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Title

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Journal

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 26(2-3)

ISSN

0041-5715

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Publication Date

1998

DOI

10.5070/F7262-3016620

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Andre Brink's White Female Anti-Apartheid Rebels

Isidore Diala

Robert Young has argued that the attempt at the decolonization of European thought, especially of historiography, is characteristic of modernism (1990: 118). Locating the basic intellectual inspiration of this post World War II anti-colonization in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Young writes that given Fanon's insight that history is man's creation, Fanon's work demonstrates the objectification and condemnation to immobility and silence of the men and women who are the objects of that history (120). The great irony, Young laments, is that humanism, exalted among the highest values of European civilization, provided the justification for colonial appropriation, excluding the "native" and "women" from its highly politicized category of "man" (121).

Andre Brink, himself an Afrikaner, has offered a sustained insight into the Afrikaner establishment's creations of myths to justify the objectification and thus dehumanization of the Black Other. In the Brink *oeuvre*, for the White as well as for the Black, the recognition of the common humanity of all men is treated as the attainment of a revolutionary political consciousness. Brink equally presents rebellion against apartheid as an affirmation of humanity. But Andre Brink, who treats apartheid as the will to power raised to a tribal level, has also noted: "Racism almost invariably goes with male chauvinism—it's why I've been fascinated in several books by the relationship between a white woman and a black man. Part of what draws them together is the common experience of oppression" (1963: 8). This essay attempts, with special reference to Brink's white female anti-apartheid rebels, to explore Brink's indication that the insight that led to their anti-apartheid rebellion invariably derived from the recognition of apartheid as ideological patriarchy.

In Brink's fiction, the rich and influential father whose rapacious ego seeks to swallow up all his children, especially the daughters, is usually the archetypal jailer whose tyranny elicits the rebellion of Brink's female dissidents. In Brink's first politically committed novel, *Looking on Darkness*, this pattern is, in fact, already discernible. Beverley's father, by sheer tenacity, rises beyond the working class status of his parents to become a big industrialist.

Thereafter, he seeks to obliterate traces of his modest background. His daughter's course of study at school, the school she attends, as well as the flat she lives in must all be chosen carefully to shore up his ego. Beverley, however, is herself sufficiently strong-willed to want to affirm herself as a sovereign, refractory person. Brink explores her rebellion in the expected sexual terms: she makes love to an aggrieved and dirty mechanic from one of her father's factories.

Brink's own explanation of his abiding preoccupation with sex in his novels is expressed mainly in political terms. Religion and societal taboos about sex are linked with inhibitions on "the expression of human freedom and the agony of human bondage" (1963: 124)—themes with which he is most deeply involved. He argues, moreover, the centrality of sex in human experience and links moral emancipation, especially the renunciation of inhibitions about sex, with the political liberation of the individual. The recognition that no absolute ethic, but only a set of practical considerations govern sex, has as its corresponding level in political consciousness the discovery that governments are mutable, not eternal, and that political absolutism should therefore be rejected. Yet Brink stresses throughout that sensual awakening that is an affirmation of self-liberation, in its authentic manifestation, is not reduced to self-indulgence but leads to a disposition to break all society's shackles for self and for all bonds-women/men.

Beverley therefore is not one of Brink's positive female rebels. In steadfastly selecting her mates from the socially inferior or from Coloureds (first, the aggrieved mechanic, then the bitter and penniless Tony who never takes her love seriously anyway, eventually committing suicide; next Joseph, Brink's stranded coloured-actor protagonist; and immediately after, a Pakistani student), Beverley is not motivated by fellow-feeling or camaraderie; she is in fact only ostensibly rebelling against her father's hyper-consciousness of his new status. In reality, she considers the socially inferior easily amenable to domination. Joseph's rejection of her offer of marriage and consequent choice of a more demanding form of life is presented as an election for the responsible life: "What I'd chosen was uncertainty and unfulfillment, insecurity, change; what I'd chosen was possibility rather than certainty, hope rather than consummation; and wandering rather than any chance of arriving at a destination" (1974: 167). Although in flight from domination, Beverley is herself a temptation to embryonic loss of the will.

Andre Brink's contention in the character of Beverley is that the impact of the attempt to dominate the other awakens in him/her an aggressive assertion of sovereignty that often becomes a serious impediment to an openness to love and the reciprocities of human communion. This study is carried out further in Brink's next novel, *An Instant in the Wind*, in the character of Elisabeth. In adolescence, Elisabeth apprehends society's expectations of propriety and decency from its female folk in terms of prison. Rejecting both the madness and the death to which an acquiescence in social conformity leads, her conception of freedom and the affirmation of personal sovereignty is rooted in the violation of taboos.

