Identification, politics, disciplines: missing persons and colonial skeletons in South Africa¹

Nicky Rousseau

Locating, exhuming, and identifying human remains associated with mass violence and genocide has come to occupy an important place in the panoply of transitional justice measures. Although such work cuts across the core transitional justice issues of justice, reparation and truth-telling, it has received surprisingly little critical attention from within the transitional justice field.² Existing studies, with some exception, can be characterized by an 'inside' literature concerned to document and develop the transitional justice field, often directed towards identifying 'best practice' and refining an appropriate 'tool-kit'.³ Counterposed to this is a literature often having much in common with the growing critiques of humanitarianism and human rights, in which transitional justice is seen to be a technique of rule, often allied to nationalist and/or a global neo-liberal politics with its associated depoliticizing effects.⁴

In the wider transitional justice literature, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) – still probably the most well-known and cited truth commission – looms large. It may thus be instructive to examine how the TRC came to exhume bodies, and how an associated practice developed, key features of which continue to characterize post-TRC exhumation work. It is easy to read this practice as comfortably fitting into either the above literatures – in the first, exhumation as an important tool in the transitional justice toolkit; in the latter, how a nationalist nation-building agenda deploys exhumed bodies of guerrilla soldiers, an example

of what Katherine Verdery calls the 'political lives of dead bodies'.⁵ Rather than pursuing either path, this chapter follows the practice of exhumation as it developed and then left the TRC's door. Such an approach, together with a focus on instrumentalities, interventions, and transformations, works on the borders, rather than situating itself along the dominant and rather well-worn tracks of transitional justice literature.

The chapter also looks at the practice of reburial, with a specific interest in how it came to be figured, and how it featured in debates on the colonial dead as well as in subsequent work of the Missing Persons Task Team (MPTT), a unit established in the TRC's wake. The focus on practice seeks to bring to view, not only the body of exhumation, but a range of other agencies or 'mediating interpretants' who do, interpret, and study the work of exhumation – exhumation teams, families, the media, scholars – and to think these *together*. This is part of a growing interest in these latter bodies, the disciplinary knowledge that they bring to bear and the body produced through practices of exhumation and reburial, thus bringing to view the 'disciplines of the dead' – anthropology and archaeology, and more recently the genetics field.⁶

While the politics of dead bodies has come to refer to the potency of dead bodies in articulating certain kinds of politics, 'disciplines of the dead' indexes those scholarly disciplines associated with the dead human body. Rather than counterpose politics and disciplines, my interest here is to extend these concepts to include the politics that arise within and between individuals, disciplines, and institutions concerned with exhumation and the ways in which the dead body (or, depending on one's view, those speaking in the name of the dead) compels, 'disciplines', those around it to react in certain ways, calling forth particular practices or rituals. In short, both the body exhumed and the body exhuming is enjoined within and between the terms 'politics of dead bodies' and 'disciplines of the dead'.

The TRC: bodies of evidence and bodies of mourning⁷

Although not included in its mandate, the TRC exhumed a limited number of bodies between March 1997 and June 1998.⁸ Many testimonies to the TRC related to the unjustly buried: funerals banned or disrupted, bodies treated callously or just missing, demonstrating how not even death enabled the raced body to escape apartheid's

bounds. Family members, mainly women, expressed their longing for 'just one bone' to bury.⁹ In a certain sense, though, the first TRC exhumation arose not in direct response to these pleas but more fortuitously following disclosures by security police, applying to the TRC for amnesty. Over a fifteen-month period, the TRC exhumed around fifty bodies,¹⁰ a tiny fraction of the more than 1,500 persons reported missing to the TRC.¹¹

In March 1997, the TRC exhumed the remains of three guerrillas of the African National Congress (ANC) from farms rented by security police in the province of KwaZulu Natal. In the presence of investigators, commissioners, and family members, security police pointed out where they had secretly buried the three, whom they had abducted,¹² interrogated and shot dead on separate occasions. These exhumations drew attention to a significant number of guerrillas killed while infiltrating back into South Africa, but whose remains had not been returned to their families, rendering them missing persons. Further amnesty-related disclosures suggested that these were not always skirmishes as recorded, but planned ambushes in which security forces had no intention to effect arrests. Guerrilla bodies thus came to constitute key examples of the unjustly buried, requiring or calling forth forms of care, restitution, and justice, resulting in TRC efforts to trace, exhume, and identify them.

In most instances, those killed in skirmishes or ambushes were not secretly buried, but entered the legal regimes of the dead body. Accordingly, as is obligatory with unnatural or violent deaths, these bodies were assigned to a police domain. Photographed, fingerprinted, and transported to a police mortuary, the corpse would be recorded in a mortuary register as 'unknown black male' or 'unknown terrorist', and a state pathologist or state-appointed district surgeon would conduct a post-mortem examination. In many instances, even where identity had been established, these 'unknown' bodies were not released to the care of families, but buried in local cemeteries by private undertakers appointed by the state to bury indigent or unclaimed bodies. Here, undertakers recorded receipt of the bodies and provided a coffin deemed appropriate for black indigents by legal regulation. Thereafter the relevant town or city council issued a burial order, assigning the body to a specific gravesite, most often in an area designated for indigents, unclaimed or otherwise unfortunate bodies reliant on the state for burial.

This, then, was how bureaucrats imagined and codified the dead guerrilla, a process that produced a trail of documents for investigators. The practice was often more haphazard – sometimes

undertakers took the body straight from the state mortuary for burial; on other occasions undertakers, in an attempt to increase their profit margins, illicitly put more than one body in a coffin, or more than one coffin to a grave; sometimes cemetery officials or grave-diggers, for any number of reasons, would decide to dig a grave different from that assigned by the burial order. In many cemeteries, the graves of those buried as paupers have long since been covered in grass or bush and now resemble desolate fields.¹³ Nonetheless, the documentary trail provided important evidence for investigators.

