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Keeping you post-ed: Space-time regimes, metaphors, and post-apartheid

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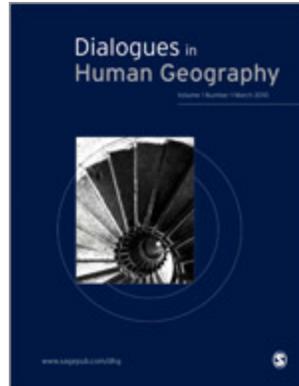
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Keeping you post-ed: Understanding post-apartheid space and time

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Abstract:	<p>Societies that have undergone systemic change are characterized as "post" – post-socialist, post-colonial, etc. - to encapsulate the impact the past still has on their structure and functioning. Research on these societies has therefore tended to adopt a mostly temporal approach, investigating the tension between continuity and change. Using the example of post-apartheid South Africa, I make a case for a more balanced approach to post situations by including space as equally valuable. I draw my theoretical inspiration from Hartog's notion of regimes of historicity and Massey's space-time to show that we should investigate space-time regimes. I show that a space-time regime of entanglement, often passéist, with blurred temporal boundaries and messy, place-bound experiences of time, characterizes post situations. Finally, I again use South Africa as my empirical grounding to offer a set of metaphors to describe and analyze the concrete places that this entangled, post space-time produces.</p>

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Figure 1: The former Venda border. Photo by the author, 2016.

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Figure 2: Official memorial to the Gugulethu Seven. Photo by the author, 2010.

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Figure 3: Disused mirador next to Khayelitsha stadium, built for the surveillance of social events happening in the stadium, specifically the political funeral rallies of the late 1980s. Photo by the author, 2011.

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Figure 4: Gugulethu's buffer zone. Photos by Olivier Ninot, Martine Berger and the author, used with permission, a-2009 and b-2013.

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Figure 4: Gugulethu’s buffer zone. Photos by Olivier Ninot, Martine Berger and the author, used with permission, a-2009 and b-2013.

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Keeping you post-ed: Understanding post-apartheid space and time

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Abstract

Societies that have undergone systemic change are characterized as “post” – post-socialist, post-colonial, etc. - to encapsulate the impact the past still has on their structure and functioning. Research on these societies has therefore tended to adopt a mostly temporal approach, investigating the tension between continuity and change. Using the example of post-apartheid South Africa, I make a case for a more balanced approach to post situations by including space as equally valuable. I draw my theoretical inspiration from Hartog’s notion of regimes of historicity and Massey’s space-time to show that we should investigate space-time regimes. I show that a space-time regime of entanglement, often passéist, with blurred temporal boundaries and messy, place-bound experiences of time, characterizes post situations. Finally, and as a first proposition, I again use South Africa as my empirical grounding to offer a set of metaphors to describe and analyze the concrete places that this entangled, post space-time produces.

Introduction

Geography is history. Living in Cape Town means you travel through the past all the time. (...)
Geography is learning how to step gently on the past, and walking from present into history and back with each footstep. (...)
Geography is fantasy; it’s time and memory. (...)
Sometimes geography is irretrievable sadness.
G. Baderoon, *Geography and Memory* (2015)

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3 What is a “post” situation? Post-colonial¹ (Raghuram et al., 2014), post-socialist
4 (Tuvikene, 2016), post-apartheid, and other similar terms denote the messy situations of
5 societies that have undergone a systemic change, but remain thoroughly entangled with
6 their pasts. The previous system, having ended in a glorious bang or being gradually
7 replaced, still informs and constraints a significant part of such societies’ day-to-day
8 realities. In other words, just as Hannah Arendt (1963; 2006) taught us that revolutions
9 confront us with beginnings, “post” situations confront us with the question of endings,
10 i.e. has the previous system really passed? If not, who is still affected and who decides
11 whether a situation has become “post”? When does a post situation end? Does it fade like
12 a comet’s tail, progressively blending its debris with a new milieu? And how do we spot
13 the end of something that is also an ending (Ilchenko and Dushkova, 2018)?
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24 Further, any post situation tilts our analysis toward a temporal analysis and the well-
25 trodden - but not less complex - avenues of continuity and change. These avenues offer
26 geographers opportunities for research, especially if we draw inspiration from a set of
27 theoretical tools and research practices that German and French historians, such as
28 Koselleck (1979 [transl. 2004]), Hartog (2003 [transl. 2015]), and Offenstadt (2018),
29 designed to renew our analysis of how societies relate to their pasts, and how space
30 becomes relevant in this relationship. At the same time, as Massey (1995; 1992; 2005)
31 has long taught us, we should be wary not to conflate space with continuity. Her insights
32 into space as change and her notion of space-time need to be combined with historians’
33 renewed analysis of the relationship between societies and their pasts.
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43 My primary ambition in this paper is to contribute to a more balanced understanding of
44 “post” societies by including the spatial in depth and using the case of post-apartheid
45 South Africa. Analyzing the contemporary South African case is therefore not an
46 objective *per se*, but the empirical grounding of my theoretical analysis, an illustration,
47 and an optical instrument (Appadurai, 1996). South Africa underwent systemic change at
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54 ¹ I follow Jo Sharp’s typographical suggestion to distinguish between the hyphenated,
55 post-colonial historical era (following independence) and the unhyphenated postcolonial
56 approaches.
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3 the end of apartheid – the first democratic elections of April 1994 terminated a racist
4 regime that had all too efficiently *systematized* racial segregation in respect of all groups
5 and all social realms. Apartheid’s prominent spatial dimension (Christopher, 2000) makes
6 it especially apt to develop a more spatial understanding of the post. Twenty-five years
7 after apartheid’s end, South Africa is gradually shifting from being self-evidently
8 described as ‘post-apartheid,’ to interrogating this term (Freund, 2010; Hayem, 2017), to
9 plain ‘contemporary’ (Elder, 2003), or even ‘post-post’ (Dubresson and Gervais-
10 Lambony, 2018; Guyot, 2015). Is its post situation indeed coming to an end? What kind
11 of spatialities has the country’s situation produced and what kind of language can we use
12 to describe them? I therefore explore how metaphors might help us speak about and,
13 therefore, start thinking about some of the specific spatial configurations in post
14 situations by not only looking at what has passed, but also at prefigurations of what might
15 come.

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27 This paper is therefore not an in-depth South African case study, although I write it as a
28 (French) geographer who has studied South Africa and the city of Cape Town since it
29 became a democracy – a long-term, if long-distance, relationship. My particular
30 positionality is not only that of a geographer belonging to another colonial metropolis,
31 France, but this location has contributed powerfully by drawing my attention to issues of
32 continuity and change: what remains, what has changed between my research stays?
33 Moreover, a combination of what Raffestin (1980) called schizochronia, schizotopia, and
34 schizoglossia characterizes my relationship with South Africa as a field. My fieldwork’s
35 time and space differ qualitatively from those of my everyday life, even though they take
36 me back to a place where I’ve lived and that has shaped me as a scholar and a person.
37 South Africa is the place to which I keep returning, although it is not my home. At the
38 same time, I struggle to express myself in different languages in the field and in writing,
39 since none of them is my own, hence schizoglossia: reaching to understand Afrikaans
40 through German, resocializing myself toward English norms of scientific writing, and
41 witnessing my feeble isiXhosa ebb away while I wait for time and funding to return to
42 nourish it. This is, alas, a classic case of being “fluent-in-too-many-colonial-languages”
43 (Phipps, 2019).

