, aware of her defeat, must accept an arbitrary end. The only thing left for her to do is to leave behind her fragile markers, dates and footnotes (Dubravka Ugrešić 1996:191).

The critic, van Bosch (2001:4), comments on the third solo exhibition, *Dancing The Dog and other Pornographies*, of Breytenbach, held in Cape Town.⁹

As usual the viewer is confronted with Breytenbach's highly metaphorical and often hidden iconography, wherein objects, birds, dogs, fish, body parts, people and therianthropes are placed in strange juxtapositions. In a most democratic way, Breytenbach does not furnish his audience with an interpretation of his work; he provides no leads for the reader or the viewer. What he asks from the individual is an awareness of response to the image or the metaphor, since these, according to Breytenbach, are the building blocks of consciousness. He asks the viewer to withhold him or herself from interpretation or understanding. The most revolutionary act the audience could engage in would be to experience the image as without meaning – at the most, perhaps an emotional reverberation toward the image. As one walks through an exhibition of his works, he or she should simply be aware of the “song-lines”¹⁰ of the self on its journey through the endless landscape across the latitudes and longitudes of consciousness. Breytenbach also talks of the “Singing Hand”, which refers to the painting painter.¹¹ This idea is derived from a quote by Miguel de Cervantes, writer of *Don Quixote* (1605) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954), who said that he will continue to work, until his hand begins to sing.

Although the viewer is confronted with fragmented images in a dreamlike situation, the work is not totally enigmatic. Breytenbach's arts portray a world characterized by obscenities, betrayal, pornography (in the wider sense), hate, contradictions, estrangement and

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The exhibition consists of sixteen paintings and twenty-five drawings. The work was created in Paris, Spain and New York.

¹⁰

Bruce Chatwin wrote the nomadic novel *Songlines* which implies the traversing of a terrain (Clapp 1997:33).

¹¹

Private conversation. May 1998.

disillusionment. Breytenbach's view on life is often cynical, but not necessarily pessimistic. In this sense Breytenbach's work can be placed within the tradition of anti-tradition, of avant-garde, perhaps not always on a formal level, but definitely in concept. It is an approach of anarchical aversion toward self satisfaction and fixed bourgeois values and world views. The only correct path is the one which remains on the cutting edge.

We can situate an encompassing point of departure and description for Breytenbach's *Ars poetica* in the field of "minor art and literature," where the war machine¹² operates by moving over smooth space. Further descriptions of his *Ars poetica* can also be drawn into this field. Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Pierre-Felix Guattari (1930-1992) (1986:6) write the following about minor revolution:

But a minor, or revolutionary, literature [art] begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualize until afterward (I do not see the word at all, I invent it). Expression must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sprouting. When a form is broken, one must reconstruct the content that will necessarily be part of a rupture in the order of things.

Breytenbach's is an art of disruption and his poetry is driven by a strange "gear-mechanism of the war machine" which leads from one idea-image to the following. In *Katastrofe* he writes:

Die rioolpype is verstop. Vuil water stoot oor die drein se bek – 'n dooie man, hy kan nie meer sluk nie. (The drainpipe is clogged. Dirty water pushes over the drain's mouth – a dead man, he cannot swallow any more).

12

The concept of the "war machine" is derived from Deleuze & Guattari's *Nomadology: The War Machine* (1986). According to de Kock (1999:22) the "machine" is not merely the result of a process of production. The machine is a complex constellation of energies, which cannot be isolated from other machines. The machine must be seen as something seizing multiple horizons: biological, virtual, language, conscious, electronic, as well as abstract machines. It is not the key in one or other mechanistic process, but rather producing (resulting from human desires), but also creating affect.

The Hindus believe that we are now living in the *Kali Yuga*, the age of destruction. It's an irremediable process. Shiva has, once more, prevailed.¹³ The Sanscrit tells of the capital of the world is not on earth. It is a floating city called Amaravati. It is where Indra lives, the kind of gods. This city moves about in space. It never remains in one place. In the *Mahabharata*, the great Vishnuist poem in honour of Krishna who is an avatar of Vishnu, Arjuna joins Indra in a machine that is described like a rocket. It mentions "thrusts" and "vapor" and "invisible horses". It the machine of the apocalypse. Deleuze & Guattari's "war machine" reminds one of the machine in the Vishnuist poem.