Exhumations took place in something of a legal and forensic vacuum. Nonetheless, exhumations 'spoke' to the TRC's mandate and process in different ways. The TRC's official mandate made no reference to exhumations, nor did investigators follow formal legal procedures, seeking permission for individual exhumations from provincial premiers, rather than from local magistrates. Providing official acknowledgement of human rights violations is an important truth commission function, reaffirming – or, as in South Africa's case, affirming – a rights-bearing citizen, a recognition of which is seen to embody the promise of 'never again'.¹⁴ Although commissioners repeated the ritual of acknowledgement to each victim in every public hearing, the materiality of exhumations and associated images provided a more powerful enactment of this ritual than the symbolic exchange of testimony and words. By returning the physical remains to the care of family, the TRC went beyond recommending reparation, as its mandate prescribed, to *enacting* reparation.¹⁵

Additionally, the first exhumations occurred shortly before the deadline for perpetrators to apply for amnesty and for the former government to appear before the TRC to answer questions, as part of a shift in gear to a more 'evidentiary paradigm' of determining accountability for human rights violations. Exhumations thus provided dramatic material evidence of police killings and atrocity, bodies rising from their graves, as it were, to accuse members of the former government who continued to deny systematic involvement in gross human rights abuse. Chastising them on the occasion of the first reburials, former President Mandela took 'this opportunity, as president of South Africa, to call on all political parties and organizations, on all soldiers and others across the old political divide – on all among these and other forces who have reason to apply for amnesty – to do so before the 10th of May'.¹⁶

More widely, TRC exhumations coincided with the internationalization of exhumation and missing persons' work. While work

in Argentina, pioneered by the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF), had been ongoing since the mid-1980s, events in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the first half of the 1990s fuelled the growth of exhuming the bodies of mass violence or genocide. Here, too, the body of evidence rather than that of mourning or care drove the expansion of this practice through the work of the International Criminal Tribunals of Yugoslavia and Rwanda. This work brought together different teams, involving a range of experts – physical anthropologists, archaeologists, anatomists, and physicians. Through these interactions and work, debates regarding exhumations and forensic practice came to the fore. One concerned the place of families in exhumation practice; another related to whether DNA testing should routinely be done on exhumed human remains. Rather than being merely a technical question, this latter debate raised important issues regarding resources and expertise.¹⁷

The TRC was not party to these multiple and unfolding debates about technologies and techniques, authority and power. Notwithstanding contact with the EAAF shortly after the first exhumations,¹⁸ the TRC's exhumation programme operated outside of the forensic frameworks developed by the EAAF and other exhumation experts. Aside from some 'technical advice' provided on one case by the EAAF, no exhumations involved forensic anthropologists or archaeologists: a pathologist oversaw some exhumations in one region, while members of a police forensic laboratory assisted in others, largely to oversee the excavation of the grave, and to take photographs. Most excavations involved a front-end loader, assisted by local grave diggers, who also assisted the police forensic unit to remove the skeletal remains.

Unsurprisingly, then, a subsequent audit of exhumations conducted by the TRC itself in 1999 uncovered serious irregularities, leading to misidentifications and incorrect remains being handed to a number of families.¹⁹ This raised the prospect of causing untold anguish for the affected families, undermining the objectives of a truth commission to provide healing through the techniques of truth recovery and reparation. The reasons for these irregularities were manifold – a cavalier police investigator, inaccurate information arising from a typographical misalignment of columns in a list of guerrilla fatalities supplied by the ANC, the absence of forensic procedures, and, in a few cases, family members who identified skeletal remains according to 'non-scientific' criteria. For example, a news agency reported in 1998 that

[t]he wife of a dead Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier identified his body by his crooked teeth on Monday when members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's investigative unit exhumed graves near Louis Trichardt in Northern Province. ... Alice Tati [*sic*] said the large skull with crooked teeth that was found in a grave at Sekoto cemetery belonged to her husband, Zola Tati [*sic*], of Port Elizabeth.²⁰

A brother-in-law identified a skull by its shape, while a brother claimed one of three skeletons on the basis of a pair of sandals, which he recognized.²¹

This pall cast a wider shadow. Within the TRC, disbelief and distress met the audit's results: the powerful images of exhumed skeletons being returned to families had been counted as some of the commission's uncontested successes. When 'evidentiary proof' was provided – such as that the thirteen partially saponified skeletons exhumed from a farm grave were not guerrillas but elderly people, several of whom still had hospital identification tags around their wrists indicating they had died in hospital beds – some TRC staff responded with anger, suggesting 'They're just bones, why couldn't the matter be left sleeping instead of re-traumatizing families?' The most powerful counter-argument sometimes was not, as may be anticipated, that this was after all the *Truth* Commission, but rather that other families were being denied the opportunity to rebury their dead. This left a strong legacy of the importance of 'best forensic practice', which was emphasized in the TRC's recommendations to government and in the subsequent development of an exhumation unit in the post-TRC period.²²

Burying the unjustly dead

In May 1997, the public broadcaster provided extensive coverage of the first reburial ceremony, rerunning images of the exhumations themselves, showing scenes of skeletal remains – long bones and, most dramatically, a skull, material witnesses from the grave – emerging from the rich brown earth – scenes that journalist Max du Preez predicted would 'be one of the strongest visual memories of the Truth and Reconciliation process'. The narrative which accompanied this footage spoke of 'uncover[ing] secrets of the past', hinting that more 'secret killings on farms' would be revealed in the coming weeks.²³ It is worth identifying and unpicking some of the threads here, and how they came into being, as this script not only influenced the remaining TRC exhumations, but had a longer life

in constituting what is increasingly a normative tradition in South Africa of how to rebury the dead who were unjustly buried.

This script drew on far longer histories of funerary practices, as funeral and burial matters in South Africa have long been political as well as cultural. One strand relates to the practice of state burial for bodies of indigent citizens, which had particular force in South Africa, where it was overlaid with the politics of race. Garrey Dennie has written of African families' long struggles from the late nineteenth century to avoid pauper burials.²⁴ Dennie traces raced differences in the treatment of corpses: until 1942, coffins for black indigents had detachable bottoms, rendering them recyclable; coffins for white indigents were better constructed, lined with fabric, had handles, and, from the 1940s, a nameplate recording name and date of death. Even after regulations disallowed conveying black indigents on an open truck, they permitted undertakers to convey and bury four black indigents at a time, in contrast to the white indigent's individual hearse and burial. Most injurious for black Christian families was the fact that while a minister of religion was a requirement at white pauper funerals, this was not the case for black paupers, suggesting these bodies fell outside the boundaries of the sacred.²⁵ The stain of a pauper's burial was so potent that in 1989 an important apartheid functionary buried the mortal remains of his relative, Sabata Dalindyebo, the head of the royal Thembu house to which Nelson Mandela belonged, in a section of a cemetery reserved for female paupers. This gesture of contempt arose from Dalindyebo's strong opposition to apartheid; the gendered aspect served to double the insult.²⁶

As a result of such profanities, 'pauper burials' were regarded with abhorrence. To escape such a fate, not uncommon in a population with large numbers of migrants, burial societies were created, mainly by women, as a means to rescue bodies from apartheid's depredations. As Dennie suggests, 'In a life littered with the uncertainties of poverty, burial societies offered Africans a single assurance: the corpses of deceased members would be treated as sacred.'²⁷ Burial societies provided funds for funerals and transported migrant bodies to rural homesteads, as well as scripting funerals. Under their direction, and as access to refrigeration removed the need for haste, funerals became far larger and more important occasions, thereby '[inventing] a new cultural economy of burial in which ... the bodies of their dead [were lavished] with resources unavailable to the bodies of the living',²⁸ signalling a politics of the everyday.