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5 This paper is an attempt to think theoretically by means of the South African case in
6 order to understand how systemic change “resignifies” time *and* space (Verdery, 1999:
7 39) or, rather, space-time; and to start characterizing the space-time regime of post-
8 configurations. To do so, I begin with an exploration of the current, South African regime
9 of historicity (Hartog, 2003 [transl. 2015]) – a regime I will define as *passéist*, namely
10 **understanding time with the past as the main frame of reference**. Thereafter, I combine
11 this *passéist* regime of historicity with Massey’s concept of space-time to suggest that
12 space-time regimes are what we should look at, and that the post-apartheid’s one is one of
13 entanglement. Finally, I offer a set of metaphors as a vocabulary to start describing and
14 analyzing the concrete places that this entangled, post space-time produces.
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25 **Current understandings of the post in post-apartheid – it’s history, 26 stupid!**

27 **A *passéist* regime of historicity**

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32 My starting point is the discussion between German historian Reinhart Koselleck and
33 French historian François Hartog with the latter (2003 [transl. 2015]) trying to answer
34 Koselleck’s question of “how, in a given present, are the temporal dimensions of past and
35 future related?” (2004: 3). Koselleck characterizes the present as the tension between our
36 “space of experience” (*Erfahrungsraum*, the agglomerated experience of what has
37 happened and what we, individually and collectively, have learnt from it) and “horizons
38 of expectation” (*Erwartungshorizont*, what we dare to hope for or fear can happen).
39 Hartog suggests that there are “orders of time,” namely ways, situated in history and
40 space, of constructing time to make sense of it. He proposes that these orders should be
41 called *regimes of historicity* (*régimes d’historicité*), that he defines “in a restricted sense,
42 (...) the way in which a given society approaches its past and reflects upon it” and, in a
43 broader sense, “the modalities of self-consciousness that each and every society adopts in
44 its constructions of time and its perceptions.” He continues, characterizing several
45 regimes of historicity: the heroic (in Ancient Greece), Christian (eschatological, and
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3 chiefly shaped by Augustine), modern or futurist (based on a belief in “Progress” and a
4 better future, characteristic of the West between 1789 and 1989), and “presentist” (the
5 contemporary regime, at least for the West, that makes the present central to our
6 experience of time). He insists that regimes of historicity are “a heuristic tool which can
7 help us reach a better understanding not of time itself—of all times or the whole of
8 time—but principally of moments of crisis of time, as they have arisen whenever the way
9 in which past, present, and future are articulated no longer seems self-evident” (Hartog,
10 2015: 16). Of course, regimes of historicity are themselves produced in specific
11 configurations, and by specific actors. They convey agendas – political, social or
12 scholarly.
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22 The regimes of historicity notion is therefore a useful tool to understand how
23 contemporary South Africa relates to its past, or, more broadly, how post societies,
24 powerfully shaped by structural and far-reaching change, conceive themselves. While this
25 notion has intrinsic limitations (mostly, for my argument, it’s the decoupling of time and
26 space, see *infra*), it is a helpful first step to unpack what “post-apartheid” might mean.
27 The expression itself makes the past central to South Africa’s contemporary experience
28 and identity. In other words, and to mirror Hartog’s “presentist”/“futurist” terms, South
29 Africa remains under a *passéist* regime of historicity, due to the depth of apartheid’s
30 imprint on society, spaces, and psyches. Glen Elder (2003: 2-3) pointed out very early on
31 that calling South Africa “post-apartheid” has reinforced this *passéist* regime of
32 historicity by “anchor[ing] contemporary South Africa to the past: literally, rhetorically,
33 symbolically and practically,” obscuring that “present-day South Africa is also much
34 more than a shadow of things past.” This term also “suggest[ed] that there is a breakpoint
35 after which everything changes,” namely April 1994 (Elder, 2003: 2-3).
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48 In the following, I will build on post-apartheid South Africa scholars’ remarkable body of
49 work as a “source of refined knowledge” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2011: 1) to show how
50 this *passéist* regime of historicity has been deployed. This regime has celebrated the
51 regime change, complexified the chronological narrative, and legitimated social and
52 political demands by pointing out how little has changed. This is well-known by scholars
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3 of South Africa, but perhaps not beyond, which is why I will devote some time – and
4 space! - to summarizing their findings. I do so to engage in a tentative practice of
5 Southern Theory: grounding the discussion in a specific, detailed case to show how post-
6 denominations cover passéist regimes of historicity, how fruitful a detailed empirical
7 engagement with the chronological limits of the post- can be, but also how post-apartheid
8 (and other post- denominations), even as a floating signifier, remains a mostly temporal
9 category.
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19 Post-apartheid as marking a radical and systemic change

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22 The end of apartheid ushered South Africa into an era of *change*. Post-apartheid change
23 was crystallized at a specific moment, namely the first democratic elections in April 1994.
24 The long lines of first-time voters and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first
25 African president were captured in beautiful and triumphant snapshots that told the world:
26 Apartheid is over; South Africa is “free at last!” The day seemed a radical turning point in
27 history perhaps best exemplified by the case of the homelands. At exactly midnight on the
28 day of the election, these native reserves forcibly turned into “autonomous,” even
29 “independent” states by the Pretoria regime, but designed to control and exploit the African
30 workforce, ceased to legally exist. The post-apartheid era could be said to have experienced
31 its glorious and precise moment of birth at this moment. The term was widely used and
32 reinforced as such in nation-building and media narratives. This reading of 1994 as a
33 radical turning point was especially strong just after the elections and during the Mandela
34 presidency. It was widely shared within South Africa and abroad.
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46 If change was witnessed as sudden and radical, it was also *systemic*, because apartheid was
47 a *system*² that cast the entire society and its spaces into racial segregation and
48 discrimination’s rigid framework (Christopher, 1994). The difference between apartheid
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54 ² The idea of apartheid as a system does not imply that it was a fully coherent system. As
55 Deborah Posel (1991), among others, has shown, apartheid was not coherent in time
56 (from the 1940s to the 1990s), space, or in implementation.
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3 and other kinds of racial segregation (e.g., in the rest of the colonial world or in the
4 American South) is in degree rather than in nature, and lies in its systemic character,
5 because segregation was applied to all races and to all spheres of existence. Residential
6 segregation was also applied to the White population group, although to their advantage.
7
8 Furthermore, influx control, job reservation, different school curricula, prohibition of
9
10 interracial marriages and sexual relations, petty apartheid in transport and public spaces,
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12 different levels of political rights, and the restriction of entrepreneurial freedom for Blacks,
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14 etc. augmented residential segregation during apartheid. This racist ideology molded space
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16 (Western, 1996; Lemon, 1991; Christopher, 1994; Robinson, 1996). Consequently, the end
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18 of this systemic undertaking sparked wide-ranging societal change that also affected the
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20 social, economic, political, and personal fields, which all underwent massive
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22 transformations. All of these also have spatial dimensions.
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26 Change in South Africa can be defined as a “systemic revolution,” since the notion of
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28 revolution clearly indicates a before/after temporal structure organized around a precise
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30 moment (Arendt, 1963). But when Bauman (1992; quoted in Beilharz, 2001: 52-67)
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32 defined systemic revolutions, he contrasted them with “merely political” ones (e.g., in
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34 Spain, Portugal, and Greece). Such political revolutions topple repressive regimes in order
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36 to express “fully developed bourgeois societies capable of self-sustained reproduction (...)”
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38 and of supporting a democratic order.” In contrast, “systemic revolutions” (e.g., post-
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40 communist and, I believe, post-apartheid) are not completed after the toppling of the
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42 dictatorial, sometimes totalitarian³, order. A new, still-to-be-defined societal system is
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44 being born in a long and messy process, loosely summarized by the post prefix. In this
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46 sense, this prefix points to the difficulty of making a clean break with the past, to the
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48 coexistence of (not so) past and “post” logics, and to social dynamics’ messiness and
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50 entanglements.
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52 Post-apartheid: Blurred temporal boundaries

