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THE POLITICS OF CHANGE:
Looking backwards and forwards

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FOREWORD

The Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria is pleased to welcome you to the 25th annual conference of the South African Visual Art Historians (formerly SAAAH). This conference reflects on the history of the visual arts within (South) Africa and engages with the diverse and changing contexts of art (history) and visual culture in a critical manner. This discourse necessarily involves the dialectic of local and global politics that forms the backdrop to image making in (South) Africa. Through this conference, we hope to sketch a historical overview of the ontology and practice of art (history) and visual culture and to represent the polemics of documenting history and theorising change in a global landscape.

Editorial note

The papers in this volume have been formatted for the sake of visual coherence, but all editorial choices regarding content, style of referencing and language are those of the individual authors who take full responsibility for any errors, omissions or inconsistencies.

Compiled by Jeanne van Eeden, Amanda du Preez and Rory du Plessis

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The South African modern artist – emerging "habitus" between 1940 and 1950

When I started with my dissertation project my intention was to find an approach to write a history of South African artists that would include all the different types. Today I would like to present that approach to you. By applying Pierre Bourdieu's[1] concept of *habitus* and *field* as well as *capital*, my presentation seeks to show under which conditions the *habitus* of the modern South African artist was formed in the 1940s after a process of gradual development. The span of the *habitus* will be demonstrated by referring to instances of specific types of artists.

I will start with a very short explanation of the main concepts of the french sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. For Bourdieu, the modern social world is divided into what he calls *fields*. He defines *field* as a social arena in which people maneuver and struggle in pursuit of desirable resources.[2] In Bourdieu's work, *habitus* can be defined as a system of durable and transposable dispositions and unconscious patterns of thought, observation and action.[3] *Habitus* and *field* form a two-way-relationship and can only exist in relation to each other. Social agents hold the dispositions and set of perceptual schemata that are necessary to constitute a *field* and imbue it with meaning, thus H*abitus* manifests the structures of the *field*. By participating in the *field* agents incorporate into their *habitus* the appropriate know-how that will allow them to constitute the *field*, and therefore the *field* mediates between *habitus* and practice.[4]

Bourdieu asserts that any research must be considered from two angles, first an objective stage of research where one looks at the structure and relations within the field. The second level must be a subjective analysis of social agents' dispositions and their categories of perception and understanding that are the product from inhabiting the field. Proper research, according to Bourdieu, must consider both stages. And I agree.

For my investigation the theory of Bourdieu serves as framework. The *field* - meaning the art field of South Africa between 1910 and 1948 - as well as the agents operating in the *field*, in this case the artists, will be looked at to pursue and explain the formation of the modern artist *habitus*.

African and European ideas of artistic creativity meet in South Africa. Different kinds of traditional art dominated in early South Africa. Nevertheless, the formation of the professional art field goes back to the initiatives of European immigrants during the colonial period and was therefore influenced by Western ideas about art and artists. Around the turn of the century the artists at the Cape became more organised. The majority of the early members of the South African Society of Artists (SASA), founded in 1902, were either autodidacts or pupils of teachers who had received their education in the academies of England.

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1 Pierre Bourdieu (1930 - 2002) was a French sociologist who elaborated investigative frameworks and terminologies such as cultural, social, and symbolic capital, and the concepts of habitus and field to reveal the dynamics of power relations in social life. By combining methods of various disciplines, specially philosophy, sociology and anthropology and building upon the theories of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Edmund Husserl, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Georges Canguilhem, Gaston Bachelard and Marcel Mauss, he attempted to understand the subject within objective structures and tried to reconcile the influences of external social structures and subjective experience of the individual.

2 Field is one of the core concepts used by Bourdieu. Contrary to traditional Marxism, he shared Weber's view that society cannot be analyzed simply in terms of economic classes and ideologies. As a consequence Bourdieu uses the concept of field instead of analyzing societies in terms of classes. For his explication of the concept see "Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste" (Bourdieu 1984).

3 Habitus, an old philosophical concept, used intermittently by Aristotle under the term *hexis,* Thomas Aquinas, Hegel, Weber, Durkheim, Mauss, and Husserl, among others, is another core concept of Bourdieu. Bourdieu re-elaborated the concept of habitus from Marcel Mauss and extended the scope of the term to include a person's beliefs and dispositions. He used it in an attempt to resolve the antinomy of the human sciences: objectivism and subjectivism. See Bourdieu 1977, pp 78-87).

4 Bourdieu 1990, pp 52-65.

According to Bourdieu's theory social agents develop strategies which are adapted to the needs of the social worlds that they inhabit. These strategies are unconscious and act on the level of a bodily logic.[5] *Habitus,* as I said, can be defined as a system of dispositions. The individual agent develops these dispositions in response to the objective conditions it encounters. According to this reproductive principle of the *habitus*, the structure of the professional art field was controlled by these early artists and thus by the dispositions and unconscious patterns of thought, perception and action, the ideas of art and artists acquired during their socialisation in Europe. They occupied strategic positions in the institutions of the *field* and thereby also determined the valid aesthetic standards and shaped the public's ideas regarding the artist.

As an example of this artist type one could name Edward Roworth who immigrated to South Africa at the turn of the 20th century. By occupying strategic offices he had the power to contol and dominate nearly the whole art field and influence the taste of the aesthetically uneducated, conservative public. His own style was oriented in the English painters of the 1890s and the conventional romantic naturalism of his teachers.

According to Bourdieu's theory the unconscious embodiment principle of the *habitus* guarantees stability. At the same time there is a moment of inertia involved; that means it is difficult for individuals to give up a habit. This inertia is strongest in conservative classes and those with inadequate education.[6]

The career *habitus* of the conservative British artists proved to be very stable; it could survive until well into the 20th century and was supported by the aesthetically uneducated public. The inertia effect placed it in a clear contrast to the changed conditions in South Africa. In the first quarter of the 20th century the art field spread from Cape Town to other centres of the country. Public galleries were established during the 1910s. In the 1930s there were art schools in many parts of the country. Exhibitions took place regularly in the bigger towns. The artists of the 1920s and 1930s were primarily illustrative painters. They concentrated mostly on still life and landscape compositions. Their works were popular among the public, who appreciated the representative style and the simple comprehensibility.

Jacob Hendrik Pierneef (1886-1957), also a landscape painter, was one of the first who deviated from pure reproduction of the scenery and integrated geometrical elements into his works. At a time when art still had relatively little importance for the public, he was already known and enjoyed great respect. He strived for an own style of South African art and made a special contribution to the aesthetic education of the public. At an exhibition in 1928 he showed some abstract paintings. In contrast to his traditional works he had become known for, those were not accepted by the public and after some bad criticism, and being financially dependent on sales, he was obliged to offer works which suited the taste of the public.

At the beginning of the 2nd quarter of the 20th century a growing number of artists came into contact with the European art scene through extensive travel and study trips. Back in South Africa, they were confronted with a decidedly conservative environment. The works of an artist like Irma Stern thus did not correspond at all to the prevailing norms and offended the conservative audience. Influenced by the Expressionism in Europe, she challenged the established conventions in style as well as in subject matter. The South African public and the larger part of the art critics were not yet ready for this kind of art.

Undeterred by this, Irma Stern devoted herself to her expressionistically influenced art which had already brought her recognition and success in Europe. Financially independent thanks to an affluent background, she could indulge her artistic and personal unconventionality. She represented a quite unusual and, in the history of South Africa at this time, new type of artist - in both - her art and her life-style. Finally in the mid 1940s she became successful in South Africa as well, at a time when art had attained prestige in the country and the public had become more mature.

The turning point came in 1937 with the formation of the New Group (1937-1953), a group of artists that, frustrated by the conservative establishment, aspired to enhance the current standards. They succeeded within a few years in sensitising the public to the fact that there were alternatives to the romantic postcard motifs.

The collision of this "old" artist *habitus*, influenced by the academic education in Great Britain, and that of the young artist generation that had been socialized within different structures in South Africa, led to these young artists rebelling and starting to organise themselves. In the art field they competed with the old establishment for the power. Under the pressure of the new conditions the artist *habitus* finally transformed itself.

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5 Bourdieu 1977, pp 87-95.
6 Bourdieu 1977, p 83 and Bourdieu 1990, p 62.

One could argue, though, that there are groups of agents whose *habitus* demands continual change; particularly artists are constantly searching for something "new". Nevertheless, according to the concept of the *habitus* the changes in expression and presentation do not constitute change in itself, because the permanent search for the „new"is part of the *habitus*.

But still, I claim that the case was different in the 1940s, because the structure - the social field - changed. After a gradual process of development in the whole country, a specific social field with its own institutions had developed to such an extent that the new *habitus* of the modern artist could gain acceptance. It was characterized by independence, creating works for the market, self-regard in the production of works and collective self-organization. A free art market with freely fluctuating prices was formed. In the meantime, art exhibitions as institutions enjoyed high renown, society had developed a cultural need and art criticism mediated between artists and the public. It provided information about the displayed works and extended the knowledge about art and artists. Only through the formation of this social field creative individuality was made possible - before the artist was a commissioned artist. Hardly any had been able to work truly independently - as we have seen from the example of Pierneef, who had to adapt his works to the public taste. Only Irma Stern formed an exception - on account of her financially independent situation.

If one now looks at the art field in its entirety at this time, one finds that parallel to the described developments another type of artist emerged. The first artists (in the European sense) emerged from the indigenous population - the so-called pioneers. Up to the end of apartheid European descendants dominated the art scene; therefore also art historiography and the perception of the public about art and artists. In a visual sense, an artist was regarded as a person with a white skin. From people of a different skin colour one expected pottery or woodcuttings; conceptually they were classified as craftsman. When using materials associated with the western art tradition, they were accepted as artist within the art field; however, seen as the exception, using e.g. the category "Special Exhibit by Native Artist" at exhibitions. Not only in conceptual terms did they have a special position; also in regards to education, genre and style - a separate space within the art field was assigned to them.

The prevailing opinion concerning education was that it had to be done differently and seperately for the indigenous population. There were a number of mission schools which offered art lessons. Nevertheless, many of the pioneers were denied a formal education. Despite the effort of patrons, the view still dominated that one had to keep these artists as unspoilt as possible; a formal education would only destroy their naturalness.

What becomes clear here, is the fact that the dominant part of society was shaped by colonial ways of thinking that were, in turn, anchored in their primary (meaning personal) *habitus*. Social agents absorb the objective social structure into personal cognitive and somatic dispositions. Thus, the subjective structures of action of the agents are congruous with the objective structures and existing requirements of the social field. Bourdieu speaks about a doxic relationship. Doxa are the learned, fundamental, deep-founded, unconscious beliefs, and values, taken as self-evident universals which lead social agents to take the world for granted.[7] Characteristic for doxa is to advantage the particular social order of the field, thereby privileging the dominant and taking their position of dominance as self-evident and universally favourable. The categories of understanding and perception that constitute a habitus are congruous with the objective arrangement of the field and consequently tend to reproduce the very structures of the field.[8]

According to Bourdieu the *habitus* is class specific - social origins and the course of life are of central importance for the formation of the *habitus*. Dispositions are internalised at in early age and guide social agents towards their appropriate social positions, towards the behaviours that are suitable for them, and in aversion towards other behaviours.[9]

For the definition of classes different forms of capital are of fundamental importance. Bourdieu distinguishes between four different types of capital. E*conomic capita*l refers to the command over economic resources like cash and assets. *Social capital* consists of resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support. A third form of capital, the *cultural capital,* refers to forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that a person has, which give them a higher status in society and by referring to

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7 Bourdieu 1977, pp 159-171.
8 Bourdieu 1984, p 471.
9 In "Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste" (1984) Bourdieu argues that aesthetic judgments are related to social position, resulting from class upbringing and education. Bourdieu claims that how one chooses to present one's social space (one's aesthetic dispositions) to the world, defines oneself in opposition to one another.

resources available to an individual on the basis of honour, prestige or recognition, Bourdieu speaks of *symbolic capital*.[10]

The conditioning of the pioneers took place in rural preindustrial South Africa, in the context of African traditions and colonialism. Eventually they came into contact with new religious as well as cultural and educational influences through the emerging mission schools and experienced new influences on their traditions as a result of industrialisation. In continuation of the policy of colonialism different laws manifested the indigenous communities as a oppressed class with ever diminishing rights. Their primary *habitus* was thus not compatible with that of the artists of European descent, who dominated the art field.

The pioneers lacked important forms of capital, above all the economic and cultural ones. For most of them their social capital was in the form of networks to patrons or other artists. The differences in the primary *habitus* und the lack of valuable forms of capital complicated their access to the art field. There are certain requirements for participants, so to speak, for membership within the social *field*. In the case of the pioneers the effect of the *habitus* as an entry barrier to the *field* becomes clear. They lacked the knowledge of what rules are valid and how one operates within the field. They further lacked the appropriate education - in other words, cultural capital. They had to acquire the artist *habitus* with much effort, which required forms of capital which were mostly not available to them. In addition, as soon as their social capital in the form of patrons, made economic capital for an education available to them - thus the acquisition of cultural capital - this opportunity was refused on the basis of myths[11] which were again anchored in the *habitus* of the dominant agents.

The types of artists referred to belonged to different generations of different cultural orientation. Roworth knew to mould the construction of the South African art field. He does not only represent the successful artist, who produced pictures according to the demand of the social elite and found recognition because his pictorial language proved to be an attractive medium for the aesthetic representation of status for his contemporaries and corresponded with their conservative taste. At the same time he represented the whole art institution of this period - he was its head and therefore decisively shaped the artist *habitus* of the time, because the institutions have essential meaning in mediating the artist *habitus*.

In a history of the development of modernity in South Africa, Pierneef can be classified as a transitional artist in whose person contradictory layers overlapped. On the one hand the aspiration for the expression of individual creativity and the already modern professional activity, and, on the other hand, the dependence on sales which forced him to produce according to the conventional, backward-looking cultural orientation of the time.

Pioneers like Pemba and Sekoto can also be seen as artists of transition, who tried to generate income from pursuing art; nevertheless, they were still probably more dependent than Pierneef was in realising their creative individuality, and besides, due to their position in South African society, even more handicapped. In different case studies one can recognise that they had characteristics in common with Pierneef -they also wanted to create an own South African art, strove for more financial independence to be able to concentrate fully on their art and were still dependent on sales and, with it, the taste of the audience.

In contrast Irma Stern represents another variation of the artist *habitus*. On the grounds of her educated and wealthy bourgeois family background she was not dependent on the sales of her work, but was free to produce an art legitimised in itself. She can be seen as a prototype of the modern artist, because her work was based on increased subjectivity, abstraction and an elitist autonomy.

From the basis of the normative power of the common characteristics of the *habitus*, the variations of artistic individuality moved, therefore, between the poles of gainful employment and freedom of the creative imagination. Through investigation of these different types of artists one can concretize how the exchange between the collective patterns of the artist *habitus* and the efforts of individual artists at individualisation played out and what different forms arose from the production of individuality in the historical context. For the exploration of the emergence of a modern artist *habitus* in South Africa, the theory of Bourdieu with its concepts of field and habitus can form the framework in tracing and explaining this development. Besides, in considering the whole art field with all active participants it becomes possible to trace a common development

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10 In "The Forms of Capital" Bourdieu distinguishes between three species of capital economic, social and cultural capital. Later he added symbolic capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, New York, Greenwood 1986, pp 241-258.

11 One of those myths is that an education would destroy their naturalness.

of different types of artists and thereby presents a means of overcoming the separate art historiography in South Africa.

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Come All Ye Faithful: Gender and identity in the religious vitalisation of South African cinema.

Introduction

This paper aims to investigate gender identity in mainly *Faith like Potatoes* (2006) but also *Hansie* (2008), focusing on how both films place these notions in redemption narratives. I see both films as forming part of the religious vitalisation of South African cinema, with takes redemption narratives and infusing them with a clear affirmation of so-called 'traditional' Christian Afrikaner constructions of identity (reminiscent of *De Voortrekkers* (Shaw, 1916), overtly locating individual salvation and redemption in organised religion while reaffirming problematic gender roles in a post-Apartheid South African cinescape. I will problematise gender identity in *Faith like Potatoes* (2006) as well as *Hansie* (2008), showing how notions of masculinity and femininity are framed as evolving directly from engagement with certain religious ideas and experiences.[12]

In light of the above, this paper represents a variety of associated ideas that problematise the content and language of both film texts, each (but mainly *Faith like Potatoes*) presenting a religious grand narrative that legitimises white normativity and male dominance while constructing contentious religion-based notions of gender as associated with prescribed binary ideas about masculinity and femininity.

I need to make it clear that my argument has nothing to do with real-life farmer and evangelist Angus Buchan, or with the late real-life cricketer Hansie Cronje. This paper deals only with these names as they exist as characters in film narratives that are inherently fictional; any discussion regarding the correlation between the real-life persons and their cinematic counterparts is in any case a pointless one. Nothing printed in this paper should be seen as or is intended as an insult to Angus Buchan, Jill Buchan, Hansie Cronje, Bertha Cronje or anyone else mentioned in this paper that may have a material existence outside of the film texts.

The language of redemption

Recently, the American films *Facing the Giants* (Kendrick, 2006) and *Fireproof* (Kendrick, 2008), with its tie-in book "The Love Dare" (Kendrick & Kendrick, 2008), framed human triumph as products of faith and divine interventions into marriage. Taking their cue from the success of these films, distributor Nu Metro

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[12] Although the original abstract for this paper makes mention of Althusser's notion of interpellation, this idea does not feature in this present paper due to a focal shift stimulated in the aftermath of the presentation of the paper at the South African Visual Arts Historians conference in July 2009.

initiated Nu Metro Inspires (www.inspires.co.za) in South Africa to distribute films that also overtly link human experiences to religious, exclusively Christian, faith. Their list of releases includes the British drama *Amazing Grace* (Apted, 2006) and the Intelligent Design-promoting American documentary *Expelled* (Frankowski, 2008), but it is the locally produced Regardt van den Bergh directed *Faith like Potatoes* (2006) and *Hansie* (2008) which called attention to themselves as films that not only based their narratives on notions of religious faith and divinity, but ostensibly integrate these notions to construct faith-infused understandings of 'white' gender identity, as I will show. American films dealing with issues of religion and faith have been resoundingly successful at the American and South Africa box-office, from *The Passion of the Christ* (Gibson, 2004) and its spectacle of suffering to *The Da Vinci Code* (Howard, 2006) supposedly bringing the feminine into mainstream Christian discourse (whether or not Dan Brown was successful in this quest falls beyond the scope of this paper). Even from a promotional point of view, the visual parallels between *The Passion of the Christ* (Gibson, 2004) and *Hansie* (Van den Bergh, 2008) are visible, indicating that *Hansie* is similar to the preceding film at least visually, but possibly also in its message (Figure 1a and 1b) of redemption.

Figure 1a: *The Passion of the Christ*   Figure 1b: *Hansie*

Figures 1a and 1b are snapshots by the author from the teaser trailers of *The Passion of the Christ* (Gibson, 2004) and *Hansie* (Van den Bergh, 2008), both available at www.youtube.com.

Redemption films in the political mould may select to subvert traditional South African (or even mainly Afrikaans) representations. *Promised Land*, for example, "undermines the farm as the idyllic, natural habitat of the Afrikaner" (Renders in Botha 2007:227), while religious redemption movies will opt to affirm and even celebrate traditional convention, such as the nuclear family (see my thoughts on *De Voortrekkers* as cinematic ancestor to *Faith like Potatoes* below). The main elements in the religious redemption narrative (based on what is observed in *Faith like Potatoes* and *Hansie*), which potently underscores the religious revitalisation of South African cinema, include a politically 'neutral' protagonist. In this, the protagonist does not pick political side even though secondary characters may do so. If this is the case, these secondary characters serve to emphasise the political neutrality of the protagonist. Of course, this male protagonist is politically 'neutral' only superficially; the film's construction of these heroic male figures endows them with patriarchal pre-eminence who serve (God?) in maintaining the status quo.

The shift in redemption narratives from the political to the spiritual – the religious revitalisation of South African cinema - occurred relatively recently. Whereas previously movies such as *Tsotsi* (Hood, 2006) and *Promised Land* (Xenopolous, 2002) commented on political redemption in light of a recently established South African democracy (see Renders in Botha 2007:222–253), *Faith Like Potatoes* and *Hansie* emphasise redemption in a manner overtly linked to religion. Instead of problematising race and difference or addressing narratives of superiority from earlier South African cinema, these films seem to naturalise race and gender and show that only if a man (and I use the word 'man' here conscious of its political connotations) becomes a reborn Christian he will be redeemed for his sins. This notion of rebirth, including baptism (explicit in *Hansie*), is the climactic element and narrative zenith of the redemption narrative.

The male protagonist in the redemption film is confronted by some form of temptation. In *Faith like Potatoes* this temptation is relinquishing a demanding gender role to drink and wilful ignorance, while in *Hansie* the temptation has to do solely with material incentives and rewards. However, I should clarify that in the context of each film, the temptation acts only as a means to and end for a man whose status as man, his masculinity, is in some way challenged. Material temptation serves as the veneer atop of the actual issue,

which has to do with the restoration of manhood as much as restoring faith. Material ways to restore manhood in these films fail, but the religious route serves to validate manliness for both Buchan and Hansie Cronje. Indeed, there seems to be difficulty in maintaining images of masculinity – in performing the male – which is problematic because it threatens the naturalised patriarchal existing power relationships with the man as head of the household.

The films' moments of confirming and affirming masculinity are placed in a safe, non-subversive classical Hollywood narrative form, which presents a clear resolution at the end of the film (Bordwell & Thomspon 2008:95-96). Seeing as the classical Hollywood narrative is still seen as the dominant way of making films and telling their stories (Bordwell & Thomspon 2008:94), the use of this dominant narrative model reinforces the idea that what is seen on screen is natural and to be accepted.There is no attempt in any of the two films to subvert the ideology of patriarchy or to destabilise the visual language (camera shots, angles, editing techniques, framing devices) of the classical Hollywood narrative that helps to maintain dominant ideas of power relationships.

The farmer, the sportsman and God

Presented in classical Hollywood narrative form, the audience friendly *Faith like Potatoes* (Van den Bergh, 2006) tells the story of farmer Angus Buchan – who is infamous in South Africa for hosting his Mighty Men conferences across the country – who buys a farm in what was then the Natal province in South Africa. Farming is a hard life, and Buchan understands that he needs to provide for this family ('needs to' in the sense that the family unit needs to survive, and in that his role as provider is part of his make-up as a man). The film details his personal tragedies and his conflict with his workers until a single visit to a local church facilitates his reconnection to the Christian God. In the end, he manages to successfully grow potatoes in very hard soil, thereby surprising numerous naysayers who claimed that such a feat would be impossible, after which he more determinedly starts to preach the word of God to all who would listen (which is mostly local black people, especially as the film ends).

The last image in the film sums up the real resolved crisis of the Buchan character: he was not a 'man' to his wife, Jill, anymore, but through God, this status had been reallocated to him. Without God Buchan's status as man would remain in question. Buchan tells the black folk that they must have "faith like potatoes", and without expanding or elaborating on the statement, or endowing it with theological significance, husband and wife leave the audience to their own thoughts. The camera follows them as they walk away hand in hand, gender roles reaffirmed and the wife happy to have her man back; the camera pulls up and away from the couple as they then become increasingly smaller, leaving the viewer to gaze upon them from a God-like position, seeing how what was 'wrong' has now been 'corrected'; the man has re-assumed his rightful place in his relationship with his wife. In terms of character development, clearly only Buchan benefits from religious rebirth. His wife, is seems, needs no conversion, no rebirth of her own; her husband's benefit is apparently her benefit by association.

Hansie (Van den Bergh, 2008) opens with the South African cricket team beating their opponents. Their captain, Hansie Cronje, has played a key role in their triumph. Within the opening five minutes of the film, Cronje has been established as a man who (a) is a top cricket player, (b) is openly adored by his fans, and (c) is now engaged to an attractive blonde woman. Here and in *Faith like Potatoes* we are presented with women who adore and stand by their men as one challenge after the other puts their relationship to the test. The greatest test in *Hansie* occurs when Cronje becomes involved in criminal acts. While touring in India, Cronje becomes embroiled in the world of sports gambling, where he receives financial rewards for affecting the outcome of certain cricket matches. It does not take long for allegations of illegal activity to take aim at the nation's sports hero, and in due time a court case begins with evidence mounting up against him. He is found guilty – he eventually confesses – and in this, the film provides an interesting moment of tension highlighting the discrepancy between the actual hearing as broadcast on South African television and the fictionalised, manipulative hearing presented in the film: unlike during the actual hearing, Hansie in the film makes no mention of the devil's role in leading him astray ethically.

Still, the devil's in the details, and here he is in the structure of the classical Hollywood narrative format. The climax of *Hansie*, the scene that previous scenes build up to, has Cronje visit Peter Pollock, a mentor figure and a Christian. Pollock informs Hansie that only God can give him the redemption he needs. Moments later, Pollock has baptised Hansie in his swimming pool. In slow motion, Hansie breaks through the surface of the

pool, arms outstretched. It is a dramatic moment that serves as the narrative payoff. Even though the court found him guilty, and he has by all accounts acted in a criminal manner, Cronje has been cleansed through his religious rebirth. The secular verdict has lost its potency since the religious redemption is attributed more weight in the film. Even the matter of Cronje's death takes second place next to religious matters. In actuality, Hansie Cronje died tragically in a light aircraft accident in 2002. The film makes this accident an afterthought of sorts, instead of the climax of the film. The crash scene simply shows a seemingly tranquil Hansie in the airplane, with lighting and rain pounding the aircraft. As the pilots become increasingly stressed at the bad weather, Hansie remains visibly calm. As the moment of impact gets closer, the film shows us Hansie, sitting, and fades to white. It is as if the fade to white here suggests something positive, something almost sacred – Hansie's death will simply serve to bring him closer to God in heaven – whereas a fade to black might have suggested the finality of death and the darkness of it, which is incongruent with the message of religious, not physical, redemption and salvation. This is followed by the funeral scene, where the Bertha character gets her first real moment of speaking out; it being her husband's funeral, Bertha proceeds to eulogise Hansie in a positive manner. Her own individual self and agency is irrelevant here; she is defined in his death as his widow, just as in life she was the wife of Hansie Cronje. Where Bertha once performed the role of loving wife, she now performs the mourning widow. Both roles are equally geared towards validating the merits of the male that she has shared her life with.

Unworthy women

It is indeed only the men in these movies who enjoy redemption (along with its conceptual counterpart, salvation). These are men with a capital 'M': farmer Buchan works his land with his bare hands; *Faith like Potatoes* is filled with images depicting firstly the visual glory and splendour of the Kwazulu-Natal landscape and secondly Buchan's struggle to make a living on it. His wife Jill remains, in a visual and narrative sense, in the background (which is even more the pity as one senses that the 'real-life' Jill Buchan can only have played an integral part in her husband's social and religious life, far more than depicted here). Buchan is performing a gender role that emphasises physically strenuous activity as partially constituting masculinity. Butler (as cited in Litosseliti & Sunderland, 2002:25) describes gender performativity as a repeated act involving "performing one's gender in one way at any one time". Male identity, for example, can be 'indexed' through certain particular acts and performances (Litosseliti & Sunderland, 2002:27), such as working the land (farmer-provider) which partially designates masculinity. Figure 3, below, provides an idea of the beautiful landscape that Buchan operates in, with images suggestive of a Paradise where Buchan is the 'first man', the one to make the land bear fruit (or potatoes).

In *Hansie*, the former South African team captain is a sportsman of note. If director Regardt Van der Bergh's Buchan starts out performing the role of man as provider and conqueror of the land, then his Hansie Cronje operates as man of physical superiority, with an emphasis on physical strength. Bertha Cronje remains in the background here too, except to comment on how their marriage is blooming (at first) and later how it is suffering. In addition, in the film she is one of the last people to finally realise (or admit) that Cronje had been involved with illicit match fixing arrangements. This eventual occurrence does not come across as an organic moment after evidence and testimony had been carefully weighed and evaluated, but suggests that Bertha is either slow on the uptake or that her reason is blinded by her devotion to her husband (or both).

Figure 3: the spectacular landscapes of *Faith like Potatoes*.

Images are author's snapshots from trailers freely accessible on www.youtube.com.

While the films exclude its females from anything resembling personal growth or development, religious or otherwise, the men are not exempt from such motifs. It is worth noting that insofar the male hero figures possess the potential for conversion and redemption, it is accomplished through their engagement with either memory or fantasy or both. Significantly, these experiences of memory and fantasy are not available to the female characters, the wives, who are thus excluded from the possibility of an own, personal religious conversion and redemption. In *Faith like Potatoes*, Buchan engages with his memory of skipping church as a young boy, which apparently makes him realise what a spiritual gap was left in his life. In *Hansie*, Hansie has seemingly vivid dreams (nightmares) which the film stops showing once he is redeemed. More significantly, he also engages with a formative childhood memory, where he speaks to his high school principal about having a calling to be a hero figure. These memories appear to contribute to the masculine identity of both Buchan and Cronje to the extent that it propels their personal development forward, both men realising what they "need to do" as men: Buchan's faith in God is revitalised, and Cronje understands that he needs to redeem himself. The memories that these men engage with provides a temporality and a line of cause and effect to their personal narratives.

As Jill and Bertha are excluded from such identity (in)forming experiences, the films' sense of portraying 'normal' diminished female agency is heightened. Even the film's visual language presents a gendered contrast in how it frames and positions women in opposition to men. While the men's memories and their respective conversions are depicted in a dynamic visual manner, the domestic existence of the understanding and supportive wife in both films remains visually static (see figure 2, below). There are no swish pans, no bird's eye view shots, no arresting camera angles or dolly shots – the women move in and around the house performing their gender required (as per the film) activities. One of the primary female activities in *Faith like Potatoes* in particular is pouring – the female carries the vessel the content of which feeds (in numerous ways) her husband, while she herself is a vessel: there is little to no indication of sexual attraction and activity in the Buchan household, yet every now and again the film shows us a visibly pregnant Jill Buchan, or a new young Buchan on the yard. In opposition to the determined, active believer Angus, wife Jill exists as passive receiver of him; he manages her body with its connotations of fertility just like he does the farm and the land.

Figure 2: Moments of 'female understanding' and 'support' in *Faith like Potatoes.*

Images are author's snapshots from trailers freely accessible on www.youtube.com.

Figures of faith

In addition to visual language, the films' spoken language further problematises notions of identity. Both *Faith like Potatoes* and *Hansie* are diegetically constructed to take place in a monoglossic world where everyone speaks English. In his discussion of the work of Bakhtin, Ivanov ([sa]:5), explains monoglossia as "absolute dominance of one language", which includes connotations of "impermeability" and the constitution of an exclusive unity in individuals by language. The world of *Faith like Potoatoes* and *Hansie* is a world where everyone seems to speak and understand English, from the main characters to Indian racketeers to rural farm workers. In the DVD extras on *Hansie*, producer and writer Frans Cronje (brother of Hansie Cronje) admits that the only reason why a film representing characters based on Afrikaans-speaking people are filmed in English is to broaden the potential commercial appeal of the movie. While Buchan's hero is from Scottish ancestry, Hansie Cronje is Afrikaans blue blood. The fact that the character Hansie speaks English throughout the film should not cloud the possibility that the character might be associated with Afrikaans and Afrikanerness.

Of all the constitutive dimensions to Afrikaner identity, the main one relevant here is the Christian religion, which in *Hansie* supersedes the significance of the use of English as dominant language in *Hansie*, for example. South African film has numerous examples of texts where the Afrikaner group is exalted and regarded as a group that is in certain ways more advanced than other social groups. *De Voortrekkers* (Shaw, 1916) showed the Afrikaners as a land-conquering people who take what they are 'entitled' to who, as the film suggests, are able to do so because they are God's chosen people. There is a religious validation of the characters' actions in *De Voortrekkers*, the epitome of which is the eventual (essentially climactic) conversion of the Zulu male Sobuza who has accompanied the Voortrekkers to Christianity. *De Voortrekkers* (Shaw, 1916) is a cinematic ancestor to *Faith like Potatoes* in how the latter film also promotes a clear religious paradigm which frames and even legitimises events in the plot as well as the characters (there might even be "black conversions" too, although we are spared any overt conversion scenes). The film seems to suggest that the religiously redeemed character is privy to an exclusive world view and understanding that enable him to 'see things' were others do or can not. This idea is not so strongly promoted in *Hansie*, but that film makes up for that specific omission by inviting a discussion of the heroic Afrikaner male, in whose personal narrative Christian religion features prominently. Here the emphasis on the religion, along with the idea of privileged knowledge, results in a form of religion-based ethnogenesis, which is "the construction, or at least the dawning awareness, of an ethnic group, an entity that had not previously existed" (Zelinsky, 2001:28).

As *De Voortrekkers* summoned into existence a triumphant Afrikaner nation (Maingard 2007:26), *Faith like Potatoes* and *Hansie* call into cinematic existence a new group of South Africans characterised by a shared religion that apparently promotes conversion and redemption. However, this exclusively Christian group is significantly white and male-dominated. This group, patriarchal and ideologically homogenous, exclusive and conservative, is indeed reminiscent of the difference-emphasising social constellations suggested in *De Voortrekkers*, which extends to the representation of women as well. Commenting on the representation of the female characters in *De Voortrekkers*, Maingard (2007:32) states that "*voortrekker* women are represented primarily as wives and mothers within domestic spaces or crucially within the nuclear family". The female gender identity presented by *De Voortrekkers* from 1916, and the female gender identity represented in *Faith like Potatoes* and *Hansie* nearly 90 years later, are very closely related. The two latter films also show women as bound to the home and defined as wives and mothers, especially in the case of the Jill Buchan character (see discussion above). Looking at *Faith like Potatoes* and *Hansie*, I am presented with the South Africa of the hetero-normative, the traditional and the conservative, where whiteness is invisible by virtue of its 'naturalism' (see Dyer (2002)). This is a country that, if these films are to be believed, is homogenous in faith if not in colour. There is no mention of a religious rebirth and redemption other than that provided by the Christian grand narrative. While *Hansie* does not care much for issues of race – the film shows Hansie almost championing the inclusion of black cricketers in the national team, although he is concerned about players' quality – *Faith like Potatoes* serves to re-inscribe the role of saviour and superior in the white man. It is important to note the racial constructions in *Faith like Potatoes*.

In the film, Buchan is not just personally benefiting from his religious rebirth, but the local black people benefit as well. Buchan is the white man who knows the way to redemption, who has been interpellated by God to show people the 'right' way. It is significant, then, that the film includes a scene where a young black woman had been struck by lightning. Some of the locals go to Buchan's homestead, eager to ask for his

assistance (strangely, the film shows this by having Buchan's wife notice the black people outside in the rain through the window, similar to scenes in thrillers where the victim spots the perpetrator through a window or a door). Upon arriving at the woman's home, Buchan helps her to stand up and, with dramatic flashes of lightning and thunder, she is brought back to life (considering that the local had thought her dead). There is no black shaman-figure that the local blacks consult; they go directly to the white farmer, the healer who speaks to God, who brings one of their own back to life.

Here the notion of resurrection takes on a politically sinister tone, where resurrection here refers not only to the (meta)physical act of returning from death to life but also the making conscious the idea of the white man as superior being with access to resources that elude Others. If it still holds that, as Fanon (in Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin 1997:325) observed, that black is "the symbol of sin", then it is the superior white who can redeem the black of their sinful nature. It is a black female that is saved by the white man, and she is not even a prominent character in the film. The main black character in *Faith like Potatoes* is a black male, the Biblically-named Simeon (the Righteous?). When he is introduced into the narrative, the film emphasises only Simeon's physical strength in context of his illiteracy.

In the film, Simeon is positioned as both the noble savage and the magical negro. According to Hughey (2009:2),

> "[t]he MN [magical negro] has become a stock character that often appears as a lower-class, uneducated Black person who possesses supernatural or magical powers. These powers are used to save and transform dishevelled, uncultured, lost, or broken Whites (almost exclusively White men) into competent, successful, and content people within the context of the American myth of redemption and salvation".

Figure 4: A strong black man looks for work in *Faith like Potatoes*.

Images are author's snapshots from trailers freely accessible on www.youtube.com.

Hughey (2009) above discusses the American version of the magical negro. While Simeon does not overtly possess "magical powers", he is very strong and by working side by side with Buchan for some time, at least validates Buchan's shift from liquor-loving corn farmer to redeemed farmer-cum-evangelist. Paradoxically (or not), in no way is Simeon at all important to the plot of the film – he remains a marginal figure mostly ineffectual to the protagonist's character arc – but like the female characters, his character is one who again serves to validate the masculinity and raced superiority of the hero. Simeon sees tragedy, for example, when a child dies on Buchan's farm, and reacts to it. Like Jill, Simeon exists to witness and react. Like Jill, Simeon lacks narrative and personal agency. More than anything, Simeon remains the noble savage, a black man who can be described as being in "harmony with nature" and possessing "generosity, child-like simplicity" (Hughey 2009:25). In no way does Simeon claim the same patriarchal power position as bestowed on Buchan; that position is exclusive to the white male.

Not only *Faith like Potatoes* but *Hansie* as well present the black validation of white redemption in a mainstream classical Hollywood narrative format that is altogether legitimised by virtue of the religious redemption narrative conveyed by the film. Indeed, Weedon (2000:157) confirms that 'whiteness' has long

had to do with, amongst other things, Christianising other (inherently subordinate) cultures. Whiteness and Christianity go hand in hand, and the legitimisation of one (Christianity) often implies the validation of the other (whiteness). This further problematises the black validation of the religiously redeemed white hero seen in *Hansie*. In the film, Cronje has a young black fan that looks up to Hansie as a role model. In fact, the black boy puts a poster of Hansie Cronje up on his wall. When the match fixing allegations and evidence finally come through, the film shows the boy, now older, dramatically tear the poster down from the wall. Once Cronje has been redeemed, however – both by God and in the eyes of the general public – the boy puts the tattered poster back on the wall again. In one the last scenes of the film, the film shows the black youth take a cricket bat as he proceeds to the cricket nets for batting practice. This black boy has no dialogue; his socio-economic position is invisible; and he worships the image of the white male hero. When the moment arrives that the boy has also 'forgiven' Hansie for his transgressions, it is as if the acceptance of white 'sins' by a black youth functions to emphasise the universality of Cronje's redemption. If an adoring young black fan can forgive Hansie, then it seems anyone can (or should).

Conclusion

The patriarchal power alignments in the film are clearly constelled in the religious revitalisation of South African cinema. Angus Buchan is a farmer who preaches the word of God; Hansie Cronje was a sports icon who redeemed himself after getting involved in match fixing. Religious redemption narratives such *Faith like Potatoes* (Van den Berg, 2006) and *Hansie* (Van den Berg, 2008) put forth problematic and contentious constructions of gender and racial identity, as discussed above, wherein religious redemption is emphasised over narrative resolution. The implication is that all that matters in the film, as far as the characters and plot are concerned, is the religious redemption of the male hero. This is not a theology of liberation, but an affirmation of potentially culturally dangerous ideology as far as constructions of race and genders are concerned.

The films' protagonists' redemption serves to maintain a discourse of submission, first before God and then before Man – the male protagonist is aligned with the Father, while he carries gendered authority himself in his relationship with his wife (and with other secondary characters) and 'fathers' (literally and metaphorically) others. *Faith like Potatoes* (Van den Berg, 2006) and *Hansie* (Van den Berg, 2008) manages to present not only female characters that are interchangeable between the films (there is nothing that sets Jill and Bertha apart, except maybe that Jill is more of a 'mother') but also female and black characters whose presence in the plot remains, in the end, irredeemably epiphenomenal.

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A nice non-place: a decidedly unhomely space

"The world of supermodernity does not exactly match the one in which we believe we live, for we live in a world that we have not yet learned to look at. We have to relearn to think about space."　　　　　　　　　　(Augé 1995:35-36)

"Art is then uncanny because it veils reality, and also because it tricks. But it does not trick because of what it is in itself; rather it possesses the power to deceive because of the projected desire of the observer."　　　(Vidler 1992:35)

A short while ago, a colleague insisted that I watch the film Dawn of the Dead: "…a film not just about Zombies," she exclaimed, "…but Zombies in a shopping mall!" I dutifully watched the movie by myself while my wife (a hardened anti-horror flicker) was attending a conference out of town. Putting aside for a minute the majority of the film's dreadful story of the un-dead hunting down and preying on the increasingly diminishing living, I want to briefly pause at scene 3. Mindful of the fact we are viewing a filmic representation of events as they unfold in the appropriately named Cross Roads Mall, I want to briefly pause on the sense of dis-ease and discomfort cinematically constructed here. Note the familiar tune to *Don't worry be happy* instrumentally humming in the back ground.

The space is presented emptied but simultaneously pregnant with human presence. Scenes of the interior mall are cut and edited closely such that an emergent picture of profound presence is inscribed in an obvious absence that seems to menacingly observe. Our response is enacted through the film's protagonists. Sight, smell and hearing suddenly become acutely calibrated in anticipation of something unfamiliar; something foreboding; something worryingly out of place. I am reminded of my own aimless wanderings in shopping malls: the occasional pedestrian squeak on freshly polished and glossy tiled floors; the sharp garbled barking from a not-so-far off security officer's portable receiver, the annoying balladic screech of Celine Dion's pseudo-diva happy horseshit, merrily and musically piped in from some or other auditory panoptical inspector. And in the distant dark recesses of the inspector's deeply concealed electrical grotto comes the ever present and fore grounded low decimal moan of white noise… in E minor!

In a previous paper (Cooper 2008)[13] I focused on the shopping mall space as a wonderland of Baudrillardian "gadgets" that ushered in an experience of retail space shrouded in an ideology of consumption, leisure, entertainment and recreation – a relatively easy process. When I sat down to write *this* paper it quickly dawned on me that I may very well have set my self an impossible task. To think of the shopping mall space as conceptually uncanny is admittedly a ridiculous assertion. Shopping malls are nice places. We feel at home in them. They resolve our fears and anxieties through choreographed retail therapy.

To some extent this paper presents an extension on some of the issues I raised earlier but shifts focus dramatically. Here I present an even more challenging problem and prompt the most obvious question: How can a space that is designed specifically for the intention of pleasure, leisure and entertainment be understood in relation to, or more dauntingly to actually *embody*, the uncanny? Is it possible to identify and trace a passage from what Freud refers to as the homely (Heimlich) to the decidedly Unhomely (Unheimlich)? More importantly how do certain spatial devices or "gadgets" in the form of public sculpture and the considered

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[13] The paper is published in the (re)views section of *De Arte* 79.

construction of surface elements in the shopping mall precinct enable a reading of the uncanny as a typically spatial phenomenon?

To re-register my thoughts on the shopping mall space, I string together two core themes: the notion of the non-place and the elusive but at the same time ever present spatial uncanny. I build on a previous assertion (Cooper 2008) that shopping mall spaces function as a spectacular wonderland of leisure, recreation and entertainment and that public sculpture and design elements are complicit in the way this ideological illusion works. However, here I want to focus on how the shopping mall space (as a non-place of empty signifiers) interpellates through the language of the homely (the familiar and the familial), a sense of estrangement and displacement brought about through an experience of aimless wandering. This follows that a recurrent experience of doubt, uncertainty and estrangement signals the emergent un-homely ordinarily disguised as comfort. For the purposes of this paper I will examine these issues in reference to selected local and international shopping mall spaces as well as in relation to selected sculptural interventions. I will build on previous comments and observations on Angus Talyor's *Tricksy* (2007), *The Udderside* (2007) and *Apollonian an Dionysian* (2007) at the Irene Village Mall in Irene, Phil Minaar's installation of mischievously placed bronze cast children at the Woodlands Boulevard in Woodhill and Guy du Toit's concrete and bronze *Jbay Wave* (2008-2009) at The Fountains Shopping Mall in Jeffery's Bay.

The spectacular wonderland of the shopping mall is an illusion of homely niceness made possible through the fantasy of familiarity, comfort and cosiness… a sense of being "at home" (Vidler 1992:24). For all the wrong reasons this is both appealing and seductive (Morris in During 1993:394). An undermining of notions of self / identity and history / time ushers in an ambivalent experience of these spaces. History and time coalesce and disintegrate as they are recalibrated as part of the spectral illusion of leisure, recreation and entertainment. In formulating his definition of a non-place, Augé (1995:77-78) makes the point that, "…a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical or concerned with identity will be a non-place."

Time and a sense of self are brought into an awkward asymmetry. "…the passenger in non-places has the simultaneous experience of a perpetual present and an encounter with the self" (Augé 1995:105). Non-places embody a sense of prescribed time, in other words "…they are lived through the present" (Augé 1995:104). One is reminded of the tinny-digitalized chiming of the "town's" clock at the heart of the Irene Village Mall mechanically reminding (s)mall citizenry of their place within the `present' of mall wonderland time space. Past and present are porridged to form a new time-space continuum set into play by the spectacular mall. One could also easily identify triggers of time space ambiguity at work in the mashing together of quaint Irene farm yard imagery and pseudo European architectural features. These devices are perhaps more blatantly and crassly articulated in the architectural design of Monte Casino's fake Tuscan surfaces and features. Although granted, this is not strictly a shopping Mall space.

A conceptual dislocation between time and space and the resulting experience of estrangement in the ideological construct of the mall wonderland is problemtised by Mbembe (2004:400) in a discussion of, "…synthetic spacetimes" of public urban spaces like casinos and shopping malls. He calls these "Calico worlds" in which "…goods offer themselves as artworks not just for sale but also for use in people's fantasies and in the production of lifestyles" (Mbembe 2004:400). These spaces become, "…copies and distortions ripped out of time and jumbled together in a dramatic geographical and temporal arbitrariness… (their spectral powers) …organize desires and provoke fantasies…" (Mbembe 2004:400). This spectral power resides in the recycling of what Mbembe refers to as "urban junk": "`Exotic', local and faraway styles… theatrically restaged in simulated environments, where they contribute to the paradoxical reconciliation of place and ephemerality" (Mbembe 2004:401). At the Irene Mall, Angus Taylor's *Tricksy* (2007) can be located as a symbolic referent that further entrenches a deeply embodied pseudo Farmyard aesthetic. Recalling Jeff Koonz's *Puppy* (1992-1995), the large seated cow positioned outside the Pick and Pay south entrance to the mall but facing west looms like a clumsy and gangly gigantic misplaced apparition as it greets on coming shoppers. Like Koonz's *Puppy* (1992-1995), it is a living sculpture in a sense that (at given times of the year) it is covered with blooming flowers. It becomes the emblematic reference for what Mbembe (2004:401) refers to as an "exoticness" – encapsulating notions of farmyard kitsch; an extension of symbolically and metaphorically indexed surfaces and features of the Mall's general design.

Part of the work of theorizing the uncanny in relation to space involves an examination of the corporeality of space; a haptic experience of space born from an acute ambivalent response to tangible reality. This ambivalence stems from an occupation of space – a certain habitation of space. "It takes the haptic to be the

measure of our tactile apprehension of space, an apprehension that is an effect of our movement through space" (Bruno 2002:250). This may be more usefully explained in spatio-bodily relations.

The tension between a sense of self and a sense of time as an aspect of the non-place can be located in a certain conflation of body and public space. Bruno (2002:208) explains this idea as "…space as an embodied terrain," in other words, "…as Merleau-Ponty has shown, the relation between bodies and space is such that `…our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space'… through it we have access to space" (Vidler 1998: 42-43). The space of a non-place invades a bodily realm transgressing boundaries of temporality and identity. Citing Caillois, Bruno (2002:208) explains: "…that for subjects captivated by space, it `seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them… it ends by replacing them. Then the body … feels [itself] becoming space.'"

The sensation and tactility of touch becomes an important trigger in this experience of space. Underscoring the significance of `being in' a place, Bruno (2002:251-252) relates this specifically to the physical act of touching: "Touch teaches the eyes to see beyond themselves… (a) sense of touch, then, makes the discovery and exploration of space possible in every way…"" Drawing on Lefebvre, Bruno (2002:255) extends the point when he writes: "…Lefebvre speaks of the relation between space and the body, extending one into the other, even conflating the two…This interaction evokes the very reversibility of the flesh, where touching also means being touched; the idea also approaches the tactile self mapped in psychoanalysis as an inside out." Sculptural interventions at the Irene Village Mall bring this relation of body and space into sharp focus. Angus Taylor's *Udderside* (2007) in the Irene mall Piazza and *Apollonian and Dionysian* (2007) positioned outside the Mug and Bean as well as the mosaic clad horse and ram outside the Pick and Pay court all prompt a physical and tactile interaction.[14] Else where I address this tactility in a discussion of children's play and how it manifests as a central function in Taylor's public sculpture at the Irene Village Mall.[15]

In Du Toit's *JBay Wave* (2008/9) curious shoppers strike poses, photographing themselves "surfing". The irony of this tableau is just too good to pass over – the "surfing" happens on a bronze cast surfboard represented propelling outwards form a concrete cast wave. Shoppers balance precariously on the surfacing board motif – one would only hope that the necessary supporting pins and enough Epidermix glue was slathered on to support the unsuspecting shopper's weight and keep the heavy bronze board in place. The motif of the skull is a foreboding allusion to death which is also playfully reinforced through the inclusion of a series of surfboard skegs at the crest of the wave. In many ways disaster is alluded to through the skegs that ominously also reference shark fins. The notion that things are not as they seem is also strengthened through the inclusion of motifs such as a mysteriously discarded Bikini top, a floating bottle and a small ball. The image of a highly polished balloon is positioned at the base of the wave encapsulating notions of festivity but also ironically signaling imminent catastrophe in the way it recalls the potential for bursting. A further confounding device is the inclusion of a bronze cast self centering ball bearing alluding to notions of mechanical repetition and the recurrent threat of a crashing wave populated with sharks, other sinister sea creatures and discarded and forgotten holiday debris. This reference to mechanical repetition signals repetitive movement in other ways. One is reminded of the numbing effect of shopping mall spaces on the hapless mall shopper as constant movement through the space is encouraged through visual and spatial devices.

The bodily invasiveness of space configured as a certain conflation with or "becoming space" is far more subtly exercised as an experience of the generic shopping mall interior. A powerful manner in which this plays out can possibly be located in the way people move through the space of the shopping mall. The shopping mall non-place can be understood as enacting a behavioral repetitiveness which signals a common shopping mall activity: aimless wandering. This repetitive movement foregrounds and reinforces the coercive and seductive impact of the simulacral shopping space: a misplaced appeal that signifies a discursive but at the same time, pervasive timelessness. Morris (in During 1993:395 & 397 & 399) links this effect of timelessness (a dislocation between time, history and space, identified here as a characteristic of the non-place) to an experience the shopping mall. She draws attention specifically to the way an ambivalent

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[14] I find particularly amusing a series of Father's day photographs of dads with children and or extended family posed precariously between gleaming bronze teated udders on Taylor's *Udderside* (2007). Note the obvious visual Freudian slips in the posed relations between dad, kids and teats.
[15] Refer to the (re)views section of *De Arte* 79.

confrontation with the self in the `present' emerges as a personal sense of estrangement in space. One may ascribe this to a certain sensual conflict brought about through an intermingling of place and non-place.[16]

Estrangement and aimless wandering are a consequence of the non-place of the wonderland shopping mall.[17] It is therefore not surprising that for Freud (cited in Vidler 1992:38) the uncanny relates to "hypnagogic visions and in the space of endless repetition… the eternal return of the same." Consider the play of light, surfaces and abundance of signage in shopping malls. The prevalent use of reflection or mirrored imagery as well as the play between natural and artificial lighting systems conjure a sense of distorted time space. An over abundance of signage affects a bewildering and confounding experience of space. Scale is suddenly and surprisingly altered to usher in an experience of claustrophobic and overwhelming reduced and dense space that is simultaneously unsettling and debilitatingly disorientating. To contrast this, particular mention can be made of the vacant sense of emptiness in some malls, amplified in interior surface cladding and a decidedly disorientating Piranesi-like application of an open plan vertigo-inducing multi-tiered volume. In some cases, the use of exaggeratedly deep space is a dramatic Cathedral-like element significantly enhancing an ambivalent and estranging effect. But the ambivalence of the non-place ushering in an experience of recurrent estrangement and displacement only partly assist in my attempts to destabilize the powerful spectacle of the urban shopping mall wonderland. I now turn to the uncanny as a final and admittedly desperate draw card.

Any deeper understanding of the uncanny requires a considerable mining of an already layered, convoluted and often misread history. Any mention of the uncanny provokes anxieties relating to some or other empirical experience of the ghostly, the ghastly, the silently terrifying residing in the familiar that suddenly reveals itself as dangerously unfamiliar. Consider the poetic narration of ambivalent self realization in the final sequence to Guillermo Del Toro's film Pan's Labyrinth (2006):

What is a ghost?

A tragedy condemned to repeat itself time and again

A moment of pain perhaps?

Something dead which still seems to be alive

An emotion suspended in time like a blurred photograph

Like an insect trapped in amber

A ghost

That's what I am.

For reasons of space and scope in this paper, I want to bypass the historicity of a chronological evolution of the uncanny and instead draw selectively on some of the core themes that become useful in demonstrating an awkward spatial phenomenon. I therefore deliberately cheat and circumvent the ghostly and the ghastly in favor of a spatial phenomenon that is cunning and evasive, concealed and layered yet emergent but always deceptively subtle.

Uncanniness is difficult to explain – language fails a sense of something there but not quite there. Popular perceptions describe "… the uncanny… (to) …be sinister, disturbing, suspect, strange; it would be characterized better as `dread' than terror, deriving its force from its very inextricability, its sense of lurking unease, rather than from any clearly defined source of fear…" (Vidler 1992: 22-23). In a chapter on the uncanny, Umberto Echo traces a strain of the uncanny popularized by Freud in the writings of Schelling (…the uncanny as something concealed but latently emergent) and Jensch (…something unusual which causes intellectual uncertainty) (Echo [Ed] 2007:311). I want to suggest here that the uncanny is an experience of something closer to home, something beneath the surface of lived experience; something we know but choose to ignore: a kind of flirting with Murphy's law of inevitable and relative occurrences.

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[16] Augé (1995:107) cements this point when he explains that: "In the concrete reality of today's world, places and spaces, places and non-places intertwine and tangle together. The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place."

[17] Citing Boyer, Mbembe (2004:403) extends this point: "`…the present is indeterminate and undecided: no metaphors of origins or belief in past covenants guide the present and no subject controls the future or determines the meaning of the past…' in an uncontested way. Displacement is the norm."

Also citing Freud's discussion of Jensch, Vidler (1992: 23) defines the uncanny as an experience born from the uncomfortable relation of Heimlich (homely) and the Unheimlich (Unhomely): "Jensch attributed the feeling of uncanniness to a fundamental insecurity brought about by a `lack of orientation,' a sense of something new, foreign and hostile invading an old, familiar, customary world." Freud favored the word, Unheimlich as it "...served to clarify the operations of the uncanny as a systematic principle as well as to situate its domain firmly in the domestic and the homely." For Freud there existed a disturbing affiliation between the Unheimlich and the Heimlich, bringing into a play an ambivalence: an all-to-easy slippage of things concealed and buried. The Unheimlich has the strong potential to slip into, subsume, merge with, invade and ultimately become its apparent opposite – the Heimlich (Vidler 1992: 23-26). This process was understood to stem from the ability of strange phenomena to double and replicate.

An encounter with Phil Minaar's life size bronze at the Woodhill Mall may illicit a response that recalls the uncanny. Minaar's installation occupies two areas of the main entrance to the Mall. The figures of a girl and boy are positioned hand in hand and frolicking in the large circular water feature at the eastern most entrance of the mall. As one moves past the water feature, up and through into the main boulevard area one encounters another three figures. One finds the image of a young boy first. He stands legs apart, poised with katjie in hand aiming tentatively at some or other small unsuspecting avian prey. A frog peeks out from one of his pockets – the bounty of an earlier catch. Minaar gives us a clue to his alter ego identity: On a small base at his feet Minaar tells us that his name is "Agent 007". Another five or so meters on and positioned close to the escalator balustrade one comes across "Ria" and "Mary". They are imaged engrossed in a game of net ball. Mary aims the ball at an invisible net. Ria holds her hands up as if to playfully block Mary's shot.

I spent some time observing the public's response to these sculptures. Adults generally ignored them. Children (of varying ages) however seemed obsessed with them. I would argue that their fascination with the figures moves beyond just a tactile response to scale and likeness (or sameness?) – a kind of sizing up of their own bodily relations and actions mirrored in these sculptured forms. My point here is that the children's response to these works may stem from the recognition of a certain doubling in the sculpted verisimilitude of Minaar's closely observed rendition of young children at play. Drawing on a critique of 19th century writers such as Hoffman and Poe, Vidler (1992:3) explains uncanny doubling as originating from an "...invasion of an alien presence; on a psychological level, its play was one of doubling, where the other is, strangely enough, experienced as a replica of the self, all the more fearsome because apparently the same." Could it be that the young Mall visitors respond through a recognition of things familiar – a re-presentation of self, that is cut short and rendered inaccessible and inactive in its hauntingly familiar frozen bronze form? The recognizable and seemingly harmless Heimlich bronze form is supplanted by the uncanny Unheimlich in its static and persistent reminder of discordant things.

Arguably the most unsettling experience of perpetual repetition as a specifically spatial phenomenon can be identified as a consequence of physical bodily movement through the mall space. Could an experience of hapless repetitive movement through the shopping mall wonderland, ushering in the estranging effects of a non-place find its most potent expression as an uncanny phenomenon? What psychological impact results from a dystopic public space so subtly ideologically veiled? In his discussion of the progressive and visionary rise of spatial incursions in 19th century urban modernity, Vidler (1992:4-5) brings attention to notions of …`home' that became "...a temporary illusion at best… (confirming)… the impossibility of `living comfortably' in the world." Vidler (1992:7) continues: "…, `unhomeliness' was more than a simple sense of not belonging; it was the fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become defamiliarized, derealized, as if in a dream."

The reference to a dream state is significant here as it recalls the gormless and circulaic wandering in the non-place. In the context of the uncanny, it references that state of displacement through "…things deliberately 'made strange`'" (Vidler 1992:7-8) culminating indefinitely in a sense of rootlessness - a nostalgic yearning for the "true, natal home." It evokes an experience of homesickness, homelessness and unsettledness (Vidler 1992:7)[18]. In part this highlights the perpetual and repetitively cyclic aspect of wandering or, more simply put, the idea of moving without moving. Vidler citing Derrida (1992:38) writes, "…speaking of Freud's own text *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Derrida notes: `the entire text has a diabolical movement, it mimes walking, it walks without ceasing, but does not advance; it regularly traces

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[18] Citing Dryfus, Vidler (1992:8) identifies this experience as one, "…of such radical rootlessness that everyone feels fundamentally unsettled (Unheimlich)… human beings can never be at home in the world."

out one more step but does not allow the gain of an inch of ground.' This endless drive to repeat is then uncanny, both for its associations with the death drive and by virtue of the `doubling' inherent in the incessant movement without movement." How often have you marched into a Mall only to stop in mid stride wondering what on earth you had come there for in the first place?[19] Or experienced a nagging de ja vu at passing a shop for the second time without having intended to do so in the first place?

Conclusion

What interests me most of all in Vidler's (1992:11) account of uncanny spaces is his assertion that "…architecture itself can never by uncanny…the `uncanny' is not a property of the space itself nor can it be provoked by any particular spatial conformation; it is, in its aesthetic dimension, a representation of a mental state of projection that precisely elides the boundaries of the real and the unreal in order to provoke a disturbing ambiguity, a slippage between waking and dreaming."

In the temporality of embodied spatial relations, the uncanny takes up its sneaky residence in the lived experience of the everyday and the ordinary. Outside of, as well as embedded in the ordained and sanctioned parametered frame of representation, in the day to day comings and goings of the citizenry, at the nexial junction of representation and lived experience, one finds the nostalgic yearning for things as they were, as the are and an unrealized expectation of what they aught to be. The uncanny is concealed in this moment of ambivalence, uncertainty and doubt. It lurks in that confounding moment of doubling and repetition brought about through strategically designed `gadgets' and `devices.' Vidler (1992:3) sums the uncanny up thus: "Its apparently benign and utterly ordinary loci, its domestic and slightly tawdry settings, its ready exploitation as the frisson of an already jaded public, all mark it out clearly as the heir to a feeling of unease…"

And just to dispel for ever more the myth that the ambivalent experience of the uncanny resides exclusively in the corporeal and material world of human beings, we may begin to question the validity and possibility of the uncanny animal deeply at odds with a sense of its bodily self. I finish with this clip of a decidedly Unhomely domestic event where something psychotically unsettling, bizarre and hysterically sinister is most certainly a foot.

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[19] In the non-place of the shopping mall this could be likened to a labyrinthine wandering: "…`like loosing oneself in the woods; round and round the chimney you go, and if you arrive at all it is just where you started and so you begin again and get nowhere'" (Vidler 1992:43).

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The image multiplied: sculpture within an ethical framework

In our time widespread unethical reproduction of artists' work is still taking place and it results in continual abuse of their rights. The main problem lies with the multiplication of the image for monetary purposes. In South Africa today, reproduction rights remain with the artist or the artist's heirs, legatees or personal representative until it passes into the public domain. They retain copyright for fifty years unless there is an express written agreement otherwise.

Right of reproduction is defined as including, but not limited to the reproduction of fine artworks such as prints suitable for framing, facsimile casts of sculpture, reproductions of paintings, sculptures and graphics for greeting cards, general books and magazines, not devoted primarily to art, and in newspapers, in other than art or news sections, when such reproductions in these books, magazines and newspapers are used for purposes similar to those of material for which the publishers customarily pay, such as art films, television, posters, billboards or films. Exceptions, where the artist's right to reproduction is not infringed, include the "fair use" doctrine of the copyright law, where a person has the right to use an image for educational or critical purposes.

This will not be the first time that our association considers the issues of unethical reproduction of artworks. On 19 March 1988 the South African Association of Art Historians held a successful one-day Symposium on past and present copyright issues in the Theo van Wijk Building at Unisa. There were three sessions entitled, "Art History, Copyright and the Law", "Friend or Foe: The Artist and the Art Museum" and "Publishing". Although all the issues raised are too many and too diverse to mention here, some of the highlights, which have a bearing on my present paper, need to be reviewed.

Proceedings were started by Professor Rory Doepel of the University of the Witwatersrand, with a particularly useful introduction to the range and potential complexity of copyright issues pertaining to Duchamp's *Bottle Rack*. Doepel noted that although his paper dealt with legal points of copyright, there are in copyright matters also always important ethical and moral considerations to weigh. He was followed by Professor Michael Godby with a paper on the "Hogarth Act", where he introduced several important conceptual problems relating to the notion of quality and its apparent protection through the protection of property. The "plundering" and "pirating" of Hogarth's work, to which Professor Godby referred then, has in our time still not diminished, as new problems of this sort have been introduced at an accelerated rate through the technological sophistication of copying devices. Intriguing was the echoes of problems of market control and perhaps, by extension, manipulation, generated by his paper. The third paper of the first session was by Professor D. Pienaar of Unisa, who delivered a most succinct presentation on the Copyright Act proper, in which he provided a valuable set of guidelines to the procedural and practical implications of the Act. The distinction he made between the somewhat different perspectives held by users of copyright material and by copyright holders was an eye-opener to those present, particularly where that difficult rider of "the substantial portion" was concerned.

With the second session the artist, Malcolm Payne, opened a proverbial Pandora's box of complex issues when he described the stony path which an artwork typically follows from the artist's studio onwards. In his detailed account of the many phases of reproduction which an artwork may go through after exhibition or acquisition by a public gallery, he clearly showed that the relationship between artist, artwork and statutory museum needed rigorous examination. This paper showed that problems raised by gallery-controlled reproduction of artworks had implications beyond the mechanics of reproduction techniques or the attendant legal issues. Some of these implications posed profound questions for artists, art historians and theoreticians, especially where they concerned the deflection of meaning in an artwork to the reproduction or even to the act or process of reproduction. Some of these issues were extended by the next speaker, Christopher Till, who was then the Director of the Johannesburg Art Museum. He intimated that the essence of copyright, in

so far as galleries were concerned, had to do with protection for the artist, while at the same time acknowledging rights for the custodians of the works and rights of access for the public.

The final session pertaining to Publishing was introduced with papers by Nic Coetzee, Ad Donker and Professor Clinton Harrop-Allin and was of a more technical nature. These three contributors provided clear and direct descriptions of copyright problems peculiar to publishing, which were considered very helpful to those who write for publication or act as editors. In his summary at the conclusion of the proceedings, Professor Terry King (1988:3) made the profound statement that:

> "Artworks are elements in greater systems of communication and social structuring, and artists and historians would normally wish to examine the relative benefits of unfettered exchange of visual information against regulating and controlling mechanisms which may protect their, but sometimes only someone else's, interests".

If we reflect on the issues and problems raised at this symposium, we should now ask ourselves how far have we come in the twenty-one years since then and what actions have been taken since then to inhibit, if not prevent, copyright infringement? My unequivocal answer to these questions would be "nowhere" and "none"!

Since copyright issues are very broad, this paper intends to focus mainly on copyright issues pertaining to sculpture. Over the last number of years, demand for casts of sculpture by important South African sculptors living and dead far exceeds the supply and has multiplied dramatically. The result is increased recasting or unauthorized new casting of sculptures. In most cases there are no laws to prevent this activity. Laws protecting the property rights of owners of plasters and bronzes have made it possible for them to make new castings to the detriment of art, artists and the art market.

It would be appropriate to commence any discussion on sculpture reproduction with a brief explanation of the sculpture reproduction process, which relies heavily on the founder for quality reproductions. Although it is the founder's main aim to maintain the integrity of the original sculpture and reproduce as accurately as possible the sculptor's vision of the sculpture, he can only reproduce the quality of sculpture equal to what he was given in the original. All bronze casting involves complex reworking, refinement and patination and all these must be executed perfectly to get the best result.

The process starts off with the founder making a high-quality silicone rubber mould with a plaster case to create a hollow wax impression of the original sculpture. A wax positive is then taken by applying a number of coats of heated wax to the rubber mould. The next step is very important for the eventual quality of the casting as it requires the founder to remove seam lines and other imperfections from this wax positive to ensure the best possible casting. The wax model must then be gated by attaching wax rods to the wax positive. These rods will form channels to allow the molten bronze to flow correctly and at the same time allow air to escape as the bronze flows into the mould. Once the founder and sculptor are satisfied with this wax model, it is dipped in a slurry solution and coated with sand for about two weeks to form a ceramic shell. When the wax is melted from this shell, the bronze is heated in a furnace and poured into the shell which has been pre-heated in a kiln. Once the bronze casting has been removed from the ceramic shell and cleaned, a skilled chiseller will examine the piece, weld together any parts and prepare the piece using small metal chisels and sanding tools to ensure that the finished bronze is exactly like the original sculpture. This final process is often the one where things go wrong in the reproduction of the sculpture, which inevitably results in poor castings. Finally the sculptor or the founder will add the patina. In our times, however, a highly accurate replica of any sculpture can be made with the latest non-contact 3D laser scanning techniques and subsequently manufactured into both synthetic and real materials such as marble, limestone or bronze.

When dealing with legal legislation pertaining to sculptural reproduction one of the first difficulties concerns definitions. Confusion occurs in response to the question of what constitutes an "original" bronze sculpture. The making of any bronze casting is a reproductive method and as a "reproduction" it will not convey in the public's mind the values associated with the word "original". When we use the words "accurate reproduction of the sculptor's original wax or plaster model" with a lifetime bronze cast by Anton van Wouw, the public often feel they are not looking at the real thing and these people are dismayed to hear that there are at least 20 "original" castings of *Noitje of the Underveld* (Duffey 2008:56). They do not realise that the sculptor creates his original clay or wax model as a preliminary version of the ultimate bronze, which becomes the finished work of art when it is cast in bronze. They define "original" as the first of its kind and see the plaster

and bronze casts as replicas. The word "replica" today generally signifies an anonymously made commercial imitation. The word "unique" also has different meanings to people who have varying knowledge of sculpture. For the general public several casts of the same sculpture are not considered as "unique", while to sculpture specialists no two bronze casts that are finished by hand are identical. In the United States only the first ten bronze casts are recognised as originals. Some scholars argue that as long as the bronze is made from the original plaster or wax of the artist, bronzes resulting from it are originals, with the result that posthumous castings taken from the artist's plasters are called originals by definition. They argue that if a sculptor does not want to have reproductions of his sculptures made after his death, he has to destroy all his plasters and wax models. Other scholars argue that only lifetime editions are original. According to the President of the College Art Association in the U.S.A., Professor Albert Elsen (2009:2):

> "While the term 'original' may be important to the public and to some professionals, to many artists and those knowledgeable about casting it is either of little value or only relative importance. More important to sculptors and those in the position to acquire, advise on acquisition, or write about casting is the specific information about when, by whom, how many, and how well a cast was made and whether or not it compares favourably with the artist's best work".

All too often sculptors leave their plasters to legatees or their heirs so that they may benefit from the income resulting from sales of future casts. Assuming that such individuals make castings from original plasters in a manner prescribed or practiced by the sculptor and that the quality in these posthumous castings is upheld, must such castings be rejected as ethically and morally undesirable? The one condition that we all will agree to is that when such reproductions are made they must rigorously conform to the artist's standards. Can anyone, however, conform to such standards? Say for instance we have a number of fragile plasters of a sculptor which have never been cast in bronze before and we notice that they are badly deteriorating and will be lost to posterity if we do not cast them in bronze. Can we turn a blind eye because it is ethically wrong to make a posthumous casting? Wouldn't it be ethically wrong not to do something? But let us take the matter one step further. Say a museum owns a number of original plasters by an important sculptor that have never been cast in bronze, but the museum does not have the funds to have reproductions made. Along comes a rich benefactor, who is prepared to make reproductions of all the plasters in bronze on condition that he/she gets a copy of each bronze. The museum agrees on condition that these reproductions conform to the artist's sculptural standards and are properly marked as reproductions and dated. Would this be unethical and morally undesirable?

Ultimately the whole issue boils down to a number of interests that have to be protected. Again it is Professor Elsen (2009:4) who can be quoted on this matter:

> "The first interests to be protected from abuse are those of the artist and his work. At stake is respect for his intensions and standards of quality and ultimately, his reputation. Linked with this is the protection of the artist's sculpture itself so that it is not used for unethical or illegal purposes. We must also safeguard the public's interest in being educated in artistic values and enjoying the highest quality of art. To be defended are the legitimate rights and interests of heirs or executors who are responsible for the artist's work. We must also protect the interests of those who own legitimate casts against their devaluation aesthetically and financially".

We have a mission to respect the rights of the artists and their heirs, to deter those with well intentioned or base motives who contravene those rights and to maintain public confidence in the legitimate reproduction of sculptors' artworks. Our most obvious course of action is to thoroughly debate these issues and establish the appropriate professional societies of standards for sculptural reproduction as well as preventative measures to combat unethical casting. In conclusion I will like to make a few recommendations on how we can discourage the making of unethical reproductions in the future. We could:

a. Encourage all sculptors to compile written instructions with respect to the future of their plasters or wax models or to ask them to destroy such plasters or wax models after making bronzes.
b. Encourage all sculptors to properly sign and date their sculptures and even copyright them.
c. Petition the state for the lengthening of the copyright period.
d. Clearly mark all posthumous castings with the name of the foundry, date of the reproduction, the size of the edition and whether it is of the same scale as the original.

e. Encourage legatees and heirs to consult with experts and be very scrupulous in discharging responsibilities.
f. Encourage museums not to acquire, art dealers and auctioneers not to sell and foundries not to cast unauthorised reproductions.
g. Establish a programme to educate the general public with regard to the dangers of illegal and unethical casting practices.

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Phallocentric fantasies / fallacies: the representation of sexuality through symbols and myths

The investigation that follows is a discursive analysis of the representation of sexuality through symbols and myths. These representations were identified by focus group research that was conducted with religious and cultural leaders from Tshwane.[20]

In providing for the above stated analysis, discussions regarding the study of sexuality and the very nature of symbols and myths are highlighted in order to act as a framework for the ensuing investigation. The culminating analysis is limited to that of the discourses of sperm that were presented by the focus group participants which will be saliently examined to reveal patriarchal descriptions of sexuality – male virility and female passivity / receptivity.

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[20] This research is in reference to a project spearheaded by the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies, University of Pretoria entitled, *Religious and Cultural Perspectives of Human Sexuality*. In particular, this project which was conducted from 2006-7, aimed to explore and debate key issues of human sexuality with religious and cultural leaders from the urban and semi-urban areas that surround Tshwane in the province of Gauteng, South Africa. The project took the form of a series of workshops in which the identified participants (religious and cultural leaders) from the given communities dialogued the key issues regarding human sexuality – its taboos, myths, and misconceptions – that give rise to the increased vulnerability of HIV infection to their community members. For a full demographic of the participants and the research findings, please see du Plessis and Maree (2009).

Studies in sexuality

In discussions regarding sexuality, sexuality tends to be pivoted around the assumption that the sexual act is a definable and a universal experience. This assumption proves to be problematic as it ignores the very fact that sexuality is immersed / implicated in social dynamics and male-female power relations that vary greatly by culture, region and over the life cycle. Rather, sexuality can be viewed as:

> …a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviour, practices, roles and relationships… Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors (WHO 2004).

The above conception of sexuality further calls for us to consider sexuality as contextual: the variety of cultural patterns that history reveals and the very different meanings given to sexual activity (Weeks 1989:1). Thus, rather than being an essentially human quality known throughout all times, sexuality is a historical and contextual construction (Bristow 1997:5; Laqueur 1992)[21] which cannot be isolated from its discursive, socially determined milieu (Bhattacharyya 2002:39).