From the mid-1970s onwards, as youth politics exploded on the scene, funerals were rescripted and came to constitute an important

repertoire of political resistance. From initially spontaneous expressions of defiance by young mourners at gravesites of their peers killed during student protests in 1976, and influenced by the visually powerful and emotional funeral of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko, a more routine script of the political funeral emerged.²⁹ If burial societies constituted communities of care, which sought to rescue racialized bodies, here funeral committees constituted communities of solidarity, which exemplified the body of resistance. Usurping the role of burial societies, and through often complex and contested negotiations with families, the funeral committee scripted an overtly political funeral from wake to grave – speeches, songs, pamphlets, banners, and flags. The one did not replace the other – many ‘struggle songs’ were already adaptations of hymns, and such songs were added to more conventional funeral fare; many religious figures supported or participated in the anti-apartheid struggle, injecting a political slant into even the religious rituals of funerals.

The potency of *this* dead body’s political life lay in its requiring, in the face of death, not mourning or sorrow, but defiance and resistance, conscripting its peers and families into freedom’s struggle – the slogan, ‘Freedom or Death: Victory is Certain’ worn on T-shirts and painted on banners during the 1980s representing the pledge of those so conscripted. More militarized aspects celebrated the guerrilla – songs from military camps, the famous *toyi-toyi*,³⁰ and guards of honour in khaki and berets flanking the coffin, fists raised. The funeral, rather than marking a moment of closure, can be seen here to open a ledger of debt, which could only be settled by intensified resistance and further deaths. Indeed, police and mourners regularly clashed at such occasions, generating new fatalities, thus occasioning new funerals. Attempts by the state to control or limit such occasions, deploying armed police, and later by imposing severe restrictions, which included prohibiting political speeches and regalia, never entirely quelled these powerful moments of mobilization.

As the dawn of democracy grew closer in the early 1990s, the funeral script again underwent revisions. In what would be the anti-apartheid struggle’s most violent period, the ANC buried two liberation movement icons – former Chief of Staff of the ANC’s guerrilla army, Chris Hani, whom white right-wingers assassinated, and Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC throughout its long sojourn in exile and the ANC’s public face internationally during Nelson Mandela’s incarceration. Here, while many of the earlier accoutrements and rituals were evident, defiance and mobilization gave way to the more sombre and official funeral of a state *to come*. Indeed, for

the first time, apartheid police rather than facing off with an enemy escorted and protected mourners, a powerful symbolic moment marking an official, if reluctant, recognition that those regarded as 'bare life', and thus available to be killed,³¹ were now citizens, worthy of protection.

Elements of both of these forms of funeral were evident in television footage of the reburial, which followed the first TRC exhumations; a high-profile affair, attended by former President Mandela, other senior government and party officials and several thousand ANC members and supporters.³² Coffins draped with ANC flags flanked the podium; mourners, many dressed in party colours, sang songs associated with the freedom struggle. Notably, although only three bodies had been exhumed, five coffins were evident: during the earlier investigation, security police had pointed out a spot where the bodies of a further two guerrillas had been thrown, weighted, into the crocodile-infested Tugela River. The ANC symbolically reburied the two alongside their comrades: in this instance, the materiality of the coffins came to constitute the absent bodies cast into the river. In his address, President Mandela proclaimed the five fallen guerrillas 'heroes', who 'did not die in vain' but would be 'inscribed in the nation's roll of honour'. He presented a medal to the young son of Phila Ndwandwe, the single female guerrilla exhumed (one of two in the total of fifty-odd exhumations conducted by the TRC).³³

In the television footage, vignettes of Phila Ndwandwe and her family interlaced the scenes from the exhumation site and the reburial. Against violent death's body – skull and disarticulated bones – the living, affective, fleshed body, a young Phila, looked out from family photos, including one with her infant son, from whom the abduction would soon separate her. Beyond this, at many levels the scenes unfolding before the camera encompassed the everyday sad rituals and routes familiar to all bereaved families as they prepare for surrendering the beloved body: Ndwandwe's family in the mortuary, looking through a glass window at the skeletal remains, anatomically laid out, and thus constituting a human body; holding a funeral vigil; preparing food for mourners; emerging from the last viewing of the open coffin before the funeral; and the final throwing of handfuls of soil onto the coffin. In some respects, footage drew attention to two different discourses: one of nation and one of family. While the funeral and President Mandela's speech clearly produced Ndwandwe and her comrades as bodies of the new nation, this was not purely a state or party production. Families themselves drew these bodies into this discourse of struggle and nation. Thus

Ndwandwe's sister commented to the television crew that she was 'so proud' of her sister, 'a hero', while an aunt spoke of the family's relief to find out that she was not, as they had been led to believe, 'an askari' (that is, a 'traitor' who had 'sold her people' by going to work for the security police), but instead had been a 'brave person'.³⁴

Such images and discourses played a key shaping role, and as further exhumations took place, they began to assume a familiar routine that operated to reverse the ignominious and anonymous pauper burial, restoring individual personhood. Once investigators had located a grave site, the TRC would organize an exhumation; families, local political and government figures (including in many instances provincial premiers) and the media would be informed and invited. After the exhumation, skeletal remains were transported to a mortuary before being handed over to families. Thereafter local or provincial party structures, assisted by government structures, organized or provided financial and logistical assistance. In keeping with their status as guerrillas, reburying the remains generally took the form of a military funeral, replete with folded flags, and twenty-one-gun salutes. Although the political party, not the TRC, shaped the form of the reburial – its function ending when the skeletal remains were returned to families – over time, many of the politically affective aspects seen at the first reburial began to characterize the exhumations themselves. A later TRC *Special Report*, covering an exhumation in 1998, noted that 'Just a few meters away, the scene around the three graves looks more like an ANC rally than a site of an exhumation, but the premier of the North West, Popo Molefe, says the ANC members are here to support the families'.³⁵ In this instance, several busloads of ANC members, dressed in party regalia, attended, and the work of exhumation was accompanied by songs associated with the guerrilla war.

Exhumations and the associated practice of burial, while restoring personhood, thus placed, not a family member, but the armed guerrilla at the centre of the script. This figure had played an important but primarily symbolic role, rather than the many thousands of youths, armed – if at all – with stones, who by and large used their bodies as weapons and whom police killed in street protests, or the many thousands more killed in inter-civilian violence. This latter violence, much of which security forces encouraged and armed, included civilians targeted because they lived in rival political territory. This centring of the guerrilla was underscored by the fact that, with one exception,³⁶ all TRC exhumations were of guerrilla bodies,

even though they did not constitute the majority of persons reported missing to the TRC.

TRC exhumations can thus arguably be seen to produce both the nationalist discourse and the need for 'best practice', confirming the script suggested by the dominant literature on transitional justice and exhumation noted earlier. This, however, may be too hasty a conclusion. The following section begins to unsettle this seemingly comfortable fit by exploring the ways in which the elevation of the forensic occurred alongside and in the face of other controversies regarding body politics associated with the unjustly dead or buried.