Elisabeth plays with slave children, not because she is drawn to them by fellow-feeling, but because her mother frowns at it; and she is bent on exploring the hitherlands because it is virtually forbidden to women. The elation she experiences while Uncle Jacobs, pretending to teach her morals and how to play chess, actually fondles her in her father's presence, derives from the vicarious enjoyment of the danger involved "a curious elation for the very reason that he [her father] was present—sitting directly opposite her, reacting to her uncertain moves, unaware of anything; the temptation of danger which left her trembling, the proximity of fire and brimstone." (1976: 238) The point is that Elisabeth's particularly intense yearning just to be different from what society authorizes will culminate in the desire for the outlandish. Recalling her journey to Holland she notes,

Do you know what I enjoyed most of the whole journey? It was our return, in the Bay of Biscay, when there was a terrible storm and everybody thought we were going under. They wouldn't allow me on deck, but I went and I stayed there, clinging to the railings and getting drenched. It felt like the end of world, it was wild and beautiful (1976: 38).

Elisabeth's encounter with the black slave, Adam, is a telling demonstration of two representative shackled characters—a white woman and a black man—each in rebellion against cynical attempts at dehumanization based on color or sex, and each therefore defining his/her freedom in terms of the subjugation of the other. Fleeing from society and its institution of slavery, Adam discovers in the

total seclusion of the wilderness the incompleteness of every human individual, and consequently the necessity for human interdependence. Defying Elisabeth's initial attempts to enslave him, Adam is to discover with Elisabeth the necessary complementarity of male and female in the pilgrimage through the wilderness of life. In resolving also to return to the Cape with Elisabeth, Adam acknowledges that the search for community and for love, which is a search for completeness, is fundamentally human.

On the other hand, Adam's transformation in Elisabeth's consciousness from a slave to a fellow human and then a lover is hard-won knowledge for a Cape white lady. She could bathe naked before male slaves at the Cape because shame was a tribute she could pay only to humans. Her arrogant claim, oblivious of Adam's presence and of "Hottentots" who pass that way, to have been the first human being to tread on a part of Africa reveals clearly the Others' lack of humanity. But Elisabeth's grandiose self-image is completely overhauled in light of all the somber revelations of the wilderness. Accidents and chance strip Elisabeth naked literally and figuratively, baring her of all illusions. The humble rations of tortoises, lizards, snakes, mushrooms, wild honey, swallow and dog meat, ostrich eggs and wild fruits are not only lessons on the human will to survive but also on the modesty of the created condition. Elisabeth's exploration of the hitherlands of Africa as well as of the self leads her to the recognition of the deadly excesses of her self-assertion and willfulness.

She remembered, with a source of wonder, her endless discontent in the Cape and on her journey with Larsson. That restlessness in her, the interminable quarrels with her mother and her all-too-timid father. Now it was different. She would always remain impatient, driven by the urgency to get things done. But at the same time she experienced a new sense of peace. The timeless experience at the sea had brought her the discovery, in herself, of something she'd never been aware of before: a faculty for happiness. That in itself sustained her through the all-demanding days. I know now that it is possible for me to be happy, I have explored serenity, something inside me had opened wonderfully, I have travelled farther into myself and nothing can ever be quite the same again (1976: 158).

Elisabeth's acclaimed spiritual growth, however, is not exploited as enhanced and sustained political consciousness. If she agonizes over her betrayal of the men, both white, who loved her and whose deaths she precipitates, nonetheless, she still betrays Adam. Brink's positive, purposeful, white female dissidents who, rebelling against domination still remain capable of fellowship do not really emerge until *Rumours of Rain*.

