

IGNORANCE
AND
EVIL

AN ANALYSIS OF RACISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Please Note

It is assumed that the reader has a reasonable understanding and some basic knowledge of the greater South African political, historic and social context.

However reference links and footnotes are provided for more background if so required.

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NOTE TO THE READER

The initial article, [*Ignorance and Evil*](#), was written in 2005 and essentially was meant to be a commentary on the relationship between ignorance and evil, and not necessarily on racism in South Africa. However it naturally included my personal reflections on the prevalence of evil in my own society, and since I grew up in [*apartheid*](#) South Africa, the emphasis was inevitable. Importantly, it was not meant to be an academic or philosophic treatise, but merely my thoughts and feelings about the status quo at the time.

With regard to South African racism, many positive changes have taken place since writing the article, although a very palpable racial attitude is still endemic within the greater interactions of a great many South Africans. That is within the subliminal as well as the overt actions and dialogue of both white and black South Africans. In particular this had come to a head with the overtly racist utterances of ANC Youth League leader [*Julius Malema*](#) (also refer to [*Reverse Racism*](#) and [*Final Note*](#)).¹

The [*Post Analysis*](#) which was written at the beginning of 2008, and was a reflection on my initial views. When reading *Ignorance and Evil*, it is important also to read the article, [*Jansen blames racism on NGK*](#) in the Cape Argus, 14 November 2009, the relevant extracts of which are included in the Addendum.

The section [*Intelligence and Evil*](#) resulted from a request to

¹ Since writing this analysis Julius Malema had been suspended from the ruling party, the African National congress (ANC).

have the initial article, *Ignorance and Evil*, published. This resulted from the literary magazine editor's unusually wordy letter of refusal, and my response to it.

IGNORANCE AND EVIL

Those who crusade not for God in themselves, but against the devil in others, never succeed in making the world better, but leave it either as it was, or sometimes even perceptibly worse than it was, before the crusade began. By thinking primarily of evil we tend, however excellent our intentions, to create occasions for evil to manifest itself.

—

[from *The Devils of Loudon* by Aldous Huxley]

Evil is Real

Evil is the ultimate example of how actively clinging to old outdated paradigms of reality — and for that matter any paradigm that one actively attempts to protect at all cost — can and does have severe repercussions for humanity.

It was suggested in the bestselling [*The Road Less Travelled*](#) by the prominent psychologist M Scott Peck that evil is real and that evil people and evil institutions do exist. But most importantly, that they are most likely ignorant of this fact and indeed actively seek to protect this ignorance at all costs. And more often than not, extreme evil is committed in the name of religion with the perpetrators cloaking their despicable behaviour in its name.

But the most fascinating circumstance about those that do so, are that they are more often than not oblivious to this, and so also their true natures, all along hiding behind all manner of rationalizations to further obscure their

unconscious disease.

In another book, [*People of the Lie: the hope for healing human evil*](#), Peck observed that EVIL is LIVE spelt in reverse. Thus one could symbolically infer that evil is the opposite of life and living. This does not necessarily only imply the taking of a physical life as in murder and genocide, but also the active prevention of the living of life—that is, of the deliberate withholding of sustenance for our spirits to thrive and to grow to its fullest potential.

An example of this is the active propagation of the belief that our current life is inconsequential, and that some distant next life is more so. Thus, evil indeed can be viewed as a force that is opposed to living the life we currently know—as human beings currently alive on this planet.²

I've written this essay primarily to indicate how actively defending one's ignorance — even by the most 'learned' (see [*Intelligence and Evil*](#)) — can create great confusion and that this confusion can be very dangerous to humanity.

What follows will be to some a very sensitive and emotive issue that they may try to hide from and most likely would have difficulty reading—at least not without a sense of guilt, anger, or revulsion. And that indeed is my intention and it is thus difficult for me to be completely objective. Though hopefully it may make some aware that they have inherited a dreadful cancer that resides within their psyche — though

² For clarification, note that the issue is not whether there is a life hereafter or not as many unquestioningly believe it is so, but rather that whatever it may be is regarded by those who believe in it, consider it to be the sole purpose of this life and therefore that the purpose of this life merely is to die to someday live it instead.

not necessarily in itself evil, but very destructive – that they have to cure, or else will pass on its cause to another innocent generation.

It has been my experience that most individuals in the community being referred to don't necessarily act out, or have malice towards others, and the description to a large extent may not apply to them. But on the other hand, it is the aspect of ignorance and particularly how it is informed by an unquestioning belief system, together with the fact that most of the world in general has — and still is — operating from a predominant ethnocentric paradigm, that has to be borne in mind in this discussion.

This is from the perspective of both the victim and the perpetrator. Thus, as with the Emperor who had acquired new clothes while in fact he did not, their motives and behaviour are obscured as the ethnocentric belief hides any negative interpretation of the behaviour that would otherwise be apparent to an impartial observer.

Ignorance and Belief

Peck though only gives a limited definition of evil and tends to categorize evil as a definite pathology in *People of the Lie*. However the interpretation in this work suggests we all have an evil aspect (what Jung referred to as *The Shadow*) which we tend to ignore to our own and other's detriment, hence the reference to ignorance and evil.

The following quote from [*The Psychology of Evil*](#) by Dr. Stephen A. Diamond highlights the limitation of Peck's

definition.

While it may be very tempting to succumb to the argument that evil insidiously manifests itself most commonly in deceptively well-functioning but subtly pathological personalities—or in blatant caricatures of evil like Ted Bundy, Jim Jones, Charles Manson, or Richard Allen Davis—we would do well to remember that evil remains an ever-present, archetypal potentiality in each of us.

To naively or narcissistically think otherwise is tantamount to denying the personal capacity for evil—the permanent presence of the "shadow" or the "demonic"—forever dwelling in the fathomless depths of each and every fallible human being. Such denial is evil of the most insipid, prosaic, and dangerous kind.³

Thus while this essay specifically looks at how ignorance is the direct contributing cause of human evil, it must be born in mind that our denial (or ignorance) of our dark behaviour is largely as a result of holding unquestionable unconscious beliefs about ourselves and the world around us. They are such a ubiquitous factor that I contend that unconscious beliefs themselves become the evil or demonic force Diamond refers to. With the resultant opaque view of reality such an ignorant individual or group develops a distorted relationship with the greater world around them. This primarily as a consequence of their attempt to adhere to the very narrow worldview prescribed by their unconsciously internalised beliefs.

The reason for this is that, once we have adopted a belief

³ *Madness and the Daimonic: Genesis of Violence, Evil, and Creativity*, Stephen A. Diamond, State University of New York Press, 1999.

in the way we presume reality is, our mind-sets invariably become locked to that perception. We then tend to judge all our interactions from its unchangeable underlying value system. Very often the accompanied fundamental perception of reality created by such a belief system then becomes the higher authority by which we measure the rightness or otherwise of our actions.

But importantly, because beliefs are assumed facts we tend to have in the absence of knowledge, are not truly reflective of reality. But rather are reflective of the way we prefer to view the facts other than what the facts actually may be. And even more crucially, when we subject our intellect to a strongly held subconscious belief system, it usually becomes an unchangeable aspect of our identities, and we develop a blockage against incorporating reason into our mental frame of reference. And so we become ignorant, and in our ignorance, the potential pawns to the deceptive ends of evil and evil doers.

The following example of group evil is specifically given as I had personally experienced it, having lived in what was a prime example of an evil society. Though, the primary aspect of the pervasive ignorance of one's offences — and particularly the justification thereof — can readily be related to many other societies where the basis of their relations with other groups is that of wanting power and dominance over them.

Power and Dominance

I know evil well as I have had first-hand experience living in a society having been victim to an evil regime.

Apartheid: the deliberate and systematic subjugation, degradation and exploitation of one man by another based on racial classification and legislation, a unique feature of pre-democratic South Africa.

Apartheid being an offshoot of divide-and-rule, a very successful approach the British utilised to colonise almost half the world, of which the Afrikaaner people — the primary ethnic group of northern Europeans having been responsible for perpetuating apartheid — was also a victim.

The word apartheid can literally be translated to mean apartness or separateness and was the basis for a political process of separate development by the then Nationalist Government—the national fervour that inspired it largely emanating from Nationalist Socialism, otherwise known as Nazism.

It included: forced removals; separate group areas; job reservation of elite jobs for whites only that was legally enforced; harshly enforced separate racial group areas; prohibition of cross racial marriages; separate amenities for races; separate schooling systems that included curricula on the supposed inferiority or superiority of respective race groups; unequal application of justice; homelands where people were forcibly confined to; pass systems with prescribed curfews; separate churches; unequal payment of wages; a brutal enforcement of the system with the

assassination of political activists; free reign of police in enforcing the 'law' in black group areas; media blackouts and censorship; military insurgency to destabilise neighbouring countries; concerted encouragement of racial division amongst oppressed racial groups; amongst many others.

Its genesis resulted from a complex and bloody colonial history, but was essentially perpetuated through a harsh form of conservative religion (refer to [*Jansen blames racism on NGK*](#)). More than ten years after the dawn of democracy it is my contention that the main perpetrators of this evil still hide behind religion, cloaked in the moral sanctitude of self-righteousness. And ten years after the dawn of democracy are still unconscious of the destruction they are yet perpetuating—though now are the main victims, and indeed, are inflicting upon their own.

As they understand their relations with others primarily in terms of power and dominance, the effects are particularly devastating in their personal relations now that their political power over others has waned. Years after apartheid's demise the effects thereof are now predominantly being experienced by their spouses and children. The main consequence is that children born from such unions more often than not feel themselves trapped — lacking a sense of individuality — and hence are unable to free themselves of the legacy of their parents, their community, and more importantly, from their past. And as with their parents, rather hiding from an awareness of their motives and thus away from healing the tormented past

they had inherited against their wills.

Thus the propensity for evil is nurtured yet, through the souls of the weak and innocent little people through their enslavement by their own loved ones. But hopefully, never to be repeated on such a grand scale.

The term Afrikaner as used in the 20th century context refer to all white Afrikaans speaking people i.e.: those of the larger Cape Dutch origin and of the smaller Boer (meaning farmer, but specifically meaning those Afrikaners who settled in what was known as the Boer Republics of The Orange Free State and Transvaal) origin, and are descended from northwestern European settlers who first arrived in the Cape of Good Hope during the period of administration (1652 - 1795) by the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC). Their ancestors were primarily Dutch Calvinists, with smaller numbers of Frisians, Germans and French Huguenots, with minor numbers of other European groups (such as Dutch Jews, Scandinavians, Portuguese, Greeks, Italians, Spaniards, Scots, Irish). English South Africans are considered a separate ethnic group from the Boer, and their first language is English.

[Source: [Wikipedia](#)]

Healing its Cause

The devastating effect apartheid has had on its victims and the gruesome evil acts that are being committed today in post-apartheid South Africa by the marginalized, impoverished and still dispossessed, is another aspect altogether.

But, because of its ugly public face we are aware of it as cold hard statistics: another baby being raped or the slaying of the innocent by mere children—the savage outcry of the brutalized and dehumanized.

In having just said this I must add that this in no way excuses those atrocities, but as the saying goes: *treat a man like a savage animal long enough, and sure enough, he'll become one*, certainly holds true in this regard.

And that these ‘monsters’ are the creation of apartheid should be clearly acknowledged by the fact that the extent of this vicious evil was not there before. It requires a deep realisation that a brutal rape or murder does not happen in isolation, and that the paying of a slave wage while one lives in affluence, or by emasculating grown men by treating them as boys simply because you have economic power over them, certainly contributes to its prevalence in this society.

Another scourge that had been a direct consequence of this unjust regime is that South Africa has the highest disparity between rich and poor than any other country; and because of this gross inequality it is indeed a miracle that the crime and murder rate is not significantly higher. The sad reality is that despite democracy, this disparity is growing.

The irony though is that despite their abject circumstances the previously marginalised and oppressed had readily forgiven the perpetrators though very little forgiveness had been sought.

But the realization that great collective evil was committed and that the perpetrators certainly were enacting on deep seated suffering must be realized—for their own healing, if for nothing else.

And it does not help proclaiming, “I was not personally responsible for what had happened”. Nevertheless a public confession is definitely not required, but rather a quiet reflection — in the privacy of one’s own heart — on what hurt exists that had contributed to its cause. It requires that

one asks how it was possible that I could've been complicit to such an atrocity and how I may unconsciously be perpetuating it still. This is the only way the old racist paradigm can consciously be shattered within one's own heart and mind.

In this regard, in a society as brutalised and fragmented as South Africa, the attitude that says, "*There go I but for the grace of God!*", to begin with, is all that is needed, whether one feels one was complicit or not.

This does not require that one now rescues every damsel in distress. But why such an attitude is all-important, is that, while one may not necessarily be actively solving the problems of the world, it nevertheless allows one to identify the potential cause within oneself. It also enables one to be in a place of gratitude which in itself is healing, and by affecting our own healing, also to affect the healing of the greater world we are an intrinsic part of.

However ten years after apartheid South Africa's demise, all the racists appeared to have died out or left its shores. This I think is not the case and a shameful lie is being masked. Though the real victims of the lie are still the former perpetrators—all those that reaped the rewards at the expense of others. And rather than take responsibility for the role they are still playing in perpetuating South Africa's brutal legacy, prefer to sit in judgement of the other.

Though they were victims then, they still are victims now, as the underlying pain and inadequacy that was its cause is still festering, hidden under the scourge of fundamental

conservatism.

Please forgive the dramatic over-generalization but I hope the point is taken. If you are now feeling affected by this message, are remorseful, can identify yourself in it, or feel you have to do something to contribute towards healing this tormented society; you are already on your way towards healing. But if you feel defensive, offended or indifferent, perhaps the veil will not be lifted soon, if at all — though I suspect those most in need of this message won't be reading this analysis in the first place.

Fortunately, time can indeed heal all—but a lot of time is needed. Though, hopefully not as it has been for the Jews and the Philistines, where — millennia after David and Goliath, and Samson and Delilah — they are still not able to heal their long festering hatreds. ⁴

⁴ Rape in South Africa is a complex issue. [The Medical Research Council has conducted a study](#) in which it was found that approximately 1 in 4 South African men openly admit to having raped and it is perceived as a normal act. However what must be born in mind is that rape in the South African context is not a cultural phenomenon, but that it has become largely normalised particularly in severely economically disadvantaged communities, and specifically, so-called black communities.

While its genesis may have been the social emasculation of young men by apartheid and the general lack of opportunity in the new South Africa, the normalisation of this abhorrent act in post-apartheid South Africa has now reached proportions beyond what can be regarded as merely a psychologically deviant response, but a societal scourge or epidemic.

Nevertheless, that its genesis had been in apartheid is important to acknowledge for one's own sake, for one would otherwise have to conclude that it's in the social and cultural makeup of black South African's to do so. Hence one's perception of the situation would indeed be clouded by a racist lens.