As a result of this "gear-mechanism of the war machine", there is probably no beginning or end to notions or ideas or thoughts in Breytenbach's art and philosophy. There is probably just the intense rupture-like interaction with hundreds of images, metaphors, thoughts and awareness. There is probably only the knowledge of intense moments of binding and unbinding and no hierarchic piling of more or less important ideas. The argument of this thesis thus centers around two concepts which are used to describe certain conditions in society: fixity and non-fixity.

Deleuze & Guattari (1986:11) say that the State is to be defined by the perpetuation or conservation of organs of power. The concern of the State is to conserve. (This argument can also be applied to the dogma of religious institutions). The State apparatus is concerned with identity, kingdoms, mega-machines and empires. The war machine (like Breytenbach) is distinguished by the important characteristic of metamorphosis. This model is of becoming, heterogeneity and hybridity, as opposed to the stable, the eternal, the identical, the constant. It is a "paradox" to make "becoming" itself a model. In contrast to the "nomadic war machine", States tend to unleash, reconstitute, an immense war machine which displays two

13

Shiva and Vishnu are the two great divinities in India. Vishnu and Shiva, are constant rivals. One preserves the world and the other seeks to destroy it.

successive figures. Firstly, that of fascism, which makes war an unlimited movement to no other aim than itself. The post-fascist figure is that of a war machine that takes peace as its object directly, as the peace of Terror or Survival. The [State] war machine reforms a smooth [nomadic] space, claims to control and surround the entire earth. Politics is the continuation of war. The desire of the State is to enclose. This is the function of their war machine.

The term “fixity” concerns fixed societal patterns, view points, images and interpretation of reality. The state apparatus constitutes the form of interiority we habitually take as a model, or according to which we are in the habit of thinking. It is concerned with a host of related values: stable identity, integration, equilibrium, authority, stratified order, patriarchy, dogma, orthodoxy, ideology, history, power, opposites, stability, tradition, structure, fascism, uniformity, the centre, the divine irreverence of images, fixed reality, ego centrism, the rational, hegemony, monotheism, simplicity, linear thinking, normalization, one voice, the autocrat, communism, Apartheid, control, disciplinary society, conservatism and the monologue. Its image will be the bowler hat and the story of Kafka’s Wall illustrates the working of the State which is attacked by the nomadic forces of disruption. It chooses the bourgeois values of beauty and non-beauty.

Deleuze & Guattari (1986:119) say that the war machine, in this instance, the work of art, lies outside the State apparatus. It is a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement which leads to non-fixity. Smooth space is precisely the space of the smallest deviation and therefore it has no homogeneity, except between infinitely proximate points. The linking of proximities is affected independently of any determined path. It is a space of contact, of small tactile or manual actions of contact, rather than a visual space like Euclid’s striated space. Smooth space is a field without conduits or channels. A heterogeneous, hybrid smooth space is wedded to a very particular type of multiplicity, which is non metric, acentered and consists of rhizomatic multiplicities which occupy space without “counting” it and can “only be explored by legwork”. They do not meet the visual condition of being observable from a point

in space external to them. Examples are the systems of sound, or even colours. Breytenbach operates the “war machine of his art” in the field of non-fixity, which is minor art and writing and which is characterized by hybridity. Breytenbach sides with Indra, the warrior god. Both Breytenbach and Indra can no more be reduced to one another. They are like pure and immeasurable multiplicities, the pack who erupts the ephemeral. They have the power of metamorphosis. They untie the bond just as they betray the pact. They bring furor to bear against sovereignty, a celerity against gravity, secrecy against the public, a power (*puissance*) against sovereignty, a machine against the [State] apparatus.¹⁴

Breytenbach is a “pack” in himself.¹⁵ Packs, bands, are guards of the rhizome type and oppose the arborescent type, which centers around organs of power. As a rhizomic war machine of metamorphoses, Breytenbach animates a fundamental indiscipline of the warrior, a questioning of hierarchy, perpetually blackmailing by abandonment or betrayal, and a very volatile sense of honour all of which, once again, impedes the formation of the State. As an anarchical thinker and “war machine”, Breytenbach subverts fixed values and replaces them with concepts, images and metaphors, which are related to the minor art of disruption. The work of art, which is the war machine, thus, attacks our habitual way of thinking, which is kept in place by the State apparatus. The term “non-fixity” is used to describe this condition and implies the alternative viewpoint (which instigates ruptures and the opening up of consciousness) to conditions at which society could operate. Images, Zen Buddhism, aesthetic and anarchical concepts, human conditions and alternative societal patterns used by Breytenbach are included in the latter lists.