However, research in regards to sexuality in Africa has rather tended to view sexuality as static and ahistorical rather than dynamic and subject to change (Reid & Walker 2005). The implication of this is that colonial images and stereotypes are not only manifest in discourses of African sexuality but that these become framed and eternally essentialised – the implication of envisaging African 'tradition' as fixed culminates in the conviction that there is no power to resist these myths and that they are unchanging (they do not and cannot reflect contemporary influences). This framing of the concept 'tradition' masks the flexibility of cultural constructions of identity and the porousness and mutability of traditions. In sharp contrast to this, Melissa Steyn and Mikki van Zyl (2009:6) describe:

> [c]ontemporary discourses shaping South African sexualities … [as] a complex mix of the dominant western discourses, both the contemporary global strands and the often still colonial local infections, and the tensions in postcolonial African heteropatriarchies as they formulate re-imagined African national identities (Steyn & van Zyl 2009:6).

Thus, rather than positing a binary of African versus Western, the myths and symbols discussed in this analysis are explored as palimpsests or multifaceted texts that cannot be attributed to a singular origin. Instead, they attest to the fact that contemporary South African beliefs represent multiple sites of engagement (whether African, Western or a hybrid of both) which are scripted to fulfill patriarchal views of sexuality and gender roles.

Furthermore, pivotal to this paper is the fact that studies in sexuality should not only pay attention to social, economic or religious sides of sexuality but should also become interested in the preliminaries of sexual behaviour, in the representation of sexuality (Bremmer 1991:ix). This approach proves to saliently aid analyses in sexuality as it is not just science that constructs sexuality but discourse in a similar way constitute sexuality (Blackledge 2005; Drenth 2005; Laqueur 1992:17; Moore 2002; Moore 2007) - the central tenets of patriarchal sexuality are mirrored in ordinary language, popular culture and literature that venerate heterosexuality and the sexual-political control of women by men in words and pictures (Bordo 1999; Friedman 2001; Jackson 1987:75; Lehman 2007; Moore 2007; Myerson 1986:68). In this light, research into sexuality has been extended to move beyond sexual practices to include the beliefs, perceptions, and representation of sexuality in all their cultural and historical variety. These various settings act as systems of classification that structure and define sexual experience in different social and cultural contexts (Peltzer 2006; Shoveller & Johnson 2006). By adopting such an approach, the relationship between sexuality

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[21] For Foucault (1980), sexuality is not an obstinate drive that is by its very nature defiant to power. Rather it is a historical construct that acts as a transfer point of relations of power: a surface network in which the body becomes linked to discourses and strategies of knowledge and power (Foucault 1980:105-6). Thus, the importance accredited to Foucault's work is that he posits sex within the context of the institutions and history in which it evolves. In other words, he allows for sex to be viewed as relational - it is shaped in social interaction and can only be understood in its historical context and in terms of the cultural meanings assigned to it. This in turn demands an exploration of a variety of forces that have shaped and constructed 'sexuality', such as gender, religion, class and power-relations.

(behaviour, acts and fantasies) and its connection to patriarchal conceptions / conscriptions are revealed (Hekma 1991:188; Mirzoeff 1995:2).

By recognising the above key insights regarding sexuality, the following analysis is pivoted along a core framework that recognises: (1) sexuality is not a biological constant but an ever-changing phenomenon. The implication of which means that studies in sexuality should not only pay attention to social, economic or religious sides of sexuality but also to the symbols and myths that categorise the 'architecture' of sexuality. (2) The symbols and myths regarding South African sexuality cannot be neatly categorised as either African or Western but are rather palimpsests that reflect patriarchal views on gender and gender relations. Thus, in sum, these points provide a framework for the subsequent analysis of the symbols and myths of sexuality: rather than exclusively conceptualised as a biological drive, a neutral surface, sexuality is argued to be constituted through cultural practices. These cultural practices manifest symbols and myths that legitimate, construct and perpetuate patriarchal prescriptions of sexuality through functioning as models of sexual behaviour / acts.

Analysis

Although there are distinct differences between sperm and semen (sperm only constitutes between 2-5% of semen, the rest is composed of fluid from the seminal vesicles and prostrate), in discussions regarding semen, sperm are separated from the semen and anthropomorphised - that is given human qualities (Moore 2007:5). In this light, sperm becomes an extension of masculinity and of gender stereotypes – sperm (man) are strong while the ovum (woman) is passive. Thus, sperm is a liminal substance as it traffics between biological and social worlds – in terms of biology it is required for fertilisation but this scientific knowledge is socially filtered to reveal patriarchal descriptions of gender and sexuality that assign meanings to the sperm (Moore 2007:12).

Sperm is layered with meanings related to both the public and private realms of human sexuality, reproduction, health and illness, masculinity and femininity. These layered meanings of sperm permit Lisa Jean Moore to term our understanding of sperm as 'polyspermous' (Moore 2007:5). That being said, the analysis that follows traces the diverse social and cultural representations of sperm situated within the focus group findings. However, no matter how diverse and 'polyspermous' these representations are, they all are described as a manifestation of patriarchy – as a substance linked to hegemonic masculinity and phallic attributes.[22]

Venting virility: sperm as a sign of manhood and male sexuality

The respondents in the focus groups described sperm as "a sign of manhood" but this seemingly innocent account carries an ideological impetus. This ideology is revealed in later discussions in which the participants explained that if a man does not make a woman pregnant he is deemed to have weak sperm, the "man is giving *Sprite* not *Inkomazi*". In this sense the relationship between a man and his semen is anthropomorphised to an affinity between the cells and the man that produces them (Moore 2007:139). In other words, people represent sperm as a projection of the man that produces them and these projections are measured according to hegemonic descriptions of manhood – the need to be virulent and dominant in sexual schemas (Moore 2007:139;148). Thus, in regards to the provided quote, semen that is deemed to be fertile is depicted as milky, thick and white and thus akin to *Inkomazi* (a South African *maas* drink – full cream cultured milk). Conversely, infertile semen is described as a see-through liquid (as *Sprite*, a lemonade flavoured drink registered to the *Coca-Cola* company). Such descriptions distinguish the fluids of men (as milky and thick) against the perceived fluidity of women (liquidity). Furthermore, sperm (rather than semen) is represented primarily through what it makes (foetus), what it achieves (male virility), and in this sense, its fluidity and potential seepage is perpetually displaced by discourses that construct it as an object – as sperm (Grosz 1994:199). This transfiguration of fluids into solids is a constituent of the broader strive for the

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[22] It is imperative to note that both male and female participants provided statements that are akin to patriarchal formations. According to Irigaray, the feminine only occurs within models and laws devised by male subjects. This model, a phallic one, shares the values promulgated by patriarchal society and culture which maintains masculine self-affection: the libido and desire is male. In this view, women are a mere obliging prop for the enactment of man's fantasies – her desire is submerged, lacking, repressed and censured in favour of the masculine (see Irigaray 1985a & 1985b).

solidity of phallic masculinity. Therefore, men disavowal fluidity (which would link male bodies to the modes of representation they commonly attribute to female bodies) in the form of phallicising the male body by exerting a quasi or apparent control over them by representing the flow of fluids as a solid (foetus), and thereby men demarcate their bodies as distinct from the feminine (Grosz 1994:202). To return to the quote in question, the above reading implies that an infertile man is relegated to the same frame of reference as a woman – as expressing a seepage (due to infertile sperm, his semen remains fluid and cannot be phallicised as it serves no procreative function). The sperm's inability to impregnate the woman becomes a projection onto the man that produces it - his masculinity becomes dubious.

Further discussions by the participants identified the myth that "if one is not sexually active, the sperm will travel in the bloodstream to an individual's brain and make him mad". This view corresponds with what van Dyk (2001) identified as a principal African belief, in which the blockage of the natural flow of the body's fluids is believed to be an inevitable cause of illness that can even be fatal. Such a belief is not unique to African beliefs but is manifest in Western accounts in which sperm (like testosterone and penises) are similarly portrayed as a powerful force in which men are driven to certain sexual acts which are beyond their control (Moore 2007:152; Potts 2001). Additionally, this belief can be described as central to Western archetypes of sexuality. The influential works of sexological research in the twentieth century, namely Kinsey and Masters and Johnson have been analysed to reveal that they are guided by key themes that have been accepted as the model of sexuality in the west. These themes include (Myerson 1986): firstly, that sexual desire is a basic, biological urge which demands satisfaction, in men the urge is usually considered to be much stronger than in women; secondly, if the male sexual drive is denied legitimate outlets, it will find satisfaction in illegitimate ones (adultery, pornography etc) or alternatively, repression of sexual desire may lead to physical or mental illness; lastly, the need for sex is as basic at the need for food, the implication being that the consequences of 'sex starvation' are extremely harmful. This model not only reflects and legitimates sex in 'male' terms but male sexuality becomes universalised and serves as the model of human sexuality. In this view, sexuality becomes a biologically determined, instinctual drive, analogous to hydraulic pressure that must be expressed or repressed (Myerson 1986:67). These findings reveal that the Western sexological literature of the early and late twentieth century constructed a model of sexuality which purported to be objective and scientific but in fact reflected and promoted the interests of men in a sexually divided society (Jackson 1987:52), namely that heterosexuality and heterosexual practices which define and institutionalise male domination and female submission are viewed as natural and predestined (Jackson 1987:71).

Throughout the above findings, both African and Western beliefs reveal a portrayal of male sexuality that is biologically determined and an instinctual drive that is akin to a hydraulic pressure that must be expressed and released (no matter what the consequences of such actions are). The corollary of this is that sex in this framework cannot be a consensual or negotiable act; rather women are mere passive vessels for the release (receiving) of the male sex drive. In this equation, a woman is implored to satisfy their male partner's sexual urges. Additionally, women are cautioned against being 'gate-keepers' to sex and are warned that this may lead to negative consequences such as the male partner losing his sex drive or conversely seeking sex elsewhere.

Reproduction as male: the sole procreative function of semen

Further discussions regarding sperm saw the participants define it in terms of its reproductive capacity as "important for producing babies" and additionally that "one drop can make a child". However, a more pervasive thought was later revealed in which the participants marveled at the sperm cells' powerful agency and self-contained role in reproduction evident in descriptions such as "[sperm] is a life-giving capacity limited to men alone". Although it has been explored by theorists (see van Dyk 2001) that in African beliefs a woman's value is determined by her fertility, there has been little substantial studies on the very same fertility of women as dependant on a male's procreative potential – his semen. This concept is illustrated in some African beliefs that repeated contributions of semen are needed to ripen the growing foetus in the womb (van Dyk 2001).

The belief of men's crucial and even exclusive role in human reproduction in which women are deemed mere vessels for carrying the foetus is not just evident in African beliefs but may even be described as a hallmark of Western thought since its origin. The basis of many of the Western cultural notions about

conception and sexual reproduction came from Aristotle's theory (Fourth century BC) in which he posited different roles for men and women. This gave a political connotation to ideas about sex and reproduction from yet we have not fully escaped. Aristotle believed that the male was the major factor in reproduction and that the female only provided the material for the semen to work upon (Bordo 1999:246).[23] Contemporary expressions of the marginalisation of generative / reproductive capacity of women are discussed at length by several authors (see Hanafin 2009; Moore 2007; Sharpe & Faulkner 2008). All these authors extensively discuss how 'sperm' becomes linguistically scripted to fulfill patriarchal visions of marginalising women's reproductive potential. Irigaray provides an articulate study of this by describing how "[s]perm, whose power in the procreation process is not immediately visible, is relayed through the linguistic code, the logos. This linguistic code tries to become the all-embracing truth" (Irigaray in Mortley 1991:65). For Irigaray (1985a:15), this means the following, the sperm which is as scripted as active (it searches for the female ovum) while the ovum is passive (waits passively for the sperm) is symbolic of the division of gender into 'masculine' to connote 'active,' and the 'feminine' to connote 'passive'. In this 'testimony', the reproductive agency is solely defined as the sperm in its race towards the ovum (Irigaray 1985a:15).[24] In this light, the reproductive function is therefore dominated by the sperm's attack upon the ovum. "In this economy, woman's job is to tend the seed man 'gives' her, to watch over the interests of this 'gift' deposited with her and to return it to its owner in due course" (Irigaray 1985a:75). The final product, the child, and it is zealously hoped that it will be a boy is the sign of the sperm's immortality, of the fact that the properties of the sperm have won out over those of the ovum (Irigaray 1985:74).The contribution of the woman to reproduction – her ovum, her sex organs, her body – are totally ignored in this linguistic scripting (Irigaray 1985a:74). As a result, women are merely represented as a transitional site for the production of a life which is ultimately generated by the father. The fact that woman's role in reproduction and birth is bypassed in this schema allows the male to claim himself as fount of all life (Hanafin 2008).

With sperm symbolised as singularly responsible for reproduction in both Western and African beliefs, and combined with the previous thoughts on the anthropomorphisation of sperm, the resounding reading reveals patriarchal visions and ideals - sperm is not only the lone driver of human sexuality but it also positions men in control of human reproduction. Sperm is seen to commandeer a man's body while simultaneously compelling men to behave in particular ways. Furthermore, by marking sperm with the traits of hegemonic masculinity, these behaviours are naturalised and legitimated (Moore 2007:31-37). Thus, the beliefs regarding sperm as presented by the respondents of the focus groups cannot be assigned to one origin or a binary, but rather reflect contemporary South African views on sexuality – whether contemporary or historical, 'Western' or 'African', or a hybrid of some sorts – the underlying ideology of the beliefs validate male privilege and power.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the preceding discussions, the central motivating factor has been that it is imperative to analyse the social structures that shape and influence sexuality. This goal has been approached through demystifying the symbols and myths of human sexuality to reveal there alignment to patriarchal gender divisions. As such, the study has been a critical analysis that resists and challenges naturalist and essentialist beliefs regarding human sexuality which ensure the maintenance and reproduction of male supremacy.

In order to address the above, the analysis of symbols and myths was limited to that of the representation of sperm as revealed by the participants of a focus group. Their understanding of sperm was revealed to be constructed through representations that drew upon gendered beliefs and ideologies. These expressions highlight the way in which sperm is represented in accordance to patriarchal gender divisions and inequality. Additionally, Irigaray (1985b:70) describes that in such scripting of sperm, "[w]oman herself is never at issue in these statements: the feminine is defined as the necessary complement to the operations of male sexuality, and, more often, as a negative image that provides male sexuality with an unfailingly phallic self-

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[23] Historically, Aristotle is heralded as the most influential pre-modern author on human sexual activity and is widely regarded as the founder of Western sexology (Bullough 1994:9). Aristotle's theory that a women's only part in conception was merely supply a container in which the 'seed' grows was only refuted in the sixteenth century AD. For further discussions regarding Aristotle and the gendered implications of his claims, please see Laqueur (1992).

[24] The ovum has been proven to be not passive in fertilization as we previously thought – the ovum chooses a spermatozoon for itself to at least as great an extent as it is chosen (see Blackledge 2003; Irigaray 1985b).

representation". This is underscored in this paper's analysis of sperm in which male sexuality is valorised as a potent drive that must be constantly 'quenched' while women are solely allotted to be a mere outlet for the male sex drive and / or as a vessel for carrying a foetus.

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Leaving the ox-wagon behind: Afrikaner nationalism, modernity and the changing canon of 'high art', 1945–76

The title of this paper is taken from a letter, written by one D J du Plessis and published in *Die Beeld* 14 July, 1968: 'Wake up! A new nation has been born with the coming of the Republic. Climb on and ride together. But leave the ox-wagon behind' (Welsh, 1969: 276). This sentiment serves as an unwitting riposte to Pierneef's oft-quoted aphorism, first recorded by Grosskopf (1945: 21): 'You must ride with your own people on the ox-wagon.' These two quotations serve as framing my discussion, in which I aim to show how an institutionalised canon of modern 'high art' emerged in response to the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism as a political and cultural force in the period 1945–1976.

By the time the National Party came to power in 1948, the visual language associated with Afrikaner nationalism was well articulated. Conservative in style and subject, it was concerned primarily with articulating the social imaginary of the Afrikaner *volk* with what Dunbar Moodie identifies as the 'civil religion' of the Afrikaner, whose articles of faith were a strict Calvinism, single-medium mother tongue education, racial segregation, the upliftment of poor Afrikaners, and ultimately the establishment of a republic.

In terms of the visual arts the imaginary of the Afrikaner 'civil religion' was expressed primarily in two ways: first, in the depiction of the majestic beauty of the virgin landscape, or 'promised land', which had been paid for in blood and sweat by the righteousness and heroism of the Voortrekkers. Second, in the imaginative (re)construction of the history of the Voortrekkers, whose selflessness and brave sacrifices led the Afrikaners through wilderness to this Promised Land. By 1948 the artists who best represented this tradition enjoyed prominent reputations, and were considered respected members of the small but increasingly powerful Afrikaner cultural elite. Pierneef and Coetzer, in particular, identified strongly with the aims and aspirations of Afrikaner nationalism, and their work clearly exemplifies the two strands identified above.

In retrospect, we can see that this interest in the empty landscape and the (not unrelated) embrace of Voortrekker history as part of a wider discourse of Afrikaner nation building in the 1930s and 40s that promoted popular identification with the Voortrekkers in order to reinforce at every level notions of the legitimacy of the Afrikaner *volk*. The inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in 1949 was thus an event of considerable cultural and political significance for Afrikaner nationalism: not only was it the realisation of a long-cherished desire to have a permanent and highly visible monument to the Voortrekkers, but following so close on the heels of the National Party victory, it gave literal expression to the abstractions of politics and nation building.

In this context the work of Coetzer and Pierneef (and a legion of their imitators) established a canonical basis of what constituted 'good' art for the newly constituted Afrikaner state: figurative, conservative in style, and

self-consciously aware of its cultural importance. Indeed, after 1948 their work increasingly informed the politics of collecting and display at public institutions, as well as setting the tone for public commissions.

By the time of the Soweto Uprisings in 1976, however, the visual reference points associated with Afrikaner nationalism had shifted considerably. Although rhetorical statements drawing on the established tropes of the civil religion never entirely disappeared, after1961 a strident and self-conscious modernity was increasingly associated with the appearance of the various apparatuses of the state. On the back of an ever-strengthening economy and burgeoning industrialisation, state-sponsored provincial buildings were proliferating in the urban centres, invariably designed in a style that embraced the post-Second World War International Style with a fervour that bordered on the messianic. The art commissioned for these buildings, as well as the art that was being promoted by institutions such as the Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, was also increasingly and insistently abstract. Thus, between the birth of the Afrikaner nationalist state in 1948 and the political watershed of 1976 that would ultimately destabilise it, a significant shift occurred in the canon of 'high art' from the backward looking, blood-and-soil imagery to a sophisticated rhetoric that was more in tune with the aspirations of a modern nation state.

Theories of nationalism are instructive here: as Anderson (1983), Gellner (1983) and others have shown, something of a paradox is discernible in the construction of new nationalisms. While nations are by definition relatively recent constructs, this objective modernity is underscored by a subjective sense of antiquity. Homi Bhabha (1990: 294) refers to this phenomenon as "a double time of the nation", in which the nation simultaneously posits ancient origins as well as progressive futurity – the imagined past gives it legitimacy, while a forward-looking modernity enables it to take its rightful place as a viable entity within a community of nations. Clearly, the art making of Pierneef and Coetzer, with its respective emphasis on the pristine wilderness and heroic history, belongs in the category of constructing notions of subjective antiquity. Two decades later, with the Afrikaner nationalist government firmly in power, the emphasis could shift to a celebration of the nation's objective modernity.

Examples abound, not only in terms of the decoration of new public buildings, but also in the increasing prominence given to non-figurative art and artists by the cultural establishment. Between the 1930s and the 1950s, the Akademie bestowed recognition on artists who emphatically represented the conservative traditions of the established canon. From the mid 1960s, however, there is something a shift towards acknowledging artists whose work, while still largely figurative, was considerably less hidebound: these included, inter alia, Higgs (1963), Battiss (1964), Stern (1965) and Welz (1969). By the end of the period under review in this paper, 'abstract' art reigned supreme, with Cecil Skotnes receiving the award in 1976, followed by Bettie Cilliers-Barnard in 1978 (Van Graan, 1990). During this period there is also an increased emphasis on promoting South African art and artists both locally and abroad. South African artists exhibited at the Venice Biennale for the first time in 1950, with official government sponsorship from 1952, and also at the São Paulo Biennale between 1957 and 1963. From 1956 the South African Association of Arts organised quadrennial exhibitions of South African art, which toured the major South African galleries.

Consolidating these efforts on the home front was the bilingual quarterly publication *Lantern*, published by the Department of Education, Arts and Science. From its first issue in 1949, the journal devoted a considerable amount of space to matters of art and culture. Although early readers of *Lantern* were encouraged "to study modern art without prejudice and with an open heart" (Meiring, 1954: 277), during the1950s the articles on artists nonetheless focused largely on the entrenched Afrikaner 'masters': Pierneef, van Wouw, Wenning, Naudé, et al. In 1959, in collaboration with the SABC, Lantern produced *Ons Kuns/ Our Art* the first of four bilingual books on South African artists. Initially this publication favoured the conservative, figurative tradition favoured by the Akademie. By the third volume in 1978, however, abstraction had triumphed over figuration, implying that 'our art' could now comfortably assert itself on a world stage.

Similar trends are visible in public commissions. In the 1950s, arbiters of public taste favoured figurative over non-figurative subjects, for example Alexis Preller's mural programme entitled *All Africa*, which was commissioned for the Receiver of Revenue's offices in Johannesburg (1953-4). The murals evoke a highly idealised and romanticised vision of Africa, and remain resolutely figurative. Indeed, but for the refinements of Preller's style, in terms of both subject and sentiment this mural would not have been out of place in a public building of the preceding two decades.

Preller revisited these themes in *Discovery*, a 1962 mural for the Transvaal Provincial Administration Building in Pretoria. Despite its African reference points and idiosyncratic style, this work still satisfied conventional standards of officially-sanctioned taste: although no longer yoked to the blood-and-soil imagery of the Great Trek, it nonetheless represented the triumph of white civilisation for the newly-established Republic in a style that was at once 'modern' and forward-looking and yet figurative and accessible.

Much the same might be said of Bettie Cilliers-Barnard's 1963 tapestry design, *Die Vrou* commissioned for the same building. Her initial design having been rejected as too abstract, final design shows a similar balance between the figurative and the decorative that characterises Preller's mural. This is also visible in Cecily Sash's mosaic, *Seekoeivlei* in the same building and completed in the same year. Public art during the 1950s and early 60s thus follows the same trends established by the Akademie and the official press: modernistic but not avant-garde, 'African' (or indeed 'Afrikaner') in its reference points, and with sufficient figurative content to reinforce the notion that art has a higher, moral purpose.

Increasingly, public art shows a dramatic shift towards abstraction by the latter half of the 1960s. The H F Verwoerd Building (1966-9), the home of the Provincial Administration of the Orange Free State in Bloemfontein, features a 12-storey high stained glass façade commissioned from the abstract landscape painter Eben van der Merwe and a mural by Bettie Cilliers-Barnard entitled *The Development of the Orange Free State* (1969). In this work, Cilliers-Barnard could give freer rein to the abstract impulses that dominated her work during this period, and the figurative elements are thus subordinated to an overriding concern with decorative abstraction. This became the dominant characteristic of other public commissions at the time, notably the various murals and other decorative elements for the new international concourse at Jan Smuts airport in Johannesburg (1970 and 1972).

Cilliers-Barnard's panel in the H F Verwoerd building is interesting both in terms of its style and in the social imaginary that it constructs. Whereas the public commissions of the 1950s and early 60s tended to be backward looking, Cilliers-Barnard produces a self-conscious celebration of the modernity of the new republic, significantly produced at a time when the National Party was enjoying its strongest support. The March 1966 election, in which the National Party won an overwhelming majority of 126 seats, effectively rendered South Africa "a single party state" (Welsh, 2000: 464), and Verwoerd's political and economic agenda had been largely fulfilled by the time he was assassinated in September 1966. In a building named for the infamous 'architect of apartheid', Cilliers-Barnard's mural clearly asserts that while the Prime Minister may be dead, his vision of economic prosperity under the guidance of white culture continues to flourish.

It is important to note that, unlike Pierneef and Coetzer, the artists producing this officially sanctioned abstract art in the 1960s and 70s were not all Afrikaners, nor were they necessarily Afrikaner nationalists. Indeed, their art is so devoid of political content, that it seems in retrospect that they were wholly unmoved by – or wilfully oblivious of – the political turbulence of their age. While the fact that they achieved official recognition in the form of highly visible public commissions does not necessarily make them complicit with the nationalist project, it does point to a paradigmatic shift on the part of the Afrikaner cultural elite: sophistication was increasingly being valued above sentiment; an optimistic future over a troubled past. This can be understood in relation to changing ideological values in the two decades after 1948. The period immediately following the 1948 victory was dominated by the consolidation of the Nationalist Party's ideological principles. By the 1960s, however, this had largely been achieved. Afrikaners were now firmly in control of all the organs of state, and the generation that had come to political maturity were sufficiently empowered to embrace new constructs of what it meant to be an Afrikaner.

Throughout the 1960s, the notion of the modern nation was aggressively promoted. Against a backdrop of increasing isolationism, the draconian policies of the state were justified in terms of notions of white (Afrikaner) racial and cultural supremacy. At the same time the notions of *volkekunde* first espoused at Afrikaner universities in the 1920s had been formalised into full-blown apartheid. Simultaneously, there is a pronounced shift in the demographics of class associated with broad-based Afrikaner nationalism. From a predominantly rural base, the Afrikaner middle class grew exponentially in the first decades of National Party rule. This is as much a function of urbanisation as of job reservation and cultural and educational policies that privileged whites in general and Afrikaners in particular.

The generation of (particularly urban) Afrikaners that came to maturity in the 1960s and 70s thus had a profoundly different awareness of itself and its place in the world than that which had informed its parents and grandparents. The bitter history of the concentration camps and the ravages of the Anglo-Boer War that

had fuelled the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1920s were no longer an immediate imperative, and were certainly no longer part of the living memory of the economically active population. Indeed, young, middle-class Afrikaners in the 1960s and early 70s – riding the crest of an economic boom and living in a state that aggressively and jealously promoted their wellbeing – could enjoy a prosperity and concomitant sense of confidence and cultural superiority that would have been unimaginable for their parents' generation.

In this context, it is not surprising to find that by the 1960s and 70s the rhetoric of Afrikaner nationalism, and the visual construction of its imaginary, undergoes a pronounced shift. This has as much to do with the expansion and consolidation of the urban middle class, as it does with a shift in rhetoric from having to mobilise a sense of the right to govern, to a complacent celebration of that right. In effect, the blood-and-suffering imagery that had appealed to the generation that grew up in the long shadows cast by the concentration camps and who had suffered the indignities of the poor white problem of the 1920s, no longer had a place in the cultural arrogance of the 1960s and 70s.

An important aspect of the debate that cannot be overlooked here is the ideological schism between the *verligte* (enlightened) and *verkrampte* (reactionary) Afrikaners that occurred within the ranks of the Afrikaner elite during the 1960s. Interestingly, the catalyst for this rupture was cultural rather than political: in May 1964 the respected Afrikaner writer Etienne Leroux was awarded the Akademie's highest award for literature, the Hertzog Prize for Prose, for his controversial novel *Sewe Dae by die Silbersteins*. At once a parody of the Creation and a parable of the failure of the nationalist project (O'Meara, 1996: 124), the controversy that it provoked raised profound questions about what constituted the acceptable limits of Afrikaner culture.

Although a staunch Nationalist, Leroux was a member of the literary group the *Sestigers*, who took it upon themselves to revitalise the staid, hidebound conventions of Afrikaans literature. This was achieved both in their engagement with themes – like anomie and sexuality – that were anathema to the existing canon, as well as in their experiments with form. While there is no direct equivalent to the *Sestigers* in terms of the South African visual arts of the period, the group nonetheless paved the way for new forms of cultural expression. The rise of abstraction as the dominant language of 'high art' at this time is part of the same cultural imaginary. It must largely be ascribed to the coming of age of a younger generation of *verligte* Afrikaners whose identity was emphatically urban rather than rural, and whose middle-class aspirations and values were well served by the retreat into abstraction that arose out of 1950s formalism.

In this context it is worth noting that the Abstract Expressionist 'field' may be considered a way of refiguring the landscape. In the South African context I would argue that a case can be made for the use of the abstract 'field' coupled with an interest in 'earthy' textures as being a way of re-imagining the landscape, but from the point of view of the self-consciously 'modern'. This is evident in the work of a number of young (often Afrikaner) painters of the period: Renée le Roux, Erik Laubscher, Eben van der Merwe, Anna Vorster, et al. In other words, by the 1950s, the landscape was firmly established as a canonical trope, but at some point in the 1960s it becomes conflated with a new imaginary of the Afrikaner – no longer a hick out of step with the world, but urban, sophisticated and firmly in control of his destiny. Abstract art, with just enough 'earthiness' to register it as African, seemed to fit the bill and was embraced wholesale in a variety of contexts.

In the final analysis, it is interesting how the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and the canon of 'high art' changed in the three decades after 1945. Indeed, the shift from the backward-looking and sentimental figurative tradition to an assertive and self-conscious modernity in less than two decades is an astonishing turnaround, and speaks volumes about the changing notions of the Afrikaner nation and its aspirations. I think it is fair to say that this new, abstract language had, by the 1970s, become entrenched as part of the high culture sanctioned by the Nationalist government, and in that way, 'canonical'. This in turn raises interesting questions about the relationship between the 'canon' and power, and about what gets valued in particular social and political contexts and why.

In the post-1994 context, it also raises questions about the ways in which the nation is imagined and constructed in visual terms, and how this in turn is sanctioned by the state. The return to literalism and a figurative tradition – often predicated on notions of heroism and triumph over suffering – which we have seen in recent public commissions should give us pause for thought. Given the recent and odious example of Afrikaner nationalism, with all its smug assumptions of moral and cultural superiority, this begs the question: what is the emerging canon, and whose interests do its embedded values serve? As Michael Billig (1995:

171) notes, "if the future remains uncertain, we know the past history of nationalism. And that should be sufficient to encourage a habit of watchful suspicion".

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BUTISITART? Landscape photography in South African camera clubs, c. 1930-1950

Graham Clarke starts the chapter 'Landscape in Photography' in his book *The Photograph* with the statement that 'Perhaps even more than the portrait, landscape photography remains encoded within the language of academic painting and the traditions of landscape art which developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.[25] Notwithstanding the obvious scientific dimension of early photography that related to the general investigation of the natural world of the time, including, of course, the processes of exploration and colonization, the medium was also bound by the aesthetic of the picturesque, that is the 'series of ideal images and terms of reference by which a landscape scene was to be judged and deemed appropriate for inclusion in a painting or a photograph.' 'In this sense (Clarke continues) landscape was not viewed so much in relation to its natural features as to the way it offered images of a rural idyll quite at odds with the reality.' Although South Africa's geography obviously lent itself to sublime, rather than the pastoral treatment of Clarke's English examples, Landscape photography in this country was perhaps even more dependent upon established artistic conventions because of the distance from the metropole. Moreover, the amateur status of the photographers who formed themselves into camera clubs around the country for the purpose of organizing exhibitions, lectures and social events, virtually ensured that the model of art would be powerful for all their productions whether in the genre of Landscape or for Still Life, Portraiture, Child Studies and the other subjects they set for their regular competitions.

The relationship of Landscape photography to art in South African camera clubs is made apparent in the advice offered to its readers in the June 1931 issue of *The Reflex* magazine, the journal of the Johannesburg Photographic Society:

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[25] Graham Clarke, *The Photograph*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 55-73.

A very useful tip was recently given at a meeting to cut an oblong shape in a piece of cardboard to view subjects through for the inspection of landscape to find suitable 'bits' of composition (as landscape painters do). It is a good plan to procure a piece of light blue glass and glue it to the card to act as a window. This serves to translate the beautiful colours of nature into monochrome and we will see more or less the same values as the film will record.[26]

The similarity of this device to the eighteenth-century Claude glass that was used by amateurs to frame bits of landscape and impose a yellowish sheen to simulate the effect of varnish on a Claude painting, surely underlines the contrived approach of the salon photographer to nature. Colour, the anonymous author continued, distracts the operator and prevents him from seeing composition. And, as a Transvaler, he should not think of photographing landscape in winter because the absence of clouds would render any photograph uninteresting. So obvious was this truth to the writer that he felt moved to express it in Latin: 'In winter, landscape photography *non est*'.

Lacking an academy for their discipline or, indeed, any place at all, at this stage, in formal art school instruction, salon photographers used lectures and journals to give form to what Graham Clarke called the 'terms of reference by which a landscape scene was to be judged and deemed appropriate for inclusion in a painting or a photograph'. In fact, there were three main vehicles in their journals for communicating the correct principles of pictorial photography. Local practitioners pronounced regularly on the idea of 'composition' drawing either on their own experience or, more often, on the work of overseas writers. A second form was the practice in certain journals of having a critic, often the magazine editor, analyse a photograph that was specifically reproduced for that purpose. And the third form was to have leading local photographers present an essay on their own work. We will look at examples of each of these vehicles in turn.

In the May 1931 issue of *The Reflex*, B.C. Wickison published 'The ABC of Pictorial Photography' that he acknowledged having paraphrased from the American magazine, *Amateur Photographer and Cinematographer*.[27] As the title suggests, the article prescribes very simple rules for composition, thus: (1) never place your principle object in the centre; (2) never have your horizon in the middle; (4) strive for a balanced composition: for example, a large tree in the foreground should be balanced by a small one in the distance but 'The larger the main object is, the smaller the 'balancer' may be. The closer the 'balancer' is to the main object, the closer should be its tone to the main object'. Other rules require (6) 'a path or something similar to lead into the picture, preferably from the left bottom corner'; (10) when a figure is included in a picture, place it at the point of balance. The position of the figure will vary according to the relative sizes of the 'balancer' and the main subject'; and (11) 'when there are two or more figures, it is usually best to place them close together at the point of balance'.

This is, of course, an extraordinarily artificial approach to nature. A similar contrivance underlies the article 'Esthetics of Photography for Beginners' that was translated from the Hungarian by the noted Transvaal photographer Karel Jan Hora and published in the August and October 1935 issues of *The Reflex*.[28] According to this article, the eye is supposed to seek a 'resting place' in a picture 'somewhat out of the centre' and preferably in the direction of diagonals. With that the eye will begin 'to weigh the relation of the surface of the object to that of its surrounding', and consider how well its surface has been reproduced. Viewers, in other words, respond to a composition in which they can appreciate both surface and depth. In landscape photography, as in Still Life, the practitioner should reduce 'the quantity of objects to a minimum, by isolating them from their surroundings, by looking for suitable counterbalances for objects placed on one side of the picture'. 'Therefore, to commence, do not photograph a forest, but a single tree, neither two trees of equal value, but one larger and one smaller, or in place of one tree, a lonely rock, or the like'. As for skies, 'it is a disease with beginners always to chase for clouds...The more peaceful the landscape, the less it needs clouds...Only landscapes rich in the foreground require repetition in skies rich in pattern...Even then, one part of the picture must subject itself to the other'. But it is the figures that cause the greatest difficulty because, on the one hand, the photographer's companions, 'our friends in plus fours ... are not always likely to fully

[26] *The Reflex*, III: 1, June 1931, 13.
[27] 'The ABC of Pictorial Photography' (B.C. Wickison with acknowledgements to the *Amateur Photographer and Cinematographer*), *The Reflex*, II: 12, May 1931, 15.
[28] 'Esthetics of Photography for Beginners' translated from Dr. Jan Lauschmann in *Fotograficky Obzor* by K.J.H[ora], *The Reflex*, VII: 1 and 3, August and October 1935.

harmonize with the landscape'; and, on the other, 'county people ... do not exactly grasp what is wanted of them and usually look back at the moment we press the release'. Once appropriate figures have been selected, however, there is no difficulty where to place them: not too close, nor too far; not too central, nor too much to either side. Moreover it is recommended to have the figures walking away from the viewer, rather than towards them. As the writer noted, apparently without irony, 'The main requirement which we must have for figures in every picture is likeness to Nature'.

The source in the United States and Hungary respectively of these two essays on composition in salon photography reproduced in South African journals may remind one that the genre was truly international for the first half of the twentieth century. And the compositional principles enunciated in the essays would have been familiar to most students of art in any Western art school until, shall we say? around twenty years ago. In practice salon photographers would submit their work to their local association from which those deemed the better examples would circulate to national exhibitions and, even, international events. Obviously pictures, and their authors, would gain reputation according to the number of acceptances they received. Thus A.D. Bensusan notes that Albert van Rheede van Oudtshoorn was described by the *American Annual of Photography* as one of the world's greatest exponents of land and seascape photography, having received around 300 awards and 450 acceptances in exhibitions on five continents.[29] And, in recognition of their international standing, van Oudtshoorn, Will Till and Karel Jan Hora were awarded honorary membership of the British Royal Photographic Society.

The criteria on which these acceptances and awards were made were constantly rehearsed in the photographic magazines of the day. Thus C.P. Frames, the editor of *The Reflex*, published a summary of the talk he had delivered to the Johannesburg Photographic Society in that organ's magazine in October 1937.[30] While discriminating between the different effect on a pictorial composition of diagonals, circles, triangles, 'L' shapes, 'S' shapes, 'T' shapes, etc., Frames maintained that 'harmony, balance and rhythm ... together with emphasis on the dominant note of the picture form the chief qualities which go to make a good composition'. Similar precepts were expounded by an anonymous writer in the Winter 1939 issue of *The Viewfinder*, the Journal of the rival Camera Club of Johannesburg, who wrote that 'the great object of composition being always to secure unity; that is to make one complete picture out of many objects', invariably by making 'one feature more important than all the rest and subordinating others to it'.[31] These principles are apparent in the regular pictorial analyses run by several of the photographic journals. Thus in the May 1935 issue of *The Reflex*, C.H. Lawson commented on Will Till's photograph 'Tree Poem'.[32] While generally admiring the image, Lawson noted that 'In the composition of this picture, however, the poetic rhythm had become slightly unbalanced'. He traced the movement of the eye reading this photograph up the tree on the left, across its branches and the area of cloud towards the right, down the tree on the right, and back to the bottom of the tree on the left: 'unfortunately a feeling of discord is created by the tree in the centre of the picture. We would have liked to have seen this interruption omitted entirely ...'

When photographers themselves spoke about their work – for example in the regular column 'My Pictures and How I Make Them' that was run from 1935 in the *Car and Camera* magazine – they rarely spoke in these dry, academic terms but these same principles of composition no doubt informed their aesthetic approach to their subject. Thus Albert van Oudtshoorn contrasted his requirement for originality in a picture with 'the unusual' effects of what he called 'Stunt photography' and advised his readers to: 'Train the eye to recognize, and the mind to conceive the picture ... always bearing in mind that such matters as unity, balance, motif, atmosphere, etc., are amongst the first essentials of a successful picture'.[33] Similarly, Will Till, whose pictures can be distinguished from those of Van Oudtshoorn by a more ethereal, poetic quality, and a greater willingness to experiment with different printing techniques, discussed the idea of pictorial unity in his exhibition prints in the March 1932 issue of *The Reflex*: 'I take great care that my composition is as simple and as perfect as possible in the circumstances – massing and balancing of darks – light and shade effect – all call for careful study'.[34] In line with many Landscape painters of the time, Will Till suggested that landscape

[29] A.D. Bensusan, *Silver Images: History of Photography in Africa*, Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1966, 92. Eric Vertue, 'Photographic Personalities: A. Van R. Van Oudtshoorn, Hon. F.R.P.S.', *Camera News*, February 1958, 325-329, stated that in 1935, *American Annual Photography* ranked him fourth in the world.
[30] C.P. Frames, 'Composition', *The Reflex*, IX: 3, October 1937, 12-13.
[31] 'Pictorial Composition', *The Viewfinder and Minicam News*, 14, Winter 1939, 5.
[32] C.H. Lawson, 'Pictorial Analysis: Will Till's 'Tree Poem', *The Reflex*, VI: 10, May 1935, 10.
[33] A. Van R. Van Oudtshoorn, ' Pictures and How I Make Them', *Car and Camera*, I: 3, January 1935, 5.
[34] *The Reflex*, III: 8, March 1932, 11.

photographs should express the beauty of the country and the love that the practitioner has for it. In the April 1932 issue of *The Reflex*, Daisy Bell, a leading Natal photographer, described her practice as a mixture between emotion and technique:

> In choosing to portray subjects for exhibition prints I aim to truthfully record the emotion I felt when I viewed the objects or scene. Lighting effects especially appeal to me and I rely mainly on these and lines in my composition, finding that by blending these I get rhythm and form ... My ideal being to always aim to get a perfect negative showing carefully graded tones of the correct density for enlarging.[35]

Jack Arnold, the leading Port Elizabeth salon photographer of his day, acknowledged the need for change in his contribution to the column 'My Pictures and How I make Them' in April 1935:

> I think we should be grateful for [the originality of the 'ultra-modernists' who made pictures out of carpenters' nails, cart wheels, etc., so much the vogue a short while ago] for they have undoubtedly had some influence in turning the trend of photography away from over diffusion and out of focus effects to a sounder outlook. I also feel convinced that it is along these lines Photography in the future must progress, and not in copying the older art mediums, such as oil paintings, etchings, etc.[36]

Jack Arnold's call for what he called 'straight photography' was answered at the end of the decade by the young Constance Stuart who had just returned from training in Germany. In her essay, 'Photography as an Art', Constance argued that photography should be 'pure'.

> If it is to be recognized as a separate art, photography should not be merged with any outside influences. Perfect composition and rendering of texture is of more artistic worth than a photo that is bolstered up with artificial influences.[37]

Stuart wrote the essay for a pamphlet to accompany the Pretoria Music Festival of 1939 which, unusually for its time, included an exhibition of photographs. Significantly, in the same pamphlet, Walter Battiss announced the recent formation of the New Group. Although the New Group did not formally admit photographers as members, Stuart at least was close to certain artists of this circle, notably Alexis Preller, and she drew on their example to maintain a new definition of artistic photography. The point is worth pausing on because while Stuart completely ignored the genre of salon photography, the pictorialists also refused to acknowledge her and the modern art she appeared to represent. A.D. Bensusan actually omitted any mention of Stuart in *Silver Images,* his 1966 account of the history of photography in this country. He did acknowledge the massive impact that the documentary style of 'The Family of Man' exhibition – in which Stuart was the only South African photographer to be represented – had on photography in this country but he clearly felt that his own mission was to re-invigorate the pictorialist idiom with the drama of tonal contrasts and huge, expressive skies. In fact, together with J.E. Gordon Maddox, Bensusan founded The Camera Pictorialists of Johannesburg in 1951 precisely to promote salon work in the new era.[38] Incidentally, while he claimed to use 'The Family of Man' as a model, his own project 'Life of our Nation – Ons Volk, Ons Land' that was exhibited at the Union Festival in Bloemfontein in 1960, he actually appropriated the liberal universalism of the original to celebrate a parochial form of nationalist ideal.[39]

Bensusan, who died in 2008, therefore, stood at the end of the era of pictorial photography in South Africa and it is perhaps not entirely coincidental that as well as being its greatest promoter he was also its historian and archivist, notably in the establishment of the Bensusan Museum that is now part of MuseumAfrica in Johannesburg. It was important for him, both in *Silver Images* and the survey he published in *Camera News* in 1957 'The Salon Print: A Changing Scene over the last Quarter Century', to identify the styles of the leading pictorialist practitioners in this country.[40] The argument against photography as an art that originated in Lady Elizabeth Eastlake in 1857,[41] but which was repeated, for example, by Dr Eisenhofer , the Director

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[35] *The Reflex*, III: 9, April 1932, 12.
[36] Jack Arnold, 'My Pictures and How I Make Them', *Car and Camera*, I: 6, April 1935, 4.
[37] Constance Stuart, 'Photography as an Art', in *Pretoria: A City of Cuture*, Pretoria, 1939, unpaginated.
[38] Bensusan, *Silver Images*, 96.
[39] Bensusan, *Silver Images*, 58.
[40] A.D. Bensusan, 'The Salon Print: A Changing Scene over the last Quarter Century', *Camera News*, September 1957, 173-180.
[41] Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, 'Photography', first published in *The Quarterly Review*, March 1857, reprinted in Alan Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays on Photography*, New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 39-68.

of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, in 1936 was that 'The mechanics of the camera excludes photography from the realm of Art.' According to Dr Eisenhofer, 'If a photographer could paint his picture, I think he would do so. He can't, so he photographs it'.[42] But South African proponents of the medium followed Alfred Stieglitz in insisting that, on the contrary, in the best pictorial photography 'there is some distinguishing feature which marks it down – the mark of individuality'.[43] C.P. Frames made this point in his editorial 'On the Problem of Individuality' in *The Reflex* in June 1938 and argued that this defining feature lay not simply in the choice of subject-matter but 'the same characteristic touch' is present in all the photographer's work in their interest in particular qualities of light or texture, or particular forms of composition. But while, after seventy odd years, a practised eye can still distinguish between the work of a van Oudtshoorn, a Will Till and a Bensusan, for example, the same eye will surely also recognize the very narrow framework within which these and other pictorialist photographers chose to work. For the fact of the matter is that pictorialist photographers *did* generally subscribe to the academic principles they repeated so monotonously in one form of magazine publication or another. And, in the end of the day, the reason they did so was because they were amateurs. Van Oudtshoorn was a lawyer, ending up as Registrar of Deeds in Pietermaritzburg, Bensusan was a medical doctor, and other members of South African photographic societies were pharmacists, retailers, and so on. Of course, there were professional photographers in South Africa at this time but those who excelled in the medium, notably Leon Levson, Constance Stuart and Anne Fischer, had all been trained overseas. The salon photographers distinguished themselves from these professionals and even prohibited them from entering some of their competitions. But the respect they accorded them is evident in the report of a visit to Leon Levson, with the prominent use of the word 'art' in the title, that was published in *The Reflex* in April 1932: 'The Art of Mr Leon Levson: 'An At Home''.[44] Members of the Johannesburg Photographic Society gathered at Levson's house apparently to view the landscapes he had taken on a three-week motor trip to the Cape. Levson is quoted as stating the familiar precept that form is the basic essential of art, and that details should be subordinated to the whole: 'We must look on life as a whole ... not to the details that will look after themselves'; and the article reported approvingly that Levson's compositions feature 'rhythmic lines that invitingly command the eye to explore the picture, following the contours of harmony that carry the eye round – and back again, as it were'. Evidently, from the point of view of the amateur, Levson was not only a successful professional but also an established artist and his work provided an example to be emulated. A similarly uncritical reverence for the idea of art was expressed in the capital letters of the announcement in the November 1935 issue of *The Reflex,* 'AT LAST! Photography officially recognized as one of the arts', in response to that medium's inclusion in the New York Academy of Design's exhibition for the first time that year.[45] The point is that these amateur photographers, lacking the confidence that an academic training might have provided, modelled their work on an idea of art that was necessarily derivative. Many evoked the idea of art in the titles they gave their images – for example, 'The Light Beyond' and 'Solitaire', by van Oudtshoorn, or Bensusan's 'Mine Dump Pastoral' and 'Nature's Lines'; and some, like Will Till even aspired to make their work actually look like paintings. But all photographers in this movement strived to make their work conform to what they understood as the principles upon which great art was founded. Because of this, the majority of salon photographers were completely unprepared for the advent of 'straight' photography, as Jack Arnold described it, or 'pure' photography, that is photography without 'tricks', that Constance Stuart and Niel Malan called for,[46] and the movement began to disintegrate, ironically, at the precise moment that it achieved national standing in the formation of the Photographic Society of Southern Africa in 1954.[47] From this time on, documentary photographers like Eli Weinberg, who surprisingly had earlier worked in the pictorialist manner, tended to avoid any debate around art as a distraction from their seriousness of purpose; and when photographers like Constance Stuart claimed the status of art for their work, they demanded that the medium be appreciated absolutely in its own terms.

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[42] 'Is Photography Art? An Interview with Dr. A.A. Eisenhofer, Ph.D, C.M.A, Curator of the Johannesburg Art Gallery', *Viewfinder and Minicam News*, 5, Summer 1936, 4.

[43] 'On the Problem of Individuality', *The Reflex*, IX: 11, June 1938, 1-2. Stieglitz published 'Pictorial Photography' in *Scribner's Magazine*, November 1899: the essay is re-printed in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays on Photography*, 115-123.

[44] 'The Art of Mr Leon Levson: An 'At Home'', *The Reflex*, III: 9, April 1932, 11.

[45] *The Reflex*, VII: 4, November 1935, 9.

[46] Niel Malan, 'Modern Photography', *South African Photogems of the Year 1952,* 10-11.

[47] Bensusan, *Silver Images*, 90-91.

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The shifting terrain of home: Landscape in William Kentridge's drawings for projection

> Johannesburg is very flat. Throughout my childhood the only mountain we had were the mine dumps, the large mine tailings all around Johannesburg from the gold mines. If you looked down to the end of the main streets of the city, you could see these golden dumps. In the mid-1970's, when the price of gold went up and technology improved, it became possible to reprocess all the pay dirt from the mine dumps and re-extract small quantities of gold. One by one these fundamental parts of the Johannesburg landscape were literally removed washed away overnight, turned into a slurry, and reprocessed. So this sense of the contingency of the landscape is built into the history of Johannesburg itself. It is not a naturally formed landscape; it has been made by the tractors of engineering. The work draws what is there, reporting the traces and process of how the landscape is made. The way to draw that landscape is not dissimilar to the way landscape itself has been structured. When you are making a drawing of it, it is a line that you describe across the surface, but it is also a civil engineering line drawn across the landscape; accumulated excavations for road-cuttings and so on.[48]

> -William Kentridge (1998)

William Kentridge's landscapes represent a gritty industrial South Africa documenting industrial transformations and ecological ruin alongside acts of political violence. *Felix in Exile* (1994) renders the bleakness of the landscape clearly; one film still (fig. 1) shows a pool of water, surrounded by engineering pylons, scorched and dying trees rendered with a single mark of deep black charcoal (itself scorched wood). Next to the pool of water are raised mounds of earth, billboards, and industrial scaffolding with loudspeakers on top of it- the detritus of industry. Kentridge's landscapes contrast with J.H. Pierneef whose *Rustenburgkloof* (fig. 2, 1931) renders the landscape as pure and untouched, but also in a specific palette using greys, tans, several shades of deep brown, and dark and olive greens to represent the South African veld. Unlike Kentridge's rough industrial landscapes, Pierneef's are smooth simplified blocky forms of rock and tree showing us the wilderness of South Africa but also what novelist J.M. Coetzee sees as an aesthetic of emptiness and silence.[49]

To return to Kentridge's landscape rendered in its polluted and destroyed nature becomes an act of criticism. Animating these conditions in *Felix in Exile* allows Kentridge to show the material conditions and the artifice of the pristine landscapes of Pierneef and of the lush and protected suburbs of Johannesburg. Kentridge's landscapes allow him to write histories of the bodies' buried in the commission of human rights abuses under apartheid, protecting them against being forgotten. However, this attempt at remembering is not complete in Kentridge's work, what he represents through erasure is an absence of remembering; the process of things slowly fading from consciousness. Additionally, *Felix in Exile* shows landscape as a commodity something that is owned, controlled and manipulated. To accomplish this, Kentridge represents the landscape as often witnessed through engineering tools: the theodolite used to level the terrain of a construction site, and a sextant an early maritime navigational tool used to calculate angles based on the positions of stars (figs. 3, 4, 1994). These tools which use sight to both witness and render the landscape, emphasize the economic relations of the terrain, taking us to the mine but also to the early mapping techniques used to claim and control South Africa.

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[48] Okwui Enwezor, "Truth and Responsibility: a Conversation with William Kentridge," *Parkett*, 54: (1998), 165-66.

[49] J.M. Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 177.

Felix in Exile (1994) is the fifth of nine films Kentridge has executed focusing on three central characters: Soho, the emblematic capitalist always depicted in a pinstripe suit, his wife only identified as Mrs. Eckstein, and Felix; rendered naked frequently gazing out into the landscape, who through the narrative of these films becomes Mrs. Eckstein's lover. Felix and Soho's characters are modelled after the artist in appearance, and of identity (their European Jewish heritage as well as upper class status mirror Kentridge's). The characters reflect different aspects of Kentridge's understanding of South Africa and the concerns and issues facing the white upper class during political transition, including safety, guilt, and racial relations as a new political terrain unfolds.

The film, rendered during the first multi-racial elections after the end of apartheid, finds Felix alone in Paris communicating with a new character Nandi, a black female surveyor. Nandi, named for the woman who modelled for Kentridge in the film, communicates to Felix through drawings (fig. 5, 1994). The communication recounts scenes where she witnesses several people die, become covered by newspaper and sink into the landscape, which are witnessed through a theodolite. These scenes of violence culminate with Nandi's death prompting Felix to return to South Africa powerless to change the landscape or the violence upon it. Kentridge's use of landscape in this film as in other films is gritty, owing to the use of charcoal as a media along with the erasures and smudges of his working method, often with dark skies and punctuated with little use of colour. The images of Nandi and others sinking into the landscape have its origins in a description of Kentridge's friend who described police photographs of murder victims always being in the landscape.[50]

In Kentridge's drawings the body becomes lost, sinking into the landscape suggesting both the burials and burning practices of the police during apartheid, where losing the body was an all too true reality as police practices frequently disposed of the body without any marker or ways of recovering it.[51] The body becomes tied to the landscape as a place of burial and forgetting, apartheid memories are etched into the landscape but like industry also erased under the ideologies of naturalism. To draw in an industrial manner is not to simply recover them but to represent the politics of their loss.

It is not just the rendering of the landscape as a space of industry or a space of violence alone that is significant in the film, it is also the way it is framed, witnessed and seen. *Felix*, engaging with concepts of vision, connects the legacy of colonialism to apartheid and present day concerns over class, race and development in South Africa's neo-liberal economy. Kentridge reveals the processes of mapping or fixing the colonial landscape as occurring simultaneously with ownership and control over the land. In *Felix* we see alongside Nandi, primarily through surveying tools: the theodolite to plot the landscape, and later a sextant to chart the skies.[52] Looking with both devices holds a referent to surveying practices that are used to build industry and infrastructure, but also to colonial mapping, which is equally a discourse about owning and marking.

Nandi's mapping and navigation tools ground the notion of vision in *Felix in Exile* within the politics of land ownership and property; they construct witness as engaged in seeing commodity structures. The theodolite becomes not only a symbol of witness, a way of figuring the violence that occurred on the landscape, but it is also a way of conceiving sight through a lens of property ownership and regulation of the landscape. In his analysis of mapping in colonial India, Ian Barrow locates a shift between the route map and the trigonometrical map, arguing that the shift, while ushering in a new era in accuracy in mapping, had a secondary goal of applying reason to the British rule over colonial India.[53] The theodolite, a trigonometric tool, becomes a symbol that can move between the colonial mapping projects and the contemporary concerns about property ownership and mining.

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[50] William Kentridge, "Bodies in the Landscape," in Dan Cameron and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, eds., *William Kentridge*, (London: Phaidon, 1999), 123.

[51] Anjtie Krog's *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*, New York: Three Rivers Press, (1998); details the testimony of several police and SADF (South African Defence Force) members revealing tactics for getting rid of these corpses.

[52] The theodolite is a surveying tool used to calculate angles of triangulation, plotting the landscape from two separate points and superimposing them onto one graph or grid to accomplish this. This process of plotting and measuring land to scale and reconciling two different perspectives into one system, possesses a similar function to the stereoscope, another key visual instrument within Kentridge's body of work. Superimposing two slightly different images on top of each other produces the stereoscope's three-dimensional effect. For a detailed account of the physics and Foucauldian disciplinary techniques of the stereoscope, see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer, on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).

[53] Ian Barrow, *Making History, Drawing Territory: British Mapping in India, c. 1756-1905*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 66-67.

The sextant, Nandi's other imaging device, used in the film when gazing at the night skies (whose stars frequently metamorphose to form images) refers to South Africa's colonial heritage. An early maritime navigational tool, the sextant, which calculates the altitude of stars to enable accurate routes on maps, becomes a device that enables exploration, further mapping, and colonial control. Its conception of vision is firmly ensconced within the Cartesian politics of the colonial regime; trace a history of optical tools from English and Dutch colonial histories to industry that provides the structure of Johannesburg. The sextant is also a key tool in the shift that Barrow outlines; it was used primarily during the transition from route maps that placed an importance on the picturesque to the scientific and ordered trigonometric surveys.[54] The sextant and theodolite are perfect symbols of the issues Kentridge deals with in his treatment of the landscape, representing both the scientific and ordered world of industry and the image of the picturesque which conceals the role that labour plays in the South African landscape.

The use of the theodolite and sextant already code the landscape with labour. Nandi is not witnessing the landscape with the paintbrush of the landscape painter, but with tools of industry. She is performing a job for us (and presumably the owners of that terrain in the film, preparing it for construction) that gets converted into an aesthetic; labour informs the production of the culture she presents to Felix. Furthermore, as Jonathan Crary convincingly claims in *Techniques of the Observer*, the process of looking is a job, training the eye to focus and getting it to perform labour.[55] Looking and providing witness in *Felix and Exile* is in itself a task of labour, further suturing the strands of violence, colonialism, work, and witness together in this complex narrative.

Kentridge's willingness to engage with the processes of the optic, surveying practices, and mapping techniques unearth a material reality to the landscape. *Felix in Exile* shows landscape as a discourse that is known, mapped and controlled, making it impossible for landscape to be seen as pure nature. Kentridge's use of landscape also represents something material that is owned, marked and manipulated for the interests of power. Looking in *Felix in Exile* is grounded in ideas of property; the devices that open the narrative to the viewer delineate ownership. It is through the theodolite that we can literally *see* the structure of labour and material relations in post-apartheid South Africa.

Kentridge's landscape is a vast expanse of empty land, a blank plane of hard-pressed dirt. In one of the sequences of a victim falling dead (several appear in the film) in *Felix in Exile* (fig. 6, 1994) the body lies on the earth, as small pylons surrounded in red pastel slowly rise up out of the surface, the pit in which the figure is held grows deeper, and a billboard emerges and the body disappears. The landscape undergoes a metamorphosis, leaving piles of industrial detritus and pylons growing out of a terrain that is seemingly flat, limitless, and shrouded with a dirty, black, and sunless sky.

This general configuration of the landscape persists throughout *Felix in Exile*, later we witness the landscape through Nandi's theodolite (the image presenting a rounded focus through which we see {Fig. 1}), the same pylons grow this time in pure red pastel, and the pool of water that appears is fed by a culvert beneath an elevated road, suggesting not the purifying water of a safe drinking supply, nor the picturesque ocean of Cape Town, but a polluted and dingy industrial supply.[56] The treatment of the body and its relationship to labour and violence engages with the ecological and natural constructions of landscape and its artifice as two central themes repeated throughout Kentridge's work on landscape.

Kentridge is intrigued by the "ephemera of human intervention" within landscapes; these are the images he wants to sketch. Nandi's surveyed landscape, containing these ephemera in its culverts, dirt roads, slurry, etc., has thin trees on the far edge of the edge of the composition, appear barren and lifeless, their rendering in charcoal suggesting that they are charred from veld fire, this landscape relates to those bodies in the landscape sinking and disappearing.[57] The landscape within the film becomes a counter-memory or a temporal memorial, its erasures document the existence of violence enacted upon labourer, protestor and the

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[54] Ian Barrow, *Making History, Drawing Territory: British Mapping in India, c. 1756-1905*, 76.

[55] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 7-8, 84.

[56] Well after the completion of this film, the politics of water rights have become much more complicated in South Africa for a discussion of water rights in a context of privatization in South Africa see Ashwin Desai and Richard Pitthouse's engaging essay "Dispossession, Resistance and Repression in Mandela Park," in Grant Farred and Rita Barnard eds., "After the Thrill is Gone: A Decade of Post-Apartheid South Africa," a special edition of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 103:4 (Fall 2004), 841-875.

[57] Emily Apter considers the ecological nature of Kentridge's work and especially his landscape's in her "The Aesthetics of Critical Habitats," *October*, 99 (Winter, 2002), 21- 44. Apter's essay draws a relationship between contemporary globalization that she finds to be most lucidly outlined by the work Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri and the ecological impacts represented by Kentridge and others, embedded in a tactic of "geopoetics" that are able to link ecological concerns to questions of human rights.

land, but the erasures also become a document of their loss and eventual absence, fading from public consciousness through the processes of time and ideology.[58] This loss brings body and landscape together; it is the land that absorbs the body as memories fade, creating closer ties between the nation and the body.

Engaging with photographic referents (the movement between the drawing and its documentation), Kentridge represents bodies within the landscape that have a degree of permanence that photographs cannot. There is a representation of loss here, the image shows the earth holding the body, and it represents the passage of time, something the photographic cannot achieve. It becomes a history of disremembering but also constitutes a landscape of South Africa that shows what is buried beneath it. This time-based narrative allows us to remember without freezing the event in time in the ways that memorial culture has the potential for.

Kentridge's use of labour as a mode of transforming landscape picks up on a long tradition of representation throughout the history of art, his interest in class structures, the worker/body, and the landscape has interesting ties to the legacy of British landscape painting. John Barrell in his analysis of the role of the labourer in British landscape from 1730-1840 argues that the poor belong to the "dark side of landscape" existing within the shadows of the scene, contrasting with the illuminated rich aspects of the landscape.[59] *Felix in Exile* is the dark side of the landscape, employing a metaphor of light and dark, rich and poor, illuminated and shadowy; Barrell's metaphor lends itself well to the former British colony and the politics of Kentridge's work.[60] Kentridge's representations of labour reveal a perpetuation of the dark side of landscape, the worker located within the dark, coal sodden, subterranean spaces of mines and shallow unmarked graves. This darkness is the repository of memory that holds the history of violence and labour in the land. The exception being of course that Kentridge works to represent the damage to the labourer and to the dark side of the landscape, unlike the English landscape which strives to keep a separation between labourer and landed classes. These representations of labour (and its tragic relationship with colour) bring together the brutal realities of the apartheid regime, disparities of property ownership, police control of the state, and wealth divides across racial lines in South Africa together in one historical project, undermining the ideology that these practices are separate.

Art historian W.J.T. Mitchell argues that landscape functions like a commodity; it has no utility in itself, but has a limitless value in the realm of exchange; and secondly that landscape conceals the value inside of it through a process of naturalizing its function and making the concept of nature appear conventional.[61] Mitchell goes on to argue that landscape's economic basis also holds close ties to colonialism stating:

> These semiotic features of landscape, and the historical narratives they generate, are tailor-made for the discourse of imperialism, which conceives of itself precisely (and simultaneously) as an expansion of landscape understood as an inevitable, progressive development in history, an expansion of 'culture' and 'civilization' into a 'natural' space in a progress that is itself narrated as 'natural.'[62]

While not directly engaging South Africa, Mitchell's analysis constructs relationships between the discourses of culture and imperialism, to the system of apartheid and present day globalized and deregulated economic structures of the GEAR initiative, grounding these discourses in a materialism that shifts between natural

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[58] Class-consciousness in South Africa could be perhaps one of the most daunting challenges to the post-apartheid state, perpetuating the ideological and hegemonic control of white capitalism in South Africa. Despite the end of racial segregation laws and the ANC government's election, the country has pursued economic policies of deregulation and outward attention to global markets, through the GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) program advocated by the IMF. GEAR has done little to help alleviate the massive poverty concerns in South Africa. Neil Lazarus, Michael MacDonald and Zine Magubane take up different aspects of this problem in Grant Farred and Rita Barnard's excellent "After the Thrill is Gone: A Decade of Post-Apartheid South Africa," a special edition of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 103:4 (Fall 2004).
[59] John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 22.
[60] The idea of shadows and illumination and its relationship to the enlightenment is a theme Kentridge addresses in his most recent works. One, a staging of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, engages with Kentridge's interest in the illuminated portion of the enlightenment project, the other *Black Box, Chambre Noir*, investigates the shadowy portion of the enlightenment project in Kentridge's interest in the relationship between Africa and European colonial narratives. Kentridge seeks to establish a relationship between the philosophical aims of enlightenment and its dark side in the brutality of colonialism, which is closely tied to enlightenment discourses. Kentridge's full discussion of the enlightenment can be found in: Maria-Christina Villasenor, *William Kentridge: Black Box/Chambre Noir*, (Berlin: Guggenheim Museum, 2006).
[61] W.J.T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed, 2002), 5.
[62] Ibid, 17.

resources and labour. These economic threads are woven together in *Felix in Exile*; we see the violence of the civilizing discourses that grew out of colonialism and their impact not only on the land, which is rendered bleak and desolate, but also on the people buried far beneath the surface erased from memory.

Mitchell's arguments draw from both Ann Bermingham and Barrell's analysis of the naturalization of 18th and 19th century British landscape painting, and its obfuscation of material relationships. Mitchell is concerned with revealing the economic processes that the image and the land represent; and with the subsequent naturalization of the terrain neutralizing the politics of colonization and labour exploitation occurring within its representations.[63] This economic bind between nature and culture is present in Kentridge's films, concerned with the ecological remnants of the mining industry, the artificial nature of the mountains of Johannesburg, and the histories buried beneath the earth; making history an ever-present condition in representations of landscape.

Mitchell endeavours to reveal similar historical foundations in earlier landscape painting, arguing that the history of landscape painting bound itself up in purity, a desire to preserve a true natural experience for the viewer. Drawing from an analysis of Emerson's work on the concept of nature and the natural, Mitchell argues that this desire to preserve a purity (a word Kentridge uses to describe Pierneef) of the landscape means the work attempts to hide a notion of ownership, or human intervention.[64] This sense of naturalness in landscape painting is a central part of the South African tradition. To return to the Pierneef image as an example, of the picturesque, there is no evidence of any intervention onto the land that he is representing; it is represented as pure and untouched. In J.M. Coetzee's study of the picturesque this untouched nature is crucial, South African landscape is conceived of as being empty and vacant.[65] Kentridge, responding to Pierneef's work in his early writings, believes these paintings to be "documents of disremembering," and abandoning "processes or history" in art.[66]

Conversely, Kentridge's landscape is coded with the relations of property. The materiality of charcoal as a medium also reminds the viewer of coal mining in its sooty texture that makes up a vast portion of the economy of South Africa, and the subsequent labour relations that occur on that landscape.[67] Kentridge's earlier film *Mine* (fig. 7, 1991) makes the relations of this materiality clear when moving from enigmatic capitalist Soho Eckstein's bed to the mines that he owns. It cuts through the nation into the chasms of memory and economics.

Kentridge's drawing bores through the earth and the history buried there, mining histories that remind us of the close ties that the legacy of slavery plays with the apartheid structures of government and role that mining plays in the national economy. The word mining takes on a double meaning because of the commodity structure of the mines, it refers not only to the physical place but also becomes a verb signifying ownership; mine moves into mining. Mining is not just about the industrial practice of mining but about claiming and controlling, a struggle that encompasses colonial struggles, apartheid, and South Africa in the age of neoliberal globalization.

Kentridge is actively engaged in a discourse of mining history; concerned about the rapidly fading collective memories that happen once a struggle becomes covered up and buried.[68] Cutting open the earth much like

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[63] In *The German Ideology*, Marx develops a critique of labour based upon the relationship between nature and culture. Within this analysis Marx argues that the shifts towards capitalist modes of economy are dependent upon the material goods that "nature" provides. Subsequently the development of capitalism is restrained by nature, needing a certain amount of natural resources such as coal to advance and impacts nature at the same time through urban growth and pollution creating a dialectic whose synthesis is not clear. See Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed, New York W.W. Norton, (1978), 168. Terry Eagleton's *Versions of Culture* also develops a similar analysis arguing that culture and nature as historical concepts are dependent on each other, both historically and linguistically. They are attached and not a simple dialectic of culture triumphing over nature. See Terry Eagleton, *Versions of Culture*, (London: Blackwell, 2000).

[64] Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 13, 15.

[65] J.M. Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*, 177.

[66] William Kentridge, "Landscape in a State of Siege," in Dan Cameron and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, eds., *William Kentridge*, (London: Phaidon, 1999), 109.

[67] While diminishing in significance since the 1980's the mining sector is historically the most important part of the South African economy. Gold mining alone currently accounts for about 5.8% of the GDP of the nation in 2007, and the mining industry in general makes up the largest sector of employment in the country. Traditionally gold, coal and diamonds are the crucial resources extracted, although other precious metals such as platinum are becoming increasingly more important. For detailed accounts of the mining industry in South Africa, see: http://www.southafrica.info/business/economy/sectors/mining.htm.

[68] Kentridge, "Amnesty/Amnesia" in Dan Cameron and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, eds., *William Kentridge*, (London: Phaidon, 1999), 126.

Benjamin's surgeon becomes away of exposing the memories carried in the body and deep below the earth, allowing one to thrust himself into the discourse of the event.[69] This cutting, mirrored in the rapid "cuts" between Felix's Parisian exile and Nandi's surveying work, opens the narrative to new associations and tactics of approaching the historicization of South Africa. In her analysis of the role of hospitality and justice in the work of Jacques Derrida, Ranjana Khanna argues precisely this point; the cut in her analysis opens the work up to unknown, new ways of thinking creating a new sense of beauty.[70] The cut creates a new way of approaching old discourses, enlivening and approaching things like landscape painting anew. *Felix in Exile* opens up a new way of seeing primarily through the red marks, little cuts upon the landscape of Johannesburg. The landscape no longer is picturesque scenes from the travel narratives Kentridge borrowed as source material; the landscape has fresh red cuts on its surface, marking pylons rising out of the surface, and bodies disappearing beneath it, inscribing the legacy of colonial control and the capitalist discourse that inherited this system. These cuts, brief instances of red in an otherwise monochromatic film refer to surveying markers which denote property lines, water pipes and other items not immediately apparent on the surface of the landscape, inscribing the ground and constructing notions of possession and ownership.

Coetzee argues in his analysis of Kentridge's *History of the Main Complaint*, that these red markers whose origins in Kentridge's work he finds in *Felix in Exile* indicate points of trauma on the landscape as well as the body (imaging the body is a crucial theme in *History of the Main Complaint*, fig. 8, 1996).[71] The body becomes linked with the landscape, the presence of the red marker highlighting the points of trauma or violence upon the land like a cut, scar, or medical imaging device would do. While Coetzee's argument is no doubt true, especially considering his interest in the relationship between these red markers and the body in *History of the Main Complaint*, not to be overlooked is the relationship between the red makers and the surveyor. It is the very connection of the body to the surveyor's tools that enables a relation between land and trauma to emerge. The cuts of red on the surface are not of bodies alone, but cut upon the nation as well.

The red markers emerge several times throughout the film, as characters die providing an evocative representation of a sense of falling into the landscape and becoming lost (fig. 9, 1994). In the final images of the film, Nandi's body becomes covered in newspaper and sinks into the landscape. The space of violence and terror is marked and preserved not through monuments, but rather through the property markers and techniques of ownership that have further plunged the terrain into crisis. In this way they preserve history through a trace that eventually dissipates, to sink as the demarcations fade and the progress of industry transforms and hides the violence of the original landscape.

These red markers provide a mirror image to Kentridge's own working method that gives a photographic referent of the event (Kentridge drawing and each stage of that drawing through the sped up animation). The red marker is put into place through the use of visually regulated tools as Kentridge's drawings are kept in place through the use of the photographic. The colour of these surveying markers provides a trace reference to something that has passed. The similarity between the red marker (representing a trauma that fades from memory) and Kentridge's animation is additionally revealed through the process of the erasures that leave a ghostly trace of the physical presence upon the landscape and upon the page as the narrative progresses.[72] The erasures become scars when viewed in tandem with the red cuts, the memories aren't as present as they fade but still bear traces upon the body of the landscape, reminders upon the surface of what is held beneath it.

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[69] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Mechanical Age of Reproduction," in Hannah Arendt eds., *Illuminations*, (New York: Schocken, 1968), 233.

[70] Ranjana Khanna, *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation, 1830 to the Present*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2008), 40.

[71] J.M. Coetzee, "History of the Main Compliant," in Dan Cameron and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, eds., *William Kentridge*, (London: Phaidon, 1999), 84.

[72] Kentridge's notion of linking bodies to the landscape is not an uncommon in representations of political violence, Walter Abish's *How German is It?* constructs a similar scene in which a ruptured sewage pipe unearths from the landscape a concentration camp which was previously unknown. In both Kentridge and Abish's example it is the landscape that holds a history denied above the terrain and it is through the literal process of digging that these histories are unveiled.

Images
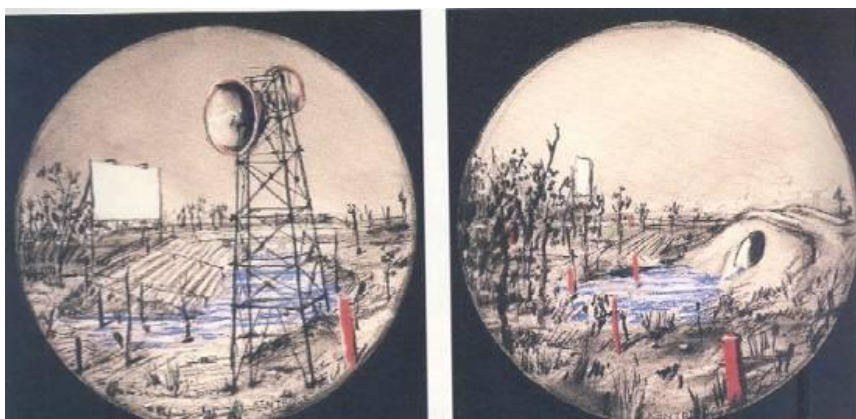
Fig. 1. William Kentridge, film stills from *Felix in Exile* (1994).

Fig. 2. J.H. Pierneef, *Rustenburgkloof* (1931).

Figs. 3 and 4. William Kentridge, film stills from *Felix in Exile* (1994).