Group versus Individual Evil

It should be noted that very few people could be considered evil by nature, but that the communities and groups that they are a part of can as a collective act in an evil and destructive manner with their silent consent. The primary determinant for the sustainability of such group evil, thus, is the individual inaction that empowers the group.

As Edmund Burke observed: “*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*”

The former convicted bank robber Alain Hail, after spending 27 years incarcerated in a maximum security prison for his prior misdeeds commented: “While many do bad things in their lives in reaction to perceived justifiable circumstances, they may yet not be evil. But if, after you’ve received all the information necessary for you to change, and still choose not to do so, then you may be truly evil”.

As mentioned in *The Road less Travelled*, truly evil people actively seek to ward off knowledge of their true nature and do everything in their power to protect their disease. In other words: *they are actively ignorant*. This is as opposed to the ordinary lazy and uninformed, who oftentimes merely are passive contributors to evil due to their ignorance and inaction.

Does this then make them complicit?

Unless they do affect the necessary change within themselves and so to take another course, they most certainly are.

Creating a New Future

While it might seem as if I'm isolating one particular community for what clearly was a terrible time in a society's history, I am aware that Afrikaaners had been victims, having suffered great oppression at the hands of another tyrannical regime, the British Empire.

This came to a head when in the [second Anglo-Boer War](#) between 1899 and 1902, almost a third of Afrikaaner women and children were killed in British concentration camps. And since then, this pain was masked under the subconscious identity associated with that of the oppressor (refer to *The Victim* in [The Seven Shades of Darkness](#)), and which was further fuelled by the scourge of conservative nationalism.

When considering the previous discussion it must on the other hand be realised that as a group, the Afrikaaner people definitely had no compelling overt threat forcing them to relinquish their political power in favour of a majority ruling democracy. Indeed, it has been an unprecedented social phenomenon with South Africa having become a beacon of light that gives hope to the prospect of a new world order that appreciates diversity while simultaneously striving to find common ground amongst all its citizens. Though for various reasons, this ideal admittedly is a long way off.

And certainly, the need to dominate the young and the less powerful is prevalent amongst all cultures and all peoples, truly having been the scourge of the ages.

Though the main point to bear in mind from the discussion till now is that: *by masking one's pain in an uncritical and unquestioning religion, one's propensity to live unconscious and destructive lives is compounded, and thus one is not the master of the course one is taking; and unless one develops a world-view that is open for inspection that includes searching and questioning, one will aimlessly be wondering in the dark, oblivious of one's destructiveness.*

Once again referring to *People of the Lie*, the following is asserted: "The plain fact of the matter is that any group will remain inevitably conscienceless and evil until such a time as each and every individual holds himself or herself directly responsible for the behaviour of the whole group — the organism — of which he or she is a part. We have not yet begun to arrive at that point."

Although it is apparent that the issue of racism is still festering under the surface of South African society, significant progress has been made and racial integration is indeed occurring. But the new scourge is 'classism' as the gap between the have and the have-nots of all races are steadily growing.

This despite South Africa having become an increasingly consumer-driven society with significant economic growth. In fact almost 25% of South Africa's Dollar millionaires had resulted from an economic boom over the past 12 months. But unfortunately the rich is becoming incredibly rich, and the poor, even poorer, with a significant percentage of the population — despite having political freedom but having no economic freedom — living in sub human circumstances

with more than half the population living on less than a dollar a day. And unless it is adequately addressed, old hatreds will continue to fester. This is particularly so, for the increasing numbers of South Africans adopting capitalist consumer values without having the means to fulfil its ends, most certainly is a recipe for potential disaster.

Regardless of its significant problems South Africa somehow is showing the potential for becoming a healthy and vibrant democracy, appearing to have sufficient checks and balances built in its social fabric that are potential stop-gaps for such an eventuality not to be as likely as it was in Zimbabwe.

Notwithstanding this, unless the needs of those who for so long have been marginalised are not radically addressed, the eventual consequences could — notwithstanding the significant progress made — be devastating.⁵

Lifting the Veil

The lack of a critical attitude in the depressing economic circumstances of Africa is not necessarily better or worse than the levels of apathy prevalent in the USA, a country with infinitely higher levels of literacy and economic wealth (refer to [Scourge: The Demise of Critical Thinking in the Age of “The Secret”](#)).

For instance, this apathy having led to the erosion of once

⁵Also See [Race a fair varsity admission criterion – for now](#), and [Outliers: The story of Masibambane High School](#) in the Appendix.

vociferously protected basic civil liberties and also the unprovoked war and destruction of Iraq—this as has been the case in Vietnam not very long before.

The continuing hostilities in Iraq exacerbating already bitter hatreds between the USA and the Muslim world. The repercussions of which inevitably will be passed on to an innocent future generation in having to contend with being pariah's to a significant percentage of the world's population in an increasingly globalized world.

Ironically the invasion of Afghanistan was viewed by even the most radical Islamists as justifiable in the light of the September 11 attack; while since then the invasion of Iraq has negated most previously held sympathies both in the Islamic world and elsewhere.

It is interesting that before the invasion Iraq was the most secular society in the region; and that despite Saddam Hussein's savagery, was one of the leaders most vehemently opposed to Al Qaeda and a foe of Osama bin Laden. Thus the facts reveal that Iraq was not in any way a welcoming place for Islamic terrorists as was the rhetoric that led to the war. This is unlike it now is, despite the presence of US and British occupying forces, with the rule of law having irreparably broken down, now making Iraq more than it ever was, fertile ground for such activity.

The arrogance that led to the invasion is also mind boggling. That America, one of the youngest nations, can interfere in the affairs of the oldest civilization on earth — ancient Babylonia — on the notion that they could use their perceived technological superiority to defeat their foe.

That they would win the big battle should not have been a guarantee that they would ever win the war. What was not factored in was that for the Babylonians the time spent warring is inconsequential, the casualties merely serving as a means to achieve the eventual end. They after all have an ancient legacy to uphold, while for the Americans defeat is as close by as the effect it may have on the annual budget expenditure when ordinary Americans begin to feel the financial pinch.

Whatever the short-term end may be, in the long term they have chosen to burden their children with a legacy of hatred and anger. This unfortunately is the shallowness of those who choose to interfere where they had no business to, demonstrating the consequences of ignorance mixed with absolute political power.

That the old hatreds have been exacerbated is evidenced by the July 2005 London bombings (and the Madrid bombings since writing this work) by Muslim extremists reflecting the prevalent tit-for-tat mindsets on both ends that are informing the prevalent ideologies. Most importantly though, the fact that suicide bombers are now operating outside Palestine is indicative of the religious fervour that has been aroused with even British citizens prepared to sacrifice their lives as suicide bombers for the cause.

Islamic fundamentalism however on the other hand underscoring the central problem of ignorance coupled with an unquestioning belief in the perpetuation of evil, and how individuals are still prepared to forsake their own

life and that of innocent others for a perceived righteous cause. This though on the promise of the attainment of paradise with seventy two virgins who will meet their every currently unmet earthly desire—that is once they are very much dead and buried, or in this case, blown to smithereens.

The Revolt of the Masses

To make any headway on this perhaps we must first come face-to-face with what evil's primary cause is.

As far as American's are concerned, they firstly have to realise that they do not truly live in a democracy. For as much as it potentially can be, it can only be so if the citizens are conscious participants in the process; by making decisions of who should run their affairs with total awareness.

Though as it stands, the incumbent president usually is the one who has accumulated the largest vested support, has the smoothest tongue, while what nowadays appears to be a must, that they have movie star charm as well. And as has been the latest case in point, has a dad who is connected to those in high places who can help smooth things over for their son.

Once elected the goal then is re-election. The formula usually being: in the first term, cut taxes, increase spending, usually by increasing the deficit, in this way creating the façade that all is well. And should that not work out, a war or an attack of some sort or other is always a handy way to

get the gullible American public to change their minds on the success of their president. That is of course, only the 50% or so who bother to vote in the first place.

Thus the reason why the democratic process does not work for Americans is not that there is any fault with the system, but is greatly due to the root of all evil in general: *Ignorance and Laziness*.

And no matter how one attempts to justify going to war for political expediency, it is fundamentally evil, while the community for whom such hate mongering works, must be fundamentally diseased.⁶ And unless checked, their insatiable desire for ‘entertainment’ and ‘drama’ that has to be fed by the media and politicians alike, could be the genesis of even greater evil still.

As the title of Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega Y Gasset's 1930 book suggests, American society certainly has become the most poignant example of the classical *Revolt of the Masses*.

Sadly, ten years into a democratic South Africa, rumblings of the same scourge is making its appearance showing that it's not just America's scourge. Rather it has become the scourge of modern man as we are confronted with a complicated and often overwhelming technological world in which man is increasingly becoming a mere cog in the greater global machinery. And as the machine becomes

⁶ That is, considering that the article written in 2005, and that hopefully the election of Barack Obama has ushered in a new era which would result in a fresh American mindset.

more sophisticated, it comes at the cost of our sense of self which is rapidly diminishing into anonymity with man himself becoming a mere saleable commodity in an all-consuming consumer driven world where greed and avarice rules supreme.

That this is so is iterated by the South African President, Thabo Mbeki, when he remarked about his own political party: *“The ranks of our movement are being corrupted by a self-seeking spirit”*.

A current day problem in South Africa that undermines the efforts made to date in having established a model for democracy and reconciliation, is that potentially corrupt and unscrupulous behaviour by a few charismatic black leaders are often condoned by their uncritical followers. Using amongst others the excuse of racism by white judges having conspired against them, as they are now still the perceived victims of an institution inherited from the past. And while the basic needs of people are yet not met and with the resulting uncritical attitude prevailing, it will remain fertile breeding ground for the likes of a Mugabe or an Idi Amin to take hold, and thus perpetuating Africa’s brutal colonial legacy.

This is taking on epidemic proportions where the corrupt are lauded by the masses also wanting an easy way to riches; though they more than anyone else can ill afford its long-term consequences. The greatest fear then being that the next leader will be one of these ousted renegades, and the doom of Africa’s greatest hope then certainly will be sealed.

This is because *freedom earned without responsibility*,

inevitably, is not true freedom at all.

INTELLIGENCE AND EVIL

Background Discussion

The following discussion resulted from a response in April 2008 by a literary magazine editor (henceforth referred to as Lime) to a request to have my work published in his magazine.

In response to this request Lime wrote:

I have now read your essay. I didn't enjoy it for a number of reasons (I am neither Afrikaans nor American), but I wonder to myself how one could actually advance the solution, rather than the argument, you put. I understand your solution is for any 'perpetrator' to recognise the source of the 'evil' within himself (the non-gender person) and to find absolution by reducing ignorance and the exploitation of it.

You make the solution difficult though because your argument as to the nature of matters – evil and ignorance – is so equivocal in my mind. For instance I associate evil with intelligence. The cows grazing in the field are ignorant, but hardly evil. On the other hand, the studies and careful weighing of consequences and outcomes and scenarios, the detailed planning, the logistics, the troop movements, the battle groups positioned by the alliance of the US and UK prior to the invasion of Iraq, the weapons of mass destruction, the misleading information, the lies and propaganda, the hypocrisy of it all, speaks to me of intelligence and evil. So I got off to a bad start with your essay.

Then I feel your agenda – vis-a-vis the Afrikaner – takes too long to surface, as if you, sotto voce, don't want the offence to be taken too soon. That is my impression – I said to myself on page one – what is this guy's issue and why is he sidetracking me with this dubious

philosophy about evil and ignorance?

For this to work for me (and my magazine while I'm editor) a choice has to be made between rhetoric, and academic argument backed with reference and peer review. As rhetoric, which for me is where it is, it has to be slick, hard-hitting with irony or comedy. It cannot succeed as a work of literary merit without some gesture of understanding to the people you are hoping to influence. (I cannot imagine the Afrikaner to whom this applies, getting through the article. You will not intersect with his imagination or patience at any point. Yes, some "new" Afrikaners may read to the end, but, hell, they're already the good guys!) As an academic essay, which it is not, you would have to show the source and weight of your argument explicitly and logically.

Perhaps you will have more positive feedback from others?

I wish you well in your efforts to expose and highlight solutions to the problems of life.

I then responded with:

Thanks for taking the time to read it and I accept your criticism though you largely missed the argument.

As I indicated in the article, and which I took pains to express (referencing your complaint "Then I feel your agenda - vis-à-vis the Afrikaner - takes too long to surface, as if you, sotto voce, don't want the offence to be taken too soon") which indeed is correct as I was sensitive about the issue and had to be clear about my definition. Nevertheless the article was not about the Afrikaaner but the connection between ignorance. On the other hand intelligence per se has nothing to do with evil except that the intelligent are better at justifying their offences than their usually uncritical following (I suppose they are the cattle you referred to). Yet unless they are psychopaths (usually very intelligent), would prefer to remain ignorant of the real impact of their offences, justifying it is some way or other.

This justification and defence of one's actions being at the heart of the discussion of ignorance *as* a prominent aspect of evil. This is because evildoers tend to prefer remaining ignorant of their true motives, even actively so. Though what they often are successful at doing is roping along the greater communities they are a part of – Nazism, apartheid, Rwanda, the Doomsday Cult, David Koresh, etc.

How complicit though are the ignorant followers as the leader often draws his power from them? A Hitler for instance could only perpetuate his evil on as grand a scale had he not had the unquestioning support his considerable following?

Hence you are right, the more intelligent tend to be the main perpetrators, but to indicate the floor in your argument, they will actively attempt to veil their ignorance hence the reference to actively ignorant. Bush for instance justifies his actions from a patriotic and Christian perspective which a great many ordinary Americans also tend to buy into. Hence all the manipulation is justified unto himself. The “intelligent individuals” who do the logistics and planning also operate from such a floored perspective (this being the disease in the American psyche referred to) and hence truly believe that they (as the mighty Americans) are doing it for the greater good of humanity. Even their greed (for oil in this case) is justifiable unto themselves.

The justification of the motivations behind the act in particular separating a psychopath from an evildoer. A psychopath usually knowing he or she is inflicting harm, but has no or little capacity for remorse thus in a manner of speaking can be excused for his actions. An evildoer has the capacity for remorse but avoids looking deeply at himself by obscuring his true motives, hence the reference to ignorance.

Verwoerd(former SA president) for instance was most certainly not a psychopath. Indeed having been a great family man and considered a generally great guy in the eyes of his clan. Yet he was the architect of apartheid and responsible for its institutionalisation and brutal implementation. Though the actions he took (at least for him) was not unconscionable as he together with his community believed in their relative superiority over black South Africans, and even justified it in the yes of God. Though what made apartheid possible was the

collective ignorant (ignorant about their deeper motivations) mindset of the Afrikaaner.