Discussing Andre Brink's philosophical conception of freedom in *Rumours of Rain*, Ben Obumselu has argued that the story of Bernard Franken, the hero of the novel, is modeled on the career of Bram Fischer, and that in the conception of that character Brink draws not only from the Christian ascetic heritage of martyrdom but also from existentialism in French fiction. Obumselu notes in particular the correspondence between the careers of the Afrikaner Bernard Franken sacrificing himself for the freedom of Black and White and of Kyo Gisors, the half-Japanese half-French hero of the Chinese liberation in Andre Malraux's *La Condition Humaine* (1990: 57). Where it is important that Franken should be an Afrikaner given his role in Brink's scheme for the redemption of Afrikanerdom, Brink appropriates the significance of Kyo's racial backgrounds in his conception of Beatrice Fiorini who both collaborates with Bernard Franken and in fact embodies Brink's idea of positive rebellion:

Her mother had been Italian, her father allegedly a German officer who had arrived in Perugia at a crucial moment and soon moved on again; after the war the family left to join some distant cousins in the States; and by the time Bea was seven and her mother already dead, she emigrated to South Africa with a Hungarian stepfather. The only constant element of her youth was her Catholicism. Until, with the fierce determination characteristic of her, she broke away from that as well (1978: 16).

Devoid of ethnic loyalties, and emigrating from one country to another, in South Africa Beatrice moves from Cape Town to one temporary address after another in Johannesburg.

To overcome her dread of spiders, Beatrice resorts to catching them in match-boxes or bottles; to conquer her dread of the dark, she deliberately locks herself daily in cupboards. Aware of her

passionate nature and of the risk of an emotional surrender to a sexual partner, she strictly regulates her sex life. Her ideal in everything is independence, self-control and self-transcendence. Her irrevocable un-attachment to tribe or family or religion frees her from the lure of power and materialism, transforming her freedom and abiding sense of an ending into an insatiable yearning for self-forgetful actions. She runs a legal clinic to offer advice to Blacks unable to afford lawyers, and organizes evening classes to help Black students running correspondence courses, while helping out also in various schools in Soweto. Beatrice is finally arrested in connection with the Black riots in Soweto.

Andre Brink's contention, illustrated through Beatrice and Melanie (*A Dry White Season*) on the one hand, and through Elisabeth (*An Instant in the Wind*), Elise (*Rumours of Rain*) and Susan (*A Dry White Season*) on the other, is that the institution of marriage with its attendant motherhood is a sly invitation to social inaction and acquiescence in the status quo. Beatrice, affirming the necessity for sobriety, locates marriage in the category of distractions:

Sometimes I envy other people. Girls who become Playmates, or who get addicted to sex, or who get married—just in order not to have to ask questions or to wonder about anything; to drug themselves into accepting that they're not really alive themselves, but living through others, vicariously. The men they're married to, the men they sleep with, the men leering at their pictures" (1978: 387).

In refusing Martin Mynhardt's offer of a job in his final bid to break down her independence and dominate her, Beatrice draws attention to both the characteristic Afrikaner will to power, and the connection between male chauvinism and apartheid: "Don't fool yourself. For Heaven's sake stop trying to annex me. You Afrikaners are all imperialists by nature. Always want to be the boss, even in love." (1978: 429)

Like Elise (*Rumours*) and Elisabeth (*Instant*), Susan in *A Dry White Season* in youth sees society's narrow conceptions of the expected roles of a girl as confining. Where Brink says of Elisabeth that she is "yearning for an apocalypse" (1976: 38), Susan, desperate to break out of her prison, confesses "...I can understand very

well why some women become terrorists. Or worse. Just to have the experience of knowing you're alive, to feel it violently and furiously, and not to give a damn about whether it's decent or not" (1979: 24). Both seek liberation by marriage to a strange partner. Susan accounts for her marriage to Ben thus:

... whenever he sat so quietly while everyone else was talking, their heads off, I always tried to imagine what he was thinking. It made him seem different and special... And he never tried to force his opinions on me like other men. I began to think he was the man I'd been waiting for. He seemed to understand people, to understand a woman. He would allow me to live the way I'd always wanted to (1979: 24).

Elisabeth's reason for marrying the scientist, Larsson, is similar: "I thought a man like him, such a famous scientist and explorer, would transcend the petty prejudices of the Cape." (1976: 151)

Both marriages fail, of course. For Brink the search for liberation in marriage is a delusion, given that we interpret our projections of our own fantasies onto other people as knowledge, given also that even self-knowledge is hardly attainable, and given too that marriage itself, being an institution of social conformity with its time-honored conventional responsibilities, is also a cage of some sort. Brink's insight is that motherhood and the acceptance of responsibility for the security, happiness, and success of spouses and children render impossible the ascetic homelessness that is basic in the rebel's vacation. Susan is to become an impediment to Ben's onslaught against apartheid in *A Dry White Season* and finally divorces him.