14

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1986:22) packs in general, even those engaged in banditry or high society life, are metamorphosis of a war machine that differs formally from all State apparatus or their equivalents, which, on the contrary, structure centralized societies. Discipline becomes the characteristic required of armies when the State appropriates them. But the war machine answers to other rules.

15

Deleuze & Guattari (1986:13) remark that Eugène Sue, a man of high society and a dandy, whom legitimists reproached for frequenting the Orléans family, used to say: “I’m not on the side of the family, I side with the pack”.

Breytenbach's images, identities and conditions of non-fixity (and nomadism) are the clown, the androgynous, the hermaphrodite, the border intellectual, the bastard, the heretic, the outsider, the social critic, the revolutionary, the anarchist, the zennist, the exile, the dunce, the shaman, the cockroach, the underling, the nomad, the war machine, the pact, the mirror, the chameleon, the bird, the butterfly, the ancestor as the self, the landscape as the self, multiple realities, schism (multiple identities), movement toward decay, death and consciousness, convulsive beauty, the absurd, the grotesque, the obscene, pornography, masochism, sadism, irony, surrealism, new realism, non-representative thinking, heterogeneity, multi-culturalism, polyphony, plurality of voices, complexity, poli-theism, subversion, memory, intuition, the irrational, multiplicities, imagination, the Watercourse way¹⁶, fire consciousness (*wou-nien*) non-attachment, suchness, the void, the paradox, denial of opposites, the process, immanence, excrement, nudity, breaking of hierarchies, de-capitation, dismemberment, metamorphosis, transgression, transformation, transmutation, radicalism, disjunction, dialogue, the dunces cap and the hybrid.¹⁷

16

The Watercourse Way: The Tao is that which encompasses the whole universe and everything existing in it. It is the Watercourse Way or the Cosmic process. This view suggests that the universe consists of polarities, which are in constant interplay with each other, and this function as a process of constant transformation.

17

An important characteristic of the minor "non-fixative" art and writing is hybridity. Instead of the monological approach of (one storyline and one history) used by the State apparatus, Breytenbach's writing and art are aesthetically coded in plurality. In his writing there is no actual role like that of the hero in the bourgeois novel, plus the attending narrative functions serving to encode his purposefully directed actions. The single hero of the bourgeois novel is but figurations of the bourgeois ideology of the unified subject thought to be perfectly capable of determining its fate through acting in an easily understandable universe that can be made subservient to its purpose. If the novelist wishes to call into doubt dogmatically hardened rules of cognition and action they have to discard the notion of an innocent, transparent language. The work has to disclose more than one meaning. In a letter to his friend, Ampie Coetzee, Breytenbach (1995:200) writes about his aesthetic point of departure as "New Writing" with, as central characteristic, creative non-fiction, in which the storyteller testifies to first hand experiences. In his way of writing "there is a longing for the ghost of the moral and anti-hegemonistic centre". Such writing is non-fixative. Lateral vision is used which creates an awareness of God as the Hole (Gat) and Utopos as Continual Movement, of which thought will be nomadic. These are the characteristics of a minor literature and art.

Deleuze & Guattari (1986: 34) write about the terrain of the war machine and that of the State. The space of the State is straited. It encourages the building of conduits, pipes and embankments, which prevent turbulence, which constrain movement to go from one point to another. The model of the war machine, on the other hand, consists in being distributed by turbulence across a smooth space. It produces a movement that holds space and simultaneously affects all of its points, instead of being held in space in a local movement from one specified point to another. The concept of hybridity contains rhizomatic characteristics of this interconnectedness between different points. An image, metaphor or concept that the French philosophers, Deleuze & Guattari (1986:11) use to illustrate the idea of the spreading connections and interlacing of things is the rhizome. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* explains the rhizome as a “prostrate root-like- stem emitting roots”. One can find the rhizome, with its gaps, detours, subterranean passages, stems, openings, traits, holes, etc. on the side of the nomadic assemblages and the war machine. On the other side, the sedentary assemblages and State apparatuses affect a capture of the phylum, put the traits of expression into a form or a code, make the holes resonate together, plug up the lines of flight, subordinate the technological operation to the work model. Or impose upon the connections a whole regime of arborescent conjunctions (Deleuze & Guattari 1986:109). According to the definition of the rhizome, things like books, ideas, orders and identities, probably life itself, could be regarded as having rhizome-like connections. Used by these two philosophers as a metaphor, the rhizome points to a network of binding, a powerful web in which things cannot be caught up. It is the place where deeds, actions and thoughts are accelerated to the extreme point. What happens here is an introduction to a multiplicity of things.