After the fact who do we now point a finger to, the intelligent Verwoerd, or the greater Afrikaaner community that nurtured many a Verwoerd (and still are)?

As far as your comment “I cannot imagine the Afrikaner to whom this applies, getting through the article. You will not intersect with his imagination or patience at any point.”

As I mentioned in the article, I assumed it would elicit great offense. Nevertheless to my surprise I am yet to find any Afrikaaner who had a problem with the article—the responses I received was from both ordinary individuals as well as intellectuals. In fact all identified with my view that the Afrikaaner community were generally condoning underlying racism by their silence. The problem the article wishes to address, therefore, is the silent condoning by the generally not so racist which allow racist attitudes to perpetuate because of their inaction.

Thus, once again, you are superficial in your view, it's not his imagination or patience I wish to connect with, it is his conscience, and which I appear to have done successfully until now. What it seems to have fostered (admittedly amongst the few individuals I gave it to, and perhaps an unknown number who read it on the internet) is a long overdue debate as there had been much silence on this issue until now. As I indicated at the beginning, my intention was to provoke, and I think an article which opens up the proverbial ugly may of worms can have a positive long-term effect it leads to an open discussion of the underlying issues.

The other criticism I 'm not equipped to comment on as I most certainly do not have the capacity to make it more slick, hard-hitting (was it not?), ironic (was it not ironic either?) or comedic. As a philosopher (admittedly self-styled and not confined to an intellectual straightjacket), slick and comedic is just not what I do.

Once again thank you for your response. I found it quite interesting and posted it on my web.

The Head of the Beast

I now want to give a more detailed analysis of the issues of ignorance and evil.

The most crucial realisation is that intelligence and ignorance should not be regarded as mutually exclusive or literal opposite notions. It is because the intelligent as well as unintelligent can be equally ignorant.

This is as referred to in the initial article.

“I’ve written this essay primarily to indicate how actively defending one’s ignorance — even by the most ‘learned’ can create great confusion and that this confusion can be very dangerous to humanity.”

In any event the piece was about *Ignorance and Evil* and not *Intelligence and Evil*, while a case most certainly can be made for it. *Ignorance and Evil*, ultimately, was not about ignorance either, but rather, about the role a lack of critical thinking plays in the perpetuation of inhumanity—whether it is Apartheid, the war in Iraq, the exploitation of others for personal gain, genocide, or the perpetuation of apathy in uncountable ways.

Though to advocate the case for ignorance above intelligence in the perpetuation of evil, one must bear in mind that that, while Hitler was a reasonably intelligent man (though not generally known for his great intellect but rather his imposing personality and that he was not particularly learned either), what made him truly evil was not his relative intelligence. Indeed it could be argued that his intelligence gave him a capacity for a far higher level of

enlightenment than a less intelligent individual. The specific factor responsible for his destructive actions, however, was his dogmatism and fanaticism. Specifically his floored irrational belief in the relative superiority of the so-called 'Arian' race. And since dogmatism is a form of self-imposed wilful ignorance, ignorance therefore was truly at the heart of his dark legacy. However his intelligence merely served to entrench as well as enact his veiled motivations. This is the same for Bush (also not associated with great intelligence), Stalin, Mao, Milosovic, or any other individual who have wreaked significant havoc on humanity.

Though in this regard one can symbolically view the intelligently ignorant as the head, and the lame followers, the body, of the greater evil beast. Either way, one then would be a part of the greater evil organism, and that the tail in most cases does end up wagging the evil dog.

Defending ones Ignorance

As far as the essay itself is concerned I found that it tends to touch a painful nerve with many who had read it—even non Afrikaaners as Lime. Because of the sensitive nature of the content my suspicion is that those who strongly disliked it, may very well have found their own prejudices reflected back at them, hence their distaste and preference to bash it.

That it should leave this distaste in those so inclined, however, was the very intent to begin with.

Admittedly I cannot be fully objective on this comment, but that nevertheless is how it appears based on the responses that I received. I say this because my personal view is that I also think it's not a likeable article either as I too grappled, and still are grappling, with the content. And in particular, I also questioned whether it was informed by own prejudices. Thus the issue for me ultimately is not whether one likes or dislikes it since those the content generally applies to generally will find it repugnant.

Lime, despite him not being an Afrikaaner, or an American, being a particular case in point and is indicated by the very shallow and very personal and subtly pernicious defence provided for a simple request to have it published. His tone I also assume is unbecoming of a magazine editor rejecting such a submission. In my experience, a courteous "we are not taking any new authors at this time" or some variation of this, is what publishers have without fail given. And it clearly went way beyond being mere constructive criticism though it nevertheless was welcomed.

I wonder if this is how he responds to all submissions?

Another is that Lime appears to have been fixated on the idea of Intelligence and Evil, and because of this fixation missed the entire argument altogether.

"I said to myself on page one – what is this guy's issue and why is he sidetracking me with this *dubious* philosophy about evil and ignorance?"

This however highlights the general point of the thesis,

that he had a bias against the topic before even reading the content. And because he had latched on to the idea that it was “dubious” to begin with, Lime had unconsciously used his “intelligence” to maintain his state of ignorance throughout the greater discussion. This, instead of having the view: “I’m not convinced that there is a link between intelligence and evil, but let me see where he is going with this argument”. Thus his “intelligent” cup-overfloweth mentality prevented him from grasping the “lengthy” introduction that should have made it clear that the essay was about rationalising away ones deeper motivations, and so to justify any unwholesome mental position one may unconsciously have had.

What Lime failed to grasp is that the essay was not about the required intelligence needed to commit or cover up one’s evil deeds, but rather that the “intelligent” as well as the “unintelligent”, tend to find ways to justify their destructive actions in this way. But moreover, the essay questions the complicity of the blissfully ignorant who by their inaction or blind complicity, allow evil to flourish amongst them. This being the primary point that was made pertaining to the ongoing undercurrent of racism in South Africa.

Criminal Intent

The issue of criminality and ignorance is also an interesting one. Parole boards usually require the following: *the ability to acknowledge the wrongness of one’s actions; the ability to show sincere remorse; and a willingness*

to compensate the victim of one's destructive actions.

Thus until such time one fully accepts (as opposed to being in denial or being in a continued state of ignorance) of one's complicity in committing the act one was charged with, one would still be viewed to have an unrepentant criminal attitude. This acceptance with the accompanying repentance, however, is sorely lacking in the South African context. For this reason white South Africans having been the generally unquestioning beneficiaries of the apartheid regime (though there are many notable exceptions) cannot truly be absolved of their collective role in the criminality of apartheid.

Despite a promising first fifteen years, the failure by white farmers to rectify the economic inequalities left by English colonialism, in fact was what was truly at the heart of Zimbabwe's eventual demise. Though Robert Mugabe's ignoring of the issue to begin with having led to the eventual extent of the Zimbabwean catastrophe. His continued denial of his complicity in this failure has led to a potentially "good" leader becoming a truly evil dictator. This is not a defence of Mugabe who now truly has become overtly evil (see [*The Fear: Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe*](#)), but that, if circumstances had been different, may very well have taken another course. This is because much of what had resulted in Zimbabwe stemmed directly from Britain's failure to adhere to their part of the Lancaster House Agreement. In Mugabe's case it is apparent that, rather than admitting his significant failures, instead to protect his very brittle ego.

What is apparent is that South Africa to a large extent is mirroring Zimbabwe's example, with the needs of the poor and destitute masses being largely ignored, and that a wellspring of support is developing for rogue leaders. What however is imperative to grasp is that the power truly is in the hands of those with economic power to reverse this growing tide of discontent. And in particular, those who have ownership of the land which is still 90% white owned.

The negotiations which led to the Lancaster House Agreement brought independence to Rhodesia following Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. The Agreement (signed in December 1979) covered the Independence Constitution, pre-independence arrangements, and a ceasefire.

The three-month long conference almost failed to reach an accord due to disagreements on land reform. Mugabe was pressured to sign and land was the key stumbling block. Both the British and American governments offered to buy land from willing white settlers who could not accept reconciliation (the "Willing buyer, Willing seller" principle) and a fund was established, to operate from 1980 to 1990.

The British assisted in setting up the Zimbabwe conference on reconstruction and development in 1981. At that conference, more than £630 million of aid was pledged. The first phase of land reform in the 1980, which was partially funded by the United Kingdom, successfully resettled around 70,000 landless people on more than 20,000 km² of land.

[Source: [Wikipedia](#)]

Selective Vision

What is most important to note about the issue of criminality is that denialism – particularly the denial of complicity – is truly at the core of the criminal mind. In the case of [Pol Pot](#), the greatest butcher of humanity next to Hitler, blamed his significant failures on the Cambodian people's supposed unwillingness to work hard enough to make his ideal of the perfect communist state a reality. Yet hundreds of thousands literally worked themselves to

death. And instead of looking at his own inaction on the land issue, Mugabe now blames the British for his country's woes.

In South Africa's case, corruption and excesses by black politicians in the New South Africa now vindicates apartheid in the minds of many whites. That black people are like children, and that they indeed needed the white man to govern their best interest. Hence there seems to be a sense of rejoicing, and indeed badgering, at the slightest failure on the part of any high profile black individual, while similar failures by white individuals appear to be ignored or not considered to be newsworthy at all.

It's not that corruption and incompetence shouldn't be exposed and even vilified. Rather, what seems to be absent in many instances, is the lack of balance, or to use an equally appropriate phrase, there appears to be a lack of perspective. In fact the failures of the black elite appears to make great dinner conversations. It however must be added that, many a high profile case such as the corruption trial against former police commissioner [Jackie Selebi](#) which resulted from his very evident inappropriate relationship with drug boss Glen Aggliotti, is very hard to ignore.

Seeing the Light

Perhaps the best way to appreciate the relationship between ignorance and evil is to associate evil with darkness. The related words therefore would be denial, unconsciousness, unawareness, irresponsibility and of course, ignorance. Goodness on the other hand can be

associated with enlightenment, with the related words being awareness, consciousness, wisdom and responsibility. Intelligence however cannot be grouped amongst either of these, for as Lime correctly pointed out, one's intelligence can be used for evil, but also for good as well.

The use of cows to illustrate Lime's point is also limited as cows do not have intelligent free will to take intelligent action, and hence the example provided could not remotely apply to them. Cows certainly also do not possess even the slightest capacity for enlightenment, whereas even a rather unintelligent human most certainly do.

Again, this significantly floored assumption therefore also preventing him from understanding the greater meaning of the essay, and as mentioned before, is reflective of how we can inadvertently place mental barriers upon our own reasoning. It is that, *if one is not able to let go of preconceived ideas and ideologies, one cannot see the error in one's own limited thought processes.*

As far as I know based on the correspondence and personal interactions on this article, Lime was the only reader not to get the context of the piece as explained at the start of the essay. He also did not comment on inequality and what I perceived as destructive attitudes amongst black South Africans either.

Though what showed a particular mindset on his part was the following.

"I cannot imagine the Afrikaaner to whom this applies, getting through the article. You will not intersect with his

imagination or patience at any point. Yes, some 'new' Afrikaners (hence he assumes the rest are of some or other 'old' variety) may read to the end, but, hell, they're already the good guys (assuming all the rest are bad)."

Clearly he seems to have a view that Afrikaaners as a megalithic unit that are not capable of reflective thought, and that only a handful of likeminded (I suppose to English speakers) "New Afrikaaners" have this capacity. In my experience a great many (if not the far greater majority) certainly are reflective and introspective (even greatly remorseful) but that they are not challenged to do so, that is by both their communities as well as "outsiders" like Lime. Rather a false belief has been fostered by a great many white South Africans that South Africa is already a happy rainbow nation. Therefore to incorrectly conclude that it is now no longer necessary to look introspectively at apartheid's brutal legacy.

Importantly the article was indeed intended to look at the core of racism, particularly in Afrikaaners, but that I took pains to point out that the issues are universal and that I was not necessarily pointing a finger solely at one group. The definition of ignorance as the root cause of evil was also critical to make within this context before citing the particular examples—hence my "painfully long" introduction.

My ironic observation since writing this piece has revealed that Afrikaaners almost without fail have been open to this message – and indeed was reflective and even repentant – and that it was English speaking South Africans who had

taken the greatest offence and dislike to it. Interestingly this includes the so-called liberal or “Neo Afrikaaners” which Lime referred to.

I’m yet to clarify this very interesting anomaly, though I suspect it is easier to say “Don’t look at me, I’m not one of them, I was not responsible!” and therefore to absolve oneself of any need for introspection.

Newton Fortuin, 24 March 2008

POST ANALYSIS

About Racial Stereotyping

Ignorance and Evil was written in July 2005 while this Post Analysis was drafted after October 2007. This allowed some time for reflection and to perhaps somewhat temper or reassert some of my initial views.

To understand why it is important to indeed generalise behaviour characteristics of a group, in other words to stereotype, one must be cognisant that it is impossible to do an analysis of why the Second World War and the holocaust happened for instance, if one does not assess the collective psychology of German people at the time by considering the influences that had brought the atrocities about. This notwithstanding that many — if not by far the greater majority — of Germans were innocent bystanders not actively involved in the resulting incidents of abhorrent inhumanity.

Thus what had occurred most definitely should not be reflective of the psyche of any particular individual at the time. Rather to be cognisant that there usually is a particular historical context to the behaviour and events that had to such nationalistic events. For instance Afrikaaner attitudes that led to apartheid must be viewed against British Colonialism, while British colonialism must be viewed against the predominating survival-of-the-fittest mentality of the time. What is also important to consider is that the respective mentalities are not reflective of these

societies today.

Another motivation for generalising as I did is that it is incredibly difficult for any individual in a group to have an awareness of their respective group psyche or group programming as it had become normalised in the group. This becomes compounded if pathological coercive group dynamics are at play. As such by their ignorance of the predominating destructive group mentality or stereotype, they most likely will remain powerless to overcome what otherwise would be perceived as natural behaviour to most individuals within the group.

With regard to transcending stereotypes or entrenched group behaviour, it usually is only possible when an individual leaves the group for a prolonged period of time — by becoming an outsider so to say — to in this way become aware of the social conditioning they were until then unconsciously subjected to.

To use an analogy, being aware of one's social conditioning is like asking a fish what the water is like. However, this understanding it can only gain once it had spent a considerable time out of the water. That is bearing in mind it would have great difficulty surviving out of it, and hence its preference to remain in the water in the first place. If this is not a possibility, the next best course is to have it explained by an informed outsider that one in this way can begin to make the required mental adaptation. That is if one can indeed be open to such information.

One can say that these behaviour patterns are unconscious programs which individuals from particular populations

naturally internalise as part of the social fabric of the communities they identify with. These, then, become the behavioural norms for that individual unless they consciously strive to overcome or disassociate from the entrenched influences. This though only becomes possible once there is some level of cognisance of the until then unconscious behaviour. But moreover, that one recognises the behaviour as destructive to begin with.