'Skeletons in the cupboard'³⁷

As historian Premesh Lalu notes, it 'was not altogether out of place', then, 'in an environment where the return and excavation of dismembered bodies became a national preoccupation through the TRC process',³⁸ that bones of the earlier dead were said to be restive and, in the TRC's language, demanding repair and restitution. One such instance concerned a quest to locate the head of the Xhosa king, Hintsa, killed and believed decapitated by British colonial forces on 12 May 1835,³⁹ another a demand to return the remains of Sarah Baartman, whose body parts, including genitalia, and body cast had been displayed as 'the Hottentot Venus' in the Jardin des Plantes and later Musée de l'Homme in Paris;⁴⁰ a third instance arose through research by historians on museum collections of skeletal remains in South Africa and Europe.⁴¹ These suggested that, while the TRC had been charged with accounting for human rights abuse during the apartheid period, colonialism's violence remained unresolved.⁴²

These bodies spoke to longer histories of dismemberment and dissection, and those of acquisition, whether as war trophies or other means of collection. The skeletal remains in museums, whose afterlives historians Martin Legassick and Ciraj Rassool researched, involved extensive practices of grave-robbing, defleshing, and trafficking of even the newly dead and buried. Moreover, the study of many such bodies was linked to the emerging field of racial science in which scientists read race on the body's surface and interior. Henri de Blainville and Georges Cuvier studied and dissected Baartman's body; Rassool and Legassick documented how British and European scientists competed to gain access to 'bushman bodies' for the purposes of racial science.⁴³

Colonialism's violence thus included the violence of knowledge and the agency of the disciplines – with respect to bodies of anthropology, archaeology, and anatomy – in such violence and in elaborating racial science through study of both live and dead bodies. But it was not only the distant past that lay unexamined and unaccounted for: Baartman's body parts had continued to be displayed until 1972 and her body cast until 1974, just as many unethically collected skeletal remains still form part of museum collections, available for further research. Scholarly engagements arising from Rassool and Legassick's research later led to the discovery of two macerated corpses in a collection of one Emil Breiting, a Nazi sympathizer who had headed the Institute for Human Biology/Anthropology at the University of Vienna; these, named by Rassool and Legassick as Klaas and Trooi Pienaar, had been acquired from the collection of Austrian anthropologist Rudolph Pösch, who had assiduously collected human remains as 'specimens' of 'primitive' or 'inferior races'.⁴⁴

Some of these controversies spilled into a public debate in Cape Town in 2004 following the exhumation of over 1,000 skeletons, believed to include slaves, from a colonial-era cemetery uncovered during the construction of an upmarket hotel and lifestyle centre in 'Cape Town's glitzy international zone'.⁴⁵ Here it was not merely development which had trumped human remains, but the fact that archaeologists and anthropologists, contracted to clear the cemetery, proposed that skeletal remains should not be buried but 'decently reinterred' with privileged access for 'bona fide researchers' to study 'respectfully'. This response by the scientific community was seen to continue, or at the very least to fail to take into account, science's prior legacies of collection and research. For multiple reasons – political, institutional, biographical – this contest and the public activism associated with it was incendiary, with scientists accused of engaging in the 'mass harvesting' of research specimens.⁴⁶ For some, these histories have left an indelible stain on the disciplines associated with them; at times, this has included a rejection of all scientific interventions and modes of reading or studying colonial bones, which have been recast as ancestral bones. Thus suggestions that mitochondrial DNA analysis could assist in identifying Sarah Baartman's kin, and later those of the Pienaars, were vigorously opposed.

Zoe Crossland, however, has pointed to more complex distinctions at work in science's encounter with the human corpse in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. Thus, while the most marginal bodies (criminals, the poor, colonial subjects) were

subjected to dissection, post-mortem practices were regarded as different and tended to concern elite bodies.⁴⁷ This was precisely the view seemingly taken with regard to Sabata Dalindyebo's body, retrieved from his ignominious pauper's grave, amidst rumours that those who inflicted this insulting burial may also have mutilated his body. Thus, although suggestions of forensic examination were regarded as sacrilegious in the case of Sarah Baartman, in the Dalindyebo matter, as Dennie points out, a post-mortem 'was called to determine whether such sacrilege had taken place [here] modern medical science [is] validat[ing] more deeply held notions of the sacredness of the body'.⁴⁸ In this case, as in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, the post-mortem examination was seen to mark the body as human, existing within a community of care, one which acted to prepare it for its sacred ancestral afterlife; in so doing, the post-mortem was marked off from mere dissection, a practice long associated with the animal and the fate of those – paupers, prisoners – who represented only 'bare life'. This suggests that while interventions in and on the dead body perform the function of constructing a line between the living and the dead body, Crossland's work points to finer distinctions, which may operate to draw a line between the dissected and the autopsied body. These are suggestive of different ontologies at work,⁴⁹ but also of a certain instability of meaning associated with the dead body (or its remains), which is subject both to continuity and difference.

In several respects, then, the developments associated with the long dead served to interrupt the promise of closure suggested by the TRC and exemplified in the physical acts of exhumation and reburial. By calling attention to longer histories of the dead body and colonialism, they called into question any notion that accounting for apartheid violence alone would be sufficient to address the past's injustices. By pointing to contiguity in the logics governing the dead body of apartheid and those of colonial violence, these developments implicitly suggested a similar contiguity in the modes and techniques of reading dead bodies and skeletal remains associated with these two histories of violence. Indeed, in the post-TRC era, it would be through the same disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, and anatomy that a more professional practice of exhumation would emerge than that which characterized the TRC's practice. Yet, while these disciplines and their associated professionals received such short shrift in the public contests over the long dead, this has not been the case with regard to exhumation practices associated with apartheid's dead.

The missing persons task team

Following recommendations made by the TRC, a unit was established within South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority in 2004–5 to examine unresolved TRC missing person cases, estimated to be 'some 477'.⁵⁰ This figure included instances where the fate of the missing person was known but the body's fate unknown. To date, much of the Missing Persons Task Team's (MPTT) work has focused on tracing, exhuming, and identifying these latter bodies. Although existing within a government structure, geared towards the prosecution of political crimes including those arising from the TRC, the MPTT worked closely with, and largely modelled itself on, the EAAF, a team that sees the physical and forensic work of exhumation and identification as one aspect of a wider collaborative and restorative process with families. This has again enjoined the body of evidence to the body of mourning, although somewhat ironically, given the MPTT's location in a prosecutorial service, the latter has dominated.