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54 ³ The totalitarian character of the apartheid regime has been long debated, as it fulfilled
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56 many, but not all of the criteria of totalitarianism. It suffices that apartheid’s hold on
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58 minds, its systemic character, and violent repression of opposition allow both it and
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60 socialist regimes to be discussed as systemic revolutions.

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5 Taking Bauman seriously requires a more careful look at the changes being brought by
6 the systemic revolution process. The sheer breadth of this systemic change was further
7 complexified because it did not occur in isolation, but was accompanied by other,
8 simultaneous changes. The most notable of these was globalization or, more exactly,
9 South Africa's accelerated return to increasingly intense global flows. Such a temporal
10 collision or *télescopage* produces composite, sometimes contradictory, dynamics. For
11 instance, apartheid's end and the democratization process fostered spatial and social
12 integration, even nation-building. Conversely, the neoliberal globalization processes
13 generated new fractures and consolidated old ones.

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22 According to Grunebaum's (2011: 19): "Passing through the long, entangled moment of
23 'transition' one is compelled to ask, 'So, what's new?'" –Conversely, one could ask
24 what's not new or what hasn't changed? As scholars explored the transition, politicians
25 repositioned themselves, activists took up social issues, and people waited and demanded
26 for their living conditions to be improved, a more refined and critical reading of South
27 African history began to emerge in the 2000s. Scholars emphasized the change's
28 messiness and the absence of a clear and unique turning point, while activists' claims
29 focused on what had not changed fast enough. Political points were scored across the
30 board through different interpretations of the past and of the change. While this merits an
31 article in itself, let me evoke the **multi-faceted ANC** discourses deploring the remaining
32 "multidimensional unfreedoms" (Manuel, 2010), **many of which** called for a second,
33 **economic**, transition **and which were used as arguments to support** Jacob Zuma's rise to
34 the presidency **as an apparently "pro-poor" candidate**. The **name** of the Economic
35 Freedom Fighters - an opposition party founded in 2013 – **and its rhetoric reference**
36 **explicitly limits the change that occurred: political freedom was acquired, but economic**
37 **freedom, namely the end of inequalities and the return of the land, is a battle still to be**
38 **fought, since the exploitation and dispossession past is still very present.**

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53 Gervais-Lambony (2003) has long shown that these complex changes reveal multiple
54 temporalities. First, one can distinguish a rapid, political temporality: once change began
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3 at the political level, it developed relatively quickly. Nelson Mandela's liberation, the
4 political negotiations, and the first democratic election in 1994 all led to apartheid laws
5 being repealed, which dissolved the system's legal grounding. This political and juridical
6 temporality is chiefly associated with 1994 being regarded as a radical turning point.
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10 Political change culminated in the 1996 adoption of the new Constitution, one of the most
11 progressive in the world, which consecrated the *political* rupture.
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13 Second, economic change has a different temporality. The transition from Fordism (here,
14 racial fordism according to Crankshaw, 2008) to post-Fordism occurred in the 1970s,
15 bringing major changes (e.g. financialization, internationalization, indebtedness, etc.), but
16 without a clear turning point, because the capitalist system actually intensified under the
17 "mining-energy complex system of accumulation" (Marais, 1998; Ashman et al., 2014;
18 Ashman et al., 2013). Furthermore, affirmative action policies, such as BEE (Black
19 Economic Empowerment), did not change the economically powerful's profile
20 significantly. In other words, with the top 10% of SA's population earning 60% of all
21 income and owning 95% of all assets, it is quite safe to say that power had not shifted in
22 the economic realm – making the transition an "elite" one (Bond, 2005). Finally,
23 neoliberal economic policies gained the upper hand in the government from 1996
24 onwards, validating structural evolutions (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999; Narsiah, 2002;
25 Narsiah, 2013; McDonald and Smith, 2004; Hart, 2013; Morange, 2016; Williams and
26 Taylor, 2000).
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29 Third, social, cultural, and even psychological changes have long been deemed elusive.
30 The elites are now racially mixed (see Nuttall, 2009; or, for a literary illustration, Matlwa,
31 2007), but the poor have remained overwhelmingly Black. Race remains salient
32 (Seekings, 2008) and racism common, attested by the frequent flare-ups of crude racist
33 language and behaviors, as well as by the persistence of systemic racism.
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These factual discrepancies between rhythms of change might be one of the reasons for
interpretative discourses changing with the field they describe. The field of politics is rife
with discourse about temporality, while political economy focuses more on spatiality.⁴
Temporality offers clean cuts, easily identified achievements (e.g. the adoption of the

⁴ I owe this idea to one of the reviewers – acknowledged with thanks!