Fig. 5. William Kentridge, film still from *Felix in Exile* (1994).
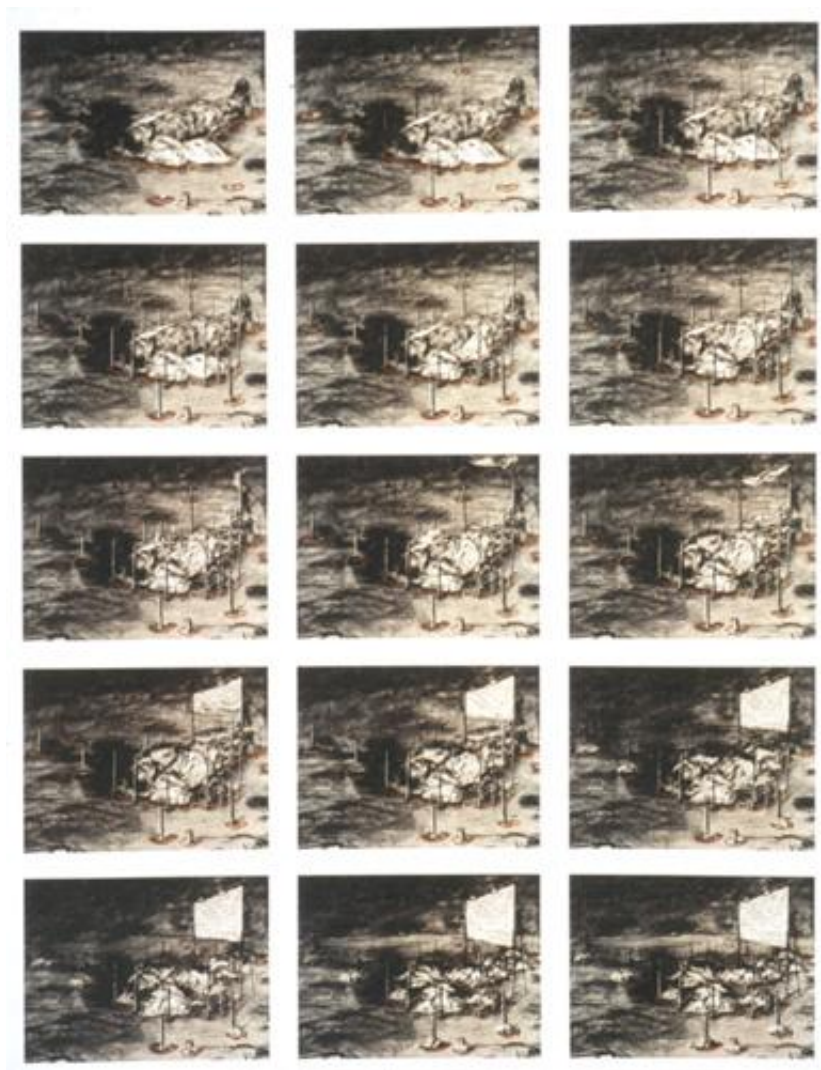

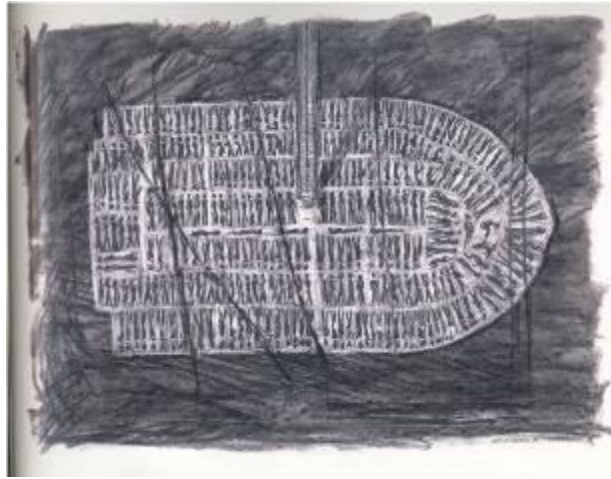Fig. 6. William Kentridge, film stills from *Felix in Exile* (1994).

Fig. 7. William Kentridge, drawing from *Mine* (1991).

Fig. 8. William Kentridge, film still from *History of the Main Complaint* (1996).

Fig. 9. William Kentridge, film still from *Felix in Exile* (1994).

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(En)gendering resistance: the tapestries and prints of Rorke's Drift (with E Rankin)

Peder and Ulla Gowenius, founders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift in the early 1960s, had a twin agenda – to combat the oppression of apartheid and to develop economic opportunities through the arts. The fulfilment of their aims has generally been acknowledged in the art and particularly the printmaking of Rorke's Drift. But the goal of developing political awareness as well as creative skills was initiated some years before the founding of the Fine Art School in 1968. Before that the chief pictorial forms were tapestries, which have most often been characterised by commentators as naïve and colourful decoration, by implication less sophisticated than the art. As the artists were predominantly male and the weavers female, this has fostered a notion of gendered differentiation. We aim to challenge this by showing that the tapestries also reflected the twofold aims of the Centre.

Although the overriding intention of the Swedish sponsors was to foster economic advancement through the development of skills, for Peder Gowenius intellectual empowerment was equally important. He initiated conscientizing and confidence-building discussions with the earliest trainees, women learning crafts to provide occupational therapy support in hospitals.[73] While Ulla Gowenius, herself a qualified weaver, was the driving force in the development of weaving, with workshops set up at Rorke's Drift in 1963, Peder provided guidance for designs. For rugs and runners, weavers were encouraged to use motifs derived from Zulu decoration on such objects as mat racks. These abstract patterns which matched modernist taste thus also seemed to reflect Zulu culture, a combination popular with international buyers. Ulla's interest in Swedish free-weaving technique also led to the development of narrative tapestries, which, even more than the African-inspired patterns, were effective conduits for self-expression in an oppressed and semi-literate rural society. As well as biblical subjects which confirmed that the weavers were mission converts, the tapestries depicted tales of village life and legend. Their vigorous story-telling facilitated the Goweniuses' notion of image making as a language of empowerment. The tapestries celebrated Zulu lifestyle, while amply fulfilling the Centre's economic agenda as they fetched high prices internationally.

The weavers were prolific independent designers, the Goweniuses encouraging them to develop their own ideas.[74] But some tapestries were based on prints, a practice which seems to have increased after 1970 once the Goweniuses had left; they most often replicated biblical linocuts of the 1960s, often evidently without the knowledge of those artists.[75] That these prints were deemed suitable for designs suggests that there was some commonality in the iconographies of the male artists and female weavers. The weavers on occasion simplified a work by focusing on a section of a complex design, as in Adam and Eve from Paulus Mchunu's *Expulsion*.[76] But generally they seem to have reproduced the prints faithfully, as with Mbatha's *Cain and*

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[73] This outline of Peder Gowenius' aims is drawn from many interviews and correspondence with him, and with Ulla Gowenius, as are discussions of other aspects of their work at Rorke's Drift (see Hobbs and Rankin 2003, and Hobbs 2003).

[74] The weavers' individual concepts were developed through their own drawings or as 'free weavings' without any visual reference. Peder Gowenius points out that even their largest weaving commission, *Creation*, for which a two-metre wide loom was imported, was not designed in advance, but developed as an 'entirely free weaving'. But this process was not foolproof: working under pressure and entirely from imagination, the weavers occasionally 'had a false start' and had to begin a weaving over again (Hobbs and Rankin interview with Peder Gowenius, Växjö, July 2001).

[75] Azaria Mbatha, has frequently commented on this later usage, pointing out that he was not consulted by the Centre. However, Peder Gowenius remembers that, despite the Centre's active discouraging of replication of existing designs at the time, Mbatha consented to the weavers making the occasional piece after his designs during the 1960s when it was felt that an infusion of new stimulus was needed in the weaving workshops. Gowenius counts about nine such tapestries made while he was at the Centre. For reasons of new stimulus, also, Mbatha himself was sometimes even asked to weave (Hobbs interview with Peder Gowenius, Växjö, May 1999).

[76] In this case the design was reversed, suggesting they worked from the block rather than the print itself, or that they created a tracing used in verso.

Abel, where their chief intervention was the conversion of the black and white original into the rich colour of the weavings.[77] The tapestries were not usually signed by artist or weavers, making it difficult to systematically match tapestries and prints. An early tapestry of Mbatha's *Nebuchadnezzar,* made while he was still at Rorke's Drift, carries his name, but not those of D. Sibiya, E. Mkhize and Philda Majozi who did the weaving.

Peder Gowenius, who was teaching printmaking informally even before the Fine Art School was established, initially discouraged religious subject matter, seeing it as too close to the cultural assimilation fostered by the conservative Zulu Lutheran mission. But he came to realise that apparently conventional subjects could also carry political meaning. Mbatha's *Story of Moses* was probably inspired by the liberation theology of the seminary's young trainee priests, and by Albert Luthuli's book *Let my people go!* which Mbatha had borrowed from Peder. Using Zulu for the inscribed text on the print clearly suggests parallels with a contemporary struggle for deliverance. Also promoting ideas of African empowerment were scenes from Zulu history, such as Mbatha's *Dingaan* and Gordon Gabashane's *Shaka*. Gowenius and later teachers encouraged an interest in the history of the region,[78] avoiding a colonial perspective, if we judge by Shilakoe's and Muafangejo's interpretations of *The Battle of Rorke's Drift,* where the Zulu warriors dominate over the white soldiers. Weavers too portrayed stories of Zulu life, but they were more often domestic tales rather than military events. An exception was a series on Shaka, designed first as prints by Joel Sibisi and Gordon Mbatha, for a tapestry commission for the KwaZulu legislature in the late 1980s. While this series honoured a heroic Zulu past, however, it arguably also celebrated the segregated homelands of apartheid.

The art students increasingly depicted a more recent history, which could not in any sense be interpreted as aligned with government policy. Because Rorke's Drift offered the only form of art qualification available to black students, it attracted participants from across South Africa, many of them young men who had been caught up in the struggle. While there was no programmed anti-government activity, by promoting critical thinking the Centre inevitably generated social comment. In recording their experiences in the townships, students created images of poverty and labour which plainly revealed the appalling effects of apartheid policies. If biblical stories were still told by these students, they were as much a statement about black consciousness as they were about Christian values, as in Charles Nkosi's portrayal of a black Christ in his series *Pain on the Cross*. And many secular images too showed suffering under oppression.

While the prints developed a more contemporary political iconography, there was no obvious parallel in the tapestries, which continued to focus on biblical and rural African narratives. One might then posit that, once the Fine Art School was fully established, the production of the artists and the weavers diverged. But to interpret this as a gendering of production is overly simplistic: the fact that an increasing number of male artists came from an urban background, while women weavers were local and rural, offers a more convincing argument. Yet this too sets up a stereotype of male and female in the old culture-nature binary. And there are several factors that argue against such a clear cut differentiation.

The first is that a number of women attended the Fine Art School, although few were able to follow careers as artists. There are political prints made by women artists, despite the fact that many of them seem to have come from a similar background to the weavers. Bongiwe Dhlomo, who grew up in rural KwaZulu-Natal before studying at Rorke's Drift, recalls of her fellow students:

> They had just gone through the Soweto students' uprising, some having taken an active part in the events of June 16 …. They were naturally highly politicised and traumatised. … There was an undercurrent of tension between those of us who came from very quiet, settled communities and these Johannesburg guys, who had been through so much. We had constant conflict because we were doing art for art's sake, and they were doing art because of so many things.[79]

Even students who had been relatively unpoliticised were drawn into the debates at the art school. Dhlomo's own art was to become strongly political, explicitly addressing township depredations in a series of linocuts

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[77] Even when the weaving was developed from visual reference it was likely to be a complicated process, and not only because the completed section of the work was rolled away from view as work progressed. As Allina Ndebele has pointed out, large landscape-format pieces must often be woven from the side, across the shortest dimension of the work, due to the size limitation of the loom (Hobbs P., N. Leibhammer and R. Loukakis interview with Allina Ndebele, Swart Umfolozi, January 1998).

[78] Peder Gowenius took students on visits to the Isandlwana battlefield, for example, and erected a memorial at Rorke's Drift to the Zulu fallen.

[79] Dhlomo in Atkinson and Breitz 1999: 119.

on forced removals, and another on the position of women. So it is not correct to say that all political works were made by men.

An even more compelling argument against a differentiation Rorke's Drift images based on gender is that subjects represented by the weavers could carry subversive meaning. Although they had not experienced life in the townships,[80] the weavers were equally affected by apartheid. Indeed it had been the poverty of rural women, left to support their families when their menfolk became migrant labourers that had caught the sympathy of the Swedish sponsors in the first place. But the way the women responded to apartheid in their work was different, filtered through metonyms of meaning that were not obvious to outsiders.

The Goweniuses became aware of this possibility quite early. Although they particularly encouraged the exploration of Zulu oral traditions as an expression of cultural pride, they found the weavers reluctant to divulge the meaning of the 'old stories' they portrayed. They probably feared condemnation by the mission, which excluded non-Christians from employment at the Centre. Peder and Ulla were occasionally entrusted with interpretations, apparently when meanings were more political, suggesting that the weavers considered political dissidence less transgressive than indigenous 'heathen' subjects which might be construed as a rejection of Christianity. Peder recalled the weavers' explanation of the man-eating *Hungry Lion*, which invokes a complex metaphor of greed and the ravages of apartheid embodied in a corrupt inspector:

> … this lion was so hungry that he even went for our dip-inspector. That was a big mistake. Mr van der Walt was too fat, even for a huge lion. He got stuck in the gullet and as he was a bad person his flesh was contaminated.
> Naturally the lion was poisoned and got seriously ill.
> But as the story goes we will all one day return to life. We will return in vomit and excrement, but not Mr van der Walt, who shall rot away slowly. We will be rid of him, and the lion, if it survives, will not dare to eat human flesh again.[81]

This potent example makes clear that weaving could be just as political as the work of the art students. One might indeed say that the weavers' images were less descriptive, more subtle and metaphoric in their layers of meaning.

The work of Allina Ndebele provides rare insights into these complexities. She had first learnt weaving while employed as an interpreter for the Goweniuses, then later trained in Sweden before returning to teach weavers at the Centre, with little time to work on her own pieces. When she finally set up her own workshop at Swart Mfolozi in 1977 and was faced with the challenge of making independent designs, she decided that she would work from the tales she had heard her grandmother relate in her *uguqa* or traditional home. Although Christian, Ndebele recreated a similar *uguqa*, and continues to use this space as a potent source of ideas in the contemplation of her ancestors.[82]

Ndebele recounts that *Polygamy* tells the story of Ngolende who had many wives, which reflected his wealth: 'If you had only one wife you were looked upon as a poor man because you had no cows for *lobola*.'[83] Ngolende's jealous neighbours plotted to kill him and share out his wives, but he foresaw this in a dream and was able to overcome the evildoers. Ndebele pictures harmony restored. Ngolende is surrounded by his extensive family, the group framed by the homestead's beehive dwellings with a traditional circular cattle kraal below. The symmetry of this containing motif speaks of a pre-colonial order that is reflected in many of her tapestries and those by other women at Rorke's Drift.

Traditional representations of social stability before the advent of Europeans and Christianity were evidently not seen as problematic by the South African authorities, for Rorke's Drift tapestries were included in the official selection for biennale exhibitions at Venice in 1968 and Sao Paolo in 1973. These themes could be accommodated within apartheid's policies, which promoted passively 'tribal' culture as long as it could be contained within authorised notions of separate development. But such images are not to be understood as

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[80] Despite the Centre's vision of interaction between the different groups working there, as time passed fewer and fewer art students included weaving in their studies, even though it was introduced as a option in the additional third year Fine Art Course in the mid-1970s. It seems that the weavers who lived in the surrounding countryside had little enough direct interaction with the art students, whose discussion of contemporary events would have been facilitated by their living in hostels at the Centre. An exception was Dan Rakgoathe, who spent time in the weaving studio in a quest to learn 'authentic Africanness' (Hobbs interview with Dan Rakgoathe, Johannesburg, November 1998).

[81] Gowenius in Hobbs and Rankin 2003: xiii.

[82] Hobbs, P., N. Leibhammer and R. Loukakis interview with Allina Ndebele, Swart Umfolozi, January 1998.

[83] Ndebele, A. Unpublished tapestry stories. (Undated). Caja Stort archive, Eshowe.

meekly submissive: as well as asserting their own culture, stories from Zulu life and legend could enshrine political allegories whilst still evading interpretation.

We are given a clue to this in Ndebele's tapestry, *Animal Meeting*, in a second title, *Apartheid Among Animals*. Subversive meaning is not immediately apparent in the lively gathering of animals under trees alive with vibrant patterns of flowers and birds. Ndebele tells how all the horned animals called a meeting from which those without horns were excluded. The hero of the tale, the mongoose Chakijana equipped himself with horns from a dead animal to make an illicit appearance. But the horns came off while he was asleep, revealing his duplicity, so that he had to run away from the horned animals. Ndebele concludes:

> They looked all over the forest, very angry because Chakijana had heard all their secrets, as the meeting was about how to find themselves a very fertile land for all the animals who have got horns and to have those who have no horns to stay on a very poor and dry land. Even today, Chakijanas live anywhere they like, only they hide themselves in holes when they go to sleep and when they see some animals dangerous to themselves or people.[84]

We are left to draw the real life analogies of *Apartheid Among Animals* for ourselves. There is a telling irony in the privileging of one group over another simply because they have horns: it seems as arbitrary as declaring whiteness a sign of superiority. The story refers to the distribution of land under the homeland policy of South Africa's Nationalist government, reserving the richest land for whites. But the cunning mongoose who understands the ambitions of the dominant group is able to defy the system by going underground. As with *The Hungry Lion,* this example, where Ndebele's alternate title helps us to discover hidden meaning in an apparently innocuous animal fable, suggests that there may be many Rorke's Drift tapestries that do more than affirm the weavers' own culture through telling its stories, and have political interpretations known only to their makers.[85]

There is one particular case on record that demonstrates that more open political statements would not have been welcomed by the mission authorities. Evidently encouraged by the Centre, a tapestry woven by Mary Tshabalala and Eliza Xaba in 1982, based on a drawing by ceramist and printmaker Gordon Mbatha, depicted the harsh treatment of black labourers, yoked together to plough the fields.[86] Although the tapestry's rich surface no doubt somewhat ameliorated the shocking message, it could not be missed. Sent to the Lutheran headquarters at Umpumulo to be crated for sale abroad, the transgressive tapestry was destroyed, in part no doubt because the mission authorities feared that so obvious an allegation of slavery in South Africa might attract attention.[87] It was probably also censored because its setting on a mission station suggested collusion between Church and Government, which would have been highly embarrassing in Lutheran World Federation circles.[88] The danger of putting the Centre at risk, whether at home or abroad, would have been a factor in avoiding subject matter that would be unpalatable to the authorities who could terminate their activities in South Africa. And the tapestries, because of their size, cost and collectability, were much more visible than the prints.

As this seems to be a sole example of censorship, we can deduce that the women were adroit at negotiating these issues to ensure the success of the workshops. Well established before the Fine Art School and continuing long after its demise in 1982, weaving workshops remained the chief source of income for the Centre. From the outset, prints had little overseas success. Produced in inexpensive multiples, they sold better on the South African market, where works with political implications might find buyers amongst white liberals. But for the internationally renowned tapestries, depressing political subject matter was unlikely to

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[84] Ndebele quoted by Hobbs 2004: 67.

[85] Ndebele's admission of such a reading for her work is rare. There is a direct although much earlier parallel in the 1960s prints of Azaria Mbatha, whose religious subject matter made allusions to the contemporary situation, often undisclosed at the time. On visits to South Africa in the 1990s, Mbatha confirmed this, as in the deliberate representation of a black David and a white Goliath, and even more specific references to Hendrik Verwoerd in his image of Herod visited by the wise men. Herod's unusual dress alluded to the mission figure Gunnar Lislerud also, an autocratic Head of the Lutheran Church Centre at Umpumulo who did not endear himself to the Art and Craft Centre (Hobbs and Rankin interview, Durban, September 1996).

[86] The weavers were apparently encouraged not only by students, as Malin Lundbohm, who was teaching at the Centre at the time, recounted this story of subversion with considerable pride (Hobbs interview with Malin Lundbohm, Grebbestad, May 1999).

[87] Hobbs and Colbert Mashile interview with Gordon Mbatha, Rorke's Drift, May 2002.

[88] Such subject matter would probably not have been appealing to buyers either, as it would have been as offensive to socialist Sweden as to Lutheran World Federation circles. The Lutheran Church in South Africa had officially distanced itself from the old 'Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms', a pre-1965 concept that differentiated the responsibilities of church and state and had condoned a blind-eye attitude to apartheid rule.

attract buyers, who relished what they thought of as 'naïve' African narratives. This reading was reinforced by the lack of the weaver's names on the tapestries, as though they were the product of some anonymous rural collective, rather than individual artists. The women weavers used these concepts to their advantage, even winning a major commission for three enormous tapestries for the Royal Society in London. Works like these were understood as celebratory decorative hangings. Yet we have seen that it would be a gross oversimplification to construct Rorke's Drift tapestries and prints as a binary opposition of the rural optimism of women and the urban pessimism of men. Both groups were equally subject to the travesties of apartheid and both drew on their diverse areas of experience as strategies for social commentary. Although differentiated because the makers were chiefly politicised urban men on the one hand and rural women familiar with oral narratives on the other, both prints and tapestries could embody messages of resistance.

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The brazen serpent and other transforming images: on the translatability of cultures

Religious image debates are currently revisited in image studies in the light of the 'new image question' especially in German-language *Bildwissenschaft*, *Bildkritik* and *Bildanthropologie*. The formation of the postmodern synthetic digital image that can no longer be described in terms of representation, as well as the appearance on the inter-cultural global horizon of images from the field of anthropology, have unleashed a new *Bilderstreit* of definitions of the image. Since post-modernity seems to have reverted to image beliefs that were supposed to have been surmounted, image studies are now focussed on human image practices (Belting 2001, 2006, Boehm 2004, Latour 2002, Mondzain 2000, 2005). From the American point of view W. J. T. Mitchell (2000) confronts the seemingly untamed and irrational aspect of the modern image's power to self-create or possess a life, presence or soul of its own, just as relics and idols were once supposed to have. He traces the modern evolution of scientific and popular images of the dinosaur for which no prototype or model exists, to specific prototype images from the Victorian era. The dinosaur, which has become the

image of the theory of evolution, is shown to evolve or self-create in images. Mitchell suggests that the "life" of the dinosaur takes place on the borderline between nature and culture, biology and anthropology, and that whenever culture is reduced to a mere projection, a shadow or mirror of nature, or vice versa, totemism lifts its head. Hans Belting (2000) invokes idolatry to explain that the abstraction of reality into images is compensated for in the increasingly violent intensity with which lost reality recurs in images today. Venerated simulations and animations on computer screens impress more than their originals so that our comprehension of the world conforms to images and becomes image-like (Belting 2000: 278, 279). Villem Flusser (Belting 2006: 17) ironically underscores the description of post-modernism as the age of idolatry when he declares that if all images are idols, there is no idolatry.

Image debates in the postmodern "age of idolatry" can benefit from an analysis of representations of the *topos* of the *Brazen serpent* selected from crucial stages in the history of images. The *topos* refers to the Old Testament history related in Numbers 21 of how God sends fiery serpents from heaven as punishment for the Israelites' blasphemous complaints about their hardships in the desert. The Lord commands Moses to erect a serpent of bronze upon a pole, so that those who look upon it in faith may be saved. This history provokes uncomfortable questions about its similarity to heathen animal cults, bewilderment at God's instruction to Moses to make an effigy in the light of the prohibition of graven images in the second commandment, and puzzlement at His choice of the incongruous prototype of a serpent.

Although representations of the *Brazen serpent* are infrequently encountered in the history of art (Brown 2008: 266) the *topos* appears to be revisited in threshold eras of cultural crisis. The Counter-Reformation in the Low Lands (Harrison 1990) as well as Italy, for example inaugurates the most prolific return to the subject. These representations then demonstrate a capacity to re-describe, translate or reconstruct conflicted image functions. Diverse representations of the history of the *Brazen serpent* appear to be characteristically aimed at types of images other than itself - mythical symbols, icons, or idols - in order to replace, destroy, fight, transform or modify the understanding of images, opening up what Bruno Latour (2002) would call a cascade of thickly entangled connections. In the history of pictorial *Brazen serpent* narratives they demonstrate a propensity to emancipate from other or preceding image understandings. God's instruction to Moses to erect an image of a brass serpent is part of His gradual transformation and reformation of the conceptions of divine manifestation of the heathen nations of the whole ancient Near East, re-aligning it with Israel's experience of the covenant God and his nature (Eichrodt 1967b: 15). The production and beholding of the likeness of the brazen serpent originally entailed a ritual of atonement and captivated all the senses of the Israelites. Its lifting up on a pole made it conspicuous like an ensign (Calvin 1847-50), demonstrating the conversion of the Israelites to a new understanding of God's revelation of himself in history.

I will focus on the capacity of the *topos* to divide as well as to mediate. Image wars, ongoing iconoclasm, the perpetual destruction, negation and replacement of images are features of the history of changing conceptions of the image (brought to our attention once more by the *Iconoclash* exhibition; Latour & Weibel 2002). Under various catchphrases like the migration of images, the dialectic of the interval, the *Kunstwollen*, principles of opposed dynamisms of style, the clash of gods, the ethnographic turn, the reformation of the image, the lives and loves of images, it has been a central concern of Art history since its inception as a discipline. The inclination of images to lead to other images, to beget images, to be transformed, modified and re-represented is distinctively apparent in *Brazen serpent* representations which stage, as such, the "innate duplicity of the image" (W.J.T. Mitchell; 2005: 50) as substitute, resemblance, or simulacrum. In order to confront current image questions I will now investigate those typical predispositions of *Brazen serpent* narratives mentioned above, by skimming the rich field of historical and systematic image theories.

I start the chronological investigation with a medieval image that excludes, erases, replaces or transforms a series of other images, including the brazen serpent. A nativity scene (Figure 1) (Camille 1989: 195) in a Gothic Psalter in the Hart Collection of the Blackburn Museum shows a manger with the infant Jesus, on a pole. Old Testament idols were often represented on columns, or poles as in the *Concordantia Caritatis* of Ulrich of Lilienfeld (Camille 1989: 169) representing the idolatry of Ahaziah and Jerobeam (Figure 2). The re-placement on a column of the manger in the nativity scene is an iconoclastic gesture and suggests that Christ is the conqueror of heathen idolatry (Camille 1989: 198). Simultaneously, I want to add, the exhibition of Christ's incarnation in human flesh, the only image in which God showed himself to humankind, justifies Christian image-making. The raised cuplike manger like an uplifted Eucharistic paten which holds the communion bread at the altar, expands this reference to Christ's body as a sign. Apart from the Nativity and

the Eucharist, the Crucifixion is one of the most important moments of Christ's Incarnation, and the pole supporting the manger also refers to Christ's subsequent suffering on the cross. If Old Testament idolatry is seen in typological relationship to Christ who overcame it, the Crucifixion replaces the Old Testament order of the Law, usually represented typologically by another pole, the pole upon which the Brazen serpent was erected. Christ Himself compares the brazen serpent and the pole of the crucifixion in John 3: 14. The successive re-placements or translations in the nativity scene of the repellent likeness of the snake on a pole, by the bloody crucifixion, by decorative foliage supporting the manger, could be interpreted as an evasion or disguise of violence. Conversely, to read allegorically is to penetrate the disguise (Paul Ricoeur 1967: 16) so that a surge of substitutive images is unleashed. In the rich medieval image-language system (Warncke 2005) a characteristic iconic energy prevails by means of which more is revealed than is shown.

But the urge to reorient, translate or re-describe established images also points to the finitude of images which merely reveal through a glass darkly. Like the suffering image of Christ throughout his life on earth, the image in its material fetters is limited. The incarnation of Christ as a human being not only reveals but also conceals his divinity. Unlike Byzantine icons of the Eastern Church in which it is believed, that through an *epiphaneia* the holy can momentarily erupt into human time, the *figura* used in the medieval church of the West is considered to be a barrier between humankind and God (Camille 1989: 205). Veiled, shrouded and obscure images are progressively revealed and enriched in the *Heilsgeschichte* and its interpretation (Ricoeur 1995: 39 – 41). The decorative foliage surrounding the manger suggests the renewed sprouting, regeneration and transformation of the image itself. The desire or lack of the image to which W. J. T. Mitchell (2005) refers in Freudian terms may have its origin in this oblique interaction with the divine which remains flawed, blemished and unsound. According to Joseph Leo Koerner (2004: 122 - 127, 2002: 191 – 196) religious images are in themselves self-defacing engines of "iconoclash" that have iconoclasm built into them. They "repeat the antagonism between appearance and truth that the image itself already displays" (Koerner 2002: 168). The ensuing struggle among images is also a progressive interrogation of the changing functions of the image.

The most popular art historical exemplum of the Brazen serpent *topos*, Michelangelo's fresco on one of the four relatively large pendentives of the Sistine Chapel (Figure 3) also exhibits the dynamism inherent in the duplicity of images.

In the encompassing iconographic scheme of the ceiling which was designed by Michelangelo's theologian patrons, it has a bridging and linking function (Figure 4). Its position close to the altar (Figure 5) as well as between the Old Testament ceiling frescoes and the Fullness of time in the New Testament Last Judgement scene behind the altar (Seymour 1972: 74) underscores its typological connection with the Crucifixion.

The composition itself, however, is characterized by the potency with which it segregates onlookers into distinctive groups. Taking the concave field of the spandrel into account, the composition is divided by a central axis that seems to strike into the space of the spectator. The group of flying serpents resembling lightning strokes, at the back of the picture plane, draws attention to a virtual axis commenced by the ruddy copper sculpture of the brazen serpent, and dramatically extended into the excessively foreshortened figure of the male figure who is overpowered by the greyish muscularly animate serpent in the foreground. In this respect the composition corresponds with the ceiling fresco of *The temptation and expulsion* (Figure 6) which flanks the central ceiling fresco.

In the *Temptation* scene on the left, Adam and Eve's arms are extended towards the curled serpent around the central tree of Knowledge, repeating the gestures of the sinners seeking atonement from the likeness of the Brazen serpent, whereas on the right in the *Expulsion* scene the palms of their hands ward the serpent off, repeating the gestures of those overcome by the fiery serpents. The two frescoes are theologically linked in their depiction of estrangement from God through sin in the presence of the serpent as well as the promise of atonement and redemption through the coming of the Messiah which was first given directly after the Fall.

The *terribilità* of the serpent with the overpowered male figure in the foreground obviously borrows from the *Laocoön* (Figure 7) which was discovered four years before Michelangelo finished the *Brazen serpent* fresco in 1510 during the second phase of his work on the Sistine frescoes. The sculpture represents the Trojan priest, *Laocoön* and his two sons being destroyed by serpents sent in unjust punishment by the Greek god Poseidon. The *Laocoön* became the *exemplum doloris* or aesthetic norm for the depiction of agony and suffering during the *rinascimento all'antica* (Brilliant 2000). Whereas the Crucifixion to which the Brazen serpent points, represents a final stage in the humiliation of God Incarnate, the formidable suffocating

serpents in the *Laocoön* sculptural group were direct mythical manifestations of the Greek god Poseidon. The embodiment of the classical deities differs radically from the Incarnation in that Christ becomes human in all aspects, except for human sin. By transforming the meaning of the biblical text that stipulates that the serpents sent by Yahweh caused death by poisoning rather than suffocation Michelangelo translates the concept of guilt as sinful or poisonous infection (Ricoeur 1967) into a heroic and tragic struggle. In the overwhelmed male figure seemingly propelled into the space of the spectator the *Dialektik des Monstrums* (Aby Warburg; Warburg 1999, Didi-Huberman 2001, Rampley 2001), the Renaissance clash of pagan gods and Christian God is witnessed. For modern beholders of the *Laocoön* sculptural group the god Poseidon manifested in the mythic serpents, was dead, but reincarnated in the virtuosic creators of Renaissance art, like Michelangelo, *Il Divino* himself. Artists' redefinitions, the aesthetic demythologization of the idol-status of sculptural representations of the gods of antiquity and their realignment as aesthetic exempla were acceptable. In the "dialectic of the interval", the iconic energy set free by references to antique culture according to Warburg, the unresolved conflict between *Bild* and *Kult* (or image and likeness; Belting 1990) is evident.

The "Eucharist question" initiated by the Protestant Reformation necessitated a reconsideration of the function of images and their imaginative reception (Belting 2006, Stoellger 2004). According to Mondzain (2000, 2005, Stoellger 2004) the reassessment of art's ecclesiastical functions during the Reformation potentially initiates a sacramental interpretation of all images in the West. The violence of all human passions henceforth converges in the image of the Passion of Christ, the image of Compassion, rather than in the Greek tragedy. For Monzain (Stoellger 2005: 185) all images are Passion images: "Only the image can incarnate – that is the most important contribution of Christian thought ... That is just what to incarnate means: becoming an image and ultimately an image of the Passion".

Lucas Cranach, a friend and supporter of Luther, is believed to have been influenced by the reformer in the design of the Altarpiece (1547) that he painted for the Church in Wittenberg (Figure 8), the church of Martin Luther's ministry where it still stands. The central panel and wings of the retable represent the Last Supper, Baptism and Confession. These "external signs of grace" are supported by another sign of grace, preaching, the subject of the predella underneath (Figure 9), which seems to "support" the rest of the retable (Koerner 2004: 76ff).

I want to argue that the predella presupposes commentaries by Reformation theologians on biblical passages referring to the brazen serpent and that Christ's animatedly billowing and twisting loincloth in the airless space of the church has a distinctly snakelike quality which is associated with the image of the Brazen serpent. Whereas the brazen serpent refers to the elevation of the Host in Catholic traditions, John Calvin follows an old established reformational tradition when he interprets the words "to be lifted up" in John 3: 14 as the preaching of the Gospel, emphasizing that such preaching is to be understood sacramentally (Devries 2002: 15, 16).

In a painting (Figure 10) titled *Law and grace* produced by the workshop of Lucas Cranach around 1535 (Belting 2006: 184. 185), a representation of the Brazen serpent is strategically placed parallel to the representation of the Temptation and Fall on the left, and "in the shadow of" the Crucifixion on the right. It demonstrates how for a number of years after the Reformation images were subjected to the new text culture to become sign systems. Such double images in which the Law of the Old Testament is confronted by the Grace of Christian religion became popular Lutheran *Gedenkbilder* - mental signs to gaze upon - and *Zeugnisbilder* - witnesses to aid memory (Michalsky 1993: 27). This painting was reproduced (Figure 11) and circulated in print as didactic treatises that must be read, like two pages of a book (Belting 2006: 184).

According to Joseph Leo Koerner (2002: 210), "... in the Wittenberg predella, Christ dies in the dead air of a school room, despite the flapping loin cloth". I want to argue that in its reference to the Brazen serpent *topos*, the predella painting extricates itself from "the school room" and that the energy set free by the swirling loin cloth differentiates it from other didactic images by Cranach. In the predella the image of the crucified Christ, according to Koerner (2004: 175 – 178), refers neither to a vision (the cross is planted in the floor), nor to a likeness or sculpture in the church interior (it has no sculptural base), nor to the historical flesh-and-blood Crucifixion (droplets of blood are stylized and the drapery flies horizontally in a windowless interior). The ambivalent placement of the crucifix in the unusually unventilated space suggests that it is interiorized, placed in the mind of the congregation, as a metaphor of the manifestation of Christ's presence in prayer and preaching. Yet, I want to add, the painting is composed so as to resemble the scene of the interpretation of an image. This is evident in Luther's pointing gesture from the lectern on the right, and in the elevated gazes of

the members of the congregation, both resembling the main actions respectively of Moses and the Israelites in the majority of existing Brazen serpent paintings. In the ritual actions of pointing, seeing, saying and hearing the new sacramental sense of images becomes evident. The emphasis is on sacramental preaching as the ritual breaking of the bread, rather than on the exhibition and elevation of the presence in Body and Host of the Transubstantiation (cf. Paulson 2003: 1 - 24). As previously with the Brazen serpent ritual that involved all the senses of the Israelites, the gradual transformation and reformation to a new understanding of God's revelation of himself in history is conveyed. The constant re-enactment of the Word through preaching (Ricoeur 1995: 42, 46, 47) requires the constant renewal of the powers of the imagination and transforms the representation and the reception of images.

The Word is also constantly preached and re-enacted in the context of different cultures. The capacity of the *topos* of the Brazen serpent to divide as well as mediate has bearing on the translatability of cultures. I argued elsewhere that the *Brazen serpent* scene in Azaria Mbatha's narrative series *The story of Moses* (1963) (Figure 12) has a crucial function in the translation and transfiguration of mythical Zulu symbolism (De Villiers-Human 2007). The fundamentally contrasting narrative attitudes in the work of Azaria Mbatha the Lutheran Zulu Kolwa (Winters 1998), and his acquaintance the Zulu prophet Laduma Madela (Figure 13) can be interpreted on the basis of Paul Ricoeur's (1995: 48 – 67) distinction of the "manifestation" of the sacred and the "proclamation" of the Word.

In Laduma Madela's mythical narrative (Miles 1997, Schlosser 1997) the sacred is represented to be read directly on the world, on fragments of the cosmos. For example Madela's rich rendering of the sheen of copper as multi-coloured concentric bands to which the eye converges suggests the plenitude of meaning of the mythical cosmos that makes Mveliqangi's power immediately significant. By pictorially enhancing the value of the durable metal to allow the transcendent to appear through it, Madela uncovers the cosmic ground of symbolism.

Azaria Mbatha on the other hand wrestles with the crisis of cultural translation in his careful and circumspect selection of particular scenes from the many episodes in the life of Moses, relating them to Zulu anthropocosmic experience. Mbatha depicts a process of translation, for example, of the mythic belief in the sacred power of thunder and lightning (Figure 14) into the biblical belief of the progressive revelation of the God of history in the *Heilsgeschichte*. In Zulu culture, according to A-I. Berglund (1975: 37, 38) thunder and lightning is attributed to the Lord of the Sky. A specific category of thunder, a sudden cracking roar, accompanied by forked lightning is attributed to the Lord-of-the-Sky's bad temper or anger and demands an apology and a request for mercy from Mvelinquangi. Under the title: "We ask for mercy!" the trembling and fearful people of Israel hearing thunder and seeing lightning and smoke on Mount Sinai where God's revelation of himself in the inscription of the Word on two stone tablets occurred, is represented. This translation of direct sacred manifestation in terms of the requirements of the proclamation of the Word prepares for an explosion of meaning, in the climactic subsequent dénouement of the *Brazen serpent* scene (Figure 15). Deictically titled as: "Behold and be saved!" the scene is transparent to Christ's crucifixion. In the *Brazen serpent* the beholder's position is challenged in the face of the conflictual gap at the meeting of powerful cultural forces and the "intranslatability of the God of Israel" (Budick 1996: 14 – 22).

The fetishistic misappropriation of the likeness of the Brazen serpent by the Israelites returns us to the postmodern era of idolatry. The likeness accompanied the Israelites on their subsequent journey through the desert initiating the cult of Nohestan, after which King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18) reduced it to powder. This myopic and obsessive focus on the object itself is not unique in its history. The constant human struggle with the function of images as substitutes manifests again in the 16th century when plague medallions (Figure 16) with relief impressions of the *Brazen serpent* on one side and of the crucified Christ on the reverse were struck in various cities in Germany (Schouten 1967: 101). As fetishistic amulets they served an apotropaic function to avert the evil of the plague.

In the light of the rarity of sculptural versions of the Brazen serpent, Giovanni Fantoni's postmodern Brazen serpent sculpture (Figure 17) on Mount Nebo in western Jordan is remarkable.

The sculpture at first appears to be a substitute, repetition or reproduction of the prototype, placed near its original site where the Israelites camped during their exile. The sculpture was visited by Pope Jean Paul II in 2000 during his pilgrimage to the Holy land which can be surveyed from Mount Nebo, and by Pope Benedict XVI who delivered a speech there in May this year (Wikipedia!!!!). But the sculpture's displacement at a conflicted site where Moses, a patriarch of the Jewish, Islamic as well as Christian religions is believed to

have been buried, soon makes the spectator aware of the ironies of the central value that the Other assumes in conceptions of the self in postmodern society. The sculpture signifies the struggle at the bloody crossroads of cultures and calls into question the self-understanding of the observer. It is displaced in the age of idolatry, the age of the missing referent. Disturbing questions like: "Does it refer to its original referent, the power of the God of Israel and/or the Crucifixion or not?" highlight the postmodern fear of the danger of substitutes and the need to unmask them.

A closer look at the sculpture (Figure 18) reveals that the likeness of the serpent is merely hinted at by a wire representation of the substitute of a serpent, its slough, by a similitude of the cast dead skin dropped off from its living flesh. Fragments of a pole seemingly violently hacked to pieces are welded onto the central pole, underscoring and endlessly repeating its hollowness. The mythic durability of copper is reduced to left-over scrap metal. The sculpture dissimulates the hollowness and emptiness of the pole, and the absence, demise and loss of the serpent and its effigy. It has a disquieting quality related to a deep questioning of the visual in society. Does this bricolage give a glimpse of a Latin cross, an ankh cross or rather the horns of a bull? Is this surplus of multi-cultural references not an ironic pointer to the emptiness of signs at a time when the Pope himself has become a media star, a living icon who has acquired cult status? The sculpture confronts and interrogates changing image conceptions through the possibilities of the image as *figura*, allegory, substitute, resemblance, mimesis and simulacrum. But it shows that ultimately images remain on the threshold of the visible and the invisible, connecting these two zones and we cannot but still believe in them, waiting for the true and real image to appear. Images remain place holders for what we believe to be true.

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Gender representation in Christian book covers: A case study (with S Viljoen)

Introduction

In 2001 pop-psychology best-selling Christian author, John Eldredge, published his answer to what secular and Christian theorists alike had deemed a crisis in Western masculine identity. The book, *Wild at heart*, instantly became a best-seller with over 1.5 million copies sold world-wide. The book has been translated into 16 languages and made the *Publisher's Weekly* best-seller list for four consecutive years. Writer for the popular Christian magazine, *Christianity today*, Douglas LeBlanc (2004:34) states that, "Eldregde… [is] leading a small revolution in Christian spirituality."[89]

Wild at heart primarily centres on the invitation that Eldredge extends to all Christian men to "recover their masculine heart, defined in the image of a passionate God" (from the back cover). It, in other words, addresses the role of masculinity in contemporary evangelical Christian culture. In spite of harsh criticism from many who felt uncomfortable with Eldredge's easy reductionism and determined essentialism he joined forces with his wife to in 2005 to bring out a companion version to *Wild at heart* entitled, *Captivating*. As the title suggests, this book concerns the captivating quality or nature of the feminine. It is difficult to explain the basic premises of these books without creating a straw man but one might say that Eldredge attempts to "discover the secret of a man [or woman's] soul" as proffered by the subtitle to *Wild at heart*. Simply put, Eldredge suggests that the secret to a man's soul is that he desires a battle to fight and the secret to a woman's soul is that she desires to be desirable. Simple as that.

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[89] It is questionable whether this success is due to effective marketing or theological merit.

This paper is concerned with Eldredge's propensity to exaggerate and hype gendered notions of 'calling' or universal purpose. Specifically we would like to address the covers of the two books in question, namely *Wild at heart* and *Captivating*.

Publishers, editors and media theorists alike agree that the cover art on books is imperative in procuring those all-important impulse buys. Malcolm Muggeridge famously proclaimed the *Time* cover spot as "post-Christendom's most notable stain-glassed window", indicating that in the media-scape of impetuous consumerism, covers communicate the ideological brand of the author. For those of us researching visual media, book covers implicate the author in a semiotic language or dialect that betrays their commitment to a certain set of visual ideologies or tropes. Within gender studies book covers may be seen as referents to the gendered ideals of the author just as glossy men's magazine covers, for instance, project the objectifying "body fascism" (Nead 1992) that is the mainstay of these publications. Book covers are, thus, as important as codes of visual ideology as magazine covers and require critical problematising and demystifying. In that vein, we hope to deconstruct the covers of both *Wild at heart* and *Captivating*.

It is noteworthy, that the covers have never changed since they were first published, perhaps indicating that the authors and publishers felt content with the manner in which the cover art represented the contents or 'message' of the books. The covers of *Wild at heart* and *Captivating* have to some degree become iconic of Eldredge's ideas regarding what it means to be either a man or a woman in Christian culture.

The primary fault that theorists[90] and bloggers[91] alike seem to find with both texts is the shaky theology employed by the Eldredges. It seems fair to say the argument of either book is supported by popular media myths and fairytale rather than theological discourse. The books are also frequently criticised for their simplistic view on gender roles. Authors Sally Gallagher and Sabrina Wood (2005:157) state that; "It places a non-negotiable and dimorphous gender identity at the centre of the story."

In order to describe how gender is represented on these covers and to consider how some of Eldredge's ideas on gender translate visually we employ a semiotic analysis of the two book covers from within a Barthesian tradition, focusing on denotative description, connotation and the construction of mythic meaning as well as created and supported ideologies (Barthes 1973).

Wild at heart

"The stallions hang out in bars; the geldings hang out in church" – David Murrow in O'Brien (2008:49)

The cover of *Wild at heart* shows a man in silhouette jumping from an elevated rock to a plateau that appears to be at the summit of a mountain. On either side of him are tall fur trees that create vertical drama within an otherwise tranquil scene. It appears to be either sunrise or sunset. Eldredge's name appears as a banner above the sprinting silhouette with the titles of his other best-sellers written beneath his name. On the bottom half of the cover *Wild at heart* is written in an oversized, pale blue font that is in high contrast with the dark mountainside that forms the backdrop to the title and sub-title. A somewhat old-fashioned, stoic, seriffed type-face is used for all the copy that appears on the cover.

We cannot hope to give a definitive meaning for this design but may attempt to situate the cover art within the context of the book and Eldredge's broader thesis in an effort to surmise potential readings of the image on the cover as a means of understanding one of many possible gender constructions within Christianity as a visual trope. The first question, then, is what Eldredge seems to be saying about Christian masculinity with this book.

Early on in the discussion, Eldredge (2001:41) quotes Thoreau as musing, more than one hundred and fifty years ago, that "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." To Eldredge this appears to be the great truth of the current age, that men everywhere in the western world are in a state of crisis. He is not the first to suggest this. In 1978 the celebrated Christian author, Leanne Payne, wrote a book entitled *Crisis in masculinity* and in 2000 the secular theorist, Anthony Clare, entitled his psychological analysis of contemporary men, *On men: Masculinity in crisis*. But Eldredge was, perhaps, the first writer to popularise this idea. The problem, according to Eldredge (2001:41-42), is that "there is no battle to fight, unless it's traffic and meetings and hassles and bills" … all of which lead to anger and boredom rather than a sense of

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[90] For a summary of theological concerns see Wingerd (Sa) and Winslow (2007).

[91] *Wild at Heart* sparks prolific and fervent criticism in the bloggeshpere (see Challies 2004; 2005; Brandt 2003; Haddad 2009).

really being alive. In the typical language of mythic popular culture, Eldredge quotes William Wallace who in *Braveheart* (Gibson 1995) sagely mused that "all men die, few men live". Through the early chapters of the book it becomes clear that for Eldredge every boy and man questions whether he has what it takes. Whether he, like William Wallace, could fight the foe and win the girl. Eldredge seems to feel that contemporary Western men have lost their ability to fight for what they believe in, they have lost their masculine essence. And that, according to Eldredge (2001:48), is the problem, that most men are not ready "to fight, to live with risk, to capture the beauty." And this so-called problem is apparently aggravated by the church.

Wild at heart sowed seeds that, according to Brandon O'Brien (2008:49) sprouted as a new masculinity movement aimed to get men into church by changing the church's atmosphere. In South Africa, we are experiencing a further religious (gendered) wave in the Mighty Men phenomenon spear-headed by Angus Buchan, a movement that seemingly attempts to re-align men with a godly vision of masculine identity (and responsibility?). David Murrow, author of *Why men hate going to church* (2005), founded the group Church for Men in the United States because, while the local congregation is "perfectly designed to reach women and older folks" – with its emphasis on comfort, nurture, and relationship – it "offers little to stir the masculine heart, so men find it dull and irrelevant" (in O'Brien 2008:49). In Driscoll's opinion, the church has produced "a bunch of nice, soft, tender, chickified church boys (in O'Brien 2008:49). In his oafish, bombastic and homo-phobic way, Driscoll goes on to maintain that "latte-sipping Cabriolet drivers" do not represent biblical masculinity, because "real men" – like Jesus, Paul, and John the Baptist – are "dudes: heterosexual, win-a-fight, punch-you-in-the-nose dudes" (in O'Brien 2008:50). In other words, because Jesus is not a "limp-wristed, dress-wearing hippie" (Driscoll in O'Brien 2008:50) the men who follow him should not be thoughtful, critical and caring, but rather aggressive, violent, nonverbal (and bigoted). This reductionist and elementary perspective may be overstated for effect but it is nevertheless a dangerous take on the masculine ideal that Christian men should aspire to and serves to colour in the backdrop against which Eldredge introduced his own masculine ideal.

One need not scrutinise Eldredge too closely to discover the defining attribute of his masculine ideal. As the title suggests, the most important characteristic of this man is that he is wild at heart. What exactly this means is not explicitly spelled out but suffice it to say his vision of ideal manhood involves being active and aggressive or ready to fight (though not in a violent macho way). For Eldredge, this fight involves the way you are willing to fight for your wife on an emotional level and spend time with your children in spite of an encroaching outside world (which may include the church) that is determined to steal their and your attention. He does not, in other words, propose that all men become gladiators or William Wallaces but he does seem to want to counter that other answer to masculinity in crisis, the metrosexual. Where the metrosexual is born out of the eighteenth century *flaneur* and his consumption of the city, Eldredge seems to sketch this pattern as detrimental to male vitality. He seems determined to draw men out of salons and clubs back to nature but in doing so slips into the rhetoric of active masculinity and passive femininity, a binary articulation which reduces Christian men and women to cartoonish gendered types.

As for the cover of the book, one might now read the image of the leaping protagonist as one that affirms the notion of men actively pursuing their dreams. At this, the dawn of a new day, the masculine is cast as the heroic that must conquer his surroundings in an epic battle for his male soul. Our hero has a backpack on his back indicating that e is prepared for the journey he now faces alone. His isolation from the rest of the world is accented by the untamed nature that surrounds him. Beneath him the dark mountain hints at the obstacles and dangers he will face on his journey. For herein lies his worth, that he can overcome the looming peril. But it is not without help that he conquers the reality of a menacing threat. The fir trees on either side of him reach up to his God recalling the pantheistic landscapes of Casper David Friedrich that visualised the Romantic belief that God is to be found in nature.

The milieu within which this intrepid adventurer thus finds himself is the wild and epic outdoors. Here, on Eldredge's cover the age-old binary of nature being associated with the feminine and culture with the masculine is thwarted so that the civilised domain of culture is as threatening to the masculine as the very feminine itself. For the ultimate fight, it seems, is not for a woman, but for yourself. Eldredge deftly proposes that in order to do so every man must embark on a solitary journey that will have him leaping from summit to summit at the dawn of his new life.

Captivating

The cover of *Captivating* is to some extent read in comparison to that of *Wild at heart*, as *Captivating* can, arguably, be considered a supplementary text to *Wild at heart*. Unlike the hero myth which is found on *Wild at heart*'s cover, *Captivating*'s cover makes pertinent reference to fairytale myths. Most of the formal elements as well as constructed codes on this cover point to this idea and functions to construct fairytale myth in connection to feminine identity.

As masculinity is strongly identified with adventurism, exploration and conquer on *Wild at heart*'s cover, feminine identity is here identified with nature, beauty and the ephemeral. A duality is constructed between these two covers, which feeds on the existing active male−passive female binary in Sherry Ortner's (1998) terms. In order to explain the universal subordination of women, Ortner (1998:29) applies the nature-culture duality to the male-female duality and aligns male to culture and female to nature. On the *Wild at heart* cover, one can see that this male-culture alignment appears intact, as the solitary boulder-jumping male figure appears as an exploring and even conquering force in the landscape. The female figure on *Captivating*'s cover manifests quite differently than her male counterpart in this regard. A solitary female figure appears in the lower left-hand corner of the cover. Unlike the active male figure, she seems to be passively situated in nature, strolling peacefully about a field. She is not running around conquering the landscape she is placed in, but blends in to form a part of it.

Most of the visual elements on *Captivating*'s cover could be considered more 'feminine' than those found on *Wild at heart*'s cover. The text used for the book's title is elegant and flowing as opposed to the bold stoic text used for *Wild at heart*'s title. Small bits seem to be eroded from the lettering of *Captivating* giving the idea that the font is fading away, fleeting and tentative. This font attribute links to other whimsical associations created on the cover. The play of light cuts through the female figure, rendering her almost translucent. This gives the female figure a certain whimsical, transient quality, as though she is fading away, or disappearing into the light. One could argue that this, as well as other whimsical elements on the cover, functions to associate the feminine with the transcendental or the spiritual.

Fairytale-like myths of princesses and castles are at work on the *Captivating* cover. At the lower right of the cover one sees an easily recognisable, though blurry, castle. The female figure in the left appears to be moving towards this castle. Feminine identity is here thus strongly and openly associated with the romantic ideas behind fairytales, castles and beautiful princesses desiring to be rescued by their prince. The central thesis of the book is robustly linked to this visual association of the feminine to fairytale myth. The Eldredges believe that they are "unveiling the mystery of a woman's soul" as the title suggests, which is that every woman desires to be desired. The blurb on the book's back cover reads:

Every woman was once a little girl. And every little girl holds in her heart her most precious dreams. She longs to be swept up into a romance, to play an irreplaceable role in a great adventure, to *be* the Beauty of the story. Those desires are far more than child's play. They are the secret to the feminine heart. (Eldredge & Eldredge 2005)

The Eldredges construct femininity in monolithic, heterosexual terms, claiming truth for *all* women and placing heavy emphasis on the importance of infantile romantic fantasies in an adult woman's life. Also interesting with regard to this feminine identity construction is that it is done in relation to that of male identity. It is the male heart, whether human or godly, which a woman is meant to captivate and it is in a man's adventure that she is to play an irreplaceable role and *be* the Beauty. Whereas *Wild at heart*'s message to men is: "Be a real man and let them deal with your masculinity," the message *Captivating* is sending to women is: "You have to please men – deal with it".

In *Captivating* the Eldredges place conspicuous emphasis on feminine physical beauty or (passively) *being* the Beauty in the story. This is somewhat contradictory to mainstream Christian belief which often downplays physical beauty in women to favour spiritual virtue. It seems as though the Eldredges are encouraging women to strive for physical captivating beauty. This tendency is significant as it provides an example of a case where Christian culture draws from mainstream culture rather than from accepted doctrine, as anticipated, for point of reference. The mainstream media often portray women as powerful due to sexual power derived from their physical beauty. The Eldredges are alluding to the same idea when propagating the notion that a woman's soul purpose is to be desired and to captivate the attention of the masculine. This feeds into mainstream gender stereotypes of female beauty and contradicts expectations of piety from Christian women, as described by Christina Landman (1994).

Although *Captivating* does put itself 'out there' in attempting to provide guidance for Christian women in their expected gender roles, Colleen Campbell (2007:52) points to the fact that, "the book, like so many others in its genre, gives only perfunctory answers to the more vexing questions about women and religion today." *Captivating* does indeed almost entirely ignore issues around biblical gender egalitarianism, the feminist problematic of women's roles and purpose in patriarchal churches, as well the subsequent turn to goddess worship and this seems to be a dramatic absence given the purpose of the book.

Conclusion

This paper posed the question whether the visual semiotic of the cover art of *Wild at heart* and *Captivating* further enshrine the gender stereotypes found in mainstream popular Christian media. Through an analysis of these visual texts it was found that the codes used in the covers continue the binary reading of gender that is established within secular media and do so within the seemingly authoritative context of the sublime.

For the purpose of this paper we were interested in the way the Eldredges' theses are translated into visual terms on the covers of the two books in question. The visuality of Christian culture is worthy of analysis not least because Christian visual media must influence Christian culture and not just the other way around. In conclusion, we maintain that the manner in which beliefs about gendered sex roles are communicated through the visual material promoting itself as 'Christian' in the hegemonic sense demands further analysis from a secular (feminist) perspective.

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Rebuilding identity: the District Six Museum's involvement in the redevelopment of the District Six site

Since its inception, the District Six Museum in Cape Town has transcended accepted definitions of heritage and has challenged common museological practices. In research carried out for my MA in heritage studies I investigated the museum's initiative to nurture the memory of one of the most iconic sites of forced removal in South Africa, as well as its contribution to the rebuilding of District Six, which is currently being redeveloped under a long and complicated process of land restitution. The following paper is a condensed exploration of what I discovered. With much of my research having been carried out over two years ago, this paper remains an analysis of a heritage institution's drive to contribute to social cohesion rather than an up-to-date presentation of the development of the District Six site.

Empty Spaces

There are various heritage sites, world-wide, that have become empty natural spaces or wastelands and offer very little visually that might explain their ascribed importance. These empty spaces have an evocative hold on the viewer in that, as art historian Annie Coombes believes, there is a felt need for them to be reanimated symbolically and sometimes physically (2003: 120). Anecdotally, many people may long to acknowledge their own similarities with a kingdom that once existed on Mapungubwe Hill, a site that holds seemingly little evidence that a community once lived there. Others want the needless deaths of the millions who were murdered in mass-burial sites during the Holocaust in what are now peaceful forests to be memorialised. And some want to rebuild both the homes and the lives of those who were forcibly removed from District Six, which has been left largely undeveloped since it was announced a 'white area' by the apartheid government in the 1960s and progressively bulldozed. These empty spaces are often more evocative than solid structures such as palaces, gas chambers and houses because we long to reanimate them, and give them meaning in an attempt to grasp what happened there. In the case of District Six however, such reanimation is not only possible but is actually happening as the site is gradually being redeveloped through the restitution process. This redevelopment makes the empty wasteland in the centre of Cape Town even more suggestive as many begin to imagine not only what it once was but also what it will eventually become.

Establishing the Museum

The District Six Museum, which was established in 1994, emerged out of the District Six Museum Foundation and Hands Off District Six (HODS), an organisation that was dedicated to protecting the empty wasteland that the District had become since it was destroyed by the apartheid government, forcibly removing over 60 000 people to the desolate Cape Flats. While HODS could not prevent the Cape Technikon being built on a large part of District Six, they successfully thwarted development plans by major corporations such as BP. Many of the HODS members were involved in establishing the District Six Museum, are now museum trustees, and furthermore became members of an organisation called the District Six Beneficiary and Development Trust. This Trust has been managing the process of land restitution and rebuilding the homes of those whose lives were torn apart during the forced removals. The District Six Museum has, in various ways, aided and informed this process.

Yet the complexities inherent in the process are abundant. There are many stakeholders that cover various levels of involvement. What becomes interesting is how various entities, with overlapping members, have maintained fairly similar goals. Sandra Proselendis, former director of the District Six Museum, describes the different approaches when it came to establishing an identity for the museum:

> There was one group that was very much about forgiveness and reconciliation. There was another group that was about returning the people and having the mandate and the means to actually develop District Six. There was another group that just wanted it to remain in its most powerful form: a big space that would always remind people what had happened… there were very vibrant dialogues and arguments, but… everyone wanted this thing to work. And I think the strongest voice outside of education and human rights was the voice of restitution… and the museum gave that voice a very strong platform… (and) became aligned with redevelopment. Everyone had built the museum together and we now felt we could rebuild District Six together (2006).

Museum trustee and Beneficiary Trust member Crain Soudien asserts that the vision held up by those who established the District Six Museum, from the very start, has been to 'rebuild a non-racial Cape Town' (2006). The initiative of 'rebuilding' District Six is linked to the nostalgic vision of the area as a place where, according to museum trustee and Beneficiary Trust chairman Anwah Nagia, 'pale faces slept with black faces' and 'they didn't feel, sense and permeate that difference, or the idea that they were different' (2001: 177). This vision derives from the need not only to reanimate the empty space that is the District Six site but to also use it as a symbol and motivation for social cohesion in Cape Town, and by extension, South Africa. Nostalgia is in this light intersecting with a strong political desire.

A Living Space

This intersection ultimately resulted in the creation, within the museum, of a 'living space'. Valmont Layne, former museum director, asserts that the museum 'has framed its primary space not so much in terms of an exhibition, as in terms of a space of dialogue; of interplay between its visual framework and of voices' (Minty, 2006: 6). By including a level of interactivity, which allows ex-residents to add to the displays and by recording everything that is said within the museum walls the District Six Museum is continually appending new narratives instead of merely presenting one didactic account.

The intimate relationship between the District Six Museum and the ex-residents of District Six officially began in 1994 with an exhibition titled *Streets: Retracing District Six*. According to Layne, the museological premise was 'an invitation to ex-residents and those who knew the District to remember and, through remembering, to collaborate in the creation of public memory about place and its significance' (2004: 188). Some of the most striking features of the exhibition, which remain part of the museum today, include a large street map painted on white tarpaulin covering most of the floor space and three vertical hanging columns constructed of an original set of the old street name signs of District Six. As the exhibition gained more attention ex-residents arrived with both their own narratives and their personal belongings. The museum was flooded with memorabilia from the district; anything from family photographs, bottles, toys to furniture and doors.

The *Streets* exhibition's level of interactivity paved the way for the museum to become a place, as researcher Zayd Minty expresses, that people used 'to meet, gather and engage with each other'. Layne questioned how the museum could capture 'the more painful memories of loss, domestic abuse, of poverty, of aspirations to live in the suburbs?' The solution to this was ultimately a 'memory booth' that was introduced to the *Streets* exhibition and was conceptualised as 'a space to integrate with the core exhibition and a space in which to render and capture memory in electronic form' (Layne, 2004: 188). Out of the introduction of a 'memory booth' came the decision to create a sound archive so that the recorded voices could be heard and accessed by the general public. The sound archive, Layne explains, was envisioned as having an 'activist role, helping to stimulate the production of new knowledge' (2004: 188).

Nostalgia and Identity

Yet this stimulation of 'new knowledge' comes from recollections, which inevitably refers back to the complex notion of nostalgia. How reliable are constructions of District Six identity established through the memorial practices filtered through the museum? The site, despite the fondness with which it has been

described has also been referred to as a slum, a violent and dangerous area and a breeding ground for gangs, which was largely the apartheid government's justification for destroying it. Yet it would seem that the biggest threat District Six posed to the apartheid government was its multiplicity, which is essentially how the area's identity is defined by the museum.

The District was home to a variety of races and nationalities. As well as the large population of coloured people within District Six, Felicity Swanson and Jane Harries in *Lost communities, living memories* refer to the District as 'a melting pot of cultures including people descended from freed slaves, Africans, European immigrants from Ireland and Jews from Eastern Europe' (Field, 2001: 63). This combination of various identities seemed to be both organic in its development as a working class and fairly impoverished district and a conscious reaction to the inhumane social order engineered by the apartheid government. Soudien asserts that 'against the apartheid order that sought to present people's identities in the narrow terms of race, people found in District Six the space to take on a variety of identities' (Rassool and Prosalendis, 2001: 98). Because of an established notion of multi-cultural solidarity in an urban context, the site often plausibly and complexly becomes a synecdoche for the establishment of a new national South African identity.

Despite the danger of nostalgia, the 'real' idea District Six ultimately becomes immaterial; the process of symbolic meaning-making surrounding the District is what becomes important here. As Sean Field, researcher and director of the Centre for Popular Memory at the University of Cape Town says: 'it is of limited value to understand memories only through scientific definitions of what is true or false. It is far more useful to record and interpret how people make their own truths and their own meanings' (2001: 118). This recalls a sentiment that theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah expresses: 'it is not the past but the way we narrate it that matters' (2006).

A Safe Space

While the museum took on the role of a 'living' institution, it also developed into what cultural practitioners call a 'safe space'. The museum has created a home for the memories and the remnants, and essentially an abstract and physical idea of District Six itself, to live. Field's sentiment is that 'The museum has provided a safe space for people to release emotions on a consistent basis which is something the TRC couldn't do. The TRC could only last for so many years. (At the museum) there is a constant process of regeneration.' (2006)

Prosalendis emphasises this by saying that the museum is 'a safe space, a space where people can do things and confabulate… in order for some kind of cohesion you have to have a real space not a virtual space… it has to have a home… Our first impulse just as organisms is seeking… seeking home, seeking comfort… that's what such spaces offer, can offer' (2006).

While the museum cannot provide the ex-residents of District Six with physical homes, it can provide them with a space in which they can both interact and be remembered. The space also acts as a kind of limbo, an in between space where District Six has lived since it was bulldozed, and will live until it is fully rebuilt.

Restitution

In 1994 the new democratic government passed the Restitution of Land Rights Act. In November 2000 an agreement was signed at a celebratory homecoming ceremony addressed by former President Thabo Mbeki. This delegated the redevelopment of the land to the District Six Beneficiary and Development Trust. It was ten years after the passing of Restitution of Land Rights Act that, on the 11th of February 2004, as a result of a land claim facilitated by the Beneficiary Trust, two former District Six families returned to live in the place they were forcibly removed from decades ago (District Six Museum, 2004). This marked the beginning of land restitution in District Six and paved the way for further development to follow. In the years of claims for restitution the District Six Museum was involved on numerous levels. Bonita Bennet, current Director of the museum explains:

> When claims for restitution were being processed, it served as an important and convenient space where information relating to compliance issues could be obtained. It played a role in supporting the verification of claims by assisting with oral testimonies in support of claims, collation of documentary evidence… helping people to declare 'I once lived here even though officialdom has not recorded my impact'. Through their stories, reconnections with neighbours and others in their

then community, as well as by relating to the remaining fragments of the once dense area, claimants were able to make a very strong relational statement of belonging. (2007)

Soudien argues that the museum is not directly involved the redevelopment of the site, 'The Beneficiary Trust is about the resettling of people in the area… and the museum's role as we would now argue is largely to facilitate that return, that home coming… it is largely an educational one' (2006). Bennet's view is that the two organisations 'are partner organisations and broadly speaking have the same overall goals... (yet) while the Beneficiary Trust is closely engaged with the "bricks and mortar" aspects of the return and redevelopment process, the museum is much more closely involved with cultural issues linked to the return' (2007).

The Beneficiary Trust, however seems to be taking on the bulk of the responsibility and the lengthy process of land claims has been, for many claimants both difficult and frustrating. Furthermore, because District Sixers will receive new houses on the original land there is a heavy emotional burden. Field explains:

> Many people have refused to apply for restitution because it is too difficult for them to relive uncomfortable memories. And many others that did apply said it has made their emotional burden even worse. Nevertheless, people's struggles for restitution are driven by dreams of returning to the home or community where they feel they belonged. But this struggle is also about wanting to be heard, wanting to be seen and wanting to be remembered (2001: 120)

The re-developed site is thus inextricably linked to the past and will simultaneously act as a memorial site and in another sense as the possible resurrection of a lost identity. Speaking to Soudien, one can gage an incredible amount of dedication and sensitivity. The various levels of consideration not only include demographics, memorial sites, urban structure and other architectural elements, but also how this site, in the centre of Cape Town, can '(recreate) an environment in which civility is possible' (Soudien, 2006).

The Beneficiary Trust has planned for 2600 claimants and their families to eventually be accommodated in about 4000 homes. Yet there have been a plethora of obstacles that have disrupted the process. Soudien says that the 'Beneficiary Trust has to fight for funds from the state and is currently in this deadlock with the city' (2006). Yet Prosalendis feels that the slow process is due in part to the fact that the Beneficiary Trust 'refused money from many sources in order to do it their own way and I think they never acknowledged the role that others have to play' (2006). Despite an unresolved funding situation the Beneficiary Trust went ahead with development. At the time that I interviewed Soudien, which was the end of 2006, he described the situation as such:

The Beneficiary Trust has gone ahead and built those houses without formal approval, those plans haven't been passed. So none of those houses in a sense are legal and it puts us in this crazy situation where… District Six is almost operating as an independent state… We've gone ahead and the city has dragged its heels on us. Of course the city can't come and say that these are illegal and we have to tear them down… which they theoretically and legally have a right to… This community in a sense has to fight against the politics of local government and the politics of the state. Both of which have used District Six, like the old government did, like a football. This is why District Six is different to Marabastad, different to Kliptown. All of those… have been driven from the top. District Six is in the process of trying to establish itself on its own terms.

District Six establishing itself 'on its own terms' however is a problematic initiative. It would seem that District Six is re-establishing itself, independent from the state, on the Beneficiary Trust's terms. More recent developments have uncovered massive obstacles towards redevelopment. Countless ex-residents have been waiting for over a decade to be fairly compensated and many of them have died waiting. Many stakeholders feel they have been excluded from the process, as Prosalendis intimated, and the District Six Advocacy Committee, according to Ella Smook of the Cape Argus, has ostensibly questioned the legality of the Beneficiary Trust and launched an urgent application in the Land Claims Court to halt all development (2008).

And yet what gives the Beneficiary Trust agency is their well-established relationship with ex-residents, nurtured in and through the District Six Museum. Despite the museum's non-involvement in physically re-developing the District Six site, restitution could not be successfully implemented without with out their involvement – based on both their relationship with ex-residents as well as the notion that District Six, since it was bulldozed over twenty years ago, has both memorially and in a sense physically lived in the museum.

Conclusion

The District Six story is not merely situated in the past, but is more fluid and in a state of changeability due to the fact that the site is being redeveloped. The District Six Museum, in a remarkable fashion has created a space that not only collects and commemorates, but also protects, re-evaluates and houses a symbolic *idea* of District Six, with the ultimate vision of one day seeing it fully rebuilt. While redevelopment has been slow and stilted and the legitimacy of the District Six Beneficiary and Development Trust seriously questioned, this iconic site of forced removal has found a home within the walls of the museum. Whether District Six will ever be fully resurrected is difficult to predict. Its condition is much like how Kwame Anthony Appiah describes South African identity: 'a work in progress. Its meaning will repose in an archive that remains to be written'.

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The fluid of the ancestors: water and its significance as a medium of transformation

Introduction

The title of the exhibition and catalogue *Dungamanzi / Stirring Waters* took its name from the late nineteenth century XiTsonga-speaking diviner and healer, Dunga Manzi,[92] which, when translated, means Stirring Waters. Together with Nkomo We Lwandle (Cow of the Ocean) he is purported to have been the first to introduce a new form of ecstatic divination into the South African Lowveld, one that is believed to have originated in Zimbabwe (Hammond-Tooke 1989: 127). Both became famous as diviners and trained hundreds of (mainly) women and men resulting in the practice spreading widely across the eastern regions of South Africa.

Called *n'yanga* or *sangoma* in local terminology, it is no co-incidence that these diviners have names with powerful references to water. Research for this paper shows that water plays an important role during their period as novices and it is from under the water that they derive their powers. Concepts involving water permeate widely in traditional southern African thinking and culture, and are particularly significant during periods of liminality associated with birth, death and initiation. Investigation further shows that, in traditional thought, particular kinds of water are understood as a symbolic matrix synonymous with the realm of the spirits.

This paper explores this phenomenon and suggests a possible origin for these beliefs in San practices in southern Africa. It will show that, in important ways, San beliefs resonate with the spiritual cosmologies of later communities in the region and further afield.

Forms of divination

In the late nineteenth century a wave of Tsonga-speaking people migrated into the South African Lowveld from Mozambique (previously Portuguese East Africa). Up to this time the diviners in the area had largely been Northern Sotho men who, guided by their familial ancestors, diagnosed illness through the reading of divination dice. In contrast, sangomas from Mozambique introduced a cult of ecstatic possession involving control by alien spirits.[93] Cults of possession were already well established in southern Africa amongst the Nguni.[94] However, there was a significant difference. Nguni divination is through spirit mediumship, in which the diviner becomes a conduit for the collective body of their ancestors. In contrast, Tsonga possession sees alien spirits, or individualized ancestral spirits, take over the host's body. (Hammond-Tooke 1989: 27).

Alien spirits are troubled manifestations such as those of enemy warriors killed in battle by an ancestor of the diviner.[95] The spirit of the slain and the slayer are linked, and the deed must be 'paid' for. Seeking retribution, the wronged spirit returns to worry the descendent of the slayer. Notwithstanding differences, water retains a primary importance for diviners from all types of callings.

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[92] This is sometimes written 'Dunga Mazi' which, when translated in Zulu, means 'Stirring Blood'. However the name Dunga Mazi is XiTsonga, which varies from Zulu, and when translated in this language means Stirring Waters.
[93] It is thought to have originated in the Zimbabwe region.
[94] 'Nguni' includes Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi linguistic and cultural groups.
[95] A similar phenomenon exists in Shona culture where a spirit called Ngozi, the manifestation of a slave killed by their master, returns to worry the descendents of the master. (Personal communication, Raphael Chikukwa, August 2009)

A common experience

The first indication that someone has been chosen to become a diviner is the onset of illness.[96] A consultation with a practicing diviner will soon establish that the afflicted individual is being 'called' by ancestral or alien spirits. Once the cause of the problem is known the person will apprentice themselves to a qualified diviner for a two to three year period. This period and the process are referred to as *ukuthwasa*.[97] At some point during this process the trainee will be led to a body of water that they will enter. Some diviners describe actual immersion in water, while others dream of this experience. Descriptions may differ in details but they share significant features and the ordeal with water follows a general pattern.

The trainee will be led to the water by an animal associated with it such as a brown-fly or a leguaan.[98] The animal's behaviour, like the calling to become a diviner, will be relentless and it will not be dislodged in its task. At the waters edge the trainee disrobes, entering the water naked. Under the water they encounter phenomena and creatures including white clay, a grinding stone, medicines spread out on mats of reeds and a large snake. Sometimes a woman is also encountered. The trainee collects the clay, smears it on their body and takes the medicine that the snake guards. Once this is done he or she will emerge from the water, naked and white, and return to their homesteads or that of their instructors.

This sequence of events resonates with many such experiences as related by sangomas across southern Africa. Nzunzu, a powerful water serpent was purported to have trained Dunga Manzi and Nkomo We Lwandle. Captured and led under deep water they lived there for months breathing like fish. Their release was only accomplished by their relatives slaughtering a cow to Nzunzu. Once this was done they emerged from the water as powerful diviners with potent herbs to assist them in their healing (Sikhauli and Niehaus 2007: 171).