Forensic expertise, a key issue in tribunals and trials where the body has been rendered as the 'last witness', has played an important role where cause of death and individual identification are directed towards '(ending) the agonising circle of uncertainty' in which the families find themselves.⁵¹ For the MPTT, misidentifications associated with a number of the TRC exhumations underscored the need for forensic expertise. However, such expertise was largely non-existent locally: the police forensic division had no forensic archaeologists or anthropologists in its employ and, in any event, its head was the wife of a former security policeman responsible for killing the very persons whose remains were among those the MPTT aimed to locate. Similarly, the University of Pretoria, which had provided the apartheid police with forensic support in cases requiring anthropological expertise, had also been a key ideological site for apartheid. Although the MPTT has drawn on expertise from both institutions on specific cases, it sought to develop an independent team, contracting the EAAF to conduct the first exhumations and to assist in developing a local South African team. This has grown into a longer relationship; a member of the EAAF based permanently in South Africa has trained a group of young postgraduate students, who have come to constitute a modest exhumation team. This choice has not been without its own controversies: several team members' postgraduate training included exhuming the colonial-era skeletons discussed earlier; a few, under the guidance of their

professor (a key protagonist in those disputes), had sought to conduct further research on the skeletal remains. But here, where physical anthropology has produced cause of death and the individual identities of apartheid's violated and dead bodies in the service of the nation, it has been uncontroversial. Nonetheless, Rassool asserts that the move to human rights work has provided a means to erase the earlier stains from the implicated individuals, institutions, and disciplines.⁵² Whether this is so or not, an effect has been to draw a line between colonial- and apartheid-era bones, disrupting their apparent contiguity, rather than the way in which human remains from the colonial era had previously served to interrupt the TRC's language of repair by drawing attention to longer histories of violence and injustice. This is doubly ironic, given that the sanctioned work on skeletal remains of apartheid's dead includes techniques of identification that continue to assign markers of race. Such techniques remain standard and normative within the forensic disciplines, despite resting on notions of measurement and typology, which underpinned racial science, and against a growing lobby, which suggests that at best such markers are predictive and geographical rather than inherent.⁵³

Aside from close attention to forensic investigation, the imprint and script developed during the TRC is still strongly visible. At the time of writing, the MPTT has exhumed ninety-four remains, overwhelmingly of guerrillas, with a smaller number of disappeared activists, including at least three persons killed by liberation movement perpetrators. The dominance of guerrillas, the team insists, is not a matter of political preference; while it continues to investigate other cases, such as those who disappeared during pre-transition violence in the early 1990s, it has had little success. Guerrilla bodies were, by and large, almost always political and if killed in ambushes or skirmishes invariably left a documentary trace; the bodies of those killed in protest action or inter-civilian violence were buried in city cemeteries where 'political' bodies are largely indistinguishable from large numbers of deaths arising from criminal or inter-personal violence. Nonetheless, these challenges bring into sharp relief the question of which bodies matter.

While much of the MPTT's day-to-day work happens outside the media's spotlight, exhumations continue to attract media attention. However, the key moments in which the body is scripted still take place after exhumation and forensic examination has been concluded. Here, a further ceremonial aspect has developed: namely, the handover ceremony. The MPTT has a limited role in this, and

is not itself directly involved in the reburial. Although its specific format, location, or scale varies, the handover has acquired a status of its own, and in most instances takes place at the premier post-apartheid memorial site, Freedom Park. As with the reburial, it has come to be a moment of celebrating the guerrilla, and inscribing the individual identified guerrilla into the pantheon of heroes: the coffin, draped in the organization's flag, is often guarded by veterans in military fatigues, accompanied by songs of the guerrilla movement. Similarly, the reburial's scale and character depend on a range of factors, both political and more contingent. Thus those organizing or in attendance may be local ANC members, especially military veterans, local or provincial government officials, or, on occasion, important members of the national government.⁵⁴

Such moments are not merely political party celebrations (overwhelmingly ANC), but are framed within a certain nation-building ethos, which continues to place the guerrilla at the centre of memory. Thus although South Africa has not gone the route of a national 'Heroes Acre' for its war dead, nor are these occasions state functions, nonetheless the guerrilla is valorized. This has been accompanied by a quiet revision by of the TRC's more critical stance on the liberation movements, a revision that has gathered momentum under the current President, himself a senior guerrilla commander. It has included how the struggle against apartheid is memorialized, the provision of state pensions and benefits to ex-guerrillas, accompanied by growing mobilization of liberation movement military veteran's associations.

Here again, we seem to be drawn inexorably towards the long-established relationship between nationalism and the dead body.⁵⁵ Indeed, by dint of legislation, the National Heritage Resources Act deals with responsibility for the care of graves with historic or national significance, including those who died in the cause of the liberation struggle. These graves, according to this legislation, form part of the 'national estate', transforming the dead into heritage with *national* significance, available for both memorialization and tourism. However, this would be to ignore more complex dimensions at work. Certainly at times the ANC deploys reburials with greater deliberation and intent, as was the case in an election year in a politically contested region when a single exhumation of five activists produced no less than three ceremonies, two addressed by national ministers, while current President Zuma himself gave a eulogy at the reburial.⁵⁶ Most often, reburials are far more a local, even community affair, and often represent the endurance of combatant

identities. Indeed it is such events that act to solidify this community, whose own access to benefits and opportunities in part relies on the maintenance rather than the dissolution of this identity, and who, by and large, have felt marginalized and unacknowledged in the post-democracy period. It is also clear that these moments are valued and sought after by many family members. Whether or not this is a spontaneous desire or a response to a format offered and institutionalized by the TRC is debatable. Perhaps a more important question to ask is what gives this format such traction? To do so requires further thinking about the particular form and script associated with both TRC and MPTT exhumations, as well as considering the meaning of these in relation to the families of the exhumed. This takes us, in the first place, back to the political funerals of the anti-apartheid struggle.

The impetus to script funerals of those killed during the anti-apartheid struggle as politicized moments of resistance and mobilization often left little room for personal, familial grief. Instead, '[p]ersonal pain and loss become depersonalized into one more death along the path of freedom, one more container of blood emptied to water the tree of freedom, one more statistic in the long saga of the nation's losses.'⁵⁷ Political movements themselves took responsibility for organizing many of these funerals, sometimes by mutual agreement with families, but often, too, through considerable pressure, even 'against [the] will' of the family concerned.⁵⁸ The sister of a detainee who died in custody recently commented 'we felt overwhelmed by the people organizing the funeral. They wanted to tell us what to say about Neil on the tombstone. My parents kept saying: "But he's our son ..." They said: "No he died for us."⁵⁹ Families, in this sense, were constructed as having bequeathed their sons, daughters, husbands, or wives to a nation *yet to come*, a nation few believed lay in their lifetimes.

