

CHAPTER THREE: MOVEMENT AND INSCRIPTION

(The inscription of revolution on the landscape)

3.1. On inscription and identity (the exile and the landscape of the mountain pass)

Three photographs from different times in Breytenbach's life assist us to trace his path of inscription (or becoming).

3.1.1. The first photograph (M&I-1)

The *Boom-Boer* lives in a district where several old men squat among the leaves, perhaps with an ancient memory of disastrous floods. It is Breytenbach's task to bring him his early morning mug of coffee. He will already be staring in the direction of the cemetery in the dark embrace of a nearby hill, untouched by sunlight. Later Breytenbach stands between the legs of his grandfather, the *Boom-Boer*, who is seated on a chair, to have a photograph taken. In the background, there is a closed gate, which opens onto a stark landscape. Although not in the photograph, there is a cemetery in the vicinity. The young child's hair is still that of a toddler and have the small features centred in a big face; the hands resting on the grandfather's knees are an indication of extreme vulnerability.

Later, Breytenbach would discover the fetish of writing on the body of the dusky-skinned Other. Now it is his own throat, rib cage, nape to coccyx, belly, penis and scrotum, chest, back, left buttock, torso, hips, back and front of arms, upper back, small of the back, right buttock, face, mole between the eyes, head, eyelid, fingers, scalp, inside leg, scrotum, lips and tongue written on. All are receiving the inscription of the section of society he finds himself in: Calvinism, the *nuendos* of the patriarch, Afrikaner nationalism and possession of the

ground, the madness of the *Jerusalem-gangers* and the impetus of the late Victorian period. Already the body is preparing itself for fragmentation. Now, however, the little boy, standing between the knees of the *Boom-Boer*, is unaware of the treacherous subterranean tracts being laid down in the landscape. He finds himself in *Apartheid*, the labyrinth of solitude that the individual, and the nation, insistently, perpetually and deceptively wove around themselves.

Breytenbach (1998d: 19) wrote a beautiful passage “of memory” on his grandfather the *Boom Boer* which appears in many of his works.

(My grandfather)

My grandfather spends his later days in an ancient pepper tree planted long before my time, and his, not far from the humble abode in which he and my grandmother live out their twilight years. Ouma Annie is his second spouse, the mother of my father and his two siblings. Grandpa’s first wife, Tante Tina’s mother dies after being bitten by a snake in the woodpile. Everybody in the family pretends that it is perfectly normal to perch on a branch some ten feet above the ground. He is not the only one either; in the district several more old men squat among the leaves, perhaps with an ancient memory of the disastrous flood, or further back, the war against the imperialist British. *Boom-Boere* they are called. It is my task to bring him his early morning mug of coffee. He will already be staring in the direction of the cemetery in the dark embrace of a nearby hill untouched by sunlight. Only once, when I ask him what he is waiting for, does he mutter: that snake is coming back. As he grows more frail my father has the tree chopped down out of concern for grandpa’s safety. We don’t want him to break a leg, or worse. My grandfather never leaves his bed after that and within a week he is dead.

3.1.2. The second photograph (M&I-2)

The exile, on a short visit to the country of his birth, wearing only a pair of shorts with a leather belt and standing against the backdrop of a mountain pass. The valley and rifts fall away into the distance and a hazy mountain ends in clouds. His hair and beard are black and his eyes closed against the sharpness of the Karoo light. The dusky-skinned woman's windblown hair fans out over his chest. When the wind subsides, the hair falls back. The writer/painter of the Bonnievale-Kafferskuilrivier-Wellington region, in a country he names *Paradise*. While still in Paris, he had already begun this writing on the body of his Vietnamese wife, Lotus – on the mouth, the eyes, the throat, the breasts, the body, the hands, the heart.

The marriage to Yolande led to the fading of the stratified order's branding on the man's body. Similar to the photo of Breytenbach set against the pass with its shifting horizon. The surface of Breytenbach's body becomes a horizon falling back onto the landscape, where experiences circulate. If we look at the photograph in the book, *Seisoen in die Paradys (Season in Paradise)*, the body reflects the same changing domain one experiences coming up the winding road. Likewise, during long years of painting the body, new vistas present themselves with every twist and turn of the road on which Breytenbach's spirit took him. The body becomes a horizon of the strife between inscription, circulation, desire, control and the desire for freedom. The body must be considered not only as a surface on which the inscriptions of a territorialized order can be found, but also as constantly on the edge or border. It embodies fractures of a contingent relationship with the becoming self. When Breytenbach enters a process of opening of consciousness, either through intensities or other deliberate revolutionary acts leading to the dismantling of identity, constant transformation and mutations of the body become a central characteristic. The body becomes a free horizon, a place of constant displacement on which different experiences proliferate. The erasure of the systemic relationships branded on the body is discarded. The body enters a plane of constant movement, beyond the territorialized inscriptions towards an endless network of becoming.

Then the body becomes a terrain – a shifting-landscape, or the revolutionary landscapes, where rhythms, forms, colours and intensities become part of the dance of chaos.

3.1.3. The third photograph (M&I-3)

According to Galloway (1990) attention focussed on Breytenbach at his second appearance in court during his incarceration. This time they accused him of conspiracy and plans of disruption, to overthrow the government. The man stands outside the Magistrate's Court on the 13th of May 1977. They extended the trial till June, when he would appear in the Pretoria Supreme Court.

Between 1970 and 1975 efforts to infiltrate South Africa took the form of couriers, who came in with false passports or identity documents shown at official control points. The most notorious case was that of Breytenbach, who was not a member of the ANC (African National Congress) and even took a critical stance towards the influence of the SACP (South African Communist Party) in that organisation. His political activities gathered momentum in 1972, when at the request of John Makhatini, the leader of the ANC for North Africa and Europe, he became a member of the forbidden anti-South African organisation *Okhela*. His subsequent illegal entering the land of his birth led to a sentence of nine years imprisonment. The tasks and the inscriptions of the stratified order are to control, to enclose and to restrain. The task of Breytenbach was to discard that inscription by moving deliberately towards an understanding of the society from which he came.

3.2. The social body and the nomad – *L’oiseau tombé* (*The fallen bird*)(M&I-4)

For Laumonier (1997:20-25) true nomads, having no relationship with the transcendent, only appear when the importance of the transcendent falls away (the nomad functions on the plains of immanence). The Spanish proverb, “*el camino se hace al andar*”, translates as: “the road is only made in the process of walking”. Or putting it differently: only the road creates meaning. Don Quixote is the perfect illustration of the modern nomad, alone and without God.⁶⁰ The modern nomad, too, must cross the landscape. This landscape is not a place, however, but a state of consciousness.