These events did not only occur in the distant past. Practicing sangoma Nkunzi Zandile Nkabinde, writes how, in the late twentieth century, the ancestors summonsed her through the manifestation of a snake that wrapped itself around her body urging her to 'answer the calling' (Nkabinde 2008: 51). As part of her training she describes the familiar process of being taken under the water:

> The most difficult stage of the initiation happens in water – a river or dam – in the darkest hour of the night (ibid 63).

At her first attempt she jumped out – too fearful to continue. On the second attempt she entered the water meeting the *inknyamba* (powerful one) who took her to the deepest part under the water where she retrieved her bag of divination bones. In a praise poem to her ancestor Nkunzi she writes *Abesekuba umkhulu Dungamazi* (Lo! There is now grandfather Dungamazi) (ibid 2) revealing that the first Tsonga diviner in the Lowveld Dungamazi (Dungamanzi), is one of her guiding ancestors.

However, bodies of water are much more than just places where the equipment of sangomas is retrieved. Anthropologist Manton Hirst, in his article 'A River of Metaphors: Interpreting the Xhosa Diviner's Myth", describes the experiences of the late N.S. Tyota (1925-95), a diviner who grew up in the Ciskei, a previous homeland within South Africa.[99] His account follows a similar pattern to those described above and Manton explores the symbolism inherent in the narrative. He explains that both the calling to become a diviner, and the act of being a diviner, is synonymous with being 'under the river'. But the metaphoric symbolism does not end here. The initiating diviner tutors the trainee in the seclusion of his *intondo* or medicine hut. However, this is no ordinary hut. The word *intondo* is related to the word *umtondo* meaning human phallus. The symbolic connections become evident. The ancestral shades, or spirits, are the ones involved with the diviner's calling to the river and the river is their water (semen), the fluid from which life emanates.

The experience of being in the hut (*intondo)* is synonymous with the dream experience of entering the river and the same items are found there – white clay[100], a grinding stone[101], medicines spread out on mats and the ancestral spirits. The 'river' is both a metaphor for a fully qualified diviner and the medicine hut in which the

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[96] Especially that which causes pain in the upper dorsal area and torso

[97] By heeding this call the ailments will be cured. Failure to do this could lead to further ailments, madness and possible death. The calling is not always well received as it causes significant disruptions in the individual's life.

[98] This is a Nile Monitor also known as an iguana.

[99] Now part of the Eastern Cape

[100] White is the colour that refers to the ancestral realm and clay would be a substance associated with that realm as it is of the earth.

[101] A grinding stone is used by traditional healers to process herbs and other substances used by them.

professional activities occur. (Hirst 1997: 233). But it is also the all-encompassing symbol of association for diviners who have been called by the ancestors.

The ancestral snake, fertility and life

The awesome snake with its manifestly phallic shape that is found 'under the river' represents the principal male ancestor that guards the grindstone, the medicines and the white clay. The forked stick used to churn medicines is reminiscent of the tongue of the ancestral snake. This ancestral snake is found only at the bottom of rivers or pools that are running and not stagnant. These are considered to be 'living water' - a substance that gives life. It comes as rain from the Supreme Being above, fertilizing the earth, as the semen of men fertilize the wombs of women. In his detailed study of Zulu thought patterns and symbolism, the Reverend Axel-Ivar Berglund, who has pursued anthropological and theological studies in KwaZulu-Natal for many years, recounts similar experiences as told to him by practicing diviners. He, however, reveals that in Zulu mythology, the snake under the river is not a shade (ancestral) snake, but a manifestation of the supreme god, the one associated with fertility.

It was explained that "The python is *inkosi yamadlozi* – the lord of the shades but not a shade – rather the lord of the sky but not himself – he sends his animal to earth" (Berglund 1976:142). This manifestation is closely connected to fertility and the snake of the water is described as putting spittle onto a woman, fertilizing her so that she is continuously giving birth to children whom she then suckles:

> The snake put spittle on the woman making her pregnant – this is a sign that life (*imphilo*) comes from the one above. But procreation is the work of the shades – they are the water of men, fertilizing women. The shades are in the water of men, causing conception. The spittle of the snake and the semen of men is the same thing (ibid 142).

The metaphor of living water as semen, or ancestral fluid, in Zulu thought systems is further revealed in the actions of a trainee diviner returning to the homestead for his or her coming-out ceremony. He or she appears at dawn, smeared with white clay and carrying an earthenware vessel filled with water that has been collected from a waterfall at night. This water is called *amalotha* (male fluid) and is the only liquid the trainee is allowed to drink while waiting for their tutor to arrive for the coming-out ceremony (ibid 163). As described above, living water is as the water of men that carry the shades that mold the child in the womb. A diviner carries and drinks this water because, in a similar way, they are also being molded by the shades.

Myths of origin

As can be seen from the examples above, the metaphoric connections of water to conception, fertility and birth is robust and are further supported by an understanding of southern African myths of origin. Diviners elucidate how the great one was in the pool because it is *uhlanga* 'the origin' – the place of the coming out of men. This myth of origin, shared by many, explains how reeds, seen as male, are the carriers of water (semen) that penetrated and fertilized the earth causing the conception of mankind. From this union the founding ancestor was born. In Venda belief the pool is also the womb and the center of creation. In it all animals and humans spewed forth from the python's mouth, thereby creating the first life.

In some traditional thought the symbolism of the pool of water is thus extended to include female fluid - likening it to the amniotic fluid surrounding a child in the womb. When trainee diviners emerge from the water with the potent medicines and divining equipment, they are naked and white, a colour not only associated with the ancestors, but also with newly born infants. Recently initiated diviners are considered to emerge like a newborn, with much to learn. But water is not just a medium from which to emerge 'newly born'. Trainee sangomas must first shed their old secular life. To enter the water of the ancestors is thus to 'die' so that they may be 'reborn'. This symbolic process is not only associated with sangomas but extends beyond into other aspects of traditional life.

From girl to woman

Immersion in water is also associated with wider notions of death and rebirth especially with reference to initiation, a period of transition and transformation through which young boys and girls shed their childhood to become adults. Anthropologist Jean-Marie Dederen's essay 'Toy or Treasure? Exploring N'wana, the Tsonga Doll' in the Dungamanzi catalogue, contains a story based on the Valenge tale of Nsatimuni,[102] a young girl who drops her doll into a pool of water, and her trials as she searches for it.

These small anthropomorphic forms are not mere playthings and are more correctly called 'child figures'. Common in the southern African region in the past, they were used by young girls and women to represent the wished for child, but also evoke the presence of an adult person in the clothing that it wears. It is still unclear what this adult apparel might signify but it may possibly indicate that the figure is an image of the girl as a married adult or of one her lineage ancestors.[103] These small forms bring together male and female elements in the phallic core and its more 'female' sheathing of cloth and beads that suggest the vagina. The child figure encapsulates the idea of conception where the male and female ancestral forces, as contained in the semen (water) of men and the blood of women, create a child. [104]

Early versions of child figures are frequently adorned with a mop-like hairstyle, called *umyeko* in Zulu, reminiscent of those that sangomas adopt. The spirits of the ancestors are understood to reside in such hair 'brooding' over their descendents, especially the creation of a child, much like a hen broods over her eggs. These child figures are thus potent symbols of conception and the union of the ancestral lineages of father and mother in the creation of new life.

Dederen shows how, for those who are prepared to look beyond the primary function of the narrative, which is the entertainment of children, a window into indigenous culture is offered "revealing a treasure of symbols and hidden meanings, references to sacred rituals, beliefs and cosmology" (Dederen 2007: 106). The story of Nsatimuni is rich in metaphor and proceeds as follows:

Nsatimuni, her friends and sisters, make dolls and show them to people in the village. Nsatimuni's doll is declared the most beautiful and she receives much praise and attention. The girls take their dolls to the river to be washed but, tired, Nsatimuni drops hers into the water and goes after it to retrieve it. Under the water she meets many strange creatures including an old woman who stands on her head. Nsatimuni undergoes a number of trials in this netherworld that test her moral character and ability to make appropriate decisions. She passes these successfully and begins the long walk home. During the night her doll turns into a real child and her mother and sisters receive her with joy. One of her sisters wants a child as well and, emulating Nsatimuni, drops her doll into the water and goes after it. However, she does not do so well on the tests and ends up being eaten by male rats.

Nsatimuni means 'what kind of woman is she' and the ordeal under the water parallel her tests and trials during the hardships of initiation. If she emerges from these having passed the tests, she is a young woman deemed to have exemplary morals. Her immersion in water signifies a moment when childhood ends and adulthood begins, marking her readiness for marriage and childbearing. The story thus depicts her 'death' as a child and her 'rebirth' as an adult. It becomes evident through this simple story that water is synonymous with the ancestral realm where moral standards are set and upheld. It punishes those who do not comply and rewards those that do.

Water is an important substance at the time of initiation - the moment in a young woman's life when she becomes physically able to have children. With physical maturity must come moral and emotional readiness for these new responsibilities ensuring that society continues to function in an orderly fashion, and it is the responsibility of the ancestral realm to see that this is maintained. Living waters mold her, and hold her just as the liquid of the ancestors shapes and supports the child in the womb. But it also tests the new initiate and Nsatimuni emerges from the womb of the ancestors successful and ready to be a wife and mother.

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[102] Originally recorded by anthropologist Dorothy Earthy
[103] However, not all the figures are female as some include small male genitals created from beads.
[104] It's often wooden core is also representative of male industry and it's cloth and bead sheath of female industry.

Rain and fertility

In its association with initiation, water is linked to concepts of fertility and Berglund has shown how rain is regarded as the fertilization of the earth by the sky. His sources reveal how:

> It is the water of the sky, which causes something to happen on the earth. Like no woman can bear a child without the assistance of a man, so the earth cannot produce food if the sky does not work with water on it (reference to sexual act) (Berglund 1989: 62).

As ancestral fluid there is a further, related quality and use of water. Zulu diviners may, when called to a homestead to rid it of evil, spit out water mixed with medicines. Water in this instance is a medium of purification and protection. As the carrier of life, water is seen to oppose and resist evil which is life destroying. Berglund pens:

> In its legal and moral sense, male emission is a resisting of evil. While witchcraft and sorcery strive for annihilation, the sexual act and the expected pregnancy, birth, growth of the child is an assertion of life. It is important to note that symbols of expulsion of anger, resistance to witchcraft (*ubuthakathi*) through medicines, purity, and fertility, have in common, the emission of fluid, the blowing out of pure and/or medicated water, vomiting, or emission of semen (Berglund 1976: 338)

Living water, male fluid, and spittle are classed together as life promoting and preserving, not only associated with each other but also frequently regarded as identical.

Images of water and water creatures in southern African art

Given its significance, the images of water and creatures associated with the water are frequent in the objects associated with diviners from the southern sub-continent. Male and female Tsonga diviners wear a *siyandhana* or textile in a dark colour that is wrapped around the waist like a skirt. These come in a variety of dark colours of black, green, blue or red and are beaded predominantly in white indicating a connection with the ancestral realm. Motifs associated with the upper and lower realms of Tsonga cosmology are frequent and include birds, stars, moons, fish and plants.[105] Fish and birds are linked to the spirit world in Tsonga belief systems with birds being the messengers to the spirits and underwater creatures often the instructors of diviners. Liminal creatures such as pythons and crocodiles that live both in water and on land are also considered to be messengers of the spirits.

A single sangoma may be guided by a number of different spirits, each of whom will demand that outfits and accoutrement particular to them should be made and worn on occasions when they are manifesting. The name of the spirit entity is frequently beaded onto these garments and the name of Dungamanzi continues to be seen today.

Carving too makes frequent reference to snakes and creatures of the water. Diviner's staffs are often adorned with images of snakes. Artist and some time spiritual leader, Jackson Hlungwani has created many sculptures of fish that have both Christian and Tsonga resonances. This synthesis – the way African beliefs are absorbed into, and converted for new Christian purposes (or vise versa), raises the question as to whether they had the same sources originally.

Tsonga and Shangaan beaded items of a more secular nature also manifest references to water and its creatures. *Minceka* worn by women are beaded onto black or deep indigo cloth likened to water or the sky. These garments are draped around a woman's body turning it into a cylinder somewhat like the phallic shape of the child figures. Beading motifs are extensive including birds, fish, stars and abstract forms. A snuffbox is sometimes attached to the *nceka* – snuff being a substance that is offered to the ancestors to draw them near. Mirrors are frequently attached to the cloth and, while they may be purely decorative,[106] they may also represent the shining surface of water beneath which the spirit realm exists. All these indicate that, while worn by ordinary women, these objects ensure that the ancestors are remembered and respected.

The symbolism of water, and the animals associated with it, proliferates in Venda thought and is seen in ritual objects associated with chiefs, healers and initiation. These are revealed in four archetypal entities that feature on the divination dice used by Venda healers, representing the young man and young woman, and the

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[105] See Nettleton 2007, pp 95-98.
[106] These may be connected to a style of textile decoration from the Bangladeshi region of India

old man and old woman. The former are decorated with the patterns associated with the python, and the latter with the patterns of the crocodile. The first stands fertility, but also healers and diviners, and the second for chiefly power. (Nettleton 1989:4). The python is a liminal being that moves between earth and water just as the diviner moves between the earthly realm and the spirit realm. In Venda thought there is also a mountain snake associated with rainmaking and fertility. Interestingly this snake has prominent vertebra on its neck, the place that the ancestral shades make themselves known through pain when calling a descendant.

Venda hemispherical ritual drums (*ngoma*) are carved in a round form like a pool and are decorated with patterns associated with the crocodile. These drums are used exclusively by chiefs or their ritual specialists during rainmaking ceremonies. Smaller version of the *ngoma* are used during women's initiation ceremonies in which the image of the snake of the water is mimicked by initiates as they perform the Domba dance – one behind the other they form the body of the snake moving sinuously in time to the drumming of the *ngoma*.

Commonalities in belief

This essay has, so far, looked at Bantu-speaking beliefs and ideas connected to water showing widespread ideas that are related, if not entirely analogous. However, when the scope of the study is extended in space and time, a most intriguing connection is found in that the cosmology of San hunter-gatherers also links the notion of water to the abode of the spirits and establishes an association with healing and rainmaking.

In the past, scholarship portrayed interactions between San and Bantu speakers as generally conflictual. However, current scholarship is exploring a more nuanced reading of the past, finding evidence that San co-habited, interacted and intermarried with farming and iron-working Bantu-speaking people (Schoeman 2006 and DNA research evidence at the origins Center at the University of the Witwatersrand). [107] The San, as the autochthonous inhabitants of the region, were understood as having special connections to the forces and powers of nature. Oral testimony from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveals that San served as rainmakers for Bantu-speaking farmers, especially in the Eastern Cape. Not only did they make rain, their skills as healers and shamans were also well established. While the methods and circumstances of San healing and rainmaking are somewhat distinct from those of Bantu-traditions, there are similarities that cannot be merely co-incidental.

San healing rituals

Scholars such as David Lewis-Williams have decoded the images of southern African rock art, suggesting a rich symbolic language associated with rain-making, shamans, trancing, healing rituals and their connection with pools and rivers. Rain, conceived as an animal, is described by the San in poetic terms. Power over rain was the prerogative of specialist shamans who had the ability to capture these 'rain beasts' believed to live in pools of water. Shamans could either enter the pool to capture it or lasso it when it emerging at night to graze. Once captured it would be led to the area of the country where rain was needed. Here it would be slaughtered, its milk and blood falling as rain.

Joseph Millard Orpen, a magistrate whose duties took him to the Drakensberg in the late nineteenth century, recorded information about rock art told to him by Qing, a San from the region. Explaining a rock painting from the Sehonghong rock shelter Qing referred to the rain-animal as a snake and the capture as happening under water. He described the scene as follows:

> That animal which the men are catching is a snake.
> They are holding out charms to it,
> And catching it on a long reim [thong]
> They are all under water,
> …
> /Kaggen gave us the song of this dance,
> And told us to dance it,
> And people would die from it,
> And he would give charms to raise them again

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[107] There is, for example, evidence of San ancestry in Nelson Mandela's DNA.

/Kaggen is the great god of the San and the verse describes events that are profoundly similar to those that Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu and Tsonga diviners experience where they 'die' on entering the water to obtain powerful tools for healing and are 'born again' when they emerge from it.

San shamans participate in a trance dance to activate supernatural potency. To do this they enter a state of altered consciousness so that they may visit the spirit realm through out-of-body travel. Here they acquire powers to heal both social and physical illnesses. The community dances, sings special songs and claps moving in a circle around the fire in order to engender the trance experience in shamans.

During this trancing the shaman experiences a range of sensations, one of which is the morphing of the body into an antelope form and the flow of blood from the nose. This is seen in rock paintings depicting shamans as therianthropes with antelope heads and hoofed feet and lines of nasal blood. To enter a state of trance is to 'die' an experience that is analogous with the dying Eland - wounded by a poisoned arrow. Not only is the shaman believed to die when entering the spirit realm, there is strong evidence that this is equated with being underwater.

The Linton panel, for example, shows a recumbent man with hoofs and red lines of nasal blood streaming down the face. A small rhebuck to the right also bleeds from the nose. In his right hand is a whisk, that ubiquitous marker of healers and leaders in Africa. From these visual cues we understand that the figure in the panel is a shaman in a trance.

The state of being underwater, while in this trance state, is clearly indicated by four fish touching the shaman's body and five eel or snake-like creatures. While not underwater in the real sense, a state of trance is analogous to the sensation of being under water. Shamans experience a feeling of weightlessness, hearing and visual distortion, difficulty breathing, tightness across the chest, and finally unconsciousness. Lewis-Williams writes that

> A shaman's journey to the spirit world thus came to be thought of as being partly underwater, a realm in which he or she encountered spirits of the dead and other supernatural beings and monsters (Lewis-Williams 2003: 38).

It is tempting to assume that early beliefs of healing and spirituality in southern Africa that feature water as the realm of the spirits underpin many later practices and beliefs in southern Africa. These do not only appear in the southern sub-continent but can be found to resonate with concepts and beliefs further north. The *gule wamkule,* or great dance of the Chewa of Malawi, enacts a masquerade that presents Njati, the rain bull. This animal must be captured in a pit and offered to God and the ancestors, as a sacrifice in order to prevent drought and famine. Interestingly these rites are also linked to female initiation. Thungu, the magical snake of God is also danced and its phallic form connected to fertility

While it is not in the scope of this paper to fully explore the elemental and spiritual significance of water throughout the world, symbolic resonances are found in many religions. The role of water in Christian baptisms is well-known. This ritual requires congregants to be sprinkled with water as an acceptance by the holy spirit or to be immersed in water as a death and burial of an old way of life and the subsequent emergence and 'resurrection' into a new life as a Christian. The Jewish religion require immersion in the *mikvah* as a process of ritual purification and, uncannily, some states of defilement require immersion in 'living water' as found in springs and wells. The water of the river Ganges is sacred for many Hindus who believe that its waters can cure illness and cleanse a person's soul of past sins.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the significance of water and its symbolism with reference to the *Dungamanzi / Stirring Waters* exhibition and related southern African traditional thought and practice. It has shown how water is the substance of the supreme god and the ancestors. As rain it falls fertilizing the earth, collecting in pools and running in rivers thus making life possible. This 'living water' is conceived as the 'fluid of the ancestors', and, as semen and amniotic fluid, it can be both male and female. As the manifestation of life, fertility and goodness, healing, purification and coolness it exists as the opposite of destruction, heat, anger, and witchcraft. Water functions as a significant symbol on multiple levels and the manifestation of its power is not only vital for healers and sangomas, but also for all living beings especially those going through life changing experiences of birth, initiation and at death. To be born is to emerge from it and to die is to be

submerged back into it. In traditional southern African thought and practice life-giving water is the substance of the spirit realm from whence all power comes.

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A speculation on representations of the (in)visible in contemporary South African art

Introduction

Everyday we look, we see, we glance, we gaze, generally assuming that these are natural processes in human behaviour. As a matter of fact, we hardly think about seeing at all; seeing is automatic, it is easy, and surely there is nothing about seeing that needs explaining. And even if seeing were interesting to some researchers, wouldn't they most likely be working within the field of science? What could art historians find useful about research into the physiological operation of the eyes?

My interest in vision was sparked by earlier research I undertook regarding the potential of visual culture studies as either an alternative or complementary field to the discipline of art history. Two notable theorists, Tom Mitchell and Nicholas Mirzoeff, base their argument for the need for a field of visual studies research on two assertions. On the one hand, they claim that vision is constructed in, and by, culture and should therefore be analysed in terms of its socio-cultural dimension. There is little doubt that this kind of research has gained impetus since the 1990s as researchers in a wide range of disciplines investigate images as representations of culture and power.

More fascinating than merely an analysis of the ideological operation of images in culture, however, is their contention that the biological functioning of the eye is plastic (that it is flexible, or malleable), and therefore, that vision is constantly changing. This would be to regard *how* we see as constructed, and not merely a given. Mitchell (2002:232) even suggests that what we need to be doing in our analyses of the visual is to "show seeing". What he means by "showing seeing" is that the process of seeing, which is generally taken for granted, should be defamiliarised; we need to "make seeing show itself, to put it on display" (Mitchell 2002:232). How can seeing - which is invisible - be made visible? How do we overcome this paradox? And why would we want to do this? It is precisely the invisible quality of the act of seeing – we can call this the 'enigma of vision' - that intrigues me. How can we see seeing and, more importantly, how do we understand vision? How does our understanding of vision contribute to how we understand our world and ourselves? Perhaps, what these questions ultimately provoke is an inquiry into the domain of vision that lies beyond (or perhaps, before) the cultural and historical dimension of representation.

The aims of this paper are twofold; firstly I explore the significance of sight in our experience and understanding of the world due to its continuing prominence in cultural practices. Secondly, I analyse Maurice Merleau-Ponty's plea for an ontology of sight that returns to the phenomenal, to lived experience. In order to clarify this philosophical stance, I draw on a recent installation piece produced by the South African artist, Berco Wilsenach, entitled *In die sterre geskryf II (Written in the stars II) (2009),* which I suggest offers an alternative understanding of how we see others and ourselves.[108]

Do you see what I mean?

Gene Youngblood (1970:46) argues that visual metaphors colour the Indo-European linguistic system and, "in most languages of most cultures throughout history, seeing has been equated with understanding." Consider phrases such as 'I see', 'I see what you mean', 'from my point of view' and 'this is my outlook on the matter'.[109] At the same time there is much evidence in widespread cultural and social practices (both western and non-western) of a suspicion of sight and a belief in the malevolent potential of the evil eye. This is suggested by familiar phrases such as 'keeping an eye out', 'I have my eye on you' or 'to cast a cold eye', for instance. Suspicion of the power of the visible is also evident in the "anti-ocular subcurrent of religious thought" (Jay 1993:13) which led to the iconclasm of eighth century Byzantium,[110] the iconophobia evident in Judaism's and Islam's suspicion of the threat of pagan idolatry as well as the Protestant reformation in the sixteenth century. Interestingly, in Christianity blindness is the punishment for transgression.[111]

Perhaps it is precisely because of its ambiguous symbolism that "sight has been raised to a dominant cultural position, as the mediator of psychological experience and the arbiter of understanding, objectivity and truth" as Maria Coleman (2007:6) suggests. This is confirmed by Martin Jay (1988:3) who contends that vision has been accorded the position of "the master sense of the modern era" thereby demonstrating the *ocularcentrism* of Western culture.[112]

The revered status given to the sense of sight in western societies is supported in no small measure by developments in modern technology which has enthusiastically set about expanding the possibilities of human vision and compensating for its imperfections. This is clearly evident in the invention of the microscope (1400s), the telescope (1608), the photograph (1840), cinematography (1895), the television (1940s), video (1950s) and the Internet (1980s) and various other tools of surveillance, which enhance our capacity to see. In medical science, in particular, the dramatic effects of visual probing are apparent. Visual prostheses such as spectacles and contact lenses compensate for our inadequate sight, while sonars and scans survey and explore every nook and cranny of our anatomies. Nicholas Mirzoeff (1999:7) describes the

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[108] The arguments posed here are primarily speculative and exploratory in nature as this paper is part of a far greater research project.
[109] See also Martin Jay's (1993) discussion of the prominence of linguistic metaphors associated with seeing in *Downcast eyes: the denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought.*
[110] The opposition to the religious use of images voiced particularly by Leo III led to the Iconoclastic Controversy (Caravaggio's *The conversion of St Paul,* 1601, shows a moment described in the new testament when,). in 726 and lasted for nearly a century. Images deemed to support idolatry were destroyed (Neobyzantine 2005).
[111] According to Acts 9:3-9, Saul of Tarsus, a Roman Jew who persecuted Christians, fell off his horse on the way to the city of Damascus. A bright light in the sky blinded him and a voice asked him why he persecuted Christians. The apostle, Ananias, healed Saul three days later after which he converted to Christianity and became the apostle Paul.
[112] The term *ocularcentrism* means that we rely on sight more than on any other sense organ in our experience of the world and that our everyday practices are mostly dominated by what we see (Jay 1993:3).

process whereby internal organs can be imaged as visual patterns, as evidence of the "diagnostic medical gaze" under whose power the body becomes the object of the probing scientific gaze. In order to expand objective understanding of its (invisible) workings, the body is made available for exploration and mapping. In contemplating the world, the subject is regarded as entirely outside and detached from what is seen, and therefore apparently able to rationally, logically and objectively inspect and observe it from an 'uncontaminated' viewpoint. What is not acknowledged in this system is the embodiment of the subject – the corporeality of the one who probes; the one who gazes.

The concept of exploring the world objectively through the sense of sight is based in the Enlightenment project that valorised the disembodied mind, set free from the limitations of the sensual body. According to this visual regime – called Cartesian perspectivalism - the observer is a rational, stable subject who is able to know the world – or, the object of his gaze. Regarded as the dominant, hegemonic visual model of the modern era, Cartesian perspectivalism combines, on the one hand, the "Renaissance notion of perspective in the visual arts", and on the other, "Cartesian ideas of subjective rationality in philosophy" (Jay 1988:4).

One leg of the Cartesian perspectival scopic regime rests on the Renaissance invention of linear perspective in art, which reflected the assumption that what was visible in the perceptual field was a homogenous, regularly ordered space, a rational visual order, awaiting duplication. In the model of linear perspective, the eye of the beholder is singular, it is motionless, and the beholder is detached from what he sees. It implies a distance between spectator and spectacle. The other leg of Cartesian perspectivalism rests on Rene Descartes' spectatorial epistemology which designates sight as an objective and mechanical process that, on the one hand, can be explained and rationalised through science, and on the other, can also render the visible world unambiguous. While Descartes (1644) was sure that he could not doubt the existence of his mind – "*cogito ergo sum*" ("I think therefore I am") - he did think that it was possible to doubt the existence of his body. Cartesian perspectivalism became the reigning model of modernity possibly because it best suited the empirical and scientific worldview of the time, based on the belief that vision is a one-way street and that objects are the passive recipients of our gaze. We can even postulate that the Western artistic tradition was for long periods based on a fascination with 'seeing' the world from a distance: from painting and drawing, to photography, cinema, television and now virtual reality. We want to control the world and see/know it more clearly.

Scientific inventions also aided explorers of the world during the great Age of Exploration from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The development of instruments for measuring distances accurately meant that the world could be mapped out and thereby accessed and controlled. Cartography is one way of visualising and supposedly objectively reflecting what the world looks like derived from a worldview based in an attitude of scientific disinterestedness. This mapping was of course not limited to the earth, but extended to the heavens too.[113] The invention of the telescope in 1608 revolutionised astronomy and aided in objectively mapping out the previously invisible universe.

What is written in the stars?

Mapping the invisible universe is a theme explored by, Berco Wilsenach, in a comprehensive venture entitled *Projek vir die Blinde Astronoom* (*Project for the Blind Astronomer*). *In die sterre geskryf II* (*Written in the stars II*) forms part of this larger project and was exhibited in March 2009 at the Pretoria Art Museum (Figure 1). The installation consists of a series of star maps etched into seven glass panels suspended on black metal frames.[114] On entering the darkened room of the exhibition space, the viewer is immediately struck by an intense green glow of light which illuminates what at first looks like hazy, floating, ephemeral images. Through closer engagement, each panel reveals a tangible decoding system, devised by Wilsenach, which makes star maps accessible to the blind (Unisa Online Intervention 2009).

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[113] Interestingly, the earliest known maps produced by humans are of the heavens and not of the earth, perhaps indicating a very early human fascination with what lies beyond normal vision, or at least, that vision is limited.

[114] The choice of seven panels is probably deliberate since its prominence in broad range of cultural practices is undeniable. For instance, there are seven days in a week; there are seven days in a lunar cycle and seven candles on a Jewish menorah, to name only a few examples.

Figure 1: Berco Wilsenach, *In die sterre geskryf.* 2009.
Installation. (Photographed by C Crafford).

Stars and star constellations are engraved as circles and ellipses on each panel thereby creating star maps for the blind. The symbols are explained in Braille in a legend at the bottom of each panel. Cartographically precise, the symbols serve to "explain the night sky to somebody who constantly lives in darkness" (Unisa Online Intervention 2009). A double irony looms over the reading of the works by the spectator. The blind astronomer does not have access to the visual component of the information while, at the same time, the sighted observer does not have access to the information required to unlock the meaning of the visual image, which is only provided in Braille. Ultimately, both audiences remain, both literally and figuratively, 'in the dark'.

It has been suggested that Wilsenach's work deals with the "inaccessibility of language [both the spoken word and the written Braille] as an effective medium of communication" (Absolutearts 2009). This implies that the artist positions himself in opposition to modernist (and structuralist) accounts of language as a structure that we inhabit and the notion that every sentence we speak or write consists of the 'already written' and the world as knowable through a rational order. But can we not also read this work as a critique of the ineffectiveness of vision only in engaging with the world?

In the late nineteenth century a suspicion of vision was already evident in philosophical writing and in the twentieth century an outright hostility towards the primacy of the visual was evident in the work produced by artists, philosophers, social theorists, psychoanalysts, cultural critics and poststructuralists.[115] Current visual discourses such as the society of the spectacle, the simulacrum, the reproduction of the image, the fetish, the gaze, the male gaze, the machine eye and envisioning the Other, amongst others, reflect this widespread "denigration" (Jay 1994) of vision.

But my focus here is on the way in which Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in particular, critiqued Cartesian perspectivalism. His importance in the philosophical history of vision is confirmed by Renée van de Vall (2005:38) who states that "not only did [Merleau-Ponty] contribute to the French philosophical critique that of … Cartesian perspectivalism, but he was also virtually the only one who tried consistently to develop an alternative theory of sight." In his posthumously published book, *The visible and the invisible* (1968) Merleau-Ponty's ideas regarding subjectivity, vision and embodiment can be described as "quintessentially anti-Cartesian" (Wylie 2007:148). While many of the critiques of vision I mentioned previously regard vision in negative terms, Merleau-Ponty offers suggestions for a different ontology of sight.

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF VISION

Merleau-Ponty's main criticism of the Enlightenment model of vision involves both the way in which it denies the "corporeal nature of human being, knowledge, experience and perception" (Wylie 2007:147) and the way in which it constructs an empty space between the subject and the object in the visual field. In fact, Merleau-Ponty (1968:133) does not recognise a space between the one and the other at all, but argues rather

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[115] See Martin Jay's (1994) comprehensive study of this hostility toward vision in *Downcast eyes: the denigration of vision in twentieth century French philosophy.*

that the observer (subject) is always part of the observed (object). While we generally consider detachment from the world as a good place from which to know the world (recall my earlier examples: 'from my perspective', 'I see what you mean and 'from my point or view'), Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of subjectivity from the viewpoint of phenomenology insists on the corporeal and engaged nature of human experience rather than the detached rationality of Cartesian philosophy. According to the former, the lived body is the place from which understanding stems. Thus, the observer is regarded as always both subject *and* object and when we look, as Wylie (2007:150 original emphasis) explains, "what is occurring is an "*enlacing together*" of body and world". Merleau-Ponty (1964:163) explains this as follows:

> Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of itself [which means] the world is made of the same stuff as the body."

This fundamentally alters the role between the perceiving subject and the perceived world, effectively overturning Cartesian accounts of subjectivity which presuppose that the seeing eye is disinterested and disembodied, and entirely outside the world it claims to know. But, if we understand vision as embodied then our gaze on the world is not from without, but from within. Merleau-Ponty (1968:133) illustrates the interlacing of subject and object in the example of one hand touching the other; the hand that touches is the subject and the hand being touched the object. But at the moment of touching, these roles become indistinguishable from one another or, more accurately, reversed. Merleau-Ponty (1968:133) terms this *reversibility*. Our bodies are simultaneously touching and touched, active and passive, observer and observed, subject and object. What is more, the visible is as much reversible as the tactile (Merleau-Ponty 1968:134). For am I not as much seen as I see?

This phenomenology of vision can be applied to Wilsenach's work, in that the sighted observer is actively involved in the meaning of the work. Ultimately, meaning occurs only at the site of the embodied subject, who is not 'disinterested', but fully (read bodily) present. This is because the audience both sees *and* touches the panels (Figure 2). In fact, the space between both the sighted and blind subject and the object (the glass panels) is broken down by the act of touching the glass panel. In this way, there is quite literally no distance between the observer and what is observed; seeing becomes touching. Furthermore, the viewer is not only 'in touch' with what he/she is viewing, but, because the glass panels are transparent, the sighted observer is also continuously aware of being observed by the audience in the room – in other words, we are constantly aware of our own being seen. And, if we are to view Merleau-Ponty's (1968:133) concept of reversibility as 'vision that touches', the transparency of the panels allows each viewer to see – and touch - every other viewer in the room. In this way, Wilsenach's work can surely then be read as a critique of Cartesian perspectivalism.

What can be said of the blind aspect of Wilsenach's work? Is it feasible to suggest that the blind astronomer Wilsenach refers to is in fact the sighted viewer who is always blind? If so, we could explore what the sighted observer cannot see. In his book, *The object stares back: on the nature of seeing,* James Elkins (1996:205) argues that blindness – which he describes as the "failure of vision" - is "intimately connected to seeing itself" and that "blindness happens alongside vision." What does he mean by this? A blind spot exists in ordinary vision in both eyes, but they normally compensate for each other. The blind spot is pure absence of vision; it is therefore an invisible absence for we don't see it as a visible absence (a darkness) or a constructed absence (a hole that is covered). It is an absence whose invisibility is itself invisible (Elkins 1996:205). In other words, it involves the belief that we see when actually we do not see. And this I think is precisely what Wilsenach is getting at in *In die sterre geskryf II (Written in the stars II)*. The work effectively exposes the gazing subject, not as the detached epistemological authority constructed in the Cartesian conception of vision, but rather, as fully immersed in the world. In this way, Wilsenach suggests an ontology of vision as connection between the seer and the seen and the space between them as 'full' rather than empty.[116]

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[116] In her article, *The look of love,* Kelly Oliver (2001:57) explores a conception of vision as connection by expanding on Irigary's suggestions about the role of light, air and touch in vision. Oliver (2001:76) argues that in such a conception of vision "notions of recognition and subjectivity are transformed" from the illusion that the subject is alienated from hostile world that he seeks to dominate and control.

Figure 2: Berco Wilsenach, *In die sterre geskryf.* 2009.
Installation with glass panels (Photographed by C Crafford).

I want to suggest that due to advances in the possibilities of their media, contemporary artists are now in a position to explore different possible notions of vision and to continually remind us that we are embodied beings whose vision is not static or monocular, but affected by our corporeality. And, since our bodies are ultimately continuously reproducing themselves, vision is also not static, and my vision is different to yours. New media (such as digital works and installation work) seems to be a convenient platform from which to do this. A new understanding of vision (as interlaced with the world) may be particularly urgent at a time when an anti-body theme recurs through much recent literary and film discourse where we are told that robots, virtual reality and cyberspace are the antidote to the 'messy' physicality of our bodies.

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Diaspora, domicile and debate: an artistic and cultural search for a Malawi identity

This paper traces the representations and contestations of colonial (Nyasaland) and postcolonial (Malawian) identities through artistic and cultural discourses. The relevant identities were produced in several phases: first, the pre-existing pre-colonial dynamics; second by the colonising process that produced a significant economic migrant population; third, by the political fallout from the Cabinet Crisis of 1964, producing marginalised exiled dissidents by Dr Banda as he perfected his one party state; and last, the post 1994 economic movements that were produced by globalisation and the freedom of movement facilitated by a multiparty dispensation. This paper will argue that a significant section of domiciled elite, as opposed to rural, Malawians, consider that 'Malawians' are only those domiciled in Malawi. Most Diaspora Malawians, however, consider themselves Malawian but may face marginalisation through distance, denial of 'home' political and cultural rights and the questioning of their Malawian identity. This denial of rights began under the dictatorship of Dr Banda as a way of excluding troublesome political elements. Politically active exiled Malawians returning home were promptly detained or jailed. This pattern of marginalising Diaspora Malawians has persisted despite the 'unity of purpose' between domiciled opposition and Diasporian elements between 1991 and 1994 which removed Dr Banda. Political, poetic, linguistic, musical, artistic and other cultural discourses are used to perpetuate the marginalisation. Interestingly, while two of the postcolonial rulers have been former long-term exiles, both recruited cultural discourses to marginalise external opponents. Paradoxically, the same discourses were, and are, are used to accord 'Malawian-ness' to any members of the Diaspora who distinguish themselves in the arts, business, sport or other activities abroad. The most significant relationship between home domiciled Malawians and those in the Diaspora

remains economic and intellectual. Malawians in the Diaspora remit significant amounts of significant financial and intellectual resources 'home' but those domiciled in Malawi control all access to citizenship rights.

Introduction

If a nation or state defines the relationship between people, a constituted authority and a geographical entity, then, the multi-ethnicities aside, there is little difference between pre-colonial tribal/ethnic entities and post-colonial nation-states. Both are about geographical belonging, identity and security, in all senses. During colonialism Nyasa (Malawians) were also subjects of the imperial protecting power, Britain. In this construct they acquired subject status of the empire and provided the labour without acquiring the rights to live in the metropole. Their ability to live in any African part of the empire was guaranteed, as long as they did not cause problems.[117] The relationship between citizen and nation here extended fully to the geographical but only partly to the economic and political rights and advantages; even cultural rights were sometimes constrained.

Defining citizenship is difficult and problematic in the African context, given the colonial, postcolonial and global contestations that it involves. At a concrete and simplistic level, Marshall's definition is still valid:

> Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community.[118]

Then again, there are geographical, historical, political, cultural and sometimes religious or other factors to be taken into consideration in this definition. In examining three possible models of citizenship, the nationalistic, the human rights and the Marshallian applicable to the American and European contexts, Schuck came to the following conclusion

> For the nationalistic model, the question is about its continuing relevance in a rapidly globalizing world. For the human rights model, the question is whether it contains any real limits, internal to itself, on the obligations that it would impose on states in their dealings with people who are often (not always) perfect strangers in all but a universalistic, humanistic sense. The question for the Marshallian model is why it has gained much less public support in the United States than in most of the European states.

> The conclusion briefly speculates about the future of the Marshallian model in both the U.S. and Europe. It predicts that a distinctively liberal, individualistic, privatistic form of nationalist citizenship will continue to flourish, one that will bewilder Europeans even as they edge their way inexorably toward their own more communitarian version of it.[119]

As with some legal concepts, Western concepts of citizenship have been adopted by post-colonial African nation-states. Malawi has been no exception.

Idowu William, in his exploration of postmodernism and citizenship in Africa revisited Peter Ekeh's work:

> Ekeh noted three 'contradictory notions of citizenship, in terms of rights and duties… in Nigeria:

> Identification of citizenship with rights, and not with duties;

> Dissociation of rights and duties in the conception of citizenship;

> The development of two publics, in respect of the conception of citizenship, in political life: an amoral civic public from which rights are expected, duties are not owed; a moral primordial public defined in terms of one's ethnic group, to which one's duties are paid, but we never expect any right.[120]

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[117] One could be deported from Malawi to their 'indigenous' Zambia or Zimbabwe and vice versa if considered to be causing political trouble in their acquired place of domicile.

[118] Marshall T H 1963 *class, citizenship and social development* Westport: greenwood press, page 87

[119] Schuck, 2009 'Three models of citizenship' Yale Law School Public Law Working Paper No 168, June 5 2009 accessed 18/6/09 at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1267356

[120] William, Idowu. 2005. 'Postmodernism, citizenship and the African predicament: a critical reflection. *Journal of Humanities (Zomba)* 19, pages 1 -18. See Eke, P 1978. ' colonialism and the development of Citizenship in africa: A study in ideologies of legitimation. In O. Otite (ed) *Themes in African Social and Political Thought.* Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers; and Ekeh, Peter,

One can easily argue that Ekeh's work, undoubtedly informed by the postcolonial fragmentation of Nigeria and his observations of the rest of Africa, is realistic in its recruiting ethnicity as a factor in citizenship.[121] In the Malawi context I have earlier adopted Ekeh's concept to illustrate the relationship between the elite and the *anthu wamba* (peasants), noting that the elite have the ability to access both the rural/peasant and globalised/urban spaces politically, economically and socially. The *anthu wamba* being mostly limited to the rural spaces.[122] This present work is not about the denial of full citizenship rights and expectations to the *anthu wamba*, a different subject in itself, but the dynamic between those elite living in Malawi and those living outside it. The term elite is used here deliberately; it is mostly those in the elite class that have access to channels of protest or representation.

In 1990, Turner observed

> The problem of citizenship has re-emerged as an issue which is central, not only to practical political questions concerning access to health-care systems, education institutions and the welfare state, but also to traditional theoretical debates in sociology over the conditions of social integration and social solidarity. Citizenship as an institution is thus constitutive of the societal community.[123]

This idea of a 'societal community' in the electronic age is relevant to the present argument; geographical location becomes less definitive of one's chosen community. The unequal, in economic terms, relationship between urban elite Malawians and their rural brothers and sisters is reflected in the unequal, in terms of political citizenship rights, between those Malawians living in the Diaspora and those domiciled in Malawi. This relationship between Diaspora Malawians and those at home has shown an interesting and complex dynamic over the years. It is argued here that, while current Malawian identities were and are crafted by various colonising and postcolonial forces, they are mostly sustained by political, emotional, intellectual and economic considerations. These identities are therefore crucial when we come to consider 'political rights, duties and entitlements.'

Since 1964, when Nyasaland became Malawi, for a significant section of the media, 'Malawians' are those who live in Malawi. Those of Malawian origin who live outside Malawi, the *machona* (exiles) were expected to, without definition or elaboration, 'decide whether they were Malawian or had become something else'. This pattern of perceptions has largely persisted despite the significant degree of dependence that Malawi, as a nation, has on financial aid from donors, as well as – at a family level – on remittances from their relations abroad. Despite this, during, and after, Dr Banda's time political, poetic, linguistic, economic and other cultural discourses have been used to marginalise Diaspora based Malawians. Interestingly, the same discourses were, and are, used to try to convince these Diaspora Malawians to invest in Malawi. It is also noted that two of the three postcolonial presidents have been former long-term *machona* (exiles).

This paper touches upon issues of personal and group identity, nationality and citizenship as it attempts to trace the representations of pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial Malawian identities through artistic and cultural discourses. Malawi is still largely an oral culture and oral discourses, as previously argued, are important in politics and economics.[124] These therefore feature to a significant degree in this paper. Malawi's rich tradition of orature is also part and parcel of Malawi's artistic heritage. Malawi orature includes poems (*ndakatulo*), riddles (*mikuluwiko*), folk tales (*nthano*) and proverbs (*miyambi*). [125] These popular and traditional art forms are inherently integrated with music and visual performance. Schoffeleers and Roscoe (1985: 11) argued that

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1975, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17, 1, p.91 - 112

[121] Ekeh, P. P., 1974, 'Citizenship and Political Conflict: A Sociological Interpretation of the Nigerian Crisis' in J. Okpaku ed. *Nigeria, Dilemma of Nationhood: An African Analysis of the Biafran crisis,* Okpaku Comunications

[122] Lwanda, J. 2006.'Kwacha: the violence of money in Malawi's politics', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 3, September 2006

[123] Turner, B S 'Outline of a Theory of Citizenship' *Sociology*, May 1990; 24: 189 – 217, page 1

[124] See Lwanda, J. 2003. The [in]visibility of HIV/AIDS in the Malawi public sphere, *African Journal of AIDS Research 2003, 2(2): 113–126* and Lwanda, J. 'Poets, culture and orature: A reappraisal of the Malawi political public sphere', 1953-2006 *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Volume 26, Issue 1 January 2008 , pages 71 – 101.

[125] Cf. Schoffeleers, J. M. and Roscoe, A. A.1985: *Land of fire: oral literature from Malawi. Blanytre: Popular* Publications; Mvula, Timpunza. E. S. 1987: Women's oral poetry as a social strategy in Malawi. PhD Thesis. Indiana University; Chakanza, J.C. 2000: *Wisdom of the people: 2000 Chinyanja proverbs.* Blantyre: Kachere/CLAIM and Chimombo, S. 1988. *Malawian Oral Literature.* Zomba: Centre for Social research.

> … despite the parvenu arrogance of the printed word […] and scholars who should know better, [this oral literature], in its bone and tissue, is as much literature as any written work.

And while pointing out the often contradictory and ambiguous nature of oral literature, they claim [orature]

> If however one had to suggest what, fundamentally, was the single basic rationale behind them – behind the plots and metaphor, the imagery and song, the personification and jesting, the warnings and strictures – one would probably have to say the survival of the group, survival of course in its fullest sense,...[126]

This concept of 'survival in its fullest sense' – and for a 'group' is a constant in the debates about citizenship and identity in Malawi. Critical to this paper is a definition of what is culturally Malawian. In this regard, the definition adopted by Malawi Vision 2020 would be appropriate:

> the essence of a given people's way of life, as represented by their multi-faceted creations, accomplishments, and aspirations… ideas, food, dance, dress, language, institutions, beliefs, and other habits learned by people through the learning process. It also includes the material objects that people have created and continue to create from the local environment, and techniques for creating them... The Malawian culture is …multi-ethnic.[127]

While it is accepted that Malawian culture is multi-ethnic, it should also be noted that powerbrokers often use culture as a tool. If therefore, we accept Mazrui vision of culture as something that 'provides lenses for perception and cognition, motives for human behaviour, criteria of evaluation, a basis for an identity, a mode of communication, a basis for stratification and the system of production and consumption', then our discussions of political rights being marginalised via culture become relevant.[128]

Concept of Malawian identity and citizenship over the years

Precolonial

As far as can be ascertained under the *Maravi* kingdom the owner of the land, *mwinimudzi,* was, in conjunction with his advisers, the ultimate arbiter of citizenship. He owned the land the subjects or citizens and subsidiary chiefs were subject to him. Those who transgressed were banished from the land. There were other factors that affected citizenship such as marriage, war and conquest.[129] Within the *Maravi* empire there were subdivisions of identity such as *aPhiri* (*akamtunda*) denoting those who lived on highland pastoral plains and *aNyanja* denoting those who lived on the lowlands around the lakes. These descriptors tended to define locale of domicile as well as economic activity. Linguistic evidence gives us a glimpse of the concepts of pre-colonial Malawian belonging-ness'. The words from the era, *mwinimudzi* (owner of the land)*, wakunja* (foreigner)*, mlendo* (visitor) *wobwera* (incomer), *kazembe* (messenger, diplomat) signify a degree of identities based on locale, political power or other factors. For example, where marriage is concerned, terms like *mkamwini* and *mtengwa* (as in *lobola*) are found. The presence of *kazembe* indicates political and diplomatic intercourse with 'other' entities. The rights, freedoms and expectations of people living under *mwinimudzi* were therefore, to an extent, defined by these and other descriptors.

Van Breugel argues, after Schoffeleers, that the *Nyau* culture was an essential part of early (before 1400) Chewa culture and played a part in resisting excessive aPhiri led political centralisation of the Chewa nation.[130] Later the same *Nyau*, 'as the heart of Chewa identity' was to become part of the Chewa resistance to colonial power. Ironically, in the postcolony, Chewa was to become one of the tools used by Dr Banda in establishing his hegemony.

In the pre-colonial era those who fell out with the king were excluded and had to leave the protection of the territory.

[126] ibid: 11.
[127] Ng'ombe, H. and Mawaya, A. 1997. *Malawi Vision 2020 Document,* Section five.
[128] Mazrui, A. 1990: *Cultural Forces in World Politics*. Oxford: James Currey, pages 7 – 8)
[129] See, for example Pachai, B. (Ed) 1972. *The early history of Malawi*. London: Longman and Phiri DD. 2004. *History of Malawi: from earliest times to the year 1915*. Blantyre: CLAIM
[130] Breugel, van, J. 2001: *Chewa Traditional Religion*. Blantyre: Kachere/CLAIM, page135. See also Linden, I. and Linden, J. 1974: *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa resistance in Nyasaland 1889 -1939*. London: Richard and Clay.

After the collapse of the Maravi empire the people living in this area divided into smaller ethnic groupings, placing the area at significantly greater disadvantage with Arab slave traders. Towards the end of this phase more powerful ethnic groups, like the Yao and Ngoni invaded the area creating newer, power defined, identities by conquest, compromise or co-existence occasioned by economic, social, cultural, and other factors. The divisive forces were also accentuated by the Arab slave trade, a trade that involved chiefs and others selling people into slavery, a condition that completely obliterated any citizenship or human rights the victims had.

Colonial

The onset of colonialism reified borders and sometimes placed artificial boundaries between the same family, separating homogeneous ethnic groups. Malawi boundaries were the result of a compromise between forces, like chiefs, begging for the people living in the area to be protected from Portuguese and Cecil Rhodes imperial designs and British reluctance to take on a piece of land with no apparent economic benefits. The shape of Nyasaland speaks for itself: a small, agricultural, migrant labour reservoir with a convoluted tortured border. But this small Nyasaland protectorate was attractive to migrants, like the Lomwe, who were fleeing from a more brutal Portuguese administration in Portuguese East Africa and looking for employment on colonial estates.

In the early colony, colonial divide and rule tactics played upon existing indigenous ethnic cleavages accentuating ethnic differences within a small territory.[131] However, a number of factors in this period began to help forge a Nyasa identity. The first of these was the migration of men to work on the mines and farms in Rhodesia and South Africa. (cf. Migration through TEBA).[132] There were a few pioneers of travel. For example, we are told that the first 'politically minded [Nyasaland] African', Gordon Mathaka, returned to Malawi from South Africa in 1896 ; exposure to SA having made him aware of need to assert his rights and identity as a citizen with expectations. A number of other Malawians, like Clements Kadalie, Hastings Banda and Daniel Malekebu, managed to obtain education and achieved prominent positions of influence abroad. Kadalie was the founder and leader of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa; Daniel Malekebu worked in Liberia before returning to Nyasaland to lead Chilembwe's Industrial Provident Mission in 1925; and Dr Banda, a medical practitioner in Britain during the Second World War was an activist for Malawian rights in London.

As more men were recruited, in their thousands, the shared hard travel, hard working and living conditions and language problems in their new environment created a bond among these Nyasaland migrant workers.[133]

The second factor that facilitated the creation of a Malawi identity was the extensive involvement of Malawi soldiers in the First and Second World Wars.[134] Again, travel was an important factor, with distance producing a bond between the Nyasa of various ethnic origins. As Shepperson observes:

> *Paulendo…* begins a well-known Nyasaland soldiers' song which was sung by thousands of *asilikali* far from home during 1939-45 War. I sometimes think that the whole history of Nyasaland is one of great *ulendo*.

> Not only did thousands of Nyasa give their lives as *asilikali* and *tenga*-tenga in the 1914-18 War and many more in the 1939-45 War, but they had served with British forces in East, West, and Central Africa and Mauritius *before the First World War broke out.* [135]

The Chilembwe Rising, itself provoked by the War as well as colonialism, was another factor in the growth of a Nyasa identity.[136] One of the fallouts from the Chilembwe Rising was the realisation that Africans had a

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[131] See for example, L. Vail (ed), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* London, James Currey, 1989.

[132] TEBA = The Employment Bureau of Africa, an organisation that recruited men to work on the South African farms and mines. For an overview of the growth of Nyasa identity from a political point of view, see Ross, AC. 2009. *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, Zomba: Kachere, pages 22 – 41.

[133] Ross, AC. 2009. *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, Zomba: Kachere

[134] See Shepperson, G. and Price, T. 1958: *Independent African.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press and Page, M. Stapleton, T. 2003. 'The composition of the Rhodesia Native Regiment during the first World war: a look at the evidence', *History in Africa 30,* 283 – 295, page 283, suggests that 1000 of the Rhodesian 'native' soldiers were in fact Nyasa. Nyasaland took on a disproportionate burden of the First World War because it shared a border with the then German East Africa (Tanganyika).

[135] Shepperson, G. 1962 'The fascination of Malawi 's history' *Malawi News,* January 25th 1962.

[136] Cf Page, M. 2000. *The Chiwaya War: Malawians and the First World War.* Boulder: Westview Press.

choice between being providers of estate labour or masters of their own destiny.[137] Thus distance from the Nyasaland/Malawi territory seems to have been an early definer of Malawian-ness as those from the Nyasaland territory found themselves labelled 'maNyasa' (those from Nyasaland). And the Nyasa had to travel. The reason, as Ndiche Mwalale later put it was simple

> *KuNyasalande Azungu achuluiche,* (So many Europeans in Malawi now)
> *nambo mbiya kwangali.*(but there is no money)
> *Wandu agamba kwenda!* (People still migrate [to the mines]).[138]

The dynamic between the incomers and host indigenous workers seems to have been as crucial; all those from Nyasaland were perceived as Nyasa, despite the language they actually spoke or the tribe they felt themselves to be. This may have had something to do with the 'Bantu' similarity of most Malawi languages, as well as their documents, work ethic and attitude to authority. Further, most *Manyasa*, worked and lived as temporary workers remitting money to their families. Contact with home was via visits, letters or other workers returning home. Those Nyasa who decided to remain Nyasaland citizens contributed to the popularity of the female dances *Chimtali* and *Chiwoda*. There is an interesting contrast in the way that the matrilineal Chewa women dealt with loneliness musically. While the Chewa women lamented in *Chimtali* dance, patrilineal Tonga and Nyanja women reacted differently. According to DD Phiri, *Chiwoda* arose during the inter-war years when migrant labourers used to 'order' (*kuoda*) brides by mail.[139] Aspiring brides smartened themselves debutante-style and danced the '*Chiwoda'* prettily and seductively, the better to catch the 'bride scouts' eye! Once they had obtained a bride Tonga Nyasa working in South Africa were thus motivated to return home. In contrast *Chimtali* songs tended to mourn the missing of loved ones who were working in the mines of South Africa or Rhodesia. One *Chimtali* songs, *Kunthandizi*, (migrant labour) mourned the absence of such a dear one

> *Kunthandizi kulibe chisoni x2* (The migrant labour bureau has no pity)
> *Kwantengela amuna wanga* (it has taken my husband away)
> *Nanga ine nditani ine* (what will I do)
> *Ndadandaula usiku tulo tasowa* (I lie awake all night).[140]

In both cases while the loved one was away reinforcing the creation of a Nyasa identity, his female partner was expecting to get married to him upon his return (in the patrilineal Tonga area) and missing him and defining him as someone likely to return (in the matrilineal Chewa).[141] The difference between the Tonga and Chewa attitudes may be due to the fact that the Tonga were one of the earliest ethnic groups to receive education and to travel, as individuals, in and out of Malawi.

But some Nyasa, like the Irish or Scots, settled in the countries where they had gone to work: Zambia, Congo, South Africa, East Africa and, particularly, Zimbabwe. Those Nyasa who chose to become citizens of these countries after 1958 (the end of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland) later became a complicating factor in discussions of Nyasa/Malawi identity.[142] Some of these settlers were/are sensitive to such discussions given the periodic outbursts of postcolonial national identity crises. Identifiable Nyasa were often termed *mabwidi* in Zimbabwe and *makwerekwere* and other terms in South Africa, all rather derogatory terms. Thus, Malawi authorities have, for solid economic reasons, always been sensitive to possibilities of large scale repatriations of people back to Malawi.[143]

The settled migrants to these previously economically important countries as far as Malawi is concerned would thus face a double marginalisation: they became *machona* and *akunja* in Malawi while facing the marginalisation of their host countries. And yet there is the paradox that wherever Malawians have settled,

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[137] See Mwase, G. S.1975. *Strike a blow and die: a narrative of race relations in colonial Africa* London: Heinemann; Shepperson, G. and Price, T. 1958: *Independent African.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ; and Phiri, D. D.(with Shepperson, G and Stuart-Mogg, D) 1999. Blantyre: Central Africana

[138] Ndiche Mwalale c1950 *KuNyasalande* MBC Recording in my archives.

[139] (DD Phiri, 2004: 60).

[140] ILAM, 1958 *Sounds of Africa,* TR92

[141] Chewa society is moving from matrilineal to a mixed matrilineal/patrilineal culture.

[142] A number of prominent Zimbabweans for example have Nyasa origin. See controversies about Kaunda's and Chiluba's citizenship.

[143] See the recent pogroms against Malawians reported by the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 'South Africa: Xenophobic attacks spreading', 23 May 2008, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4843fff50.html [accessed 6 September 2009]; see also Andersson, J. A. 'Informal moves, informal markets: International migrants and traders from Mzimba District, Malawi. *African Affairs,* 105, 420, pages 375 – 398.

be it Zimbabwe, South Africa or Namibia, despite these occasional sensitivities to the political ramifications, Malawians have established patterns of hanging on to the cultural expression of their indigenous homeland via dances like *nyau, beni, Mganda.*[144]

In their reaction to, and experience of, war the Nyasa, like the East Africans created syncretic dances that mimic, critique and celebrate survival of, and Africanize these war experiences; *mganda* and *beni* being the best examples. The Tonga *Mganda* song

> *Tikupangana mchakachiya 1891* (We made a pact in 1891)
> *Asani mwasambira* (That once you were educated)
> *mkajiusanga mwija* (You would rule yourselves).[145]

asserted the national identity of the Nyasa as having negotiated a pact with the British.[146]

Mganda is a highly visual choreographed dance in which the men wear smart 'starch white' uniforms. The choreography evokes part of the origins of the dances in military marches marrying indigenous culture. In the Kings African Rifles a crucial ingredient was marching and drilling. Music was used to a great extent in these activities. Music also softened the pain of war and was also a large part of the bonding process among soldiers recruited from various ethnic groups. Above all, music, due to the characteristics of its original localities and languages, was something that identified the Nyasa as distinct from say the East African soldiers.

> *Lembani kalata!* (Please write a letter)
> *Lembani kalata!*
> *Kumudziko! Kumudziko!* (Back home! Back home!)
> *Kumudziko Kwabwino kodi?* (Is everything at home ok?)[147]

After the gruelling experiences of war, with the high casualty rates suffered by Malawi soldiers and the hard conditions, the returning *Nyasa* had forged a cohesive identity out of that communal suffering.[148] Demobbed soldiers returned with greater expectations and a self assurance of having been part of a victorious army fighting for 'freedom'. But some soon had to travel again, to the mines. In a *beni* dance 'migrant workers and their relatives' acknowledge this:

> *Ku Chileka, chichi mwachiweni eeh?* (At Chileka Airport, what did you see?) x2
> *Najiweni ndege jakwenda mwiunde eeh?* (I saw a plane that flies high in the clouds) [149]

Music from the post war period shows the awareness of the Nyasa identity. In *Chitukutuku*, Wilson Makawa talks about being left alone in a foreign country, an assertion of his Nyasa identity.

> *Jamani chitukutuku ngani chilemwa* (Friends, this creature did no wrong)
> *Pakulilapo chikuti kuku nsigele jika* (It cries hey I am left alone)
> *Nsigele jikape, chilambo cha syene* (I am left all alone in other people's land)
> *wachiYao wane pangali* (None of my fellow Yao people are here).[150]

At the same time, Thailo and Kapiye sang about travelling to Rhodesia to work.[151] But they were singing about a temporary 'inconvenience' rather than permanent migration. While they were undoubtedly proud of the fact that they were heading for the bright lights of Rhodesia (*ulendo waku Rhodesia)*, they made it clear that they are leaving their land and family behind *temporariy*. The very visual guitar and banjos duos, full of bombast, were a crucial part of the nationalist identity formation among the Nyasa in the 1950s and 1960s especially in the rural areas.

Significantly, this migrant work, temporary or otherwise, brought changes in morality as the cash economy and all its exigencies began to impact on communal rural culture in terms of economics, gender imbalance,

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[144] Cf. Daimon, Anusa 2007 'Migrant Chewa Identities and their Construction through *Gule Wamkulu/Nyau* Dances in Zimbabwe', Paper presented at the "*Society, State & Identity in African History*" 4th Congress of the Association of African Historians, Addis Ababa, 22nd-24th May 2007. Accessed 1/7/09 at http://ir.uz.ac.zw:8080/dspace/bitstream/uzlib/555/1/Daimon_migrant_chewa_identies.pdf

[145] Tonga nationalist song quoted by Chirwa, W. J. 2001: Dancing towards dictatorship: political songs and popular culture in Malawi. *Nordic Journal of African Studies,* 10, 1: 1 –27, page 5.

[146] In reality, Nyasaland came about as the result of a number of 'pacts and pacifications.'

[147] Kings African Rifles marching song as transmitted to the 1960s school marching bands.

[148] See Page, M. 2000. *The Chiwaya War:Malawians and the First World War.* Boulder: Westview Press.

[149] Mangoche *beni* song.

[150] The Yao were one of the ethnic groups that joined the army in large numbers and sent significant numbers to the mines.

[151] Thailo and Kapiye '*Ulendo waku Rhodesia'* On the CD *Banjoes and Guitars* Glasgow: Pamtondo

single-headed families with absent fathers and so on. In schools, for example, one of the popular traditional-derived dramas were from the folk-tale Sikusinja *ndi* Genembe (Sikusinja and Gwenembe) in which greed causes one lazy and profligate brother to kill the hardworking one for his money as they return from the mines. This metaphorical fight for foreign-derived resources is ever-present in a small overcrowded country with limited resources.

During the nationalist struggle, between 1945 and 1958, the concept of *atsamunda* (colonial settlers) and considerations of *mchona* (one who has lived in exile for a long period) did apply. Even Dr Banda was considered a *mchona* when he came back to Nyasaland. But soon, within six months, Banda had, in Thailo and Kapiye's eyes, transited from being a *mchona* to become the owner of the land (*mwinimudzi*):

> *Dziko lino ndilathu, ife Afirika* (This land is ours, us Africans)
> *Chitaganya chinkafuna kulowa m'dziko lathuli* (The Federation wanted our land)
> *Koma Dr Banda alikukana!* (But Dr Banda says no!).[152]

At least in the Nyasaland African public sphere, Banda was already the 'owner of the land' or *mfumu* (chief). By this time both migrant workers and those domiciled in Nyasaland, as had the soldiers before them, were seen as Nyasa both when away and at home.

Oral discourses

Mufunanji has criticised aspects of drama, particularly 'Theatre For Development' (TFD), in Malawi for being a 'tool for undermining the growth of professional [theatre] practice in this country'.[153] Theatre for development used to take plays and sketches around the country into rural areas and involved the public in plays about specific and general issues of development, exploiting rural Malawi's love for visual and performance arts. These criticisms back my argument that drama was exploited for political and other ends. As Magalasi puts it:

> The most influential part of TFD practice saw the Travelling Theatre, government ministries, and other non-governmental organisations travelling the length and width of the country to spread news of social development, health and agriculture through theatre, and not the news of theatre as an art form that exists independently.[154]

Inevitably, the agenda of the government of the day held sway. In relation to the present debate was the demonization of some Diaspora Malawians as enemies of the state and state development.

Oral discourses

In such plays and dances oral discourses that promoted staying at home were recruited. These included proverbs like: *Kwanu nkwanu mtengo mudalaka njoka* (East or west, home is best); [155] *Mbalame ya kwao ndi ya kwao, siiwala kwao* (Even when far you cannot forget home); [156] *Ndipo mleme anangowola sanaike maliro* (A bat was, due to having teeth, unwelcome among birds and, due to having wings, unwelcome among animals; a selfish and wandering life has a sad story to tell). [157] These proverbs were used to warn Malawians about the dangers of travelling away from home and abandoning 'the village'. What was often missed from these propaganda discourses were the counter proverbs, such as *Mbumba ndi anthu onse* (Kinship knows no exclusion), [158] demonstrating that there were healthy pre-colonial concepts of travel. The irony was that from time to time Malawians would be reminded that Dr Banda had walked from Malawi to South Africa and from there travelled to the USA to obtain an education.

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[152] Thailo and Kapiye. c1958 *Dziko.* On the CD *Banjoes and Guitars.* Glasgow: Pamtondo

[153] Magalasi, M. 2001. 'Malawian theatre at the crossroads: development paradigms and underdevelopment of stage drama in Malawi. *Journal of Humanities,* 15, 17 – 43, page 20

[154] ibid

[155] Chakanza, J. *Wisdom of the people: 2000 Chinyanja proverbs.* Zomba: Kachere, p 154

[156] Ibid, page p 184

[157] ibid, p244

[158] ibid Page 188

Pictures, drawings and cartoons

A significant proportion of Malawi arts and crafts are concerned with aspects of travel. Some of these reflect travel: carrying, walking, buses, canoes, boats, bicycles, minibuses. Travel appears to be an integral part of the Malawi psyche.

Post colonial

The political dimension assumes a greater importance after independence. A Cabinet Crisis, with cultural overtones, separated Dr Banda, on ideological grounds, from his younger colleagues.[159] Having defeated them, he set about consolidating his power in a dictatorship that was underpinned by the 'four cornerstones of Unity, Loyalty, Obedience and Discipline.' saw dissidents as enemies to be jailed, marginalised or eliminated. Dr Banda spelt out this explicitly; talking about the 'Subversive elements', for example, on 13th September 1965 at mass rally at Chileka, in a speech whose ferocity has been compared to a MacBeth monologue, that he said:[160]

> These people are wild animals now. They must be destroyed. No beating about the bush. Arrest them, but if they resist arrest, well anything you do is alright so (sic) far as I am concerned. So remember that.[161]

The post-Cabinet Crisis political culture thereafter became a definer of what a loyal Malawi citizen was: Loyal, Obedient, Disciplined and, despite the lack of work, resident in Malawi. Because leading and overt political dissidents – and some religious organisations like the Jehovah's Witnesses - were driven into exile, exile became associated in the popular Malawi elite mind with political and religious dissent. This fleeing could be literal as in Legson Kayira's *The Detainee*. After waking up in a mortuary Napolo, a hapless villager who has been mistaken for a dissident, been beaten and left for dead by the dictators Youth Brigade; he thus had no choice but to flee the country.

> Napolo ran as though propelled by some external force. Never in his life had he run so hard. He ran and ran, never once looking back. His tired lungs felt as if they would burst but he did not stop running. He was obsessed by only one thought and that was to get away as far as possible from the dead people... He did not know that he had already crossed an international boundary and that he was now in another country.[162]

In some cases Dr Banda ensured that dissidents remained abroad, denied the opportunity to visit their families. A one-time rival of Dr Banda, Manoah Chirwa, suffered this fate. Those chiefs who tried to get the Malawi Congress Party Convention to change this policy and enable Manoah Chirwa to return home were abused and silenced. There were high profile exclusions. Because political exiles fled to neighbouring countries, many people of Malawian origin in these countries consolidated their Zimbabwean, Zambian or South African 'citizenship'. The dissidents, who could not renew their Malawi passports, were excluded from citizenship, no matter how patriotic they felt themselves to be. David Rubadiri, from his exile, reflected this in 'Yet another song'

> Yet another song
> I have to sing
> In the early wake
> of a colonial dusk
> I sang the song of fire...
> Today
> I sing yet another song

[159] Dr Banda, at 66 years of age, was much older than his cabinet colleagues who were, with one exception in their thirties. See the Chewa folk story of 'When the young men seized power' Schoffeleers, JM and Roscoe, AA. 1985. *Land of fire* Limbe: Popular publications. See also P.G Forster, P G. 1994. Culture, Nationalism, and the Invention of Tradition in Malawi., *Journal of Modern African Studies* 32(3): 477–497. For the Malawi Cabinet Crisis of 1964 see Short, P. 1974: *Banda*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Lwanda, J. L. 1993: *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi.* Glasgow: Dudu Nsomba Publications and Ross, AC. 2009. *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, Zomba: Kachere
[160] See Lwanda 2008 *Music, Culture and Orature: Reading the Malawi public sphere, 1949 – 2006,* Zomba: Kachere
[161] Short, P. 1974 *Banda* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul page 256.
[162] Kayira, L. 1974. *The Detainee*. London: Heinemann, page 172.

A song of exile.[163]

There was certainly nostalgia experienced by many Malawians in the Diaspora

> Winter home thoughts
> On a cold Glasgow day,
> In among the smoky breaths and coughs,
> I am full of home thoughts.
> Home? Where is home?
> Is it where the romantic heart is;
> Or is it where the warm gas fire awaits,
> As the wife worries and frets.
> Home?
> The fading memories of a romantic youth,
> Pampered innocence and boarding schools,
> Among the poverty and misery of my peers.
> A land where the immortal one rules.
> Home?
> You are an exile in Babylon,
> Swathed in cotton, worry and anxiety,
> Exiled and separated from your very roots:
> A shiftless, fearful alien living off his boots.
> Home?
> Where is my home?
> On this earth, do I have a physical home?
> Pray, will I have a home spiritual in heaven?
> Or is it all a deadly game political?
> Home?
> One day I will get home.
> Without walking, worrying or running.[164]

The writer here is trying to express his nostalgia for and hope that he will end his days back in his homeland. His reason for being in 'among the smoky breaths' and cold of Glasgow was economic and political.

But if the exiles missed home and were, generally in the 1970s and 1980s, miserable, the elite that remained home benefitted from the extra economic spaces vacated by political dissidents and those choosing to work abroad. The identity crises of those who stayed and obeyed and those who left were played out in a poetic duel by Frank Chipasula and Steve Chimombo. After exile Frank Chipasula produced *A Love Poem for My Country*:

> I have nothing to give you, but my anger
> And the filaments and hatred reached across the border
> You, you have sold many and me to exile
> Now shorn of precious minds, you rely on
> What hands can grow to build your crumbling image.
>
> Your streets are littered with handcuffed men
> And the drums are thuds of the warden's spiked boots.
> You wriggle with agony as the terrible twins, law and order
> Call out the tune through the thick tunnels of barbed wire [165]

Chipasula's poem contains a hint of some of this contest between home domiciled Malawians and those who live abroad. His two lines 'Now shorn of precious minds, you rely on

What hands can grow to build your crumbling image' is a contentious suggestion that arose from 1964 when Dr Banda lost all his graduates from his cabinet. It was no longer true ten years later when Malawi had

[163] Rubadiri, D. 1989 *Growing up with poetry.* London: Heinemann, page 54
[164] Lwanda, J. 1994. *Black thoughts from the Diaspora* Glasgow: Dudu Nsomba Publications
[165] Chipasula Frank 1998. 'A Love Poem For My Country' In Nazombe *Operations and tears: a new anthology of Malawian poetry.* Zomba: Kachere, page 46

produced many graduates and 'educated minds'. But Chimombo's 'A death song' answers Chipasula's 'exiled' elements, providing an explanation as to why some home domiciled minds were mute but defiant:

> (Look at my homestead
> Its empty, empty, empty)
> The Chameleon was wrong.
> The homestead was not really empty
> Some Zombies were left in spite of their deafness
> The *ndondochas* wailed at night despite their tongues
> being cut off. They were not yet completely dead. [166]

If in the second part of the poem Chimombo is trying to explain, in the third part of the poem he seems to go on the attack:

> (I shall leave this village
> You stay behind and build the village)
> The Chameleon was wrong
> The answer was not to abandon the village
> as rats do a sinking ship
> or fleas a dying hedgehog.
> Exile, pretended, genuine,
> or self imposed is not the answer
> to the holocaust or the apocalypse. [167]

The 'exile pretended, genuine or self-imposed' was a dig at those who freely left Malawi to seek pastures new. Indeed there was an interesting interplay between economic and political imperatives. Although he did not want meddlesome and troublesome exiles, Dr Banda's Malawi still required remittances from those living and working abroad. The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) was allowed to continue until the issue of HIV/AIDS positivity rates among Malawi migrant workers was used as 'an excuse by South Africa' to progressively stop Malawians going to work on the South African mines via the repatriation of Malawi workers between 1988 and 1992. [168] From the Malawi government point of view TEBA was encouraged and a managed *mchonaship* short-term (economic migrancy) was encouraged. This managed *mchonaship* can be illustrated by one of the defining songs from the middle of the 1970s.

> *Inu achimwene* (Brother)
> *Thandizani makolo* (Help your parents)
> *Bamboo ndi mai akuvutikaaah!* (Mum and dad are suffering)
> *Akusowa wina wowathandiza* (They have no one to help them)
> *Popeza inu mulikutali* (Because you are far away)
> *Bwelani kuti muwathandize* (Come and help them). [169]

In this scenario, the young man was supposed to be both at home to help his parents and working at the same time. Staying at home would mean that he would have no financial means of helping them, while going to work as a migrant worker meant he was deserting his parents.