Yet, today it would seem to be the rescripted political funeral for which families now yearn as an appropriate format – or more particularly the struggle funeral rescripted as official funeral, a more ceremonial and tightly scripted affair of state – in which the nation is enjoined to celebrate those who had lived and died for freedom. But, although desired, the local character of these reburials, which are not formal state functions, means some funerals enjoy more attention (and thus more power) than others. This itself becomes a source of further grievance or pain for families. Insults may be evident in how elaborate a coffin was, the attending crowd's size, whether media were present, how many party or government officials paid

their respects, and of course, which funeral the President attended. The wives of one of the first group of guerrillas to be exhumed by the MPTT voiced their dissatisfaction in interviews conducted by Jay Aronson: 'It was like we were burying an old person. We are not happy at all. There were no flags. There were no MKs to march for them to show people that these people have fought for this country. It was like a normal funeral.' Echoing similar sentiments, others suggested their husbands' reburial 'was not proper':

No matter, they put some stones, the headstones. That doesn't interest us. We wanted these people to be buried as soldiers and respected as people who fought for this country. We are here now, we are free, because of the people like them. Why [are they] not being respected like others? ... So the truth must be said.⁶⁰

The desire for a high-profile political funeral and the accompanying dissatisfaction and disappointment has been understood through two primary and related lenses. The one points to the need for greater acknowledgement of sacrifice. The sister of a combatant killed by the security forces and later exhumed, described visiting parliament in the post-democracy era: 'As I stood there, I thought, this is what Peter died for and who knows his name? He is forgotten.'⁶¹ This forgetting – and this provides the second lens – is materially evident in the inability of transitional justice mechanisms to impact on longer legacies of inequity and structural violence. This is a view frequently expressed by the MPTT, and echoed in Aronson, which points to the inevitable incompleteness of repair where families exist in dire socio-economic circumstances, little changed by political democracy.⁶² It is not uncommon for the MPTT to meet families for whom putting a meal on the table is a daily struggle, or who are unable to pay for electricity. In post-democracy, communities are riven by those who are seen to have enjoyed the fruits of democracy and those – the majority – whose material lives remain largely unchanged. These distinctions are intimate, carefully watched and noted, physical in their visibility.⁶³ The advancement of a son's, husband's, or brother's peers, often exemplified by employment and possession of the potent symbol of a car, and by association lifting the prospects for their wider families, is a matter of deep sorrow for those whose mainly sons or husbands are missing or killed. And here the notion of the ultimate sacrifice is powerful; here 'the bodies serve as a reminder to those in power of the bitter cost of liberation to numerous families, who by and large continue, despite this sacrifice, to live in conditions of deprivation and poverty.'⁶⁴

The politicized and heroic reburial thus addresses a complex amalgam of emotions and needs – on the one hand, it calls for a recognition of freedom's sacrifice, it enacts a proper burial so the missing and unjustly buried now returned to family and community may rest; but in this, it also functions as a reminder (even a protest) that the family bequest to the nation *yet to be* has not been reciprocated in the nation *now present*. Here, the materiality of the remains exemplified in the oft-repeated cry for 'just one bone' is shown to be insufficient; indeed, the insistence on the unfulfilled promise of the nation *now present* is one disabling or refusing closure. For Lizzie Sefolo, the 'sickness was removed [when the bodies were initially recovered], but now it's coming back. Because it's like they were not really people who fought for this country, *it was just remains*' (my emphasis).⁶⁵

This suggests that the issues relating to the family require careful thinking, as well as a more careful disentangling of the seemingly sequential journey from the liminal status of being missing to final reburial, a journey that often engages radically different temporalities. The disappointments expressed in Aronson's interviews assume greater force considering the emphasis that the MPTT, drawing on the EAAF's model, places on the family. This has meant engaging with families, not just as sources of pre-mortem information or persons to whom reports are given, but also as integral to its practice. Encouraged to think of the process as an often lengthy journey, in which they are fellow or co-travellers, family members are often physically present at the site of exhumation, sometimes assisting the team in small ways; at times they will be invited into the laboratory where the skeletal remains will be anatomically laid out and forensic results will be explained and discussed, sometimes family members will touch or hold the bones, and perhaps examine clothing or artefacts found in the grave. On occasion a prayer may be said or a rite associated with the dead will be performed at the scene of death, the exhumation, or in the laboratory, transforming again evidence's body into one of mourning. Family members often speak of the period of investigation and exhumation – as Lizzie Sefolo suggests above – as a healing time, one that often follows a period of silence and official neglect. What is evident from Sefolo's comments is the power of official acknowledgement, one the team provides, but which MPTT head, Madeleine Fullard, suggests needs to be public, indeed 'shouted from the roof-tops'.⁶⁶

At the same time, the interviews conducted by Aronson constitute a small subset of victim families, and it is not at all clear that those he interviewed represent a general view or a particular dissatisfaction

focused on some reburials. There is perhaps a tendency to essentialize notions of family, their needs and desires. Those who work with families are only too aware of complex family dynamics, fault lines within which the question of who speaks for the family and for the dead is often disputatious. Exhumations and their associated investigations sometimes reveal explosive family secrets: a combatant's betrayal to the authorities by a family member, neighbour, or lover; rivalries within or between families in the same exhumation; revelations emerging during DNA analysis regarding paternity. Nor is the idea of an exhumation always desired or regarded as healing: the children of a disappeared activist openly expressed lack of interest in searching for bones, preferring a focus on the living; news of the planned investigation and possible exhumation returned a wife to such a severe depression, that it rendered her physically and psychically unrecognizable to a MPTT investigator between visits over a few months. Yet despite intimate knowledge of these fractures, sometimes running along fault lines of gender and generation, the notion of 'family', often a core rationale for exhumation work, often remains under-theorized.⁶⁷

Aronson, whose evocative interviews are cited above, proposes that, in line with the International Commission for Missing Persons, a 'grave to grave' policy should be implemented, in which families should not just be co-travellers, but co-drivers helping to shape policy and identifying priorities, including memorialization.⁶⁸ This would seem to intensify the current script rather than to open it to a more careful reading.

Conclusion

The TRC privileged recovering, identifying, and returning the material and individual body of the guerrilla and exhumations came to be scripted through a range of agencies, including the TRC, families, the media, government, as well as the ANC. Although reburials fell outside the TRC's purview, being the domain of family and the ANC, they constituted an important moment, in which the body handed over to the family now returned to its political community as well as to a wider nation. Reburials also had the effect of rescripting the exhumations themselves, becoming dominantly ANC moments. Through the scripts of exhumation and reburial, the absent and missing body was produced as evidence, testifying from the grave to apartheid's atrocity, and later, individually identified, produced as the nation's hero on whose body freedom rested. The body of grief

and mourning, testified to over and over again in the public hearings, was entangled in these depictions but perhaps overwritten by the larger narratives of what Ciraj Rassool has referred to as a narrative of 'ancestral heroes of the nation'.⁶⁹ A further aspect was the misidentification of skeletal remains, a blunder that produced exhumation as a field requiring professionalization, ensuring appropriate expertise and knowledge to remove remains from their improper graves and to conduct the important task of identification.

Even as the TRC was operating, other bodies of the unjustly dead and buried came to the fore and, in the same language of reconciliation and repair, provided something of an interruption, pointing to the failure to account for earlier colonial violence, including the violence of knowledge and racial science. Here attention was drawn to the way in which, even as they may have tried to reckon with this past, scientists continued to regard the body as an object of study requiring the specific expertise of science, while at the same time regarding science's own history as irrelevant or off limits.