Viljoen (1998:274-293), writes that Breytenbach’s oeuvre must not be seen as a whole, but as a network of intertexts or a compilation of “fan-like” discourses (where the idea of an “author” is continually undermined) and abstract conventions which lead to sites of struggles. By writing in this way, Breytenbach’s enters the areas of non-fixity and the rhizome. There is also no stable self to portray in his art but multiple identities. In the essay, *Painting and Writing*

For Africa, Breytenbach (1996:69) writes:

There is no *I*, just a series of temporary jottings, a brief bundling of being which will delineate as if along a dotted line the passage of an (eye), an ancestor, a mask.

Taking the lead from Breytenbach, this thesis is hybrid in the sense which the term “intertextuality” takes as its general point of departure. Kristeva’s (1980:15) notion that every text builds itself as a mosaic of quotations, every text is an absorption and transformation of other texts. Intertext is the other text created when two or more texts are brought into dialogue with each other. This approach is a case for non-fixity. Seen in a wider perspective, any text is an intertext consisting of different texts (or semiotic systems), crossing each other or influencing each other. They are transformed from one semiotic system to another. Such a point of departure would lead one to see any text as a web, wherein other texts, citations, anonymous formulas, language fragments or social use of language is articulated in another way (Barthes 1981:39). The thesis itself becomes an intertext. The discussion of similarities between Breytenbach’s and other artists work also, creates a vibrating intertext, which conceptualizes his place in the field of films, art, poetry, writing and music.

Worten and Still (1990:1-2) point out that texts are entered by other texts, either via the writer who, because she/he has read texts, therefore creates texts that are “inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind, or via the reader who brings it to a reading of other texts that she/he has read.” Both axes of intertextuality are emotionally and politically charged. As they point out, the more obvious truth of intertextuality is that each intertextual quotation is inevitable a fragment and displacement [that] distorts and redefines the primary utterance by relocating it with another linguistic and cultural context (Worten & Still 1990:11). Consequently, the reader’s attention is drawn to textual functioning rather than interpretation. A quotation constitutes an “event in the text” whose full significance depends “on the activity of a reader who perceives that something is happening rather than simply being said.” The reader recognizes, Worten and Still (1990:12) argue “that each quotation is

a breach and a trace and as such demands a nonlinear reading.”

The reading of the text has to do with thought. According to Deleuze & Guattari (1986: 44) thought can be placed in an immediate relation with the outside, with the forces of the outside. It then operates on the smooth space with its hybrid and rhizomatic interconnections. To make thought a war machine, is a strange undertaking, the precise procedure of which can be found in Friedrich Nietzsche’s (1844-1900) work. The aphorism, for example, is very different from the maxim, for a maxim, in the republic of letters, is like an organic State act or sovereign judgment (formal academic judgement is also part of this sovereign judgment). An aphorism always awaits its meaning from a new external force, a final force that must conquer or subjugate it or utilize it. This is counter thought. To really illustrate this point, many quotations are provided in this thesis without interpretation. They operate like the rhizome and are intricately interconnected with the text. The quotations can always be traced to different arguments on different pages. Constant interpretation of the quotations lead to fixity of meaning and will not serve the main argument. A counter dialogue, which is a function of a war machine is provided. Textual functioning is also illustrated by using quotations of Breytenbach and other writers. By actually illustrating the fact that the quotation is an event in the text, Breytenbach’s important argument of “becoming” (that which leads away from fixity), is enhanced. Strings of words are also used in the thesis to illustrate Breytenbach’s important notion of becoming.