Between *Don Quixote* of Cervantes and *The Castle* of Kafka, the nomadic personality experienced a change. His space of development becomes an inner personal one, not necessarily requiring the movement of walking, but no less painful. The plain of immanence as a nomadic concept (the one the nadaist moves across on his way to death) is an image of thought. It is the image where thought encapsulates itself in terms of that which thought means. It is not opinion on thought, or results, or notions, or forms of thought. According to this idea, thought initiates movement, which can be borne into eternity. This movement is not that of an object with a fixed point of reference: to orient oneself in thought infers no fixed point of reference.

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Reflections about place, where everything is submitted to transcendence, are characteristic of the Middle Ages. The Middle Age man is the *homo viator*, who crosses the world in his search of the true Place, which cannot be found on earth but somewhere above. And the pilgrimage is the strongest symbol of this journey that ends only in death where, in a certain way, God becomes the substitute for the Place. The nomadism of Quixote lies neither in the imitation of the chevalier of the Middle Age, nor in the repetition of heroic gestures, as discovered in the chevalier romance. Rather, as Foucault states in his *Les mots et les choses*, it lies in the fact that he, in his never-ending search for analogies, despite his reading about another world in his books, never succeeds in escaping the well-known space and restrictions of his own province. He crosses the space endlessly, without ever crossing borders or reaching the heart of identity.

As Breytenbach's work, *L'oiseau tombé*, hits the public eye in an Art Gallery in Pretoria, the pain inflicted in this initiation rite (Breytenbach's bodies are the scars on the social body and the coupling for the viewing eye ["I"] is of pain), the markings on the minds of the viewers become similar to those of primitive nomadic society. A poetic and emotive description of the initiation rights in primitive societies would read as follows.

In primitive societies the eye is coupled with pain. As the young Massai maiden is being scarified, the thorn inserted again and again to raise welts in regular patterns across her back, down her thighs, throughout the afternoon the others watch eyes like flies feasting on the pain. Savage inscriptions cut into living flesh; the markings, perforations, incisions, circumcisions, clitoridectomies are painful. The markings are made during long public feasts. Like the initiation rites of the primitive societies, which are public and theatrical: one watches, the eye does not circumscribe, survey, comprehend; it winces, it senses the pain. The boy's first ejaculation and the girl's menarche are highly significant, coded, public events. In Western societies, the flow of pubescent semen and blood are decoded, deterritorialized, privatised; they are supposed to take place behind locked doors, at night. No one is supposed to see the evidence of wet dreams on the sheets. Nietzsche, in the second essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, speaks of the excitement that pain affords the spectator. The eye is a crystal ball, where the pain suffered is transfigured into pleasure received. The public eye, when feasting on the image of the suspended man, recaptures those historical moments captured by Goya's *Cannibals* and the horror and eroticism of Yi dam and his Çakti from the Tibetan art (Boundas & Olkowski 1994: 101).

On occasion of Breytenbach's first exhibition in Pretoria, in February 1994, *Painting the Eye*, at the UNISA Art Gallery, the curator requested Francis Galloway and me to conduct a walkabout, attended by art critics, lecturers and members of the public. That encounter generated very specific questions and reactions, which were expressed in terms of discomfort and pain. In the painting, *L'oiseau tombé*, the body is suspended on the dark glowing canvas reminiscent of Christ's Crucifixion. The green high-heeled shoes reflect an element of the

transvestite. This painting portrays above all a case of “fucked-up-ness”[sic], to which Breytenbach so often refers. What the painting is depicting, is an inscription of “disruption”; that which not only links it to the vast network of primitive societies, but also to twentieth-century’s artists and ideas and other instances. As one questions and experiences the image, certain disruptive nomadic energies are set into motion and the stable and stultified viewpoints of more dogmatic viewers and critics are upset.

The dove, falling from the erect blue penis, is an exchange with Ernst’s painting, *la parole – femme-oiseau*, (the word – she bird), in which Ernst painted a decapitated woman clutching a bird between the upper thighs, another under the arm. Both Breytenbach and Ernst have an obsession with birds.

Loplop, a motif that first appeared in Ernst’s work in the late twenties and became important in his collages of the thirties, has been defined as both the alter ego and a personal totem of Ernst. The use of bird imagery in his art resulted, it seems, not only from a personal event in his childhood, but from his awareness of birds in Easter Islands imagery, North American Indian Art and their meaning and role in shamanistic literature. Ernst’s *Loplop* and the American Indian “rain bird” serve as vehicles for the idea that any artwork might be viewed as a revelation of personal feelings or subjective truths. *Loplop* is a master of disguise. Indeed, his fluctuating identity (often masked or bird-headed) corresponds with Ernst’s shamanistic identification with birds and other animals. In certain incarnations, *Loplop* possesses pronounced androgynous characteristics, further reinforcing the sense of the alchemical. Ernst also uses bird imagery throughout his œuvre: as for example in the following works: *la parole – femme-oiseau* (1921); *Vögel -Vögel, Fisch-Schlange-Vogelshreck* (c. 1921); *les hommes ne le sauront jamais* (c.1921) and *La belle jardinière* (c.1921/22).

Breytenbach began his use of bird imagery through the fetishism of an old, stuffed parrot that he keeps in his studio, as represented in the work, *T/3 (M&I-5)*. The parrot is placed on a fetus like figure that is probably a commentary on Breytenbach's period of incarceration. From the fetishism of the studio parrot, he continued, developing the bird motive into many directions. During his period of incarceration his *œuvre* is scattered throughout with bird imagery. With *Vogelspinnenvrouw* (1989) and *L'oiseau tombé* (1990) the conversation continues. The position of the bird in relation to the body infers certain similarities with Ernst's *la parole – femme-oiseau*. The image of the bird is positioned across the left arm and between the two legs, near the sexual organs. In Breytenbach's work, *L'oiseau tombé*, the bird falls from the androgynous figure's penis.

The theatre producer, Marthinus Basson, also used Breytenbach's bird imagery in his interpretation of the two dramas, *Boklied* and *The Life and Times of Johnny Cockroach*. The enduring image of the bird is one step away from the body metamorphosing into an angel. The body with wings is the angel and there are many references to angels and flying in his work. In Breytenbach's painting, *Nature morte (M&I-6)*, we find the angel man galloping over the mountainous landscape, accompanied by a bird. A work like *Épitaphe no 8918 (M&I-7)* is much more complex. There is a reference to the painter's prison number and a parrot, echoing the studio parrot, harnessing the body of the prisoner to fly him out of prison. In Breytenbach's paintings and drawings, the bird in flight, or the angel, or the image of a figure performing swimming motions, often in the air, is the emblem of the true nomad.

3.2.1. The Nomads.

The hollow-eyed nomads are graphic societies. They inscribe the earth with their paths, their dances; they inscribe the walls of their caves or huts. They inscribe their bodies. They cut twigs to mark their paths, weave patterns into baskets and clothing. Their marks do not

express ideas they express myths, which are encompassing ideas or meaningful forms, but reveal the dexterity of hands. They do not relate their inscription to speech and they develop no alphabet or ideograms. Hands learn skills, not being explained the meaning and methods of handling and manipulating, not by their being shown the diagram or the method, but instead by immediate induction: the hands of the child imitate the movements of hands of the men and women. As in Zen archery, there are no manuals, no discussions with the master: the master holds and tightens his bow; the pupil does the same, repeatedly (Lingis 1994:301).