Having argued for it before it however must be considered a mental limitation to habitually stereotype others (or oneself) based on their supposed race, ethnicity, religion or sex. Notwithstanding this, within the context of this analysis it most definitely was not possible to avoid labelling groups if an analysis about the root causes of on-going racist attitudes in South Africa is to be done.

In this discussion it must also be borne in mind that any evil, whether race based or any other, thrives on the prevailing mindset of the greater unconscious community or group dynamic it feeds on. As such the psyche of what often are its unsuspecting participants can only be assessed if the greater organism it utilises to achieve its perverse ends is considered as a collective.

It is furthermore apparent that these unconscious group behaviour patterns are not necessarily confined to large population groups alone. Stereotypical behaviour patterns are also apparent on a much smaller scale, such as that of a particular corporate culture, the culture of the military, any other organisation, and even families. These usually having been derived from the particular value systems of the group

as a whole, but also largely from the value systems and personality characteristics of its founding members which within time have become entrenched as the aspired-to norm within the greater community fabric.

In South Africa's case a few examples would include The ANC Youth League (particularly informed by the mindset of its leader Julius Malema, refer to [Cronin a Racist – Melema](#)), the Black Management Forum (as exhibited by their race-based defence of [Jacob Maroga](#)), the Dutch Reform Church (refer [Jansen Blames racism on NGK](#)), amongst others.

Overt Racism

Notwithstanding the above explanation I was nevertheless extremely ambivalent about this article and spent a considerable time deliberating whether I should take it further (almost 3 years). The reason for this ambivalence was, while I certainly experienced full blown Afrikaaner racism during apartheid, I also have discerned and felt that conscious changes in attitudes were taking place. This was particularly so over the past number of years and thought it was best to rather let the proverbial sleeping racist dog lie, so to hopefully allow it to die a slow and quiet natural death.

The main reason for now being vociferous about it is as a result of the recent blatantly racist events at The University of the Orange Free State which confirmed my suspicions that the underlying issues had not truly been addressed (this issue was again addressed in September 2009 by the first

black rector at UOFS, Johnathan Jansen, and surprisingly revealed [black racist attitudes as well](#)). But more alarmingly the common excuse by Afrikaaners regarding the Reitz hostel incident at the UOFS, that this event was taken out of context or is merely an isolated incident, instead of outrightly condemning it, but moreover, by being reflective about why it is still occurring.

This silent condonation I now realise had been what I was primarily attempting to convey with the initial article. It quite frankly is that a great many Afrikaaners are in denial of the role they had collectively played in the circumstances that had brought South Africa to its current-day reality. Another is that Afrikaaner society is largely paternalistic and conformist (this definition though applies to the greater South African society as a whole), and free expression is not truly tolerated, with their intellectual leaders being blackmailed — particularly by the church — if they do not toe the line. In fact Afrikaaner society is largely dominated by a ubiquitous culture of fear where it is forbidden to question the prevailing status quo. That is at least as far as the deeper issues affecting the Afrikaaner community are concerned, while condemnation of other groups tends to be far more vociferously expressed. There also exists a reluctance to confront racist attitudes amongst fellow Afrikaaners which appear to be privately condoned, or in the very least are not openly confronted.

In this regard it is my perception that a great many Afrikaaners view themselves as Afrikaaners before all else, and not as humans equal to all others first. This personal

definition itself being the principal problem as this strong group identification/affiliation limits the perception of others as equal human beings to oneself unless one also is an Afrikaaner. It also limits them being able to accurately perceive the potential in other human being, and that they for the most part are no different to themselves.

Developing such a strong superior-to-other group identity, however, having been the concerted goal of the apartheid propaganda machinery for over sixty years (since [DF Malan](#) in 1948), and it is more than obvious that it should still have a subconscious impact on the mindset of those having been subjected to it (of all ethnicities), and that this influence will still be at play well into the foreseeable future.

Subliminal Racism

Having focused on Afrikaaner racism, I must add that I find other white South Africans often subtly more racist, though appear to be completely oblivious of it, and usually are quick to declare they are not so. The usual defence given is to argue that they were not directly responsible for apartheid, that it was the Afrikaaners, and that they were merely the inadvertent benefactors of a system they were not responsible for. Consequently they tend not to be reflective of how they indeed may still be acting in a racially motivated or even racist manner.

This I refer to as subliminal racism as these individuals may not necessarily directly articulate their racist attitudes, though their racism or racial biases are very evident in their

actions, or often, their inaction. Yet they may vociferously declare they are not so, and indeed, finding any such reference to themselves as an incredible insult.

One representation of this racial — though not necessarily racist — attitude is apparent in the form of tokenism where gestures at racial transformation are not sincere but rather appear to be motivated for economic or political expediency. This type of tokenism is most apparent in the advertising industry which ironically is dominated by supposedly more liberal English speakers.

Another instance is the apparent attitude of a significant number of English speakers towards the first black South African National Rugby team coach, Peter de Villiers. While this may not necessarily be reflective of the general sentiment, my impression from a great many commentators on this issue on an English talk radio show Cape Talk, is that a great many were incredibly reluctant to give any credit to the coach. Rather to give credit to the assistant coaches, the captain, or the experience of the players, but appeared very eager to bash De Villiers when the team took a beating. Peculiarly he appeared to receive a far greater acceptance in the Afrikaaner community, perhaps because of the shared language which has become another factor of division (but also unification in the case of the so-called coloured community and Afrikaaners) in post-apartheid South Africa.

Interestingly, a more entrenched racist attitude may very well exist amongst many English speakers. To give a particular example, at a talk I gave at the Plumstead chapter

of *The Seven O'clock Club* (a weekly discussion group into esoteric subjects in a English speaking suburb of Cape Town) I attempted to argue against the New Age notion that we fully create reality with our thoughts. To this end I cited a particularly horrific rape incident which happened that week in which a girl's throat was slit, then burnt alive, after which she was left for dead, yet survived.

However I noticed the mostly English audience could not identify on a human level with this incident. This I concluded as I discerned a generally bland expression on the faces of the audience which appeared to communicate: "so what about it, they rape and kill each other all the time", indeed as if the girl deserved her fate because of her or her parents mentality.

However when I cited another incident that occurred in the same week in which a one year old white English boy whose father accidentally left him in his vehicle in the hot blazing sun, died, the audience were ashen and could immediately grasp my point. This indicated to me that, despite pretensions, these individuals still operated from an underlying predominantly racial/ethnic paradigm as they obviously were unable to even slightly relate on a human level to the horrific plight of the girl. Though these individuals may not act in an overtly racist manner, this particular incident certainly suggests that subliminal attitudes about race do inform their interactions towards people of another so-called race. It also appears that this grouping may have such an indifferent attitude towards Afrikaners as well.

Quite frankly, not being able to relate to the humanity of another human being, and in particular when such suffering is apparent, merely because they are supposedly of another 'category' of humanity, whether consciously or unconsciously, is nothing but racism. It is because this underlying paradigm does inform one's daily interaction with those one deems not to be the same as or inferior to oneself. Thus it suggests that a racial double standard is at play which does have an impact on how this group subliminally engages their interactions outside their community.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of such racial biases, a discernable group stereotype is not evidenced amongst English speakers. In other words, racial attitudes are not as institutionalised and entrenched – i.e. in churches, schools, sports, cultural and other organisations – and that a broad variation in the degree of attitudes is discernable which is ultimately closer to the ideal.

To assert the above, the following was taken from an article [*The beautiful mind of Johnathan Jansen*](#), asserting the above:

Fast-forward to 2011 and the university (of the Orange Freestate) has a new problem now. The big problem Jansen says is interracial love affairs. “With young people, when you remove the barriers to human interaction they tend to fall in love.” Now Jansen has to counsel fearful sons and daughters who are scared of going home because their white fathers might kill them if they find out their children are in an inter-racial love affair.

So why did this miracle of integration happen at UOFS and not the more liberal campuses of Cape Town or Wits? “Universities like Cape Town and Wits cannot change fundamentally. When black people moved into the residences at Wits, the white kids fled to Parktown and Rosebank. When UCT started to integrate its residences, the white kids fled to Observatory, Mowbray and Rondebosh. I saw that with my own eyes. And these are the so called liberal universities, but don't believe that crap. The assumption of innocence is what you still have to work through.”

In the historically Afrikaans universities like UOFS the students stay in the residences and they fight, and then they meet their fears head on and when they do,

the miracle happens. That is where change happens and people can begin to reconcile the past and perhaps even fall in love.

Also refer to [*In a Divided City, Many Blacks See Echoes of White Superiority*](#). Cape Town is commonly regarded as the country's most liberal city, and in the 19th century was regarded as one of the least racist cities in the world as divisions were primarily along social class.

Reverse Racism

Black South Africans also are less inclined to look closely at how they too may be engaging their own peculiar racial stereotyping. This largely being as a result of their racial victimisation under apartheid and thus is evidenced as a form of victim mentality. This is usually referred to as reverse racism, or playing the race card in order to gain some moral, political or economic advantage, but usually has little to do with the merit of the argument held or action being touted.

One manifestation of such a racially motivated attitude is manifested through what is commonly referred to as [entitlement](#) behaviour. That black South Africans were previously disadvantaged under apartheid having become the de facto excuse for poor governance, greed and tardiness, and a general lack of taking responsibility and accountability, are consequences of the associated mentality. Though from a purely sociological perspective it nevertheless is completely understandable that such attitudes would prevail given South Africa's long and brutal colonial history with its associated inequality and deprivation. That some or other form of expectation for payback and/or desire for retribution for past sufferings

would be evident, however, is a natural human response given past circumstances.

Notwithstanding that it is to be expected amongst the victims of a prolonged period of systemic deprivation and subjugation, the associated unconscious attitudes have been directly responsible for most of Africa's post-colonial woes and now are truly threatening the long-term sustainability of South Africa as well. This is also the predominant mindset responsible for the phenomenal rise of Jacob Zuma despite his questionable reputation. What is truly concerning is that a concerted and very dangerous belief is being nurtured that Zuma will somehow magically rescue the impoverished masses from their despair, that is without any effort from anyone's part. Zuma's own meteoric rise from poverty despite the fact that he is not educated for the job, representing a hope that the impoverished masses too can rise from their own destitution and despair. But instead they are merely being used as pawns in a greater power-play that has very little to do with improving their lives, but entrenching vested interests.

Julius Malema, the most notable benefactor of the Zuma campaign, and who in my view is the most divisive individual in the country by polarising white and black South Africans even further with his inflammable rhetoric, however, is a perfect example of what in my opinion is an overt black racist. This is underscored in an article of 21 November 2009 in the Cape Argus, [*Cronin a Racist – Malema: Youth Leader waves race card again*](#). I consider him a racist as the arguments he generally engages is seldom

based on any objective scrutiny, but rather that he intellectually engages most arguments from a racial perspective and thus his own prejudices.

His pontificating usually being in defence of black incompetence while bashing white hegemony, the latter not being altogether unfounded though often misinformed. For instance his defence of Jacob Maroga, former ESKOM CEO, and the accusation of [Bobby Godsell](#) as a racist, in a matter that clearly was not about race, but the effective governance of a vital parastatal.

Referring to the article, any reasonable person would not in the slightest claim that [Jeremy Cronin](#) a racist. And that he chose to indeed make such a preposterous allegation, clearly suggests that Malema makes his intellectual judgements from what clearly is an overt reactionary racist paradigm. This proclivity therefore clearly does severely limit his intellectual judgement of any circumstance involving any person of any so-called race, and this most certainly includes his own. He perhaps more than any other highlights an ignorant mind at work, and how reason is abandoned in favour of factually floored racially inspired rhetoric.

But moreover, as a youth leader, it is apparent that the utterances are meant to inflame and incite a significantly suggestible group of individuals. A parallel can indeed be made to the Hitler Youth, and let's hope it is not a prelude to a future historical reference to the Malema Youth, for certainly, Malema and his unchecked irresponsible

utterances, is setting a dangerous tone for future racist attitudes if allowed to continue unchecked.

Though as indicated in the article at the end, Jansen observed that Malema is not the idiot as the media caricatures him. This is my view too, and that Malema appears to have a very clear political agenda, and indeed appears to wield extraordinary political power despite not holding a political office. My view is that he concertedly exploits populist opinion by mobilising the groundswell of discontent against the unchanging socio-economic status quo. And in particular, he does this by putting a racist face to the impoverishment experienced—and which to a large extent it certainly is.

Specifically, nationalization—implying “taking the wealth from the “whites” and putting it into the hands of 'blacks'”—being a very appealing slogan call which sweeps up emotions amongst his expectant following.

But again, Malema certainly has a basis for his call—albeit impractical and unworkable—since it certainly is immoral that the super profits made by the mining houses not significantly filter down to those who out of pure desperation, are forced to eek out a subhuman living by literally having to grovel for a daily pittance, just to survive.

As much as nationalisation may sound as the ideal solution that would rectify current imbalances, China provides a poignant example that state ownership is not the solution either. While Chinese mines are the most

dangerous in the world, Chinese miners most certainly do not appear to be reaping the reward for their sweat and toil either. It must also be considered that South African parastatals are notoriously inefficient, and thus given the track record, that any state owned mining company may more than likely become a burden to the taxpayer, than a significantly profitable asset.

Malema's simplistic utterances on race, politics and economics, certainly epitomizes the following quote by staunch critic of American life and culture, Henry Louis Melcken (1880 – 1956), “to every complex question, there is a simple solution, and it is wrong.”

Nevertheless planting the idea in the mind of anyone toiling to make their capitalist masters rich, that they one day could become the master themselves, certainly doesn't take much convincing. The groundswell of unrealistic expectation this creates, however, is the true danger behind such opportunistic racially couched sloganeering, and I believe, is by far the gravest danger to this wounded and vulnerable nation. ⁷

Other Racial Attitudes

When considering attitudes towards Peter De Villiers

⁷ The above References to Jacob Zuma should be viewed within the context of the time (before the election), and that a potentially corrupt official was being touted to become the president of a democratic country.

Also refer to [*Entitlement under fire: Zuma urges youth to 'effect change'*](#) and [*Old Treacheries, New Deceits: "Embarrassing Malema makes South Africa look ridiculous"*](#).

discussed in *Subliminal Racism*, admittedly, he appears to be his own worst enemy, appearing to portray an at times mindless knee-jerk defensiveness particularly prevalent amongst those of the so-called coloured community. The dynamics of this attitude is complex, but partially has its origins in brutal slavery, one consequence being severe levels of corporal punishment that otherwise can only be considered abuse, the “[dop system](#)” – the practice of paying farm workers with alcohol – which has resulted in the Western Cape being a region with the highest level of [Foetal Alcohol Syndrome](#) in the world, but also, as a community that always perceives itself as the outsider having to seek acceptance from perceived more powerful groups. The result is that many appear to have an inferiority complex—a “ja baas (yes boss!)” demeanour—while in others the reverse or reflex attitude is manifested as a “who are you to tell me what to do” (or *hardegadheid* in Cape Flats vernacular) attitude. The latter is what De Villiers appears to project, this though is still a manifestation of an entrenched inferiority complex. Those who show this attitude would often perceive normal interactions in a racial light, while this more-often-than-not may not be the case at all.