A Dry White Season traces the stations in the growth of its Afrikaner protagonist, Ben du Toit. From an unconscious endorsement of the evils of apartheid through sheer apathy, Ben du Toit is led (by the discovery that the decent search for truth is a homicidal affront against the Afrikaner hegemony) to the choice of martyrdom. Ben's progress is expectedly slow, halting and traumatic because truth, the object of his quest, is presented as an ideal that can be glimpsed only by a total demolition of all that he knew and believed because what he believed as truth was derived from the lies of official history, and the devotion to truth demands nothing less than

complete self-denial. Ben needs guides and compassionate encouragement in his perilous pilgrimage to truth.

Stanley Makhaya, whom Brink's narrator describes as "a man who knew everything about everything in the township" (1979: 41), proves to be a thoroughly informed and steadfast guide to Ben. Professor Bruwer and the daughter, Melanie, are others. Bruwer, a retired professor of philosophy functions in Brink's broader scheme of the philosophical and tragic contemplation of man's fate, and illuminates the South African situation from the enduring perspective of history. Melanie, re-formed in the terrible smithy of the South African experience, leads Ben through that fire.

Melanie is partly conceived on the model of Annamaria in *Looking on Darkness*, and her role in the process of Ben's enlightenment is similar to Annamaria's in Joseph's. The abiding presence of cats in both Annamaria's boat and Melanie's home, suggesting some form of Circean enchantment, foregrounds this similarity. But in both abodes, of course, the voyager or pilgrim is taught grim lessons in truth. Under Annamaria's guidance, Joseph is awakened to the folly of the infantile and irresponsible thrill of opening his mouth to have another person's voice come through, and his gaze turned instead to a fulfilling creative life of responsibility. At the figurative level, this is also expressed in her sending him into the sun after his sojourning in her cave-like habitation. The splendid chaos of Melanie's home, the cats purring luxuriously, and the "obscure golden gloom of the lamp" (1979: 127) also create an initial illusion of enchantment. And Ben "could feel the chill fatigue slipping from him like a heavy overcoat gliding from a hanger and landing on the floor" (126). The flight from reality is, however, a fantasy:

Temporarily, only temporarily, the harsher realities of the long day were softened: the court room, death, lies, tortures, Soweto and the city, everything which had been so unbearably vivid in the seedy little cafe. Not that it ever disappeared entirely: it was like a charcoal drawing over which a hand had lightly brushed, blurring and smudging the starkness of the lines (1979: 127).

Half-English-Jew and half-Afrikaner, pampered as a child and in marriage, and with a natural inclination towards laziness and a life of

self-indulgence, Melanie divorces her husband in a bid to transcend her weaknesses by fending for herself and exposing herself to the thousand natural shocks to which flesh is heir. In choosing journalism and consequently relinquishing "security, stability and predictability" (1979: 246), Melanie is in search of a vocation that would keep her from sliding back into her former pattern of life: "I thought it would force me, or help me to expose myself. To prevent myself from slipping back into that old euphoria again. To force me to see and to take notice of what was happening around me." (1979: 131)

Melanie discovers too, like all of Brink's authentic rebels, that the good life in apartheid South Africa meant self-denial and devotion to the common good. Apartheid South Africa transformed even the desire for perpetuity through procreation into obscene self-indulgence: "It is impossible to lead a private life if you want to live with your conscience. It tears open everything that's intimate and personal. So it's less messy to have as little as possible that can be destroyed." (1979: 246) Melanie at the beginning of her career as a journalist, leans on Stanley Makhaya, whom she fondly regards as "a big black rough uncut diamond" (119), to find her bearing. In the course of the performance of her duties, however, she is brutally raped, detained and shot at. Her credentials are impeccable: she can lead Ben.

Melanie points out to Ben that our habitual dread of truth is vain, given our inevitable encounter with it. In her company, Ben approaches the terrible moment of illumination, and Brink's narrator points out that "her presence affected him like light beating on unsheltered eyes." (1979: 123) Later dazed by his discovery of evil at the heart of Afrikanerdom, Ben meditates, "Darkness descending. Still, there is Melanie. Light in the gloom." (1979: 161). Ben's encounter with Rev. Bester is Brink's device to reveal Ben's awakening to truth and his commitment to its pursuit even to the point of self-sacrifice. His dialogue with his wife, Susan, the same night, already indicates this growth. Significantly, when Ben tells his wife, "What does the magistrate know about [the law]? He's not a jurist either. He's just a civil servant" (137), he actually echoes Melanie: "You've got to face it, Ben. It's not really the function of the court to decide on right and wrong in absolute terms. Its first duty is to apply the laws." (121) Melanie also offers Ben the opportunity of an extra-marital relationship that consolidates his decisive estrangement of all his traditional notions of the good and responsible life. And the

process for Ben culminates in a complete metamorphosis. The Apartheid establishment's imposition of exile on Melanie is indeed an acknowledgement of the strength of her anti-apartheid activities, prominent among which is Ben's discipleship.