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3 1996 democratic and progressive Constitution), linearity, the measurement of progress,
4 and proof of political agency. As such, temporality “serve[s] the political needs of the
5 elite and the historically privileged” (Madlingozi, 2015: 1), whose ongoing privileges are
6 secured by temporal distancing from their origin in colonial and apartheid times. By
7 contrast, the persistence of structural violence, economic inequalities, and dispossession
8 points to “temporal ossification” (Madlingozi, 2017: 125), making the continuity that
9 often characterizes understanding of spatiality more relevant.
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17 Under this closer scrutiny, the post-apartheid era’s beginnings become plural and blurred.
18 This blurring is perhaps best illustrated by returning to “transition”, a term used very early
19 on to analyze South Africa’s systemic change. The term initially depicted the first phase of
20 change, which Hein Marais calls “the twilight zone of interregnum” (1998: 83). This
21 “interregnum” was the intermediary political phase that started with de Klerk’s February
22 1990 speech unbanning the ANC and opening the way to democracy and which lasted until
23 the first democratic elections. This “transition” was a complicated period that included the
24 negotiations between the White government and the opposition parties, extreme political
25 violence, and many significant events, such as the 1992 referendum and the 1993
26 assassination of Chris Hani, a communist ANC leader. The transition phase’s legal and
27 political frameworks were still that of the old regime. Progressively, a broader definition
28 of transition took root in the public debate and in academic texts. This new definition
29 included the government of national unity period from 1994-1996, which ended with the
30 adoption of the new Constitution. This definition, although mainly political, also makes
31 sense from an economic perspective, as it included the redistributive Reconstruction and
32 Development Program replaced by the far more neoliberal GEAR (Growth, Employment
33 and Redistribution) policy in 1996 (Narsiah, 2002; Williams and Taylor, 2000). Less
34 rigorously, this definition included the end of Mandela’s presidency in 1999, as he
35 incarnated the democratization process. The transition era was also extended upstream;
36 Marais incorporates more structural elements of change, especially at the social and
37 economic levels. These structural elements confirm that the 1990-1994 events were not a
38 “miraculous historical rupture,” but “the (as yet inconclusive) outcome of a convergence
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3 of far-reaching attempts to resolve an ensemble of political, ideological and economic
4 contradictions that had accumulated steadily since the 1970s” (Marais, 1998: 2).
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8 The diversity of definitions of the “transition” period proves that the post-apartheid
9 period can and should be divided into different periods with very different characteristics
10 (Houssay-Holzschuch and Sanjuan, 2018; Michel, 1994). Currently, a rich literature is
11 devoted to understanding these periods and how they shifted or morphed into one
12 another. This article’s space constraints do not allow me to delve deeply into this, I
13 therefore summarize this literature by saying that, after the transition phase (see above), a
14 phase of normalization took over, combined with neoliberalization and developmental
15 state policies (Marais, 2010), as well as the insufficient delivery of services. These
16 policies reduced poverty and decreased interracial inequalities, but also produced
17 persisting, even increasing, intra-racial inequalities, which the HIV/AIDS epidemic
18 intensified. These characteristics differ profoundly from events during the transition and
19 demonstrate that the post-apartheid era is in no way homogeneous.
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31 Finally, the “post-apartheid” notion interrogates the idea of endings. Is it finished? If so,
32 when did it finish and how? Authors’ answers to these questions differ, but several have
33 suggested the idea of “post post-apartheid” (Dubresson and Gervais-Lambony, 2018;
34 Guyot, 2020). With good reasons, public debate has identified the 2012 Marikana
35 massacre, and the 2015 #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, which
36 consecrated the so-called *born-free* generation’s entry into the political debate as turning
37 points by asking for a “properly post-apartheid order,” namely a “decolonial” one
38 (Makhulu, 2016: 257). Dubresson and Gervais-Lambony (2018), who approach these
39 questions from a political economy angle, suggest that the 2007-8 economic downturn
40 and Jacob Zuma’s election as president already signaled a period change.
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50 “Post-apartheid” is therefore a floating signifier suggestive of a passéist regime of
51 historicity. Once seen as radical, precisely dated change, it is now understood as a far
52 more complicated periodization combining multiple temporalities, diverse periods, as
53 well as blurred beginnings and endings. However, this much more sophisticated view still
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3 understands “post-apartheid” as a strictly temporal analysis of continuity and change. But
4 regimes of historicity are not only about how one interprets the past. Nicolas Offenstadt’s
5 recent work (2018) on the German Democratic Republic, which he calls “the disappeared
6 country”, has shown how a relationship with the past is materialized through artefacts,
7 objects, ruins and, crucially for geographers, places. Consequently, post-apartheid should
8 not be seen as a temporal category only: it is a “space-time” (Massey, 2005) and an
9 especially entangled one at that.
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20 Post-apartheid as entangled space-time

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22 Doreen Massey wrote powerfully that the “interpenetration of space and time” (2005: 24)
23 is such that we *have* to think of them together – offering her “space-time” notion to this
24 end. Thinking of space and time together also means that “the imagination of one will
25 have repercussions (...) for the imagination of the other” (2005: 18). This means that any
26 analysis of regimes of historicity needs to be complemented with an enquiry into their
27 associated regimes of spatiality – in fact, *space-time regimes* are what we should look at.
28 Here, I want to show that a space-time regime of entanglement characterizes the post
29 situation. I will subsequently initiate the complementary enquiry into this regime’s
30 spatialities – taking care not to exclude time - through a set of metaphors, as this figure of
31 speech is useful when speaking about such hybrid configurations.
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40 Moving to space-time uncovers how the post-apartheid experience never separates space
41 and time, but configures them in specific ways for which we have to find a relevant
42 vocabulary. This is just as true for other post-situations. Verdery (1999: 98), for instance,
43 evokes how the circumambulating bones of the XIVth century prince Lazar
44 simultaneously reconfigured space and time by “establish[ing] the territorial claims of a
45 new Serbian state” and “compressed time, as if his death in 1389 had occurred just a few
46 days ago.”
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53 A spatial experience of temporal entanglements

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3 Sarah Nuttall, building among others on Mbembe's postcolony (2001) as a "time of
4 entanglements" (her words), regards this notion as central to defining what post-apartheid
5 is (for a use of the notion of entanglement in geography, see Sharp et al., 1999). She
6 defines entanglement as
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10 "a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an
11 intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may
12 gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring,
13 in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness." (2009: 1)
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16 Contemporary South African spaces still bear the deep scars of apartheid's spatial
17 planning. In this sense, wandering South African cities and countryside even today very
18 often feels like a throwback to a different time. Spaces formerly demarcated as White or
19 African still differ sharply with regard to their landscapes, density, uses, and income.
20 Hard data vindicate this feeling – a national geography of poverty visibly maps the
21 former homelands' contours as still impoverished areas. On the ground, the boundaries
22 that delimited these homelands can often be identified in the landscape: a dirt road
23 separates a commercial cattle farm's vast pastures from farm workers' informal
24 settlement where Bophuthatswana's border used to be.
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33 **[Insert here Figure 1]**

34 Figure 1: The former Venda border. Photo by the author, 2016.
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38 Further east (see Figure 1), road signs materialize the former border of Venda. Drivers
39 entering the dense African settlement are warned to keep to the 60-km/h speed limit,
40 while a car driving the other way can speed up to 100 km/h as it enters former White,
41 "modern" space, here in the guise of an industrial tree plantation (Amilhat Szary et al.,
42 2017). In other words, both the contours and the content manifest the phantom borders
43 (*Phantomgrenzen*) of the previous, still visible spatial order on maps and in the
44 landscape, in pretty much the same way as former imperial borders and the iron curtain
45 remain visible on maps depicting voting patterns or even techniques of public lighting,
46 such as **night aerial photos of Berlin delineating where the wall was through the use of**
47 **differently colored lights** (von Hirschhausen et al., 2015; CityMetric Staff, 2015).
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3 Contemporary spaces also reflect the multiscalarity of the apartheid spatial order. *The*
4 *Group Areas Act's precise demarcations*⁵ *of African and Coloured townships still appear*
5 *as urban apartheid* *PhantomGrenzen* *on contemporary maps tracing race or income*
6 *distribution*. This persistent social cum racial geography is only to be expected, as land
7 reform has remained elusive. In short, and to paraphrase French political geographer
8 Michel Foucher (1988), even in the post-apartheid era, apartheid is still visible from the
9 air.