It however is not [Reverse Racism](#) as it is a subliminal self-defence mechanism to protect against any perceived racial victimisation. Since it is unconscious, it varies greatly from individual to individual. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that because of the inherent diversity (South, West and East African, Afrikaaner, British, Dutch, French, German, Portuguese, Italian, Arab, Malay, Indian and

Chinese being prominent nationalities that constitute the group), this grouping more than any other in the country cannot be viewed as a monolithic whole. That is despite that a great many do behave in ways that do entrench the stereotype that accompanies the deep-rooted inferiority complex.

What's important is to consider the historical and social context in order to begin to understand the peculiar behaviour of *certain* individuals, and not to label all members of what should truly be viewed as the most cosmopolitan community in the world as if they were cut from the same monolithic cloth.

The term Cape Coloured refers to the modern-day descendants of slave labourers imported into South Africa by Dutch settlers as well as to other groups of mixed ancestry originating in the present-day Western Cape. They are the predominant population group found in the Western Cape Province.

Slaves of Malay ancestry were brought from Indonesia, Malaysia, Madagascar, and Mozambique; and from these diverse origins they gradually developed into a grouping; along with coloured people (African and European origin); that was subsequently classified as a single major ethnical grouping under the Apartheid regime. In many cases the slaves were imported to be concubines and wives to single male Dutch settlers. People from India and the islands within the Indian Ocean region were also taken to the Cape and sold into slavery by the Dutch settlers. The Indian slaves were almost invariably given Christian names but their places of origin were indicated in the records of sales and other documents so that it is possible to get an idea of the ratio of slaves from different regions. These slaves were, however, dispersed and lost their cultural Indian identity in the course of time, hence being labelled Cape Coloureds. Much racial mixture has thus occurred over the generations, between the Europeans, Indians, Malays, various Bantu tribes, along with indigenous Khoi and San.

The Cape Coloured group is far from being homogeneous: the divisions within it were accentuated by the Apartheid classifications which defined type hierarchies with this grouping. As a consequence, there is much racial intolerance between self-defined groups of Cape Coloureds. Many Cape Coloureds are from totally different heritages, some having mostly European and others mostly black South African heritage. Many also have mostly Indian or mostly Indonesian/Malay heritage. Religious differences also exist, many being Christian and others Muslim. Therefore many Cape Coloureds feel very insulted being classified into the single Coloured racial category.

[Source: [Wikipedia](#)]

It is hard to reconcile Cape Town's deep racial divides today with its history as one of the biggest melting pots in the world. Beginning in the 17th century, the Dutch East India Company brought slaves and prisoners from Mozambique and Madagascar, as well as from India and Indonesia. These groups intermarried. White blood inevitably entered the gene pool, too.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, racial barriers existed but were not terribly rigid, historians say.

"Pigmentation wasn't an absolute barrier to changing your station," said Vivian Bickford-Smith, a historian at the University of Cape Town. "There was a saying: 'Money whitens.' "

One of the Cape's earliest governors, Simon van der Stel, was of mixed race. But by the end of the 19th century, pseudoscientific attitudes about race had come into vogue, along with the popular notion of a hierarchy among races, with black Africans at the bottom.

When the National Party came to power in 1948 and declared its new policy of apartheid, the separation between the races was etched in stone. People who lived in mixed communities like District 6 near the centre of the city were forced from their homes and moved to desolate, segregated towns and townships on the Cape Flats, far from the city.

[Source: [New York Times](#)]

Non Racialism

As I indicated before, my personal view is that the stereotyping of any particular group in one's ordinary interactions most definitely should be discouraged, and that a non-racial perspective is the ideal. Non-racialism being the view that there is only one race, the human race, and that there are no fundamental difference between any group of humanity.

While I accept this totally, I now wish to submit an alternate mental perspective. It is to suggest that we make it our own responsibility to refrain from viewing interactions through a racist lens. Importantly, that is regardless of whether the utterances or actions of others may be informed from a racist perspective or intent. Malema's example attests to this, where his intellectual defence of his

actions or utterances invariably comes from an underlying racial paradigm, and how it can be detrimental to one's own intellectual and psychological development. But moreover, in his case, how it can prove detrimental to South African society as a whole.

A recent article (at the time of writing this section) in the Cape Argus (March 15, 2008) titled *Integration Still a Dream, say Maties Students* illustrates the central problem with strongly mentally identifying oneself with a particular race or ethnicity. The article concerns how non-Afrikaaners (including black students as well as English-speakers in general) feel themselves excluded from activities at the University of Stellenbosch campus (a university that in the past catered mostly for Afrikaaner students and still has a majority Afrikaaner student population). However when I asked my daughter (a third year English speaking science student at SUN) about this, she indicated that this was ridiculous as she did not perceive any form of exclusion based on her race or language at the university at all. That is considering that she is classified as coloured and English speaking.

Perhaps the main reason for her not having a similar perception is that my children were brought up not to identify themselves with any particular race, ethnicity or religion, and that the only identification they should consider for themselves, is that they are human. In this regard we discouraged identifying any racist motivation on the negative actions of a teacher or other individual or group, even though it may indeed have been racially

motivated. Rather address the behaviour and how it impacted them, and then how to accordingly respond to the abusive action. Thus while there indeed may have been racist motives behind a particular incident, they did not discern it as such.

Consequently they did not view their world through a racist lens, and thus in their life are not finding themselves impacted by the issue of race at all. Thus they were brought up racially oblivious simply because the mental limitation was not encoded within their psyche as is still the greater norm in South Africa and much of the world.

Such a personal attitude furthermore has the potential of shattering any preconceived notions and mental limitations for such an individual, hence being a potential antidote to real or perceived racist attitudes. But moreover, having such a perspective empowers one not to remain the poor victim of South Africa's brutal racist legacy, rather to willingly give away one's power, perpetuating apartheid within the confines of one's own mind.

Slaying the Evil Beast

At this point it is important to take a long mental pause to reassert a previous point. Yes, I am indeed generalising, and therefore it may very well be that this analysis does not apply to any particular person of any group mentioned in this discussion. For instance in my city, Afrikaaner children within the urban perimeters tend not to exhibit what can be considered stereotypical Afrikaaner behaviour. Rather, attitudes are more greatly

influenced by socio-economics than any other single factor, though the Afrikaaner identity is yet a reasonably strong social factor, and thus that Afrikaaner children very often have differing interests such as music and dancing to other white individuals, let alone other South Africans in general.

To start identifying one's underlying programming, one must become aware that, *if you can strongly identify yourself with the Afrikaaner label and do take the views expressed in this article very personally, that this proclivity in itself suggests that you are strongly protective of this identity, and as such you most likely have the ethnic/racial mental block alluded to.*

Notwithstanding what social or ethnic group you may identify yourself with (if any) *if you do honestly confront those with racist attitudes in your midst on a day-to-day basis and make every effort to confront your own racial programming, then clearly this article is not a reflection on you.*

That is if you confront racism *by both black and white, irrespective of whether you are black or white.*

Then again *the paradox of subconscious racial stereotyping is that unless one unconditionally accepts that it may apply to oneself, one cannot even begin to perceive that one may be operating from a racially motivated perspective in the first place.*

That is *notwithstanding that one may believe one does not operate from such a paradigm.*

Thus the paradox is, *that the insistence that it is not so invariably is the root cause of the problem to begin with.*

An example of this is given in [Jansen blames racism on NGK](#), where Professor Johnathan Jansen (the first black vice Chancellor at the UOFS) indicated how he confronts his own racist attitudes:

“Jansen, the first black vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State, acknowledged yesterday that he could not say he was not a racist.

“I try every single day of my life to be generous, to be honest, to be equitable, to live my life for all my fellow brothers and sisters, black and white, but I can’t guarantee you that I don’t sometimes think thoughts that I’m ashamed of. I can’t guarantee you that I don’t sometimes have hatred towards white people for what happened in my family history.”

The Pathology of the Group

While the above somewhat convoluted mental conundrum probably is the most important point to grasp, it must also be appreciated that any population is the sum-total of all the individuals that make up that group, and that in this regard each person is unique and their behaviour may very well not be reflective of the group stereotype at all.

A poignant example of this is that it is apparent that some (though by far not enough) Afrikaaners and Afrikaaner institutions are increasingly becoming the most vocal crusaders against racism in their organisations and communities.

Two particular examples being the transformation that has taken place within the Blue Bulls and Cheetahs Rugby teams. These provincial rugby unions having been of the most racist unions in the past, with some of the previously less conservative unions such as the Western Province Union having been far slower at racial transformation. And interestingly, cricket, a historically more English orientated sport, were far slower to transform.

Another aspect to consider when reviewing this work is that the greater pathology of a particular group becomes apparent by recurring incidences that suggests behaviour other than the socially acceptable norm. In the case of black communities, the prevalence of all manner of criminality and particularly high rates of rape and homicide, being reflective of a greater social pathology associated with apartheid, but of the prevalence of poor socio-economic conditions in general. This though can be considered as normal behaviour taking into account the legacy of apartheid and the conditions that are still existing for a great percentage of the previously (and still) disadvantaged South African population.

In the case of the Afrikaaner community the group pathology is apparent by extremely high suicide rates. Statistics show that the average Afrikaaner male is more than ten times as likely to commit suicide compared to the average American male (a white South African has a higher chance of committing suicide than being murdered, that is considering South Africa has one of the highest murder rates in the world), and five times higher than the average

Afrikaaner female. A further anomaly is that such an Afrikaaner male would be far more likely than any other demographic worldwide to also kill his wife and children with him. This is a horrific statistic that was prevalent during apartheid as well that ought to have raised alarm bells that something horrible is amiss, but was – and is still – completely ignored.

On the other hand it is far more likely that an average American boy will go on a shooting rampage killing his classmates than any other person on the planet. This being reflective of the enormous amount of peer pressure, and the pressure to be part of the good-looking popular crowd, prevalent in American schools. Attitudes mentioned about American involvement in the Vietnam and Iraq wars and the attitudes that are stirred up that also suggest that there is a particular group psychology that was responsible for it as well. Another is the average America's obsession to bear arms. In America there is also much denial about the deeper systemic causes of these as well.

When looking at the issue of Afrikaaner suicide, the ability to feel compassion for others less fortunate than oneself becomes of paramount importance in curbing it. This is because high suicide levels usually are reflective of depression, it on the other hand is indicative of feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness—that is irrespective of whether one's circumstances indeed are hopeless or not.

What is important to bear in mind when considering the horrific suicide rate amongst Afrikaaner men and boys, is that the ability to feel compassion for those less fortunate

has the potential to counter this. This is because it is a state of mind that is conscious of the suffering that may be around one, and that one appreciates one's relative level of privilege, and hence that one's circumstances may in reality not be as dire as it may otherwise seem.

In other words it is reflective of one's ability to have a healthy perspective and thus to put one's relative state of despair in a more healthy and realistic light. This ought to be a simple matter in a society as South Africa considering the omnipresence of suffering. In other words it allows one to be in a state of gratitude for one's relative position of fortune which should be a natural antidote to the debilitating effects of depression.

Hence the very real reason for the very high prevalence of suicides amongst particularly Afrikaaner South Africans is that they indeed have difficulty mentally and emotionally extending themselves beyond their own limited relatively privileged communities, and to rather extend themselves towards the greater human community they are a part of.⁸

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⁸ The Psychopathology of those who commit family suicides are usually associated with men who feel themselves emasculated, either by their wives or society in the whole. On the other hand the motivations for school ground killings are primarily associated with a need to be noticed. The latter is the result of intense peer pressure in American schools for individuals to be part of the so-called "in crowd", failing which many youngsters who do not fit into the American ideal find themselves victimized by their peers. While this is also an occurrence elsewhere the pressure to conform to particularly a Hollywood-styled ideal can be regarded as pathological in American society.

⁹ In a survey published by the South African National Injury Mortality and Surveillance System it was found that the suicide rate in South Africa far exceeds the world average. In this regard it is noted that the suicide rates amongst males exceeds that of females by 5 to 1 (this variation appears to be a common statistical tendency); and that the suicide rate

Guilt and Absolution

Guilt is another aspect that requires some attention when discussing the issues around racism.

The most important realisation one must have is this: *that feelings of guilt and remorse over how one's destructive actions may have negatively impacted others is one of the most important indicators of a normally socialised person.*

Only extreme narcissists, sociopaths and psychopaths being incapable of the associated emotions or unwilling to

amongst the white population greatly exceeds that of black males; and that Afrikaaner males has the highest mortality of white men.

With regard to the above, the average white male is far more likely to die of suicide than homicide, though South Africa has of the highest murder rates in the world. With regard to the black population the suicide rate has increased by 48% in the ten years since democracy, this though had resulted primarily because of increased incidences of HIV/AIDS.

When considering that south Africa has one of the highest suicide mortalities in the world (30 per 100 000, about twice the World Health organisation Average), that 38% of this statistic is attributable to the 9% white population, and that the average suicide rate amongst non-Afrikaaner whites most likely is similar to the average European, one therefore can reasonably conclude that Afrikaaner males are the greatest contributor to this statistic.

From the above figures one can calculate the average white suicide rate to be 130 per 100 000. That is $30 \div 9 \times 39 = 130$. Thus in real terms the black population's suicide rate is around 16 which is more or less equivalent to the world average. The US suicide rate is around 10.8.

The issues in this regard are complex and have largely to do with changing social dynamics, particularly changing power dynamics since the end of apartheid, the particular high incidence of family killings among Afrikaaners had been a notable occurrence for some time.

Interestingly in this regard is that Australian men, also brought up in similar stoical "big boys don't cry" way as the average South African male, also has one of the highest suicide mortality in the world. This occurrence notwithstanding the relatively advantageous social circumstances of the country. This being similar to the relative social advantage of whites compared to indigenous South Africans.

For more detail on these statistics refer to [Suicide rate among blacks hits new highs: Studies show that more South Africans are taking their own lives than ever before](#) Sunday Times (Johannesburg) - June 12, 2005 by Brett Horner and Ilse Fredericks

engage the requisite inner dialogue.