One has to understand that there is no blueprint or plan for how social organisations will be constructed. In this sense what is meant by organisation one must understand as a continual process of composition and decomposition, through social encounters on an immanent field of forces. The skyline of society is perfectly flat, perfectly horizontal, in the sense that social organisation continues without any predetermined design based on the interaction of innate forces. It can thus, in principle, be thrust back anytime. The horizontal society is the open site that fosters practical creation and composition, and destruction and decomposition. The model of this constitution is the general assembly. During social assemblage, the borders of social bodies are continually subject to change, as certain relationships are decomposed, others are composing. This is Marx's way of grasping the living force of society that continually emerges from the dead forces of the social order; living labour that refuses to be sucked dry by the vampires set in flight by capitalism. This quality of living is defined both by the power to act and to be affected (Lingis 1994:305).

The nomadic notion is a movement of variations, a territorial idea, and a deed, where the body also becomes a terrain-shifting landscape. In nomadic art, the fixed point – here the body – is subordinated to the movement and the space through which it shifts. What we are confronted by is a political consciousness that grows from this network of becoming, which is the nomadically inspired smooth space. Herein the nomadic art and the aesthetic range of perception take up an anarchical stance against the stratified order. Deleuze & Guattari

(1987:494) describe nomadic art in the following way:

... the twisted animals have no land beneath them; the ground constantly changes direction, as in aerial acrobatics; the paws point in the opposite direction from the head, the hind part of the body is turned upside down; the ‘nomadological’ points of view can be interlinked only on a nomad space; the whole and the parts give the eye that beholds them a function that is haptic rather than optical.

From this we must gather that the nomadic-aesthetic consciousness is an emotive quality, which uproots fixity from the ground (earth), air and horizon, and the body. The image leaps through the air. In Breytenbach’s work we also find that he paints images floating or swimming through the air. Movement is a continual and enduring motif of his paintings of which *Dancing Warthog* is an example. This painting contains three “moving” figures in an enclosed room with a window. The sexless one glides through the window, while the naked male swimmer performs free style movement through the air, the third three-legged image, performs acts like an insect hovering against the wall, wears a swimsuit. Like the twisted “nomadic” animals, they have no ground beneath them. A fourth figure resembles an alien. It is lamenting against a wall, which reflects its image. The Bacon toilet is placed on a red floor with entrails dangling from it in a movement towards a block on which is a dancing warthog.

3.3. The political body and the landscape of revolution.

A photographic copy of the revolutionary painting of Breytenbach, *Le menage militaire (The military housekeeping)(M&I-8)*, is reproduced in the catalogue. The menacing red body extends an arm, which serves as a perch for the yellow monkey, which may be an embodiment of the absurdity of South-African society. The torn off leg of this creature is clutched in the

revolutionary hand. An explicit sexual slit hovers between the legs. This is the revolutionary body, which is pulled from the earth, from the burial ground of Che Guavara, Steve Biko(1946-1977), and ... red becomes a deeper red, colour becomes colour. “The goal of revolution is transformation”, says Snyder⁶¹, the Cold Mountain poet (Breytenbach 1972:60). In order to metamorphosis that which the bodily changes represent, Breytenbach comments that:

...one must learn the slow art of revolutionary patience. One has to explore subterranean tracks, the hidden rivers surfacing as eyes elsewhere. The writer/painter must acquire frontier-consciousness (Breytenbach 1996:83).

A cultural attaché in France, well informed about cultural affairs in Paris, mentioned that Breytenbach was the only painter of the past two decades who had succeeded in shocking the Parisian art world. In the beginning, most of Breytenbach’s works were large in size, easily six by eight feet. He had also exhibited a canvas, two volumes’ high, in the Paris Museum of Modern Art. According to Brink (1967:29), he possesses a singular combination of fiery imagination, capacity for meticulous observation, moral passion and intellectual gaiety, with a talent at once pungent and distinguished, ironical and incandescent. He creates the “ideology” of systematic revolutionary agitation. Like other young painters, Breytenbach broke free from the current tendencies in art. The term *New Realism* was used to describe the awareness of a series of new realities being experienced. There was an expectation that anything could happen at anytime and often it was something terrible. The motto in his volume of poetry, *Katastrofes*, reads as follows: “*Ons is soos diere oorval deur katastrofes*” (Like animals, we are overtaken by catastrophes).

Breytenbach (1996a:136) describes this resonance with the following words:

⁶¹ Snyder is a poet from the United States of America and is identified with the Beat movement. He received the Pulitzer prize for Poetry in 1975.

The Image: unclothed by understanding or even meaning, it cannot be fixed. It moves against the dullness of information, it is movement. It is metaphor. It is detonation. The aim is not to survive, but to keep one jump ahead of the deadening hand of the state of reasonable understanding ... to keep moving the image must set off resonance.

Breytenbach ends his drama *Die Toneelstuk* (2001:44) with the words, “Alles is toelaatbaar”(Everything is allowed). The metaphor and the image are important aspects for the argument of non-fixity. In contrast to the scientific method with its fixed point of departure, the metaphor and image are the tools that Breytenbach uses to interact with society. They rely on non-fixity. The metaphor and image have multiple meanings. The interaction with the metaphor and the image is individual. Breytenbach’s metaphors and images operate in a similar way as Counter-thought. The metaphor and the image are instruments of the revolution. He writes the poem, *The revolution*, in which he uses poetic metaphors to describe the revolution.

the revolution

**I have drawn three cards
but only one was of death
the cursing skeleton with ash in eye sockets**

**for freedom my hands are pomegranate
transparent pips and bloody juice
cigarette in the teeth in front of the firing squad**

**incarnate the firmament
hurrah for the revolution
for freedom my hands are pomegranate**

**doves in the tormentors drawers
the bride rode in a donkey cart**

transparent pips and bloody juice

an elephant gave weight to my dreams
his teeth crumble the dungeons to ruins
and wonderful was the population in streets

mustered against the idol of the state
not for the leader nor for
party bureaucrats who prompt meetings

but for freedom my hands are pomegranate
my heart with its way tell places my love
for the bride in black on the elephant's back

fruit for the workers and farmers
the dead warriors of the ragged-proletariat
for this my eyes paled like snow

cigarette between the teeth in front of the firing squad
the cursing skeleton with ash in eye sockets
incarnate the firmament

read this discourse aloud, brother
two were donkey carts filled with bread and wine
for the poor conquered at dawn

for true freedom my hands are prepared
hurrah for the revolution
conquered for the poor by daybreak (Breytenbach 1993b:130)

3.4. Social criticism: art as social criticism.

Marx was born as a Jew, he was converted to a Christian but that did not prevent him from becoming Communist (Degenaar in van Vuuren 2001:11).

