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SCHOLARLY REVIEW ESSAY

Confronting Apartheid's Spatial, Perverse, Psychiatric, and Racialized Dimensions

John Dugard. ***Confronting Apartheid: A Personal History of South Africa, Namibia and Palestine***. Jacana Media, 2018. ix + 312 pp. R320.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9781431427352.

Grant Farred. ***The Perversity of Gratitude: An Apartheid Education***. Temple University Press, 2024. xi + 223 pp. $128.00. Hardback. ISBN: 9781439924969.

Mabogo Percy More. ***Being-while-Black-and-Alienated in Apartheid South Africa***. Lynne Rienner, 2024. iv + 256 pp. $45.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9780796110251.

Neil Roos. ***Ordinary Whites in Apartheid Society: Social Histories of Accommodation***. Indiana University Press, 2023. ix + 240 pp. $40.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9780253068033.

In 1948, the Nationalist Party of South Africa implemented apartheid, a policy of strict racial segregation that governed the country for forty-six years until 1994. Apartheid's proponents legislated several measures to entrench racial separation under the direction of its proclaimed architect Hendrik Verwoerd. This included passing the Group Areas Act, which set aside enclaves for different racial groups, and the Population Registration Act which required every citizen to declare a racial category in 1950. These promulgations further enforced the 1945 Groups Areas Act. Passed during the segregation era from 1910 to 1948, this law determined where Africans could live, work, and travel within the metropolitan spaces.

John Dugard, Grant Farred, Mabogo Percy More, and Neil Roos utilize biography to demonstrate respectively that apartheid involved more than an ideology put into practice. Dugard pursues the law, Farred evaluates education, More interrogates the psychiatric mind, and Roos captures the accommodation of ordinary Whites. These different theoretical and thematic approaches underscore the ways in which apartheid stamped its imprint upon South African society. Authors show "how ordinary people tells the stories of their lives, confronting and resisting dehumanizing conditions [to remake themselves and their worlds creatively]"(Mathebula 2024).

Dugard is the first to confront apartheid in this analysis. He accesses his experiences as an academic legal counsel, as an international fact-finding mission chair, former Human Rights Centre director, a South African academic, a practicing lawyer, and as a United Nations (UN) special rapporteur on human

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rights (Palestine) to illustrate these observations: legal domestic cases had international ramifications, replications of domestic policies appeared in different geographical regions, and the past still haunts the present. Dugard leads readers into the courtrooms, the academic halls, and the Middle East where his expertise shines. These spaces document different phases of an account that historicizes his biography.

Divided into three parts: Southwest Africa/Namibia, South Africa, and Palestine, *Confronting Apartheid* was conceived at the Bellagio Center of the Rockefeller Foundation on Lake Como, Italy when the author had a residency there in 2013 (2). Dugard makes invaluable connections to apartheid's reiteration in the Middle East. This concentration differs from studies that privilege activists or exiles of South Africa's liberation struggle and in doing so, he enters apartheid's world as a double insider. Dugard challenges and interrogates court decisions to show their impact not only upon Namibia's Southwest African People's Organisation (SWAPO), but also in other cases where apartheid's repression extended beyond South Africa's peripheries, such as in Palestine and Gaza where the line between perpetrators and victims blur.

Clarity does, however, exist in terms of how Israel applies an apartheid-like policy to entrench domination and subordination spatially. Checkpoints, a dividing wall, settler designated roads and roadblocks enforce difference and contain sameness. House demolitions reminisced the apartheid regime's forced removal process whereby places such as Sophiatown (Johannesburg) and District 6 (Cape Town) in the fifties and the sixties faced destruction for their interracial makeup or to impose the Group Areas Act, which sought to create segregation within the urban areas. Arbitrary arrests mirrored South Africa's pre-dawn pass raids. Dugard analyzes policing, civil society, censorship, and separate development to illustrate how geographically sanctioned residential and occupational areas represented important domains in the psychology of racial discrimination. More than anything, *Confronting Apartheid* chronicles Dugard's own blackening amid his participation in apartheid's dismantlement within and outside South Africa. Dugard's public writings of legal decisions and his leadership in various capacities led many to call him racist, Eurocentric, and colonialist. This personal browbeating and the country's execution of repeated violence failed to prevent Dugard from ending his work on a hopeful note. Grant Farred, on the other hand, left South Africa following the brutal murder of a former teacher in 1989.