Thus one of the normal responses in becoming aware of one's own and one's community's role in perpetuating the apartheid legacy, should in fact be that one feels guilt about it. However those socialised with a racist mentality would naturally have difficulty doing so as the tendency is to justify their interactions with other "races" from a subliminally racist paradigm. And since it fundamentally denies the full humanity of anyone that is not from one's own group, it becomes easy to justify unto oneself.

By doing so way they can justify away any potential feelings of guilt. Hence, as was the previous mentioned reference to Verword, become in a manner of speaking sociopathic in their behaviour towards anyone from another group. That is despite completely normal socialisation in their respective demographic. Hence they are unconsciously sociopathic because of their inculcated racist belief system limiting their humane interaction to the members of their identified ethnic/racial group.

To give an example of how this plays out in everyday life, the following was an interaction I recently heard on a talk station. A gentleman called in to complain about a "cold war" style wall built by the military in a seaside resort of The Strand near Cape Town, and questioned why it still existed in the new South Africa. His view was that it was reminiscent of Nazi and apartheid style practices.

An irate Afrikaaner woman then called in cursing about why people were continually referencing apartheid, and that they should get over it by now and move on with their

lives. What this lady had missed is that the comment was totally appropriate as the wall to him indeed was reminiscent of this period. It should be totally reasonable that, when the context is appropriate, apartheid indeed should be legitimately referenced—as Nazi Germany also should—as a negative beacon of inhumanity.

This is because apartheid had undeniably been responsible for gross acts of inhumanity, though it should not be used as a personal justification or excuse for one's own lack of character or socially unacceptable behaviour. Within this context the appropriate response for the lady should have been to—without guilt—acknowledge the evils of apartheid as an absolute fact, but more importantly to see the comment within the greater context in which it was intended. That is without exhorting to a habitual knee-jerk defence.

In saying this, having feelings of guilt towards the victims of apartheid's aftermath ought to also be a normal response. The guilt emotion in itself, however, is to a large extent at the root of the problem of dealing with the issue of racism to begin with. What is important to consider, firstly, is that to act out of guilt is not the answer either as the tendency would be to irrationally overcompensate. One consequence being the encouragement of entitlement behaviour and acceptance of mediocrity as mentioned before.

Secondly, and is the juxtaposed position, the refusal to accept responsibility for the role one's community had played in apartheid is synonymous to the avoidance of taking any accountability for one's actions.

Denial, as appears to be the case with the lady in question, therefore becomes the less painful option. This incidentally is similar to the [five stages of grief](#) where denial is the first stage and acceptance being the last. Why this is appropriate is that a loss of power (in this case political) is in itself very painful to accept. This attitude of denial and defensiveness, incidentally, is mirrored amongst Serbians, and their collective role in the Bosnian genocide as well.

This attitude of denial, therefore, to a large extent also explains the woman's persistent defensiveness—that is, given it is more than 16 years since the end of apartheid. However what she fails to comprehend by virtue of her unrepentant attitude, is that it is far more important for the perpetrators to acknowledge their collective role (existential guilt) in the perpetuation of evil, for them then to psychologically move on, and indeed heal themselves. Then, crucially, to move on from this acknowledgement.

The crux to this, however, is not to demand that the victim simultaneously put the past behind them and also to move on. Simply, the dynamics are completely different, that the victim prefers to remain in their victimhood is their own limitation which the perpetrator should have sympathy for if they truly are remorseful. That is bearing in mind that many communities have to live with the daily reminders of the scars of apartheid's brutal repression as well as the continual reminders that South Africa's social stratification is still by-and-large along racial lines.

For this reason the guilt emotion—both the acting out of it as well as in denying it—both tends to be problematic.

Nevertheless the latter tends to be the overtly racist and far more dangerous pathology, while the former indicates some level of psychological progress. This is because, implicit in the defence of apartheid, one must then also have the view that it was an appropriate and just system. It therefore stands to reason that one must also hold the view that the social inequality and the laws which diminished the humanity of others, were indeed fair and just. And by virtue of this then also hold the view that others who are not like oneself must be lesser humans as well.

This, therefore, being the very characterization of a racist.

Breaking the Shackles

What, however, is required to move on, is not to carry one's guilt emotion indefinitely (either by denial or in acting submissively out of it) and thus to be subconsciously motivated by it. Rather, to develop a sense of compassion towards the *legitimate* difficulties others may be facing. This requires a sense of understanding of the reasons why people do have their respective limitations or mental proclivities.

It requires one intellectually overrides one's emotion of guilt by firstly accepting one's position of relative privilege in society. It also requires accepting responsibility for the conscious or unconscious role one had inadvertently or directly played in having perpetuated apartheid. In practical terms, when someone wishes to play the apartheid card to in this way, perhaps, prey on one's feelings of guilt, to have the response.

“While I accept the devastating role apartheid had played, and indeed that you had been significantly disadvantaged, even damaged, it not my responsibility to get you out of your particular circumstance, but I certainly will lend you a hand if you are prepared to do the hard work...”

Perhaps, if that person had gone a significant way in helping themselves, or at least has the right attitude, one’s own assistance may be of some value in the long run. The important thing here is to at least have some sense or understanding of the legitimate limitations and difficulties a person may be experiencing because of their circumstances, and then to make reasonable accommodations. But on the other hand, that the apartheid card may have been played to begin with, usually is the surest sign that one’s sympathies are being exploited, and that one’s precious seed of generosity more than likely would fall on barren ground.

On the other hand it is important to engage any discussion which may happen to dwell on the territory of race in a positive way, and particularly, to acknowledge the impact apartheid had had on its victims.

Here it’s imperative to understand the interaction from the victim’s point of view, though if the intention is to purposefully elicit guilt, to respectfully decline to engage it any further. Again, it is important to acknowledge the impact of past injustices, but to question the wisdom of dwelling on things that cannot be changed, while perhaps suggesting a more forward looking way to deal with its fallout.

Another attitude which may help one move beyond one’s

racist programming is that one consciously seek out the goodness around one, and particularly, to identify those who may face difficulties because of social neglect, and to find proactive ways to bring out the human potential in those one may have some power to impact. That is as opposed to prejudging others by negatively labelling the group they come from in negative terms, and to continually look for evidence to enforce one's negative stereotype.

A particular example I recently witnessed on a television programme is of a middleclass afrikaaner family opening up their home and actively assisting to raise the toddler of their domestic worker. In fact, they all but adopted the little boy, and that kid is now certainly assured of becoming a positive contributing member of society. But moreover, is unlikely to view "white" people with apprehension or hatred as so many others will.

Another example of such selflessness is portrayed by cabaret artist Elzabe Zietsman who fosters destitute youngsters, so providing them with a chance of having a productive meaningful life which they otherwise would not have had. So too, also contributing to the future social wellbeing of South African society.

The examples given, while definitely difficult to replicate, should notwithstanding serve as beacons for what the human spirit is capable of, but that the striving towards contributing to making one's society better being what is most important. The important side-effect being that also frees one of the shackles of one's past and the limited mind-set it has fostered.

A word of caution though. It is that, in having such a contributing attitude one must nevertheless not be too idealistic and starry-eyed, as a great many damaged individuals can only with great difficulty be positively impacted, if at all. Hence to wisely consider who and how one is indeed to have such a potential impact. One thus must well consider that, by attempting to save the world, one may very well be spreading one's power to influence it far too thin, and thus to be far more ineffective in doing so. For this reason the acting out of guilt will in all likelihood perpetuate the negative legacy of apartheid even further.

Thus if one is naturally prone to strong emotive feelings for the downtrodden, be aware of those who wish prey on one's generosity, who may wish to indeed play the race card to elicit one's sympathy, so to rather entrench their victimhood even further, not being prepared to lift a finger for their own upliftment at all, expecting that it somehow will be served to them on a convenient silver platter.

A New Attitude

It is assumed that Lime's reference to "Neo Afrikaaner" alludes to the increasing number of Afrikaaners strongly integrating with so-called liberal English-speaking South Africans. Reformist Afrikaaners such as [Max du Preez](#) and [Beyers Naude](#), however, cannot be categorized as "neo" as they had their reformist views for quite some time and had not recently jumped on the "enlightened" bandwagon.

I think it should rather be viewed that on the whole Afrikaaner views are collectively changing and that a new

Afrikaaner attitude is emerging (that there is not merely an elite clique that has seen the light) despite some significant cultural and social obstacles to make the required change.

The main obstacle, I think, is a stoicism or emotional hardness the Afrikaaners had developed (the proverbial cowboys don't cry attitude) in response to the British dispossession of their land that eventually led to the Anglo Boer wars and the deaths of a great many in concentration camps. This strong survivalist group interdependence developed into a particularly strong Afrikaaner nationalist identity. This very strong identity, which has as one of its consequences, the need for separateness from other groups, is at the heart of the perpetuation of the apparent Afrikaaner racist problem in the new South Africa.

Neo Afrikaaners disassociation from their group on the other hand appears to be motivated by shame over the actions and attitudes in their group. Hence their defence often is that "I'm not actually one of them", so they therefore feel absolved from having to take responsibility (as many English do) for the Afrikaaner's collective role in the perpetuation of Apartheid.

Again, as iterated before, the requirement for personal absolution, is not necessarily guilt. Rather, that one has compassion, at least in understanding what the obstacles are for ordinary South Africans and how apartheid had largely been responsible for this, and how one possibly can assist in the upliftment of less fortunate communities. And if one finds this too demanding, to in the very least, understand

the circumstances individuals are faced with on a daily basis before prejudging them as inferior to oneself or one's group.

A great example of such a new attitude and a possible brighter future for all in South Africa is evident in the seemingly impossible but true story of [Bongani Mvumvu](#) and the Mohr Family.

In 2000, Bongani 11 was a street kid, foraging for food at a pig farm in Phillipi outside Cape Town. While doing so, he met Grant Mohr, the four year old son of the owners, Geoff and Linda Mohr, who took an immediate liking to him.

Since then Bongani become a regular visitor to the Mohr's who enrolled him into school and included him in all their activities, including horse riding. Two years after meeting up with the Mohr's Bongani won the world Children's World Challenge Showing Championship in Hagen am Totenburger Wald in Germany. That is after taking most of the local junior as well as senior competitions.

Another major achievement is that he was selected to play Craven Week Rugby (a national cup competition) for Western Province at more or less the same time. His achievements on the field winning him a scholarship to Rondebosch Boys High, one of the leading schools in the country.

Given how remarkable the story is, it's surprising it had not been greatly reported in the country, and on queering

acquaintances and my students hardly anyone had heard of this story.

Other than the need to celebrate such inspiring instances, the even greater issue is: *what would have happened to Bongani if it had not been for the generosity of the Mohr's?*

But moreover the issue that should have us all pondering is: *how many Bongani's are out there, whose potentially immeasurable talents are going unnoticed, instead having to live in inhuman conditions, depending on mere stipends for their entire life, just to survive?*¹⁰

¹⁰ Also see [*Outliers: The story of Masibambane High School.*](#)

CONCLUSION

I want to reiterate that this work does not argue that Afrikaaners or Americans or any other community are evil. Rather, that the propensity for evil is nurtured by any community or group holding a distorted belief about themselves which are not reflective of reality as it actually is. Examples highlighted in this work being the relative superiority of Afrikaaners over black South Africans and the perception of national invincibility and moral superiority among Americans for instance.

For these reasons it is paramount to consider the greater collective psyche of the particular population as a whole; that is to generalise or stereotype in order to identify the underlying group belief systems that is its ultimate cause. This is because it is very likely that the greater group dynamic may have indirectly contributed to the continued pathological behaviour or incidences of extreme evil perpetuated by individuals within the respective group.

Hence, while this work may be offensive to some, providing such a potentially healing perspective is exactly what it attempts to convey, as bitter a pill as it may be for some to swallow.

Another aspect that must be borne in mind is that the failure to address the needs of the poor and marginalised, nurtures the likes of a Julius Malema. And that every act of overt or subliminal racism, intolerance and indifference, further adds to his public appeal. And while there are still the masses of unemployed disillusioned youth, and people

living in subhuman conditions, there will be those who will feed upon them by spewing the rhetoric they so dearly wish to hear. Albeit that the promises are empty, merely well-chosen rhetoric nurturing the illusion in the minds of those who otherwise have very little hope for a better future. Thus that it is easy to sell the idea that there is a shortcut to utopia which will bring to an end this broken society's many woes. But instead, would only deliver even greater future despair if the opportunistic likes of a Malema would ever one day come to power.

And, unless these needs are significantly met, being a very likely future scenario.

Finally, and perhaps appropriately, I received the following extract attributed to Rabindranath Tagore—Bengali Nobel Literature Prize winner—in an email on Freedom Day, 17 April 2010.

The question will be asked, "What is goodness? What does our moral nature mean?" My answer is that when a man begins to have an extended vision of his self, when he realizes that he is much more than at present he seems to be, he begins to get conscious of his moral nature. Then he grows aware of that which he is yet to be, and the state not yet experienced by him becomes more real than that under his direct experience.

Necessarily, his perspective of life changes, and his Will takes the place of his wishes. For Will is the supreme wish of the larger life, the life whose greater portion is out of our present reach, most of whose objects are not before our sight.

Then comes the conflict of our lesser man with our greater man, of our wishes with our Will, of the desire for things affecting our sense with the purpose that is within our heart. Then we begin to distinguish between what we immediately

desire and what is good. For good is that which is desirable for our greater self. Thus, the sense of goodness comes out of a truer view of our life, which is a connected view of the wholeness of the field of life, and which takes into account not only what is present before us but what is not, and perhaps never humanly can be.

Why this extract is important, is that it is apparent that the political dispensation of South Africa currently appears to be subject to the idle wishes and animalistic acquisitive desires of but a few lesser men, instead of the will to extend our human capacity beyond the limited dictates of our transitory tactile drives.

FINAL NOTE

A further aspect to consider is the increasing popularity of the struggle song “Kill the farmer, kill the boer” popularised by Julius Malema. “Kill the farmer, kill the boer” in fact implying “kill the Afrikaaner” because of the historic reference to Afrikaaners as ‘boers’ or farmers. Despite it having been a struggle song, in its post-apartheid context clearly being in violation of the rights and dignity of [Afrikaaners](#) as it does amount to hate speech and most certainly is an incitement to violence against a particular group.

Nevertheless its perceived condoning by a great many in the ruling party and the previously disadvantaged populace must be viewed against the greater backdrop of South Africa’s brutal racist past and the current unfulfilled aspirations of the greater majority which also happen to be black. From this the perception is that the general apartheid status quo appears to have remained unchanged, although the powerbrokers have changed.

This sentiment exists notwithstanding that the maintaining of the status quo is perpetuated by the current governments apparent indifference to provide the necessary means to rectify the predicament of the populace, while only a handful of loyal party faithful are becoming part of the new economic and political elite.