Camus, who received the Noble Prize for Literature in 1957, had been involved with the FLNA (National Liberation Front) in Algeria, from the beginning of this revolt in 1954. Camus wrote *The Myth of Sisyphus* in 1955, in which he elaborated on the philosophical consequences of the absurd. Breytenbach in an informal talk with Hennie Serfontein stated that he took note of the execution of an Algerian in Paris, and painted *Three Heads (M&I-9)*. The work recording his response to this incident was completed within three days. Two of the heads were done on one day, the third on the last day. An execution that took place in France on 13 March 1963 inspired him. Firing squads executed one of the men attempting an assassination on the life of De Gaulle. His name was Bastian T. Although Breytenbach was not in sympathy with the man; the execution horrified him. Evidently, Breytenbach was aware of the conflict between France and Algeria. He must have read the works of Camus. Breytenbach takes up the concept of Camus' absurd, commenting on an exhibition at the Espace, and compares his work *Old King Breyten, (M&I-10)* to the absurd political situation in South Africa.

Sartre was writing in 1965, very much in the shadow of the Algerian war, arguing that the only way to learn to say “no” to one’s fellow citizens was through a perpetual self-criticism. The life of a social critic must begin with the rejection of his own socialisation, the denial of society-in-himself. More simply, he must consult the moral map and cross the border that separates oppressors like himself from the mass of the oppressed. In the early sixties Breytenbach absorbed the viewpoints of the existentialist⁶² In fact, the lessons received from Sartre, especially the existential enquiry of the “Self” has remained with Breytenbach and forms the basis of his aesthetic point of departure.

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Informal conversation with van Zyl Slabbert (February 2000)

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), a founder of the Italian Communist Party, was imprisoned by the Fascists in 1926, when he was only thirty-five years old, and died in a prison hospital eleven years later, in 1937, in the middle of the Moscow trials. He left his *Prison Notebooks* behind. Gramsci's great discovery was the density and complexity, the sheer sturdiness of bourgeois civil society. The real bastion of bourgeois power is ordinary life. It is in everyday actions and relations, and, more important, in the ideas and attitudes that lie behind these, that the hegemony of social class is revealed.

Socrates (c. 380-c.450) (cited in van Vuuren 2001:11) said that an unexamined life was not worthwhile. Breytenbach has constantly posed difficult questions to those that sanctify the power structures and accept ideology in an uncritical way. Breytenbach accepts and emphasises personal freedom and responsibility. One must constantly fight for that right. Breytenbach can engage in the movement of knowing and accept responsibility, which is part of this struggle. He had already accepted the early views of Marx in the sixties. He also strives to embody the Marxist idea that knowledge (to know really), leads to conscience. Conscience is awakened when Breytenbach, through his art, addresses the field of "unhuman" estrangement. Because he has chosen to carry the mirror, he reflects this estrangement in his art.

The process of reciprocal effect between conscience and knowledge is notably necessary for the development of both, but also forms the basis of a (self) responsible life, where the human being does not charter his freedom by the uncritical acceptance of final answers and closed meanings of ideological thought.

The unexamined life belongs to the practitioners of ideology. It is a life of abstractions that does not relate to concrete reality, is raised to eternal answers and is a life, which does not allow critical questioning. In the politics it is embodied as the life lived through sanctified

In his politics of alienation, Michel Paul Foucault (1926-1984) (Merquior 1985:141) referred to political events, like the student demonstrations of May 1968, which Breytenbach took part in, or the French prison revolts of the early 1970s or the Iranian Revolution of 1979. What he said is that we cannot understand our own society unless we look long and hard at this kind of power and at these people: not state or class or corporate power, not the proletariat or the people of the toiling masses, but hospitals, asylums, prisons, armies, schools, factories; patients, lunatics, criminals, conscripts, children and factory hands. We must study the sites where power is physically administered and physically endured or resisted. Foucault seems to see a grand alternative. The complete dismantling of the disciplinary system, the fall of the enclosed city, not revolution, but abolition. It is therefore that Foucault's politics are commonly called "anarchical" and anarchy certainly has its moments in his thoughts. When Foucault is an anarchist, he is a moral and a political anarchist. For him, morality and politics go together.

Walzer (1988:223) places Breytenbach in the category of social critics. It is to these dissidents that he has been compared. Foucault's "disciplinary society", was Breytenbach's refuge from a really disciplinary society: a South African prison. From 1983, Breytenbach has been a naturalised French citizen, living in Paris, grateful for France's tolerance and political dissidence, free to travel wherever he likes, free to write as he pleases, even to castigate his adopted *patria* if the need arises. Mostly, however, he has continued to castigate his native South Africa. He has become the most brilliant of social critics. What must the critic-in-exile do? According to Breytenbach he must force himself to maintain a dialogue with the inside.

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Van Vuuren (2001:11) wrote an article in commemoration of the philosopher, Johan Degenaar, where he explained the difference between the liberating dialectic of conscience and knowledge. Degenaar and Breytenbach are concerned with the same questions.

... He must bark all along the borders.

Dissidence is characterised by political persecution; the inability to publish, exile, or taking a political stance other than that of the regime in one's country. Political subversion is global. Dissidence or political subversion that operates in the areas of non-fixity, does not only attach itself to incarceration, but to the idea itself. Breytenbach's scrutiny of politics is an absolute, an unconditional distance, that of unbelief from which, unlike others, there is no return. In the unpublished lecture, *Foreword. Travelling Towards Identity* (1996b), he says that the writer/painter is a social bastard – unpredictable, untrustworthy, politician of a party of one, feeding words (images) to the monsters, metamorphosis, essential for transformation, a traitor to the pure and the true and patriotic. These ideas are important arguments for Breytenbach's encompassing journey against fixity.

Formulating his radicalism, Breytenbach, the dissident is constantly and continually transforming his body into that of the Buddha. In the paper read at Stellenbosch in 1990, entitled *Fragments From a Growing Awareness*, Breytenbach (1996a:36) said:

An ancient Japanese poet, Daigu – meaning 'Big Fool' – wrote:

Buddha is your mind

And the way goes nowhere.

Don't look for anything but this.

If you point your cart north

When you want to go south,

How will you arrive?

Buddha helped me understand Marx; First: there can be no Buddhism, only Buddha's. I am Buddha, and so are you, and you, and you. All of us, together or separately, are potential or actual Buddha's. Second: if you encounter Buddha, kill him! Third: my radicalism (working with or looking for roots) cannot be encapsulated in a dogma or school or party.