An aim of this thesis is to trace and interact with the (hybrid or rhizomatic) network of connections in Breytenbach’s work, display the network by creating another network of discussions: art historical, philosophical, biographical details, notes on art and writing, tracing the influence of ancestors and determining Breytenbach’s place in the international art and writing scene. Breytenbach has introduced South African researchers to important new fields of thinking. The thesis is not a critical approach to his work, but rather a critical rethinking of the important body of research that has been done on his writing and poetry until now (very

little research has been done on his art and philosophical concepts), in South Africa and elsewhere. No thesis has ventured the vast task of integrating the complex scope of his art, writing, aesthetics, philosophical and revolutionary thoughts, in one study.¹⁸ The contribution of the thesis regarding the study field of Breytenbach's work, lies in the integration of all these different notions. By retaining the research done on his work, important new insights are provided. This thesis is also characterized by hybridity. A multiplicity of arguments and a host of other artists are used to illustrate the notion of hybridity. Similar to the use of multiplicities in his art and writing, the thesis writer uses multiplicities and strings of words to enhance Breytenbach's "non-fixative" point of departure.

The thesis was written from a certain viewpoint of departure, which underlines Breytenbach's way of thinking. The inclusion of Breytenbach's own writing multiplies the special network effect of the intertextual approach. By writing the thesis as an intertext, Breytenbach's own intertextual approach is enhanced. The "thesis text" in itself becomes an instrument of breaking down forms of fixity that stem from a monological approach. Breytenbach's art, writing, aesthetic notions and political points of departure are interlinked in a Tantric network of images, metaphors, deeds, and dictums. Poems and paintings and dramas are also linked to one another. Accompanied by mystic multiplicities, the various discourses and networks of intertexts (both image, metaphor and notion) form the seven crown flowers of the holy lotus of Breytenbach's oeuvre. Breytenbach's own intertextual approach undermines all forms of monological (one story, one meaning, one image) creation. The cultural forms, coming from his mind, are hybrid, mixed and impure. He is a collagist, who juxtaposes images drawn from some fantastic archive.

The probable meaning of tears in Breytenbach's art is investigated in chapter one. Tears in

18

The doctoral thesis of Francis Galloway, *Breyten Breytenbach: Die skrywer as openbare figuur* (1987) integrates the public relationship of Breytenbach with the media.

Breytenbach's work are a sign of psychic pain. It is stated that the experience of pain could lead to the dismantling of the fixed identity (the breaking up of the self). By shattering of his self, Breytenbach became more aware of life processes; this could lead to the opening up of consciousness. There are traces of masochism in Breytenbach's art. Pain has to do with masochism and sadism. This is the way of the body. Erotica could lead the way to schism. Fire consciousness is a notion which enhances the dissolution of the self or the "I". It is part of the Tao or the Watercourse Way. What is the "I" then if the stable self no longer exists? Hofstadter, Breytenbach and Dogen's (1200-1253) inquiry into the notion of the pattern might provide a possible answer. Some aspects of pattern-making are investigated. This could lead to a totally new conception of the self. There are similarities between the Watercourse Way, and the "smooth" space of the nomadic way against the "straited" space of the State. By engaging in these ways, the fixed self is dismantled. Two "nomadic" works, are discussed: Philip Glass's *Koyaanisqatsi* and Breytenbach's *le Coucher de soleil (To lie Down)*. The *Ars poetical* (non-fixative) values concerning the outsider are also discussed.

In chapter two the argument is concerned with the movement of bodies through space. According to Deleuze & Guattari (1986: 50), the nomad has a territory. He follows customary paths and goes from one point to another. He is not ignorant of points (water points, dwelling points, assembly points, etc.) The water point is reached only in order to be left behind, every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo. Even the elements of his dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing them. The nomadic trajectory distributes people (or animals) in an open space, one that is indefinite and non communicating. It is a space without borders or enclosure. Sedentary space is enclosed by walls, enclosures and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by straits that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory. The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space, he occupies, inhabits, holds that space; that is his territorial principle. The nomad is one who does not want to depart, who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, where the steppe of the desert advances. The movement of the nomad deterritorializes and there is no reterritorialization afterwards. He is a vector of

deterritorialization. He adds desert to desert, steppe to steppe by a series of local operations which endlessly vary. Breytenbach is the nomadic thinker of movement away from the direction of the uniform toward the chaos machine, which undermines the instrumental intellect and fascistic grip on things. The inquiry of movement leads us to the notion of multiplicities. Multiplicities stem from a desire to create a matrix of polyphony, a plurality of voices and vestiges that reverberate in the halls of identity. When he was born, his name was Breyten Breytenbach. Nor might it be more illuminating to trace the trajectories of Panus, Elepheteira, King Fool, Don Espejuelo, Geta Wolf, Jan Blom, Vagina Jones, Lazarus, Comrade Ekx, Afrika Aap, Bangai Bird or Bién Tóng. He is also continually becoming Breytenbach. Movement in art is discussed and Bacon, William Kentridge (1955-) and Breyten Breytenbach are compared. Breytenbach's important aesthetic concept, the bodily movement toward death and decay, is an indication of temporality. He is a thinker who attempts the nearly impossible act of destroying all forms of fixity – the grey areas between things, of greyness between life and death.