Moreover, it must be born in mind that the use of the song by Malema is overtly opportunistic given his questionable business dealings, and that he indeed appears

to purposefully want to fan racial hatred for his own political and financial ends. In other words, it may very well be a smokescreen to divert attention away from his apparently dubious dealings. Malema's rising political influence, and the apparent failure of his political masters to decisively act against him, should however be regarded as the single most dangerous development on the South African political landscape since democratic elections in 1994.

However, his increasing influence on the masses of youth must also be assessed against the greater groundswell of unmet expectations of the greater previously disenfranchised population.¹¹

While Malema's song most likely did not result in ultra-right winger [Eugene Terreblance](#)'s death, the timing certainly was responsible for mobilising support for the far right, thus fracturing South African society even further. However, what these events are emblematic of, is that racial divisions are still largely entrenched, and that South Africa is yet far from being the rainbow nation we had thought or hoped it was.

Finally, on the 29th of July 2010 the [Reitz Four](#) were given a fine of twenty thousand Rand (one thousand Rand over 20 months) for making a racist video mocking university workers, a sentence which ought to have been considered lenient given the racial fragmentation it had caused.

¹¹ In the article this previously disenfranchised group are collectively referenced as black and includes all population groups previously disenfranchised by the apartheid government.

However in a News24 survey in which 32 thousand people participated, 41% of the respondents indicated that the verdict “is unfair, the cleaners were willing participants”. While the racial demographics of those who polled are uncertain, and that it is assumed that the proportion of black respondents reasonably had voted that the verdict was fair or lenient, that this vote does indicate that a significant percentage of the respondents (assumed to be white) do not perceive the impact of this overtly racist act.

This post soccer world cup poll also suggests that a significant percentage of the population do have a private or subliminally racist attitude. The failure in my view is that these respondents were not able to perceive the impact these overt racist actions had on South African society as a whole, and therefore the importance that these individuals indeed did receive an adequate punishment reflective of the severity of the crime when considering the greater South African psyche.

Therefore that the severity of the crime (which indeed it was) was not perceived. On the flip side, though, the percentage breakdown also does indicate that a significant percentage, perhaps close to half depending on the ‘racial’ makeup of the participants, may have a more enlightened view.¹²

¹² Breakdown of result of the News24 Poll:

- It’s enough and they are remorseful 33% 10588 votes
- It’s nothing compared to the cleaners’ humiliation 14% 4464 votes
- It’s unfair, the cleaners were willing participants 41% 13052 votes
- They should go to jail 12% 3819 votes.

APPENDIX

Extracts from:

Jansen Blames Racism on NGK: *Makes Call for “honest open conversations”*

Free State University vice-chancellor Johnathan Jansen has taken on the might of the NGK (Nederduits-gereformeerdekerk / Dutch Reformed Church) saying it has helped entrench racism in South Africa.

Speaking at a Cape Town Press club lunch at the waterfront yesterday, Jansen said the roots of racism lay in a number of “agencies of socialisation” like homes and schools. He added: “The most dangerous for me is the NGK.”

“There is no way you can undo the damage without looking at the home churches, schools, and the university’s arrangements,” he said, referring to institutions like one colour student hostels and separate classes for Afrikaans and English speakers.

This separation could aggravate bitterness and racism.

Speaking to Weekend Argus Afterwards, Jansen said he was not sure tat the Church which had been “part and parcel of the National Party’s Apartheid Project”, shared the broader values of non-racialism.

Jansen was the centre of controversy last month when he reinstated two of the four Reitz hostel students who had humiliated a number of hostel workers.

He was Vilified by the cabinet and Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande. But he found an unlikely ally in ANC Youth League

(ANCYL) President Julius Malema, who after a meeting said Jansen was “one of us”...

...Jansen, the first black vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State, acknowledged yesterday that he could not say he was not a racist.

“I try every single day of my life to be generous, to be honest, to be equitable, to live my life for all my fellow brothers and sisters, black and white, but I can’t guarantee you that I don’t sometimes think thoughts that I’m ashamed of. I can’t guarantee you that I don’t sometimes have hatred towards white people for what happened in my family history.”

Jansen’s speech which he titled “The Pain on the other Side”, tried to put into perspective the country’s racial divisions and how they could be overcome if people had open, honest conversations with one another...

*By Lynnette Johns,
Weekend Argus, 14 November 2009*

Extract from:
Cronin a racist: *Youth Leader waves race card again*

ANC youth leader Julius Malema has brandished the race card at communist leader Jeremy Cronin, accusing him of being a white supremacist.

The ANC Youth league president lashed out at the deputy transport minister after Cronin questioned Malema's call to nationalise country's mines.

Malema said the league did "not need the permission of white political messiah's to think."

Anti-apartheid struggle veteran Cronin suggested this week that Malema could not rise above sound bites and questioned whether nationalising the mining houses would advance, or damage, transformation of South Africa's economy and society.

"The impression of a policy being made on the hoof, individualistically, is reinforced by the fact that we are yet to see any serious attempt at a collective policy document on this matter from the ANCYL," Cronin wrote in an online article on Wednesday.

Malema replied: "Previously, those who look like us were considered intellectually inferior by the white supremacists, and today comrade Jeremy reflects the same sentiment."

He asked why Cronin had only become concerned when the league wanted to save blacks from economic imbalances by transferring white wealth through such nationalisation...

Political Bureau,

Weekend Argus, 21 November 2009

Extract from:

Race a fair varsity admission criterion – for now: *we need to take into account obstacles a student has overcome*

... The best arguments against the use of racial categorisation are based on a commitment to non-racialism – the need to move our society away from thinking in apartheid categories and away from seeing the world through racial lenses...

Implicit in the objection to using “race” is the belief that performance in the school-leaving exam is the only fair basis for rationing admission opportunities. In other words, it is unfair to an applicant who has achieved 60 percent over one who has achieved 70 percent. But anyone who is familiar with the school system will know the difference between students’ performance in a national exam has much more to do with the school they went to and their socioeconomic status and the conditions under which they lived and learned.

For a pupil at a township school with no school laboratory or library, poorly qualified teachers and many missed days of teaching, and living in a shack or RDP house, sharing a room with several other children and adults, no books at home, no computer or internet access, no parents with matric to help with homework, not speaking English at home yet leaning and writing matric in English, no extramural music or art lessons and minimal exposure to museums, shows and travel – for such a pupil to overcome those odds and get 60 percent in the Grade 12 exam requires a degree of motivation, commitment and raw talent that far exceeds the average Model C or independent school student who has the cards stacked in her/his favour – including private lessons when marks slip.

If talent is randomly distributed in the population, as I believe it is, the fairest way to select students would be simply to take the top 10

percent of the matric class in every school, regardless of how the marks of those top decile students rank against those from other schools – the only condition being that all must exceed a minimum threshold that predicts success at university.

Fairness therefore demands that we do not consider marks on their own, but that we moderate marks by also taking into account the obstacles a pupil has overcome in achieving those results...

“Race” as a criterion therefore captures the history of disadvantage, which has a current impact not measured through household income and school. Thus the legacy of disadvantage will probably be present for at least two generations after 1994...

I do not dispute that policies using race or disadvantage will reduce the number of white students gaining entry. But we must not forget the context in which white students still have access to higher education.

I would venture the observation that any reduction in opportunities for white students because of affirmative action is not nearly as great as it would be if the school system were fixed and there were half a million more qualified black applicants competing for the same number of university places. We need to recognise where the primary unfairness is.

Our graduation ceremonies are examples of the inclusion of race in our selection criteria as the best students from all “races”, from vastly different backgrounds – many of whom would never have been accepted into university – make their way on to the podium and leave to make their mark on society.

This is transformation.

Dr. Max Price – University of Cape Town Vice Chancellor

Cape Times, 21 April 2010

Reitz Four debate should move beyond race

I have grappled with the Reitz Four saga for some time now. When I first watched the video, I was in the process of completing research for my master's dissertation which explored the difficulties of "deracialising" South African universities. Using my *alma mater*, the University of Cape Town, as a case study, it became evident that though "race" or "racism" was often close at hand as *the* explanation for many of the university's struggles with retaining young black learners and so on, it was often *not* the real cause for slow transformation within the university (though it played a certain role in the process).

What the weight of the evidence showed is that when it comes to curriculum, institutional and structural challenges faced by the university, it was easier for learners and educators alike (both black and white), to resort to "race" as an explanation for these challenges. Black learners would for example complain that professors discriminated against them because of their blackness, while some of the language used by a number of white educators was laden with the "us and them" jargon that insinuated a kind of white superiority.

Digging deeper, however, it was clear that the more pertinent challenges in this context were largely *infrastructural* than they were of a *racial* nature. The university needed to recognise that despite many useful and recognisable efforts, they had not created nearly enough equal opportunity for some learners to succeed as they had for others. Barriers had been created (whether purposefully or not) for many black learners through things like, language (a resistance to recognising the validity of a "poorer English" when it came to marking scripts, especially in the social sciences for example), the hierarchy of cultures (UCT is by and large Eurocentric), and a largely Eurocentric curriculum amongst other things.

Many of the learners and educators (particularly educators) were aware of these issues (these findings are not new). But what was interesting in the whole experience was the ease with which people slipped into “racial” reasoning when conditions became frustrating or difficult to explain. At the height of a frustrating conversation, I knew that race was lurking, waiting to be pulled from the corridors of history and placed neatly once again as a valid tool of analysis in the present.

But what I also knew is that when learners complained of racism, what they were most likely frustrated about was a lack of opportunity and limited access to academic success. What they were asking for were resources and validation of their peculiar challenges which stem largely from systemic and background issues. What they were rightly demanding was that the university be more cognizant of its diversity and effect the changes needed to accommodate that diversity. And when they levelled their valid arguments for this to a largely white audience (in the form of management and professors) and were either ignored or dismissed, then race and racism became the next conversation to be had. And whether race was the issue here or not, it can be argued that had the university put in place the infrastructures *really* needed to make these students successful, then the race conversation would become less salient or possibly even obsolete.

Fast forward to the Reitz Four. As I watched that video over and over again on YouTube I must admit that what I saw (and still see) more than anything else is four very ignorant and idiotic men who clearly have a limited moral compass about how to treat fellow human beings. I see young men so caught up in their own mundaneness that they had time (and resources) to make a video in which they use other human beings (elders for that matter), as their guinea pigs for a distasteful “*Fear Factor*” replication. (Interestingly enough, the images took me back to my days at UCT when I witnessed many white male students play out

similar “initiation” ceremonies, except in this case they were doing it to each other, and the conditions were even more appalling). I see young men who did not know where to draw the line between pranks that may be acceptable with your friends and the respect that is due to those who may not be interested or understand the implications of the actions you impose on them.

The unfortunate thing is that in this case, these boys created a sensitive image (and situation) that arouses too many painful memories for everyone in this country. And as illustrated in the research I mention above, amidst their evidently regressive behaviour, they further regressed into racial language to justify or explain their antics. And what better thing to do in a country where race is still so salient? What better thing to do when four misdirected and ill-socialised young boys decide that they are going to be “funny” and create a video that they are going to later show as entertainment to their friends or to the cyber community? They knew it would pull an audience! They knew it would raise controversy! And look! It worked.

Is this to say that the UFS boys were not racist? Maybe they were, maybe they were not. There is no litmus test available to prove racism, seeing race itself is effectively a construct. What can be said for sure, however, is that here is a country so affected and influenced by a racialised history that the only language these boys had to explain their behaviour was racial. It was easy for them too — the context they were acting in was very racialised. What can also be said for sure is that here is a country so caught up in the limits of racial discourse that any misunderstanding that happens between lighter and darker skins is necessarily racial. And this may be true but what is then to be said about cases where the new middle class of black people also treat their domestic help like “lesser than” beings? What is to be said about an emerging class of black people who now find it difficult to “fraternise

with the help". What is to be said about the amount of abuse that is heaped onto domestic help in black households including physical and even sexual abuse! These things exist. The only difference is that they have not been caught on tape and they have not been brought into popular discourse!

What I believe the Reitz Four video should have done for this country was to create room for a discourse not on race but on economic disparities and the vulnerability it creates for too many of this country's poor. What that video should have done was to inspire an outcry about worker rights and the level to which institutions fail to protect their workers. What that video should have done was to bring to the fore issues of elitism and classism which are a disease of all of us within the capitalist system, black and white! What that video should have done was to create a platform from which those workers were allowed voice, their own voice, in which they could interpret the situation for us instead of us interpreting it for them.

Am I saying that race is not an issue in South Africa? Well, no. I for one have been troubled by white supremacist attitudes in this country for a long time. I have been bothered by the arrogance and sense of entitlement that a number of white people *still* walk around with, often in subtle but recognisable ways. I am angered daily by evidence around me that white privilege *still* exists and that I remain patronised by it on many levels! I have been confounded by white people that really believe that they are superior to me by virtue of the fact that they have a paler skin and I have a darker skin. But I am equally troubled by the nuances of my own inferiority complex (which often catches me by surprise), and allows me to descend into thinking in an "us and them" mind-frame. I am also troubled by a growing black elite who now act equally as selfishly and patronisingly as their former coloniser.

The point, however, is that the regression continually to racial language to address such issues, while emotionally satisfying in some ways, tends to mask larger structural issues and processes that remain unchallenged. The point is that racial language has become too close to us to the extent where it has become the be all and end all of many a political and social debate. It simply does not allow us to think strategically but traps us in an emotional and angry cycle that limits our ability to get to the root of these matters — and the root is largely economic and political.

And South Africa will do well to remember that it was the same regression into ethnic language that got Rwanda into trouble in 1994? In fact, in Rwanda it regressed to such an extent that Tutsis became “cockroaches” that must be exterminated. And because ethnicity was so salient in that context, all it took was a radio broadcast, machetes and a hundred days to create genocide of shocking proportions! I am sure Rwandans would have never imagined the power of their own language and discourses in creating such a bloody episode. But it did and the results did nothing to address the real issue — a growing gap between those with access to resources and those without.

This is a warning to all of us that if we do not do the *real* work that needs to be done to close the gap between those with access to resources and those without, then we will soon find ourselves in the regressive state that often leads to bloody wars that are justified through racial/ethnic language but really have economics, resources and/or issues of access at their base. We address that, and then we may very well have ridden ourselves of race issues in this country. And anyone who will want to regress into racial language or behaviour again will be, well, plain ignorant and silly!

So I pose the question: what if the Reitz Four were more disrespectful, inhumane and ignorant than they were racist? Would that allow us to go beyond the race debate and challenge the real gaps in this country that allow certain people to be more vulnerable to abuse than others?

Rachel Nyaradzo Adams

[*Thought Leader Blog*](#)

Mail & Guardian, 10 November 2009

Rachel Nyaradzo Adams has a master's degree in African Studies from Oxford University. She is a social scientist who is openly disgruntled by current world systems and seeks to make commentary that will make us uncomfortable with them.