Brink has identified *An Act of Terror* as an imaginative sequel to his encounter with Black ANC activists in the late 1970s, an experience he found particularly exhilarating in terms of the radiant and cultivated personalities it revealed to him. Aiming at the exploration of violence, Brink, who set out to ask if there were situations which only violence could change, notes:

At first I thought I knew what I wanted to say, but everything changed as I was writing it, largely because of one of trick characters, a young woman who appeared half way through the book and imposed her point of view on me. She simply won't listen to what I was trying to explain to her. She rejected violence completely, and I couldn't find any easy answer to her arguments (1993: 8).

Brink's treatment of violence in *An Act of Terror* is, however, consistent with his earlier fiction. In novel after novel, Brink apparently acknowledges the validity of Fanon's conception of violence as cathartic. As Fanon writes in *The Wretched of the Earth*: "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It forced the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (1967: 74). Brink agrees with Fanon that violence is a means of existential refutation of degradation and an assertion of the human dignity of the oppressed; Brink also illustrates that violence, both as an individual mode of protest and as an organized program of rebellion, is so steeped in ironic possibilities to be sanctioned as a positive political weapon. The careers of Thomas Landman and especially that of Nina Jordaan, Brink's female "terrorist" in *An Act of Terror*, are, in this regard, Brink's demonstration-pieces.

The only daughter and the youngest child in a family of five, Nina, like Beverly in *Looking on Darkness*, early in life recognizes her chauvinistic father as representative of a male-dominated society. Inherent in her sober evaluation of her in her father's scheme of values is revulsion: "all your life you've wanted a daughter (the ultimate wish of the male chauvinist?—to have a female made by

himself, to fulfill his every wish, and with whom, barring incest, he can do what he wants)" (1991: 39). She is further estranged from her father by her recognition of his ecstatic surrender to the lure of power:

they made you a judge after you'd done the Party's dirty work in that big cause against the English press. You're not concerned with right and wrong. All that matters to you is *quid pro quo*. Your friends. Your contacts. And the power they give you access to. And for that, I swear before God, I cannot forgive you (1991: 40).

Jordaan's intervention to release Nina from detention, not because of his conviction of her innocence or that injustice had been done, but because he wanted to save his family's reputation, makes her estrangement complete and exacerbates her rebellion.

Forced by the father to attend Stellenbosch, his "alma mater, the cradle of Afrikaner intelligentsia" (1991: 39), the very gifted Nina deliberately fails in all her examinations, taking to "booze, dagga, sex, opposition politics." (30) Finally, her career flourishes when she is allowed to attend her choice university, UCT, on promising to pull herself together and, like her father, to read law. The Organization's dossier on Nina indicates in fact that her more important education at UCT is her dedicated apprenticeship as an anti-apartheid activist:

... the impressive record at UCT: academic achievements running parallel with hard, dedicated work in different organisations: the SRC, ECC, Black Sash, the UDF, NUSAS, (on the national executive in her final year). The ability to work on a project with others, through days and for weeks, organising, collecting data and interpreting them, distributing food and clothing among refugees of squatter settlements bulldozed by the police, conducting interviews in the embattled townships, taking affidavits from victims of unjust dismissal from domestic or factory employment, of persecution or exploitation, following up information, negotiating with police officers about the particulars of detainees and their conditions of detention, liaising with the families of prisoners. Hardly sleeping for a week sometimes, going almost without food: such things she would

readily give up if the well-being or freedom of others were at stake. Protests, demonstrations? Oh all the time. But that had never been as important to her as working in the legal aid clinic, or in an advice office, or among people in the townships. (1991: 36-37)

The central question in Brink's fiction about the representative Afrikaner is ironically evoked in *An Act of Terror* by the Afrikaner hegemony's ideological representation of the San in the museum as sub-human creatures. Stuffed "like the other animals," the plaster casts of those "little people simply looked too naked, too exposed, to the 'civilised' eyes staring at them as monkeys in a zoo. Africa's oldest inhabitants? Perhaps. Now reduced to an anthropological curiosity" (1991: 16). Touched by the exhibition Nina is led to wonder: "Perhaps, one day, they'll make room for a stuffed Afrikaner too.... Our wretched species is already an anachronism. But who do you think will be chosen to represent us? Who is 'typical' enough?" (1991: 16-17)