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12 In addition, a distortion of the linearity of time and the continuity of space often
13 characterizes post-situations: the (aptly-named) Lazar case evoked above illustrates this
14 in respect of the post-Yugoslavian context, as does Nicolas Offenstadt's (2018) analysis
15 of the GDR as a "disappeared country" – *the apparent solid continuity of space totally*
16 *disrupted here*. In South Africa, *this past, which cannot pass spatially and socially*, is
17 associated with a future that never materialized. This future would have included righting
18 apartheid wrongs, eradicating racism, inequalities and poverty, and making "a better life
19 for all," which ANC 1994 electoral posters pledged. Democratization held the promise of
20 all of these, but they are still a distant, unlikely prospect. In spatial terms, such a future
21 would mean decent housing, service delivery, land reform, environmental justice, etc.
22 Many authors have identified this specific temporal and spatial configuration – according
23 to Koselleck, a promised horizon of expectation that never materialized, but is still hoped
24 and fought for - as a key feature of post-apartheid South Africa, or, as I claim, of post-
25 apartheid space-time. Achille Mbembe (2011: viii), for example, wrote that:

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28 "One of the main tensions in South African politics today is the realisation that there is
29 something unresolved in the constitutional democratic settlement that suspended the
30 'revolution' in 1994 but did not erase apartheid once and for all from the social, economic
31 and mental landscape. (...) Seventeen years later, the country is still caught between an
32 intractable present and an irrecoverable past; things that are no longer and things that are
33 not yet."

34 Adam Habib (2013) has likewise mentioned a "suspended revolution" that is not as yet
35 accomplished. Such configurations are typical of Szacolczai's (2009) "frozen liminality,"

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54 ⁵ The 1950 Group Areas Act was a key piece of apartheid legislature that assigned
55 specific, demarcated residential and business neighborhoods to racial groups in urban
56 areas. It was harshly implemented, including through forced removals and bulldozing.
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3 which Van Gennep's rites of passage inspired, namely that social change can be analyzed
4 by means of the liminality notion, which combines a phase of separation from the
5 previous state, followed by a phase of liminality proper, or in-betweenness, after which a
6 return to a "normal," but enhanced, state closes it off. However, the process can freeze
7 over during any of the phases. The post-apartheid category designates the frozen
8 liminality precisely at the in-between phase. It does not mean that nothing happens during
9 this phase, quite the opposite. Anthropologists remind us that absolutely *anything* can
10 happen there, but whatever happens does not move towards the desired, more just, future
11 delineated when the process began.
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20 Because it is stuck in this liminal stage in which apartheid wrongs have not yet been
21 righted, post-apartheid is the space-time of ghosts. Again, this is not specific to South
22 Africa: Marie Bonte has shown that in a post-conflict situation that might just as well be
23 pre-conflict, Beirut teems with them (Bonte, 2017; Barthe-Deloizy et al., 2018). They
24 might be haunting memories that persist and which one has to confront unexpectedly, or
25 the phantoms of people forcibly displaced, kidnapped, murdered, and massacred. These
26 memories and shades inhabit the ruins of what was destroyed – a neighborhood, a
27 countryside valley now badly eroded; they show the lasting scars of what was brutally
28 implemented – the homelands policy, urban segregation, etc.; they emerge in the chilling
29 or heartbreaking former use of everyday spaces – a neighborhood police station used as a
30 torture center, a buffer zone, a "granny flat" that formerly housed the live-in maid, a
31 church, etc. A staple, if problematic, trope in postcolonial and/or postconflict contexts
32 (Maddern and Adey, 2008; Cameron, 2008; Hoelscher, 2008), ghosts were legion in the
33 South African political discourse of the 1990s and 2000s. They haunted the words of
34 Desmond Tutu who hoped the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would lay them to
35 rest (Ramphela, 2008: 46). They are invoked as such in the hollowed-out forms of slain
36 anti-apartheid activists (see Figure 2) in the memorial to the Gugulethu Seven (Houssay-
37 Holzschuch, 2010). These ghosts rose from the ground opened up in Prestwich Street,
38 Cape Town, to build an international hotel, revealing a slave graveyard (Jonker and Till,
39 2009). True, post-apartheid ghosts "have a politics" (Cameron, 2008: 383), both temporal
40 and spatial. They manifest the entanglement of temporalities produced by persisting
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3 injustice and reveal a **nation-wide** “topography of terror,”⁶ by appearing at specific places
4 to reveal past injustices, or when roaming a country full of “disappeared” activists’
5 hidden graves (Rousseau, 2009; Rousseau, 2016; see also Till, 2005 for an analysis of the
6 **original use of the expression in Germany**). As such, these ghosts are the essence of the
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8 post-apartheid passéist regime of historicity and bear witness to Baderoon’s “irretrievable
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10 sadness” of post-apartheid geography.
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15 **[Insert here Figure 2]**

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17 Figure 2: Official memorial to the Gugulethu Seven. Photo by the author, 2010.
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21 Nostalgia is a last, emotional, manifestation of temporal entanglements’ spatial
22 experience. Gervais-Lambony (2012; 2017b) maintains that it is a “geographical
23 sadness,” a sadness caused by space and that can in turn produce space. The term was
24 initially coined to describe the illness that people, wasting away because a place to which
25 they wanted to return was inaccessible, experienced. Later, nostalgia was used to describe
26 the sweetly sad feeling of re-experiencing a past in the present while knowing it is
27 inaccessible. Nostalgia is thus a longing for both space and time lost, and is an emotion
28 that has been identified, even positively asserted, in countries that have undergone
29 systemic revolutions. Yougonostalgia (Petrov, 2018), the German *Ostalgie*, and the
30 feelings expressed by “the last of the Soviets” in Svetlana Alexievich’s *Secondhand Time*
31 (2016) all document this emotion with regard to post-communist countries, **even when**
32 **acknowledging or having suffered under these brutal regimes**. South Africa too has post-
33 apartheid nostalgia, longing for a variety of pasts: the brutally destroyed pre-apartheid
34 past (Buire, 2012), the apartheid past even if one was a member of the oppressed, which
35 Dlamini (2009) described so poignantly in his remembrance of the Katlehong, a **Black**
36 **township**, of his childhood, and even for the hopes and enthusiasms of the mid-1990s.
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38 **This does not mean that people are nostalgic for the regime, but that one can be nostalgic**
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52 ⁶ The expression initially referred to the permanent exhibition in the museum with this
53 name in Berlin, built on the site of the Gestapo headquarters. It connects the site and the
54 system of propaganda and terror that the Nazis unleashed on the country and Europe.
55 This original use and Rousseau’s extension of the term to South Africa point to places
56 and spaces shaped by perpetrators (*Ort der Täter*) and to the comparability of cases.
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3 for the moments of happiness, relationships, or places that happened during the time of
4 apartheid. For instance, an important body of literature of a scholarly and/or
5 autobiographical nature documents the nostalgia that seizes forcibly removed people
6 when returning to the place from which they were displaced: Gervais-Lambony (2012)
7 documents the case of Comet in Ekurhuleni, which is less famous than District Six,
8 Sophiatown or Cato Manor. While walking the streets with former residents he recorded
9 their nostalgic reminiscences: “Comet, it was the most beautiful place, it was well
10 maintained, we had space”; “this was my street, we used to play here”; “that was my
11 home, can you take a picture of me standing here?” These reminiscences conclude with a
12 disenchanted comparison with the present: “It is very sad to see what this place has
13 become.” Physical presence, perambulation, and the in-place experience of the
14 discrepancy between the past and the present spark nostalgia.
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26 Spatially experienced entangled temporalities that tend to be mostly turned toward the
27 past constitute the key characteristic of post-apartheid space-time. However, this passéist
28 régime of historicity and spatiality does not radically exclude other temporalities.
29 According to Koselleck (2004), such remembrances, including the remembrances of hope
30 even when (or because?) a better future remains elusive, shape expectations for the
31 future. Consequently, post space-time, even when passéist, does not limit spatial
32 experiences to continuity and permanence. Doreen Massey mentions that space also
33 works as a marker of social change. But changing space in a post context takes on forms
34 characterized by temporal entanglement, for which we need a specific vocabulary.
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45 Metaphors for post-apartheid space-time