Outliers: The story of Masibambane High School

A demonstration that many young people, of average ability, can become part of the "story of success".

In his best-selling book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell seeks to unravel "the story of success" - exceptional success, not just great achievement.

He defines an outlier as a "statistical observation that is markedly different from the norm" and asks: why do some people achieve so much more than others? How come they lie so far outside the ordinary? What is the secret of their success? He tries to find the answers by examining the lives, times and circumstances of legendary figures like Bill Gates, the Beatles and various sports stars.

In each case, he finds the fortuitous combination of three key factors:

- * Opportunity;
- * Natural ability combined with enormous personal effort: and
- * The proverbial "hand of fate" - a confluence of circumstances that make exceptional things possible.

I decided to test Gladwell's thesis after the recent release of matric results. It is appropriate to use the term "Outlier" to describe a 17-year old boy, who lives in a backyard shack with his single mother and three siblings, and achieves 7 distinctions in matric, including 97% for higher grade mathematics and the top award in the Western Cape for life sciences.

A shy, finely-built young man, Asavela Rawe arrived at the annual "matric achievers" ceremony in the school uniform of Masibambane high school. As I handed him his award, I resolved to find out what lay behind his exceptional achievement. When his classmate Monde Simbosini (three distinctions and 98% for higher grade mathematics) was also honoured, I was even more determined to find out more

about the school that serves the poverty-stricken community of Bloekombos and achieved a 95% pass rate with 24 subject distinctions.

The purpose of my investigation was to address this simple question: what is the government's role in creating the circumstances that offer children the opportunity to excel? If this can happen in Masibambane, what must we do to enable it to happen elsewhere? How much of Asavela and Monde's academic success can be attributed to opportunity, intelligence, personal effort, and plain good luck?

During my investigation, I concluded that all these factors played a role, each a tributary flowing into a river, reinforcing one another to create the momentum for exceptional achievement.

Having sourced the cell number of the school's principal, Mr Rajan Naidoo, I gave him a call. I apologized for phoning him on a Friday evening during the school holidays.

"No, no", he replied. "I am at school. We always start the matrics a week early, so that they settle into the learning programme before the other pupils arrive."

That said a lot about the ethos of Masibambane.

I asked Mr Naidoo if I could visit the school, and possibly meet the key matric teachers and the chair of the governing body. I also enquired whether it would be possible to speak to Asavela and Monde as well.

"Come tomorrow morning at 11," he replied without hesitation.

The next day, Mr Naidoo welcomed me to the school accompanied by his daughter, Vinolia, a second year law student. She reminded me that we had met before at the opening of the state-of-the-art operating theatres at Red Cross Children's hospital. I then recalled the lovely,

petite young woman who had given a moving speech about the doctors and staff that had saved her life through a combined liver and kidney transplant.

While doctors were battling to save his daughter's life, her father, then a deputy school principal in Durban, had applied for teaching posts in Cape Town, so that he could be near his desperately ill child. He was appointed principal at Masibambane in 2003, at that time one of the weakest schools in the Western Cape.

"The hand of fate", I thought to myself as I applied Gladwell's thesis.

On the final weekend of the holidays, the school property was a hive of activity - a gardener weeding, a cleaner sweeping and a handyman painting a classroom. "We are preparing for the opening of school next week" he said as he showed me the stacks of text books and stationery ready for distribution on day one.

He proudly walked me around his school, formerly a derelict provincial building which was converted into a school in 2001. He explained how he had driven each improvement, including a sports field with an embankment where pupils can sit and cheer their teams. There is a computer laboratory, a science laboratory, a small library (with a rack for daily newspapers), a kitchen for the feeding scheme, a new hall and toilets. The absence of any sign of vandalism was striking.

"Opportunity," I thought to myself. Decent basic facilities are necessary to create opportunity, but entirely insufficient on their own. What Mr Naidoo said next, delivered in his characteristic matter-of-fact way, demonstrated why Masibambane is a school capable of producing "outliers".

"When Vinolia came out of hospital, I wanted her to be near me, so I enrolled her here, at Masibambane," he said. "I believe principals

should be prepared to enrol their own children in their schools, to show they have confidence in the quality of the education they are providing for other children".

He paused and added: "Vinolia was probably the first Indian child to attend a township school."

We entered the new administration building, where a small gathering was waiting at a table laid with refreshments.

There I was introduced to Mr Yusif Sium, the school's mathematics teacher; Mr Andre Kleinschmidt, who teaches physics and life sciences; Mr Shimeless Zeleke the maths literacy teacher; Mr Phumzile Dosi, the English teacher and grade 12 co-ordinator; Mr Thabiso Motsana the life orientation teacher; and Mr Michael Vena, the chair of the school governing body. There were also the star pupils, Asavela and Monde, together with Asavela's mother, Lungiswa, who works at the "fruit and veg" section of Checkers in Kraaifontein. She told me she had not seen Asavela's father since her baby was one month old. "That is why I say he died," she said. Monde's parents were visiting family in the Eastern Cape.

Mr Naidoo told me he and the governing body applied a strict "merit selection" policy when recommending teachers for positions at the school.

It was not always that way.

"When I came to this school, I confronted a governing body that had a different approach. Some were even prepared to accept bribes from applicants to be nominated for positions. Everything was politicised. It was difficult to change that approach. We had some conflict about it. But I knew the school would only succeed if we applied a merit selection". He recalls the backing and support he received from an

outstanding senior circuit manager, Mrs Ntombi Dwane, who helped him implement the new policy.

"Today I follow a strict policy of keeping party politics out of this school. We take decisions on their merits. We employ our staff on the basis of their ability to teach our pupils," Mr Naidoo emphasized.

This was immediately apparent as I spoke to the teachers. Their own stories show an astounding confluence of excellence and effort, influenced by the inevitable "hand of fate". Mr Sium, for example, is an Eritrean studying actuarial science part-time at the University of Cape Town. He earns his living as Masibambane's maths teacher. Mr Zekele, who teaches maths literacy, is from Ethiopia.

The team ethos and mutual support were tangible. But the greatest insights came from the pupils themselves.

Asavela and Monde told me how they were able to stay at school until 9 o'clock at night, so that they could study in an environment conducive to learning. They negotiated the after-hours use of their classrooms with teachers, and worked in groups to assist others with their homework. Prefects were given the responsibility of locking up when they left. They were accountable for the state of the premises the next day.

Then Asavela made the following observation: "Monde and I would not have done so well if we were not competing with one another. We are good friends, but also competitors. That helped a lot. We will carry on as friendly competitors when we go to University." Both will study actuarial science at UCT next year, and Mr Sium has made a commitment to continue teaching and supporting them.

I asked Mrs Rawe whether we could visit her home - two shacks in the backyard of an RDP house in Bloekombos. Her baby was asleep

on her bed. She told me the tiny premature boy had spent 5 months in Tygerberg hospital, where she had remained with him. With his mother away, Asavela had spent most of his matric year taking personal responsibility for his younger siblings as well as himself. All of his belongings, including the computer he had won as a prize for his matric results, were neatly stacked in a small pile at the bottom of his narrow bed. I realised that he had come to the matric achievers function in his school uniform because it was probably the only suitable outfit he had.

Above his pillow, he had written on the shack wall in red koki: "A true gentleman is a true genius in calculation. A true legend lives on". Those words gave him inspiration, he told me.

We then went on to visit Monde's house. He lives with his siblings in a backyard shack of his parents' RDP house, where he shares a bed with his brother.

The rest of the space in the shack is taken up by a rickety home-made table on which stands an ancient Dell computer.

"You must never get rid of that computer," Asavela said to Monde. "That computer helped us to succeed".

Monde told me that his uncle had been given the computer by his employers when they upgraded their systems. Together Monde and Asavela set it up - and through their own efforts turned this stroke of luck into yet another opportunity. At school, during the day, they downloaded matric papers and worked on them late into the night, on the old computer in the shack. "The computer kept freezing, but we kept starting it again," said Monde.

That comment captured it all.

We often talk about the "opportunity" society. On that Saturday I saw what this idea can mean when opportunity meets singular human

effort. The key priority of any government is to create real opportunities for all, so that people can use them.

It is true that "Outliers" like Asavela and Monde cannot be used as the yardstick for the rest of society. But the story of Masibambane as a school is a demonstration that many young people, of average ability, can become part of the "story of success". There is no reason why this cannot become South Africa's story too.

Helen Zille, DA Leader

MoneyWeb, 23 January 201

[Go to web Article](#)

Entitlement under fire: Zuma urges youth to 'effect change'

"People expect everything to be done for them by state"

President Jacob Zuma has urged South Africans to start doing things for themselves - instead of waiting for state hand-outs.

President Jacob Zuma addressed the Young Communist League's congress in Mafikeng yesterday. Zuma blamed YCL leaders for the violence that marred the congress
Picture: SIMON MATHEBULA

Zuma told delegates at the closing of a violent Young Communist League national congress at the Mafikeng campus of North West University that the government needed to "break the chain of entitlement" – especially among the country's youth.

"We have a situation where people expect everything to be done for them by government while they are spectators and are standing aside when they must effect change," he said.

"We must instil among our people, especially the youth, a new culture and the spirit of going out to find opportunities. They must advise government on how it can help them achieve their goals, having identified the goals and possible tools to achieve them."

Zuma said the youth "should be at the forefront of development and change".

Zuma lamented the fact that delegates had resorted to violence at the weekend after disagreements over the credential of delegates and, ultimately, who their leaders should be.

Riot police used teargas to disperse brawling delegates. Journalists were assaulted and some had their equipment seized.

Zuma blamed delegates' lawlessness on the YCL's lack of decisiveness in dealing with ill-disciplined members.

"Those who love and admire the party and who believe the party can take them somewhere, what are you saying to them if in the news somewhere they see chairs flying? You are killing their spirit. You are killing their hope," Zuma said.

"If discipline was prevalent, those who misbehaved would have known exactly what to do and not [gone] ahead with what they did.

"When you come to a conference with preconceived ideas – not about the objectives of the party but about personalised objectives – then you are in trouble."

Thulas Nxesi, a member of the SACP's national executive committee, said the party's leaders, present during the chaos would write a report on the congress, and expected the YCL to do the same.

"Decisive action must be taken and those responsible must face the full might of the organisation," Nxesi said.

The congress recommended that certain provincial leaders be expelled from the party for orchestrating the violence.

Buti Manamela was elected for a third term in office as the YCL secretary - defeating his former deputy, Khaye Nkwanyana.

By Nkululeko Ngana

The Times Live, 12 December 2010

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Old Treacheries, New Deceits: “Embarrassing Malema makes South Africa look ridiculous”

Julius Malema is an embarrassment to his party and his country.

A country with South Africa’s wealth—of people as well as mineral resources and infrastructure—really should have expected more.

This is the view of author and academic Stephen Chan, whose book *Old Treacheries, New Deceits, Insights into Southern African Politics*, was published this week.

“You expect youth leaders to be firebrands, but also to provide intellectual debate.

He touches a chord,” concedes Chan, who is the dean of London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies, “but some of his seniors are using him as a stalking horse, which is dangerous.”

The net result is a rhetoric that’s more in keeping with the kind of opposition in countries such as Zambia, *ad hominem* attacks devoid of any alternative policy or plan, just a straight demonization of personalities and existing policies.

“I think his a disaster for South Africa,” says Chan.

“What you’ve got is a very small-town way of dealing with problems translated to a national stage. It makes the country look ridiculous.”

Chan’s been coming to South Africa since he was first sent out as a young public servant to help the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia transition in 1980.

His first visit to South Africa was in 1992, monitoring the taxi violence in Khayelitsha.

He's come back regularly since then, teaching at the erstwhile University of Natal, striking up conversations with ordinary South Africans and meeting business leaders and politicians alike.

Chan makes a point of going through Alexandra, the dormitory township and slum, cheek by jowl with Africa's richest shopping area, Sandton, Johannesburg.

This week he was back in the country as part of a whistle-stop tour that will take him to Zambia and Zimbabwe too.

"I tell my white friends that the slums in Khayelitsha are worse than Lagos. Believe that, but it's true.

"People should not live like that; there's a lot of tension and poverty. Every time I go to Alex I get depressed," says Chan.

What particularly agrieves him is the lack of progress since South Africa's much-vaunted democracy.

"You could expect a decade of good grace, but now we're a decade and a half into democracy, there can be no excuses."

The problem, Chan argues, is the lack of any coherent plan for the future.

Parastatals, he believes, have to be able to work like corporate entities. "by definition they have to look both ways, to the government and to the market, but often they look too much at the government."

As a result they behave like government department, are too hidebound, content merely to be social providers, rather than catalysts of economic change.

A further problem is the public service itself in South Africa, which he argues has never transformed beyond its 15-year-old high point of being a service catering for a minority.

“There is no streamlined modern civil service geared towards service delivery.”

The consequences, Chan says, are plain to see. “The gap between the haves and the have-nots in South Africa is absolutely appalling.”

Given South Africa’s resources, there shouldn’t be a Third World economy at all, only a First World.

But this hasn’t happened. Instead, the all-powerful ANC has led to a situation where membership of the party has what he calls “an escalator to privilege”.

“It’s very much to be regretted.”

The poor become an underclass and the middle class become resentful at being squeezed by both ends.

The answer, though, lies in South Africa’s admission to BRICS, the trade block comprising Brazil, Russia, India and China, and a privatisation of utilities. “South Africa could be a genuine world order player, but its membership of BRICS is an act of faith by the other members which it has to live up to.

“To live up to that it needs a dynamic planning structure with proper regulation and watchdogs.”

The last two are critical to curb rampant corruption that can accompany massive growth and development, as has been the case in China with intellectual property theft, shoddy workmanship and non-existent safety regulations.

The East does hold the key to South Africa’s future, but not in the way the ANC’s original plan to borrow from Malaysia envisaged.

“The ANC only looked at the way in which Malaysia successfully brought up an ethnic underclass, but ignored the very sophisticated discussions around economic planning that took place,” he says.

The ruling party, though, looks unlikely to be able to do this in the near future as it has become riven by dissent and internal factions all jostling for political and economic power at the moment.

President Jacob Zuma, Chan says, has found himself in a very similar predicament to US President Barack Obama who has had to fight off dissent from his own party and in a divided US Congress to govern—while trying to negotiate a global financial crisis—all of which explains Zuma’s and the party’s reticence in muzzling its enfant terrible, Julius Malema.

Chan, though, has no doubt South Africa can and will become an Asian Tiger in Africa; it just needs the right encouragement and the will to sit down and discuss how it will go about it, properly plan and execute it.

Most of all, it needs what he calls a “technocratic discourse”, but this won’t be forthcoming from either COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) or the SACP (South African Communist Party).

By Kevin Ritchie

The Weekend Argues, 13 August 2011