The most visual aspect of the era was the *mbumba* phenomenon: female political praise singers for Dr Banda's political party. The *mbumba* were useful to Dr Banda in a number of ways. First, by perpetuating the traditional cultural aspects where women were essentially praise singers who continued the build-up of Banda began in 1958, Dr Banda was praised as the 'Father and Founder' of the nation, being seen as the saviour and provider of the nation, and ultimately the font of all wisdom.[170] Second, the *mbumba* served as message carriers. Official MCP policy was often fed into the lyrics. This varied from simple exhortations to hard work to support for Banda's national unity crusade or foreign policy. Third, the *mbumba* were an

[166] Chimombo, Steve. 2003 'A death song' *In Nazombe Operations and tears: a new anthology of Malawian poetry,* Zomba: Kachere, pages 36 - 38.
[167] Chimombo, Steve. 2003 'A death song' *In Nazombe Operations and tears: a new anthology of Malawian poetry,* Zomba: Kachere, pages 36 - 38.
[168] Chirwa, WC 1998 'Aliens and AIDS in southern Africa: the Malawi-South Africa debate', *African Affairs* 97:53-79,
[169] MBC Banda 1974. *Inu achimwene.* On *Kokoliko ku Malawi.* Blantyre: Ngoma Records.
[170] Cf. Lwanda, J. L.1993: *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi.* Glasgow: Dudu Nsomba Publications, page 21; Forster, 1994, page 491; Muyebe and Muyebe, 1999, page s 49 – 193; Gilman, Lisa. 2001. 'Purchasing Praise: Women, Dancing, and Patronage in Malawi Party Politics.' *Africa Today* 48, 4, pages 43-64; and Semu, 2002 page 82.

instrument of control. Fourth. The *mbumba* had a gentle critique role in the system. Dr Banda used them as a litmus test to present any complaints.

Resplendent in their colourful party uniforms and backed by the best drummers the party could commandeer, *mbumba* women laid down Banda's law. For example, when Meki Mtewa published his critique of the Banda regime, as well as making life almost unbearable for his mother in Malawi, the *mbumba* spelt out what was on offer for dissidents

> *Walira koto, koto Meki Mtewa* (He has cried in pain Meki Mtewa))
> *Ndi m'Malawi sadzalowa Meki Mtewa* (In Malawi, Meki Mtewa will never set foot).[171]

In this case the bait was Mtewa's mother; she would be harassed until he stopped criticising the government from abroad.

While Dr Banda had sought to create a scenario where Diasporian Malawians were economically complicit in his dictatorship, he had also encouraged Malawians to see most of those living abroad and interested in Malawi politics and social affairs as *zigawenga* (thugs or rebels) [172].Thus another *mbumba* song about Henry Chipembere, another dissident who had then fled abroad, went

> *Panali chimundu china kunyumba yamalamulo* (There once was some guy in Parliament)
> Chipembere *Galu, galu galu galu...* (Chipembere, a dog, a dog, a dog...)[173]

The objectification of, and removal of human and citizenship rights, from Dr Banda's political enemies was so total that only a 'mad' person would want to associate with them. The connection between politics and exile, and ultimately identity and economy were managed at state level. One was a patriotic Malawian if one followed the party line. If one dissented then economic and human rights consequences, often with the loss of liberty, within and without Malawi, resulted. But economics dominated at personal level. Dissidents, even in the Diaspora had to help their families in whatever ways they could. And tensions within both the Malawi Diaspora communities and exiled Malawi political elements often precluded exiles from settling in their adopted countries among Malawi communities.

Post colonial discourses, like *mchona* (one who lives away from home for a significant period), *chitukutuku* (exile)*, akunja* (people from outside Malawi) and the derogatory *zigawenga* denote the contestations in the public sphere. Words like *mchona* and *wakwathu* (home boy), *nzika* (citizen), were recruited as descriptors of exclusion or inclusion.

Ironically, Dr Banda himself was not amused when the song by the Zambian Nachil P Kazembe *Aphiri Anabwela* (Mr Phiri returned home) became popular in Malawi. It is a song about an émigré returning with an empty suitcase to find all his relations dead. Banda, who had lived abroad for forty years, thought the 'empty suitcase' and 'dead relations' were about him.

Paradoxically, part of the machinery that maintained his repression was built on the sweat of migrant workers. Asked in April 1965, where funding for the newly established Malawi Young Pioneers would come from, John Tembo, the Finance Minister replied 'the sale of passports to Malawians working in South Africa'.[174]

In the final analysis 'identity, perceived, self imposed or by order', *did* matter as Mapanje, a former political detainee, liberated from detention in 1991 and living in York, later observed in 'Prologue'

> From the vault of Chingwe's Hole
> Come these chattering wagtails,
>
> Desperate voices of fractured souls
> Nesting on desert walls of prisons
>
> And exiles, afflicted or self-imposed
> Counting stubborn beads, deprived

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[171] Mangochi *mbumba* song
[172] Kayambazinthu, E. and Moyo, F. 2002. Hate speech in the new Malawi. In Harri Englund (ed) *Democracy of chameleons.* Blantyre: CLAIM
[173] Mangochi *mbumba* song circa 1970 - 1991
[174] Lwanda, J. *Promises, Power Politics and Poverty.* Glasgow: Dudu Nsomba, page 184

> Laughters and ceaseless tears shed
> In the chaos of invented autocracies
>
> Now darkly out of bounds beyond
> These tranquil walls of York.[175]

Post Banda

After the battle for multiparty was won, Francis Moto, in 'You should have been here my friend' seems to be talking to an absent and exiled fellow poet, almost damping down his Diasporic expectations;

> Michiru, Ndirande and Soche Hills have
> Witnessed the birth of yellow daffodils.
> Be warned nevertherless:
> The season is not yet over.
> The pre-puberty dance is still
> Punctuated by chilling steel bracelets
> At the field of metal birds.[176]

Motos' yellow daffodils did not fully bloom during the United Democratic regime of 1994 to 2004. Malawi did not have a Truth and Reconciliation process. The National Compensation Tribunal, while compensating the top UDF elite failed to compensate lesser mortals, many of them political returnees from Zambia, Tanzania and other African countries and not the fully privileged lives in Europe, America and USA that some of Banda's elite were prone to suggest. Moto's warning was right. The previously 'dead' *machona* were still not 'full citizens'. The revolution had not released the 'steel bracelets' of exclusion and Malawians, unlike many other nationalities on earth could not be 'global and local'.

Once the new multiparty regime was in place all Truth and Reconciliation discourses were forgotten. There was no attempt at investigating the failures of Dr Banda's regime. The reason was simple: many of those in the new government were part of the old regime and would not have gained from a Truth and Reconciliation exercise and, despite the new multiparty government wanting exiles to contribute more in remittances, [177] there continued to be a tacit unwritten rule that only those living in Malawi were 'true Malawians'. The UDF government even raided migrant workers pension funds as part of their initial patronage building exercise for internal elite. [178] Part of the money that gave the UDF and AFORD MPs their K50,000 capital payments came from appropriated migrant workers pension funds.[179]

Interestingly, as the process of elite-production continued, the UDF and other post-Banda elite used resources, internal and external to send their children abroad. Many of these children constitute a new Malawi group settled abroad. There was also, surprising given Malawi's poor economy, a general reluctance by the home groups in power to entertain competing or collaborative business interests with those in the Diaspora. A culture of 'donations and subsidies' were encouraged.

There is a contradiction in the political and citizenship rights marginalisation of the vast Diaspora resource while at the same time recruiting their *donor* economic clout. The irony that the same power players who deny the Diasporian Malawians their voting and citizenship rights are sending their children abroad, to, in turn, become Diasporians. It calls into question the motives of the domiciled elite. Without dual citizenship these children of the elite will become lost to the same Malawi as defined by their parents, impoverishing the nation they claim to love.

Another contradiction is the fact that most 'domiciled, and thus 'Malawian' Asians and Europeans living in Malawi have, effectively, dual rights, most have foreign passports. The answer is that most Asians are not in

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[175] Mapanje, J. 1993/ 'Prologue' In *The chattering wagtails of Mikuyu prison.* London: Heinemann. Page 1
[176] Moto F. 1994 'You should have been here my friend' in *Gazing at the setting sun.* Zomba: FEGS
[177] Goodall Gondwe, the Malawi Finance Ministers, stated that financial remittances from the Diaspora had fallen in 2008.
[178] Lwanda, J 1996. *Promises, Power Politics and Poverty.*
[179] Cf. Chirwa, WC. 1999 'Jailing the Voiceless: Ex-migrant Workers and Popular Struggles in Malawi *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 8, 1, pages 1-20.

as direct competition with the domiciled elite; the incoming Chinese, who are *more* likely to be in competition with Malawians have already been the subject of criticism.[180]

Another contradiction is the fact that any identifiable Malawians, no matter how tenuous the connection, who distinguishes themselves abroad, become 'publicly and by acclamation' a Malawian at home.[181] Citizenship by status, as it were.[182]

A tangible example of the undervaluing of its Diaspora community by those domiciled in, and exercising socio-economic and political influence in Malawi is the political decision to exclude Diaspora Malawians from voting and citizenship rights, while encouraging remittances. The issue of dual citizenship rights debate began during the one-party era. Under the one-party regime the debate was one-sided. Between 1993 and 1994, the UDF regime promised to look at the issue but there was no follow-up. Despite a spirited and continuing debate on the chat forums frequented by the elite and opinion formers, *Nyasanet* and *Malawitalk* the issue of dual citizenship rights has not been conceded. Given that strong, and given their divorce from the patronage circles of Malawi, Diasporic voices and constituencies may have a positive impact on the internal civil societies, these are understandably feared by those in political, social and economic power.

And an examination of the elite media, the newspapers, internet chat rooms and government officials reflects this debate. Calls for dual citizenship were rejected out of hand with calls for Diasporians to return home 'if they wanted to be Malawians'.[183] The debate on dual citizenship brought out issues clouded in power political, economic, and other issues. In debates in the press and internet chatrooms one reads exhortations for *machona* to return home despite the obvious query about Malawi being able to employ *all* returnees.

The cultural responses also continue to be *machona inu bwelani kuno mudzaone* (Exiles, come home and see). Mlaka Maliro, a popular musician famous for his stage presence, as well as his barbed lyrics, articulated this:

> *Mulamu tikuti mubwere*, (In-law we say come)
> *Ndikale lomwe munachoka* (It's such a long time since you left)
> *Chumacho chimakoma bwa?* (How sweet is that money you earn)
> *Chodya ndi anthu achilendo …*(That you share with foreigners)
> *Moyo wako kodi umamva bwa?* (How do you feel?)
> *Kunjoya ndi anthu achilendo…* (Enjoying your money with foreigners).[184]

The tone of the song suggests a 'you have amassed a fortune, bring it home so we can share it'. Yet if the same *mulamu* asked for dual citizenship rights he would probably be denied them. There is a good reason for the home domiciled Malawians to view *machona* with suspicion. They are, as Chimombo's poem suggested, often seen as 'I will leave the village, you build the village' proponents. They are seen as enjoying 'TV lives' while their kith in Malawi 'starve'. But this is inaccurate; it is *not* the elite who starve in Malawi. The villagers who 'starve' would, as true Malawian culture has it, welcome their children and grandchildren as continuing citizens. Although applicable to the urban/rural situation as well, Davis and Edgar's song *Musamabwere kumudzi,* reflected this 'come home attitude'.

> *Musamabwere kumudzi* (Don't come back home)
> *Kumudzi sikofera* (Home is not where you come to die) [185]

Although the song was meant as an (internally Malawi) urban versus rural debate, it was recruited to include exiles. In traditional culture someone who dies before erecting a house at home is usually accorded a strangers funeral. His body is rested under a (mango) tree instead of in a house, the final insult for someone who did not help his relations while alive. For some Malawians who migrate and toil and labour in the mines and metropolises of various nations on earth, remitting some of their earnings year in and out, the omission of building a house is often the final insult.

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[180] Pilirani Semu-Banda, P. 2007, 'Foreign Traders Are Taking Our Jobs' *Inter-Press Service* http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=40534

[181] Cf. CNN Heroes honoured in Hollywood. http://www.nowpublic.com/world/cnn-heroes-honored-hollywood

[182] Kanjo. C. 2009. Personal communication.

[183] See Nyasanet and Malawitalk archives at http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?SL1=NYASANET&H=LISTSERV.ICORS.ORG and http://www.mailtalk.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=MALAWITALK respectively.

[184] Maliro, Mlaka c 1998 *Mulamu* Blantyre: Mlaka Maliro.

[185] Davis and Edgar. 2007 *Musamabwere kumudzi* on the CD *Musamabwele kumudzi.* Blantyre: Davis and Edgar.

Discussion

There are continuities between migrants and Diasporians; the latter are after all long-term migrants. A number of factors are evident in the tussle between home domiciled Malawians and those in the Diaspora. First, there is, from those domiciled in Malawi, resistance to Diasporic political and economic independence. This resistance is articulated in contests about political and cultural rights, duties and expectations. Paramount among these are the denials of cultural and voting rights. While Diaspora parents may be denied voting rights, their children may be denied cultural rights: the right to be perceived as Malawian on visits home and the right to have a future stake in Malawi. Paradoxically, the children of the elite in power in Malawi can sometimes still enjoy cultural and citizenship rights even after many years abroad, showing that this is – increasingly as more children of the elite migrate– a selective and contrived process.

While those in the Diaspora use various media to engage with home, the tendency has been for the domiciled elite to use these same Diaspora-owned tools to marginalise those in the Diaspora politically as uninformed and out of touch *machona.*

While the current debates rage it is often forgotten that in the globalised 21st Century more young Malawians are leaving the country. Given that Malawi has, historically and to a significant degree, always been dependent on remittances from abroad, the need to build linkages to this group would seem, from an economic angle obvious.[186] The elite may enjoy their intellectual debates, if Malawi continues to lose its human capital it is the rural poor who will lose out from the drying-up of remittances from grand children in the Diaspora who have lost personal and cultural links with their parents' country of birth. Ironically the debates recruit the cultural, artistic and musical energies of the peasantry for these debates.

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The "Old Dutch" in Phokela: Interpretations of 'African Visual Theory' in a 'Global Art History'

Phokela's artwork, often referred to as the progeny of "Old Masters" emergent in an African location, questions the manufacture of aesthetic receptivity. It also directs attention to a theoretical polarisation of "West" and "Africa" and its predicament on the construction of a South African art history. It has been pronounced that a South African art history is yet to be written. Without overlooking significant existing scholarly work on South African art histories, the scope of interpretive strategies lingers between the political context of South Africa and theoretical structures of an art history formulated by methods, principles and/ or rationale of a Western art history. When theorising Phokela's work, does one separate Dutch art histories from South African art histories or can one safely speak of a global art history? Phokela has been defined as a "doppelgänger"… of Old Masters" (Haines 2001: 380). While this form of ghostly doubling downplays Phokela's repertory to a sinister aping of Western forms of artmaking, it also alludes to the strata of intercultural quotation and its implications on interpretation. This paper seeks to examine whether the form and conceptual structure of a South African art history that is yet to be scripted will mirror the idea of a global art history through analysis of Phokela's paintings.

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[186] I am grateful to Chifipa Du Mhango for economic literature on those countries moving towards the acceptance of dual citizenship: Ghana, Tanzania and Kenya. And also for providing the following references: United States office of Personnel Management Investigations Service. 2001 *Citizenship Laws of the World*; Lyimo, K. 2003 'The case for dual citizenship in modern-day Tanzania: duality is a life-line in times of uncertainty. *Business Times,* September 5 2003; Spiro, P. J. 'Dual Nationality: unobjectionable and Unstoppable and the meaning of Citizenship' accessed 12/8/09 at http://www.cis.org/articles/cantigny/spiro.html, and for drawing my attention to the 'position Paper on the Introduction of Dual Citizenship in Tanzania'.

South African-born artist Johannes Phokela often appropriates iconic Dutch paintings, hence his work has been defined as "doppelgängers[187]" and as "the progeny of Old Masters" (Haines 2001: 380). Arguably, the use of the word "doppelgänger" somewhat implies an underlying aesthetic censure. It alludes to a "dark twin" or a ghostly doubling rather than appropriation or the very practice of quoting in the arts and even in literature. Prompted by the discourse that frames Phokela's work, this paper addresses aesthetic receptivity, interpretive strategies and some of the preceding deliberations regarding the existence of an African art history, its flirtation with Anthropological theory and its shadowed relationship with "Western art history".

In the initial stages of this research, I was tempted to see Phokela's citation of works by artists such as Jacob Jordaens, Jaques de Gheyn, Peter Paul Rubens and Caravaggio as a strategy to not only problematise the persistence of Western art history as an overarching narrative but also to provoke the inferred possibility of a theoretical (South) African aesthetic. The implicit paradigmatic difference somehow assumes a hierarchy that relegates and defaces the latter. The issue with quoting may be that it is does not take a single course of a single direction. For instance, Primitivist artworks created by artists such and Matisse and Picasso are quotations that are not necessarily seen as the progeny but rather as the progenitors of a cultural movement. Phokela, on the other hand, declines the reference to African masks as "more nostalgic than functional", further placing an emphasis on a correlation between critical utopianisms and purposefulness. In addition, Phokela draws attention to some of the relational aspects of quoting as well as the notion of mimicry underpinned in the term 'doppelgänger'.

Although the word doppelgänger may be problematic in that it limits interpretation and casts Phokela's work as shadows which mimic what seems to be the "real", there is an allusion to doubling or dualism of both sameness and difference within his work. What seems to be mimicry of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's attributed[188] *Narcissus* (1599) begins to read as critique of racialism or continentalism and the differentiation of aesthetic experience. Phokela's *Narcissus* (2005) stares down at a dark shadow rather than a representative reflection. It appears, to a certain extent, as a confrontation between people of different races where the black character seems like a shadow or an obscure dark illusion. To borrow from James Ferguson's (2006: 16) discussion on the analogy of "shadow states" and Carolyn Nordstrom's "ethnography of the shadows", the concept of a "shadow" is not merely representative darkness but implies "a kind of doubling". Ferguson (2006: 16) observes that "the first version is the 'official', and implicitly Western, model, while its uncanny dark double is the 'African' version thereof". There are complications, therefore, in defining Phokela's repertory as doppelgängers since associations of Africa adhere to the concept that cast it as the ugly twin, the base from which it is always read in comparison to. Ferguson (2006: 17) referred to Africa's position in this relationship as "the attached twin". The connotation of this idea is that Africa is assumed to mimic the West under the false assumption of the different singular constructions of "Africa's" and the singular notions of West. The implication of Africa's paralysis can be argued to haunt cultural production through the puppet shadows manoeuvred about history.

Nevertheless, to continue this line of argument one would have to think of the shadow as an independently existing entity rather than just a silhouette or even, a mirrored reflection (that mimics the "real"). As such, it becomes ambiguously a real subject and an imagined subject. This ambiguity is also stressed in Achille Mbembe's (2001: 241-242) proposition that discussing Africa as a category involves the "oscillation between the real and the imaginary, the imaginary realised and the real imagined" which takes place "in writing [and] in real life". Considering Phokela's *Narcissus* (2005) the dark character appears as both imagined *and* real where mimicry can be said to be more in the performance of the dark character as it seemingly imitates the white Narcissus and less in Phokela's re-presentation of Caravaggio's painting. In Phokela's *Narcissus* (2005) mimicry arguably involves a composite relationship between the Imperial subject and alterity as well as what Diana Fuss (1994: 24) distinguishes as the "mimicry of subversion and mimicry of subjugation" which interact and "make it increasingly difficult to discriminate between [them] or at least to know with any degree of certainty their possible political effects". Fuss (1994: 24) elaborates further by stating that the "Imperial Subject imposes upon all others, as a condition of their subjugation, an injunction to mime alterity [o.e.] … the colonized are constrained to imitate the colonizer's version of their

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[187] This word means an apparition or double of a living person, double goer.

[188] There is no certainty that Caravaggio indeed painted *Narcissus* (1599). However, this painting was attributed to Caravaggio due to stylistic similarities to his other artwork.

essential difference". It is also arguable that Phokela's *Narcissus* (2005) is a representation of a psychological identification of selves that are constituted within a singular body.

Considering the myth of Narcissus death results from self-love. The concept of self is complicated by the understanding that the reflection (of self), is an external thing and desire is therefore directed outwardly rather than inwardly. In Phokela's work the "reflection" appears as alterity[189], as an*other* body which could possibly not die simultaneously as Narcissus. In another series of paintings entitled *Altruistic Narcissism I-IV* (2008) Phokela illustrates men pointing to their heads, others with gun in hand. There is a paradox of killing oneself for the benefit of others, being translated as absolute self-love. Altruism in this work, debatably, connotes a seemingly self-serving way of being charitable. This irony, which at times appears as dark humour, is another element that persists in Phokela's use of the Red Nose (and in the implication of the circus mime and clown personages). The suicides in these portraits are performed as a serious joke that demands not only the attention, but also the altruism of others.

The gun is replaced in the second set of this series by the pointing finger, which can be interpreted as egotism, as auto-critique and as an index to (a) the suicidal subject, (b) the suggested observer beyond the frame as well as (c) the viewer looking at the artwork. Pointing is another aspect that is present in Phokela's use of the gun, the banana, the bulging male crotches, the red nose, the borders or calculated lines within the frame and the laceration of the canvas (reminiscent of Jacques Derrida's hypothesis in "Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing"). In the painting called *Altruistic Narcissism I-IV* (2008) the gun and the pointing finger are indices of death. Moreover, the portraits give a vague impression of ghostliness, of shadows or of doppelgängers through the sketchy brushwork.

There seems to be an assumption that imitation and quoting risks symptoms of an imminent death that points to the quoted and often dead artist and the quoter's impending prophesied death alike. Furthermore, quoting tends to somehow overshadow the one who quotes legitimising the quoted. Remembering Mieke Bal's *Quoting Carravaggio*, the agency of the art object "is a key premise, with the work as an active producer of the viewer's subjectivity in encounters across time" where she calls for "an auto-critique of the historian as narrator, for an acknowledgement that one inevitably tells a story of self in formulating an account of history" (Baum 2001:101). Again, what is apparent in Bal's proposition, the artist and narrator are debatably both altruistic and narcissistic at different instances in time.

With regards to suicide it can be said that Phokela weaves in dark humour in the painting entitled *Prozac* (2005) in that Prozac is an anti-depressant for mental illnesses leading to suicidal thoughts. Prozac is illustrated by Phokela as the cure and the cause. The loss of innocence in this image is seemingly caused and cured by the monkey in his performance of double pointing through the phallic banana at the bottom of the bunch and his offering of a peeled banana. If the apple that is held by the nude woman is read in a Biblical context as carnal or original sin then the peeled banana arguably transcends as its moral opposite. The monkey with its connotation to imitation/ mimicry as well as the primitive or alterity ominously appears as the joker who forms the arch between points that frame the male and female subject, causing the division between the two while merging or bridging the gap in sexual innuendo, linking reproduction as cure to the finality of death and as cause to the moral death of the virgin. This moral ambiguity seems trivialised by the red nose on the monkey.

The red nose (as it has been stated earlier) seems to personify the clown, the buffoon or the joker. Phokela's use of it begins to question the altruism of the Red Nose day charity which began as reaction to the famine in Ethiopia in the 80's. As a token of laughter, the red nose appears sinister in the context of deaths resulting from famine. Laughter is seen as synonymous to death in Phokela's interpretation of *Pantomime Act Trilogy* (2001) through a South African proverb which he explains "translates as the greatest death is laughter" (Richards 2004: 290). In *Pantomime Act* (2001) Phokela introduces the boy soldier who, similar to the monkey in *Prozac* (2005), is positioned in-between the two internal frames, wears a red nose and is pointing a gun. The *Pantomime Act Trilogy* (2001) is based on Jacob de Gheyn's *Allegory on the Equality of all Mankind in Death* (1599) in which at the top of the tent is a Latin inscription that reads 'death makes the sceptre and spade equal'. The little boy who is positioned below the scene of the Last Judgement and is flanked by two men of different classes blows bubbles above which are the words 'Homo bulla', meaning

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[189] I use this term in this instance to denote the condition of being foreign to the conscious self. It is also used with reference to Emmanuel Levinas' definition of this difference as a relationship relation between "the self and the other" that is fundamentally asymmetrical and nonreciprocal in which "the other, that one who faces you, is not another self" (Crignon 2004, CPS 1996).

'Man is as a soap bubble'[190]. In this work equality seems synonymous with death where difference sublimates into sameness, in effect collapsing some of the meanings associated with social construction and historical narrativity.

With regards to Phokela's *Pantomime Act Trilogy*, consisting of *Pantomime Act* (2001), *Pantomime Mortal Quiz* (2001) and *Pantomime Mortal Chic* (2000) the notion of death and performance alludes to a ghostly doubling where the corpses at the bottom can be seen to be representative of the two men on either side. This is in contrast to birth represented by the baby boy in the middle. Phokela's introduction of the two different boy soldiers in the two paintings (excluding *Pantomime Mortal Chic*) complicates the contradiction of death and birth through the vertical positioning of the black boy and the white boy who become polarised. Furthermore, there seems to be a difference between the two boy soldiers where the one in *Pantomime Act* (2001) appears to solicit sympathy and seems to be burdened by the power of the object he holds whereas the boy in *Pantomine Mortal Quiz* (2001) appears to be unperturbed by the gun, saluting below his oversized combatant cap and smiling with a red nose. His salute seems to be in synchronicity with the overplayed performance of the Walt Disney Mickey Mouse imprinted on his jersey further implicating social performativity of the two men below. The notion of performativity in relation to mimicry and, to a certain extent, narcissism is emphasised by Phokela in the title. The word "pantomime" is derived from pantomimus which can be broken up into the words *panto* which means "all" and *mimos* which means "mimic" (Broadbent 1901:99). Phokela references elements of pantomime such as buffoonery, clowning and the double entendre, which weaves sexual innuendo for adult entertainment with innocent narratives for children.

The tradition of pantomime also introduces a moral divide in the principle that the good fairy generally enters from the right (which symbolises Heaven) while the evil villain enters from the left (which symbolises Hell). Some of these symbols are maintained by Phokela from De Gheyn's work: the owl, the scene of Original sin above a parergonal skull, the wig and the smoke are depicted on the left. In contrast, on the right is the light, the scene of Christ's crucifixion framed by a baby face below, Christ's transcendence to divinity and immortality through death, the crown and the flowers. However, in Phokela's work these oppositions are downplayed by the moral ambiguity of the red nose through its being altruistic or narcissistic and as a symbol of economic difference (also emphasised by the Mickey Mouse jersey) between 'developing' and 'developed countries'. In the trilogy, the red nose and the skull appear on both sides of the "moral divide" where on the right the skull is held separately from the nose (as if to separate death from humour). In the middle of the painting, the skull is connected to the nose by the baby boy. On the left, the skull and nose are connected into a singular object which can be seen as an association of humour with death. There is also ambiguity between the viewer's left – right and stage-right – stage-left that mocks the tradition of representing moral difference.

The red noses appear also on the men in *Pantomime Mortal Chic* (2000) on either side of the girl who wears a headdress that is a bunch of bananas. The girl is positioned in the negated space that has been occupied by the black boy and the white boy, who can bee seen as contrasting. A bulging crotch points to her and a sword points in an opposite direction. The word chic denotes being fashionable, as can be seen in the confident stances of the two men. It also disturbingly seems to imply a fashionability or trendiness of African sympathisers where desire manifests in misconstrued constructions of Primitivism. Through this implication, sympathy for Africa appears to be a poignantly narcissistic emblem of vanity.

Phokela uses the symbol of the skull and red nose in a sculptural format in the work entitled *Gold, Silver, Bronze Medals* (2008) where death appears as different classes of achievement. In this work, Phokela cast three skulls each with a red nose. It can be said that there are references to the Red Nose charity which has sold over 50 million noses to raise money for distribution to developing and poverty stricken countries. Furthermore, there is an allusion to war and victory where the latter is an index of death. The number three is recurrent in Phokela's use of the triptych, the trilogy, the third space (between life and death which is also the position of a ghost), the notion of third world country, the three skulls and the tricolour. This is also

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[190] This work has many symbols of vanitas: the soap bubbles, the smoke, the skull, flowers. It can be said that Phokela defames other principles of allegory such as the *Danse Macabre* or the Dance of Death symbolizing equality and democracy in death where, in his work, death is seemingly aligned with ambiguous enjoyment. There are also defamed elements of *Ars Moriendi*, The Art of Dying, where a good death, in contrast to a bad death, results in advising the dying man to imitate Christ as a procedure for dying well (Aiken 2001: 164-167).

apparent in *Enterprise* (2002) where the red nose is first, the upside down polystyrene cup is second and the skull is third, through seemingly Cartesian, Pythagorean hypotenuse right-angled triangle and calculated methods of classification. Piercing through the skull is a knife that also looks like a cross. This knife is replaced by a nail in *Gold, Silver, Bronze Medals* (2008) which can be said to refer to the Biblical narrative of the three crosses. The cross in-between has in most cases been represented as Christ's cross who transcends death. The theme of life and death suggests conclusiveness of a being that will never exist in exact likeness again. Interestingly, Phokela includes what looks like a stamp with Chinese writing as reference to the reproduction of sameness driven by capitalism.

Linked to these connotations are the issues of cheap labour, child labour and trade in some countries where product value is not sufficiently regulated through fair-trade. Arguably Phokela suggests the economical inequality in his sketch entitled *These Miserable Old Legs* (2008) which is clearer in the triptych called *Tender Loving Care* (2006). The sketch and painting depict a black man carrying on his back a white family who swing a stick that pricks a note of money in front of his face. Also, in front of him is a white dog that is comparable to the dog that appears on the tarot card that represents the fool. In the tarot card, the fool is distracted by juggling. The Fool in Tarot is associated with death and yet is also seen as the traveller who may understand different kinds of people but does not become acculturated.

In Phokela's *These Miserable Old Legs* (2008) the ethereal depiction of the dog and the absence of the old white male in the related image *Tender Loving Care* (2006) accentuate the multipart yet merged body as a grotesque, ghostly entity. There are references, also, to the exaggerated features in clown costumes (large shoes, cylindrical hips, large eyebrows, large smile and red nose) which can be seen as both comical and monstrous or grotesque. In *Tender Loving Care* (2006) the socio-political and racial satire becomes more apparent and references ghostly presence through the indecipherable scroll at the bottom. In this painting, Phokela parodies progress which, ironically, seems servantile (in terms of the suit and pointy shoes). The representation of the black servant is recurrent in this series. For instance, the painting depicting a friar who pokes a bulk of meat pierced with Christian cross and carried by a black servant. Phokela refers to an image in William Hogarth's *The Gate of Calais* or *O, the Roast Beef of Old England* (1748) which depicts a scene in France that juxtaposes English affluence against the hunger of the French soldiers.

French nationality is represented in Phokela's French tricolour in *Regarding Fontana – Spatial Concept I-III* (2005), where each canvas represents one colour of the French national flag: blue, white and red representing the bourgeoisie, clergy and nobility in that order. In *Regarding Fontana – Spatial Concept I-III* (2005) Phokela depicts three different slits where the red nose and pointing device appear on all three. In the first blue canvas, there seems to be a hand carrying the red nose entangled in banana's where the suggested body beneath the surface is concealed. In the second white canvas the breach of the surface elaborately frames a boy who violently prepares the gun with the red nose at the tip for shooting. The third red canvas reveals only the face and hand of a boy who eats a banana and holds the red nose above his head. The two colours on the sides represent economic classes and in the middle is religion which performs a violent act, complicating the notion of morality.

Phokela's work problematises the notion of nationalised or continentalised art histories which projects historical narratives as ghosts that are tagged with "the authentic" or "the real". His artworks allow for the continuous questioning and re-framing of the linked meanings, further emphasising the reader and particularly, conscious reading and interpretative strategies. Furthermore, Phokela's alchemy urges the reader to engage in intercultural, interspatial and interperiodical discussions that do not necessarily merge into one legitimate way of looking at a multifaceted Art History.

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Visual commentary and the image of Julius Malema

Political representations of black male figures have taken a major shift that corresponds to the political transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa. Black men in the Apartheid era were portrayed as strong figures fighting against an oppressive system. Today, images of black male politicians are continuously presented in the newspapers as ridiculous bodies that have themselves turned into the oppressor. In most cases, these contemporary political images employ humour, mockery, and caricature to constitute certain arguments that need to be addressed and acknowledged by the South African public. These images of our political leaders, although employing different strategies and means of distribution, serve a similar purpose to the protest posters of the Apartheid era. They often serve to educate the public about the atrocities of the current government. The role and image of leadership is subsequently questioned.

Julius Malema is an example that has invited attention owing to his outrageous comments ridiculing his colleagues and the public. Cartoonists have attempted to caricaturise Malema's juvenile image, a child incapable of leading South Africa's youth. These cartoons produce a spectacle and a farce while implicating the spectator and the public. Malema is rarely portrayed without his comrades, community and the public at large in these cartoons. The public is therefore represented with him, and is implicated in the formation of his ridiculous image.

Most of the published images are satiric cartoons, particularly those by Zapiro. They comment on political issues and political leadership in post-apartheid South Africa. My presentation will explore how the cartoons and related images have taken the representation of our political figures to a different state of agency. My focus will be on visual representations that comment on the African National Congress Youth League leader, Julius Malema.

Zapiro's cartoon of Julius Malema titled, *ANC Problem # 943: Another Malema Outburst*, was featured in the newspaper *Mail and Guardian* in November 2008. The cartoon explores some of the visual perceptions of the president of the ANC Youth League. In the cartoon, Malema is standing barefoot on a three legged stool, which is placed on a stage. The size of Malema's head is too large for the rest of his body. His lips have been exaggerated into a large size, typical of the large lips often given to black people in caricatures. Malema is wearing a nappy which is tied in the front with a large safety-pin. His audience is represented by 9 faces of black men standing below the stage. Their surrounding has been clouded by a gas like substance that has been defused from Malema's bending behind. All of the audience members are pulling their faces in different manners that all represent disgust. Some are covering their mouths, some are covering their noses. Some are sweating while cringing their teeth, and some have their tongues pulled out.

Zapiro is making use of caricature to mock Julius Malema. The cartoon follows a number of 'outbursts' that Malema has been releasing in the media since his inauguration as the President of the ANCYL in April 2008. These outbursts include his deeming Naledi Pandor's accent a "fake American accent", and his proclamation that he and the ANC Youth League are prepared to kill for the then president of the ANC, Jacob Zuma.

Zapiro's portrayal of Malema as infantile is emphasised by the napkin that Malema is wearing and through the 'juvenile act' of his releasing flatulence at his audience in a disrespectful manner.

Besides mocking Malema and his juvenile acts, Zapiro also scrutinises Malema's audience. The cartoonist suggests that while the audience knew that Malema is capable of public outbursts, they still attended his rally. This is elaborated by the title, which reads, "*Another Malema outburst*", suggesting that there have been many "outbursts" prior to this one. In this regard, the audience is presented as both victim and perpetrators of Malema's image. They enable his disrespectful explosions by attending these rallies and by participating as his audience. They are later turned into fools and victims by being succumbed to the foul smell of Malema's fart. Although we find these often humorous images entertaining, we cannot help but feel unease at the seriousness of the issues presented. Malema's flatulence makes people uncomfortable and they cannot escape it. This speaks to the effect that cartoon visual commentary and caricature enables in images. Humour in this regard is able to communicate an issue that both irritates, and often frightens the South African public with regard to the leaders of this democratic nation.

The representation of Malema as a child questions the notion of what it means to be a man, and a black man in particular. Malema cannot be a child as well as a man. While black male identities may differ culturally and temporally, it has been explored through visual imagery in the Apartheid protest posters. Looking at this 1990 poster celebrating the 35th anniversary of South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), certain dimensions of what it means to be black man in the Apartheid era have been explored. The black man has been represented as a working man faced with hard labour on a daily basis. As Frantz Fanon (1967) in his *Black Skins White Masks* suggests, the image of the black man does not exist in isolation from economics and the political context in which he lives. The black man's "fact of blackness" is a social and an economic construct. In this particular poster, black physical masculinity has been exaggerated. The subject has a very strong build, and his arms enact the *Amandla* sign with easy strength. Without their agency and subjectivity in an oppressive system such as the Apartheid era, the black man developed what Fanon describes as an inferiority complex. This was a result of politics paradigms not allowing him his manhood in public, and he could only exercise his definition of being a black man at home. Today, black men have been given a different kind of agency. However, Malema's maleness is constantly been questioned in images that continuously depict his as a child.

Following Malema's publically describing Joe Seremane, the chairperson of the Democratic Alliance, Hellen Zille's puppet whose "role is to smile at the madam each time", Helen Zille proclaimed that Malema does not have the right to address Seremane. She referred to Malema as an "*Inkwenkwe*", which in Xhosa is an uncircumcised boy (Qudsiya Karrim 2009 ; Mail and Guardian.) Black masculinity and black maleness in most South African cultures is defined by whether or not a man has been circumcised. Black men will remain children and unable to rule, unless they have undergone the circumcision ritual into manhood. Helen Zille's comment on Malema's uncircumcised *pipi*, that is penis, questions his masculinity. To further comment on this, Malema is never shown with an ounce of muscle. He is a fat 'boy', contrast to muscular black activists, and would be incapable of physically being a part of the Apartheid struggle.

The role of the ANC Youth League members has often been to keep the members of the ANC intact. They publically comment on discrepancies and mistakes made by the ANC. From Peter Mokaba, the President of

the ANCYL from 1991, to Julius Malema, youth league members have publically challenged certain members of the ANC. During the Apartheid era, the Youth has often physically fought the white supremacist government. In contrast, the elders of the organisation, preferred to 'civilly' negotiate their equality into the country. Prior and during his inauguration as the president of the ANC youth league; Mokaba employed hostility against the oppressor. Violent and aggressive outburst such as the proclamation "Kill the boer, kill the farmer" were an indication of the fight that the youth was prepared to go through. From subtly and respectfully challenging the elders and their tactics, to violently targeting the opposition, Malema has employed a different kind of strategy. He often disrespects the elders he comments on, and employs sexist, militant, aggressive and violent approaches in his speech. His strategy to some degree takes on the form of Mokaba's aggression while simultaneously disturbing political expectations.

Through his speech, Malema is undoubtedly still militantly fighting for the revolution of the country, the revolution that should set the black people of South Africa free. Njabulo Ndebele mentions in his article, *The Journey of the Dogs,* that what Malema and the ANC fail to realise is that there is no longer a need for a revolution, especially not from the ANC who is in fact in power. Ndebele suggests that because the blood of the oppressor was never shed, there is still a longing for the war than never occurred. Black people pre-1994 were fighting for liberation from a disabling system, and Malema is evidently still awaiting that revolution. There is an aggression and hostility towards those that are mobilising a "counter-revolution"; a 'counter revolution' against a revolution that never occurred.

Since Malema's hostility is made evident through his speech, the language that he employs is part of his public image. His language is unfortunately an indication of his education. Following the controversy around Malema's 'outrageous' Matric results, and his infamous double G, that is, in the 20% category in Woodwork, his intellect has continuously been questioned. Fanon (1967; 8) suggests that, "The educated Negro, slave of the spontaneous and cosmic Negro myth, feels at a given stage that his race no longer understands him."

In this regard, I suggest that Malema's matriculation marks being shown as a point of embarrassment and diminishing his image might be effective only to a certain point. There is a reason why Malema always has an audience when he speaks at his rallies. In Fanon's view, he is able to be understood by his audience. This point is not meant to diminish Malema's audience to his believed 'below average' intellectual capacity, but if one has to look at the statement made by Fanon, there is a point of acceptance that connects Malema to those that listen when he speaks. Language and the accents that black male politicians often speak in, including formers South African presidents Thabo Mbeki and Nelson Mandela, opens common grounds with the masses that they speak to. The all speak in a 'black accent', for lack of a better phrase. The dynamics inherent in such an act I believe tie in to a dedication and commitment to the "fact of blackness". With the inclusion of foreign accents, accents that may be associated with the oppressor, such as a "fake" British or American accent, might break away from a Black-consciousness that has proven to inhibit most minds.

The Nandos advert which aired on local television screens on April 21st 2009 comments on language and accents. This derogatory advert featured as another attack on Julius Malema's image. It was banned soon after its debut. One cannot ignore the ridiculing tactic employed by Nandos to air the advert a day prior to the 22nd of April 2009 National elections. The timing of the advert adds to the hilarity towards Malema and the ANC. The advert is of a news bulletin, with an old white man with grey hair as the news presenter. He speaks in an eloquent white South African accent. While interviewing Julius Malema, or rather a puppet of Julius Malema that has a tag written "100% Julius" (possibly a comment on his Matric results), Malema is yet again portrayed as an unintelligent leader. After being greeted, "Good evening" by the old white man, Malema responds "Yes, good day" in a heavy "black accent". The language difference between the news presenter and that of Julius Malema is clearly marked. When Malema speaks, he uses words that are often associated with an inarticulation of the English language. His grammar is sometime incorrect. These mistakes break the fluency of speech and can often act as a distraction. Malema's language is different to the old white man's 'fluent' language, and with sentences such as "In the first place, ja", and "eh, you see" and "up to so far" while he aggressively points his index finger at the audience, Malema becomes an example of the importance of language, and even accents and how they often represent power.

Frantz Fanon suggests that "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization." Further on, Fanon suggests that "A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language...Mastery of language affords remarkable power" (1967; 18). When

one considers Apartheid era black male activist Steve Biko in comparison to Malema (I'll probably get shot for making that comparison), that power inherent in language plays in two different manners. Although Steve Biko was aggressive in his speech, his articulation of the English language meant that he could not be easily dismissed when he spoke. He was favoured by the black community as an image of black intellect. Malema, on the other hand, is aggressive, but his articulation is questionable, and is therefore an easy target to mockery by both black and white people.

Malema's heavy black accent can be contrasted to Naledi Pandor's so called "fake American accent". Fanon (1967; 25) suggests that the inferiority complex inherent in black people is "intensified among the most educated". This is a result of the black man's adopting "a language different from that of the group into which he was born [which] is evidence of a dislocation, a separation." Naledi Phando studied at a British university, which means that she may have a British accent, and not an American one as Malema suggests. Malema's criticising of Pandor's accent suggests her dislocation with her South Africanness. Her accent is gendered, and is an indication of class. I might even go as far as saying that it is an indication of race, an indication of the "whiteness" that according to Fanon, the black man or in this case, the black women, strives for (Fanon 1967; 10). Fanon suggests that mastery of language has the ability to elevate the oppressed to the state of the oppressor, the black person to the state of the oppressive Apartheid government. In this regard, Fanon echoes William Shakesper's *The Tempest*. Prospero is a colonial settler to Caliban's land. He enslaves Caliban and teaches him his own culture and language to enable communication and as a mean of civilisation. The bitter and colonised Caliban violently proclaims to Prospero "You taught me language; and my profit on't, Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you For learning me your language!" (Shakespeare; Act I, scene II). To Malema, his speaking in a black accent probably brings him closer to blackness and his roots. Pandor's acceptance and practice of the Oppressor's language subsequently turns her into the oppressor, one who is possibly plotting a counter revolution against the ANC.

With all this said, in a *democratic* country where the public is allowed "freedom of speech", the double standards between the public, represented by the Nandos advert and political bodies such as Malema becomes evident. Malema practices his freedom of speech for his 'improper' public outbursts that have the possibility to taint his target's public image. These are often, but not always followed by public apologies that could never restore the tainted image. When the public, such as Nandos, tackle Malema's image, they are quickly silenced and banned from local television. What Malema says about his colleagues and what is said about him is a contribution to his image. His T-shirt wearing self as an attempt to mark him as a 26 year old South African youth member cannot be denied. These are all strategies that emphasise that, while his mouth is a "lose canon", his acts should quickly be dismissed or ignored because he forms part of a broader youth culture.

Conclusion

While images of Steve Biko and the black men that were fighting for the emancipation of the oppressed black people of South Africa represent them as desirable and a basis for pride, Malema's image is one of juvenility and ridicule. Posters from the Medu art ensemble and other organisations were produced to show the pride of the black man, and to later promote black- consciousness. From the image of black men fighting for their rights, Malema is seen as exercising the right to disrupt and constantly disturb the image of South African politics. Malema's image is an indication that in a democratic country such as South Africa, the public is given the capacity to choose anyone they wish to rule them, however, they are not given the grounds on which to test whether the chosen leaders have the ability to lead. The point is not whether Malema can lead or not, but how the image of his leadership is presented in society. He does not adorn the muscles and manhood that the Apartheid black political bodies had. His black masculinity is constantly ridiculed and questioned, not only by cartoons and chicken fast food outlets, but also by other politicians, such as Helen Zille. Malema will forever be portrayed in contemporary visual and popular culture as a nappy wearing, puppetereed child who is incapable of ruling the youth of this country.

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Gender blindness and the shaping of memory in post-apartheid visual culture

I would like to begin by considering two familiar images from the Monument to the Women of South Africa, designed by Wilma Cruise and her collaborator Marcus Holmes. Located at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, The Monument recognizes and marks the site of one of the most celebrated political events in anti-apartheid history: the 1956 women's march, in which over 20,000 women from across the country came together to protest the proposed amendments to the Urban Areas Act. According to the competition brochure, this monument was to be a "significant, visible tribute to the women of South Africa," - one that was "long overdue" (Brigitte Mabandle, cited in Becker 2000: 1). In the 9 years since its inauguration, a number of scholars have written about the profound significance of the Monument as South Africa's first public memorial to recognize women's participation and involvement in the liberation struggle (see for example: Coombes 2003, Becker 2000, Smith 2000, Coombes 2003, Marshall 2004, and Arnold 2005). While the critical responses to the artists' aesthetic choices are varied, there is consensus that the Monument is *politically important* to the nation, because it makes visible the political strength of women and, in the words of Rayda Becker, it "officially affirms the role women have played in the formation of the new country in which all South Africans have equal civil rights" (Becker 2000: 1).

The paper that I have prepared for today represents one part of my larger research project -- in which I examine the extent to which women's participation in the struggle for democracy is represented and remembered, and in many cases forgotten, in contemporary South African visual culture, including commemorative sites. In her book *Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*, Annie Coombes remarks, "Women's vital role in the overthrow of the apartheid state has been sorely neglected in favor of a more monolithic representation of the liberation movement" (Coombes 2003: 107). Similarly, Raymond Suttner argues that post-apartheid narratives – visual and written - "dismiss or downplay the involvement of women in the political struggle" (Suttner 2008: 124). I believe that the rich visual rhetoric that once helped create political identities and recognition for women has now largely disappeared.

For my paper today, I aim to do two things:

First, I will consider the Monument as an example of feminist memorializing, based on the criteria set forth by Christine Bold, Ric Knowles, and Belinda Leach in their article "How Might a Women's Monument be Different?". According to the authors, in addition to marking or commemorating significant moments in women's history, a feminist memorial challenges the status quo through content and design, or in their words, it "resist[s] hegemonic monumentalism". They also argue that feminist memorials must be transformative in some way, either by inserting women's history into the public domain through the aforementioned counter-monumentalism, or by encouraging feminist action and activism (Bold et al 2003, 17).

Second, I will consider this feminist monument, and the fact that it has been virtually inaccessible to the public since its creation, from the perspective of Cynthia Enloe's work on post-conflict depictions of gender in relation to emerging political power. Speaking specifically about memorials and museums, Enloe argues that post-war representations often preserve the existing social order, or express cultural anxiety about

women's power; this in turn leads to what she calls a "postwar reimposition of prewar gendered 'normalcy'" (Enloe 2004, 199). Predictably, this "normalcy includes the absence of women from post-war political life". Enloe claims that the active failure to record – or the attempt to erase – women's political contributions can directly "affect postwar women's self images and opportunities for generations to come" (Enloe 2004, 200).

Although the Monument to the Women of South Africa includes a range of visual and audio components, including written text, spoken words, and lighting, much of the critical – and political -- responses have focused on the artists' choice to use an *imbokodo* – a grinding stone – as the primary sculptural element. And so I would like to begin there as well, and to begin thinking about what is expressed, politically – for women, by the use of the *imbokodo*?

Some who have critiqued the artists' choice argue that the primary understanding of the *imbokodo* is that it limits women's power because it is an everyday object, specifically one used for the preparation of food. In the most literal sense, this is true: Cruise used an actual grinding stone that was collected from the rural districts north of Pretoria (Cruise 2009). Because it was previously used for food preparation, this everyday object carries with it the memory of women's work and it is a reminder of women's domestic labor.

James Deetz urges us to look closer at the meaning behind everyday objects for what they can tell us about "the small things forgotten" of daily life (Deetz 1977). In this context, the "small things forgotten" include the fundamental importance of women's domestic work, including the preparation of food – work that is typically undervalued, unrecognized, and certainly under-memorialized. One reading of the *imbokodo*, then, is that it memorializes and recognizes the important role that women play as nurturers and nourishers, and how central this work is to the survival of families and communities, especially in circumstances where resources are limited. But I argue that the *imbokodo* does more than just remind us of women's domestic labor. It compels us to think about the more explicit ways in which food preparation has been tied directly to women's political activism in South Africa.

A visual symbol that speaks on many levels, the *imbokodo* is important because it acknowledges that the economic – and political -- challenges faced by women frequently differ from those faced by men, and that there may be gendered issues that compel women to activism. It makes reference to a long history of South African women's activism around what noted trade unionist Emma Mashinini termed "breadline" problems (Higgs 2004: 122), which encompass a range of issues essential to basic survival of families – issues that remind us of how and why some women inserted themselves into the political processes that led to democratic rule. [191]

Indeed, as a primary issue of concern particularly for black women who faced mounting poverty as racial segregation took hold in South Africa, breadline problems prompted many women to organize and agitate in the early 20th century by joining Zenzele ("help yourself") clubs (Higgs 2004, 122). Zenzele clubs were a primary way by which women sought both to empower themselves and *influence the political sphere* by restoring "a degree of economic independence" to themselves (Higgs 2004, 130). Zenzele clubs were critical spaces for women's mobilization and collective action and were particularly important during apartheid years when Black women's political activities were severely restricted through formal exclusion from the political sphere, as well as within most resistance organizations, including the ANC (Walker 1990). In a context where struggles for racial justice took precedence over gender issues, these clubs can be seen as early examples of precisely what the *imbokodo* symbolizes: women's political action around issues that were specific to them and which have since become central to theorizing about South African feminisms where the eradication of poverty is a central issue. [192]

The linking of women's domestic work to women's political work is not just a thing of the past - one needs only to listen to the voices of many women political activists who, in speaking about their experiences to Annie Coombes, voiced "particular challenges, frustrations, and devastating emotional and personal consequences of juggling domestic life with the public demands of the struggle" (Coombes 2003, 106). It is an issue that remains central to the life experiences of many women who seek a life of activism and politics.

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[191] In the context of South Africa, breadline problems have historically affected black women to a much greater extent than their white counterparts. Mashinini identified them as a key political issue, and described "suffer[ing] anxiety over what we call breadline problems" (Mashinini, in Higgs 2004:122).
[192] I have written elsewhere about Zenzele clubs in relation to artistic production and the eradication of poverty in South Africa, specifically among women's cooperatives, in "Iconographies of Gender, Poverty, and Power in Contemporary South African Visual Culture" (Miller, 2007).

The association with food is one of the ways in which the *imbokodo* represents the nuances of women's political issues, and their political roles, and it is a reminder of Zoe Wicomb's claim that women participate in political activism not as objective, or natural, agents, but as gendered brings (Wicomb, 1996, 47)

But there is, of course, more to the *imbokodo* than this. The *imbokodo*'s other meaning and function in the context of the Monument and anti-apartheid resistance – is not as a grinding stone but as a rock. In addition to being an everyday object, the rock is also a natural resource that, when in the bare hands of women, becomes a weapon that in the words of Zoliswa Mali, "made things happen" (Mali 2009). When considered in the context of a group of women who have mobilized to demand their rights – indeed, 20,000 women standing together – the rock connotes physical power, women's militancy, and their potential for violence.

This reading of the rock is reinforced by the 20,000 women who stood on those steps on that day, who did not hold rocks in their hands, but who invoked this symbolic understanding of the rock through written, spoken, and sung texts. Their freedom song, written specifically for this demonstration, frames women's strength in terms of a rock: "you strike the woman you strike the rock". It also invoked the rock as a symbol of potential violence, with the warning of women's intention to use the rock as a weapon if necessary: "you will be crushed". Indeed, these phrases and related imagery have been repeated on countless protest posters, t-shirts, and in other contexts throughout South Africa to indicate women's courage, strength, and political power over the past 50 years. The phrase is so powerful that it has worked to, in Susan Sontag's words, "lock a story in our minds" (Sontag 2003, 86). It is repeated as a reminder of this particular historic moment when women managed to create public voices for themselves in a circumstance where political dissent was restricted – a moment when women demonstrated that they were vital political agents in their own right.

This understanding of the rock as a weapon and as representative of women's political strength – not their cooking skills – is also reinforced repeatedly throughout the Monument, in visual and audio form. The stairs leading up to the *imbokodo* – those same stairs that the women walked up and stood on – display words and phrases from the letter of protest that was written by the Federation of South African Women. Thus a visitor should first encounter the Monument slowly - through reading, and passing upwards through the written demands. The text also leads visitors up to the *imbokodo,* where, when they arrive, their presence activates a series of sound recordings whispering the phrase "you strike the woman you strike the rock". The phrase is repeated in each of South Africa's eleven official languages.

This subtle but strong presence of voice, and the inclusion of the viewer in prompting the voices – if not engaging with them – is important in understanding the Monument to the Women of South Africa as a feminist site. Bold, Knowles, and Leach maintain that an emphasis on voice is an important component of feminist memorializing, particularly when it aims not just to record the past but also "to activate it, to keep voices… alive and to render memory performative" (Bold et all 2003, 32). And indeed, at this Monument, one of Cruise and Holmes' initial objectives was "to allow the voices of the past to be an ever present reminder of the power of women" (Cruise & Holmes 1999)

I would also like to suggest that the words carry more force, here, because they are written on the very site where the petitions were delivered, the site where women gathered, where words were spoken, thus reminding us that, in Rayda Becker's words, the Monument was meant to be a "claim for women in a center of political power, at the actual site where these historical events had taken place" (Becker 2000, 4). Space is particularly important here because while the work's visual impact is subtle, the memory of what happened here is not. It is a space where, as Pierre Nora might say, "cultural memory crystallizes and secrets itself" (Nora 1989, 7).

The voice, text, and *imbokodo* also work together as powerful features to demonstrate the non-hierarchal, feminist collaboration and political organizing among women that defined this historical moment – what Elaine Salo identifies as "the politics of coalition" (Salo 1999, 129). The artists' original proposal sought to make this even more clear by placing *izimbokodo* and accompanying explanatory plaques at various sites throughout South AFrica where smaller protests took place on that same day - - places like Durban, East London, Winburg, Port Elizabeth, and Venterspost -- to recognize the fact that women's activism on August 9 extended to less prestigious and now unacknowledged locations throughout the country (Cruise 2009). Although this aspect of the Memorial was never realized, it points to the artists' desire to emphasize collaboration and commonality, rather than hierarchy and heroism – a sentiment that would have been marked and memorialized, once again, through the symbol of the *imbokodo.*

This brings me to one final area where the *imbokodo* has stimulated debate, and that is whether or not the monument is appropriately "monumental", or heroic. Some critics have described the Monument as "small and insignificant" "anti-heroic" or even "submissive". It has been critiqued for its lack of monumentality (see for example Coombes: 108 and Marshall: 1020 - 1022). Even the Department of Arts and Culture registered their dissatisfaction with the anti-heroic and egalitarian quality of the Monument, when twice – in 2000 and again in 2006 – they urged the artists to enlarge the size of the *imbokodo* and place it behind glass and on a pedestal. Both times, the artists refused, although the original proposal indicates that they too were ambivalent over this issue of heroism, and how, and to what extent, it should be depicted (Cruise & Holmes 1999).

While I disagree with the force of some of these critiques, I do think its important to consider the issue of heroism in relation to gender, and to think about whether or not there is a general absence of a post-apartheid iconography of female heroism in relation to depictions of heroic men, and if so, what are the implications of that absence? What happens when national pride, or revolutionary success, is equated with male leadership? In her analysis of the gendered dynamics of imperial power, Anne McClintock offers one possible implication – she suggests that this absence naturalizes the idea that women do not inhabit history as agents (McClintock 1995,40).[193] On the other hand, as Ikem Stanley Okoye notes, all icons "achieve status by erasing more complex histories" (Okoye 2007, 114). And in this case, Cruise and Holmes decided to focus on that more complex history, and, through the *imbokodo*, they offer an expanded understanding of heroism. The *imbokodo* pushes us to not only reconsider (to return to James Deetz) the "small things forgotten" behind everyday objects, but also the small things forgotten behind *everyday people*. It reminds us that when one listens to how women imagined their own experiences during apartheid, a slightly different struggle story emerges, a story that compels us to enlarge our own understandings of heroism – of the heroic – of 20,000 or more "everyday" women.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper I stated that I would talk about commemorative sites in relation to the emerging political power of women, and I have spent the majority of my time conducting a feminist analysis of the Monument to the Women of South Africa. Part of doing a feminist analysis involves looking at the power structures that are involved, and those that are at stake, and then uncovering suppressions of female agency that are real and perceived. In my remaining time, I would like to talk about the suppression of women's agency that has happened subsequent to the installation of the Monument due to the fact that the Union Buildings have been restricted from public access since the beginning of the Mbeki administration. Memorials and monuments should engage the public in meaningful and significant ways. As Pierre Nora notes, the purpose of sites of memory is to "block the work of forgetting" (Nora 1989, 19). But in the context of the Monument to the Women of South Africa, it is the work of remembering that is blocked.

Annie Coombes has described her attempts to visit the Monument as a "Byzantime procedure for gaining access to a 'public monument' (Coombes 2003, 111). In addition to being closed to the public, it was also virtually inaccessible to Coombes, despite having ministerial clearance and approval for her visit. A few years later, Marion Arnold took up this issue of access while writing about the Monument, noting that "Anyone wishing to view the women's memorial how has to make an appointment, well ahead of the expected visit, via the Office of the President" (Arnold 2005, 27). Now, even this is not enough. When I attempted to gain access to the Monument last November, 2008, together with Wilma Cruise and Sandra Klopper, we, too, came equipped with clearance from the Department of Arts and Culture and the Office of the President. We too were denied entrance on the basis that the documents we had did not include the precise information desired by the guards who happened to be on duty that particular day. We spent well over an hour involved in conversation and pleading with the guards, who rejected our credentials while insisting that the Monument had "structured access" similar to that of the White House. However, it was quite clear to us that there was no structure to this absurd process, and that there is in fact no established protocol for gaining access to the buildings, or to the site of the Monument.

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[193] McClintock says this in the context of explaining the notion of "anachronistic space", which she considers as a regulatory trope that naturalizes the idea that women are not historical agents. "Within this trope, the agency of women, the colonized and the industrial working class are disavowed and projected onto anachronistic space: prehistoric, atavistic, and irrational, inherently out of place in the historical tie of modernity" (40).

That said, I have played the role of the "clueless American" in the past while conducting research, and so, as a final effort, I decided to do so once again. After the guards changed shifts, I informed one of the new guards that I was visiting from the United States, and that I missed Barak Obama's Presidential election in order to come to Pretoria to visit the Monument [this was, in fact, a true statement]. After a short pause, he allowed us to enter, escorting us through the gates, up the stairs, and to the Monument. We were not permitted to take photographs, which is why the two images you see here are the same images that are reproduced in every publication written about the Monument.

While it was thrilling for us to gain access to the Monument, if such access requires contacts, or special favors, from ministers in the Department of Arts and Culture or the Office of the President, or even a bit of inspiration of Barak Obama, what does this mean for the majority of people who visit the Union Buildings hoping to see the Monument?

Coombes argues that while this important commemorative site – still the only one dedicated entirely to women's efforts - exists as a material object, it has no presence in the public consciousness. Indeed, even the kind security guard who escorted Wilma Cruise and me up the steps to view the Monument did not know about the event that it represented. This, when combined with the relative absence of representations of women in other commemorative contexts, causes me to wonder: to what extent does women's contribution have any presence in the public consciousness? Is South Africa's landscape composing a topography of "struggle memory" changing in favor of a more narrow vision of sites and events, where women's experiences are generally neglected, if not actively omitted, in the context of a new national identity?[194]

While I certainly don't claim to have an answer to these questions – and I do hope to hear your thoughts at the end of this presentation - I would like to suggest that it is possible to interpret this literal erasure of women's presence in the public sphere as a denial the validity of women's political agency. If the Women's March was, in the words of Rayda Becker a "turning point in [women's] resistance history: [because] it marked their agency" (Becker 2000, 4), then the closing of the Monument can be evidence of what Meg Samuelson calls a "persistent patriarchy". I believe that this can affect the perceived importance of women's political roles during – and after – political transition, and lead to profound political consequences for women, including what Samuelson describes as a "postwar re-domestication of women that accompanies a restoration of patriarchal power in the present" (Samuelson 2007, 6).

In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, the omission – and erasure - of women is troubling, but perhaps not surprising, given what many have observed as the "gender blindness" of South Africa's internationally acclaimed process to confront its traumatic past and achieve national reconciliation: the TRC. Because the TRC failed to account for the sensitivities involved with sexual crimes against female political detainees, many women were unwilling to come forward to share their stories which, as Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes rightly claim, had "serious implications for the telling of [South African history]" (Goldblatt and Meintjes 1999, 4). I would argue that a comparable form of gender blindness is currently operating with regards to visual culture within South Africa, which not only has implications for the telling of history, as noted by Goldblatt and Meintjes, but may very well affect women's ability to, in Cynthia Enloe's words, "sustain an authentic political life in post-war periods" (Enloe 2004, 71).

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[194] This erasure must be considered in relation to the relative absence of representations of women in other commemorative contexts – for example, there are only two other memorials dedicated to women who were prominent in the struggle – one for Cissie Gool and the other for Lilian Ngoyi – created as part of the Sunday Times Heritage Project – but these sites are either physically isolated or ignored in tour itineraries.

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Threading the interstices: Tradition and Modernity in an African Wedding in Kwa-Zulu Natal

The research for this paper was prompted by two or three convergent events and their relationship to forms of representation. Some of the ethnographic thick description of the main wedding under discussion has been done in another paper, which helped me to define some of the salient further questions. One event was a dialogue with Patricia Allan, a curator at the Glasgow Museum, about a rough cotton skirt of the type made and used by Xhosa-speakers in the Eastern Cape. It was accessioned in 1893, one of three objects donated by

Magaret Wagstrom Hope, a teacher with the Kaffraria Mission at the Mgwali Training School near Dohne in the Stutterheim District prior to that date.[195] The skirt had been collected as an example of clothing worn by Xhosa subjects of the British Empire, but was about to be resurrected as an aesthetic object within a Museum setting. The skirt was prone to such treatment: not only was it old and suitably ochred, it was extensively decorated with beads and buttons and braid, and therefore had a particular aesthetic presence.

It was one of the a few well-preserved, early examples of the genre, and it stands as the direct antecedent to examples seen in photographs of Xhosa-speaking people; from that of a woman captured by Monica Wilson, to one of Tony Yengeni and his wife, posing in their chosen 'traditional' clothing for the opening of parliament in the mid 1990s. None of these photographed clothes has, entered into a museum collection, leading to the question of why one skirt is considered worthy of enshrinement in the halls of art, craft or culture and the others are not. This question is linked, of course, to distinctions made on the grounds of authenticity and ethnic identity in the face of a creeping modernity which will form the main theme of this paper.

While there are significant differences between the skirt in Glasgow and the ochre-less and beadless skirts in the photographs, they all participate in processes of modernization, which Sahlins has characterised as a *struggle of non-Western people to create their own versions of modernity.*[196] In this paper I take as read the modernisation of dress worn by the people in these images[197] and argue that this modernization of dress demands a particular form of representation, especially through photography. Wilson's photographs formed part of an ethnographic enquiry into the lives of the Pondo peoples,[198] and this one captures a microcosm of the changing world of 20th C Africa. Although it was the white woman anthropologist, the representative of one of the colonial project's hegemonic disciplines, who wielded the camera, it is clear that the woman in the photograph was able to dictate some of the terms. She wears clothes which speak of modern status, of ability to obtain trade goods including the towels or bedspreads used as upper body wrapper and turban, the belts and beads, reinterpreted in her own terms.[199]

Yet the photograph clearly follows certain prescribed photographic conventions. The woman stands, almost three-quarter view to the camera, looking at the spectator, smileless and slightly frowning. While we can only assume that this pose was dictated by the photographer, the lack of the conventional smile was probably inscribed in a different set of cultural assumptions.[200] As she does not identify this woman by name, Wilson's interest must be assumed to lie in her own agenda – possibly the subject's ability to appropriate aspects of Western culture and make them her own,[201] a process of indigenization characterised by Appaduari as "modernity at large"[202] and by Wilson (1961) as a "reaction to conquest". We do not know whether this woman ever received a copy of Wilson's photograph, and for the contemporary viewer functions only as an archive of an anonymous life in an ethnographic image bank.

The Yengeni couple claim their modernity in subtly different ways. Their clothing references Xhosa tradition but does not replicate it because it includes only a few modern elements, it interpolates a considered authenticity. The photograph arguably therefore presents us with an image of modern subjects,[203] despite their notably bare feet; a monogamous couple in a conventional couple-pose (who can be contrasted with more recent photographs of Jacob Zuma's polygamous household), presenting very conventional broad smiles to the camera. This convention was more or less consistently repeated in the press-photos of other

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[195] Patricia Allan pers comm. 12 May 2006.
[196] Sahlins 1999a xi.
[197] I have unpacked this in a fist part of this paper presented at a conference in London in 2006. This analysis will appear in the fuller version of this paper to be published in 2010.
[198] Wilson (1961).
[199] The question remains, however, as to whose constructs of modernity and tradition are ultimately visible here. That Wilson is not guilty of the kind of primitivising othering of the subject that Mirzoeff (1995) discerns in Lang's images of the Mangbetu is arguable because of the setting and the inclusion of many objects that have intruded from the world of consumer goods that came with what Wilson (1961) refers to as "Conquest".
[200] The question of how much experience a woman of this class in this particular historical setting would have had of photographic conventions is one that has not been asked in the literature where photography has always been treated as being innocent of its own historicity.
[201] This interest of Wilson's is evident throughout her work "Reaction to Conquest" (1961).
[202] Appadurai (1996:32).
[203] Both Sahlins (1999a & 1999b) and Appadurai (1996) make this point, although in different ways.

politicians caught at the same event,[204] all of them thus framed within one particular tradition of photographic representation, the rhetoric of the friendly.

The same framing convention is evident in one set of photographs in Thuli Priscilla Nkosi's and Simphiwe Nkosi's wedding album. This set shows the couple in their formal white-wedding finery.[205] These photographs index modernity not only through the use of conventional forms of clothing which are now so widely used across the globe that their 19th century European bourgeois origins are completely forgotten, but also in the way in which the photographs have been orchestrated and posed. One of the bride and her entourage is stable, a veritable classical triangular composition, which indicates a familiarity with conventions of group photographs first introduced into Africa, and to South Africa in particular, in the late 19th Century institutional photographs taken by missionaries of the converts to Christianity in mission schools.[206] Familiarity with the convention is shared between not only the photographer and those in the photograph, but also between them and the subsequent audiences of the photograph.

Such images have, since van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait, acted as potential archival evidence of weddings, recording opulence or lack thereof, and providing pivots of nostalgia for those photographed and their descendants. Their documentary character is to some extent dependent on their stasis. Similar images can be found in Bridal magazines, such as *You and Your Wedding;* in particular a wedding in Buckinghamshire (England), cast as Caribbean, which served to announce, via its inclusion in the media devoted to bridal extravaganza, a particular union to a very wide audience indeed.[207] Sahlins (1999), Appadurai (1996) and Forster (2007), among others, have linked processes of not only modernization, but of indigenised modernity as well, to the globalising effects of media. Although the Nkosi wedding photo was intended for a family and for their viewing, or a distribution determined by them, it participates in that same world of indigenisation of the global, because it also participates in a genealogy of imagery and iconology attached to white weddings, although these participants maintain a serious African facade.

The indigenisation of both the white wedding, and the conventions of its photography, date back to the conversion of Africans to institutional European Christianity in the nineteenth century. The photographs of these contemporary weddings are of the same order as the portrait photographs of the emergent black middle classes in late 19th century South Africa, whose literacy and Christian beliefs lent credence to their claims of modernity, and which were investigated by Santu Mofokeng in 1996. In this sense they contrast with another kind of image in which the conventions take another turn. Across Africa, from the earliest days of its introduction, photography was used to capture images of difference – that is difference in relation to European norms (Geary 1991). Such difference was, as Mirzoeff (1995) has argued, to be found in the bodies and customs, languages and dress of the people of Africa. One of the customs most studied by colonial anthropologists was the way in which people got married and what constituted legal and socially recognised forms of marriage. These customary marriages were photographed, often producing images which contrasted with the images made of white weddings which always, however erroneously, carry with them a Christian baggage. The photograph of a 'traditional' Zulu wedding as envisaged by the Shembe Church and taken by Schoemann in the 1960s makes the contrast very clear. It is a photograph of action.[208]

The young woman at the centre, the bride, is being escorted to her husband's village by a married woman wearing an *isicholo and an isidwaba* to her left (our right) and a man in a *beshu* to her right. The details of the costume indicate very clearly the different statuses assigned to people and these have been taken as indices of particular ethnic identity in a fairly long duration. Items of such clothing have been collected as ethnographic specimens, and as works of art, and photographs of persons wearing these costumes have become documents, not only of customs and mores, but of particular aesthetic formations of the body. They record not only the objects and persons but also ways in which objects are deployed at a particular moment and in a particular place. While, in South Africa, these different aesthetics have been enforced in brutal separations of people from each other, they nevertheless remain entrenched in peoples' consciousnesses as in some way indigenous and authentic.

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[204] I have unpacked these images elsewhere.
[205] These include one of Thuli, Simphiwe, Thuli's children and Simphiwe's niece, and another of Thuli and her bridesmaids and flower girls.
[206] Bester 1997 discusses various aspects of Anglican mission photography in the eastern Cape and Namibia.
[207] "Caribbean Dream" 2009
[208] My thanks to Sandra Klopper for her insight in identifying this photograph and the particularity of the wedding gear. Isiah Shembe's Nazarite Church imposes particular kinds of wear on its followers – see Papini(2004) and Muller (1999) for more details

Yet as Appadurai (1996) and Sahlins (1999a,b), have argued, cultural authenticity is always open to mutation and modernization. These latter processes are, as Till Förster (2007) has shown in relation to Ivoirian weddings, heavily dependent on media depictions of modernity. They are also inflected by the specific localities in which they are followed. When Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma attended the opening of parliament in Cape Town in her traditional Zulu costume, she was making a statement about an African identity, a statement which, if we follow Appadurai (1996), could be seen as expressing a nostalgia for something which she had not lost, largely because she would not have dressed like this on an everyday basis. Of course, her outfit is modernised, and its situation in the particular locale in which she is photographed prevents it from taking on a fully authenticated character.[209]

The photographs of the 'traditional' Zulu phase from the Nkosi wedding, however, are more akin to the structure of the Shembe wedding image. There are one or two photographs focused on the bride and groom in 'traditional' dress, whose authenticity is contemporary because it is re-imagined. Most of the images of this phase of the Nkosi wedding focus on the dancing, on the process of the wedding, on the bride and groom in a larger context, but outside the conventions of portraiture. Similarly the images broadcast to the nation in various media, of the wedding of, now President, Jacob Zuma to his fifth wife in 2006 focus on the traditional processes of dancing – there were no formal static, whole family portraits – this was an African, more accurately, a "Zulu" wedding.[210] The photographs of Zuma's wedding reveal a form of spectacle similar to that seen in 'Zulu' dance and singing troupes, and both reflect what Appadurai calls the contemporary form of work of consumers, the work of imagination. They fit into this category in that the choreographing of the action and the clothing are markers of a culturalised identity and imagine a present that is situated in the past. The traditional segment of the Nkosi wedding did not escape this paradox, as is exemplified in the appearance of a woman in a contemporary version of Venda dress in the dancing group and the presence of a video photographer in the background. The geneaologies of such imaging of weddings does not only take us back to ethnographic documents of the 1900s, but also to the contemporary media.

One of the most powerful illustrations of this is from the soap opera *Scandal!*, for which which an Afro-Indian fusion wedding between two of the main characters was recently filmed. Photographs of these sequences were published in the July 2nd edition of *Drum* and *You* (Orlin 2009 a & b) magazines. In both, this wedding was written about as though it were real, an actual wedding across ethnic lines, and the photographic stills fall into the two groups I have outlined, except that the formal, family photograph is placed within the nexus of the Indian (read outside/not fully African) wedding ceremony. All of this takes place within a world that is imagined by the writers and designers and directors of a TV series, but the costume designer claims that 'a lot of research went into making sure that the traditions and customs of both cultures were maintained.'[211] While there is little correspondence between the dress worn in any of these images and those evident in the Zuma and Nkosi wedding photographs, it is nevertheless clear that they all belong in a similarly imagined space of cultural authenticity. The claim made in these magazine articles for the uniqueness of the cross-cultural wedding presented in the soap opera, are of course unfounded, because such weddings happen every week within the cultural melting pot that is South Africa.

The question of authenticity, however, returns us to the question of the status of articles of clothing within the world of collections, museums and the rarified air of 'art' spaces. Unlike the *izidwaba, izicholo* and large variety of beadwork forms, which once graced actual bodies, mostly before 1970, and are now kept in museums and South African art galleries, the new forms of clothing are largely ignored, unless they feature elements of extreme modernization.[212] The white wedding dress is often merely hired for the occasion; buying one leaves the married woman with a white elephant,[213] one which very few museums are liikely to want unless the wearer was someone of importance or the designer had acquired star status. Once clothes are museumised, one is made aware of their relationship to particular bodies only through the photographic record. So, while Appadurai (1996) talks of the way in which states have museumised culture through forms such as dress, turning them into heritage, it is also clear that the documentary conventions of photography

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[209] The lack of authenticity is here enhanced by the static smiling pose and by the fact that Fraser Moloketi and Ginwala who share the frame would not have been able to participate in a Zulu-style dance.

[210] One of the notable differences between the Nkosi traditional wedding and that of Zuma is that Simphiwe Nkosi refused to wear the *beshu* and to follow some of the traditional practices because he is a Christian and considers himself bound by another code.

[211] Carol Furstenberg cited by Orlin (2009b:86) in the *You* article she is called Corlene.

[212] See Nettleton, Charlton and Rankin-Smith 2003.