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48 Entangled post-apartheid space-time, while partially inherited from the past, is also
49 shaped by “possibility” (Pieterse et al., 2004: 2). Pieterse et al. suggest that the end of
50 apartheid opened up spaces of possibility rather than probability. Political and social
51 changes have made it possible for people to aspire to the better life they were denied in
52 principle under apartheid, even if the odds are not in their favor, as they act under strong
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3 constraints, most notably economic ones. Examples of the post-apartheid possibilities
4 include newly legal access to rights, resources, encounters, and places to which one can
5 hope to return, decades after being forced out, or which one can finally access. As Julien
6 Migozzi (2012) has showed with regard to post-apartheid school rugby, spaces of
7 possibility can be very concrete. While structural inequalities persist and are revealed in
8 the quality of the coaches, equipment, and even of the rugby field's grass, the match on
9 the rugby field's space-time hosts (bodily) encounters between teams that race divided
10 not so long ago. These possibilities have thus a spatial imprint and are combined,
11 entangled with other, inherited spatial forms. Together, they produce places that are
12 specific of post space-time, places for which our geographical vocabulary is currently
13 being expanded.
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24 Metaphors are especially useful, perhaps even necessary, to describe these specific
25 places. Susan Sontag, excavating the work that metaphors do when speaking of illnesses
26 such as TB, cancer, and AIDS, demonstrated how one thinks with, through, and thanks to
27 metaphors:
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30 "Saying a thing is or is like something-it-is-not is a
31 mental operation as old as philosophy and poetry, and the
32 spawning ground of most kinds of understanding, including
33 scientific understanding, and expressiveness. (...) Of course,
34 one cannot think without metaphors." (Sontag, 1989: 5; see also Sontag,
35 1978)
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39 She demonstrates how powerful and pervasive metaphors can be, and how they reflect
40 their time of use, evolving as social and scientific conceptions change. In turn, Johnston's
41 *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Johnston, 2000: 456) reminds us that "metaphors are
42 an indispensable part of both writing and theorizing" because they are ambiguous.
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45 Noxolo et al. plead for metaphors to be developed for conceptual thought, echoing
46 Pieterse's notion of possibilities:
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49 "Developing new metaphors becomes an important way to open up [possibilities]. (...) Their 'open-endedness or inexplicitness' (Boyd, 1979, page 357) allows the expression
50 (or at least intimation) of concepts that are not fully comprehended and for which a literal
51 set of terms is not available. But metaphors also make that which is new or strange a little
52 less intimidating by providing familiar concepts as bridges or steps. Thus, new
53 disciplinary metaphors can provide 'hooks' into new ways of thinking, providing us with
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3 the ability to move beyond our current discursive limits, and enabling us to reshape our
4 geographical projects.” (Noxolo et al., 2008: 149)

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6 They argue that metaphors are particularly powerful when used in a postcolonial
7 approach as thinking in and through metaphors mobilizes a powerful linguistic tool that,
8 by its very ambiguity, works against constructed binaries (e.g. past/present, or, in our
9 case, apartheid/post-apartheid), allowing new constructions to be imagined (Noxolo et al.,
10 2008).

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12 Metaphors do not, however, come without caveats. First, let it be clear that they are not
13 intrinsically better than other regimes of knowledge,⁷ but that they are a complementary
14 regime that might be particularly useful in post- situations. Second, and in Sontag’s
15 (1989: 5) terms, “that does not mean there aren’t some metaphors we might well abstain
16 from or try to retire.” We should pay careful attention to their nature, to their diversity, to
17 what they designate, **to their spatiality and temporality**, and to the work they do in
18 society: **do they exclude people or shut possibilities out; can they speak to the future?** We
19 should also pay attention to the language in which they are couched and the power
20 relationships embedded in that language – especially in a post-colonial context. Lastly, I
21 do not claim that metaphors are the only way to grasp post- space-time realities. Makhulu
22 (2004: 239) has analyzed other ways in which people make sense, through words, of this
23 configuration: framed isiXhosa “ditties and proverbs, both new and old, invented and
24 recycled” found in shacks on the Cape Flats weave together personal, situated experience
25 and broader narratives of the past.

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**However, metaphors have a lot of power to help us think about new situations, such as
post-conflict time-space configurations.** Using a South African example, namely Cape
Town⁸, as I believe South Africa resonates empirically and theoretically with many other

⁷ My thanks to the reviewer who suggested this idea. A caveat: **I use metaphors here in an exploratory and descriptive manner, although I did systematically try to include an overview of the possibilities they might open.**

⁸ **In the same way as South African exceptionalism has been repeatedly debunked (see Houssay-Holzschuch 2010 for a summary of the debates), Cape Town is not an**

post places, I here offer a few metaphors to describe the spatialities of post-apartheid. Some of them are mine, but other scholars, inside and outside the South African context and post situations, have proposed most of them. I have chosen to classify these metaphors by the type of places they most aptly describe, which differ depending on their time of creation. This does not mean that they were built or vacated in just a single period, but that the direct temporalities that constituted them shaped their particular configuration decisively. Table 1 offers an overview of these “hooks,” the ways of naming and apprehending post-apartheid space-time.