In the cases of the colonial dead, all forms of forensic investigation have thus far been refused. Nonetheless, formal handovers accompanied the return of, first, Sarah Baartman from Paris and, more recently, Klaas and Trooi Pienaar, who 'had entered the Natural History Museum (in Vienna) as types' and their reburials strongly echoed those associated with the TRC and MPTT,⁷⁰ despite Rassool's prediction in this instance that 'a rehumanisation and privatisation [would be sought] through local reburials, and a retreat from public inscription'.⁷¹ Here it would seem that the imperative to wrest these remains from their object status in museums and research collections resulted in the adoption of the TRC-MPTT script, a script overlaid with longer histories of the political funeral. Indeed, President Zuma addressed the reburial of the Pienaars in 2013, just as former President Mbeki addressed that of Sarah Baartman. An ethos of nation-building characterized both, scripted as restoring the dignity of the victims of colonialism and racial science.

Whereas the coffin in which the exhumed and missing body of the apartheid dead affected a transformation of incomplete and fragmented remains into a mournable body, in the case of Baartman and the Pienaars, the coffin served as well to rehumanize, recuperating the body regarded as first a specimen, then as a museum artefact.⁷² If, as Rassool suggested, the mode of exhumation and reburial turned the missing dead of the apartheid era into 'ancestors of the nation',⁷³ then here one could say that colonial dead have been inscribed not only as citizens but into the pantheon of heroes, those who have sacrificed all, for and on whom the nation rests. Following this, if

colonial bodies had initially interrupted the TRC scripts, but the later role of physical anthropology in the MPTT had served to draw a line neatly separating apartheid-era and colonial bodies, then the politics of personhood have tended to erase that line, drawing them ever closer together. These moves signal the ongoing instability of South Africa's bodies of violence.

Notes

- 1 This chapter, although expressing personal views, draws on experiences of working in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in the Missing Persons Task Team (MPTT). Thanks to Ciraj Rassool, Madeleine Fullard, and members of a graduate reading group on the dead body – Riedwaan Moosage, Bianca van Laun, and Aidan Erasmus – for comments and many stimulating discussions.
- 2 This contrasts with a growing literature on issues of memory and materiality, much of which arises from recent Spanish Civil War exhumations. See, for example, F. Ferrándiz, 'Cries and whispers: exhuming and narrating defeat in Spain today', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 9:2 (2008), 177–92, and 'The return of Civil War ghosts: the ethnography of exhumations in contemporary Spain', *Anthropology Today*, 22:3 (2006), 7–12; L. Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss: Memory, Materiality and Mass Graves of the Spanish Civil War* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2011).
- 3 S. Robins, 'Towards victim-centred transitional justice: understanding the needs of families of the disappeared in post-conflict Nepal', *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 5:1 (2011), 75–98; P. Aguilar, 'Transitional or post-transitional justice: recent thoughts on the Spanish case', *South European Society and Politics*, 13:4 (December 2008), 417–33; J. Aronson, 'The strengths and limitations of South Africa's search for apartheid-era missing persons', *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 5 (2011), 262–81.
- 4 See B. Bevernage & L. Colaert, 'History from the grave: politics of time in Spanish mass grave exhumations', *Memory Studies*, 7:4 (2014); I. Kovras, 'Explaining prolonged silences in transitional justice: the disappeared in Cyprus and Spain', *Comparative Political Studies*, 46:6 (2014), 730–56.
- 5 K. Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Post-Socialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- 6 Z. Crossland, 'Of clues and signs: the dead body's evidential traces', *American Ethnologist*, 1 (2009), 69–76; Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*; F. Ferrándiz & A. Baer, 'Digital memory: the digital recording of mass grave exhumations in contemporary Spain', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 9:3 (2008), www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1152/2558 (accessed 29 August 2014); C. Rassool, 'Human remains: disciplines of the dead and the South African memorial complex', in D. R. Petersen, K. Guava & C. Rassool (eds), *The Politics of Heritage in Africa: Economies, Histories, Infrastructures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

- 7 T. Laqueur, 'The dead body and human rights,' in S. Sweeney & I. Hodder (eds), *The Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 75–93.
- 8 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, vols 2 and 6 (hereafter TRC, *Report*) (Cape Town: Juta, 1998, 2003), pp. 543–54, 550–69.
- 9 For further discussion, see M. Sanders, *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law, Literature in a Time of a Truth Commission* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).
- 10 For discrepancies in the TRC figures, see TRC, *Report*, vol. 2, p. 543, and vol. 6, p. 556.
- 11 TRC, *Report*, vol. 6, p. 519. Victim support group Khulumani provides a higher figure of closer to 2000 persons still missing, see www.ediec.org/world-map/map/country/south-africa/ (accessed 29 August 2014).
- 12 Abduction, more correctly described as an enforced disappearance, was the term employed by the TRC.
- 13 Personal observations during the period of working with the MPTT.
- 14 P. B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 24–7.
- 15 For the TRC mandate, see the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995, available at www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1995-034.pdf (accessed 20 January 2014); for the TRC's interpretation of its mandate see TRC, *Report*, vol. 1, ch. 4, pp. 48–102.
- 16 SAPA, 'Come clean: Mandela', 26 April 1997, available at www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1997/9704/s970426a.htm (accessed 4 December 2013).
- 17 This debate disappeared post 9/11. Immense investment in the project to identify individual victims, returning identified fragments to families, led to technical advances, and considerable cost reductions in DNA testing, as well as a far wider pool of expertise, thus removing many previous technical and cost obstacles.
- 18 Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF), 'Bi-annual report, 1996–7', available at www.eaaf.org/ar_1996_1997/ (accessed 4 December 2013).
- 19 TRC, *Report*, vol. 6, pp. 550–69.
- 20 The audit queried whether this was the correct grave. The MPTT subsequently exhumed a further gravesite; DNA tests confirmed those remains as belonging to Zola Tate, while those given to the Tate family by the TRC have been identified as those of another deceased guerrilla.
- 21 Madeleine Fullard's and Nicky Rousseau's working notes on the audit of the TRC exhumations. In this case our audit verified the graves as being correct for the three guerrillas killed in the same incident, although we were unable to verify whether each family received the correct skeleton.
- 22 TRC, *Report*, vol. 6, pp. 565–69.
- 23 SABC, *TRC Special Report*, episode 45, parts 1–4, screened 27 April 1997 by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), South Africa's public broadcaster, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0zs0LXgNuM (accessed 14 November 2013). See also 'The