[213] This is evident from the presence of a section in *You and Your Wedding* devoted to what the now married woman should do with her wedding dress after the ceremony.

enable the use of such museum items as a source for the work of the imagination. Most people, like Simphiwe and Ntuli Nkosi, do not have access to the Zulu objects in museums, especially as few of them are on display, and few are accessible through popular publications. This has pevented the freezing of objects and their manners of use into a form of inalienable authenticity. It has left the very notion of the authentic in the realm of memory rather than history and has decentred the single author as the focus of the creation of cultural capital. It has left the field open for a continuous reinvention of traditions.

At the same time the lack of certainty in classificatory schemes points to the continuing crisis of identity in the world of the art museum and the ethnic gallery. This crisis is can, following Appadurai(1996), be ascribed to a collapse in the lived world, of the boundaries that separated the past from the present, that situated memories in personal and community experience, in what Nora (1989) called *lieux de memoire*, and thus located authenticity outside the grasp of both official history and streamlined academic genealogies. The ways in which such memories were documented, produced photographs as *lieux de memoire* with different audiences on an exponentially expanding scale. Weddings are now a thriving cultural business in all parts of the world and photographers specialise in weddings; the photographers at the Ntuli wedding outside Newcastle in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal are no exceptions. Where clothing of ancestors might, in the past, have located memories, now it is photographs of ancestors (often still living) and their clothing that do the job of feeding the contemporary desire for the past. It is thus clear that the interstices between modernity and tradition, Homi Bhabha's (1994) colonial and postcolonial inbetweenness, are visible not only in the content of these photographs, but in the modalities of representation which they engage. The conventions of photography that I have traced here coincide with particular forms of enormously complex culturalised practices, a correlation which has implications for understanding and collecting art in its post everything manifestations because it demonstrates the ways in which genealogies develop within contemporary manifestations of discourses.

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The bicycle ride to Berlin: Robin Rhode and humour

In South African visual art, humour is not generally thought of as having much currency, thus its discourse is often disregarded. Art that evokes laughter or even a smile continues to challenge art professionals. Robin Rhode is one of the fewer South African artists that explore the currency of humour in his work. His sometimes quick, witty and often humourous works, together with his utilisation of a globalising urban youth culture, has established him in the global art market. Using humour to subvert the notion of the centre and the periphery, he continues to tackle the politics of the marginal figure in democratic South Africa, a country still fighting ghosts of apartheid while trying to assert itself in the global arena. Born in Cape Town in 1976, Rhode grew up in the West Rand of Johannesburg, Bosmont. He received a diploma in Fine Arts from the Witwatersrand Technikon in 1998 and then furthered his studies at the South African School of Film, Television and Dramatic Arts in 2000. He decided to settle in Berlin in 2002 whilst completing his residency programme there.

Rhode manipulates the 'coloured' figure in an ambiguous and playful manner to challenge the character of the stereotypical 'coloured' that has often been rendered an object of ridicule and an anomaly. Like other humourist figures such as the minstrel and the jester, Rhode performed for his audience, challenging notions of truth and permanence. Even though Rhode has been compared to humourist figures such as the jester and the trickster, he is no buffoon. He is savvy, commercially and professionally successful artist. In this paper, I intend on showing that, even though Rhode has settled in Europe, his work continues to reference the race politics in South Africa.

In South Africa in particular many creative responses have surfaced as a result of colonialism and it's after effects. As a result, Rhode's use of humour speaks to some of the creative and reflective strategies used by contemporary artists today. Andre Breton defines humour to be "the denial of reality, and a splendid affirmation of the pleasure principle."(Klein, 2007:9) Humour can also be thought of as an attitude that makes jokes and comedy possible through understanding reality, but refusing to be constrained by it. Rhode however does not deny the reality of the space, the figure in space nor the performance, but rather conflates the three to push the limits of reality itself. His initial inspiration for his visual approach is told to several interviewers when he states,

I became inspired by a specific experience or ritual in high school- a type of initiation rite whereby young pupils were forcefully taken into the boys' toilets by senior pupils. Chalk was stolen from the classroom and the senior boys would draw elementary objects such as candles and bicycles, directly onto the walls of the toilets. The younger pupil was then forced to interact with the drawn object, either trying to blow out the candle or to ride the bicycle. It was a form of initiation into high school subculture. (Rhode quoted in Bellini, 2005:91)

This experience became the model for his most of his artistic practice. This form of initiation used by senior students would ridicule the younger to elevate their status among the rest of the school. Using this playful form of aggression the senior students would attain pleasure as they ridicule the juniors. Here humour is used to enforce power and hierarchy, which is best understood using the first theory of humour, represented earlier by Plato and Aristotle. The superiority theory of humour acknowledges that for something to be funny the viewer must come to some delight in seeing others come to some travail. This psychodynamic theory advanced by Henri Bergson in 1928, dominated the philosophical tradition until the eighteenth century, (Critchley, 2002:3) emphasising the social function of humour, where humour and pleasure can be derived from finding delight in other's misfortunes through mockery and ridicule. (Klein, 2007:10) Humour may be one of the conditions for taking up a critical position with respect to what passes for everyday life, producing a change in our situation which is both liberating and elevating. (Critchley, 2002: 41) This is true to Rhode's approach where he takes personal experiences from everyday life and objects, liberates them from the

constraints of reality whilst defying the physical laws of the world. By looking at art like Rhode's invites a humorous response and asks us to remain open to ambiguity and play.

This initiation process resulted in the bicycle becoming a major icon of Rhode's work. In one of his first performances *Classic Bike* (1998), Rhode draws a bicycle on the wall and attempts to ride it, unsuccessfully however. Here the drawing of the bicycle depicts an object of desire; the desire to ride and own the bicycle. In the performance Rhode's face his hidden from the viewer, remaining anonymous. Like that of a storyboard his attempt to ride the bike unfolds. The figure raises one leg in the hope to get onto the bicycle; he leans forward, takes hold of the front wheel, crouches down and checks the chain, bends his knees and tries to push the bicycle away. (Rosenthal, 2008:9)

Rhode's interaction with the representation of an art object as if it was the actual physical object blurs two and three dimensions. In doing so he suggests that the confusion between the real and the illusion is not only unavoidable but also inherent to every attempt of representation. (ibid) French philosopher Blaise Pascal, first proposed the theory of incongruity in the 1600s. He said "Nothing produces laughter than a disproportion between that which one expects, and that which one sees." (Klein, 2007:10) Rhode suspends our disbelief so that our minds are taken to fantastical possibilities. In his early performance work the planes of reality and fantasy are blurred. Rhode inverts the frame, using humour and play to destabilize and admit the unseemly. *Park Bench* (2000), *Getaway* (2000),*He Got Game* (2002) are all early works which use this strategy of destabilization.

This iconic bicycle continues to appear in his later work like in 2002 titled *New Kids on the Bike* (2002) which similarly depicts a bicycle chalked into the ground. Two school-age boys playfully drape themselves and their backpacks on to the imaginary bicycle. Later in 2007 he re appropriates the image of the bicycle into something more concrete. In the installation titled *Soap and Water* (2007), the once desired bicycle now takes on solid form. The life-size bicycle is made of pastel green soap and is presented on the gallery floor alongside a metal bucket of water. The bicycle's form has the illusion of permanence, but this permanence is quickly destabilized by the nearby presence of water, which alludes to the possibility of the bicycle turning from solid to liquid form.

According to Rhode, being a student in South Africa in the late 90's was extremely challenging. He claims that the political landscape was as a determining factor on art production, where art institutions were predominantly run by white practitioners with black artists situated towards the periphery. (Rhode quoted in Bellini, 2000:91)

South Africa continues to be the main inspiration of his creativity. Rhode draws on his experiences in 'the hood' as positive and motivating, rendering the negative aspects as "ironic, absurd and humourous."(Hobbs, 2001:11) When speaking of his personal experiences of marginality, Rhode self-consciously uses and asserts this position as an advantage, using his culturally coded landscape to invade the status quo of the South African art world. This historical, political and geographical marginalisation has afforded Rhode a dual position in which to create artistically. (ibid) According to Khwezi Gule, Rhode personally sees his role as "illuminating a common heritage of marginalisation," (Gule, 2005:25) where the scenarios he creates speak of trying to fit into standards and frameworks that are devised by others; "situations devised for exclusions." (ibid: 25) Rhode approaches resistance in a playful manner, fantastical rather than purely "oppositional." (ibid: 25) Being inspired completely by his own "cultural identity being a coloured person" in South Africa, he believed that a sub-cultural language impregnated by politics and marginalization could give birth to a broader artistic vernacular. (Bellini, 2005:91)

Even though humour plays a substantial role in facilitating cross cultural understanding, whereby artists take light hearted swipes at their own cultures to which they belong, it may also perpetuate such stereotypes. (ibid) The use of culture as a means for understanding as well as resistance can be traced as far back as the arrival of the colonialists themselves. In Cape Town, The Minstrel, or The Coon Carnival as it is known, continues to be an important site of contestation for the coloured working class. (Minty, 2006: 425) It is suggested by Baxter that many politically aware coloured people opposed the carnival, believing it to epitomise and reinforce the negative stereotype of coloured identity. The support base for the Carnival is predominantly Cape Town's coloured working-class whereas the coloured petit-bourgeoisie (its intellectual and political elite) tends to reject suggestions that the Carnival is representative of their culture. (Baxter, 2001:89) Like the 'petit-bourgeoisie' who did not want to be associated with the stereotype of what it means to be coloured, Rhode decided to steer away from performing himself, and opted for the use a performer as

the protagonist of the performance. Rhode himself began to feel like a "minstrel".(Kino 2007) To quote Rhode, "Some museums would fly me in and say, 'Do something. There's no budget. Here's a piece of chalk'."(Rhode, in Modern Painters: 66) Similar to Rhode the jester was something more than an entertainer but also the licensed critic of his master and his fellows. He was not held accountable for what he spoke, and could speak "unwelcome truths with comparative impunity." (Goldsmith 1958:7) Using their wit, jesters like Rhode could out do people of higher social and political ranking, more specifically for Rhode who comments on the institutions and systems which were and still are in place as a result of colonialism. Both jester and trickster are dualistic manipulators and marginal figures with a "disruptive presence" to expose deceit and disrupt the status quo. (Gaylard, 2005:162)

Since 2006 Rhode has steered away from live museum performances. He choreographs his performances which are executed by his chosen performer. This step has culminated in Rhode working more on paper, and producing sculptures, film and photographic works. Performance continues to remain essential to his work, but his aim now is to "to see how it can evolve into other forms." (Green: 2008) The work produced outside of South Africa continues to make reference to experiences felt within the country. Works like *Candle* (2007) once again references the high school initiation ritual and *Caps n Coins* (2007) makes reference to the abalone shell also known as perlemoen, which has been important to the underground economy in South Africa. The history and context of the abalone shell is what drives the work. In nearly all interviews and reviews, Rhode claims that his interests have been shaped by the subtleties of identity and city life in post-apartheid South Africa. Is this what gives his work the currency it has now? The catalogue for *Who Saw Who* (2008), the title of his solo show at the Hayward Gallery is an example of this where the politics of South Africa is heavily referenced in the texts like *Jozi Juice* (2008)*,* which discusses the ambivalence of the city as a site for production and destruction.

The culmination of his fame and fortune is evident in his latest rockstar endeavour, as the commissioned artist for the BMW Expression of Joy campaign. The commissioned artists for BMW tend to reflect the who's who of the moment's hottest artists, which previously included Andy Warhol, David Hockney and Jenny Holzer. By this observation, it is clear that Rhode's once desired bicycle had proved to be an efficient mode of transportation. From drawing bicycles on walls to directing a BMW Z4 Roadster, Rhode's position in the art world has certainly escalated at a fast rate. Along his journey, his strategic use and misuse of South Africa's social and political climate has eased his entry into the global art market.

As I have mentioned in the beginning of my paper, humour in art history and art criticism is often side lined and the works themselves tend not to be taken seriously enough, and are often laughed off. An increase of scholarly interest in humour and South African art could shed light on the varieties of terms associated with humour, thus providing some space for debate and discussion.

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Fiction and the Artist's Book: A contemporary novel read through the lens of selected conventions of the Artist's Book

In this paper I undertake a focused 'reading' of Jonathan Safran Foer's novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* in which I explore some of his departures from what might be termed 'the conventions of the novel form'. This exploration is supported by a brief examination of selected historical examples of the novel which achieve important departures from the conventions of their day. My reading of Foer's 'exploded' novel finds parallels in the artist's book; parallels, I argue, which aid in a reading and deconstruction of Foer's work.

Michel Foucault, (1994:10) describes a terrain in which Foer's image / text relationships may jostle in such a manner as to suggest something 'new':

The relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate…it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say...the space where they achieve their splendor is not that deployed by our eyes but that defined by the sequential elements of syntax…in other words, to pass surreptitiously from the space where one speaks to the space where one looks…to fold one over the other as if they were equivalents.

I argue, however, that it is exactly within that space which is 'deployed by our eyes' that Foer is able to suggest something new. Although Foer seems to have taken the contemporary novel into a terrain which has been partially prepared by the breaking of literary conventions by earlier forms of the novel, some of which I discuss here, I argue that this terrain is also occupied by concrete or visual poetry and the artist's book.

A direction for this paper, in terms of the breaking of literary conventions of the novel, was suggested by the exhibition of Jack Kerouac's scroll manuscript of *On the Road* exhibited for the first time outside of the USA, at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, in early 2009. Typed on a number of reels of 12ft long paper taped together to form a 127-foot-long continuous typescript scroll, Kerouac's novel formed the centerpiece of an exhibition which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the release of the book in the UK.[214]

Literary theorist Joshua Kupetz (2008:86) in discussing what Kerouac described as his "American poetic 'sprawl'"[215] (2008:87), states that:

> Kerouac abandoned the conventional techniques he had used when writing…so that he might be 'free as Joyce' when composing *On the Road* ... Kerouac writes that he was 'not interested in The Novel' and that he wanted to be 'free to wander from the laws of the 'novel' as laid down by [Jane] Austens & [Henry] Fieldings.

Howard Cunnell (2008:25) describes how Kerouac dramatically collapses the distinction between writer and narrated 'I', in a headlong, intimate, discursive and wild manner with improvised notations including dots and dashes to break sentences so that they "pile upon themselves like waves".[216] Kupetz (2008:91) elaborates: In that Kerouac's method may be seen as "contingent" his readers "find themselves...stranded if they approach his mountain of unbroken text anticipating that it will offer an inherent meaning, if their expectations and interpretative strategies are based upon linearity[217] and predetermined by novelistic convention". Kupetz (2008:91) states that the reader must allow the "sprawling prose" to turn, reverse and set back upon itself in "a series of deflections" and by accepting "that the shifting horizon of signification is part of the experience of meaning,[218] the reader can proceed and be 'headed there at last'". Kupetz (2008:91) continues:

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[214] The *Guardian's* Mark Brown (online 2008:np) informs us that Kerouac typewrote the scroll in just three weeks, on a number of reels of 12ft long paper taped together as a scroll so that he did not have to stop, just writing fuelled only, he said, by coffee. The exhibition's curator Professor Dick Ellis (online 2008:np) states:
> This is an iconic manuscript. It is a record of the huge effort Kerouac put into composing it. It was 20 days of typing 6,500 words a day, flat out, in spontaneous composition. He wanted to record things with the most possible accuracy using the spontaneous technique. His typewriter became a compositional instrument…Kerouac said he wrote fast because the road was fast…Of course, in the published novel, there are paragraph breaks but in the scroll, there are none. Kerouac did not have the time.

Ellis is not completely accurate in his reading of 'time' in Kerouac's scroll: Kerouac certainly edited the scroll as he went. Howard Cunnell (2008:1-2) debunks the mythology surrounding both man and scroll, stating that in his letter to Neil Cassidy (Kerouac's friend, travelling companion and one of the story's major protagonists) of 22 May 1951, informing him of the completion of the scroll manuscript which he wrote between April 2 and April 22 1951, Kerouac explained that "of course since Apr. 22 I've been typing and revising. Thirty days on that."

[215] Having established Kerouac's desire to be free of the laws of the novel, and thus from conventions, Kupetz (2008:86) states that Kerouac suggests that, "the novel is an articulation of recognizable conventions, 'laws' that will not help him tell the story that he wants to tell". A combination of poetic and prosaic elements made his most radical transformations of narrative possible as "a novel like poetry…a narrative poem, an epos in mosaic" so as to "bust out from the European narrative into Mood Chapters of an American poetic 'sprawl'" (2008:87).

[216] Kerouac (in: Cunnell 2008:34) described his technique to Allen Ginsberg as 'sketching'

[217] Just as the linearity of Route 6 seduces Kerouac into believing that it represents the wonderful prospect of a direct passage to his destination but which he soon realises will 'lead him only to death' (Kupetz 2008:91).

[218] In so consciously disrupting our understanding of what it is that we are reading, writes Cunnell (2008:25) Kerouac claims that *On the Road* marks a complete departure from not only his previous work (*The Town and the City*) but in fact from previous American literature.

As a series of deflections, Kerouac's prose narratives anticipate reader-oriented theories that establish the reader, not the text, as the site of meaning. However, contemporary theory cannot prove that meaning definitely occurs inside the reader either, so a text's meaning is often considered an effect of the interaction between text and reader…Kerouac's narratives involve the reader in the process of discovering meaning by encountering unfamiliar structures.

To the American public, the scroll, its style as a continuous sketched 'sprawl' and even the sanitized, vastly edited final published version of 1957[219] are all unfamiliar structures. Yet for a European audience, such structures are not unfamiliar.

Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1760), one of the first novels in English, interrogates the novel form and in doing so, introduced the element of self-consciousness into narrative structure: the author digresses from the story in order to speak directly to the reader; introduces blank, black and marbled pages as illuminations to and of the text; introduces dashes, stars, linear diagrams and gaps to highlight and extend aspects of the text. Both Guillaume Apollinaire and Stéphane Mallarmé[220] unhinged the semiotic differences between texts and images and ushered in forms of Visual and, later, Concrete Poetry in which these differences began to collapse. But what is more crucial as a foundation for Kerouac is Virginia Woolf's writing. In *To the Lighthouse* (1927), literary theorist Kate Flint (1984:xi) describes Woolf's denial of formulae and conventions in order to "write with an entirely different approach." Flint continues:

> Instead of putting her efforts into organizing a carefully constructed plot, she preferred to manipulate words and sentences, to juxtapose different ways of seeing a scene, in order to show the way in which 'an ordinary mind on an ordinary day' receives, and indeed itself organizes, 'a myriad impressions' (Flint 1984:xi).

Shifting perspectives (like 'shifting horizons') show how the mind can operate on several levels simultaneously. For Woolf, 'character' is not a fixed, static quality and is "dependent on varied angles of perception" (Flint 1984:xxvi) an idea concomitant with the contemporaneous works of Cézanne and Picasso[221]. Simultaneity, of 'inner' and 'outer' perception,[222] was typical in her work from 1920 onward where she "was explicitly thinking of a new type of fiction: one based on the author's 'own feeling and not on convention'" (Flint 1984:x). The lighthouse, "in its many manifestations throughout the novel perpetually reminds us that living is a precarious affair, a theme to which I will return later, and that nothing is 'simply one thing', the bearer of one meaning" and her development, along with James Joyce, of writing as a *stream of consciousness*, helped establish this (simultaneity and the fluidity of meaning) as a pre-postmodern form and taken up by, amongst other post-modernists, by Jacques Derrida in the parallel narratives of *Glas* (1974).[223]

In defending what Carl Solomon, editor at A. A. Wyn publishers, termed "an incoherent mess", Kerouac wrote that Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) was considered difficult reading and is now hailed as a classic which 'everybody understands' (Kupetz 2008:84). Notwithstanding Kerouac's faith in everybody's ability to 'understand' *Ulysses* and his earlier stated desire to be 'free as Joyce', it is clear that Joyce's work requires some attention. South African artist's book collector and maker, Jack Ginsberg, has devoted attention to Joyce's work and particularly to the last chapter of *Ulysses* which comprises Molly Bloom's soliloquy, generally called *Penelope*,[224] and notorious for having no punctuation. Ginsberg (1998:5) considers it "Joyce's great achievement that he managed to convey a plausible version of the workings of a semi- or sub-conscious state of mind" and that, Ginsberg continues, "one might indeed say that the development of the

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[219] After completing the scroll on or just before 22 May 1951, Kerouac had to wait until 5 September 1957 for its final publication.

[220] Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dès* (1914) proves to be an unrealisable form of what he called The Book as a spiritual instrument. What it does achieve, however, is to "belie the conventional layout of the book with its 'eternally unbearable columns' and manifests a constellation of text" (Drucker 1995:36), a 'constellation' which might foreshadow Kerouac.

[221] Cézanne and, later in examples of 'Analytical Cubism', Picasso exploits simultaneity of viewpoint as particularly 'truthful' modes of representation.

[222] A window, presenting a vista (the outside), at one moment for Ms Ramsay, becomes a limiting frame (the inside) in a later paragraph.

[223] In *Glas*, Derrida follows a parallel structure suggested by Jean Genet in which the text is written in two columns: the left column is about Hegel while the right column is about Genet.

[224] Penelope was the wife of Odysseus (Ulysses) who waited twenty years for her husband's return from the Trojan War

novel ended with Joyce".[225] Ginsberg explores the unpunctuated text as a space for typographic play, exploiting the text block's pitch from 1, through 5.5 where the full extract fits onto one page and which, Ginsberg notes (1998:9) is "a particularly beautiful typographic example owing to its lack of punctuation". Ginsberg's final page, to a pitch size of 262, allows for only the last word 'yes.' The final full stop is Joyce's! Hereafter Ginsberg attempts to punctuate the *Penelope* soliloquy in a humorous attempt "to construct an artist's book, largely typographic in nature, which explores text as image" (1998:3) as much as it might offend the "prescriptive demands" Ginsberg states, of Microsoft Word's grammar-check functions (1998:3).

In summing up this part of the paper, I have noted that, in the examples which broke with the literary conventions of the novel, a distinctly visual element, or a need for the simultaneity of the verbal and the visual seems to have resulted from these breaks. Having established the importance of 'the visual' as an element of these novels, and with the aid of a theoretical underpinning provided by the artist's book, in the next part, I undertake a visual analytical 'reading' of Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005).

Briefly stated, it weaves the stories of three related protagonists who have experienced such traumatic loss that they are barely able to function in conventional society[226]. Firstly, Grandfather, Thomas Schell, who survived the bombings of Dresden but lost both Anna, his love, and his unborn child and who later loses the son (also a Thomas Schell) in the 9/11 World Trade Centre attacks, who, it is implied, he had never met. Secondly, his grandson, Oskar Schell, whose beloved father is the one lost in the 9/11 attacks, and thirdly 'Grandma' who experienced and survived both the Dresden bombings and 9/11. Like Woolf, Joyce and Kerouac, Foer weaves a series of non-linear narratives across time and history, constructing a montage of spoken, thought and written communication from, about and to the protagonists and other characters. Just as we have found in *To the Lighthouse*, *Ulysses* and *On the Road*, these narratives speak of both the externally experienced world of the here-and-now; and of internalised memory and thought. It is beholden upon the reader to understand and separate these texts as well as by which protagonist they are uttered and to whom these thoughts or words are directed. The reader begins to believe that she/he might be privileged to hold a bird's-eye-view of the entire tapestry, with the various protagonists and characters understanding, only partially, what the reader knows, only to have these certainties removed when characters reveal what they have known and done without the reader's, or other protagonists' knowledge.

In this book, the act of writing is self-reflexive and as such, Foer is able to release many of the unusual pictorial and visual elements of the book. What is also clear is that, in 2005, Foer presents this work as an object which attempts to counter the ubiquity of contemporary forms of electronic and digital communication and in which commercial desire and terror as spectacle are flattened to 'sameness'. It is clear that Foer's protagonists, whether elderly immigrants to America who are caught in the events of the past or a 9 year old child, afraid of 'ordinary things' battle against a contemporary media-rich world which cannot provide answers to their experiences of trauma. Rather, Foer constructs his protagonists' experiences in quaint, obsessively haptic forms; materials which present themselves as forensic evidence, such as: lists; data card indexes; dated envelopes which fill drawers; written letters which fill suitcases; a tattooed 'yes' and 'no' on the palms of the hands, diaries which fill rooms, and whose texts creep out onto the walls when full; and Oskar's 'Stuff That Happened to Me', his journal which contains, amongst many things, Googled material, printed and stuck into it like an antiquated scrap book; something he can hold, like a comforter. These provide Foer with an opportunity to expand the novel's conventions through images,[227] and where, as Foucault describes, we pass 'surreptitiously from the space where one speaks to the space where one looks'.

The book begins with three images: a close-up of a keyhole in an ornamental doorknob; birds in flight and an out of focus building – we learn later that these are probably photos taken by Oskar and pasted into 'Stuff That Happened to Me'. But these images are the first 3 pages we encounter on opening the cover, not the conventional blank and title pages, these only come later. And thus we are forewarned that we are entering something other than the conventional novel. Only much later can we understand that the 'something' we are

[225] In a similar way to Kerouac's need for the continuous text block of the scroll to symbolize the experiences on the 'fast road', Joyce's use of stream of consciousness used in *Penelope* allows Molly Bloom's thoughts to flow in a way which punctuation would inhibit.

[226] For a reading of the novel in relation to trauma, see: Sien Uytterschout and Kristiaan Versluys', *Melancholy and Mourning in Jonathan Safran Foer's Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. Orbis Litterarum 63:3 216–236, 2008.

[227] Pictures become illuminations of Oskar's stream of consciousness or clues in his search or hints as to his state of mind; where objects described in the story take on a resonating iconicity by also being depicted; where texts slip their conventional moorings.

entering might be Oskar's journal or perhaps his memory? The photos' arbitrariness, lack of quality and the fact that they bleed to the page edge hint at their reflexive status as things in and of themselves, self-conscious about being what and where they are. Importantly for the reader, the mind is activated through the visual before it has any textual reference. These are the very qualities Johanna Drucker (1995:161-162) draws attention to in describing the artist's book. She states:

> The structures by which books present information, ideas, or diversions, become habitual so that they erase, rather than foreground, their identity. One can...forget about a book even in the course of reading it...But when a book calls attention to the conceits and conventions by which it normally effaces its identity, then it...calls attention to its own processes of enunciation...Self-conscious attention to the means of enunciation often lay bare the devices of literary or visual strategies of illusionism.

Drucker (online 2003) describes artists' books as "'phenomenal' books, which mark the shift from books as artefacts, documents, vehicles for delivery of content, and instead demonstrate the living, dynamic nature of work as produced by interpretive acts" and reminds us that the idea of an artist's (or 'phenomenal') book should replace the identity of what a book *is* with what it *does* and *how* it does it. With this in mind, Drucker (1995:10) is able to help us decode Foer's opening pages. Images thus become prompters and illuminations of, and extensions to the text. The first image, the doorknob, through whose keyhole we are able to conceptually peer, takes us into the novel/journal/mind, and towards the desperate search Oskar undertakes, over a period of 8 months, to find the one lock, of 162 million possible locks in New York, Oskar calculates, which might fit the key. The doorknob/key image appears again in various forms,[228] yet only on p 303 do we first glimpse the key to which Oskar is attempting to find the lock and which clearly fits none of the locks thus far shown and which ultimately leads to a dead end.

Other forms of self-reflexive and self-conscious image-as-textual illumination are business cards[229] which, later, become the form in which Oskar finds his identity and sense of self-hood. Further forms include X-out and struck-through text, as well as red pen notations of spelling, grammar, and factual or perceived errors which index the very act of editing or 'correcting' the text.[230] Here, the process of writing is a self-reflexive act in the exploration of meaning. Thus, a relationship between reader and writer develops through the novel. But here, the writer is not necessarily Foer, but a collection of authors which the reader must deconstruct as fragments and reconstitute as 'the narrative'; something akin to the referencing and appropriation of the imagery of others by many postmodern visual artists. As many of his characters write to a protagonist, and in Oskar's act of collecting, we are able to glimpse Foer's underlying narrative: writing as an attempt at healing. Oskar, we note begins writing letters only after his father's death.

When Grandmother types her '*My Life*' of many hundreds of pages and asks Grandfather to read them, blank pages are all he sees. The typewriter was one of the few possessions he managed to save from the destruction of Dresden but from which he has pulled the ribbon.[231] Grandmother, who always described her eyesight as 'crummy' is exposed as blind, not only physically but emotionally. The reader also realises that this is the very moment when Grandfather leaves her and their unborn child (Oskar's father Thomas) in New York and returns to Dresden, unable to speak[232] and unable to confront his loss and from where he writes to his son every day for the next 40 years, but is unable to send the letters.

Like Woolf's lighthouse, Foer's image of writing, in its many manifestations also perpetually reminds us that time is not 'fixed', that nothing is 'simply one thing; the bearer of one meaning'. Writing, too, reminds us

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[228] In the edition under discussion (see bibliographic detail), the doorknob image appears in various forms again on p 29 as a manual and thus interior latch which requires no key to lock or unlock it, but with the latch turned, implying that it is locked; p 53, a host of key blanks on a locksmith's wall is shown; p105, a fuller image of the 1st doorknob but also glimpsing the door slightly ajar; p 134, where the manual latch is turned in such a way as to imply 'unlocked'; on p198, an image of a revolving door; p 212, a doorknob with no keyhole; p265, a doorknob with a 'Yale' lock; p 303, the 1st glimpse of the key to which Oskar is attempting to find the lock.
[229] These appear on pages 4, 99, 158/9 and 286.
[230] This indexicality provide a graphic link between Oskar's father who marked errors in the New York Times in this fashion (p 10) and the realisation of the fact that he must have indeed had some contact with his father (Oskar's grandfather) as one of the 'unsent' letters is marked in this manner (pp 208-216). It seems that Oskar has this letter in his journal, presumably taken when Grandfather finally places a score of unsent letters in his son's grave as an act of redemption. These red 'clues' hint not only at relationships which Foer keeps from the reader, but marks the act of hunting which the various protagonists undertake in an attempt to quell the grief in their respective losses.
[231] Thomas pulled the ribbon out as 'an act of revenge against the typewriter and myself, unwinding the negative it held – the future homes I had created for Anna, the letters I wrote without response – as if they would protect me from my actual life'.
[232] Aphasia, is a refusal or inability to speak. Here it prevents Thomas Schell from sharing his experiences verbally with others.

that the individual experience of living is a precarious affair and that society as a whole is still not as safe and secure as it thought it was before the so-called War on Terror.

If Grandma's 'Life' was reduced to 'two thousand white pages', Foer produces a masterstroke in rendering Grandfather's obsessive writings as a counterpoint to Grandma's blank pages. As he has been unable to speak for more than the 40 years between leaving and returning to New York, Thomas has written everything down: simple questions to strangers, rendered as a single line on the page, an index of Thomas's daily form of communication; a mountain of letters written and never sent to, and finally buried in the grave of, his son; and, upon his return, the final letter he writes to his son on the rapidly diminishing pages of his daybook.

In a chapter without paragraph breaks, and in one block of text – with the spirits of Joyce, Woolf and Kerouac looking over his shoulder, Foer produces perhaps the most visually and emotionally charged piece of human communication in contemporary fiction. Thomas Schell's stream of consciousness pulls together the book's themes, characters and their impossible hopes.[233] Upon his return, he phones Grandma's number and taps his message to her in pages of numerals – an image which recalls the numeric works of Hanne Darboven and artist's book-maker, Richard Kostelanetz. He then pours out his heart to his dead son in a rapidly filling daybook: 'I'm running out of space' he often writes. Foer literally pulls the text together in Thomas's breathtaking attempt to write 'everything'.

The overtyped text blocks become a typographic index of futile labour, his utter failure and the incomprehensibility of attempting, too late, to explain 'everything' to a dead son and an alienated wife. Ironically, Grandma's blank white pages and Thomas's overtyped black ones have achieved the same result. I have seen nothing like this in the contemporary novel, but it is 'incredibly close' to those other icons to the complexity and futility of human communication: Willem Boshoff's *Verskanste Openbaring* and *Verdwaalkaard* typed some 30 years ago as part of *Kykafrikaans* and now in *The Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry*, Miami, Florida. In formal terms, the only South African book which, as a totality, approaches the textual and visual complexity of Foer's work, and of which I am aware, is Andre Brink's *Orgie* of 1965.[234]

Foer's structural, linguistic and visual disruptions of the conventions of the novel have proven controversial for contemporary literary criticism, with some denouncing Foer as contrived. Yet I suspect that Joyce, Woolf and Kerouac might smile and wink in Foer's direction and that even Drucker might accept that this unhinging of semiotic difference between image and text may approach and acknowledge the field of the 'phenomenal' or artist's book. But Foer is still not finished with us. Just as the book opens with illuminating imagery, the final pages become pure artist's book. In an attempt to control, or at least delay, historical fact, Foer acknowledges that the quaint simplicity of turning a paper page is, in fact, a critical and subversive act. One of the conventions of the artist's book has been to interrogate the act of reading and page turning through the structure known as the 'flip book.'[235] Foer describes Oskar, finally tearing out the Googled images of the World Trade Centre's unidentified 'falling man'. And in an act of pure artist's bookmanship and haptic reassertion of control, Oskar rearranges the order of the pages and physically flips the falling man, Oskar's father? back toward his son, toward his father and to safety.

In rephrasing Kupetz' (2008:91) argument, Foer's narratives too, involve the reader in the process of discovering meaning by encountering unfamiliar structures. It has not been my aim to show Foer's direct literary influences or that he might have been aware of specific artists' books and their structures. Rather, I have attempted to show that an awareness of both a history of the breaking of literary conventions, and of artists' books and their structures, might help a reader gain greater insight into Foer's narrative by understanding how he enunciates, not what a book *is* but, what it *does* and *how* it does it.

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[233] He begins: 'To my child' and describes the reason for returning, the purpose of his visit, by writing to the man who takes his passport: 'To ~~mourn~~ try to live'.
[234] In *Orgie*, Brink exploits various typographical possibilities which were to predate Boshoff's manipulations in *Kykafrikaans*, and, like Stern, Brink exploits blank and black pages.
[235] Of interest is the very recent projection of William Kentridge's latest flip book into the public domain from the window of the Goodman Gallery, overlooking Jan Smuts Avenue, Johannesburg, in July 2009.

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A healing journey: the case of Freedom Park

The following will be discussed:

- Background
- The aim with Freedom Park
- The location
- The layout
- Elements of the Garden of Remembrance
- Elaboration, interplay and juxtaposition of elements

Background

Freedom Park was initiated in response to the birth of democracy in South Africa (1994). Radebe (2004:12) said that Freedom Park reflects the recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: calling for the preservation of the memory of historic conflicts in South Africa (slavery, the pre-colonial wars, the wars of resistance, the struggle for liberation, the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and the first and second world

wars). Petje (2004:3) states that Freedom Park aspires to represent "the entire South African story". Freedom Park, although still under construction, already enriches the celebration of the history of South Africa.

It promotes nation-building and nation-healing (the more so because the visually present Voortrekker Monument and Union Buildings, symbolic of Afrikaner and British statements of power, were preserved).

Freedom Park celebrates African culture and introduces visitors to it (for instance the Garden of Remembrance "provides a place where Africans … can find healing for past pains" (African cosmology, 2004:10). However Nkwana maintains that "it must have a deep meaning not only for Africans, but for all" (Corporate services, 2004:13)).

Another role of Freedom Park is that "we [as South Africans] are giving ourselves a chance to address issues of the present and the future and committing our generation to handing over an intact, non-racial, and non-sexist, democratic, prosperous and powerful nation to all who come after us" (Celebrating ten years of freedom, 2004:15).

The aims of Freedom Park

The aims are to celebrate "freedom and humanity [while promoting and introducing African] civilization and culture [to the world]… It seeks to showcase African history and heritage as bearers of traditions and values… Its organising principles are [largely] based on African philosophy… Healing is thus perceived from the perspective of rebirth and a regeneration of a nation within the African milieu" (Vision for the architectural brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:7).

Location

Freedom Park is situated on Salvokop and adjacent to the Voortrekker Monument on Schanskop. Freedom Park overlooks the Union Buildings on Meintjeskop to the north and Fort Klapperkop on Klapperkop to the east (Vision for the architectural design brief, 2004:7).

These sites represent the British and Afrikaner heritage, Freedom Park's positioning is strategic, negotiating the past. (These monuments and hills relate the history of Pretoria very eloquently while the retention of the older monuments facilitates reconciliation).

Layout of the Freedom Park terrain (1) (b)

The Freedom Park terrain encompasses about 52 hectares of Salvokop. Its commemorative features consist mainly of the Garden of Remembrance, a museum and a memorial. This paper focuses on the Garden of Remembrance.

The Garden of Remembrance consists of a spiral path from the west around Salvokop to the east through the following stations (elements) along the way:

- a forest;
- a final resting place (*isivivane*);
- a cave/ tunnel (*mveredzo*);
- a meeting place (*isikhumbuto*);
- a sacred lake (*tiva*) visible from the spiral path. *(At this stage only the final resting place and meeting place is finished and open to the public.)*

This paper will focus on an interpretation of some of these elements according to its symbolic value. The concept of the Garden of Remembrance stems from traditional healing ceremonies, particularly those performed in indigenous cultures after an unnatural death when, in order to assuage or appease powerful, negative forces, rituals were performed. For example: in traditional healing ceremonies water is considered to cleanse and is a feature throughout the Park: for instance the ritual washing of hands takes place when visiting the isivivane.) It seems that visitors to the Park and its Garden of Remembrance are meant to undergo some symbolic cathartic experience culminating in healing as they progress or journey through the

stations along the spiral path (performing 'rituals' such as washing their hands), approximating the experience of indigenous people when undergoing the rituals in a traditional healing ceremony.

Elements of the Garden of Remembrance

The Garden of Remembrance makes use of concepts and elements that are part of an African philosophy and have significant meaning in an African context (Vision for the architectural design brief, 2004:7). However, many of the elements used in the Garden possess an appeal and meaning with which most people can associate. Cirlot's *A dictionary of symbols* (1988) is the main source for possible interpretations of the symbolic meaning of the elements. As seen earlier, the Garden of Remembrance consists of stations or elements such as a forest, a final resting place, a cave, a sacred lake, etcetera, which in turn also are made up of smaller units such as water and boulders. In this paper these elements and units are interpreted for its symbolic meaning.

The spiral path

The spiral signifies, among other things, a dance of healing and prayer. Among indigenous people spiral dances induced a state of trance in participants - transporting them away from reality and heightening the effectiveness of healing and prayer (Cirlot, 1988:306).

Journey

The symbol of the journey is significant not only for Africans, but also for western and eastern people. According to Cirlot (1988:164), "from the spiritual point of view, the journey is never merely a passage through space but rather an expression of the urgent desire for discovery and change that underlies the actual movement and experience of traveling". Cirlot further explains: "The true journey is neither acquiescence nor escape – it is evolution. For this reason … ordeals of initiation frequently take the form of 'symbolic journeys' representing a quest that starts in the darkness [in this case the forest] of the profane world (or of the unconscious …) and gropes towards the light. Such ordeals or trials – like stages in a journey – are rites of purification" (1988:165). The symbol of journeying is physically experienced in the Garden as one follows the spiral path through the stations: the forest, arriving at the final resting place (*isivivane*), enjoying a view of the sacred lake (*tiva*), going through a cave or tunnel (*mveredzo*) and arriving at a meeting place (*isikhumbuto*). This journey is symbolic of the journey to a democratic South Africa.

The forest

The forest is a widely recognized symbol associated with the unconscious. The dense growth of the trees results in darkness, pointing to the fading of consciousness and the dangers of darkness (Cirlot, 1988:112). Therefore the person undertaking the journey enters the unfamiliar world of the subconscious.

The final resting place

The spiral path approaches the final resting place from the foot of the hill, from the east and through the dark forest. When one emerges from the forest, the final resting place is visible, symbolizing moving up to the light and escape from a dark and cluttered environment. It consists of a circular area, an inner circle accentuated by a circle of boulders from South Africa's nine provinces. In the core is a fine spray. This feature represents a burial site where generation upon generation have been laid to rest. "It brings back home the spirits of those who were not accorded proper burials – it's a way of healing for their families" (African Cosmology, 2004:10-11). The boulders are solid and durable – the opposite of biological matter that decay and die – symbolizing unity and strength (Cirlot, 1988:313). In the final resting place the boulders become a reminder of the impermanence and fragility of life but comfort the onlooker because of their permanence. As one leaves visitors are invited to wash their hands, which is a cleansing purifying ritual. The journey continues with a view on the lake and the Voortrekker Monument.

The lake

The symbol of the lake is also widely recognized in many cultures. Sometimes it refers to the "transition between life and death" (Cirlot, 1988:175). The lake's reflective surface points to "self-contemplation, consciousness and revelation" (Cirlot, 1988:175). The lake will come into view on leaving the final resting place continuing the state of reflection.

Water

Water is widely acknowledged for its cleansing power. It is used throughout the Garden of Remembrance in the form of a spray, a basin for washing hands, waterfall, lake, etcetera.

The elaboration, interchange and juxtaposition of elements

Facets of *healing are* expressed through a complex elaboration, interplay and juxtaposition at the Garden of symbols such as:

- Light

- The journey

- Verticality (as one finds in light shaft(s), trees, koppies and steps)

- Edifices (boulders, bricks, stone)

- Orientation (orientation of the Garden to the other sites such as the Union Buildings and Voortrekker Monument)

- Water (spray, lake)

- • Elaboration: For instance in the garden water is used as a fine spray, washing hands (touch), drinking (taste), waterfall (hearing), and lake (seeing the reflective surface). The cleansing and healing power of water is experienced and compounded by engaging and involving all the senses.

- • Interchange: Darkness and light of the forest: in the garden one journeys from darkness to light.

- • Juxtaposition: The impermanence of the fine water spray next to the boulders at the isivivane emphasizes the permanence and solidity of the boulders.

- • Munro states that: "Healing is not achieved by standing and watching: one has to be engaged and involved and move through space and time. Healing is action driven, and [one can agree with Munro that] Freedom Park fosters this in its intentions and layout" (Munro, 2006).

Conclusion

At this stage Freedom Park's Garden of Remembrance is still in a developmental stage. The final resting place, and meeting place are completed and are linked by the spiral path. One approaches the final resting place from the west along the spiral path. Upon completion the approach will be from the east. Interpreted as a healing journey it is already promoting insight into South African and African culture. Such insight can become one of Freedom Park's main contributions as heritage site. Controversy surrounding the exclusion of names of SANDF soldiers on the wall of names is not resolved yet. Inclusion will facilitate reconciliation between groups. Fulfilling its striving to represent communality, a sense of belonging leading to national unity.

"Healing is not achieved by standing and watching: one has to be engaged and involved and move through space and time. Healing is action driven, and Freedom Park fosters this in its intentions and layout" (Munro, 2006). *(These monuments and hills relate the history of Pretoria and Tshwane very eloquently and illustrate the similarities in the reasoning of the groups who conquered the area. However the retention of the older monuments facilitates reconciliation).*

According to Anderson (1991:4), to create a national identity, we need a shared social and cultural concept as well as cultural artifacts that will command a deep emotional legitimacy. Many of the symbols used at Freedom Park possess an appeal and meaning with which most people can associate.

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Learning to fly: the flight of the hero as a symbol of gravity and grace in Heroes

Introduction

In Tim Kring's multi award-winning television series *Heroes* (2006), the first character that the viewer encounters is a New Yorker in his mid-to-late twenties named Peter Petrelli.[236] He works as a privately employed hospice nurse and is, at the start of the series, taking care of a dying old man in a high-rise apartment. Through clear narrative and visual rhetorical devices, the viewer is initially made aware of two key concerns relating to this character. Firstly, he is a nurse and not a doctor, indicating that his vocation is primarily one of service rather than of authority.[237] And secondly, he is presented as an ordinary man with an ordinary job, with commonplace hopes and insecurities, leading a good but unremarkable life. The only foreshadowing of greater things to come insofar as Peter Petrelli's heroic calling is concerned, is found in the fact that he dreams that he can fly.

The image of man in flight is as old as the known history of humankind. In every ancient civilization, whether Incan, Egyptian, Sumerian, Anatolian, Hebraic or Grecian, there are representations of gods and men with wings. More recent stories continue this fascination, including films like The *X-men* trilogy (2000, 2003, 2006), *The Matrix trilogy* (1999, 2003), The *Batman* films (2005, 2008), *The fantastic four* (2005), *Superman Returns* (2006), and *Iron Man* (2008).

This paper argues that, far from being a mere narrative device or whimsical notion, the flight of the hero is imbued with definite metaphorical and symbolic values. These values relate to specific archetypal facets of human nature and of the hero, and concern, amongst other things, the role of the community in the formation of identity, the place of law and the desire for individual liberty. By referring to the character and context of Peter Petrelli, it is my aim here to unpack the symbolism of heroic flight in terms of its significance to the ethical life of individuals within cultural systems. The ideas of Simone Weil and GK Chesterton form the backbone of the paper, since both of these philosophers deal extensively with the paradox that freedom imposes, namely that absolute freedom lies in the ability to choose constraints.

1. The hero a symbol of the good

All of history is informed and even determined to some extent by heroes and their heroism (Carlyle 1897:1; Segal 2000:1), but this is not to suggest that all views on the subject are congruent. The nature of heroism tends to be understood in accordance with what each age and cultural context requires (Segal 2000:2). John Lash (1995:7) argues that the idea of the hero is a normative concept: a chameleonic notion that continuously adapts and changes. Thus, the hero can be found in a number of guises: as warrior, demi-god, moral saviour, prophet, poet, lover, priest, king and everyman (Carlyle 1897:1; Lash 1995:12,82; Tallon & Walls 2005:210).

However, despite his many transmutations, the hero is widely regarded throughout history as one who is connected with the divine and the transcendent (Carlyle 1897:3, 4; Crossley-Holland 1980:xxxviii). The Roman philosopher Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) argues that people need heroes precisely because of this particular transcendent value. The philosopher Joseph Loeb (& Morris 2005:19), one of the producers of *Heroes,* quotes Seneca as follows:

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[236] Peter Petrelli is played in the series by the actor Milo Ventimiglia.
[237] This aligns with John Lash's (1995:6) assertion that the hero shows autonomy, but not authority. In other words, the hero is bound to a great degree by the limitations of his original context.

> Choose for yourself a moral hero whose life, conversation, and expressive face all please you, then picture him to yourself at all times as your protector and as your ethical pattern. We all need someone whose example can regulate our characters.

However, there is a fairly significant problem with Seneca's exhortation, for, as Paul Johnson (2009:19,36,44,262) observes, history has recorded the treachery, brutality and ruthlessness of many who have been deemed heroes.[238] One man's hero, it seems, is another man's villain. Thus, one may rightly question why anyone should aspire to imitate the ethical pattern of such remarkably flawed individuals.

Weil (1952:19) argues that people need superiors – or, as I would argue, heroic figures – not necessarily because their actions are without defect, but because their presence has a symbolic quality. These superiors symbolise the 'realm situated high above all men', which is expressed primarily through duties and obligations 'owed by each man to his fellowman' (Weil 1952:19). Consequently, the hero may be understood as a human being whose existence points to ideals greater than himself. He is symbolic of the good even when he does evil. He is an allegory of moral vitality even when he is a picture of human fallibility.

Aeon Skoble (2005:39) contends that any engagement with the concept of the hero 'ultimately involves questioning ourselves'. As a symbol, the hero-figure may therefore be seen as a mirror, albeit a murky mirror, to the ethical life of people.

In the light of the above, the fact of the hero's humanity becomes central to the heroic journey. I maintain that the hero must reflect the ordinariness of life in order to demonstrate how to transcend this ordinariness. Peter Petrelli's heroic journey shows exactly this. As already indicated, he is shown at first to be living a *status quo* life. Through his dreams of flight and acts of great courage he is able to show himself, and the viewer, a new way to be human. This journey from groundedness to flight, from the human to the superhuman, may be interpreted in a number of ways, but here I aim to examine it through the lens of Weil's notions of *gravity* and *grace*.

2. Gravity

Weil (1947:1) writes that all actions and movements of the soul are guided or controlled by laws that are analogous to those of physical *gravity*; for her, *grace* is the only exception. Other words that may be used to describe this gravity are: law, restriction, limitation, descent, control, and mechanisation. Gravity – as downward weight – in terms of both physics and in terms of ethics is more easily measurable than grace (Tasker 2006:39). Indeed, gravity seems easier to achieve than grace (Chesterton 1986:326, 1910:17). It takes no energy at all to fall of a cliff, but it takes a great deal of energy to fly.

However, gravity should not be seen as a negative force. Rules, laws, restrictions and limitations are all part of and necessary for life. Thus gravity may also be taken as synonymous with words like order, duty, responsibility, security, obedience, and necessity (Weil 1952:10, 14, 15, 32). These qualities are simply unavoidable. Chesterton (1986: 243) writes that '[t]o desire action is to desire limitation'. Every motion of the universe, and consequently of the hero, is in some way limited by laws, both physical and metaphysical. The hero – in this case Peter Petrelli – must begin with gravity. His earth-bound state is reflective of his connection with the community of people that surrounds him. This connection, or sense of duty, begins on a personal level with those closest to the hero, and then extends to the wider collective that we call humanity.

Chesterton (1986:140) argues that the primary basis of ethics is concerned with one's duty towards one's neighbour. Chesterton (1986:140) insists that '[w]e have to love our neighbour because he is *there*'. Humanity, for all heroic purposes is merely an abstract idea. But one's neighbour is a solid, objective fact. 'He is the sample of humanity which is actually given us. Precisely because he may be anybody he is everybody' (Chesterton 1986:140). Right-acting, then, is not an issue of preference or taste, but one of compulsion. By the same token, as Iris Murdoch (1970:52, 54) suggests, good is not an issue of sincerity but rather an alliance with what is transcendentally true. With this in mind, it is arguable that gravity points to

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[238] Johnson (2009:19,36,44,262) uses the examples of such heroes as the Biblical figures of Deborah, Judith, Samson and David, as well as the tyrannical Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. All of these, Johnson contends, are revered in one way or another even in our present age despite their obvious moral failings.

good as an indisputable, concrete ethical value. It is the underlying principle of all ethical behaviour and ought to be seen as the object of our attention, not as an object of our making (cf. Murdoch 1970:54).[239]

The hero is to a great extent the result of the gravity of context. He begins his journey embedded in a specific picture of reality that is largely determined by his sense of duty towards others. This is particularly true of Peter Petrelli, who sees himself as inextricably bound to his family, and specifically to his domineering mother and his ambitious brother, both lawyers constricted by a system of self-seeking rules and obligations. His environment, then, establishes his identity and state of mind as resulting from the force of *gravity.*

Peter Petrelli's ability to fly, as well as other abilities that he discovers along the way, are all the apparently accidental result of his engaging with other people with superhuman abilities. This connects Peter Petrelli[240] with his namesake – the Apostle Peter of the Christian New Testament, whose ability to walk on water is only possible when he is in the presence of Christ. Peter Petrelli's abilities are also reflective of the law of gravity – merely the consequences of a predestined, pre-existent order. This is highlighted in something that a character called The Invisible Man says to him:

There's a lot you don't see. You have no idea how to use these gifts of yours properly. Right now, your abilities only show up as a reflex, autonomically, like swallowing. That's a dog's trick. Making it a conscious choice, using it, makes you more than [an animal].

The implication of this is clear: a man who is merely reacting to the forces of nature and nurture around him is not a hero. Transcending the gravity of context requires two things. In the first place, it requires an act of will or belief – something that I call the heroic choice. This is a choice made by the protagonist to stand apart from his community and environment in order to determine the nature of that indisputable quality of good mentioned above. In the second place, transcending the gravity of context requires something else – a gift that Weil calls *grace.*

3. Grace

As already mentioned, Weil's (1947:1) idea of *grace* is the exception to *gravity* (Weil 1947:1). Grace is defined by Murdoch (1970:54) as 'supernatural assistance to human endeavour which overcomes empirical limitations of personality'. Grace, as a word that is used more commonly today to denote elegance or refinement, is in this usage far more connected to its Latin root *gratia* that means both *an unmerited gift* and *thankfulness*. Grace is synonymous, to some degree, with providence. It is that which is given by divine will only, and not by human will.

Essential to Weil's conception of grace is the individual's humility. It is only in accepting that his abilities and his goodness are not found within himself that the hero is able to receive his superhumanity. In other words, the hero can only transcend himself when he is humble enough to accept the help of some external supernatural force. This sentiment is echoed by Chesterton (1986:340) when he writes that by "[i]nsisting that God is inside man, man is always inside himself. By insisting that God transcends man, man has transcended himself".

In Greek mythology, the great inventor Daedalus attaches wings of wax to himself and to his son, Icarus, so that they may escape from the island of Crete (Padilla 2004:68). Icarus, however, flies too close to the sun, causing his waxen wings to melt, and as a result plummets to his death (Grant 1989:385; Padilla 2004:68). Icarus is considered a tragic hero precisely because he is unable to sustain flight. Another mythological figure possessing the gift of flight is Mercury, who is the herald or messenger of the gods (Graves 1955a:65).

There is one key difference between the flight of Icarus and the flight of Mercury that should be noted, for it has a bearing on how the flight of the hero can be taken as symbolic of grace. Both Icarus and Mercury are given the gift of flight by their fathers, Daedalus and Zeus respectively, but only Mercury's father is a god. Campbell (1973:72) notes that supernatural aid to the hero often tends to be masculine in origin. The significance of this lies in the fact that, generally, the masculine is more readily associated with strength and permanence in mythology. However, the symbolism that is of most significance here is not in the gender of

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[239] One may argue that the hero is a symbol of our making, and is consequently also the object of our attention.

[240] Peter Petrelli's name is derived from the Greek name Πετρος, which means rock. The name indicates solidity and stability and is arguably as paradoxical a name for Peter Petrelli as it is for the Apostle Peter. Both of these men display tremendous bravery and audacity, but both also possess lesser qualities that are closer akin to fickleness than to stability.

the gift giver, but in the nature of the gift giver: it is only the supernatural giver's gift of flight that lasts. Therefore, flight may be taken as a symbol of grace only when it is of divine origin.

Grace is not the opposite of gravity, but its natural result. In a sense, gravity exists for the sake of grace. Indeed, without grace, gravity can be equated to oppression and slavery (1947:180). Without grace, hope is merely a state of anguish (Weil 1958:37). Without gravity, grace would simply be a form of narcissism. Grace is tempered by gravity, and gravity is relieved by grace.

The connection between gravity and grace in the life of the hero is not an issue of self-determination. Grace is something that can only be received, not earned or constructed. This is where gravity is essential to grace: it imposes limitations on grace so that true heroism is made possible. Chesterton (1986:340) believes that the hero is accountable for his actions, precisely because his abilities have been given to him and are not just self-created; he is accountable to the giver of the gift.

This is a particularly problematic issue in Tim Kring's *Heroes* because the narrative does not present any single worldview. It hints at the possibility of God's providence, but more mention is made of the predetermination of Evolution or Fate. This agnostic fluctuation between worldviews tends towards Nietzschean perspectivism, allowing the viewer to make up his or her mind concerning the origin and purpose of heroes. However, it is worth noting that one cannot simply take the ideas of God and Fate, or God and Evolution to be synonymous in relation to Weil's notions of gravity and grace. Fate and Evolution imply what Viktor Frankl (1959:131) calls 'nothingbutness': 'the theory that man is nothing but the result of biological, psychological and sociological conditions, or the product of heredity and environment.' These are simply the complex result of endless causes and effects, resulting in further effects. Fate and Evolution on their own suggest concrete determinism, which suggests that even the decisions that we make are just the result of impersonal forces beyond our control.

However, Murdoch (1971:62) contends that the concept of grace can easily be secularized. In her view, attaining the transcendent and the good requires two things, namely, the suppression of the self and attention to things of value (Murdoch 1971:64):

There is nothing mystical about this, nor about the fact that our ability to act well when the time comes depends partly, perhaps largely, upon the quality of our habitual objects of attention. 'Whatsoever things are true … honest … just … pure … lovely, whatsoever things of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things' (Murdoch 1971:55).

At a pivotal moment in the story of Peter Petrelli, he realises that his ability to access superhuman powers comes when he simply thinks about those who have the ability that he needs. He learns that attention to the self only forces him further away from his desired aim. This concurs with Murdoch's (1971:54) view that one does not change his or her ethical orientation by mere accident, but rather by a deliberate reorientation of the will. While this opinion does support the secularisation of grace, it does not solve the mystery of where the good comes from. Grace can therefore be seen either as an accident or as a miracle. If it is a miracle, it is one the same way that the gift of flight is a miracle. "If it is desirable that man should triumph over the cruelty of nature or custom," writes Chesterton (1986:333), "then miracles are certainly desirable". One would need to "discuss afterwards whether they are possible" (Chesterton 1986:333).

Conclusion

George Bernard Shaw (1930:218) writes that 'liberty means responsibility'. Frankl (1959:111) argues that liberty without responsibility is merely anarchy. This reiterates the idea that one may talk of gravity and grace as ethical concepts, but never separately. Both are essential components to the life of the hero. To suggest the grace of liberty is to imply the gravity of responsibility.

Ultimately, the tension between gravity and grace is met in the hero's main aim, which is to mete out justice. The hero senses, as we all do, that there is something wrong with the world. While his journey may be long, arduous, confusing and heartbreaking, as Peter Petrelli's journey is, it exists to remind us of the human desire for a connection with the transcendent.

In the third season of *Heroes*, in a startling turn of events, Peter Petrelli loses all of his superhuman abilities. It is unsettling when a character with such power suddenly returns to an apparently pre-heroic state. However, Peter Petrelli explains that he wants to see if he can be a hero without his superhuman abilities.

This implies that it is not only the exceptionally gifted who are required to be heroic. Grace, then, is not just concerned with flight, but also with the courage it takes an ordinary, grounded human being to face life in all its magnificent, beautiful, messy, chaotic, painful, perplexing glory. Arguably, it takes more grace for the ordinary man to be heroic. On this, Weil (1947:35) writes the following:

To find extraordinary difficulty in doing an ordinary action is a favour which calls for gratitude. We must not ask for the removal of such difficulty: we must beg for grace to make good use of it. In general we must not wish for the disappearance of any of our troubles, but grace to transform them.

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"I ain't gonna glay Sun City!": Boycotts and opportunities at a South African mega-resort

In 1985, Bruce Springsteen back-up man and future *Sopranos* cast member, Steven Van Zandt, wrote and produced one of the most definitive protest songs of the decade. "Sun City," released by the non-profit collective Artists United Against Apartheid, combined the talents of fifty-four musicians and singers in an effort to make the South African mega-resort of the same name a nonviable concert stop for international performers. While Van Zandt's single (and subsequent album) never achieved vast commercial success in the United States, the cultural impact of his project had global implications. In this paper, I examine how the "Sun City" album and video, as a vital component of the larger cultural boycott of South Africa in the 1980s, solidified the identity of the apartheid regime as a pariah in the eyes of the international community. Simultaneously, a variety of visual and aural strategies were implemented to depict the protestors in both countries as racially integrated and unified in their opposition to apartheid. Through a deconstruction of the "Sun City" music video that received heavy rotation on MTV (Music Television), I analyze how these strategies contributed to a conflation of American neoliberalism and South African radicalism.

An American album and music video may seem an odd vehicle for an examination of African performance and yet by analyzing "Sun City" the artistic project in conjunction with Sun City location, we uncover a nexus of global cultural commodities, state interventions and ethical conundrums that is particularly illustrative of South African performance and U.S. representations of the country. Sun City is significant as a location of inquiry because for nearly thirty years it has been one of the primary sites of intercultural contact in southern Africa. Albeit within the constraints of resort entertainment during the apartheid era, Sun City became one of the principal forums in which South Africa could perform itself to the rest of the world. Simultaneously, the site functioned as a performance *intra*-nationally - for the many different citizens of South Africa.

From its inception the place itself was envisioned as a hub within a global network of high-profile performance venues. Sun City certainly did not operate within a cultural vacuum, hermetically sealed in by its national borders. International performers of renown (e.g.Sinatra, Elton John) graced the stages of Sol Kerzner's mega-resort as they made their way around the globe. South Africa's Sun City became one of the stops along this international circuit and a convenient place where stars would receive the acclaim and compensation they had become accustomed to in places like Las Vegas, Atlantic City and Monte Carlo. Yet despite its global prominence and the fact that international superstars would frequently perform on its stages, the exact national affiliation of Sun City was fiercely disputed. In short, the dispute centered on whether Sun City was part of the nation of South Africa or a centerpiece of the newly created "country" of Bophuthatswana.

"Bop" (as it was referred to locally) functioned as a brutal manifestation of South Africa's apartheid policy of separate development. Named an "independent homeland," Bophuthatswana was a powerfully imagined and legislatively manufactured ancient home of southern Africa's Tswana people.[241] Beginning in 1948 with the election of the Afrikaner dominated National Party, South African blacks were assigned to one of ten such native homelands, and based on questionable tribal affiliations, forced by the South African government to relocate to their "appropriate" designated area. Four such homelands were ultimately granted full "independence" by South Africa, ostensibly because of their potential to thrive economically and politically

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[241] The history and culture of the people who resided in the particular parcels of land designated as Bophuthatswana (itself an unstable designation) is complex and conflicted. Part of what became Bophuthatswana had previously been referred to as Bechuanaland during the British colonial era in South Africa. John and Jean Comaroff provide a comprehensive history of the colonial era in *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Bophuthatswana, however, was a specific invention of the apartheid era and included parcels of land beyond Bechuanaland. Sun City is situated in what is now called the North West province, just two hours from Johannesburg by car.

as autonomous states. However, their sovereignty and thus their legitimacy as true nation-states were recognized only by South Africa and each other. With an acceptance of so-called independence, newly dubbed citizens of Bophuthatswana were stripped of their South African rights and denied access to the limited material resources that their former country had offered. A putative opportunity to gain access to new civil liberties was revealed as a means of enacting a racist ideology.

Despite the racist underpinnings of Bophuthatswana's sovereignty, Sol Kerzner, a maverick South African developer, recognized that homeland independence brought with it new black nationalist leadership and perhaps more importantly a legislative ambiguity that he was prompt to exploit. Kerzner knew that due to its liminal status and need for steady economic support, the new nation of Bophuthatswana presented a potentially lucrative chance to circumvent South Africa's restrictive laws against gambling, soft porn and interracial sex.[242] Backed by South African corporate money and the leadership of the new Bophuthatswanan nation, the unlikely couple of President Lucas Mangope and Kerzner envisioned a luxurious mega-resort. Sun City would become the "Las Vegas of Africa"[243] – a place temptingly situated just beyond the legislative reach of the South African government, yet within the grasp of thousands of South Africans tourists who sought the thrills and illicit adventures that a short trip over the "border" promised.

To local black South Africans, Sun City was something else entirely. As South African musician, Eddie Amoo, referred to it: "Sun City is an Afrikaner's paradise in a black man's nightmare" (Marsh 8).

The cultural boycott of South Africa was originally intended to bring to light and eradicate this nightmarish state of affairs. Foreign protestors of apartheid envisioned the boycott as a means to staunch the flow of performers from the US and Britain whose performances and related cultural commodities within South Africa might be seen as evidence of support for, or at least tacit acceptance of the racist regime. By 1969, the United Nations General Assembly had taken a formal stance. It adopted a resolution which implored its members to suspend "cultural, educational, sports and other exchanges with the racist regime [of South Africa]" (as quoted in Nixon 159). South Africa had been officially branded a pariah state in the eyes of the world community.

Still, these international efforts were undermined by two concurrent forces: first, the rise of political conservatism in the 1980s (marked by the election of Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK); and second - what I delve into here in greater detail - the difficulty of defining and regulating cultural exchange.

Rob Nixon notes that during the 1980s "the cultural ban remained symbolically powerful, but strategically vexing." He reasons that since "culture is pervasive, ordinary and conflictual" it makes for "an exasperatingly baggy and diffuse political target" (156-7). In contrast to the sports boycott of South Africa which featured specific games and players to sabotage and ostracize, the cultural boycott of South Africa provided no such clearly defined parameters and raised more questions than answers: How should cultural commodities like records, tapes and books be regulated? What should be done about international artists who claimed their aesthetic message could be used to fight apartheid? Why did local South African artists need to suffer for the sins of their government?

Steven Van Zandt's "Sun City" project went a long way toward addressing these concerns. It provided specificity in terms of place and people upon which the AUAA would capitalize. Suddenly, British and American artists and citizens had a location upon which to focus their scorn. If the political protest *within* South Africa was meant to make the country ungovernable, this artistic expression of protest from outside was meant to make its stages unplayable. As such, Van Zandt and his fellow rockers established Sun City as a metonym for all of apartheid - a bound and tangible place that acquired meaning beyond the confines of its physical borders. Moreover, performances and performers took center stage in the conflict, for it was primarily this discrete subset of culture that could be readily identified and targeted.

Two snippets from the music video, directed by Academy-Award winner, Jonathan Demme, exemplify the visual tactics used to incite anti-apartheid sentiment. (All references are to the "Sun City" video file accessible on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjWENNe29qc (accessed August 22, 2009.))

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[242], South Africa was governed by the National Party (NP) from 1948 until the multi-racial democratic elections of 1994. The NP was dominated by a conservative Afrikaner leadership that often sought to integrate its Calvinist religious views into government legislation.

[243] I believe this tagline was created by Kerzner during the initial push to create Sun City. It is certainly prevalent now, as any search for travel information on Sun City vacations will reveal.

"Sun City" opens with what seems to be a travel video promotion. Pleasant muzak underscores the mellifluous voice of a commentator describing the resort. The voice (touched with a white South African accent) assures us that at Kerzner's Sun City we will be privy to shows from some of world's "headline entertainers." The narrator also unapologetically notes the relocation of blacks to Bophuthatswana is "one of the realities of apartheid" almost as if the location itself might give the tourist a snippet of what authentic apartheid is like – a perceptible commodity to be consumed in the process of our stay. But just as the spectator is about to settle into this alluring comfort, the rifle shot of a South African police officer disrupts the visual and aural flow. To reinforce the message that we have strewn off the path of apolitical tourist, a brief clip of a white woman sunbathing is quickly interrupted by the snippet of a frenzied white policeman using what appears to be a whip to disperse a gathering of blacks. As the whip strikes, it is synched up and repeated to coincide with the syncopated drumbeat of the song.

Clearly "Sun City" was not a typical benefit for Africa. The lyrics directly confronted Ronald Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" with South Africa, and the participants included a mixture of celebrities and non-mainstream musicians who had no guarantee of the lucrative exposure that would result from the contemporaneous benefits like "We Are the World." However, as Njabulo Ndebele has pointed out in regard to similar benefits for Africa, the logic of the song still operated from the faulty premise of "extended rights" emanating from the West on behalf of the Third World[244] (Ndebele 101).

While the American and British artists proudly proclaimed "I ain't gonna play Sun City!" to the audiences of MTV, local South African artists remained largely uninvolved with the project. Both on the level of the intended audience (the American public and other performers) and the spectator (individual viewers of MTV), the Sun City project primarily sought the "conscientization" of Westerners instead of contributing to the empowerment of black subjects of the apartheid state. As such, the project risked foregrounding an unsophisticated anti-racism at the expense of possible efforts to contribute to local cultural development. In this light, I think it is instructive to briefly mention and contrast Van Zandt's project with Paul Simon's "Graceland" album. In their engagement with South Africa in the 1980s, both artists, albeit with decidedly different priorities, confronted a no-man's land between a conviction to punish the apartheid regime and the recognition that a space for new black culture needed to be promoted.[245]

The impact of the "Sun City" project is further complicated by what I interpret as a conflation of Western liberalism and South African radicalism that takes shape at the end of the music video. In the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, the ANC could no longer credibly back a policy of racial integration and nonviolence. Thus, in South Africa, some black activists associated Western liberalism with a right-of-center mentality that had largely failed and was distinctly at odds with the radical politics of the Black Consciousness Movement, led and articulated by Stephan Biko.[246] Biko's radicalism (which gave voice to the beliefs of many South African protestors) was fundamentally opposed to the purportedly left-of-center liberalism and faith in the transformative power of racial *integration* that guided projects like Van Zandt's "Sun City." But the nuances of the South African resistance movement are obfuscated by the video.

In the video, the connection and purported similarity between the South African anti-apartheid movement and the US Civil Rights Movement is made explicit. The song lyrics urge the listener to consider that: "it ain't that far away, Sun City." Furthermore, Dave Marsh's book on the making of the record states that "All [black South Africans] ask is that we look at them and see them, because *by seeing them we see ourselves*." (118, my emphasis). The link between the US and South Africa is further ingrained by images of Martin Luther King marching during the Civil Rights Era and brief snippets of King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech intercut with footage of black *South African* protestors.

However, to my eye, the most significant and intriguing visual conflation is the frenzied celebration of protest and defiance depicted near the end of the video (VIDEO CUT #2 – 6:45 to conclusion.) American

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[244] As Bruner notes in his *Culture on Tour* words like native, Third World, and traditional should be read as if they were in quotes. He adds, "In anthropological discourse such words can have negative and sometimes derogatory connotations (bound up in colonial history) but in tourist discourse and in tourist advertising they are used frequently and unreflexively."

[245] See Viet Erlmann's chapters on "Sun City" and "Graceland" in *Music, Modernity, and the Global Imagination: South Africa and the West* for a comprehensive overview these projects.

[246] Nixon cites the following Biko quote as a summary of his views on racial integration: "The myth of integration as propounded under the banner of the liberal ideology must be cracked and killed because *it makes people believe* that something is being done when in reality the artificially integrated circles are a soporific to the blacks while salving the consciences of the guilt-stricken white. It works from the false premise that, because it is difficult to bring people from different races together in this country, achievement of this is in itself a step towards the total liberation of the blacks. Nothing could be more misleading" (84, italics added).

musicians (filmed in Central Park in New York City) fist-pump in unison to the beat of the song. These images of resistance are intercut with those of thousands of black South Africans *toyi-toying* in the streets who seem to have taken up the *American* cause. The rhythm of movement and the beat of the song make it appear that black South Africans in protest are dancing with the predominantly white group of American artists.

Ultimately, Van Zandt's "Sun City" manufactured an important if tenuous solidarity; it sought to visually and musically forge an intercontinental connection. While international pressure like the "Sun City" project was indispensable in the dismantling of apartheid, foreign intervention – even in the name of a noble cause – runs the risk of obscuring the complexity of local dynamics and overstating the benignity of American goodwill.

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A framework for recuperation: HIV/AIDS and the Keiskamma Altarpiece

There have been various initiatives to harness the visual arts as a mechanism for negotiating the impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. One such initiative has been by the Keiskamma Art Project which was established by Carol Hofmeyr when she settled in Hamburg in the Eastern Cape in 2000. Well known for its large-scale embroideries, the work which I focus on here is the second by the project to achieve prominence. *The Keiskamma* Altarpiece, which explores the impact of HIV/AIDS on the local community, was completed

in the first half of 2005 and shown at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in July of that year. Following its exhibition at the University of Johannesburg in mid 2006, the altarpiece commenced touring North America.

Trained as a medical doctor after completing secondary school, Carol Hofmeyr had redirected her focus to the making of art in the 1990s. But alert to the fact that Hamburg had no mechanism for dealing with a rising rate of HIV infections, she resumed working as a medical practitioner in 2002. Beginning by working in various rural clinics, Hofmeyr started simultaneously collaborating with Eunice Mangwane, a widow and AIDS counselor. In 2004, before Hamburg had benefited from the government's antiretroviral rollouts, Hofmeyr sourced these medications privately and secured funding to pay for them. During the first half of 2005, when government-sponsored antiretroviral treatment became available to Hamburg, Hofmeyr set about securing a locale that could serve as a hospice offering personalized care to HIV-positive patients, and the Umtha Welanga Treatment Centre was founded. By the time that work commenced on the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* in January 2005, Hofmeyr had become less involved in the day-to-day running of the art project, and much of this management would be done by Jackie Downs who was employed by the project from 2003 until early 2007, along with women from within the community, such as Nozeti Makubalo, head designer, and project manager Nkosazana Veronica Betani.

Based on the *Isenheim Altarpiece* (1515) which had been commissioned by the religious order of St. Anthony to provide hope and comfort to the victims of ergotism, a gangrenous skin condition known as St. Anthony's Fire that resulted from a fungous that infected the rye used to make bread, the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* is intended to bring solace to a contemporary South African community suffering the effects of the AIDS virus. But if the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* was modeled on a European artwork, its imagery is nevertheless linked to the norms and values of makers operating in an African context, as I reveal. I also suggest that the altarpiece affirms and empowers women. While the Hamburg environment is one where unequal relations of power between males and females present the latter with enormous challenges in managing the impact of HIV/AIDS, the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* represents women as icons of strength and agency as well as the gender who provides the community with hope for a better future.

Part of the collection of the Musée d'Unterlinden in Colmar, the *Isenheim Altarpiece* was commissioned for the high altar of the church of the Monastery of St. Anthony in Isenheim. Comprised of two sets of folding wings and three different views, but disassembled during the French Revolution when it was removed from Isenheim to Colmar, its pinnacle and ornate framework were destroyed. All the paintings on the altarpiece are by Grünewald while the inner section originally incorporated wooden sculptures by Nikolaus Hagenauer. Made for a monastery subject to the 1478 reforms of the Antonite order which advocated that "each patient be required for every canonical hour to say twelve Our Fathers and as many Ave Marias, and in the church if it is possible" (quoted in Hayum 1993: 28), the *Isenheim Altarpiece* appears to have had a special function in addressing the needs of the ill. With a palpable emphasis on affliction, its imagery seems to have conveyed a message to sufferers of ergotism that enduring pain and misery brings one closer to God. (For detailed investigations of the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, see Scheja 1969, Mellinkoff 1988 and Hayum 1993.)

Carol Hofmeyr saw the *Isenheim Altarpiece* during a trip to Europe in November 2004, and it was at this stage that she had the idea of producing a work modeled on it but which substituted allusions to ergotism with reference to HIV/AIDS. Evidently the poor were most susceptible to St. Anthony's Fire and this seemed apt for a representation of HIV/AIDS which has also had the direst effects on underprivileged communities. But, while it imitates the shape, scale and form of the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* makes use of media that are distinctly different from its Renaissance prototype as well as imagery which speaks specifically of the contemporary South African context and framework of its makers.