In this essay Breytenbach arguments against fixity. He starts by stating that the Buddha (in contrast to Christian belief in one God) is multiple. He also says that his radicalism is not part of a party, which is fixed. He again pleas for movement on the Middle Way and stresses the dialectics. He also speaks of the dissolutions of the self and a movement away from homo-centrism. For him the essence of harmony is radical change. In Breytenbach's art, this radical change is embodied in its many transformations and transgressions.

3.5. Commentary on interiors and bodies: de Sade, Goya, Bacon and Breytenbach.

A radical change took place in eighteenth-century libertine France. The erotica of the sixteenth century had been abandoned; it went along with frenzied sadism, as in the work of Antione Caron (c.1520-c.1600). François Boucher (1703-70) shifted in the direction of lightness. Lightness might have made an appearance then only to open the way for heaviness. The eroticism of those times knew nothing of the horrors to which it was merely the prelude. Boucher probably never knew de Sade. Whatever excesses of horror may have obsessed him throughout his life (making up the fierce tales of his books), de Sade knew how to laugh. De Sade was completely drained by witnessing an execution of aristocrats before his very eyes during a brief stopover on the way from the prison at Madelonnettes to the one at Picpus. His Thermidorian reaction saved his own life and death at the scaffold. De Sade himself spent thirty years of his life in prison, but, more than that, he peopled his solitude with innumerable dreams: dreams of terrible screams and bloodied bodies. De Sade endured this life, and endured it only by imagining the intolerable.

De Sade and Goya lived simultaneously. De Sade locked up in his prisons, sometimes at the extreme edge of madness. Goya deaf for thirty-six years, locked up in a prison of absolute non-hearing. The French Revolution awakened hope in both of them. Both men had a pathological loathing for any regime founded on religion. Nevertheless, more than anything

else, an obsession with excessive pain united them. Goya, unlike de Sade, did not associate pain with sensuous pleasure. His obsession with death and pain contained a convulsive violence that approximated to eroticism. However, the transgression of eroticism is, in a sense, an outlet, an infamous outlet for horror. Goya's nightmares, like his deafness, imprisoned him. He reached a state of total aberration in his engravings, his drawings, and his paintings (Bataille 1985:103).

In 1929 Luis Buñuel (1900-1983)⁶⁴ and Salvador Dalí (1904 - 1989) made the film *Un Chien Andalou*. Buñuel's ability to jolt the senses and create an atmosphere of a threat fascinated Bacon. A guiding principle for Bacon is disguise and transformation. He had a lifelong preference for dressing up in female underwear. He also embedded disguise in his painting, that Bacon had seen how the Surrealists equated the desire to express something new with the need to shock. Curiously, it is as if in his search for a subject that would satisfy his needs as a painter, Bacon had begun by defining the background. It is the interior in which he would later set his drama of mid-century man caught in an animal awareness of his own futility and despair.

In *SKRYT*, Breytenbach had also begun exploring the human body in this way. The devastating dramas, emotions and awareness of the mind are portrayed in human figures set in different interiors. There are instances of vaginal bleeding, a figure propped in a corner of a room in 'ça va?' 'ça va, ça va; et toi, ça va?' 'ça va' and a landscape of decapitated female torsos with hands pleading which could be compared with the worst nightmares of de Sade, Goya or Bacon. In these drawings Breytenbach's lifelong companion, *Dog*, also takes shape. The cover inscription for a later collection of poetry also evolved from the drawings in *SKRYT* – the images of the anthill metamorphosed into a title of a volume of poetry:

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Spanish director and film-maker noted especially for his early Surrealist films and for his work in the Mexican commercial cinema.

Die miernes swel op ja die fox-terrier kry 'n weekend en ander byna vergete katastrofes en fragmente uit 'n ou manuskrip van Breyten Breytenbach (1980).

The visual works of Breytenbach are inherently paradoxical. The drawings of aberration and transformation or metamorphosis illustrates the process and movement, which enhance change. The grotesque is expressed in forms of reduction, expansion, distortion, animation, excess and estrangement. The depiction of the grotesque is a process of continual metamorphosis in which new forms are continually projected. Not only does the grotesque contain the products of various kinds of transformation, but very often also the processes of transformation themselves. For the same reason, elements already grotesque in themselves often engage in further transformations before the viewer's eyes.

A particular kind of looking is at stake here and the role of the viewer is a painful one: all the deceptive certainties of the visual tradition we are used to are challenged, all the relationships between looking, all the positive constructions of bits of reality are questioned.

3.5.1. SKRYT

Breytenbach wrote *SKRYT* (1972) during and after a visit to Tanzania. In this volume of poetry Breytenbach manages to marry his own aesthetics with social involvement. The poem, *Life in the ground*, is an example of his dedication to criticize the fixed views of Apartheid and the effect it had on a certain section of society. Breytenbach writes:

Life in the ground

**blessed are the children of Dimbaza
of Welcome Valley, Limehill and Stinkwater**

dying

of sickness, under feeding, poverty –
because they clean the boss' field of vision,
because they escape hell
because they vacate the territory of the boer
– the Boer and his God –
– the hand of the God –
because for them life is spared,
because to live black is a political crime
because you who are black live
in the country of blood
and the pass and the insult and the dog,
you stain the earth of the Boer
blessed are the children of Dimbaza,
of Welcome Valley, Limehill and Stinkwater
thrown away
in pits, festive places for ants,
the black toothed smiles –
because they receive toys and empty milk bottles
to please the graves,
toys and cellophane which rustles in the wind
milk bottles – empty tits – from which the wind
can suck sounds
to lure moles nearer
– because meat is scarce–
so that the little ones might forget
that they are dead
blessed are the dead of Dimbaza,
of Welcome Valley, Limehill and Stinkwater
gorged
by the earth, because their coming and their going
is discrete between mouth and spoon
without leaving stains before the sun

blessed benediction and holy are the moles
and the worms and the ants
in the country of sunshine
in the country of the Boer
in the country which the Lord has given him,
because they keep the sods clean and fertile
so that the person can flourish and thrive
grow his plants and breed his stock
and can become pretty and strong and white
in honour of his God.

The task of the stratified state is control, enclosure and control. In free action, what counts is the way in which the element of the body escapes gravitation to occupy absolutely a non-punctuated space. According to Deleuze & Guattari (1986:79) fascism has an unlimited movement with no aim other than itself. It has been stated in the introduction that the post-fascist body of Breytenbach's oeuvre is that of a war machine. What this means is that bodies as an artistic endeavour of movement can be a potential war machine, a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement. The art works echo political dissonance. The unfolding of this way of thinking resembles a journey through a landscape of many rhythms, chaotic forms and strange art-like connections, between disparate elements.