Time of Creation	Metaphor and its source	Example
Before apartheid	Palimpsest (classic, see Marshall et al. 2017)	Cape Town City Center
	Spring	Khoisan place names
	Brecciation (Bartolini)	Prestwich Street Memorial
Apartheid layout	Tomasons (Akasegawa)	Miradors
	Hermit Crabs	District Six Rubble Piles
		Township Buffer Zones
After apartheid	Bubbles (inspired by Sloterdijk)	Summergreens neighborhood
		Leisure and shopping places

Table 1: Metaphors for post-apartheid space-time

The first set of metaphors, palimpsest, spring and brecciation concerns places with a visible heterochronia – places whose material structure and usage were constituted over a long period of time; they not only predated the apartheid era, but were actively produced after 1994. The past therefore appears in multiple and thick layers. Cape Town city center, the oldest witness to the colonial encounter and conquest, is a very good example of this type of places. The post-apartheid city thrives on a background of layers of the colonial, then the modern, and then the apartheid city. Remnants of these various eras come in diverse guises. The “Castle,” namely the fort established during the first decades

exceptional either. Rather, as Richard Poplak said (*Daily Maverick*, June 21, 2016): "For millions of South Africans, Cape Town isn't a sales pitch. It's an early warning system."

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3 of colonization, old churches and mosques dating to the same period, and the Old Slave
4 Lodge, where the enslaved working for the Dutch East India Company slept, are all
5 monumental landmarks, while the Company's Gardens public park memorializes Cape
6 Town's *raison d'être*, namely to provide fresh produce and water to colonial ships on
7 their way to the East. The street grid evokes early modern town planning; Strand Street's
8 name traces a disappeared shoreline, erased by reclamation. Further north, high-rise
9 buildings are either office towers built after the post-WWII reclamation of the Foreshore,
10 or post-1994 deluxe hotels for global tourists. Here, the classic metaphor of the
11 *palimpsest* (see Mitin, 2018 for a recent take on post-socialist palimpsestic places) makes
12 sense, as the Capetonian city-text has been rewritten several times, much in the same way
13 as most other cities around the world. But, Marshall et al. (quoting Philpotts, 2014: 52)
14 have recently maintained that

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17 "... palimpsestic spaces specifically seek to: 'stabilize and disambiguate different
18 temporal layers' as opposed to a 'more inventive' process of seeking out 'new relations
19 between the non-synchronous layers'." (Marshall et al., 2017)

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22 Owing to this limitation, the palimpsest metaphor needs to be complemented with others
23 for more complex configurations.

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26 So long and thorough were the dispossession and repression of indigenous Khoisan that
27 traces of precolonial times are hard to identify in Cape Town. However, the way they
28 crop up offer us another metaphor, that of the *spring*: forced deep underground for
29 centuries, circulating through the cracks and fissures of oral history and colonial texts,
30 Khoisan place names are now forced back to the surface by very different dowers
31 (Giraut et al., 2008). Table Mountain's indigenous name, Hoerikwaggo, now appears on
32 trail names and tourist information. Marketing and tokenism certainly play a role, but
33 there are also indigenous stories and traditional leaders' place-based ritual healing
34 practices. For instance, a renaming ritual was performed to claim back the Rondebosch
35 Common open space during the Occupy movement; cleansing rituals and indigenous
36 stories of naming were part and parcel of the struggle to keep Princess Vlei a nature
37 reserve (Ernstson, 2012; Houssay-Holzschuch et al., 2018; Houssay-Holzschuch and
38 Thébault, 2017).

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3 Furthermore, Nadia Bartolini (2013) has suggested *brecciation* as a very useful
4 alternative to the palimpsest in order to describe space-time configurations where
5 historical layers are neither horizontal, nor neatly ordered chronologically. In Rome,
6 where her study is located, “soil and matter may shift, become nonlinear, be displaced
7 and spatially disorganized” (p. 4). Breccia is a geological term that designates “coarse
8 deposits of sedimentary fragments from different origins that are consolidated or
9 cemented together.” Freud also uses breccia “to grasp the disparate concentration of
10 elements of the past in the same space: the space of a dream” (Bartolini, 2013: 4-5). Not
11 only does brecciation explicitly include messiness and entanglement to describe the
12 space-time configuration, but it takes temporal dynamics into account. Past elements
13 from a specific bygone period can therefore be brought back to the surface, here or there,
14 or sink and disappear for a while. The above-mentioned Prestwich Street memorial in
15 central Cape Town is a perfect example of such brecciation (Jonker and Till, 2009). In
16 2003, builders excavated an ancient slave graveyard while constructing a luxury hotel,
17 digging straight into an early colonial layer of the past. The remnants were displaced and
18 ended up in a memorial, but not on the site - the hotel was built on it -, a few hundred
19 meters away.
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34 My first set of borrowed or not metaphors for the post-apartheid space-time evoking the
35 pre-apartheid past tends to be geological by nature. The set convey the weight of a heavy
36 past and how hard it is to break through the sedimentary or chronological order, and the
37 metaphors risk naturalizing or solidifying this order. Nevertheless, as my examples show,
38 the metaphors risk naturalizing or solidifying this order. Nevertheless, as my examples show,
39 the space-time configurations that these metaphors describe also leave space for
40 possibilities: excavating erased memories, and turning them into heritage – material,
41 juridical, immaterial, and spiritual – contribute to healing what Karen Till has called
42 “wounded cities” (2012). This holds specifically for brecciation, a metaphor that brings to
43 the fore all that’s problematic with the linear view of the past lying at the heart of South
44 Africa’s passéist regime of historicity.
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53 The second set of metaphors addresses the post-apartheid space-time configuration in
54 places of apartheid layout. In such places, apartheid’s spatial nature remains
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3 overwhelmingly apparent, with space used to sustain and maintain the regime, and entire
4 neighborhoods designed for spatial control (Christopher, 2000; Robinson, 1996;
5 Houssay-Holzschuch, 1999). For instance, in African and ‘Coloured’ townships, the
6 street grid, the layout of the buildings, the matchbox housing model, the surrounding
7 buffer zone, and some strategically located miradors (or watchtowers) still echo
8 apartheid’s segregation, control, and the violent containment of protest. Currently, some
9 of these urban elements have very different usages.

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17 **[Insert here Figure 3]**

18 Figure 3: Disused mirador next to Khayelitsha stadium, built for the surveillance of social
19 events happening in the stadium, specifically the political funeral rallies of the late 1980s.
20 Photo by the author, 2011.
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25 Some are just abandoned (see Figure 3), having become what Japanese artist Genpei
26 Akasegawa (1987) has called *tomasons* – built remnants, such as a passage or stairs, that
27 no longer lead anywhere, signs pointing to disappeared places, objects whose very *raison*
28 *d’être* has been forgotten. This metaphor refers to Gary Thomasson, a U.S. baseball
29 player who infamously finished his career in Japan by missing every single ball thrown at
30 him – “a pathetic shadow of his past self” (Gervais-Lambony, 2017b: 205, my
31 translation). Akasegawa offers the *tomason* as a memory sign, a concrete hook that can
32 spark emotions. Gervais-Lambony (2017a; 2017b; see also Vladislavic, 2006), who
33 conceptualized the notion for geographers, believes that the *tomason* offers new ways of
34 understanding the discontinuities in our space-time experiences. The miradors protruding
35 from township landscapes, the piles of rubbles colonized by vegetation, and the faint
36 tracks of disappeared roads in District Six, the cosmopolitan neighborhood demolished
37 by apartheid, are such *tomasons*.