It is difficult to establish exactly how the specific content of the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* was devised. In all likelihood, Hofmeyr commenced by showing groups of women the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, proposing that it be used to produce a work with local relevance. Having received consensus, she seems to have then gathered photographs of local individuals who could feature in the work, providing these images to the designers and managers. Nozeti Makubalo made preliminary drawings and thereafter four project members enrolled in diploma studies in East London drew the design onto cloth panels which then went to the embroiderers who worked in groups comprised of about ten individuals.

The work uses various techniques and media. Stumpwork, a form of raised embroidery, was coupled with appliqué, photographs by Tanya Jordaan and beadwork done under the auspices of the group headed by

project member Caroline Nyonga. The frame for the altarpiece was built by Justus Hofmeyr, Carol Hofmeyr's husband.

Grünewald's image of the Crucifixion, visible when the *Isenheim Altarpiece* is closed, is substituted in the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* by a central widow, who had lost her husband to AIDS, with a cross – a symbol of faith – behind her, and around her children orphaned by AIDS. The identity of the widow has not been disclosed to outsiders and seems in fact not to be known by project members themselves. Hence rather than the particularities of her individual circumstances being relevant, she serves as a generic symbol of women who have lost their loved ones to AIDS.

The two figures on the left and right of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* are St. Sebastian and St. Anthony. While the latter founded the Antonite order in the twelfth century to care for those afflicted with ergotism, the former was not only associated with protection against the plague but also, as Hayum (1993: 17-20) points out, had "come to be associated with the repelling and warding off of general bodily harm and of sudden, devastating, and epidemic disease in the broad sense". In the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, the side panels represent two respected women in the Hamburg community who, as Amy Shelver (2006: 126) observes, "lend their support to the central figure just as the Anthony and Sebastian figures do in the *Isenheim Altarpiece*." The elderly Leginah Mapuma, on the left-hand side, is a widow whose late husband had worked on the mines. Shown here in the formal dress of the Anglican Church, her garments are on one level testimony to her Christian faith. On another, her luminous red blouse reminds one of the color of an AIDS ribbon as well as perhaps the drapery of the disease-deterring St. Sebastian. Susan Paliso, in the right-hand panel, was mother to a son Dumile, who died of an AIDS-related illness in 2002 at the age of 35, and had subsequently taken on the care of her grandson.

There is one important respect in which the closed view of the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* contrasts distinctly with that of the *Isenheim Altarpiece*. Early sixteenth-century viewers would have comprehended the swooning of the Virgin Mary and the palpable distress of the Magdalene in the *Isenheim Altarpiece* as empathetic responses to the tortures inflicted on the Christ figure, as Georg Scheja (1969: 60) indicates. In the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, this tradition of visualizing Christ's agony through the representation of "co-suffering" females has been substituted by a suggestion that women, in their iconic largeness, frontality and uprightness, are pillars of the community. In contrast to the Renaissance work, the emphasis in the South Africa altarpiece is on female resilience in the face of hardship.

The predella, which remains visible when the altarpiece is opened, represents the hospital ward where Dumile spent his last days (on the left) as well as his burial and the accompanying church service (in the centre and on the right). These events are substitutes for the Lamentation scene in the *Isenheim Altarpiece* where – along with the Crucifixion scene that is visible when the altarpiece is closed – there is particular emphasis on the physical damage or torture to the body of Christ. According to Scheja (1969: 60), the treatment of Christ in the Grünewald has its origins in the writings of Bonaventura who proposed that He "suffered in all parts of His most holy body and, indeed, in such a manner that each individual member was forced to endure its own separate suffering. There was no place on His body not ravaged by torments." In the Grünewald this overall torment to the body is suggested through the emphasis on wounded and ruptured skin – a stress also entirely apposite for a monastery renowned for its care of sufferers of ergotism. This emphasis is in turn appropriate for representing HIV/AIDS as, apart from emaciating the body, the disease reveals itself through sores. Indeed the left-hand section of the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* predella which focuses on a hospital scene shows the body of an AIDS sufferer overlaid with pustules.

The first stage of opening Grünewald's altarpiece reveals an Annunciation (left) an angelic concert and an iconic image of the Virgin Mary (middle), and the Resurrection (right). The Holy Dove in the Annunciation scene indicates Christ's incarnation as human, while the Resurrection – on the far right – indicates His departure from corporeal form. Made in a context where pragmatic aspects of medicine were coupled with a stress on the miraculous and revelatory, this section of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* incorporates imagery which, as Hayum (Hayum 1989: 49) points out, refers to occult beliefs and magic which were "marshaled to combat the evil spirits associated with disease". For example, the earthenware pot and the tub in the foreground of the centre panel feature in allegorical illustrations which celebrate alchemy.

In the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, a sense of the spiritual and the visionary as well as an allusion to trance-like states is conveyed through the representation of experiences and events particular to the Hamburg community. Vuyisile Funda, known locally as "Gabba", makes an appearance on the right side of the central

panel. Spoken about with affection by women in the project, Gabba is a holy man who runs along the dunes on the beachfront each morning, producing patterns in the sand with his footprints. On the left side of the central panel are women wearing the formal uniforms of churches which have a following in Hamburg and surrounding villages. Leginah Mapuma's garments are reiterated in the Anglican Church dress of an individual who appears alongside a woman in the blue robes worn by members of the Zionist Church, for instance. A generic church building is represented, and alongside it is a choir of people from different denominations, above whom angels swirl and swoop energetically in parallel to those in the Grünewald panel. Immediately below the churchgoers is another religious event. Framed by a trio of huts, people in customary dress gather around a fire for the ceremonial slaughter of a bull and the roasting of its meat.

This juxtaposition of churchgoers and those involved in a customary ritual is meaningful. The numerous people in Africa who view Christianity as an addition to, rather than a replacement of, their customary values include individuals in Hamburg. For example, project member Nozaliseko Makubalo, who belongs to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, explains her own religious practices as follows: "When it is time to do traditional work, I'm there. And when it is time to go to church, I go to church. But I can't leave traditional work at home and go to church."[247] This double commitment also affects the way in which many people in Hamburg respond to HIV/AIDS. If even those who claim to have abandoned their customary religions in favor of Christianity often end up turning to African belief systems and practices in times of crisis, as Magesa (1997: 9) observes, it not surprising that people in Hamburg may couple continuation of Christian prayers with endeavors to seek interventions from diviners and healers when confronted with the calamitous news that they are suffering from an AIDS-related illness.

The far left panel of the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* shows a large and leafy fig tree in Hamburg. Providing a home to birds as well as shelter to humans and cattle, it signifies continuity. The panel on the far right includes a spiral of animals, flora and fish that parallels the circular aura surrounding the resurrected Christ in the *Isenheim Altarpiece*. Seemingly charged with supernatural energy, it substitutes Grünewald's representation of Christ's incarnation and departure from human form with, as Carol Brown (2006) suggests, reference to "a never-ending cycle of life".

The second opening of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* shows, at its center, the sculptures of St. Anthony and the Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine and St. Jerome. In the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, these have been replaced by life-size digital photographs printed on canvas which represent three local grandmothers and their grandchildren, some of whom have been orphaned by AIDS. Jordaan's photographs suggest the mass of the three adult "saints", thus conveying a sense of their weighty influence. Implied to sustain the vitality of the community through their concern for the needs of its youngest and most vulnerable members, these grandmothers enact the concept of *ubuntu*. Magadlela (2008) points out that, in terms of *ubuntu*, "each one of us can only effectively exist as fully functioning human beings when we acknowledge the roles that others play in our lives" and, more particularly, when we act to sustain this social interconnectedness.

The side panels of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* illustrate scenes from the life of St. Anthony. On the right is Anthony's so-called 'Temptation' in which he is menaced by daemons until God dispatches an angel to dispel them. On the left is his meeting with the Hermit Paul in the desert, where the two saints are miraculously delivered bread – symbolic of the Communion – by a raven. In the *Keiskamma Altarpiece*, these two scenes have been translated into representations of "serene imagery of the Hamburg landscape" which is as the authors of a short catalogue from 2005 explain, "a final resting place for … community members who have fallen to illness and who can now be remembered with dignity and peace" (Downs et al. 2005).

In the Temptation of Anthony in the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, the daemons that inflict punishment on the saint are suggested to be diseased and harbingers of contagion. Pustules, for example, are evident on some of their bodies, particularly the web-footed daemon on the bottom left. The *Keiskamma Altarpiece* uses the idea that the daemon, AIDS, is testing the endurance of the community. But rather than depicting punishment, the panel corresponding to the Temptation (along with the far left panel) is rendered in terms of translucent hues and transparent shapes which dematerialize the represented scene and thus invoke reference to a spiritual milieu. While lending themselves to interpretation in terms of Christian understandings of physical death as

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[247] Interview with Nozaliseko Makubalo on 18 December 2008.

the potential prelude to an afterlife free from suffering, the two panels might also be viewed as allusions to a realm where the deceased become ancestral forces who mediate between God and humankind.[248]

In the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, the scene representing the meeting of Anthony and the Hermit Paul in the desert includes plants which can be identified as medicinal herbs that were used as remedies for St. Anthony's Fire in the early sixteenth century. The corresponding scene in the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* (along with the far right panel) also includes plant life – perhaps, as Betani suggests, to signify the hope that one day these herbs might be transformed into a permanent cure for AIDS. More noticeably, the panel represents the mouth of the Keiskamma River and this also has implications in regard to healing. Noseti Makubalo made the following observation:

> We go into the river and speak to our ancestors. We give gifts to the river ancestors like tobacco, beer, matches, white beads of the *sangoma*. Sometimes *sangomas* go under the water of the river to become a *sangoma* – to talk with the ancestors. I think the thing we all wish for and hope is that there will be a cure for HIV one day, like there is for other diseases, if only we could be washed clean by the river (Quoted in Shelver 2006: 130-1).

Constituting the name of the project, the Keiskamma becomes associated with the possibility of religious transcendence as well as a cure for disease.

Producing the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* provided embroiderers with an opportunity to discuss their understandings of HIV/AIDS and, through the efforts of Eunice Mangwane and others, to become better informed about the disease. Also significant is the pride that women in the community feel at having contributed to a work that was ceremoniously presented to the public in the Cathedral in Grahamstown at the National Arts Festival and has subsequently travelled internationally. Further, the *Keiskamma Altarpiece* had the benefit of offering comfort and reassurance to the people of Hamburg. An iconography focusing on spiritual renewal along with a representation of older women as stalwarts of the community suggests that Hamburg has the resources and will to overcome HIV/AIDS and its devastating impact. Although Hofmeyr did not envisage this in the beginning, a message of hope would turn out to be especially apt for a work on HIV/AIDS that took shape simultaneously with government-sponsored antiretroviral medication finally becoming available in Hamburg. "It was fortuitous", Hofmeyr observes, "It was the right thing for women to be making in the first year they had ARVs. They were seeing some people get better. … So in a strange way, almost a magical way, the work allowed a real expression of the community."[249]

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[248] See Asante and Nwadiora (2007: 75-80) for an overview of the religious beliefs of isiXhosa-speaking groups. They observe: "Ancestors dwell in the same spiritual realm as Quamata, and therefore, are the mediators between him and man. … Qamata is considered the greatest king of all, 'Inkosi enkulu' (The Great King), and to approach him without a mediator is highly disrespectful" (Asante and Nwadiora 2007: 75). Nkosazana Veronica Betani, Project Manager, made the same point when I asked her about customary beliefs and their import in Hamburg: "My grandmother used to say the ancestors are the way through to God. You cannot speak straight to God. You have to speak to the ancestors about what you are asking for and then the answer will come to you" (Interview with Nkosazana Veronica Betani on 18 December 2008).

[249] Interview with Carol Hofmeyr on 1 June 2006.

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Photography's aura: Rereading Walter Benjamin and Michael Fried against the grain of visual colonialisms

This paper continues my exploration of photographs as shadow objects marked by fact and fiction, the then and the now, as well as the not-yet. In previous papers I have argued that, as melancholy objects, photographs imperfectly trace the presence and the absence of the "that has been" (Barthes 2000, Schoeman 2008a). They offer consolation against the ravages of time; yet they also serve as uncanny harbingers of death (cf Freud 1988, Schoeman 2008a & 2009). I have argued that, as ideological products or projections, photographs require constant reframing, so as to help lay bare their or our cultural presumptions to realism, verisimilitude, or totality. With reference to Susan Sontag and others, I have argued that, photographs can be fascinating, phantasmagorical stand-ins for reality (cf Sontag 1979, Schoeman 2008b & 2009); and that even the most overlooked examples may have auratic allure.

It is to this auratic allure that I wish to turn today. I do so from the perspective of Walter Benjamin's influential writings on art, technology, and aura, as well as from the perspective of Michael Fried's most recent book *Why photography matters as art as never before* (2008). Here Fried offers a compelling reading of the tendency in recent art photography towards a larger image-size and the tableau form — regarded positively by Fried for creating distance between the image and the beholder. Fried's interpretation of recent photography in terms of antitheatrical distance and exclusion, absorption and wholeness, integration and independence (all of which define his theoretical project in general) recalls aspects of Benjamin's notion of the aura, although Fried refrains from discussing Benjamin's concept. Moreover, Benjamin's and Fried's conceptualising of aura and distance seems especially pertinent in the contested context of visual colonialisms, in which the dialectical distance and proximity of the "exotic" other becomes the target of our insatiable gazes and discourses.

This paper rereads Benjamin and Fried against the grain of visual colonialisms. Contrary to Benjamin, it can be argued that photography, and the mass reproduction of photographic images or photographic signs, produces the aura Benjamin speaks of, although "in a new way" (Didi-Huberman 2005: 4). The photograph as substitute reality uncannily produces a unique distance, "no matter how close at hand." To photograph something or someone, means to lend them an aura — it means transforming them into a sight to be seen; a sight that every photographic reproduction pushes further into the distance, making it all the more alluring. This perhaps has special bearing on photographs of "exotic" persons, things, or events, which are designed to be seen from an alluring distance. From this perspective, the question can be asked: Is Fried's privileging of distance an expression of ideological repression of difference by the totalising idea of beautiful semblance?

"What is aura, actually?" asks Walter Benjamin (1999: 518) in his dialectical essay "Little history of photography". To which he answers, it is "the unique existence of a distance, no matter how close at hand." For Benjamin aura describes a work of art's uniqueness and singularity — in time and in space. It lends the artwork its authority, authenticity, and unattainability. But, argues Benjamin (2002) in his famous essay "The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility", with the advent of modern technology, with the technological reproducibility of artworks, persons, or things, the aura of distance and uniqueness — or, better, the "bad" simulation of auratic effects — is rendered obsolete.

According to Benjamin, the first daguerreotype photographs have an "authentic" aura of distance, partially created by their long exposure times — up to fifteen minutes in 1838; by each photograph being one of a kind; and by their singular fusion of darkness and luminosity, subject and technique. As Benjamin (1999: 508) notes: "Daguerre's photographs were iodized silver plates exposed in the camera obscura, which had to be turned this way and that until, in the proper light, a pale gray image could be discerned. They were one of a kind; in 1839 a plate cost an average of 25 gold francs. They were not infrequently kept in a case, like jewelry". Benjamin is especially drawn to portrait photographs circa 1850, which were used as unpretentious, technical adjuncts, such as the English portrait painter David Octavius Hill's photograph of the Newhaven fishwife (Figure 1), of which Benjamin (1999: 510) writes: "in Hill's Newhaven fishwife, her eyes cast down in such indolent, seductive modesty, there remains something that goes beyond testimony to the photographer's art, something that cannot be silenced, that fills you with an unruly desire to know what her name was, the woman who was alive there, who even now is still real and will never consent to be wholly absorbed in 'art'".

Figure 1: David Octavius Hill, *Photograph of the Newhaven fishwife*

Writing about Karl Dauthendy's portrait of his fiancée and himself (Figure 2), Benjamin suggests the woman's eminent suicide is already prefigured here, in her distant gaze. He observes: Dauthendy "seems to be holding her, but her gaze passes him by, absorbed in an ominous distance". For Benjamin, technology here makes visible, as if by magic, what is not yet visible — death; and this is the photograph's unique aura. "Immerse yourself in such a picture for long enough", he writes dialectically, "and you will realize to what extent opposites touch, here too: the most precise technology can give its products a magical value, such as a painted picture can never again have for us. No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed his subject, the beholder feels an irresistible urge to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of the here and now, with which reality has (so to speak) seared the subject, to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment, the future nests to eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it" (Benjamin 1999: 510).

Figure 2: Karl Dauthendey, *Karl Dauthendey (father of the poet) with his fiancée*

For Benjamin, this intertwinement of distance (she is not yet dead, then and there) and proximity (she is dead, here and now) marks the dialectical intertwinement of precision technology and magic — precisely what, according to Benjamin, will begin to decline into bourgeois art photography's inauthentic simulation of auratic effects (cf Baudrillard 2005: 108f), from the mid-1850s onwards, when collodian wet plate photography replaced the daguerreotypes. Uniformity of print production via collodian negatives brought with it large-scale photographic publication and near-complete commercialisation; and photographic prints took on a gloss, which came increasingly to look machined and mass produced, although they were made by hand. According to Benjamin (1999: 517), the aura of Hill's and Dauthendy's pictures "was by no means the mere product of a primitive camera. Rather, in this early period subject and technique were as exactly congruent as they became incongruent in the period of decline [that is, commercialisation] that immediately followed".

This is the crux of Benjamin's argument: the aura of these early portrait photographs resides in them capturing the here and now without artfulness, without pretence to art; they are unaffected. Hill's Newhaven fishwife materialises as she is, without acting. Dauthendy and his wife seem to crystallise, simply by waiting for the image to develop. "[S]o much, no more", writes Barthes (2000: 87); so much, still. Neither photograph, in which "light struggles out of darkness" as in a mezzotint (Benjamin 1999: 517), *pretends* to have distance or allure. According to Benjamin, this pretence is precisely the point in bourgeois portrait photography after 1880, in which fake distance is designed to give affected stature to a class in decline. Ironically, as Benjamin (1999: 517) writes, with the "advances in optics that made instruments available that wholly overcame darkness and recorded appearances as faithfully as in any mirror", photographers felt compelled to "simulate the aura, which had been banished from the picture with the suppression of darkness through faster lenses".

Take *Portrait of man and child*, from the atelier of Robert Wallich (circa 1895) (Figure 3) and Anonymous, *Portrait*, from the late nineteenth century, a hand-coloured American tintype (Figure 4). Both have been staged in nineteenth century studios whose draperies and painted trees, tapestries and ornamental chairs, "placed them somewhere between a torture chamber and a throne room", as Benjamin (1999: 800) writes with reference to a childhood photograph of Franz Kafka. In the first image, man and child have been staged, stiffly, against the backdrop of some exotic, far-flung locale. The man appears to grip the child's hand, as if she is a rudder with which to steer himself in an uncertain world; the child seems to be pulled up straight, chin up, as if stoically facing the inevitability of her future role as wife and mother. The starched dress and pose of man and child, so incongruous against the wispy backdrop, brings to mind the ludicrous incongruities of pictures of colonial settlers, playing dress up in the meagre shade of Kenya's Acacia trees.

Figure 3: *Portrait of man and child*, from the atelier of Robert Wallich, circa 1895

In the second photograph, the young man poses seriously in a studio version of a bourgeois interior. Standing amongst typical bourgeois ornaments, phantasmagorias of the interior, the young man fills his suit and his self-worth like a ghost — he is a pale image of himself; prematurely old; disconnected. Like the first photograph, this one was intended to be displayed in the private, bourgeois interior, on the wall or in a photo album, together with the other imperial curiosities and exotic discoveries representing the universe. As Benjamin (1999: 515) writes: "This was the time photograph albums came into vogue. They were most at home in the chilliest spots, on occasional tables or little stands in the drawing room [and in the photographs themselves, GS] — leather-bound tomes with repellent metal hasps and those gilt-edged pages as thick as your finger, where foolishly draped or corseted figures were displayed". Unbeknownst to the young man, his pose is a parody — literally a painted or retouched, machine-glossy simulation expressing inward estrangement.

Figure 4: Anonymous, *Portrait*, late nineteenth century

From Benjamin's perspective these two photographs display fake aura — making them theatrical, in Michael Fried's terms; or inauthentic, in Martin Heidegger's (cf Pippen 2005). Of course, according to Barthes (2000: 13), every time you are photographed, you imitate yourself; you become inauthentic. Except, he suggests, if you hold something back (Barthes 2000: 113); if you distance yourself, by not supposing yourself (Barthes 2000: 67). These two photographs have been commercially designed to mimic or suppose the aura of the first people who, as Benjamin (1999: 512) writes eloquently, "entered the visual space of photography with their innocence intact". In these bourgeois photographs, which lack the "beautiful and unapproachable" aura of innocence (so distant now) that he detects in the first photographs (Benjamin 1999: 527), a pose is "in evidence, whose rigidity", as Benjamin (1999: 517) writes, "betrayed the impotence of that generation in the face of technical progress". Benjamin hails the elimination of this rigid, alienating pose and pseudo-aura in the photographs of Eugène Atget and August Sander.

Benjamin (1999: 518) observes that Atget "was an actor who, disgusted with the profession, wiped off the mask and then set about removing the mask from reality too". Although he disliked Atget's photographs, writing "what have I to do with Atget's old tree trunks" (Barthes 2000: 16), Barthes's (2000: 81) perception of colour as artifice and cosmetic resembles Benjamin's evocation of Atget's photographs as stripping the romantic artifice and phony cosmetic from the city of Paris. Atget's photographs disinfect, cleanse, and emancipate the object from the smothering, fake aura of Paris; they empty the city, laying it bare like a scene of the crime.

Figure 5: Eugène Atget, *Shop window (giant & dwarf),* 1925

In Atget's *Shop window (giant & dwarf)* (1925) (Figure 5) and *Marche des carmes* (1910) (Figure 6), "megalography" makes way for "rhopography". "Megalography", as Norman Bryson (2001: 61) observes in

Looking at the overlooked, "is the depiction of those things in the world which are great — the legends of the gods, the battles of heroes, the crises of history. Rhopography (from *rhopos*, trivial objects, small wares, trifles) is the depiction of those things which lack importance, the unassuming material base of life that 'importance' constantly overlooks". Against the exotic, fake importance of bourgeois portraiture as a form of megalography, the overlooked trifles depicted in these two photographs "suck aura from reality like water from a sinking ship", to cite Benjamin (1999: 518). Devoid of people, Atget's photographs are also devoid of pretence — though not of surrealism.

Figure 6: Eugène Atget, *Marche des carmes* (1910)

But are they truly without aura? Do they really dispel distance in the name of bringing things closer to us, or rather, as Benjamin (1999: 519) writes, closer to the masses? Because this is the point of Benjamin's argument: Atget's photographs, like those of August Sander, democratize the image; no longer intended solely for private collections, technological reproduction has made images accessible on a mass scale. Benjamin (1999: 519) writes: "Every day the need to possess the object in close-up in the form of a picture, or rather a copy, becomes more imperative". For Benjamin "the difference between the copy, which illustrated papers and newsreels keep in readiness, and the original picture is unmistakable. Uniqueness and duration are as intimately intertwined to the latter as are transience and reproducibility in the former". However, as W J T Mitchell (2005) argues, in our age of biocybernetic reproduction, thanks to "new constellations of media at many different levels", reproduced images or copies take on an uncanny life and death of their own. Today biocybernetic clones and digital doubles have a peculiar aura of distance, "no matter how close at hand". Hence the Pygmalion effect (Stoichita 2008) of Wendy McCurdo's digitally composite image *Helen, backstage, Merlin theatre (The glance)* (1996) (Figure 7) or Jeff Wall's early digitally manipulated transparency *Double self-portrait* (1979) Figure 8).

Figure 7: Wendy McCurdo, *Helen, backstage, Merlin theatre (The glance)*, 1996

Figure 8: Jeff Wall, *Double self-portrait*, 1979

But I am getting ahead of myself. In Benjamin's view, Atget's and Sander's photographs dispel the *false* aura of art, and truncate the distance produced by *make-belief*. Because of technical precision, their photographs bring empirical reality closer for critical inspection. In Marxist terms, Atget's and Sander's photographs partake in ideology critique; they dialectically reveal the false consciousness produced by auratic, phantasmagoric images. In Sander's *Pastry cook* (1928) (Figure 9), aesthetics makes way for politics. According to Benjamin, here everything is clear; no atmosphere that stifles or obfuscates the man's social function. He is here for us to see, up close. No wonder the Nazis censored Sander's "faces of the period" in 1934 — no trace of Aryan perfection; no hyperbolic athleticism; no aura of power.

Figure 9: August Sander, *Pastry cook* , 1928

And yet, the aura of ideology remains. Though Sander's pastry cook is clearly quite different from the posed young man in the faux-bourgeois interior discussed earlier (for one the picture was not intended for a photo album, and second the man is not posed in a studio), the scientific gaze is projective and heated. The man is framed for a reason; his picture forms part of a programme. He stands for a universal type, and this obfuscates his singularity (his "that has been"). He is simply a pastry cook — hardly someone with an inner life, or sense of mischief or melancholy. The clarity of the picture reduces the man to stereotype. Thus we can stare with impunity at the specimen. What has happened to aura? It is inflected, and returns in a new way. The closer the pastry cook appears to our heated gazes, the less we see of him. He is flattened by generalisation, concept, and sign. Impenetrable and platitudinous (cf Barthes 2000: 16), Sander's quasi-

objective picture of a pastry cook has the "apparition of proximity" which, ironically, increases the "apparition of distance" (cf Didi-Huberman 2005: 17).

Diane Arbus's photographs extend Sander's human atlas project; only now the subject is less everyman, than freak. As with Sander's photographs, Arbus sets out to objectively and matter-of-factly record the "overlooked" of society. Similar to August Sander's *Sisters* (1927) (Figure 10), Arbus's *Identical twins* (1967) (Figure 11) are framed where they are found: no torture chamber or throne room; no studio lighting; no props. At first glance, this would translate as the elimination of the stifling atmosphere of aura and of distance. And yet, despite its potentially self-aware thematising of photography as twinning, doubling and copying, the picture is nothing if not stifling. The twins seem enveloped in a fog of maudlin nostalgia and solipsistic fantasy. Arbus's photographs have the aura of a fabricated childhood encounter with the fascinating, risky, exotic other, perhaps at a travelling circus. Like so many grainy flashbacks in movies, their false air of sadness makes them grotesquely sentimental. For all their supposed honesty, the photographs aestheticise their subjects, preserving them as if in milky formaldehyde.

Figure 10: August Sander, *Sisters*, 1927

Figure 11: Diane Arbus, *Identical twins*, 1967

Roger Ballen's photographs arguably partake of a similar aestheticisation. Although the later work is deliberately staged (Figure 12), signalling a break with Sander and Arbus, the similarities with Arbus especially are striking. It is as if Ballen restages Arbus — magnifying the false, suffocating aura that envelops her subjects. What kind of private fantasy is Ballen living out, in these moody, atmospheric framings and manipulations of the grotesque other — the marginal, the entropic, the oblivious?

Figure 12: Roger Ballen, *Lunch time*, 2001

Ballen's recent *Shadow chamber* (Figure 13) seems to copy John Divola's work (Figure 14), of which David Campany (2007: 88) writes: "Divola explores relationships between the natural and the artificial, the objective and the subjective. In the *Vandalism* series [1973-75] he blurred the distinction between found evidence and constructed performance. The marks recorded by the camera appear intentional yet their meaning is elusive. Has the camera 'encountered' them or have they been made especially for it? The photographs preserve the ambiguous status of the traces. In fact Divola had himself broken into these condemned buildings, which he 'vandalised' creatively before photographing them". In light of Ballen's admission that his photographs represent his own constructed, fantasy world, do they also partake of Divola's deconstruction of meaning? Do they reveal the act of construction as a form of unmasking — an undoing of the false consciousness of aura? Does their ambiguous performativity and aura dialectically reveal the deceptive claims to objectivity informing Sander's and Arbus's work — as well as the pseudo-objectivity of much ideology-critique in general?

Figure 13: Roger Ballen, *Configuration*, 2003

Figure 14: John Divola, *Untitled*, 1974

Similar questions may be posed with reference to Pieter Hugo, whose photographs are sometimes interpreted as self-reflexively staging their own objecthood (Figure 15). I want to consider Hugo from the perspective of Michael Fried's latest book *Why photography matters as art as never before*, in which he regards positively the tendency in recent art photography towards a larger image-size and the tableau form, for creating distance between the image and the beholder. As mentioned earlier, Fried's constellation of antitheatrical

distance and exclusion, absorption and wholeness, integration and independence recalls aspects of Benjamin's notion of the aura.

Figure 15: Pieter Hugo, *Gezina and Hendrik Jacobus Venter and their children Pieter and Intelashia with their dog Snowy and rabbit peanut*, 2007

In his latest book Fried discusses ambitious photography by photographers such as Jeff Wall, Thomas Struth, Candida Höfer, Thomas Demand, Rineke Dijkstra, Hiroshi Sugimoto and others with reference to, amongst other things, his 1967 essay "Art and objecthood". Fried retains the basic gist of his earlier ideas, which have been criticised by postmodern writers for their ideological, modernist bias, but shifts the emphasis from modernist painting to contemporary photographs that are intended to be "framed and hung on a wall, to be looked at like paintings" (Fried 2008: 14). But whereas in his 1967 essay Fried was critical of literalist or minimalist art for *distancing* the viewer, in his book on photography distance is recast in a positive light; here the distancing effect generated by the predominantly large scale photographs by Demand, Höfer, Struth, and Sugimoto is seen as antitheatrical as opposed to theatrical. In "Art and objecthood" distancing transforms beholdership into an experience of the artwork in a theatrical situation, premised on the subject/object relation; in Fried's book on photography it translates as the exclusion of the beholder from the antitheatrical artwork, which is seen as a self-enclosed world apart or tableau.

In this regard Fried's interpretation of Thomas Struth's work differs substantially from the interpretation offered by the art historian Hans Belting. For the latter Struth's museum photographs, in which we can see museum viewers contemplating paintings in famous museums such as the Prado, represent a game with the boundaries between art and reality. According to Belting, in a photograph such as Struth's *Art Institute of Chicago 2* (1990) (Figure 16) it appears as if the woman with the stroller contemplating Caillebotte's *Paris street* inhabits a space that is continuous with the space depicted in the painting. Belting argues that Struth questions the boundaries between photography and painting, just as Caillebotte questioned the boundaries between painting and reality (Fried 2008: 118).

Figure 16: Thomas Struth, *Art Institute of Chicago 2*, 1990

But for Fried it is questionable whether the space of the woman is genuinely continuous with the space represented in Caillebotte's painting. He doubts whether "'one no longer knows' whether she stands in front of the painting or within it" (Fried 2008: 119). Instead Fried argues that the apparent continuity between pictoral space and the space of the viewer is a pictoral fiction — "far from visually subsuming the woman standing before it, the painting in the photograph is not only closed to her but in the end almost actively indifferent to her very existence (and *a fortiori* to ours as viewers of Struth's photograph)" (Fried 2008: 120). In fact, Struth's photograph seems to draw attention to this pictoral illusion; it thematises it. The photograph consists of a series of frames within frames, boundaries within boundaries, representations within representations which together thematise the dialectical to and fro between closed, indifferent or exclusionary realms — within the photograph and without.

Said differently, Struth's photograph is a self-referential metapicture (cf Mitchell 1994 & 2005) — in Fried's terms, it is a self-enclosed picture representing the "world apartness" of pictures that seemingly deny or exclude the presence of the beholder. This denial or exclusion is then also on a par with Fried's ongoing argument for the relevance of pictures that form part of the pictoral tradition of antitheatricality and absorption — perhaps first visualised in the work of Baroque painters such as Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Vermeer; and critically elucidated for the first time by Diderot during the eighteenth century.

Reading Fried against the grain, I am not certain whether antitheatrical "world apartness" is what characterises Pieter Hugo's confrontational photographs which, in their *hollow objectification*, seem to veer towards the theatrical. Because of their large scale, their expensive printing and framing Hugo's matter-of-fact, colour photographs declare: *This is art* — designed for high-end galleries, wealthy patrons, and museums (in fact, this is a characteristic of the work of many of the photographers Fried discusses in his book, something which complicates his argument). To borrow from Fried's 1967 essay "Art and objecthood"

— in their obtrusiveness Hugo's images demand that the beholder take them seriously (cf Fried 1998: 155). Their pronounced *presence* (cf Fried 1998: 151) obliterates all intimacy, distancing the beholder — making him or her into a subject and the subject of the work into an object to be looked at (cf Fried 1998: 154). Hugo's large scale images *expose* their subjects, and *pose* their subjects as *art objects*. They literally project the distancing effects of the museum. Is this distancing absorptive or self-important?

Compare Hugo's work to Thomas Struth's large-scale *The Richter family, Cologne* (2002) Figure 17)]. Is it the difference in the class of people represented that opens the door to a critique of Hugo's work as opportunistic, flattening, ethnographic? Or is it merely the different approaches to light — Hugo's harsh; Struth's soft — regardless of subject matter, which distinguishes the two portraits? Still, both are intended to be "framed and hung on a wall, to be looked at like paintings", which immediately gives them the (false? theatrical?) aura of art, beautiful semblance, and capital. Neither portrait escapes the theatrical situation of art. Yet perhaps through the image of the artist Richter, which accompanies what we know of the images he produces, Struth's photograph acquires an authentic aura of distance — in a Benjaminian and Friedian sense.

Richter's work is famous for its "antitheatrical" inaccessibility, its uncommunicative negative dialectics, its cloudy remoteness (cf Schoeman 2005) — the framed, blurry painting of a skull hanging on the wall just behind Richter and his daughter is an absorbing example. It is as if we are looking at Richter and his handsome family through these filtered pictures about pictures (for example, the painting of a skull clearly references seventeenth century still life paintings allegorising *vanitas*); images that mediate other images in their nearness and remoteness. Richter's images are mediated by other images and Struth's photograph is mediated by Richter's work. The aura of remoteness that Richter's works possess (they have the aura of masterpieces we will never possess) lends the photograph an aura of distance; meanwhile, the magnetic aura of the artist Gerhard Richter in Struth's photograph increases its push and pull.[250]

Figure 17: Thomas Struth, *The Richter family, Cologne*, 2002

A different dynamic is at play in photographs devoid of the pretence of art. I am thinking, for example, of a grainy image reproduced in W G Sebald's novel *The rings of Saturn* (2002) (Figure 18). Here the author recalls an article in which the concentration camp at Bergen Belsen is mentioned, which is then followed by this image. But as Adrian Daub (2007: 322) points out, the article appears to be an invention by the author, which complicates the veracity of the image. In fact, whilst doing research for this paper no google searches for the image proved successful. Yet the image remains alluring — precisely because it is unclear to what degree it manifests piles of dead bodies at a concentration camp. "Not only is it unclear what this is a picture *of*", writes Daub, "but it offers us no particulars to relate to in a 'proscenium' to the landscape of destruction".

Figure 18: Photograph from W G Sebald, *The rings of Saturn*, 2002

Sebald's inaccessible, shadowy forest of lingering annihilation has the enigmatic aura of *afterlife*, which grows because the image is reproduced and folded in a book, multiple times; it is deceptively unremarkable, making us look again; its factuality can be fiction, which creates a puzzle; and because it seems invested with an obscure return gaze. "To experience the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to

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[250] In a similar sense I am reminded of a scene at the end of the film *The reader*, which was directed by Stephen Daldry in 2008, based on Bernhard Schlink's novel from 1995. In the scene we see a fragment of one of Richter's abstract paintings hanging on the wall of the chic New York apartment of the well-to-do Jewish granddaughter (Lena Olin) of the only survivor of the church fire that killed the Jewish prisoners who were under the command of Hannah Schmitz, with whom the film's protagonist Michael Berg (Ralph Fiennes) had an affair when he was a teenager. In this scene in which the now middle aged barrister Berg meets with the granddaughter to discuss Schmitz's will, in which Schmitz leaves money to her, the fragment of Richter's painting takes on a special significance. The well-known indeterminacy of Richter's paintings becomes a filter through which to contemplate the indeterminacy of judgment and the im-possibility of forgiveness. That we see only a fragment of Richter's abstract painting (an abstract of an abstract) reveals not only the fragmentariness of all of our judgements, based always in flawed or limited perceptions; it also emphasises the impossibility of judging once and for all. This fragmentariness and inscrutability — this distance — translates also as a powerful critique of totalitarian systems that claim absolute knowledge and right.

look back", writes Benjamin (2003: 338). Like the photographer in Michelangelo Antonione's film from 1966 *Blow up*, we are enveloped in the impenetrable darkness of an image that seemingly peers back, from the distance of not-yet catastrophe. Here there is nothing imperial, nothing colonised, no situation; only incomprehensible remoteness, no matter how near.

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"African Orientalisms, African Occidentalisms": Reflections on the Curatorial Premises of the 2008 Gwangju Biennale

When we come to the concomitant question of the consciousness of the subaltern, the notion of what the work <u>cannot</u> say becomes important. In the semioses of the social text, elaborations of insurgency stand in the place of 'the utterance'. The sender – 'the peasant' – is marked only as a pointer to an irretrievable consciousness. As for the receiver, we must ask who is 'the real receiver' of an 'insurgency'? The historian, transforming 'insurgency' into 'text for knowledge', is only one 'receiver' of any collectively intended social act. With no possibility of nostalgia for that lost origin, the historian must suspend (as far as possible) the clamor of his or her own consciousness…so that the elaboration of the insurgency…does not freeze into an 'object of investigation', or, worse yet, a model for imitation…The postcolonial intellectuals learn that their privilege is their loss. In this they are a paradigm of the intellectuals. — Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman, eds. *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993): p. 82; original essay published 1988

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's now-familiar essay regarding sociocultural marginalization casts the historian/sociologist/anthropologist/academic as one who exposes, liberates, and reorients the elements and dynamics of such a marginalized state, yet doing so from the position of privilege that one enjoys within academia, within economically privileged classes, and/or within the West. While Spivak's project does reference issues of spectacle and cultural visibility, her arguments largely confront representation and inclusion as functions constructed either through critical observation or first-hand experience—producing states of "speaking" or "being spoken for." However, her quotation of Foucault serves as a useful bridge between historical processes and museological/curatorial postures: "to make visible the unseen can also mean a change of level, addressing oneself to a layer of material which had hitherto had no pertinence for

history and which had not been recognized as having any moral, aesthetic, or historical value."[251] Spivak's subsequent differentiation between "rendering visible the mechanism" and "rendering vocal the individual"[252] link well to the relationships between contemporary biennales—the flawed mechanisms through which curatorial ruminations on troublesome, often-vague themes such as "postcoloniality" and "globalization" are vetted—and the historical, artistic voices that do (or, in many cases, do not) form part of those meditations.

The polarities identified in Spivak's 1988 essay included the authentic subject and its subsequent (mis-)representation, a seemingly straightforward "I-vs.-Other" relationship rendered all the more problematic by economic privilege (or lack thereof), geographic location affected by migration and diaspora, and access to the platforms for the formation and dissemination of knowledge. The danger that Spivak identifies is the point at which the marginalized voice transforms into privilege and, one might subsequently infer, how this transformation affects the speaker's understanding of key cultural terms, such as "postcoloniality," and (in the case of the global mega-exhibition) how such understanding informs curatorial choices and intellectual trajectories. In terms of the contemporary biennale and the ideas with which it grapples, can the curator accurately engage with the dispossessed, from the perspectives of both lavish entitlement and nostalgic dispossession, when one's curatorial vision is now deferred to as "central," "key," "formative," "essential," and "mainstream?" Can "the West" be lumped together as the consistent and unchanging foil to the progress of the "non-West" by a curator whose career and vision straddle both worlds? In the case of the Gwangju Biennale, which serves as inspiration for this paper, what happens to the hierarchically constructed notions of Orientalism (long considered to be how the West represents, typologizes, objectifies, subjectifies, and essentializes the East)[253] when a curator epitomizing the "non-West-within-the-West" extends his gaze to the histories of South Korea and proposes the details of their interconnectedness with other cultures and practices? Is this a form of African Orientalism, and what might it indicate about the curator's view of Africa's relationship to global culture and contemporaneity?

Trade Routes: History and Geography, the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale curated by Okwui Enwezor in 1997, created interesting and compelling links between some familiar conditions that umbrella contemporary artistic discourses—"hyper-consumerism, ethnographic travel, cultural tourism, [and] the Hollywoodisation of mass culture"[254]—and the historical occupations, dominations, and exploitations associated with fifteenth-century European conquests and trade missions. According to Enwezor, the catalyst for proto-globalization at that time was not simply the establishment of efficient routes between cultures but also the manipulation of travel "for greater economic mobility and leverage, which would serve to consolidate the powers of the monarchies and emergent merchant classes of Europe."[255] The economic expansionism that followed ushered in an "Age of Europe" that Enwezor conceptualized as the bitter counterpoint to the conditions concomitantly experienced in Asia, the Americas, and Africa: "a negative Age of Decline and Defensiveness."[256] Enwezor surmised that what the Age of Europe/Age of Enlightenment provided was a largely economically motivated engine of intellectualism and creativity that propelled Western interests by combusting the livelihoods and welfare of the non-West. Accordingly, his curatorial vision often exposed how identity has been alternatively defined and suffocated by capitalism and consumer culture—relying on works, such as Pepón Osorio's installation *Badge of Honor* (1995), to establish clear tensions between the prison's deprivation and the home's relative material plenty, but also to put into question which environment was truly the most "free" and desirable **(Figure 1)**. Other works, put Western engagements with Africanness into question using a socioeconomic subtext—with Yinka Shonibare's *Victorian Philanthropist Parlour* (1996-1997) problematizing cultural origins and relationships: a batik fabric with Indonesian origins

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[251] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977,* trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon, 1980): pp. 80-81.
[252] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman, eds. *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993): p. 81.
[253] For elaboration on the "orientalization" of the Orient to which this statement refers, see Anwar Abdel Malek, "Orientalism in crisis," *Diogenes* 44 (Winter 1963): pp. 107-108.
[254] Okwui Enwezor, "Introduction – Travel Notes: Living, Working, and Travelling in a Restless World," in *Trade Routes: History and Geography* (Johannesburg: Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, 1997): p. 7.
[255] Ibid., p. 8.
[256] Ibid., p. 9.

patterned with "African" motifs covering turn-of-the-century English furniture and walls, yet originally purchased in the Brixton markets **(Figure 2)**.[257]

The resulting layers of conflicting cultural references and their unpredictable relationships to economic traditions and imperatives mirrored the exhibition's contradictory stances: Francesco Bonami's celebratory description of the growth, production, and perception of contemporary art as "the result of economic transformation, the symptom of an enlightened capitalist society,"[258] countered by Enwezor's building of "contact zones" within the exhibition, as opposed to national pavilions, in order to dismantle the traditions of socioeconomic hierarchy and exchange.[259] Importantly, for Enwezor, contemporary economic prosperity was the underlying condition that stymied the formation and preservation of the global village and the global citizen; indeed, economic wellbeing as the stubborn precondition for visibility within the art world was a force against which Enwezor supposedly fought, stating in a meta-economical way that in the world of truly representative exhibition strategies, "belonging proceeds from a much broader frame, acknowledging individual situations."[260] Such a frame—one might have inferred from other essays included in Enwezor's catalogue, such as Paul Gilroy's "For the Transcultural Record,"—extended beyond the economic privilege that buttresses much of the contemporary art world to embrace what Gilroy called "the vectors of traveling modern culture: cramped bodies, bloody commodities, innocent objects, oppositional signals, broken codes, impure thoughts, and hidden information."[261]

Beginning neither with an attempt to re-visit some of these lingering tensions that underlie contemporary art practice nor an acknowledgement of the uneasy position that the privileged academic/researcher/curator occupies as a "translator" or "mediator" of subaltern and underrepresented interests within a biennale's proceedings, Okwui Enwezor prefaced the 2008 Gwangju Biennale in a manner strikingly dissimilar from Johannesburg. Much like a colleague I once had who railed in seminars against the inequities and brutalities of capitalism, whilst bemoaning that her local liquor store no longer carried her $60-a-bottle French chardonnay, Enwezor redeployed polarities that he seemed to deconstruct eleven years earlier—now creating a conceptual differentiation between "dark murmurings in the cultural and political scenarios" and "the spaces where the activities of art occur."[262] His introduction explained the "vectors" of globalization not as the conflicted consequences of centuries-old cultural modes of domination and resistance, but as a self-proclaimed platinum frequent flyer: "In all these trips—from Havana to Caracas, Singapore to Berlin, Seoul to Beijing, Mexico City to New York, Cairo to Mumbai, Sydney to London, Kuala Lumpur to Istanbul, or taking the ferry from Tangier to Tarifa—one witnesses not so much a change of geocultural agendas, as much as witnesses…the accelerating ideological irrelevance to which many of these diverse geopolitical spaces once subscribed."[263] Enwezor's support for this position issues from a discussion of the many hotels occupied on his curatorial sojourns—all decorated similarly, all lavish enough to provide him with breakfast buffets and concierge services, all enjoyed by him and "other cosmopolitans." Yet, in the very sentence following the enumeration of his luxuries, Enwezor proclaims: "Navigating the worlds crisscrossed by the news and commentaries of the global media helps to provide a small window into the shrinking space once ruled by the imperial ambitions of the Western Alliance."[264] Doesn't Enwezor himself now occupy this shrinking space that he so often derides as the oppressor to non-Western interests? Does this condition of the non-Westerner working in the West now looking to the non-West in the context of the Gwangju Biennale allude to the growth of a "neo-Orientalism" or "African Orientalism" and the need for new mechanisms of

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[257] For an excellent discussion of Shonibare's cultural perspectives about the use of fabric and its relationships to dominant cultural and visual traditions, see Nancy Hynes, "Re-dressing history: Yinka Shonibare," in *African Arts* 34:3 (Autumn 2001): pp. 60-65. See especially Shonibare's comment about the superficiality of the fabric and its relationship to the forging of "Africanness": "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe* by Magritte, is important for understanding my work. You know how his piece presents a pipe and then says it is not a pipe. You can't smoke it. Sometimes people confuse representation for what it represents. But they are not that physical thing, they don't exist in the world in that way. So if you see a woman walking down a road and she's wearing African cloth, you might think--now there's African-ness, true Africanity. But that cloth, those clothes, are not African-ness…"

[258] Francesco Bonami, "The Electronic Bottle: Dreaming of Global Art and Geographic Innocence," in *Trade Routes: History and Geography* (Johannesburg: Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, 1997): p. 14.

[259] Enwezor, p. 12.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Paul Gilroy, "For the Transcultural Record," in *Trade Routes: History and Geography* (Johannesburg: Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, 1997): p. 23.

[262] Okwui Enwezor, "The Politics of Spectacle," in *The 7th Gwangju Biennale: Annual Report* (Gwangju: Gwangju Biennale Foundation, 2008): p. 11.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Ibid.

mediating ideological and geographic differences in the West and the East? These questions may well be answered by looking at two of Enwezor's curatorial premises: first, his assessment of the twenty-first century as the "Age of Asia" and, second, his juxtapositions of the French student uprisings of May 1968 with the popular protests against the Korean military junta that took place in May 1980.

Enwezor proclaims the twenty-first century as the "Asian Century" not because of chronicled efforts by specific artists in the region who have both exposed local histories and meaningfully yoked them to issues of global importance, but because of the economic engine that has increasing potential to drive the commercial art scene and to fund even more contributions to the biennale circuit. He seems to note with pleasure that "1,200 museums [are] under construction in China alone" and that other parts of Western Asia and the Middle East are dedicating indulgent sums of money to showcase both architecturally and aesthetically "the very ambition of their imagination."[265] Is this privileging of contemporary consumerism as evidence of cultural apotheosis not a stark theoretical contrast with his remarks made for the 1997 Johannesburg Biennale?

Ours is a fascinating time, that is filled with despair and what Edward Said, in speaking about displacement and exile, has referred to as the theological ambitions of dictators…Our cities and lives have been transformed by the everchanging direction of the compass as populations drift and masses of people are submitted to the most horrific methods of genocide, starvation and cruelty. Ours is a fascinating world of plentiful material comfort and economic triumphs, yet many countries and their inhabitants are so beggared that their very existence makes mockery of the idea of sovereign national states and subjects.[266]

Here, Enwezor's awareness not only of global economic disparities but their potential and dangerous interconnectedness with "the privileging [of] ideas about national culture"[267] rightly puts into question the success with which geographic nationalism can translate adequately into museological representation.

What Enwezor seemed to suggest in 1997 was that speaking of nation always and already implied the presence of the dispossessed and the diasporic, yet by 2008, Enwezor's problematizing of nationhood was based less on its relationship to place and placelessness and more on a re-orientation of how nations (even Onwezor's native Nigeria) might benefit from looking eastward and be economically, culturally, and morally changed by doing so. Indeed, the neo-Oriental gaze may be inevitable for Africans, according to Enwezor, who mused, "the Chinese dragon is poised to roar [in Africa], and its phoenix ready to unfold its resplendent wings."[268] Yet, if, as Said has suggested, "the political and cultural circumstances in which Western Orientalism has flourished draw attention to the debased position of the Orient or Oriental as an object of study,"[269] does Enwezor's "African Orientalist" praise of Asia's supposed economic triumph over Europe and the United States transform those locales as the "neo-debased" subjects of postmodern times? Where do Africa's interests fit within Enwezor's staged economic war between the "Age of the West" and the "Age of Asia?" Enwezor's question, "Will [Asia] make…local populations [in Africa] view [it] differently because of its increasing economic power and its thirst for natural resources to keep the machinery of modernization going?"[270] is tricky because from his stance in 1997 one would believe modernization to be a mechanism of strategic and purposeful exclusion designed to reify First- and Third-Worldiness. In 2008, it would seem Enwezor's marvel at Asia's growth in technology, arts infrastructure, and political clout encourages an African Orientalism in order to view, perhaps adopt, new cultural templates and economic models, whilst jettisoning those of the West that promised much but delivered too little in the twentieth century.

Enwezor's defense of the coming of an "Asian moment" in the Gwangju Biennale was furthered by his comparison of the May 1968 student uprisings in Paris, that he summarily dismissed as "a totem of leftist nostalgia," and the May 1980 protests in Gwangju "motivated by a tradition of postcolonial resistance and the collectivized vision of a common politics."[271] Enwezor's comparisons between the two moments of unrest had much to do with the universalization of leftist yearnings that are commonly associated with Paris' protests—that, for all its trumpeting of modern liberalist ideals, it had very little impact on the development of contemporary politics in Europe—and the more potent, regional, and tangible results that the Gwangju

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[265] Ibid., p. 15.
[266] Enwezor, "Introduction," p. 8.
[267] Ibid., p. 12.
[268] Enwezor, "The Politics of Spectacle," p. 17.
[269] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978): p. 96.
[270] Enwezor, "The Politics of Spectacle," p. 17.
[271] Ibid., p. 25.

protests were able to elicit. In the end, Enwezor analyzed the May 1968 protests, what he deemed the "spasmodic activities of a few days,"[272] as exercises that history had inflated and that could not be reconciled with the neo-fascist and ultra-conservative agendas that often marked European politics in the years subsequent to that "moment." Not only did this assessment stand in pointed contrast to his description of the Gwangju protests as "one of the moments, among other exemplary historical moments, in Korea's path towards democracy and democratization,"[273] but it informed his selection of included works, re-defining Western liberalism as a has-been resistance overcome by the economic indulgences and sociocultural hierarchies that were, in Enwezor's view, evidence of its contemporary decline. And so the work reiterated Enwezor's claims, from Jacques Villeglé's *decollages* that rendered street communication a colorful, yet fragmented and disorganized, palimpsest of memory as opposed to activism, to Eunji Cho's mud-slinging aggressions taken out against the white cube of Western modernism **(Figure 3 and Figure 4)**. Relics from the past to interventionist performances well illustrated Enwezor's point, but it also served as the same type of typologization and generalization once criticized by Said, as the stereotypical gaze of the West attempting to understand and to represent its relationship to the Orient.

What remains unclear is where Enwezor now positions himself as critic, curator, historian, African, American, Orientalist, African Orientalist, Occidentalist—all of which seem to describe the varying ways in which the biennale has served as the platform for his changing roles from champion of the underrepresented (with an accompanying, even self-effacing awareness that he was amongst them) to one who now benefits openly from the same privileges, positions, systems, and all-you-can-eat buffets he once critiqued. As biennales try to balance the need to promote cultural tourism, awareness, and authenticity and as they look for what associate curator of the Biennial of the End of the World Paz Guevara called "a region's right to the contemporary," a responsibility surely surfaces to engage with history not as a year-long research sojourn, an opportunity to stockpile frequent flyer points, or a means for furthering and hypocritically justifying one's distaste for Western ideals, but rather as a constantly contestable continuum with myriad interpretations (from those of artists, curators, viewers, and cultures).

Figure 1
Pepón Osorio, *Badge of Honor,* 1995
Mixed media/installation, dimensions variable
Image courtesy the artist

Figure 2
Yinka Shonibare, *Victorian Philanthropist Parlour,* 1996-1997
Mixed media/installation, dimensions variable
Image courtesy the artist

Figure 3
Jacques Villeglé, *Rue Pastourelle – Avril 1968,* 1968
Decollage mounted on canvas, 36.8 x 31.8 cm
Image courtesy the artist

Figure 4
Eunji Cho, *Mud Poem,* 2008
Mud, white-painted gallery walls, performance; dimensions variable
Image courtesy the artist

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[272] Ibid., p. 29.
[273] Ibid.

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"We want to see something different (but not too different)": spatial politics and the Pink Loerie Mardi Gras in Knysna

Introduction

Most days the fountains flanking the entrance to Knysna's waterfront run clear, but once a year the *Pink Loerie Mardi Gras* (hereafter referred to as the *PLMG*) announces itself by bubbling, bright magenta-coloured water. The fountains are but one of the many sites where a distinctly 'pink' infiltration of space is noticeable during this three-day long festival: A number of shop-fronts sport dramatic pink feathers, Rainbow Flags are ever-present and queer bodies, of course, abound in the streets, restaurants and nightclubs of this town in the Western Cape.

This paper highlights the role of sexual orientation in the social transmutation of space as a means of illustrating how landscapes, generally characterised by heteronormativity, are queered by cultural phenomena such as the *PLMG* and the 'Other' personae that accompany them. In other words, I explore the spectacle of the *PLMG*'s parade and other queer performances as catalysts for change, which destabilise the binaries of public/private, straight/queer and dominant/marginal that propagate a heterosexual prerogative to the spaces of Knysna in the absence of queer intervention.

It is not, however, the intent of this paper to describe the processes of producing queer space and transgressing heteronormativity in a 'celebratory' tone only, but also to investigate the manner in which hierarchies of race, class, gender and especially sexual orientation are sometimes re-asserted in relation to spatial practices (Butz and Ripmeester 1999: [sp]; Puar 2002: 935). The power-laden binaries initially disrupted by the queering of space can, in fact, revert when the *PLMG* is employed as a vehicle or mechanism that attempts to control, discipline or even normalise queer bodies (Shields 1991: 38).

It seems that the *PLMG* is managed by heteronormativity in terms of 'how much' space it occupies, who is represented and therefore included or excluded from these spaces (Bell and Binnie 2004: 1810). This leads one to critique the supposed 'Otherness' of the *PLMG*, because if it is influenced by ideologies of consumerism and cosmopolitanism that ultimately operate in favour of heteronormativity and what it considers to be 'different enough', then to what extent can the festival legitimately or freely call itself 'queer'?

Knysna is not unequivocally marked by the presence of homosexuality in the same way that De Waterkant in Cape Town and other gay urban 'clusters' present themselves as *bona fide* queer spaces (Sonnekus 2007:43). Whereas established queer landscapes seemingly allow very little deviation from homocentric ideals, the *PLMG* represents a process of queer restructuring that is marked by the spatial, as well as the temporal. Events such as the *PLMG* can be thus be read as a public deconstructive spatial tactics, which actively queer space and "even if *momentary*, present an ever-shifting ground on which power and constraint is exercised" [emphasis added] (Shields 1991: 53-54). Yet, the manner in which power is re-allocated during the *PLMG* can be interpreted at two levels; the one more vexing to this paper than the other.

'A space of our own': queer politics, tourism-based motivations and the PLMG

The social visibility and representation of queers, whether in political, economic, media-generated or spatial spheres, is vital to queer culture, because it creates a *visually* unified group, bound together by shared histories, practices and political sentiments (Freitas, Kaiser and Hammidi 1996: 89; Cover 2004: 81; Brickell 2000: 168). The defiant mantra of 1990s queer politics, 'We're here, we're queer, get used to it', is indicative of the manner in which "privileging visibility has become a tactic of late twentieth-century identity politics, in which participants often symbolise their demands for social justice by celebrating visual signifiers of

difference that have historically targeted them for discrimination" (Levina, Waldo and Fitzgerald 2000: 739; Fraser 1999: 114). Spatial strategies such as the *PLMG* can be conceived of as cultural phenomena that make previously private, 'closeted' queer bodies and identities public, thereby not only disrupting heteronormativity, but also creating new, 're-arranged' spaces that supposedly promise liberation (Johnston 1997: 30).

One must also take into account that the *PLMG* operates within the realm of tourism and therefore incites queer participation for a number of reasons that are also closely tied to establishing and maintaining, or simply giving uninhibited expression to, queer identity (Sonnekus 2007: 50). The 'mundane' and often stifling qualities of everyday spaces, such as 'home' or 'work', seemingly affect queers more, because the "strength of the 'naturalness' of heterosexual hegemony [is so omnipresent] that most people are oblivious to the way it operates as a process of power relation in most spaces", yet queers perceive and experience it every day (Kirby and Hay 1997: 296).

The *PLMG* can be viewed as a hiatus from the structures of heteronormativity and is closely tied to the notion that 'escapism' is akin to tourism, since the festival "embodies the refusal to acknowledge the authority of those official institutions which … seek to exert and extend" their hegemony (Lachmann 1989: 124). In the process of 'painting Knysna pink', the festival effectively creates a liminal space that, unlike the spaces travelled *from*, apparently holds the promise of radical and endless possibilities (Johnston 2001: 185; Sonnekus 2007: 52). One essentially deals with the creation of a 'utopian myth' when discussing the queering of space that accompanies this event (Lachmann 1989: 125; Sonnekus 2007: 51): Temporarily reversing the patterns of socio-spatial status by shifting heterosexuality to the 'background', therefore offers queers participating in the *PLMG* 'unlimited' opportunities relating to ego-enhancement, self-realisation, fantasy and sexual encounters, to name but a few (Hughes 1997: 5; Clift and Forrest 1999: 616; Mackie 1998: [sp]; Brickell 2000: 169; Sonnekus 2007: 50).

(Selectively) selling the 'queer experience': cosmopolitanism and the regenerative power of heteronormativity

This paper does not seek to completely detract from the buoyancy of the previous section, which illustrated that *at first* the *PLMG* succeeds in subverting "prevailing [spatial] institutions and their hierarchy" (Lachmann 1989: 125). Yet, one cannot ignore that competing heteronormative rationales seemingly impact on this brief 'alternative' space to such a degree that it "ultimately leaves everything as it was before" (Lachmann 1989: 125). Heteronormative motivations for 'tolerating' the *PLMG* are consequently exposed as attenuating the power of queer spatial intervention; re-inscribing the spatial hegemony of heterosexuality; re-establishing inequities between 'straight' and 'gay'; and creating imbalances *within* the queer community.

One can argue that in articulating the possible virtues associated with the *PLMG* (in terms of stimulating tourism and consumption), certain 'differences' are more troublesome to heteronormativity than others (Binnie and Skeggs 2004: 43). In view of this, the repercussions of being selectively homophobic ultimately foster a sense of 'homonormativity' in the heterosexual imaginary in which "certain queer identities have become almost pathologised" or, at least, marginalised to a greater degree than 'normal' queerness (Bell and Binnie 2004: 1811). External pressures from heterocentric role-players involved in the *PLMG*, whether in personal or capitalist guises, therefore "draw symbolic boundaries between the 'invited' and the 'not invited'", which have shifted from referring to 'queer' and 'straight' to 'queer and straight' and 'the queer *unwanted*' respectively (Jeong and Santos 2004: 641; Bell and Binnie 2004: 1810).

In view of this, the *PLMG*'s queering of space is not exempt from the notion that a "newly defined social [or spatial] regime may prove every bit as oppressive as what it replaces", because extrication from one point of a power structure may leave other oppressions in its wake (Butz and Ripmeester 1999: [sp]). Highlighting only one axis of difference, namely sexual orientation, in discussions surrounding so-called 'sexualised' power struggles over space, often effaces disparities between race, class and gender, while these constructs are exactly those which new forms of spatial marginalisation are based on (Puar 2002: 936; Rushbrook 2002: 184).

As subjects *and* objects of urban entrepreneurialism, queers possess a certain 'allure', based on their perceived particularities, that has the potential to stimulate tourism and its consumerist effects (Bell and Binnie 2004: 1089; Binnie and Skeggs 2004: 40). Cosmopolitanism, or the accumulation of worldliness and

cultural capital, permeates the *PLMG* and is "lived through the [queer] bodies involved, because the cultural context of "queerness" surrounds and arguably inhabits the [participants], but to some extent also extends to the …watching tourists" some of who are presumably 'straight' (Binnie and Skeggs 2004: 53; Johnston 2001: 181, 189). Tourism therefore not only manifests as an 'escape' (for queer subjects), but also represents a search for authentic experiences of 'Otherness' or 'something different' (which positions queers as objects) (Gotham 2002: 1736; Johnston 2001: 181-185; Rushbrook 2002: 185).

Yet, the 'straight tourist gaze' enforces certain prerequisites regarding what it sees, since less assimilable qualities of queerness are presumably relegated to invisibility (Binnie and Skeggs 2004: 52; Bell and Binnie 2004: 1816; Jeong and Santos 2004: 645). Not only is it important to explore who consumes whom at the *PLMG*, as this inevitably suggests a voyeuristic power relation of 'seeing' and 'being seen', but one must also be attentive to the notion that the act of gazing upon cultural 'others' is never neutral, and always subjective (Bell and Binnie 2004: 1809; Pritchard and Morgan 2000: 900-901).

When inflected upon by heteronormativity, cosmopolitan agendas ultimately replace 'real' authenticity with 'simulated' authenticity in order to create an acceptable version of queerness for the heterosexual imaginary, which titillates, but does not 'offend' or 'threaten' (Gotham 2002: 1738; Gotham 2005: 311; Rushbrook 2002: 196). This simulacrum is nowhere as present as in the realm of visual representation, since the primary publicity image generated for the *PLMG*, which appears ubiquitously across online and print advertisements, brochures, festival programmes, flyers and posters, features an embodiment of the so-called 'good homosexual', who is male, attractive and white (Jeong and Santos 2004: 645; Smith 1994: 64; Puar 2002: 943).

Finding images of black gay men or lesbians that appear with the same *frequency* is unlikely, illustrating that in order to maintain the 'trendiness' or 'chic' of queer culture it must be homogenised or streamlined to facilitate fetishisation via cosmopolitanism (Tucker 2008: 5; Binnie and Skeggs 2004: 57). Limiting the straight gaze's contact with black, female or sexually 'deviant' queers serves to reinscribe the supremacy of whiteness, patriarchy and propriety, and heteronormative ideology therefore benefits from having some of its 'norms' reiterated, despite having to make space for homosexuality. This illustrates the manner in which heteronormativity 'recuperates' within the spatial dynamics of the *PLMG* and hierarchically re-structures queer culture in order to maintain and perpetuate its already established cultural privileges – whether they appear in 'straight' or queer guises (Ingraham 1994: 204).

The imagined, media-generated queers that create seamlessness between the 'spectacle' of the *PLMG* are therefore more often than not based on heteronormative notions of what queers should 'ideally' look and behave like. It is, however, important to acknowledge that these 'place-images', which are used to connect Knysna's spaces to a specific experience of 'queerness', do not reflect the reality of the *PLMG* – especially not in terms of the parade, which represents the climax of the festival and appears to be especially inclusive with regard to gender identity, race, class and sexual proclivity (Gotham 2005: 310).

One can argue that the *PLMG* is sanitised at a textual level for the straight gaze, but when confronted with the corporeality of queer bodies in Knysna's Main Street, heteronormativity must seemingly find other means by which to maintain the upper hand. The public presence of queers in Knysna threatens heterosexual hegemony exactly because it "may force people to acknowledge the heteronormative nature [and dominance] of those spaces", since 'everyday' heteronormative geographies become explicit only when homonormative geographies become explicit (Kirby and Hay 1997: 299; Johnston 2001: 190).

Thus, in order to maintain its taken-for-grantedness in social spaces, heteronormativity must curb the subversive effects of the *PLMG* in order to re-draw distinctive boundaries that re-establish the spatial power relations of 'self'/'Other', public/private and dominant/subordinate in which it occupies privileged positions (Brickell 2000: 166). In view of this, one must bear in mind that although the so-called cosmopolitan 'touristification' of Knysna during the *PLMG* appears to "indicate a heterosexual acceptance and even embracing of [queer culture], it could equally be viewed as [an] effective means to re-establish heterosexual dominance" (Pritchard, Morgan and Sedgely 1998: 280).

This is achieved, firstly, by assimilating and effectively heterosexualising a selected 'type' of queerness (as discussed with regard to visual representation, advertising and the 'good homosexual') (Namaste 1994: 224; Jeong and Santos 2004: 645; Smith 1994: 64; Puar 2002: 943). Secondly, one can argue that a 'de-gaying' of the *PLMG*, which attenuates the power of queer culture, occurs because the festival's overt sense of queerness becomes *diluted* by the presence of 'straight' spectators that manifest as 'subcultural accruers'

seeking cosmopolitan kudos (Pritchard et. al 1998: 278-279; Binnie and Skeggs 2004: 58; Rushbrook 2002: 193).

The third and thus far unexplored tactic employed by heteronormativity in re-asserting its dominance relates to the manner in which the *PLMG* is essentially restricted to a particular, designated area of Knysna. In other words, the 'public' nature of the festival comes under serious scrutiny when one considers that the parade, for example, follows a predetermined route and is therefore restricted only to certain spaces *within* the larger geography of Knysna (Jeong and Santos 2004: 648, 650).

To state that the *PLMG* 'queers' Knysna in its entirety overvalues the reach and power of the festival when considering that most of its events and accompanying queer performances only manifest in selected areas, of which Main Street and particular restaurants, bars, nightclubs and stores along it are key sites. In other words, Main Street not only encapsulates the *PLMG*, but it also *insulates* the spaces beyond it from queer infiltration.

Allowing for the consumption of queerness from a 'safe' or 'comfortable' voyeuristic distance, determines where queerness can be 'flaunted' and where it must remain closeted or self-monitored (Kirby and Hay 1997: 301-302; Johnston 1997: 32). These provisions imposed on the *PLMG* are indicative of the manner in which "western hierarchical dualisms violently reinscribe [queer spatial practices] as private" (Johnston 1997: 30).

Knysna's Main Street and selected businesses that display pink feathers and other queer paraphernalia in their shop-fronts, in support of the *PLMG*, become signifiers of spaces that welcome 'queerness', but simultaneously represent that it is explicitly 'at home' only within their confines. By restricting its scope in terms of being privatised and disconnected from the larger public realm of Knysna, the *PLMG* seemingly finds itself operating within the very heteronormative spatial regime from which it initially sought emancipation.

Conclusion

Firstly, the prerogatives created for queer culture by the *PLMG* were discussed with specific reference to the notion of 'tourism-as-escapism', which elevates the festival's status to that of a temporary utopian space in which queers dominate (Mackie 1998: [sp]; Lachmann 1989: 125). Yet, whereas the 'touristification' of the festival speaks of liberty in the queer camp, it simultaneously presents heteronormativity with the opportunity to employ the festival's capitalist, consumerist and cosmopolitan undertones in diminishing the newfound cultural gravity of queerness that the *PLMG* supposedly creates (Pritchard et al. 1998: 280).

By 'whitening' the publicity images generated for the *PLMG*, heteronormative and 'appeasing' queer media and sponsors collapse the differences between ideally 'straight' and ideally 'homosexual', subsequently attenuating the queer power of the festival by re-structuring it as a space biased more in terms of race, class and gender than sexual orientation in matters of inclusion and exclusion (Jeong and Santos 2004: 645; Rushbrook 2002: 185, 194, 196).

The 'straight tourist gaze' and its acquisition of cosmopolitan knowledge through prejudiced and imagined notions of the *PLMG* as an 'authentic', extra-ordinary experience, therefore enforces ideological borders that monitor exactly which 'type' of queer most accurately embodies the cultural worth of queerness (Binnie and Skeggs 2004: 40; Gotham 2002: 1737). In regenerating its temporarily subdued control over Knysna's landscapes, heteronormative power must, however, also find a means to monitor the physicality of the *PLMG*'s parade.

The fixed route that the parade follows, which does not allow for deviation, designates a segment of space *within* the larger sphere of Knysna that 'houses' and therefore 'restrains' the more explicit performances of queerness that characterise the *PLMG* (Johnston 1997: 30, 32). The implications of clearly marking where queer culture can be unequivocally 'queer', ultimately re-positions heterosexuality at the apex of spatial power relations by creating contained, 'private' spaces where queerness can be freely gazed upon by heteronormativity from an elevated (yet sheltered) 'public' position of superiority.

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Changing identities – identities of change

1

"I do not know what Congolese identity should be. Except perhaps, that everything changes constantly and at tearing speed. The question is: How do I find a bit of stability amidst this chaos, something I can rely on, so as not to get lost?"[274] interrogates Faustin Linyekula.

This paper investigates the interplay between personal as well as collective identities and body memory in the context of the (dance) performance *Radio Okapi* of Congolese choreographer Faustin Linyekula. Under the premise that nowadays personal identity is considered to be an open process, a constantly "changing identity", personal identities conversely incorporate radical social change as "identities of change", so to speak. The introductory genealogy will outline how dance, since the boom of the idea of nation(-state) in the 19th century to this day is ideologised as generator of collective identities - in Africa as well as in Europe.

Using the performance *Radio Okapi* as an example, this paper analyses how the traumatic experience of (collective) constructions of identity in Congolese national history are inscribed into the body memory of the artist, and how non-verbal forms of expression in performance art together with the theatrical situation offer possibilities to remember what is not rememberable; because traumatic body inscriptions are inaccessible. Yet, paradoxically, the artist denominates his body "My only true country"[275]. Therefore one will finally ask, whether Linyekula's emphatic accentuation of body identity not only illustrates a reactive escapism, but above all a self-determined approach toward an autonomous construction of personal and collective identity?

2

The following excursus will outline contemporary African dance in the context of Eurocentric stereotypes. The formulation 'contemporary African (dance-)performances' explicitly serves as an hybrid auxiliary term, that is owed to the variety and contradictions of the history of terms and the genre of art itself. Because the instrumentalised topos comprises the entire heterogeneous continent (of art). I employ the term 'performance' from the point of view of the performing arts, although the fine arts accentuate identical thematic fields.

Stereotypes such as fictitious images of Africa seem to filter into both the production and the reception of contemporary African (dance-)performance. Moreover, these stereotypes may be understood as persistent verbal encroachments on artists' bodies. Because, to this day, the 'black body' seems to be predestined for cliché-like attributions, as - in a historical and present Eurocentric view - the 'African body' advances to a paradigmatic figure of eroticism and the continent itself to a place of exotic yearning. Last but not least, non-verbal dance - 'there' as well as 'here' - is supposed to imply universal legibility. These multiple stereotypes of dance, 'black body' and Africa as symbols of a presumed authenticity and naturalness culminate in the context of performance art in the simplifying phrase "Every African dances". On the spot in Africa performance artists see themselves also confronted with verbal attacks, says Kossi Efoui, a young Togolese novelist: "The work of an artist cannot be trapped into the folkloric image that can be made of one's origins.

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[274] Linyekula, as cited in: Werner (2008:13).
[275] Linyekula verbatim: "I had been on the road for such a long time. My only true country is my body ... ". Linyekula as cited in: Van Reybrouck ([sa]:[sp]).

We must end this tendency to reject the authenticity of a work in which a so-called African specificity can not be found and in which the author can be seen to exhibit strong European leanings."[276]

The asymmetrical viewpoint of (Western) mediatic rhetoric also entices to cement Eurocentric politics of language, instead of emphasising the potential of artistic content. In 2005 a German dance magazine still sides with disenfranchising stigmatisations of a "specific Africanness" refreshing these with headlines such as "Dance from Africa is a category A art: AIDS, aggression, alms, alphabets, Allah and Apartheid."[277] These mediatic constructions produce unreal images of contemporary African performances, that inevitably enter cultural memory. - End of excursus.

3

Along with other genres of art, dance is ideologised as generator of collective identities since the idea of nation boomed in the 19th century. According to Stuart Hall, in nationalism culture and state were supposed to be made identical.[278] Here, too, the etymological origin of identity and identical in the Latin *idem* becomes visible: the same. But in truth, collective identities constitute themselves all but homogenously.[279] In this context Manuel Castells speaks of "legitimating identities"[280]. Because by way of these imposed normative identities the institutions in power seek to expand and rationalize their rule.