Farred is a scholar of postcolonial studies, race, sports theory, intellectual thought, and cultural studies and Africana Professor at Cornell University. This South African native is the author of numerous works but his most recent offering, *The Perversity of Gratitude*, sits at this scholarly table. Farred divides the work into numbered concepts to interrogate dehumanization, empowerment, blackness, perseverance, and dignity among other themes that derive from the Bantu Educational system that former Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd endorsed. The institutional structure, therefore, prepared Africans for service as menial laborers rather than as lawyers, doctors, or other professional capacities because "There [was] no place for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour, so why educate them if they would

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not have opportunities?" (South African History Online (SAHO), Hendrik Verwoerd-10 Quotes by Hendrik Verwoerd (Politics Web), 20 September 2016). Further dehumanization existed. For example, the pass laws required Africans to carry identity documents at all times. These identity documents contained the carriers' names, employment histories, residential addresses, ethnicities, and fingerprints among other markers. Passes enabled Africans to live, work, or travel to prescribed areas.

The apartheid system failed to prevent people from "leaving" South Africa physically, but they went beyond the country's borders intellectually (99). The irony of this all, as Farred explains "was that … apartheid, because how it was conceived as a political system, provided the optimal conditions for disenfranchised thinking" (xi). Farred proves his overarching thesis repeatedly through different lenses, but especially through those that taught him at Livingstone High School. Founded by African Political Organisation (APO) leader and physician Abdullah Abdurhuraman, this institution—which opened its doors in 1926—welcomed Farred as part of the class of 1976, the generation of student uprisers who opposed Afrikaans as a medium of instruction for all courses.

Richard Owen Dudley, Morgan MacArthur, and Richard Moore Rive and other teachers pushed the limitations inscribed by the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD) curriculum by making their students' "minds … invaluable [commodities] by [using] the canon [for] subversive and literary ends" (78-79). For example, MacArthur taught Farred about Gerald Durrell's "Greek Isles," "a democracy in the style of Walt Whitman." The desire to learn African literature and history grew within Farred, however, he found something valuable in the descriptive prose of European authors: "the White snows, or the spring flowers fluttering by on an icy lake served as an invitation for Farred and other disenfranchised South African minds to extend … [and] … in a literary sense, outside itself" (81).

Another one of Livingstone's legends, Richard Moore Rive, mapped a path out of South Africa (for Farred) through writing to show him why it mattered (171, 174). His death outlined another map that Farred dotted by his grief. He confessed, "That South Africa could have laid Richard's life to waste so brutally and be so cavalier in the injustice it dispensed—that was when I knew, irrevocably, I would never return" (175). While Farred proclaims that migration represented a one-way trip, he had done this many times before intellectually. Rive's death returned Farred to a disenfranchised state causing him to think yet again about the historical lessons of apartheid's impact upon the present. Mabogo Percy More examines this notion further through the intellectual biography of South African psychologist Noel Chabani Manganyi.

Being-while-Black-and-Alienated provides a genealogical trajectory of thinkers who influenced and inspired Manganyi to diagnose his "psychological" patient, apartheid. Manganyi earned a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of South Africa (UNISA) in 1970. During that year, the apartheid regime implemented the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act thereby stripping Africans of their birthright by consigning them to ten ethno-linguistic reserves that only the South African government identified as independent nations. More explores how the theoretical world of logotherapy (Viktor Frankel), existentialism (Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger et al), metabletics (Jan Hendrik van den Berg),

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absurdity (Albert Camus, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard), psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud), and social psychology (Kurt Lewin) impacted Manganyi's thought. More shows how Manganyi shares ideological beliefs with each of these pioneering thinkers who endeavored to understand how systems of domination and subordination impacted psychological behaviors. Of particular concern was how these structures alienated marginalized populations. More's comparison with Martinican psychiatrist, author, and theorist Frantz Fanon and Manganyi shows how both specialists diagnosed the damaged Black psyche.