- breast-feeding warrior', in the DVD series, *Truth, Justice and Memory*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, South Africa, 2008.
- 24 G. Dennie, 'The standard of dying: race, indigence, and the disposal of the dead body in Johannesburg, 1886–1960', *African Studies*, 68:3 (December 2009), 310–30.
 - 25 *Ibid.*, p. 317.
 - 26 K. D. Matanzima, also of the Thembu royal house, served as 'Prime Minister' of the Transkei, declared an independent homeland of South Africa as part of the apartheid government's policy of dividing South Africa into independent ethnic homelands. Dalindyebo, who died in exile in Lusaka, Zambia, was initially buried in Lusaka; his body was returned to his ancestral home following intense negotiations between the exiled ANC and both South African and Transkeian authorities – see G. Dennie, 'One king, two burials: the politics of funerals in South Africa's Transkei', unpublished seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, October 1990, p. 7.
 - 27 Dennie, 'The standard of dying', p. 323.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, p. 336.
 - 29 J. Bucher, 'Arguing Biko: evidence of the body in the politics of history, 1977 to the present' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Minnesota, 2010); see also Special Issue *Drum*, November 1977.
 - 30 A form of war dance, expressing defiance and protest, said to be derived from guerrilla training camps.
 - 31 G. Agamben, *Homer Sacer* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).
 - 32 SAPA, 'Come clean: Mandela'.
 - 33 SABC, *TRC Special Report*, episode 45.
 - 34 *Ibid.*
 - 35 *Ibid.*, episode 86, part 2, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=exMpVMcTUDY&list=SPB5E49FFA382FFC46 (accessed 5 December 2013).
 - 36 The TRC also exhumed the body of a former guerrilla in the employ of security police whom they later killed owing to fears about his continued loyalty.
 - 37 C. Rassool & M. Legassick, *Skeletons in the Cupboard: South African Museums and the Trade in Human Remains, 1907–1917* (Cape Town and Kimberley: South African Museum and McGregor Museum, 2000); see also Rassool, 'Human remains'. This section draws on this latter paper and discussions with Ciraj Rassool.
 - 38 P. Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2009), pp. 4–5.
 - 39 Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa*.
 - 40 Y. Abrahams, 'Colonialism, disjuncture and dysfunction: the historiography of Sarah Baartman' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2000); S. Qureshi, 'Displaying Sarah Baartman: the "Hottentot Venus"', *History of Science*, 42 (2004), 233–57.
 - 41 Rassool & Legassick, *Skeletons in the Cupboard*. For an exploration of these themes in Namibia, see M. Biwa, "'Weaving the past with threads of memory": narratives and commemorations of the colonial war in

- Southern Namibia' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2012).
- 42 Lalu, *Deaths of Hintsa*, pp. 1–30.
 - 43 Rassool, 'Human remains'; Rassool & Legassick, *Skeletons in the Cupboard*.
 - 44 Rassool, 'Human remains'.
 - 45 *Ibid.*; N. Shepherd, 'Archaeology dreaming: post-apartheid urban imaginaries and the bones of the Prestwich Street dead', *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 7:3 (2007) 3–28; L. Green & N. Murray, 'Notes for a guide to the ossuary', *African Studies*, 68:3 (December 2009), 370–86; 'Prestwich Place Memorial: human remains, development and truth', 27 July 2010, Archival Platform, available at www.archivalplatform.org/blog/entry/prestwich_place/ (accessed 20 January 2014).
 - 46 Rassool, 'Human remains', p. 18.
 - 47 Z. Crossland, 'Acts of estrangement: the post-mortem making of the self and other', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 16:1 (2009); 102–25.
 - 48 Dennie, 'Two funerals', p. 12.
 - 49 Crossland, 'Acts of estrangement', p. 104.
 - 50 TRC, *Report*, vol. 6, p. 519, para. 37 and note 3.
 - 51 L. Fondebrider, 'Reflections on the scientific documentation of human rights violations', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 84:848 (2002), p. 889.
 - 52 Rassool, 'Human remains', p. 2.
 - 53 See, for example, special issue of *Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 13:1 (2009).
 - 54 These observations are based on my participation in some of these events, discussions with members of the MPTT, as well as media coverage of individual exhumations – see for example, 'Closure for families of MK soldier', available at <http://m.iol.co.za/article/view/s/81/a/431085> (accessed 20 January 2014); 'Fallen hero gets apology', available at www.iol.co.za/dailynews/opinion/fallen-hero-finally-gets-apology-1.1534089 (accessed 20 January 2014). See also 'Address by the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development', 8 December 2013, available at www.justice.gov.za/m_speeches/2013/20131208-MK-cadres.html (accessed 20 January 2014).
 - 55 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
 - 56 This funeral was indistinguishable from a guerrilla funeral except for the presence of flags and banners of the 1980s mass democratic movement.
 - 57 M. Ramphele, 'Political widowhood in South Africa: the embodiment of ambiguity', *Daedalus*, 125:1 (Winter 1996), p. 107.
 - 58 *Ibid.*, p. 106.
 - 59 D. McRae, 'History stalks the torturers who drove Neil Aggett to suicide', *Mail and Guardian*, 29 November–5 December 2013.
 - 60 J. D. Aronson, 'The strengths and limitations of South Africa's search for apartheid-era missing persons', *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 5 (2011), p. 278.
 - 61 Author's notes from family meeting.

- 62 Aronson, 'The strengths and limitations', pp. 272, 275–7.
- 63 A. Ashforth, 'Witchcraft, violence, and democracy in the New South Africa', *Cahiers d' Études Africaines*, 38:150/152 (1998), 505–32.
- 64 N. Rousseau, 'The farm, the river and the picnic spot: topographies of terror', *African Studies*, 68:3 (2009), p. 364.
- 65 Cited in Aronson, 'The strengths and limitations', p. 278.
- 66 Personal communication.
- 67 An exception to this is the significant literature in recent years on tensions between families regarding support for exhumations, especially in Argentina and the current civil war exhumations in Spain. See E. Domanska, 'The material presence of the past', *History and Theory*, 45:3 (2006), 342–4; and Z. Crossland, 'Violent spaces: conflict over the reappearance of Argentina's disappeared', in J. Schofield, W. G. Johnson & C. M. Beck (eds), *Matériel Culture: The Archaeology of Twentieth-Century Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 115–31; L. Renshaw, 'Missing bodies near at hand: the dissonant memory and dormant graves of the Spanish Civil War', in M. Biele, F. Hastrup & T. F. Sørensen (eds), *An Anthropology of Absence: Materialization and Transcendence of Loss* (New York: Springer, 2010), pp. 45–62; and Renshaw, *Exhuming Loss*.
- 68 Aronson, 'The strengths and limitations', p. 281.
- 69 Rassool, 'Human remains'.
- 70 'Reburial of Mr. Klaas and Mrs. Trooi Pienaar, Province of the Northern Cape', www.northerncape.gov.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=769:reburial-of-mr-andmrs-klaas-and-trooi-pienaar&catid=44:speeches&Itemid=54 (accessed 29 August 2014).
- 71 Rassool, 'Human remains'.
- 72 Ciraj Rassool, personal communication.
- 73 Rassool, 'Human remains'.

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