Chapter three deals with the notion of an inscription. Deleuze & Guattari (1986:42) again provide a model by which the inscription of the State could be understood. It inscribes thought on its inhabitants. Thought defines the goals and paths, conduits, channels, organs, and entire *organon* for the State. The classic image of thought is a free republic of free spirits whose prince would be the idea of the Supreme being. Only thought is capable of inventing the fiction of a State that is universal by right, elevating the State to the level of the universal of law. The modern State defines itself in principle as “the rational and reasonable organization of a community.” The State gives thought a form of interiority, and thought gives that interiority a form of universality. The goal of worldwide organizations is the satisfaction of reasonable individuals within particular free States. The poet in the archaic imperial State was able to play the role of image trainer. Today, noology studies the images of thought and their historicity. However, Deleuze & Guattari (1986:44) state that thought has never had anything but laughable gravity and that we should not take it seriously. This is a paradoxical statement because the less people take thought seriously, the more they think in conformity with what

the State wants. Noology is confronted by counter-thoughts, which are violent in their acts and discontinuous in their appearances. These are the acts of the private thinkers, as opposed to the public professor: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Counter-thought, which belongs to the war machine is not another image in opposition to the image inspired by the State apparatus. It is a force that destroys both the image and its copies, the model and its reproductions. It is again an exterior form. It is the relation between brother and sister, the becoming-women of the thinker, the becoming-thought of the woman: the *Gemüt* that refuses to be controlled (Deleuze & Guattari 1986:70). It operates by relays instead of forming a fixed image. In this section the investigation starts off with the inscription of the patriarchy, Calvinism and Apartheid on Breytenbach's body. His body would become a horizon of the strife between inscriptions and desires for freedom. Breytenbach left the tribe and deployed his life in some horizonless milieu that is a smooth space, steppe, desert or sea. All that is left is to engage himself in the continual movement more than a thousand plateaus (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Breytenbach was concerned with the notion of movement since the sixties. After the period of incarceration (1975-1982) he refined this aesthetic concept to that of nomadism. The political body and the landscape of revolution (the way against all forms of fixity) are discussed. Like Genghis Kahn(c.1162-?), he (Breytenbach), does not understand the phenomenon of the city and thus he is discussed as a social critic and the carnival-goer. These are the counter-thoughts of the war machine. Lastly, Breytenbach's formulates the notion of the Middle World, in which he places certain people (war machines in their own right). They have left all forms of fixity behind. Many of them are exiles where memory in itself can become a war machine. All of the thought is a becoming, a double becoming, rather than the attribute of a Subject and the representation of a Whole.

Artistic movement can be a potential war machine, to the precise extent that it traces a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement (Deleuze & Guattari 1986:121). It is not the nomad who defines this constellation of characteristics, it is this constellation which defines the nomad, and at the same time the essence of the war machine. If guerilla warfare, minority warfare, revolutionary and popular war, are in conformity with the essence, it is because they

take war as an object. They can make war only on the condition that they simultaneously create something else, if only new non-organic social relations. The line of flight that it creates turns into lines of destruction. The plane of consistencies that constitutes them, even piece by piece, turns into some planes of organizations and dominations. When Breytenbach entered South Africa with an illegal passport in 1974, he left the smooth nomad space and entered the terrain of the stratified space with its laws and regulations. Breytenbach was incarcerated. Memory as a notion has interested Breytenbach over a long period of time and has been the theme of novels, poems, paintings, dramas and essays. Memory in itself has the potential of a war machine. In chapter four, and using the concept of memory, Breytenbach's period of incarceration is looked into. Breytenbach has been engaged in a livelong conversation with Kafka. It is thus apt to turn to Kafka's story of *The Great Wall* to investigate the difference between the stratified memory system, the stratified space of prison and the poetics of space and memory as imagination which Breytenbach experienced while he was imprisoned. Breytenbach uses memory as an aesthetic and revolutionary concept, embracing the constant changing nature of reality. Arising out of the artist's fantastic journey through the landscape of consciousness and memory, are the images of the prison drawings. His drawings are the war machines that are in conflict with the stratified order's notion of "good art." Goya's art (during the Inquisition in Spain) is investigated and compared to that of Breytenbach.