The first part of *SKRYT* (1972) is a serious, logical *Ars poetica* on the poetical way of political involvement. Does the poet have to prophesy or withdraw? The answer lies in the paradoxes. Coetzee (Breytenbach 1977: introduction) mentions that according to Breytenbach, one has to entrench oneself in poetry. Poetry can be compared with a windowless waiting room, where one has to live and by that gather the dead yesterdays. New life evolves from this. There are fourteen grotesque drawings in *SKRYT*. The title of this volume of poetry infers that the motions of taking in and excreting is typified in one word. This is the physical reaction to psychic impotence. Emotions of longing, anger, love and nostalgia, all are spat out. The drawing, *les filles de Laocoön* (M&I-11), refers to the style of Andy Warhol. The sprawling

and blood-spurting woman (M&I-12) refer to Kahlo's *My Birth* (1932). The inner room comes from Bacon. Magritte's *The Rape* (1934) is echoed in *Now, really Mr. Jones-Ferguson!* (M&I-13). Breytenbach's interaction with the body in these drawings reflects the shapes depicted by Victor Brauner in *The Morphology of Man* (1934).

3.6. The carnival-goer (the one wearing the dunce's cap and the landscape of the carnival).

The notion of the carnival may be used as an analytical tool for exploring the paintings and drawings of Breytenbach. Thus conversation is taken up with Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975)⁶⁵, whose writings on the carnival have had a long and lasting influence on the contemporary practice of literary and cultural studies. Bakhtin presents carnival as a festive world. It is brimful with exuberance and ambivalent laughter. The carnival figure is grotesque and embodies corpulent excess. The carnival figure represents ever-renewing becoming and is against all forms of fixity. Bakhtin's emphasis on the heterogeneous, multivalent and *heteroglossic* characteristics of the carnivalesque have inspired many contemporary theorists who are interested in the notion's transgressive and subversive potentials.⁶⁶

Metaphorically speaking, the carnival is a gigantic mask behind which a multiplicity of other masks hides (Bakhtin 1968:102). The term "carnival" is iconoclastic by nature because no dogma nor coercion and no narrow-minded seriousness can coexist with Rabelais' images that

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Bakhtin was a Russian philosopher and cultural theorist whose influence extends to today.

⁶⁶

There is now a large and increasing body of writing which sees the carnival not simply as a ritual feature of European culture, but as a mode of understanding. For the film critic, Robert Stam, the notion of the carnival "is a potentially indispensable instrument for the analysis not only of literary and filmic text, but also for cultural politics in general" (Tsu-Chung Su. 1996:28:2 & Stam 1989:47).

are so deeply opposed to all that is complete and polished (thus fixity). Carnival is opposed to all pomposity and to every ready-made solution. Carnival occupies an ambivalent space of in-between-ness like a mid-zone. It belongs to the non-fixative borderline between art and life. In reality, it is life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of play. All spectators are simultaneously participants, taking part in the carnival, simultaneously undergoing metamorphosis. It is the strategy used to fight all that are elevated, abstract, transcendental, and it offers the option to laugh. Laughter kills the spirit of gravity by action directed downward. Coming down to earth and shifting the gaze to the lower stratum of the body through convulsive laughter of the body is, in Bakhtin's view, always a positive gesture conceiving, regenerating and giving birth. In this context Bakhtin (1968:110) writes:

To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better. To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly, and the reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth.

3.6.1. The carnival mask.

Breytenbach, during his intense conversation with the self, uses various masks. Examples would be the book as a mask in *la Famille Sainte* (M&I-13b) and the bird and wolf mask in *Songe de sept ans et demi* (Seven and a half dreams) (M&I-14) Then there is the white masks in *T/15* (M&I-15) and in *Homme devant la fenêtre* (Man in front of a window)(M&I-16), *Hovering dog* (M&I-17) and the interplay of black and white masks, reminiscent of Fanon's search for black consciousness, in *Black Skin, White Masks*. The bird mask features again in *L'Arbe aux oiseaux* (The tree with birds)(M&I-18) and the eye mask in *Monddood* (Mouthdead) (M&I-19). A masked Breytenbach embracing the praying mantis appears in *praying mantis* (M&I-20) and finally there is the dog mask in *Nuit à Gorée* (Gorée

Night)(M&I-21).

The fascination with the carnival mask, whether we call it paradox, illusion, ambiguity, or ambivalence, lies in the interplay of multiple identities, both real and imaginary, that are simultaneously revealed or concealed by the mask. To play with masks is to shift roles, rather than to stick to a unique identity, a stiff facade or a monolithic truth. What lurks behind the mask of the grotesque is not a terrible vacuum, or nothingness, but an inexhaustible flux of identities (Bakhtin 1968:40).

One can catalogue some of these identities of Breytenbach, such as the parodies and caricatures in *Hommage au Pinceau Décédé* (Homage to deceased paintbrush)(M&I-22), *Woord* (M&I-23) or grimaces in *King breyten 6* (M&I-24) and eccentric postures in *Dakhaas* (M&I-25). He also uses the comic gesture as in *les oeufs de d'été* (Summer eggs)(M&I-26). The self becomes the buffoon, the fool, the one wearing the dunce's cap in *DA/2* (M&I-27), *Judges Kiss* (M&I-28), *Circus Angel* (M&I-29). There is the clown fishing for an image in *Le Pêcheur* (The Angler)(M&I-30). Breytenbach uses the photocopy to repeat the bird masked figures in *Gorée Memory* (M&I-31). Further examples are the *doppelgänger* in *El rey doble* (M&I-32) and the schizo depiction in *Bird* (M&I-33). There is depiction of the copulating figures in *le noeud* (The knot)(M&I-34). Also the defecating *Femme* (Woman)(M&I-35) and an example of growth in *Siamesen koppe* (M&I-36). Lastly, Breytenbach depicts the dying body in the work, *cadavre exquis* (M&I-37). This is the focus of Breytenbach's imagery. According to Derrida (1978:xvi) the carnival, as a force for transgression that moves against fixity, is an *aporia* in the fabric of the official culture. It is an excess that they cannot construct within the rules of logic, for they can only conceive the excess as neither this nor that, or both simultaneously. It is therefore a departure from all rules of logic.

3.7. Borders (un-citizen and the landscape of Mor).

“If you feel the pain of thresholds, it is because you are not a tourist; the thoroughfare can thus take place”, writes Peter Handke (in Laumonier 1997:87-94) in *Images of Renewal*. In the work, *Chinese of suffering*, Andreas Loser defines him as the “seeker of thresholds”. In his free time, cleaning the thresholds of antique villas, he contemplates the role of places of thoroughfares, which can only be defined in their relation to a centre. Handke sharpens his intellect on this aspect of in-between spaces. In his book, *My year in nobody’s window with a view*, he sees the idea that the suburb is the true centre, the true place. In the thoughts of Breytenbach, the un-citizen finds him/herself in the in-between space.

The space that Breytenbach (1996e) is describing here is not of the Centre though, since it is by definition peripheral, it is the other, living in the margins, on the edges of life.

Mor. I like the sound: the land of Mor. To be first of the Moricans.