Brink regards apartheid not only as a racist but also as a sexist hegemony that necessarily requires violence in order to perpetuate itself:

The president and his men (they are all men) might still cope with hate, it is given in the very nature of the situation: in the course of time the hate of the oppressed masses even becomes a necessary pretext for the means applied to keep the regime in power (1991: 19).

The automatic candidates for the position of the representative Afrikaner would then seem to be great advocates and ideologues of apartheid, Brigadier Bester, Jordaan, committed to racial exclusivity and to the preservation of the Afrikaner hegemony, with its promise of power and wealth to the Afrikaner male, even to the point of unleashing genocide on the Others. Brink's passionate contention, however, is that this is only a type of the Afrikaner and that he is in fact atypical.

Nina is called "Judas" by her father and becomes aware on the eve of the anti-apartheid attacks on the State president that their action would be interpreted as treachery by Afrikanerdom; Nina attempts an advocacy of Judas's case whose main insight is the typi-

cally Brinkean one of the role of perspective in the writing of history.

You must remember, all we have is the official version. Who has ever tried to see it from Judas's perspective?... You'll have to define "traitor" very carefully first.... What do you think people are going to call this thing we're doing? To them we are all a bunch of Judases. And in our case, too, only the official version will be sent into the world (1991: 38).

Vilified in official South African demonology as Judas or the Anti-Christ, the Afrikaner anti-apartheid rebels, in Brink's fiction, are presented in the image of the messiah on whose self-sacrifices the survival and redemption of Afrikanerdom depended. Nina is in part Brink's tribute to the role of the Afrikaner woman in dismantling the racist, sexist Afrikaner apartheid hegemony. Writing on the liberation struggle in south Africa, Ben Obumselu in fact argues that the anti-apartheid league was indeed multi-racial and comprised both men and women:

During the Treason Trials, all races were among the 156 accused, and Robben Island has hosted Jews, Indians, and Afrikaners as well as Blacks. No story of the struggle will be complete without some account of Ahmed Kathrada, the Pillays, the Naidoo's, Billy Nair, Ray Alexander and her husband Professor Simons, Ruth First and Joe Slovo, Braam Fischer, Goldberg, Phyllis Altmann, Beyers Naude, Andre Brink, as well as the thousands of Black people who gave their lives to the struggle (1990: 14).

Asked in 1993 if he didn't envisage an antidemocratic backsliding on the event of majority rule in South Africa, Andre Brink had answered that given the ANC's eighty years, its history of non-racialism and tolerance, and the representation of all South African communities in the movement, he had absolutely no anxieties about the future (1993: 8). Brink further noted in fact that the dismantling of apartheid would give him a new sense of freedom about the subjects he wanted to explore, making it unnecessary for him to be overtly political and to explain the ANC's policies since the ANC could then do it for itself. He actually models the multi-racial anti-apartheid Orga-

nization in *An Act of Terror* on the ANC. Comprising blacks, English, Afrikaners, Jews, Coloureds, men, women, the Organization's espousal of violence also draws on the ANC's historical experience: "The Organisation didn't choose violence for ethical or humanistic reasons, but because after fifty years of peaceful protest we had no other option left. And because it was effective" (1991: 47). For all Brink's ideological identification with the ANC, however, *An Act of Terror* is nonetheless his most sustained and passionate espousal of his non-violent ethic. In the experiences not only of Brigadier Bester and Jordaan, but in particular of Thomas and Nina, Brink seeks to reveal the ironic, even self-defeating, processes of the use of violence.

Brink's fiction offers many portraits of women, often willful in childhood and adolescence, but finally subdued, flayed, shackled and despairingly accepting male domination, and of others resolutely and inspiringly wearing thin the thick reins of social restraints. But where he equates apartheid with male chauvinism by making his greatest advocates and ideologues of apartheid also male chauvinists, Brink also draws attention to the social irrelevance of mere deviance among the oppressed—Blacks and women. Brink's ideal is dissidence as a counter-hegemonic valence which in its opposition to the dominant oppressive hegemony seeks not only the liberation of the self but of all bonds of (wo)men.

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