In chapter five the question is asked how does one experience reality, when the self is deliberately, continually lost or shattered? "Sharding" (schizophrenia, schizoid and shaman) then stand for life, instinct, freedom of nomad thought, compared with the mind (of the normal) which provokes oppressive self-consciousness, the illusion of logic and the belief in self-control. The selflessness of Buddhism is looked into. The conventional idea of identity is based on the existence of structure, which remains more or less the same throughout life. Breytenbach's playing with his identity, takes on more exteriorized forms. This becomes evident from his creating other names which he sees to consider appropriate for defining the various circumstances in which he finds him. Creoleness and bastardness are words that hang

about Breytenbach like a cloak. He sides with Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) who said: “I have always been of an inferior race . . . /I am of an inferior race for all eternity . . . /There I am on the Breton shore . . . / I am a beast, a nigger . . . /I am of a distant race: my ancestors were Norseman”. Aspects of the shaman, the exile, the border intellectual and the nomad are investigated. The important aspect of the other and Frantz Fanon’s (1925-1961) role in the creation of the Black Consciousness movement is considered.

In chapter six Breytenbach’s work is an inquiry into the nature of reality. Zen Buddhism profoundly influenced Breytenbach’s thoughts. It is a way of attaining direct experience of reality, leading to a life unmediated by words or ideas. He embraces the notion of the Middle Way in his interpretation of reality. The second aspect which is looked into is the realities of utopia. Breytenbach’s involvement with Marxism (the dialectics), is investigated. His point of departure does not embrace one stable view of reality. This is radicalism. The simulacrum is the third aspect which is investigated. Mirroring is an all-encompassing metaphor and image of the simulacrum. The simulacrum of the theater sheds light on the relationship between Breytenbach and Klossowski. The art movement which Breytenbach is part of, New Realism, is concerned with the reflection of new realities, the absurd, the grotesque and the gruesome. Breytenbach also has strong connections with the Surrealist art movement, which is interested in the reality of a super-rational world, imagination and the dream. With Breytenbach the modern reality of a single origin is replaced with a play of multiple meanings. The last aspect, is the utopia of memory and forgetting that distorts the nature of reality.

There is no possibility of providing a “biography” of Breytenbach. Such a monological approach will not enhance the argument of this thesis. Once again Breytenbach’s “Self” which is his life as art work is investigated. Deleuze & Guattari (1986:4) say that Luc de Heush analyzed a Bantu myth.

Nkongolo, an indigenous emperor and administrator of public works, gives his half-sister to the hunter Mbidi, who assists him, and then leaves. Mbidi's son, a man of secrecy, joins up with his father, only to return from the outside with that inconceivable thing, an army. He kills Nkongolo, and proceeds to build a new State..."

Between the magical-despotic State and the juridical State containing a military institution, we see that flash of the war machine, arriving from without. From the standpoint of the State, the originality of the man of war, his eccentricity, necessarily appears in a negative form: stupidity, deformity, madness, illegitimacy, usurpation and sin. Breytenbach's work consists of an invented and fictionalized "Self" which is a war machine. The Self has its own rhythm which flows into endless successions of catatonic episodes or fainting spells, and flashes or rushes. For Deleuze & Guattari (1986:9) catatonia is: "This affect is too strong for me," and a flash is: "the power of this affect sweeps me away," so that the Self (*Moi*) is now nothing more than a character whose actions and emotions are de-subjectified, perhaps even to the point of death. There is much of the East in Breytenbach: the Japanese fighter, interminable still, who then makes a move too quick to see. This is the Go player. The most uncanny modernity lies with Breytenbach. It is because his self, which is his art work, is presented in secrecy, speed and affect. With Breytenbach, the secret is no longer a content held within a form of interiority. It becomes a form, identified with the form of exteriority which is always external to itself. Feelings become uprooted from the interior of a "subject", to be projected violently outward into a milieu of pure exteriority that lends them an incredible velocity, a catapulting force of love or hate. They are no longer feelings, but affects. With Breytenbach the self becomes a deterritorialized velocity of affects which unleashes itself. The Self surfaces in relays, intermezzos and resurgence. The Self is a rhizome and a war machine.