38
39 These apartheid-designed urban objects have been discarded. Others have been recycled,
40 hosting new meanings and social uses in hollowed-out apartheid shells – becoming the
41 *hermit crabs* of places. Buffer zones (see Figure 4) surrounding the townships, for
42 instance, openly became traditional initiation sites, therefore reclaiming a spatial tool
43 from white supremacist control for an African-centered practice of personal and
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3 community accomplishment (Houssay-Holzschuch et al., 2018). Buffer zones are also
4 important sites for constructing much needed, if low standard, social housing, as they
5 offer vacant land both within the city and within immediate proximity of an existing
6 community. These opening-ups of possibilities are rooted in urban practices and insist on
7 people's agency regarding changing what a place means: perhaps children will even reuse
8 the tomason of a mirador as a playground. This fits metaphors from living beings –
9 humans or animals - embodying the “loosening” and possible transfiguration of once
10 rigid structures (Franck and Stevens, 2007).
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19 **[Insert here Figure 4]**

20 Figure 4: Gugulethu's buffer zones. Photos by Olivier Ninot, Martine Berger and the
21 author, used with permission, a-2009 and b-2013.
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26 Finally, places built after the demise of apartheid, or while it was crumbling, can be best
27 described with a *bubble* or foam metaphor. According to Sloterdijk's (2005) analysis of
28 spheres, bubbles comprise a specific milieu. Such bubbles vary in size, but can contain a
29 small world; they grow and might pop at any moment, or last much longer than expected;
30 they are semi-porous to their environment, isolating a portion of the world, but still
31 traversed by light; and they can be autonomous or coalesce into foam. The metaphor of
32 the bubble can be used to understand how recent, racially mixed neighborhoods “foam
33 over” a metropolis whose social and spatial layout was structured under apartheid. In
34 Summergreens, middle-class and racially mixed new homeowners invented a post-
35 apartheid suburban lifestyle for Cape Town (Broadbridge, 2001). Other bubbles of
36 interracial interaction are leisure pursuits or shopping, that are politically potent *because*
37 they are fleeting and gratuitous such as the above-mentioned rugby match (Migozzi,
38 2012; see also Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo, 2009). Bubbles are thus fragile space-
39 time that harbor promises regarding what the future could be like.
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51 In short, the entangled space-time of post-apartheid and other post places pushes us to
52 think more deeply about how we, as geographers, can think of, speak about, and
53 conceptualize the complex, situated configurations produced by the relationship between
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3 time and space. Metaphors are a great help here – as long as we use them carefully,
4 conscious of the work they do and of their nature and politics (Smith and Katz, 1993;
5 Noxolo et al., 2008). The ones I propose here are by no means extensive and are simply
6 aimed at sketching the possibilities of thinking post- space-time by means of a
7 metaphorical, knowledge-generating regime. Furthermore, metaphors reflect the era in
8 which they are used (Sontag, 1978; Sontag, 1989) – tracking them would shed light on
9 the periodization of the post-period. They have clear limitations – most obviously
10 linguistic, since mine tend to come from specific European languages. This doesn't imply
11 that Western, former colonial languages are the only ones that can create meaning,⁹ they
12 simply reflect my own linguistic positionality and limitations (see above), as well as my
13 inability to identify shared metaphors with which to designate post-apartheid space-time
14 in the indigenous languages. The first discussions point to a conceptualization of post-
15 apartheid time as the time of “freedom (*inkululeko/tokolloho/togologo*)-but”; that is,
16 freedom, but persisting inequalities, the persisting denial of dignity and of access to land,
17 jobs, and houses, all of which are consistent with the political and scholarly discourse
18 identified in the first part of this paper.
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35 Conclusion

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37 In this paper, I have used the South African case to reflect on post situations and what
38 they tell us about a society's relation to space and time. Post situations tend to be
39 researched first and foremost for their relationship to time; I have therefore endeavored to
40 include space in our understanding of them. By investigating what, and *when*, post-
41 apartheid is (When did it start? Did it end or not, and, if it did, when?), I have shown that
42 this systemic change has very blurred temporal boundaries, although it still powerfully
43 informs contemporary South Africa's relationship to time, which François Hartog would
44 have called a *passéist* regime of historicity. Blending this notion with Massey's space-
45 time, I propose the notion of space-time regimes and show that their entanglement
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55 ⁹ Again, many thanks to the reviewer who pushed me to clarify this, and to Sheilla
56 Bendile for linguistic discussions.
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3 characterizes post situations. This regime combines a past that cannot pass and a radiant
4 future that never materialized, and includes the presence of ghosts and nostalgia, namely
5 place-bound experiences of entangled times. Entangled, post, space-time takes on
6 different concrete and localized shapes, for which we need a specific vocabulary. I
7 therefore propose a set of metaphors to describe and analyze these shapes.
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13 This enquiry and the metaphors it suggests to understand entangled places, extend beyond
14 the South African case and its post-apartheid situation, as other post-colonial
15 configurations, as well as post-conflict and post-socialist societies, encounter similar
16 issues. These configurations' relationship to the past should be neither oversimplified,
17 overwhelm our analysis, nor bypass space. There is indeed much to be gained in
18 theorizing all these different posts together, and metaphors, because of their very
19 flexibility, could help spark this theorization. Identifying more metaphors, ones that are
20 linguistically more diverse in order to decipher place-based, potentially inspiring, space-
21 time meanings in various contexts, would be a worthy research project, as
22 interdisciplinary in nature as space is indissolubly linked with time. Metaphors do not
23 care for linearity, binaries or preconceptions, nor are they bounded by current conceptual
24 understandings of space and time, or ossified ontological categories (Lakoff and Johnson,
25 2003 [1980]). They are inherently relational, which makes them especially relevant for us
26 geographers, whom Doreen Massey convinced of place's relational nature. Metaphors are
27 open-ended, "imaginative and creative," and conceptual (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003
28 [1980]: 139, 244) – in short, heuristic. A more concerted effort to share the metaphors we
29 live and write by is therefore worth it.
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45 Finally, in introducing this paper, I characterized the South African case as an optical
46 instrument. Post- configurations are, in turn, another optical instrument with which to
47 better understand the relationship between space and time from a geographical point of
48 view, as they combine the sharpness of space-time contrasts with entanglements'
49 messiness. The intensity of what is at stake in post- space-time regimes should not make
50 them exceptional; rather, they should work as ideal-types for other, less stark, situations.
51 They teach us to ask renewed questions, such as how do people engage with a space-time
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3 regime? What is the materiality through which it manifests itself? How are places linked
4 to time periods? Where are change and permanence located? Who does so and to what
5 purpose? In short, post- configurations remind us of the importance of what lies in-
6 between:
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10 ... the interval
11 and what breathes there
12 the jagged, the not-yet
13 the core.
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17 G. Baderoon (2018: 65)
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24
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