.... how do you draw the map of Mor? Wherever its un-citizens are, there the Middleworld is ... Alexandria was Middleworld territory and so was Beirut once upon a time; Sarajevo belonged, before the pigs slaughtered it to ‘purity’. Hong Kong is an outpost (the poet P.K. Leung writes – in an admirable volume called ‘City at the End of Time’, in which I found much comfort and inspiration – ironically, Hong Kong was a colony that provided an alternative space for Chinese people and culture to exist, a hybrid for one to reflect upon the problems of a ‘pure’ and ‘original’ state); Paris used to be a section of Mor when it still had a proletariat, many of whom were of foreign origin, living within the walls (by the way, the Middleworld has nothing to do with riches or urban sophistication); Cuba may be of the Middleworld despite its best efforts not to; Berlin, still, although it is now becoming ‘normalised as the pan-Germinal capital’. Jerusalem could have been, were it not for the fanatic exclusivism of the Israeli’s; South Africa went through the birth pain, it was close to understanding a cardinal Middleworld law – that you can only survive and move forward by

continuing to invent yourself – but then became a majority-led democracy instead; New York might have been, but is too close to America; I have heard tales of tolerance and centre-insouciance from a town once known as Mogador, now Estaouria; Tangier, where I celebrated my twenty-first birthday (bird-day) wrapped in a burnus, despite the closed warren of its casbah, was a refuge; Haiti, and the other Caribbean islands as well, belong – most islands tend to be natural outcrops of Mor, Gorée, Zanzibar ...; Palestine most certainly – ‘exodus’ can be a high road taken to the Middleworld, and what is now named the Territories (an euphemism for ghettos and ‘bantustan’, subjected to Apartheid) will breed a new generation of un-citizens.

For Breytenbach to become the un-citizen required a break with rigid patterns inscribed on the body and mind by the stratified society from which he came. His revolutionary interaction with the body of South African society, his political stance, art, writing and practice of Zen place him on the radical plain of immanence. He cannot be pinned down, the closer one gets to him, the more likely he is to turn, slipping from one situation into another, or one social level to another, and being many things to many people. The enigma that he still seeks in his work surrounds him like a protective cloak, allowing him repeatedly to break the mould of accepted thought and behaviour. He weaves a rich account of the world we live in, an account committed to forwarding notions of plurality, temporality, flux and change, and to show the diverse ways in which human existence and its experiences are created.

For the un-citizen, thought has no eternal value. It is bound in a network of temporalities with other entities. As un-citizen, painting and writing have made Breytenbach aware of the essence of things. He writes about the disruptive function of the metaphor and the image. Meaning is built in a dialectical interplay through involvement of the reader/ viewer that creates an illusion of movement. This is a process or thing as process and not as product. These are the areas of non-fixity and of democracy, pattern, space, reference, harmony, dissonance, rhythms, repetitions, concealment, under colour, texture, structure, leap, rapture, “fuck-up”[sic] and radicalism. These aspects cannot be encapsulated in a dogma, or school,

or party. Breytenbach's radicalism is the choice of non-fixative alternatives. These alternatives could also be paintings, drawings, poems and concepts and these works are instances of knotting in the sediments of consciousness. The formation of a new pattern of consciousness is required. Bach achieved this. His manifestation of consciousness is the fugue. Escher's, revolutionary depiction of the pattern is the spiralling staircase. Gödel questioned patterns through his mathematical equations.

The Middleworld person will be obliged to create concepts. The security of repetition of the known is forbidden to him, and this is why all fundamentalists will want to outcast him and will want to spit on his very name. Breytenbach's pattern of consciousness is based on a continual play of concepts. Death, decay and movement are interlinked. The un-citizen will inhabit *nada* and will have a lifelong intimate dialogue with death. In the act of seeing, the viewer of these paintings, the reader of the poems and the one acknowledging and internalising the various concepts Breytenbach works will enter the immanent field of consciousness. Then he or she will hover on the threshold of Mor. Accompanying the painter, he or she will trace the footsteps of the un-citizen. In the act of viewing, artworks vibrate and set free energies, which could initiate certain actions for the viewer. One could say that Breytenbach's images and metaphors join a curve near many and different singularities. This becomes a movement towards the always eluding un-citizenship, which embodies the "dogging" pain of constant change. A network of endless connection and becoming arrive on the plains of Mor and, if the viewer so wishes, a process of choosing alternatives could become part of his or her daily life. For the viewer, this could also serve as one of numerous ways of becoming conscious.

As a young man, Breytenbach left the country of his birth to cross the threshold to the now formulated Middleworld, joining forces with other un-citizen's like:

Kundera, Nureyev, Naipul, Rushdie – neither East nor West, Homi Babha - 'we now locate the question of culture in the realm of the beyond'. Pei, the

international architect, Gaudi, Juan Goytisolo, Erik von Stroheim, but somehow neither Chaplin nor Dietrich; Edward Said, intermittently, Bei Dao, Samuel Beckett, who staged the workrooms of *Middleworldness*, Pessoa, who populated his head with multiplication of alienated explorers of the self, that slippery slope to damnation, Jean-Marie le Clezio, Henri Michaux, Rimbaud – both as poet and trader, Victor Segalen, Han Shan and the Cold Mountain poet Gary Snyder, his disciple; the Andalusian explorers, and historians: Franz Fanon and Franz Kafka: Carlos Fuentes, (but not Octavio Paz); Frida Kahlo (but not Diego Riviera); the Zapatistas of Chiapas but not the Shining Path Guerillas; Pasolini (but not Fellini); Ryszard Kapushinski: Gauguin, maybe Degas, probably Bacon with the raw meat of his thinking, Goya and Matisse, certainly neither Picasso nor Cézanne ... was Nietzsche one? Of his descendants he included Foucault, who had the baldness and the loud taste in attire so typically un-citizen and perhaps also Deleuze (Breytenbach 1996e).

3.8. On consciousness (insect lament and the landscape of the theatre).

I end where I started: with a call for total subversion; not for exercising an Alternative Culture, but to cultivate alternatives; not to be different, but to be – knowingly, fully, with all your aches and pains; to tie through the specific a navel-string to the universal. If we had time, we could have spoken about the law (*dhamma*) and the Way (Tao), and how the Law can be annulled or abrogated only by walking the Way. The responsibility of the writer (painter) is not so much one of literal meaning but of social and moral implications (Breytenbach 1996e).