As the chronicler of Algeria's Dying Colonialism, Fanon uses his essays and articles found in *Towards the African Revolution* to call for African liberation through the severing of colonialism's psychological umbilical cord (Mabogo Percy More, *Being-while-Black-And-Alienated-In-Apartheid-South Africa*, 2024). Fanon writes, "Having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his food habits, his sexual behavior, his way of sitting down, of resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed flings himself upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drowning man" (Fanon, 1964). Manganyi addresses colonialism's diabolical twin, apartheid, to scrutinize alienation.

Like Fanon, the South African employed phenomenology to disentangle the everyday lived experiences of Africans within his home country. He found that race, psychology, and politics negatively impacted their mental health. For that reason, *Being-while-Black-and-Alienated in Apartheid South Africa* led Manganyi to derive this conclusion: "violence created an existential crisis for Black South Africans, simply because [the apartheid regime] continuously controlled and dehumanized them to undermine their identity and humanity" (Mathebula, 2024). Manganyi's intellectual contributions sparked the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) that Steve Biko, Barney Pityana, and Mamphela Ramphele established in the seventies. Its promotion of "Black is Beautiful," Black self-determination, and community engagement served to combat apartheid's racialized poison by uplifting them from institutionalized, spatialized, and geographical inferiority. Manganyi shows how Blackness represented disempowerment while Farred shows how Africans enfranchised this construction.

Historian Neil Roos, on the other hand, turns his gaze to *Ordinary Whites* to explore the inequalities they faced from the late forties to the early sixties. "This compellingly told, meticulously researched and delightfully accessible book brilliantly portrays the lives of White South Africans in the lower strata of apartheid society. [*Ordinary Whites* is] an intellectual feast for historians of whiteness and a riveting read for ordinary readers" (Morrell, 2025). Roos ensconces his argument and interpretations within subaltern studies, historiographies on Nazism, and social history to center the subordinates within the dominant White community. He demonstrates again and again that personal politics are political. Roos shows how his subjects, including those of his own family, complied with and challenged the apartheid regime. Dick Roos (the author's father) and Vic Roos offered their services to the military during the Second World War; however, upon their return home they faced significant challenges that disrupted their own lives and also the image of respectability that the apartheid regime propagated.

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The Rooses turned to alcohol to numb the pain amid a plummeting economy and a state of joblessness. Drunkenness and unsteady employment damaged the portrayal of White men as moral, upstanding, and contributing citizens in apartheid's matrix of respectability. South African officials sent the Rooses for confinement and rehabilitation in the work colonies that represented one of the Nationalist Party's "architectures of control" (Wintz 2024). Centralized authority appears to undermine independent decision-making but as Roos demonstrates, ordinary Whites smashed the façade of dutiful and polite Whites that along with growing African opposition the regime tried to maintain.

Women also enter Roos's social history. His mother Sheila Roos underscores the complexities of whiteness. Because she challenges and complies with the apartheid state's version of normalcy, Roos leaves open her story for rectification (Wintz 2024). This differs for those White women who entered the labor market in increasing numbers after the Second World War. A growing number of Afrikaner politicians and nationalists became concerned that those female laborers had forsaken their duties as "Mothers of the Nation," or *volksmoeder* (Wintz 2024). Working took them away from domestic and childrearing responsibilities not to mention these same Afrikaners believing that they had compromised family virtues by participating in the work force. Through these stories, Roos shows how everyday lived experiences intertwined with national policies not only within the White community that he addresses, but also the African populations that apartheid intruded on and even controlled how they mourned (Curry 2007, 2012, 2022).

Dugard, Farred, More, and Roos offer intriguing insights into apartheid's impact within and outside South Africa. They all question the notion of disenfranchisement. Dugard and Roos operated as subjects who represented the dominant White minority, yet they each show that whiteness possessed a cost. Dugard faced public criticism while Roos's family endured personal turmoil amid a system that thrived on the illusions of hegemony, normalcy, and control. But while these two privileged whiteness as an analytical category, the questions that Dugard and Roos address correlate with those posed by Farred and More. Congruence centers on the subject of alienation. As Roos shows, economics and issues of respectability created chasms between and among White Afrikaners whereas More and Farred discuss this within the context of personhood. Thus, *Confronting Apartheid*, *The Perversity of Gratitude*, *Being-while-Black-and-Alienated in Apartheid South Africa*, and *Ordinary Whites* coalesce around the authors' abilities to theorize how apartheid acted hegemonically through spatial, perverse, psychiatric, and racialized dimensions.

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