The word “orthodoxy” conjures up a world in which people have reached a final stage of defining themselves. In voicing a new generation’s view on being the ultimate alternative, Norman Galloway (1999) writes about the visual poem, *Life and Times of Johnny Cockroach*,

directed by Marthinus Basson and performed at the Grahamstown Festival and at the Nico Malan in Cape Town (1999/2000):

All traditional structures have been abandoned and everything simply flows across a wide plane. You are permitted to enter and exit the narrative at your will. There is no attempt to ‘grasp’ or involve the viewer; you as witness must chose to enter a work, which will have you question every ideology you have ever clung to. ... You are ultimately drawn in, not because of the structure or narrative, but by the challenge to become a participant in active confrontation of what you had always considered as your ‘self’. The ‘I’ is the target. ⁶⁷

To be blindly dedicated to a single ideology or point of view or even points of departure is the ultimate “evil”. To deny change of every ideology (“safe” or otherwise) is to deny what makes us human. ... Johnny Cockroach is the true alternative, without labelling himself/herself that is the one character that realised that there are no absolute right and wrong. Any single ideology set of laws, or whatever will not muzzle the Cockroach. Johnny sits with hollow laughter in his throat, bearing a witness to fools realising their own shortsightedness. ... Johnny wants to die; Johnny can’t bear to be a witness any longer. ... You may be able to hide from authoritarian powers, or underneath a mound of words and rational justifications, but your memory will follow you to the grave. And when all of memory returns, the folly of you own blind dedication to any single ideology/orthodoxy will be revealed. ... Beginning, Middle, End? Forget it. Do not approach this work with any expectation of traditional form. Life itself is without neat compartments. The compartments we create are merely conveniences. We can never identify the specific point at which an issue is resolved or concluded ... take note. A

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Galloway (1999) writes: ‘I use the word “alternative” tentatively. To be different for the sake of being different is just as much a straightjacket on human nature as anything else. The word “alternative” in the context is used to describe those who search for fundamental truths. Once they stumble across one they are willing to abandon it once again. All of us are alternative. Most of us are unconscious of this. The alternative is the person who is committed to the eternal search – the search will continue until we are released from the constraints of both physical and false truths created by identity and mind. In a sense all truths are false. As soon as the answer is found ,it is no longer the answer. Those who are conscious of this are the alternatives...’

deeper confrontation, waiting in the wings, wants to be heard. Have the courage to confront yourself in the mirror.

In a Press interview with Marthinus Basson, *Johnny Cockroach* is described as one-fourth rant, three-fourths vision.

It is a sermon, lecture, tract, philosophical dialogue and ineffable poetry rolled into one. It is an imaginative riot, a breeding ground of ideas. An entire century's worth of ideologies, a ragbag of discarded slogans are used and catch phrases, TS Eliot's "heap of broken images".

The debate concerns freedom, history, the artist's role, race, violence—but there are absolutely no answers, no instant solutions. It is also a romanticising of Afrikaner history. The great theme of *Johnny Cockroach* is freedom, debated across time and place by a bewildering variety of speakers, for the elucidation of a cockroach witness who has watched aeons of human squalor and travail. The ambiguity of the text reflects disillusionment with the powers that be, as well as with the Twentieth Century as a disastrous phase in human history.

The cockroach of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* in which man becomes an insect, is reversed. As limbs, torso, head, eyes, feelers and wings grow, as consciousness becomes richer in context until the hermaphrodite body comes to life. Here, two cockroaches, the truly immortal creatures, ask God to let them become human so they can die, so they stop watching humans' century after century. Who then is Johnny Cockroach? He is a litmus paper for humanity (Willoughby & Basson 2000:5).

Involvement with the body concerns reterritorialisation. At the moment of becoming, the ultimate Cockroach body asks for a new form, a new earth and a new nation, which are not yet

in existence. Becoming is that which distinguishes itself from the fixed majority who subscribes to dogmatism, patriarchy and so forth. The race requested by the un-citizen Cockroach consist of the bastard, the inferior, the anarchistic and nomadic. The Cockroach becomes Afrikaans, so the Afrikaners themselves may become something other and tear away from their suffering. The different portrayals of this body bear within themselves numerous instances of suffering, which beckon in the direction of a new nation. And what they have in common is to resist submissiveness, the unbearable, the shame and the present. Thus, deterritorialization and reterritorialization meet each other in a process of double becoming. And the beckoning Cockroach transforms its body into a mirror of the future.

3.9. *Ars poetica.*

The process of becoming the un-citizen, cockroach, nomad, nadaist, the carnival-goer, the exile or the revolutionary is one of shifting realities and intense bindings and knots of thought which cross life, an inquiry without anxious acts and grasps for a fixed point. Mutations of the body and the alienation that follow will open the way by which vast instances of political principles, as well as art aesthetic principles, desire and Buddhist thinking, call up that which is temporary, instances where fixed, limited and expressed realities are constantly overthrown. By mutating into what is momentary and that which is constantly becoming. The body does not become an isolated instance or a measurement of personally becoming, but one that mutates with the cadence of all other orders, the desiring economy, art aesthetic principles, political discourse, languages, state structures and memory systems. In the process of becoming, the image of metaphor or concept is captured in the image of a shifting net of knotted realities. The plane of becoming is the existential landscape, which does not allow closed horizons of introspection.

3.10. Summary:

The chapter, Movement and Inscription, enlightens important issues regarding the argument of being against fixity. Breytenbach is described as the person who received the social inscription of dogmatism and patriarchy during the first twenty years of his life. When he left the country, he chose a more open life.

It has previously been noted that movement is the important notion that opposes that which is fixed. A comment is made on the impact which the painting, *L'oiseau tombé*, has on the viewer. It is a painful impact. This viewing process is compared with inscription rites that are found with primitive, nomadic societies. The effect of this painting on the viewer is disruptive. As one questions and experiences the image, certain disruptive nomadic energies are set into motion and the stable and stultified viewpoints of more dogmatic viewers and critics are upset.

The nomadic concept is one of movement which works against fixity. A comparison was made between Deleuze & Guattari's view of nomadic art and Breytenbach's painting, *Dancing Warthog*. The art movement in which Breytenbach's work, *New Realism* upsets the stable bourgeois viewpoints of art as beautiful and ugly. *New Realism* has its own internal dialogue and confronts society with that it does not want to see or hear. Breytenbach is the social critic. He is a dissident, who continually castigates his native South Africans. He barks all along the borders of that which is fixed. Breytenbach's volume of poetry, *SKRYT*, was just as eruptive as his latest drama, *Die Toneelstuk*.

The carnival is an important notion that works against fixity. When Breytenbach relies heavily on grotesque depictions in his art, writings and dramas, he enters the regions of the aesthetics

of the carnival. The carnival mask, like the dunce's cap, is an important image in Breytenbach's work. The mask is also a pointer that directs us in the direction of multiple identities. It is thus an instrument which works against fixity.

Breytenbach formulated the important notions of the un-citizen in his essay on the Middleworld. The un-citizen is that person who has left the fixed parameters of the mainland behind. He may be an exile. The cardinal Middleworld notion is to invent yourself constantly. There is no fixed identity, but only the constant movement towards identity, which is dismantled when it is fixed. Breytenbach's image of the double bodied Johnny Cockroach is not a specific body. The two bodies are connected with a navel-string to the universal. Johnny Cockroach depicts a human condition. This chapter deals with the process of becoming which is the constant movement against fixity.