When in France in late 19th century science developed an interest in studying movement as a culture of knowledge, regional folklore dances were supposed to distinguish themselves as so-called "moving archives". Because the cultural 'Other', presumably primitive and natural, had a dynamic impact upon traditional orders of knowledge based on a culture of writing. Knowledge, thought to have been lost in the process of industrialisation, was then located in the body. An anachronistic "rescue-ethnology"[281] should therefore save a threatened cultural identity. Hence, theatre scholar Inge Baxmann states: "In that [folklore] establishes identity through performance, i.e. through collective rhythm and in relation to traditional forms of movement, it contributes to 'emotionalise' abstract concepts such as 'nation' or 'region' ... '*Heimat*' evolved to become a projection screen for the yearning for community, that is preferably epitomised in festivities and dances."[282]

French colonialists, too, in their 19th century exhibitions, staged identity, a construction that paradoxically anticipated that of post-colonial nation-building in Africa.[283] Mobutu Sese Seko, the Congolese ruler, for instance, wanted to secure himself pre-colonial history and identities: A nation as cultural construct - and whose cultural symbols represent nothing but an "empty temporality"[284]; as an expression of blindness to the colonial genesis of national frontiers. On the other hand and for this reason dance had been charged ideologically. Not only with the dress codes he decreed, but also by politically ordained folklore dances, Mobutu intended to bolster national culture. Mobutu quoted Léopold Sedhar Senghor verbatim: "Happy are those who sing and dance".[285]

But dance was not only staged as a national but also as a Pan African generator of identity. Because the models of collective identity produced by colonialism caused conflict. Therefore "highly essentialising and idealising ideas"[286] of African dance emerged within the first generation of African performers living in Europe, such as Germaine Acogny or else Koffi Kôkô. Senghor in particular influenced the development of contemporary African forms of dance. In his concept of *Négritude*, rhythm and dance were supposed to epitomise African culture: "We are the people of dance, whose feet get vigour by stomping on hard soil."[287] Together with the choreographer Maurice Béjart he founded the Pan African dance academy *Mudra Afrique*.

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[276] Efoui as cited in: Mensah (2004:40).
[277] Wesemann (2005:27).
[278] See Hall (1994:207).
[279] See Geulen (1998:373).
[280] Castells (2002:10f).
[281] Baxmann (2005:30).
[282] Ibid.(25).
[283] See Lüsebrink (1998:401).
[284] Geulen (1998:373).
[285] Senghor verbatim: "heureux ceux qui chantent et qui dansent" as cited in: Muyumba (2001:287).
[286] Sieveking (2001:53).
[287] Senghor verbatim: "Nous sommes les hommes de la Danse, dont les pied reprennet vigeur en frappant le sol dur". As cited in: Italiaander (1960:5).

According to Senghor the academy should "integrate the values of other dances, so that a new form of dance can arise: Negro-African dance."[288]

Contrary to this older generation of contemporary African performers, a new generation of African choreographers rejects the mysticised affinity to animistic rites, as these lead to the "legitimation of authority in the sense of their representation of *authentic tradition*"[289], so ethnologist Nadine Sieveking. The dance journalist Ayoko Mensah accordingly speaks of a "a body to construct"[290], of a young generation, that aims to mark its position far from decreed collective identities - selfdetermined - in a global present.

4

The Congolese choreographer and performer Faustin Linyekula, too, proverbially experienced these normative constructions of identity for himself. Linyekula concludes verbatim: "The memory of the body is the most faithful."[291] Drawing on the example of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the *Heimat* of the artist, the construction of cultural identity as a convergence of local and international influences may be mentioned: 1885 Leopold II declares Congo his private property at the Africa Conference in Berlin and first names the country Free State Congo, then Belgian Congo. Up to this day, the wealth that Leopold II brought to the country is better remembered than the reality of the genocide. In 1961 Pan Africanist Patrice Lumumba proclaims the Democratic Republic of Congo, that after only 18 months is followed by Mobutu's decade long dictatorship. 1971 he renames the country Zaire. With the coup d'État of Kabila in 1997 the country is again renamed to Democratic Republic of Congo. Until today Congo is characterised by an utterly unstable situation, exacerbated by conflicts spilling over from neighbouring countries. Linyekula's biography is connected with the varied national history of Congo, above all Mobutu's regime of terror. Until today the first name of the artist can not be found in any official document.[292]

Not only disenfranchising changes of names were inscribed into the body of the artist due to the traumatic experience of national history. "In the context of freedom, politics seem to become corporeal"[293] states the dance journalist Katja Werner. In cultural studies the term body memory is used complimentary to mental memory,[294] as the body is under social discipline since the early modern era.[295] And under the assumption of it being able to be coded, the body counts as a mnemonic medium, which leads to it being inscribed with cultural signs.[296] The metaphor of inscription follows Nietzsche's idea of the relation between memory and affect. Freud is also concerned with corporeal traces of memory, and Foucault investigates the body as a mnemonic medium, as internalisation of symbolic orders.[297]

Body inscriptions develop subconsciously, as self-inscription under the influence of mental impact; they are steady and therefore not available, says Aleida Assmann.[298] Because whereas reminiscence ("Erinnerung") is discontinuous, memory ("Gedächtnis"), and thus trauma, as it were, signifies a continuous presence in a fleeting body.[299] Yet, the memory of the body never appears unmediated, but rhetorically in the form of permanent traces, which trigger the repetition of related affects and images and imaginations.[300] Particularly as a consequence of traumata - when the affect has surpassed a bearable measure - the body becomes a marked tablet.[301]

The connection to one's own life, to a "scenic autobiographical narration"[302] plays a persistently significant role in performance art. Although Linyekula's *Radio Okapi* is not only connected to present performance traditions, but also to those of the African *Contes*, orally transmitted traditions, where, similar to today's

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[288] Senghor as cited in: Vucko (1995:41).
[289] Sieveking (2004:175).
[290] Mensah (2004:34).
[291] Linyekula as cited in: Mensah (2004:39).
[292] See Gimplinger (2007:10).
[293] Werner (2008:12).
[294] See Beise (2007:9).
[295] See Bannasch&Butzer (2007:2).
[296] See Frey Steffen (2008:10).
[297] See Beise (2007:10).
[298] See Assmann (1999:242&247).
[299] Ibid.(247).
[300] See Bannasch&Butzer (2007:4).
[301] See Assmann (1999:264).
[302] (Following Gabriele Brandstetter) Klein&Sting (2005:14).

research in memory the focus is not so much on historical truth, but on a collective consciousness of history.[303] But how might the real and the fictitious, the present and the past, the here and there meet in theatre? Gerald Siegmund, theatre scholar, emphasises that with the aid of new forms of representation the "socially unspeakable and unrepresentable"[304] can be shown and thereby that which is not rememberable may be remembered. Reality is nowadays remembered "across the [previous] division of stage and auditorium"[305]. For today the desired subjectivity of the spectator bears a "potential of effect"[306], and so Linyekula's biographical elements create productive, new connections. The audience is asked to actively participate in the performance using its own memories, because experiences are not reconstructed through the mnemonic function of theatre. Gabriele Brandstetter, dance theoretician, considers the categories of space, time and mediality and their function of transference to be fundamental to dance and choreography: "The body in itself is not a given, natural unity (of space), but is, as it were, configured through images and myths ... Thus body concepts develop as topographies and choreographies (both terms meaning to 'write space'): a corpo-realisation, that at the same time describes a mnemonic space."[307]

During his performance, the artist establishes a connection with his home country via the live stream of *Radio Okapi*. His memories are recontextualised through radio waves and movement. A connection is opened between the reality of the space on stage and the reality of his home country, in a sense an encounter with absence (of places and persons). Repeatedly he exclaims the names of non-present, living or dead European and African friends and relatives. Simultaneously he repeatedly addresses the audience. Here Linyekula verbalises whom he is addressing, with whom he is connected. At this point, the sound and volume of his words are so full of longing, that they trigger nearly physical pain in the audience; the trauma is participatingly present in space.

In the context of trauma and performance, performance theoretician Diana Taylor speaks of the audience or other performers becoming witnesses, participating at the traumatic event.[308] Although the trauma itself will always be inseparably connected with the person itself, yet, as can be seen with the example of Linyekula's performance, traumatic experience can be recontextualised through images and non-verbal means of expression and thereby channelled.

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"Perhaps my only true country is my body"[309], says Linyekula in an interview. But of which "true country" is the artist talking here? The pronounced tracing of personal identity back to a presumably stable body identity may, when assessed negatively, seem escapist. Yet, collective identities are, according to Jan Assmann, as already mentioned, a "social construct"[310] as a "social body"[311] does not exist. Therefore, the psychologist Jürgen Straub notes that here a "biophysical unity"[312] is suggested, but "pseudo-identities"[313] are imagined for "pseudo-collectives"[314]. In Congo, Linyekula experienced these collective normative rules; people ought to be manipulated by force and thereby homogenised, their diversity unconsidered. Linyekula's emphatic body identity thus formulates nothing else but a reactive withdrawal into a (presumably) secure, politics-free zone.

But his reference to a personal identity, that is supposed to represent itself singularly as a body, raises above all also the question for a paradox. Because if, following social psychologist Heiner Keupp, identity nowadays represents a patchwork,[315] Linyekula's escapism provides new hints at the body inscription of

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[303] See Lüsebrink (1998:418&420).
[304] (Following Helga Finter) Siegmund (1996:10).
[305] Ibid.(11).
[306] Ibid.
[307] Brandstetter (2000:20).
[308] See Taylor (2003:167). Also see Felman&Laub (1992:57). Laub verbatim: "comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event".
[309] Linyekula as cited in: Van Reybrouck ([sa]:[sp]).
[310] Assmann (1992:132).
[311] Ibid.
[312] Straub (1998:98).
[313] Ibid.(100).
[314] Ibid.
[315] See Keupp (1999).

trauma, which, according to Aleida Assmann, strongly jeopardises the possibility of identity-building.[316] Straub further clarifies: "Identity problems are problems of orientation."[317] But do we not, besides the inescapable trauma, hold this body moreover prisoner with our rhetoric? When will we release so-called 'post-colonial artists' from passivity? What kind of *Heimat* are we giving the body nowadays? Performance theoretician André Lepecki concludes: "Again, the question for the subject who must constantly negotiate his or her body's agency and identity under the haunting blows of past colonialist history and the invisible mannerisms of current post-colonialist racisms, is of how to mobilize his or her blundered body in a contemporaneity where such issues are deemed 'overcome' and properly 'buried'."[318]

But besides this defensive reaction, a selfdetermined action can also be read from the words of the artist. I quote Faustin Linyekula: "... in relationship to our society in which all has been confiscated from us, especially our identity, the body is all that remains, the last vestige of our liberty. You have to carve your own originality out of yourself."[319] Here again can be seen, how collective and personal constructions of identity are interwoven with each other. With Linyekula it is no longer the varied national culture that serves as the only fixed point of reference, but rather the individual itself. Thus one can conclude: while collective identity asks for a passive "who is being constructed", personal identity actively asks "who constructs". So it is not just purely longing that speaks through Linyekula's words, but above all the necessity, to actively produce personal identity.

Not only identity, but also an identity founding *Heimat* is being fashioned by contemporary subjects. For "homing in"[320] has shifted to the interior of subjects, as psychologist Beate Mitzscherlich puts it.[321] Thus, a utopian blueprint of home can emerge from the experience of being displaced,[322] as can be seen with Linyekula. Linyekula is thus at home in himself. Because for a successful homing in the subject has to neglect constraining components. The core dimension of *Heimat* is a sentiment that conveys safety and security.[323] In Linyekula's body identity, too, such a strategy of homing in can be found, albeit a dysfunctional one, due to displacement. The artist thus resists political constructions of identity. He wants to secure himself of his actions, that allow for an individual room for creation. Mitzscherlich verbatim: "The cultural problem of displacement becomes an individual task, it has to be overcome individually. *Heimat* therefore is not a collectively defined fixed place or location, but an individual process of 'passages', of self-knitted relationships and a subjective creation of meaning."[324]

Today's network societies also make stability impossible. Because, following Castells, network societies destabilise processes of identity building.[325] As an artist Linyekula nowadays experiences homing in also as being on the road. Linyekula is socialised with his wife and children in Paris and is creating a network of cultural centres in Congo; but the traumatisation as well as the phenomena of globalisation increase the sense of displacement of the artist. It is all too understandable that behind the remarks of the artist lingers the wish for autonomy and individual location. But only those who are able to reckon with contingency and alteration, may be able to succeed in creating identity in the future. A new definition of identity becomes necessary, that is independent from the "logic of networks of institutions and organisations"[326]. As an artist, Linyekula seems to be more sensitive regarding the fragmentation, flexibilisation and instability and the resurgence of collective constructions of identity and experiences of difference in our time.

"Because there, where we - as in an ideology of homecoming that takes up romantic ideas - always seem to arrive at home [emphasises performance theoretician Krassimira Kruschkova], it is necessary, to scrutinise exactly the strangeness of being at home, and especially that of the strangest of all dwellings that we call our

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[316] See Assmann (1999:248).
[317] See Straub (1998:86).
[318] Lepecki (2004:147).
[319] Linyekula as cited in: Mumbu (2001:28).
[320] See Bevis (1987:580-620).
[321] See Mitzscherlich (1997:225).
[322] Ibid.(66).
[323] Ibid.(226).
[324] Ibid.(136).
[325] See Castells (2002:3&13).
[326] Ibid.(13).

own body."[327] "… so perhaps the strangeness of the artist consists exactly in that he embodies the innermost self, viz. the u-topian, the non-original, non-identical of an organicity, that is interspersed with fissures."[328]

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[327] Kruschkova (2004:7).
[328] Ibid.(10).

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Minotaurmania [metaphor]: Animalized human representations, humanism and the collapse of the animal sign

> Darwin's evolutionary theory, indelibly stamped as it is with the marks of the European 19th century, nevertheless belongs to a tradition, almost as old as man himself. Animals interceded between man and their origin because they were both like and unlike man. Animals came from over the horizon. They belonged *then* and *here*. Likewise they were mortal and immortal. An animal's blood flowed like human blood, but its species was undying and each lion was Lion. Each ox was Ox…The first subject matter for painting was animal. Probably the first paint was animal blood. Prior to that it is not unreasonable to suppose that the first metaphor was animal (Berger [1980] 2009: 6-7).

As John Berger ([1980] 2009: 6-7) has signalled to speak of man and animal (as here I must) is to speak of events, ideas and ciphers as old as time. It is to speak simultaneously and opaquely of things ancient, present and future. It is as Derrida (2002: 369) states in the opening address to his seminal essay *The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow)* (2002) to be "naked"[329] in gesture and in mind laying bare the conceit of difference and the metaphor of humanity vs. animality that pervades and constitutes all that stands before you (and is you). In his groundbreaking 1977 essay, Berger ([1980] 2009: 6-7) eloquently dwells on the

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[329] Derrida links the notion of Nakedness to creation myths such as Genesis and heralds the underlying themes of his paper: how philosophy has constructed and conceptualized the "otherness" of the animal in relation to the "oneness" and centeredness of humanity. The later relying completely on the former for a mirror image of what it is not.

devaluation of the animal as a metaphor in the formation of human identity. Following on the previous citation Berger cites Levi Strauss ([1980] 2009: 7) who surmised the importance of the animal metaphor in the hierarchical development of man in relation to his animal companions in stating that:

> It is because man originally felt himself identical to all those like him (among which Rousseau explicitly says, we must include animals) that he came to acquire the capacity to distinguish himself as he distinguishes them – i.e. to use the diversity of species for conceptual support for social differentiation.

Later I will return to this notion of what it is to be human and not animal as part of a continuum of antiquity and what becomes known as humanism. However it is important first to understand what comes before language (so allied to humanist discourse), what was at the beginning and will be at the end: the visual animal sign. This is not the abstract conventionalized formation of language that the structuralist Charles Sanders Pierce posited; and yet the modality of the visual sign as resemblance, mimesis, subtraction and deduction correlates equally well with his structured interrelated syntax – *iconic* likeness, *indexical* inference and *symbolic* meaning by contract (Kress et al. citing Dyer 2006: 8) and the grammars that constitute and govern these syntagms. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006: 21-22) have proposed the primacy of language in Western histories stating that:

> …one form of representation 'took over' the other, as a means of recording; that is, visual representation became specialized-one could say reduced-to function as a means of the visual representation of speech, perhaps in highly organized and bureaucratized societies.

In their book *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design* (2006) Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 15) propose a visual grammar including angles, composition, and materiality as the grammatic parts of speech of the visual. This notion of supplanting the Bartheian anchorage of language (2006:18) and the literary emphasis of semiology; which has for so long laid siege to the visual seems essential to this argument as I have discovered that the pictured animal sign in no way relates to the stabilized fossilized iconic sign of Saussure and Pierce's linguistics, fixed in specificity, and direct reference to the real. Rather the animal sign constitutes a silo of phenomenological, mythical and disseminated meanings. The animal sign functions in the symbolic and indexical modes, but is rarely capable of the "objective likeness rather than analogy" (Kress et al. citing Dyer 2006: 8) that constitutes the Peirceian notion of the iconic sign. I regard it as problematic that the pictorial animal sign has primarily an indexical and symbolic action on the viewer and through the viewer. In my mind the metaphoric [substitutive] and metonymic [contiguous] grammatical devices constitute the modality of the slipping *index*; but are also the generative factor leading to the formation of the *symbolic* order. That is to say that any lion is a metonymy of all Lions and one ox encompasses all Oxen [symbolic]; while metaphorically any lion is reduced to the human notion of regality and strength and the figure Ox is supplanted by the concept of dull plodding labour [index].

With all things ancient it is advisable to return to the wisdom of old. Here I will look to the insightful and observant mind of Brother William of Baskerville, Umberto Eco's famous medieval sleuth in his acclaimed novel *The Name of the Rose* ([1980] 2005) to gain insight into the particular genus and morphology of the animal sign:

The morning after an event where Brother William impressively guessed first that a horse had passed that way and finally the name and breed of the horse he explains to his bewildered apprentice the process of his deduction and in doing so points to the universal nature of animal signs:

> So I found myself half way between the perception of the concept 'horse' and the knowledge of an individual horse. And in any case what I knew of the universal horse had been given me by those traces which were singular. I could say I was caught at that moment between the singularity of the traces and my ignorance, which assumed the quite diaphanous form of a universal idea. If you see something from a distance, and you do not understand what it is, you will be content with defining it as a body of some dimension. When you come closer, you will then define it as an animal, even if you do not yet know whether it is a horse or an ass. And finally, when it is still closer, you will be able to say it is a horse even if you do not yet know whether it is Brunellus or Niger. And only when you are at the proper distance will you see that it is Brunellus (or, rather, that horse and not another, however you decide to call it). And that will be full knowledge, the learning of the singular (Eco [1980] 2005: 28).

Anyone who has ever had a pet or grieved the loss of a loved animal friend can relate emphatically to the notion that a singular and individual knowledge of a non-human creature is not only possible but desirous. This knowledge is however benign in relation to what I must say here: that although singularity is possible in the realm of the real, it is virtually unseen in animal representations [signs]. Rather it is the universal metaphor of animality that holds sway. Very rarely can the concept 'horse' and the knowledge of an individual horse occupy the visual sign 'horse' simultaneously. It should be noted here that when Brother Williams speaks of his perception of the "concept horse" ([1980] 2005: 28) he is employing a metonymic action whereby the traces and markers of the lost horse become symbolic subtractions and deductions for all horses-"the generic horse". Brother William is too acute a detective to fall into metaphor in this instance. Figure 1 is a fragmentary Egyptian relief carved during the 18th Dynasty about 1350 BC. In my mind the stylized and archetypal nature of this image demonstrates unequivocally the metonymic "universal idea" (Eco [1980] 2005: 28) "horse" of which Brother William speaks. Figure 2 represents a slightly different configuration being as it is an eighteenth century horse portrait by the painter unparalleled in this genre, George Stubbs. This portrait entitled *Hambletonian, Rubbing Down* (1800) was painted for Sir Henry Vane Tempest (Clark 1977: 126). The horse in question had a string of wins under its crop having won at St Leger in 1795 and memorably at Newmarket where he beat Mr Joseph Cookson's Diamond (Clark 1977: 126). Clark (1977: 126) cites the following report of the encounter:

> The St Leger winner held the lead until Diamond challenged in the last half-mile, and from then on both horses seem to have been cruelly punished, Hambletonian being only just lifted in ahead by Buckle's splendid riding in the last few strides…Sir Harry determined never to ride him again.

Reading such a rousing account leaves one with the initial impression that this painting must represent a "singular" knowledge (Eco [1980] 2005: 28) of the horse Hambletonian. Closer inspection of the image collapses this notion. Although the side view of the horse does present the viewer with a one-eyed gaze, it is the gaze of his groomers which is compelling and singular. Judging from their postures and expressions one senses a pride in their involvement with the winning horse. We know them, while the horse in its immutable and forever separate non-human state, mouth gaping, legs kicking is only knowable to the human viewer of this painting in its universal and in this instance metaphoric totality as brute animal force, 'horse power' and the notion of superiority through breeding. In being 'horse' and 'primal 'other' the emotion of pride is only available to those who possess him. There is undoubtedly a further material dimension and implication to this notion of possession. In discussing the tradition of oil painting John Berger ([1980] 1972: 85) states that paintings:

> … are themselves objects which can be bought and owned. Unique objects. A patron cannot be surrounded by music or poems in the same way as he is surrounded by his pictures. It is as though the collector lives in a house built of paintings. What is their advantage over walls of stone or wood? They show him sights: sights of what he may possess.

This idea of the ownership of the patron and therefore the gaze of the beholder of the painting over not only the painting (as paintings are subject to the possessive gaze of people who do not own them in the legal sense), but more importantly the represented simulacrum of the painting is a much dwelt upon art historical discourse and a theoretical lynch pin of all arguments discussing representational violence. I use it here to point to the "twice possession" of the visual sign Hambletonian. Not only is he held and owned with pride by the groomers in his painting, but he is more importantly rendered in the form of the oil painting as a signifier, a metaphoric substitution of Sir Henry Vane Tempest's good breeding and fortune. As an aspect of the fortunes of most well to do men of this period, the horse also becomes a metonymic abstraction-a symbol of wealth, power and breeding. Jakobson (1988: 57) has described metonymy as occurring when "an attribute or cause or effect of a thing signifies the thing". The sign Hambletonian can never constitute a singular knowledge, a sign that stands just for this horse and not another. After only momentary contemplation Hambletonian's sign suffers the collapse of the animal sign into universal obscurity, a fate which ironically his low cast groomers elude through their compelling gazes and their status as human beings. Hambletonian is the sign of an object of possession and then an index for the pride and status of his owners and groomers.

This musing analysis points to a discussion that must follow (but must wait) of Humanism and the Cartesian notion of the inferiority of animals; following on this Heidegger's notion of the linguistic superiority of human beings. But first it is necessary to speak further of the action of metaphor in constructing the indexical modality of visual animal signs and of a pictorial grammatical tool for deciphering it.

Here the famed Great Dane Able Seaman Just Nuisance springs to mind. In these photographs (Figure 3 and 4) taken around the period of 1941 we see Just Nuisance consorting happily with sailors of the British Navy. In speaking of photographs Roland Barthes (1981: 27) described a twofold action that of the *studium* and the *punctum*. The *studium* constitutes a vague interest or reception of the photographer's intentions or the field or events represented in the photograph (Barthes 1981: 27). The *punctum* on the other hand is the "sting, speck, cut, little hole" (Barthes 1981: 27), dominant tone or voice of the photograph. In a reductive sense there is some correlation between the notion of *studium* and denotation; and that of *punctum* and connotation. Jacques Rancière ([2002] 2007: 18) has linked the modes of *studium* and *punctum* to the activity of "semiology as critical thinking about images". In terms of this paper *studium* and *punctum* constitute a tool for recognizing and discussing the metaphors and metonyms that hold sway over the animal sign.

The *studium* of these photographs is plainly the interaction of the breed Great Dane and more broadly the concept 'dog' as well as the singular dog Able Seaman Just Nuisance with young male sailors at war. This *studium* is punctuated by several *punctums*: firstly a myth of species affinity; a notion of the tamed savage; and the investment of the man of war with the attributes of the "dogs of war'. The notion of dogs as ferocious companions in man's violent pursuits is not a new one. Figure 5, Alexandre Desportes's *Self Portrait as a Huntsman* presents this most ancient of couplings man and his beasts in the act of hunting. Figure 6, the Limbourg brothers' *Très Riches Heures* and Figure 7, *Death of the Unicorn* illustrate the same mythic partnership as a staple of medieval courtly life. Contained in these photographs of Just Nuisance is even the *punctum* "he is going to die, they are going to die". This as Barthes (1981: 32) most poignantly noted is the punctum of all photographs. Most tellingly though, is the absence of the *punctum* "this is Just Nuisance". A singular knowledge of the individual creature is absent from these images; and this obscurity and opacity opens up an endlessly disseminated plethora of *punctums*: both indexical and symbolic. This is the fate of the animal sign.

It feels necessary at this point to supply a philosophical and discursive background to this argument. Animal Studies is an emerging field of visual culture nascent in post modernity's concern with revisiting and redressing the histories of the 'other'. Philosophically and materially animals have long been the most 'othered' and disempowered creatures on earth. As Akira Mizuta Lippit (1994: 789) has pointed out the Aristotelian theses proposed animals as little more than automata. Aristotle (cited in Lippit 1994: 789) argued that the capacity for the animal cry (signalling pleasure and pain) existed in all creatures, but only man possessed the ability to form words and in essence give description to the nature of the cry.

Erica Fudge (2008: 13) (a leading animal studies theorist) states that "pets are good to think with". Here she is picking up on what Derrida (cited in Fudge 2008: 6) has pointed to, that the notion of what it is to be *human* is dependent on a binary opposition with the notion of what constitutes *animality*. Many modern philosophers such as Derrida acknowledge that this relationship is less a binary opposition and more an inter-reliance "in that the human needs the animal to be human" (Fudge 2008: 7). In discussing Derrida's position Fudge (2008: 6) explains:

> He argues that the idea of the human as it can be traced in much conventional thinking that I term humanist and that presents the human as rational superior and free to choose and to act, can only be conceptualized if there is also a being called the animal set along side it. Without the idea of the animal as irrational, lower and driven by instinct, this conception of the human, Derrida proposes, cannot exist.

This oppositional dialectical relationship to the *punctum* 'animal' as a mark of all that being human is not has pervaded Western philosophy since the Greeks and as Berger ([1980] 2009: 4) has suggested man's relationship to animal kind is ancient and originary, exerting itself as magic and metaphor, sameness and difference from the earliest times. Asserting this difference is notably at the center of Renaissance humanism and its incalculable influence on the anthropocentric world view that it gave rise to: a philosophical project that celebrated an ennobled vision of man (PDLT 1999. Sv "humanism"). A notion immortalized by Hamlet in William Shakespeare's (1989: 1022) play of the same name:

> What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world! The Paragon of animals! (Act ll, scene 2, lines 323-328).

As the project of Humanism continued to over-define man and undermine animal it found expression and didacticism in the Enlightenment thinking of René Descartes who posited that animals are nothing more than

automata supposedly functioning without sentience, thought and language in a mimicry mode that falls short of what he valued above all else, "the idea that the capacity for reason and consciousness determines the ontological universe" (Lippit 1994: 805). Heidegger follows closely on from this thinking applying his favoured technique of *erasure* or "crossing through…[words]…that are at once written and erased" (Lippit 1994: 796). Often Heidegger crosses out words such as *being* pointing to the obvious, that life co-exists with certain death. Using the same modus Heidegger crosses out words such as *world* in relation to discussions of animals famously proposing that although the lizard sits on the rock and therefore has a claim on the world, the lizard's inability to name the rock renders him "poor in the world" (*weltarm*) (Lippit 1998: 1113).[330] Here the philosopher is not empathizing with animals but rather pointing to the linguistic poverty of non-human creatures in a logo-centric world.

Much philosophical effort has and is being devoted to deconstructing this destructive philosophical teleology. There are innumerable strategies all deserving of mention that cannot be afforded time in this context. Nonetheless I must mention attacks on logo-centrism or the dominance of language in formulating these theoretical quagmires. Derrida's adaptation of Burke and Hegel's notion of the sublime animal cry as an authentic experience and expression of *Dasein*, which subordinates reason and abstract language (Lippit 1994: 813) is a notable example. Derrida follows on from Hegel's assertion (cited in Lippit 1994: 815) "that there is a murderous quality to all modes of conceptualization", which Hegel (cited in Lippit 1994: 815) explained as follows:

> When the Meaning (Essence) "dog" passes into the *word* "dog"-that is becomes *abstract* Concept which is different from the sensible reality that it reveals by its Meaning - the Meaning (Essence) dies: the word "dog" does not run, drink, and eat; in it the Meaning (Essence) *ceases* to live-that is it *dies*. And that is why the conceptual understanding of empirical reality is equivalent to a *murder*.

This comment is firmly grounded in the linguistic, commenting as it does on the inadequate distillation of meaning into an abstraction-the word 'dog'. However it can and does resonate on visual animal signs. Pictorial signs are very rarely abstract conventions due to their reliance on the recognition of the viewer. They function through the modes of the iconic *studium* and the *punctums* of substitutive metaphoric index and contiguous metonymic symbolism. This argument has asserted the inability of pictorial animal signs to support an iconic literal *studium* against the coercive ingredients of the punctum. Here I must speak plainly and state that the scope of this paper it is not the worded abstraction of the real creature 'dog', which undoubtedly constitutes a violence that must concern us. Rather it is the refusal of iconic recognition of the creature 'dog' that occurs in the similitudinous action (reception) of the visual animal sign that is the specific concern of this moment-the rendering transparent of the iconic syntax: *recognition of resemblance to the real*. The representation that resembles the 'dog' is likewise subject to a murderous and imperial action: *a death in simile*. Picking up on this idea of a "conceptual murder" (Hegel cited in Lippit 1994: 815) Derrida (cited in Lippit 1998: 1113) proposes that in naming non-human creatures *animals* we have created the *animetaphor:* a state whereby the mythologies and prejudice surrounding non-human creatures overpower, distort and diminish their existence. It is important to note here that this state of complete alienation is not purely the concern of linguistics. The *animetaphor* (Lippit 1998: 1113) is firmly embedded in visual signs.

Derrida develops this into a discussion of what he calls "l'animal autobiographique" (2002: 402). This is a divisive speaking of the complex and metaphoric/metonymic formulation of a human self; an "I" through the attribution, affectation and oppositional differentiation in relation to the "animal", which is here notated in inverted commas, drawing solidarity with Derrida's (2002: 402) assertion that the word "animal" represents a "catch-all concept" encompassing "*all the living things* that man does not recognize as his fellows, his neighbours, or his brothers." Following on this Derrida (2002: 409) moves towards the biblical and the mythical discussion of Bellerophon's slaying of the Chimera a creature which he describes as sporting the "head and chest of a lion, entrails of a goat and tail of a dragon". This rumination culminates in the formulation of what he describes as a "chimerical word that sounded as though it contravened the laws of the French language, l'animot" (Derrida 2002: 409). For a time this sent me to dwelling on the notion of cyborg hybridity and the monstrous as an "outside" space of potent agency (Haraway 1991: 180), a notion that

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[330] Lippit excels in a very clear and thorough reading of Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (2002). He thoroughly explores Derrida's interpretation of Heidegger's notion of erasure in relation to animals. In doing so Lippit also links Derrida's animetaphor to the modes of similitude and also Freud's conception of the unconscious. See Lippit, A. M. 1998. Magnetic animal: Derrida, wildlife, animetaphor in *MLN*, Vol.113, No. 5, Comparative Literature Issue (December), pp. 1111-1125.

Donna Haraway proposes in her paper *The Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the late 20th Century* (1999). It seemed for a time that this same state of hybrid otherness that Haraway (1991:177-180) proposed was a solution for breaking down binary formulations of race and culture between women and women and men and women, might be applicable to the animal/human binary opposition. So I turned my attention to the most monstrous of mythological binary human/animal pairings, the mythological figure of the Minotaur; the half-bull, half-man son of Pasiphaē's union with the Cretan bull (Kirk 1974: 153). Figure 8 is a painting entitled *The Minotaur* by G F Watts This figure of binary taboo constitutes an uncanny and uneasy morphing together of two polarized conceptions: *human* and *animal* seemingly presenting a liminal creature powerful in its "outsideness" of the political and philosophical boundaries of discourse: a "l'animot" (Derrida 2002: 409) sign that does not immediately render itself to the service of human autobiography. But something irks me. Slowly the impression creeps in that this image of an *animal-man* is more an *animalized human* unequal in power; much more man than animal. Anthropocentrism is unmistakable in Watts' *The Minotaur* depicting as it does the creature paradoxically outside of his Labyrinth and pensively looking out to the sea that will carry his slayer Theseus to him.

Here I must deviate away from Minotaurs briefly to Fauns. Piero di Cosimo's *The Death of Procris* (1500) (Figure 9) is an alchemical allegorical image of such complexity and resonance in terms of the animal sign that it cannot bear discussion in this context. Suffice to say that it was created by a man who Vasari reported was "less a man than a beast" (Clark 1977: 176). Here I am looking only at the Faun figure who kneels attentively at the side of the deceased girl. What is striking about this vision is the *punctum* "man and not beast". His posture and gestures are tender and human and anthropomorphic and it appears that his "Faun bottom" seems to be peeling off of him or merely a costume. This is not Derrida's (2002: 409) chimerical "l'animot" or the monstrous and empowered "other" of Haraway's formulation. This man dressed in animal is the "l'animal autobiographique" (2002: 402), attributing desirable animal indices and attributes to the man. As Derrida (2002: 405) states in relation to his discussion of fabled and mythic animals:

> We know the history of fabulation and how it remains an anthropomorphic taming, a moralizing subjection, domestication. Always a discourse *of* man, on man, indeed on the animality of man, but for and as man.

Picasso's *Minotauromachia* (1935) (Figure10) is an example of the anthropocentrism that pervades hybrid man/animal visual signs. The image depicts impassive observers gazing upon a scene of violence where a Minotaur stalks a disemboweled horse figure supporting a woman in the costume of a torero (Buchholz et al 2005: 60). This image is less striking than what has been said about it. Some historians have linked the Minotaur image to a metaphor of human violence, while others have asserted that Picasso linked this hybrid being with his own virility (Buchholz et al 2005: 60). Following Roland Barthes' (1988: 167-172) position in the *Death of the Author,* the author's conceptualization is less important than its reader reception; and what is notable in the reception of this image is the tendency to view the animal hybrid as a metaphor. Jakobson (1988: 57) defines metaphor as "a similarity between things otherwise different". The similitude that operates in this action is of an imperialist nature, effacing difference and autonomy in the selected substituted metaphoric object, what I. A. Richards calls the "vehicle" (PDLT 1999. Sv "tenor and vehicle"); in service of the signified subject or purport, which Richards refers to as the "Tenor" (PDLT 1999. Sv "tenor and vehicle"). This art historical example points strongly to the obsolescence of the animal sign as almost incapable of literal iconic signification. Animal signs more often than not are indexical (metonymic and metaphoric) signifiers attaching affect or moral "fabulation" to the humans they accompany or merely reductive figurative stand-ins for virtue or vice.

The recent performative photographic work by the South African artist Nandipha Mntambo entitled *Europa* (2008) is a photographed enactment of the artist as a bull-like creature. The title of the work points to the mythological figure of Europa, a Phoenician princess who was abducted by Zeus and taken to Crete where she gave birth to Minos who was to be the husband of Pasiphaē, who was the mother of the Minotaur (Guirand [1959] 1985: 87). Europa in this sense is the step-grandmother of the Minotaur. Mntambo presents us with a fusion of the human grandmother with her animal grandchild. This is a new myth and a powerful strategy pointing as it does to a conglomeration of "others": the Phoenician identity of Europa is a non-western identity, which is emphasized by the figures' blackness and Europa is notably a woman. This is the *punctum* of this image: "of woman and blackness and the myth of animality". However important this work may be in its context it does not reverse the transparency and obscurity of the animal sign. Again this is not an animal/woman fusion but rather a woman dressed in "animal" addressing the mythical "othering" of

colour and sex, but not the obscurity and philosophically imposed slavery of animals that extends beyond their lives into their murder as signs.

This image has one further attribute for this argument, namely Europa's smoldering gaze. Derrida dwelt much on the gaze of the animal. Here he borrows from the writing of Michel de Montaigne who recognized the right of animals to communication and signification based on their "capacity to respond" (Derrida 2002: 375). This reciprocity has been written and depicted since antiquity and was amplified in the Middle Ages where the arrogant and segregating effects of reason was the preserve of clerics and monks only (Clark 1977: 47). St Francis of Assisi, who regarded animals as brothers and sisters is a compelling example of this medieval relationship with animal-kind (Clark 1977: 48). This solidarity with the animal neighbor is also evidenced in Homer's hero Odysseus who shed a tear for his ailing dog Argus, who despite his disguise recognized his master as he infiltrated his home unseen by Penelope and her suitors (Homer cited in Clark 1977: 47). Derrida (2002: 372) links this mutuality and empathy to the animal gaze famously musing on his sense of shame when his cat looks at him naked. In defining the implications of this sense of shame Derrida (2002: 372) names this experience *animalséance* and subsequently encodes its meaning with the notion of a shameful suspicion that nakedness is irreducibly connected to animality and is a state most vulnerable under the animal gaze. This rejection of the fixed philosophical distance between man and animal is a post-humanist gesture and typical of Derrida's post-structural model where there is no secure ground or transcendental absolutes (Lodge 1988: 107). Unfortunately (for my purpose that is) Mntambo's animal 'cloaked' *Europa* gazes at the viewer, presenting only the defiance of the non-western female "other". Yet it discloses a possibility that must be present in the minds of all involved in signifying practices: to support the animal sign and prevent its perpetual slippage into metaphor by concentrating on the capacity of non-human creatures to respond (Derrida 2002: 375). This is a larger project of revisioning and probing the fissure of ideological difference that has separated man from animals [nature]. The ground shakes; things are not what they seem:

> The animal is there before me, there close to me, there in front of me-I who am (following) after it. And also, therefore, since it is before me, it is behind me. It surrounds me. And from the vantage of this being-there-before-me it can allow itself to be looked at , no doubt, but also-something that philosophy perhaps forgets, perhaps being this calculated forgetting itself-it can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have ever done more to make me think about this absolute alterity of the neighbor than these moments when I see myself seen naked under the gaze of a cat. (Derrida 2002: 380).

IMAGES

Figure 1 *Head of a Horse*, Egyptian 18th Dynasty (1350 BC). Aegyptisches Museum, Berlin. (Clark 1977: 92).

Figure 2 George Stubbs, *Hambletonian, Rubbing Down* (1800). Oil on canvas, 209.5 x 397cm. National Trust. (Clark 1977: 126).

Figure 3 Unknown Photographer, Able *Seaman Just Nuisance* (1940's). Black and white photograph, dimensions unknown. (Sisson 2001: 2).

Figure 4 Unknown Photographer, Able *Seaman Just Nuisance* (1940's). Black and white photograph, dimensions unknown. (Sisson 2001: 12).

Figure 5 Alexandre Desportes, *Self-portrait as Huntsman* (1699). Oil on canvas, 197.2 x 162.9cm. Louvre, Paris. (Clark 1977:.200).

Figure 6 The Limbourg brothers, 'December' from *Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry (French) (1413-16). Vellum, 29 x 21cm. Musèe Condè, Chantilly. (Clark 1977: 187).

Figure 7 Artist Unknown, 'Death of the Unicorn' (detail) from the *Hunt of the Unicorn series* (French or Flemish, late 15th century). Tapestry, wool and silk, 145 x 153cm (whole tapestry). From the Château of Verteuil, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, Gift of John D Rockerfeller Jr. (Clark 1977: 188).

Figure 8 G.F. Watts, *The Minotaur* (Sa). Medium and dimensions unknown. Tate Gallery, London. (Kirk 1974: Cover).

Figure 9 Piero di Cosimo, *The Death of Procris* (1500). Panel, 65 x 183cm. National Gallery, London. (Hagen 2001: 178).

Figure 10 Pablo Picasso, *Minotauromachia* (1935). Etching and Scraperboard, 49.8 x 69.3cm. Musée Picasso, Paris. (Buchholz 2005: 60).

Figure 11 Nandipha Mntambo, *Europ*a (2008). Archival ink on cotton rag paper, 100 x 100cm. (O'Toole 2008: cover).

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Untimely postludes: the separation of past and present

The title stems from fundamental question I have about the unfortunate association, as pervasive as it is superficial, of history with the past. The title should thus be read as playing rather awkwardly with double negatives — 'untimely' being linked to 'separation' and 'postludes' with 'present' — with the purpose of expressing the exact opposite of 'separation', namely an indissoluble and interlinked connectedness of past-present-future on the temporal horizon, even beyond a human scale, and also to justify the interest of artists as well as the art historical discipline in the presentation and the presence of images from the past, including peculiar imaginary acts of making present visually.

[SLIDE 1] The key image of my presentation is a well-known and intriguing David Goldblatt photograph, *Picnic at Hartebeespoort Dam, News Year's Eve, 1965*. It is one of the early photographs which featured in several Goldblatt exhibitions prior to being published in *Some Afrikaners photographed* (1975) and then republished and exhibited in *Some Afrikaners revisited* (2007). This image of a working class picnic scene is noted for evidence of underlying or nascent violence. The recumbent figure of the unconscious toddler in the foreground seems to fluctuate ambiguously between the sleep and abandon of the innocent and the spread-eagled corpse of a dead victim of violence. It can be read in contrast to but also as corollary of the sibling conduct in the background, where an older brother, cradling a baby in his lap, has a toy gun aimed into one of its eyes.

Considered in a self-reflective meta-picture frame, the photograph divulges another form of violence — a pictorial variety of violence. Such framing alerts spectators to the allusive play of resonant metaphorical parallels or analogies between the gun-toting boy's and the photographer's actions, especially between their devices — the toy gun and the camera — both aimed from one eye and directed at another eye, with each agent's finger ready on trigger or shutter release, the result of both being "shots".

Notions from play and game theory enter the art of photography in the wake of drawing such self-reflective analogies between camera and toy gun.[331] By disposition and training, experienced photographers cope with the extremes of Roger Caillois's *ludus* and *paideia*. Whether they are taking snapshots, choosing contact prints, or developing and printing them, photographers combine patience, skill, ingenuity in difficult conditions with improvisation, serendipity and chance. Spectators, on the other hand, experience images — whether sculpted, painted or photographed — as visual play gambits which engage them in playful participation and absorption, immersed in the pursuit of unforeseen movements, directions and complications, and where the search for meaning is part of the imaginary game. Renée van de Vall (2008: 101) formulates the gist of the matter as follows:

What connects the experiential dimension of art with that of play is that its significance is basically performative: what a work 'means' is only disclosed in a doing.

Furthermore, the self-reflective analogising of toy gun and camera appears to reiterate Roland Barthes's (1984) obsession with an inherent correlation of photographic image and death,[332] ultimately due to photographic indices' reified equalising and naturalising of things combined with the mechanisation of time's fatal and dehumanising effects. As we know from history, trigger and shutter are standard release devices which, in combination with pendulum periodicity and gear ratios, became key resources for the historical drive towards mechanisation that led to the formation of the modern clockwork universe and, in due course, to mechanised production, the industrial revolution and globalisation (cf. Dijksterhuis 1969).

The concurrent establishment of modern chronology with its inexorable and systematic division, regulation and boundless industrial exploitation of time has particular relevance in the present context. One of the well-known and entirely negative consequences of the technological drive for measurement, control, speed, efficiency and profit-making by means of globalised industrial time-keeping was its levelling or distorting consequences. It forcefully funnelled the temporal horizon of reality into secular, abstract and calculative chronologies, reducing the rich and concrete diversity of lived human experiences of time, diluting our historical and communal awareness of the continuities of past, present and future. What comes to pass thus dwindled into mere chronology, with the present shrivelling up into instantaneous moments within, or recordable fractions of real passages of time, thus pushing the past — once alive with its share of friendship, joy, pain, courage, violence, tedium, suffering, endurance — into the domain of the non-existent or non-real.

In approaching this field I draw on two distinct sets of theoretical discourse — one concerning the image as visual action, picturing as articulation of imaginary meaning and presence;[333] the other related to recent debates among historians about the experience of the presence of the past.[334] The first is cued by certain suggestions in the recent thinking of Felix Thürlemann, formerly a Greimasian proponent of semiotic art history, presently at Constance. The second discourse centres around curious time notions debated among theorists of history, in particular Frank Ankersmit and his colleague at Groningen, Eelco Runia, a former psychiatrist.

Thürlemann's articulatory notions of picturing appear in a recent series of interviews Klaus Sachs-Hombach (2004) conducted with leading thinkers in German visual theory.[335] The spectrum of positions and approaches covered in *Wege zur Bildwissenschaft* encompass diverse compromises between phenomenology, critical theory and semiotics. In his interview — the title may be translated as "The image in the context of its presentation" — Thürlemann advances a number of thought-provoking ideas regarding the image as "visual syntagm". Deviating somewhat from semiotic's customary spatial, compositional or configurational fixations, a noteworthy aspect of this syntagmatic conception is the idea that visual images should be understood preferably in sequential, actantial or performative terms.

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[331] I have in mind key ideas from Johan Huizinga, Roger Callois, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Wolfgang Iser as applied by Renée van de Vall (2008: 75-102) in her study "Between battlefield and play".
[332] Cf. Smith (ed) 2001, Olin 2002, Costello 2008.
[333] I do not agree fully with the division Gumbrecht (2004) makes between presence and meaning, meaning being but one of many ways that presence may be experienced.
[334] Among others, cf. Rosand 1974, Nora 1989, Junod 2002, Rüsen 2005, Gumbrecht 2006, Assmann 2008, González-Ruibal 2008, Kasabova 2008, Trachtenberg 2008, White 2008 & Kramer 2009.
[335] Audio and video records of all the interviews are available at the *Bildwissenschaft* website
<http://www.bildwissenschaft.org/content.php?menuItem=5si3=1>

This functional and interactive hypothesis regarding the image as an impulse towards visual articulation[336] understands it as an iconic agency affecting its spectators and unfolding in the presence and the responses of its beholders. In this respect Thürlemann appears to be drawing close to phenomenology's special area of interest which Renée van de Vall (2008: 69) describes in the following words:

Visual art creates fictional worlds in which the appearances of and relations between the ingredients of this world are given visual form; moreover, it gives its spectators a specific — sensible, imaginative, conceptual — access to that world. It is this latter dimension, the construction of spectatorship, that I am primarily interested in.

In addition this understanding is expanded further by certain correspondences with incisive notions of visual articulation developed in the context of critical theory, exemplified for instance by certain ideas Martin Seel (2005) formulated in his "Thirteen statements on the picture". Especially pertinent in this regard are his insights with respect to artworks themselves as "presentations in the medium of appearing", as "formations of an articulating appearing". He sees artworks as "objects that need to be *understood* in their performative intent" and furthermore proposes that "in the encounter with works of art, we *encounter* presences of human life".[337]

[SLIDE 1] Against the backdrop of this discourse from image theory, the following nuances may be discerned in the key image, the Goldblatt photograph from 1965:

We imaginatively mobilise and animate this photograph's visual syntagm by responsively performing its articulating appearing. This is done as and when we discern and ponder the actions and relationships among the siblings in the scene. Beyond the male arm and hand on the left, probably reaching for a flask of wine, parents and the adult world are absent, deliberately excluded from the photographer's frame. But every item of the scattered remains of the picnic surrounding the children may be read as a sign of human life — a working class family's life in this case. However, an imaginary presence (rather than accumulating signs) of human life seems to be converging in the recumbent figure of the sleeping boy in the foreground. Here, in this figure, human presence seems to reach beyond mere individual existence, being paradoxically open and close, ingenuous and secret, vulnerable and dormant, oblivious as well as exposed to the surroundings and the actions of others.

Unlike Seel, however, Thürlemann's understanding of presentation is primarily contextual. As the interview title indicates the distinctive mark of his thinking is his commitment to the syntagmatising ramifications of contextual image presentation. This vital interest directs his investigation of staging or display procedures which in various ways enhance, amplify or intensify the basic visual syntagm of any image. It goes without saying that measures of this kind can of course also have negative consequences — in manipulative, malicious, insensitive or incompetent hands an inept or misguided *mis en scène* may well serve to stifle, repress or gag images. According to Thürlemann (2004: 209-210), his own curiosity regarding visual syntagmatics began serendipitously, in a Palermo flea-market where he came across an old stack of humorous British monthlies from the 1940s, probably remains from the Allied invasion. He was struck by typical exercises of "visual rhyming" on the back cover of the *Lilliput Magazine*.

[SLIDE 2] He cites this example of image pairing from a *Lilliput* back cover. It shows a Second World War German bomber aircraft's open nosecone display of a machine gun battery combined with a Berlin Zoo hippopotamus's yawning display of teeth. Both identified as "Enemy Property", the analogies drawn by the visual rhyming of the images deflate and poke fun at wartime German ostentation and propaganda. Comparable to an extremely complex and elaborate statement[338] the rhetorical pairing has the effect of sustaining, augmenting and merging the visual syntagms of the separate images. Exploiting each picture's self-critical potential, it furthermore accomplishes a complete tenor shift, in effect turning the photographs against themselves.

Comparable contextual procedures of visual syntagmatising and visual rhetoric also occur in diverse disciplinary areas of art history in which artworks are assembled, collected and displayed. For generations of art historians and art history students, the slide lecture undoubtedly counts as the prime example of

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[336] Visual articulation may perhaps be compared with expressive phrasing in the rendering of pieces of music. Cf. ideas about moments of aesthetic reflexivity manifested in spectator participation in artworks which Renée van de Vall (2008: 130) describes in performative terms as "rhythmic play".
[337] Cf. the line of thought unfolding in Seel 2005: 95-97, his italics.
[338] Thürlemann (2004: 206) toys with the term *Bildsatzgefüge*.

ubiquitous image pairing practices meant to make artworks present in discursive space.[339] Describing the slide lecture as a "ventriloquist act [that] enables the picture to speak, to act, to desire", Robert Nelson (2000: 419) reviews some of dual slide projection's rhetorical devices, for instance the theatrical features of a dark yet intimate room, the lecturer's shifting stagings of selfhood and the constructing of sequences of visual argumentation from anchor slides, visual comparisons and close-up shots of details.

The disparity between the following two of Nelson's conclusions centres on the crucial question of contextual image presentation and the image's own action of making present:

The projected image is … less a sign and more a simulacrum of the art object, an entity that in some way is that object itself, or, rather, a thing in itself, *a past made present, even as it is understood to be past …* (Nelson 2000: 418; my italics in the closing phrase which incapsulates the issue)

But ironically the photographic slide's very power to make art present in the lecture hall distorts it at the same time because, to state the obvious, the original is not present. (Nelson 2000: 432)

Nelson is troubled by misgivings and questions regarding the art historian in cyberspace, posed in the face of the looming spectre of magic lantern phantasmagoria reinstated in the future. Thürlemann (2004: 207-208), conversely, deplores the role of conservative scholarly practices in the sphere of cyberspace image syntagmatising. Indispensable even today for digital image database programmes as well as for Internet search engines, our reliance on verbal descriptors in order to access images according to him seems to assert the indisputable triumph of iconography and connoisseurship, rather than the imminent redundancy of these disciplines.

In a different art historical domain, in public museum and gallery exhibitions as next case, we have a multitude of panels, walls and niches with paired or clustered hangings of works of art. Of course no curator can evade the inveterate stumbling block of balancing each individual image's impulse towards a particular counterpart within (or perhaps sadly absent from) the overall arrangement of an exhibition, and of finding the best position to accommodate each visual syntagm and its spectator engagement in relation to the spatial layout and spectator sequencing of an exhibition. The historical study of the image arrangements on such walls has in recent years emerged as a popular trend in recent research on such topics as early palace collections, later Salon or modernist exhibitions and current installations.

[SLIDE 3] The presentation of paired photographic images only gradually acquired some degree of prominence in the course David Goldblatt's career, eventually culminating in the *Intersections intersected* exhibitions of 2008 and 2009 (cf. Hawort-Booth, Danelzik-Brüggemann, Stevenson 2005). Often combining early black-and-white photographs with later digital colour photographs, the image pairings in these exhibitions convey a strong sense of the passage of time — presenting near and remote pasts. A vital strategy here is the vibrant triangulation of syntagmatising effects that are realised between the paired images and the spectator. The title confirms Goldblatt's nodal grasp of photographs as imaginary "intersections" — fractions in the passage of time yet junctures in the course of history. A sense of historical continuity is generated by this means — not merely a nostalgic remembrance of things past, but a strangely obdurate and enduring presencing of the past in altered changed circumstances.[340]

Such sense and presence distinguish this particular image pair emerging from the enthralling interplay — strangely familiar, intimate but distanced — among the uncanny figures of the shovelling farmer and idol-like goat in the black-and-white photograph's inhospitable environment and the veranda with framed family photograph, bonneted wooden sculpture and statuesque white horse in the colour photograph. Spectator involvement in the visual triangulation is cued by the narrative captions of the two paired Gamkaskloof images from 1966 and 2006, typical of Goldblatt's evocative verbal economy:

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[339] This practice became so ingrained in the modern Western practice art history that this appears to be one discipline where Edward Tufte's (2006) critique of the use of PowerPoint in teaching or scholarly contexts does not apply. Art historians certainly make use of PowerPoint, but the rote use of its software formats is rare in their circles. It cannot be denied that due to the pervasiveness of PowerPoint in scholarly conference jargon, "presentation" is nowadays used more commonly than "paper" in conference proceedings.

[340] In a formulation suggested in the title of Goldblatt (1998), the *Intersections intersected* photograph pairing conveys a sense of "South Africa: the structure of things then … and again, and again".

Piet Swanepoel clears ground for planting on his farm in the isolated community of Gamkaskloof (Die Hel), in the Swartberg Mountains. That community is no more. Swanepoel left the valley in 1992, the last of the farmers to do so. *Gamkaskloof (Western Cape), December 1966*

At the food-shop and restaurant of Annatjie Mostert-Joubert, during a kultuurfees. Annatjie is a daughter of Gamkaskloof and the only member of the original community still living there. *Gamkaskloof (Western Cape), 7 October 2006*

Back in 1972, at the time that he was preparing the printing of *Some Afrikaners photographed*, Goldblatt decided against proposals for juxtaposed or cross-pollinating photograph pairs. He instead opted for a more expensive and "philosophical" book format which he describes in the following terms:

> … one picture to each double-page spread; picture on the right, caption on the left; each picture framed by white; no 'bleeds' …. relationships between pictures and the ideas and meanings they conveyed were indeed intended — *this was an essay, not simply a random collection of photographs* — but they were subtle, almost subliminal; they lay, essentially, in *the sequencing of the photographs*. If a reader missed the connections or chose to ignore them, this would not detract from or intrude on his or her 'reading' or understanding of the work (Goldblatt 2007: 15; my italics).

Goldblatt's reminiscence touches on a further aspect. Diverse formats and combinations of image presentation are available for the layout of illustrated and photographic books, especially in the era of digital layout — usually single- or double-paged image pairings or image sequences. But a cardinal attribute of all of them has to do with the fact that — contrary to exhibitions and presentations in public spaces — they all translate their images' visual syntagmatising effects and presencing into the private spaces and secret domains of the reader's individual attention, rumination and memory (cf. Drucker 2004).

The following lines are from the conclusion of Ivor Powell's (2007: 28) introductory essay for *Some Afrikaners revisited*:

> The two photographs of picnicking groups at Hartebeespoort Dam on New Year's Day, 1965, are an example. Two groups are picnicking at the same time, alongside each other — the one infected with death and destruction, the other responding to the electricity of the moment in a primal phallic display.

[SLIDE 4] These lines serve as the caption of the next image pair. However, instead of opening up the articulation of their meaning and presence, the caption's overwrought ideological framing of the images in effect curtails the iconic agency of the photographs. Powell in this case seems to have fallen prey to the desire of controlling the image readings, resembling in this respect the very ideology and anxiety he was combating in this and other critical essays (cf. also Powell 1993).

[SLIDE 5 & 6] In stark contrast we have Goldblatt's own chosen format — a page-turning, sequential presentation of the same two photographs, with a laconic iteration of the pithy caption, calling for the reader to participate in a measured comparing of the captioned images by means of retro- and prospecting to-and-fro paging. Thus we shift between the two scenes, between the contrasting toddlers in the foreground, one white, one black; neither makes contact with the beholder, one face-up but sleeping, the other alert but with his back to us; one surrounded by scattered picnic remains, the other by dancing adults.

For the reader undertaking this sequential circling, the images' polysemous articulation presents a tough as well as intricate South African inflection of a time-honoured image type in the idyllic mode. The traditional *topos* — comprising pastoral scenes with people at leisure, playing, drinking, dancing and sleeping in idealised natural settings with shady trees and water — is here transformed into a complex and tensioned presentation, vital yet indolent, abrasive yet playful, thorny yet relaxed. Close together at a resort on the same day, the two picnicking groups imaginatively present the conjunction of two separate worlds, with historical intersection as their common destiny.

It would be interesting to speculate about reasons why these two images from 1965 were only brought together in 2007, seeing that their pairing visually unfold the separation and unison of time and place essential for historical insight into Afrikaner identity. In line with Walter Benjamin's *Passagen* project thinking the delayed publication of the image pair could perhaps be taken as an instance of the "historical

index" — in other words, "against the grain" discoveries of elective affinities between the present and a certain historical past:[341]

For the historical index of the images not only says that they belong to a particular time; it says, above all, that they attain to legibility only at a particular time … Every present day is determined by the images that are synchronic with it; each 'now' is the now of a particular recognisability (Benjamin 1999: 462-463, Convolute N3,1).

[SLIDE 7] Rather than a Benjaminian blast from the past, however, the sleeping toddler to my mind can perhaps be compared more fruitfully with another figure from a remote and distant past — the pissing Pulcinella depicted from behind in a Venetian arcade in one of many similar *vedute* paintings by Francesco Guardi. Featuring already in an earlier article on Rococo boredom by Frank Ankersmit (2003), the little-known painting from the Academia Carrara collection was then reproduced on the cover of the English edition of Ankersmit's *Sublime historical experience* (2005). [SLIDE 8] This painting has attained virtually metapainting status in the wake of being cited as visual reference in Ankersmit's (2001, 2005, 2007) and Eelco Runia's (2005, 2006, 2007) writings on the concrete historical experience of the presence of the past. Returning to the example of their predecessor, the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, Ankersmit and Runia are leading the turn in historiography against abstract notions of the past as a theoretical construct of reputable scholarly methods like historical representation and narrativism. Unfortunately I do not have the time today to rehearse the ambiguities of their thought-provoking proposals regarding unmediated contact with the past, being experienced uncannily, involuntarily, even unconsciously as directly present in unexpected places and circumstances.

The Pulcinella figure has the nebulous appearance of a painterly blob adrift in Guardi's strange spatial construction. Not in contact with his surroundings, nor with the spectator, the Pulcinella is situated in the composition like a hidden stowaway, metonymically making a Rococo Venetian past present in the some beholders' personal experience (Runia 2005). [SLIDE 1] What does this say regarding our visual experience of the Goldblatt photograph? Human presence is not isolated, distilled or embodied in the manner of a Roland Barthes *punctum* in the figure of the sleeping boy or one specific detail. Spectator awareness of presencing instead appears at the very edges of human vision. We are caught unawares by this imaginary presenting of the past. It manifests itself entangled in the web of connections between the boy and his surroundings, bolstered further by syntagmatising relations between the image pair and the identical captions. At the threshold of human consciousness, spectator awareness transpires in volatile interactions between focal and peripheral vision which are beyond our control and command. The beholder's vision will be directed by a specific intentional search for meaning, but the unanticipated presencing of the past will be a startling experience.

SLIDES

1. David Goldblatt, Picnic at Hartebeespoort Dam on New Year's Day, Transvaal, 1965. *Some Afrikaners photographed* (1975: 153) & *Some Afrikaners revisited* (2006: 213)

2. Anon, Enemy property I & Enemy property II, *Lilliput Magazine*, May 1942

3. David Goldblatt, *Intersections Intersected,* Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, 16 January - 1 March 2008; http://www.michaelstevenson.com/contemporary/exhibitions/goldblatt/intersections2008/index.htm

4. Ivor Powell's presentation of David Goldblatt, Picnic at Hartebeespoort Dam on New Year's Day, Transvaal, 1965. *Some Afrikaners photographed* (1975: 153) & *Some Afrikaners revisited* (2006: 213) and David Goldblatt, Picnic at Hartebeespoort Dam on New Year's Day, Transvaal, 1965. *Some Afrikaners revisited* (Roggebaai: Umuzi 2006: 215).

5. David Goldblatt, Picnic at Hartebeespoort Dam on New Year's Day, Transvaal, 1965. *Some Afrikaners photographed* (1975: 153).

6. David Goldblatt, Picnic at Hartebeespoort Dam on New Year's Day, Transvaal, 1965. *Some Afrikaners revisited* (Roggebaai: Umuzi 2006: 215).

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[341] This would entail the discovery of connections between the South Africa of 1965 and 2007 of the kind that Benjamin saw between Baudelairian and surrealist Paris.

7. The cover of the Frank Ankersmit's book, *Sublime historical experience* (2005).

8. Francesco Guardi (1712-93), *Veduta di Venezia con maschere* (*s a*). Bergamo: Academia Carrara.

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"Through the eyes of the beholder": Recent Dutch representations of South Africa

Introduction

While one viewer thought the story to be "interesting to follow" and the images of the location "really terrific"(Kassenbouwer 2007), another stated that it reminded him rather of "Stellenbosch plonk" (Limburg 2007). These are just two, rather different, reactions to the 7-episode long Dutch television dramaserie, *Stellenbosch* (Van Jaarsveld 2007), which was screened on television by the Dutch public broadcaster in 2007. *Stellenbosch* tells the fictive story of a Dutch farmer and his family who migrate to the wine producing Stellenbosch region during the late 1950s (where they, interestingly enough, start off as cattle farmers!) and their personal adaptation to the "new" South Africa after 1994.

For this presentation, I will read *Stellenbsoch* as an example of how television as a medium has been used to represent South Africa as the cultural imagination of others (a Dutch director, screenwriter and actors, in this case). I will do so by considering this Dutch interpretation of the South African socio-cultural landscape from my position as a South African living in the Netherlands. A first inquiry might be of course why series such as this appeal in the first place to a "non-South African" audience. Part of the explanation certainly lies in the notion of the "tourist gaze", which is about the consumption of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the orindary – that is: from a Dutch perspective – and which functions as a visual form of "armchair travel" (cf. Urry 2002). Furthermore, as Hammett and Jayawardane argues, tourists from Europe, the West,

often desire to travel to the ex-colonies, which resemble "imaginary constructions of prelapsarian utopias" (Hammett and Jayawardane 2009, p. 219). I will return to this notion of the prelapsarion in a moment.

After having watched *Stellenbosch* on Dutch television, I was curious to further explore the various dimension of the representational process and to unravel the image makings of "South Africanness" from such an "outsider" perspective, such as the Dutch one. My intention is to investigate how series such *Stellenbosch* construct a discourse and imagery that represent identity and "assign identity positions in relations to categories such as race, nation, region, gender and language" (Osborne and Wintle 2006, p. 15). I was also intrigued to explore what it is that texts, such as this one, reveal about their own context of production, and what they could tell the attentive viewer/reader about the Netherlands and Dutch culture itself: what faultlines do such texts hint at in Dutch society?

For this project my reading of the series *Stellenbosch* investigates how South Africa and South Africans are represented (as opposed to say, an investigation of how people 'are') and how the characters are ascribed certain meaningful social and cultural subject positions within this context. The emphasis here will be on the allocation and construction of images of identity (the self and the other) in this television programme against the backdrop of particular references to a recognizable socio-political and socio-cultural context.

The series

The TV series *Stellenbosch* was aired during November and December 2007, on Sunday evenings, followed by a travel documentary on Southern Africa called *Van Dis in Afrika*.[342] *Stellenbosch* received quite some public attention: a marathon viewing of it was organized for the annual Dutch Film Festival in 2007, where it also received a nomination for a prestigious Dutch film award for best drama series, de Gouden Kalf; reviewers, however, were not unanimously positive about the series (e.g. Beerekamp 2007). The programme was sold to a Belgian TV station, and during April and May of 2009 it was aired in South Africa during prime time on Thursday evenings by the public broadcaster on SABC 3. The series has also been novelized by its screenwriter, Jacqueline Epskamp (2007).

Stellenbosch is a fictional narrative that recounts more or less the following story: Henk senior and Anneke Keppel migrate to South Africa at the end of the 1950s, to start a new life as cattle farmers in the Western Cape. Son Henk (junior) and daughter Betty are born there, and the family changes from cattle farming into wine production. During the early 1980s the parents re-migrate back to the Netherlands; Henk becomes disillusioned in his attempts to produce an award-winning wine and also returns to the Netherlands, while his sister, Betty, remains in the country and as a member of the ANC, stays involved in the struggle.

In 1963 two children disappeared: the son of one of their workers, Andile, and the Flemish neigbhour's son, Jean-Luc. Henk seems to be implied in these disappearances, which is revealed in a series of flashbacks as a criminal act. Shelley, the sister of Andile, who lives and works in the Netherlands, becomes the object of Henk's romantic and erotic desires when he runs into her in 1994, but the unresolved case of Andile's disappearance hinders their romantic union.

Henk is frustrated in another way too: his sister Betty is set on transferring ownership of the farm to the farm workers, while his dream is to produce a wine worthy of a "Veritas Double Gold Award". He is thus set on keeping ownership of the farm in his own hands.[343] In the end Henk manages to produce the top wine, while the disappearance of the boys, which lingered as a sign of the repressed in Henk's memory, is also resolved. He is reconciled with Shelley (a Dutch, personalized interpretation of the processes of "truth" and "reconciliation"?), and Betty transfers ownership of the farm to a workers' trust.

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[342] *Van Dis in Afrika* is a 7-part travel documentary of the travel experiences of the Dutch writer, Adriaan van Dis, who undertook a journey to South Africa ten years after the great political changes of the early 1990s had taken place. Van Dis is a famous and award-winning literary author in the Netherlands, with a strong interest in South Africa. During his university studies at the University of Amsterdam, he specialized in Afrikaans literature, culminating in a master's thesis on the prose work of Breyten Breytenbach. His travel experiences across South African are related in the novel *Het beloofde land: een reis door de Karoo* (Van Dis 1990). For the purpose of this presentation I focus on the series *Stellenbosch,* while a comparative analysis of both series is part of a larger project I am currently working on.

[343] The reasoning here is as follows: if the farm wants to remain economically viable, it has to produce an "easy, drinkable" wine, which sets quantity above quality.

Historical background to Dutch-South African relations

Before going into the series and its themes in greater detail, some words should be mentioned about the relation between the Netherlands and South Africa. The ancestral "Dutch link" of many (white and coloured) South Africans is rooted in historical events, which commenced during the 17th century; the story of which is well known- as is the Dutch interest, identification with and support for the "Boere" during the 19th century, especially during the 2nd Anglo-Boer war. This relationship between the Afrikaners and the Dutch has been cast (emotionally) in a narrative of "stamverwantschap" (kinship) during the early 20th century.[344]

Although, during the first half of the 20th century, the Dutch showed mostly a cultural interest in the country (the highpoint of which was the signing of a cultural agreement between NL and SA in 1951), the development of Afrikaner nationalist sentiments and politics after the second world war lead to increasing political resistance against the racist policies of the National Party and a freezing of the Cultural Agreement in 1977, prompted more specifically by the police reactions that triggered the riots in Sharpeville, the police reactions to the Soweto riots and the death of Steve Biko (cf. Colborne 1987; Jansen 1998). The political situation in the country inspired the creation of the Dutch anti-apartheid movement, whose legacy in Dutch collective memory is perhaps most strongly remembered as a visual one with protest and boycott posters against trade with South Africa.

The estranged relations were re-kindled very strongly from the Dutch side after the political events of the early 1990s with a keen new interest in and attention for the country. Despite the "estrangement" during the second part of the 20th century, the narrative of a relationship remained quite strong, and it is especially through the Afrikaans language that a specifically cultural relationship is nurtured and promoted. The Dutch media generate a great amount of interest in the country (primarily represented as a tourist destination) and its people, as does the significant portion of contemporary South African literature that gets translated into Dutch, and the many theatrical and musical acts that regularly perform in the Netherlands. After the intellectual interest in the development of Afrikaans and Afrikaans literature during the first half of the 20th century, the Dutch has (re-)discovered Afrikaans as a "leuk taaltje" (a cute little language) and are creating and commodifying symbols and signs of "South Africanness" for consumer purposes, as witnessed, for example, in a recent campaign for a flip-flop shoe – designed in the Netherlands, produced in South Africa – called "Plakkies".

Representing South Africanness

There are a number of avenues that one might explore in an enquiry such as this one, but today I will touch on a number of issues that come into play in the representation of South Africa. How are the notions of "South Africa" and "South Africanness" given meaning through the process of representation? Against which larger (Dutch) narrative may these representations be read? Which codes - available for quick and easy reading - are used to represent South Africanness on the one hand and current Dutch issues on the other?

Now, the question might be asked in the first instance about how the series is "located" in the South African context. One strategy is the use of a number of important and iconic references that are made to recognize the setting as typically South African: right at the start of the series the opening scene of the first episode (called "The year of Mandela") shows a panning camera shot moving from the front of a Cape Dutch farm house by night to a nearby barn filled with workers watching the televised speech of Nelson Mandela after the ANC is announced as winners of the first democratic elections of 1994. Later on in the series specific references are made to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Betty applies for a job with the Commission and her own personal involvement in the Struggle is revealed in this manner. As an aside: Betty's activities in the liberation struggle[345], and her participation in the TRC raises an interesting issue, namely the representation of the liberation struggle and the TRC in popular and artistic culture and the way in which fiction gets interwoven with the facts about the struggle and the TRC (cf. Philips 2007). For example, the viewer learns that Betty had a relationship with an important ANC figure (called Steve Dialo),

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[344] For a historical discussion of the relation between the Dutch and Afrikaners, see Schutte (1986), and De Graaff (1993). For a critical appraisal of the Dutch notion of "stamverwantschap" see Henkes (2008).

[345] For her involvement in the struggle Betty was jailed for half a year and kept in prison in Pretoria. This biographical detail of hers is a reference to the imprisonment of real Dutch anti-apartheid activists such as Klaas de Jonge and Hélène Passtoors.

whose photograph is shown during an interrogation between Betty and TRC commissioners. But this "struggle hero" is a creation of the screenwriter, and not a historical person.

These recognizable signs provide not much more than a "couleur locale" to the story – it is that which is needed to make the distinction between the South African and Dutch contexts of the story clear. The *locus* of the South African context is diluted to the microcosm of the wine farm itself, where most of the dramatic action set in South Africa takes place.[346] A number of excursions undertaken to locations outside of the farm (e.g. the neighbour's farm, the house of a retired policeman, a location where a TRC meeting is held, an office at a financial bank, a "shebeen" in a nearby township). What does play an obvious and prominent role is the lush scenery of the South African landscape and the intense quality of the sunlight; the camera takes it time exploring and intensely regarding what is - in the eyes of many Dutch tourists - the epitome of South Africanness for many foreign visitors: the Cape Winelands and mountain scenery bathed in sunlight, occasionally juxtaposed with a "township scene" for an authentic "South African" flavour. These are set in stark contrast with the "bland" Dutch scenery: shots of dreary, grey agricultural scenes in the Dutch countryside, or equally overcast scenes set in Amsterdam.

Stellenbosch sets up a complex relation of social-scapes and landscapes, which is initiated already with the name given to farm where the Keppel family settle themselves. The farm carries the symbolically laden name Arkadia which conjures up notions of ancient Greek and Roman times, an association intended by the director, who emphasized that the story should be read as a Greek tragedy, with fate directing the lives of the characters (Schmidt 2007). The name Arkadia also carries the connotations of an idealized, pre-lapsarian, pastoral life. This idyll was dramatically disturbed in 1963 by gruesome events in which Henk played a role and which left him and Shelley traumatized in different ways. The message throughout the series is that the idyll – worked out as the possibility of a relationship between Henk and Shelley –can only be restored once the truth about the past is (literally) unearthed and faced.[347]

At a first glance this personal struggle might seem rather removed from the harsh reality of the South Africa the series is situated in. A viewer more familiar with the South African system might pick up very oblique references to the socio-political background, and especially to the complexity of social and labour systems under Apartheid, which is implied when mention is made of Shelley Yona's Xhosa identity. Thus the topic of Xhosa migrant labourers on Cape Wine farms is thematized, although the ethnic and racial complexities, structured by unequal power relations and access to resources and facilities, and formalized in different job allocations and privileges are not further explored or explained in the series. It is at this point, for example, that a comparison with the Van Dis documentary offers an interesting discussion point. In the first episode Van Dis travels to the Eastern Cape, to visit Francis Magxa, a retired domestic worker of friends of his in Cape Town. On his journey to Magxa's home, Van Dis refers to the homeland system, the experience of migrant labour, and the effects this system is then given the voice of individual experience by Magxa in her conversation with Van Dis. It thus gives voice to the experience of migrant labour in a much different way than *Stellenbosch* manages to do.

Related to the issue of migrant labour is the issue of land restitution. A key storyline in the series *Stellenbosch* is Betty's attempt to transfer ownership of Arkadia to the farm workers. It is interesting to see this Dutch interpretation and treatment of a much contested South African issue (cf. Du Toit, Kruger, and Ponte), which is played out as the struggle for "power" between brother and sister, and the seemingly stubborn unwillingness of the farm workers to go along with Betty's plan. In the case of Henk and Betty the storyline creates an opposition between sensible economic reasoning and idealistic political ideology. As for the farm workers: their attitude to the proposed transfer is shown as one of short-term economic thinking (choosing an income above ownership) and an inability to engage in dialogue with Betty about the issue. In the end Betty does, however, manage to transfer ownership of Arkadia to a workers' trust, and in an emotional and pathos-laden speech to the workers announces this accomplishment, which is then, in a turn of attitude, enthusiastically accepted by the workers.

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[346] A significant part of the series is also situated in the Netherlands.

[347] The events involve the gruesome death of two young boys. The first death is the result of a fatal accident with the Keppel's plough, operated by the young Henk junior, who unwittingly kills the neighbour's son, Jean-Luc, who, in following Henk junior, came too close to the ploughshares. Andile, the son of one of Arcadia's workers, is a witness to the tragedy, and also sees the hasty burial of Jean-Luc there and then by Henk senior. Henk senior has no insurance, and cannot face the financial consequences of this accident, and therefore tries to "cover up" the incident. Henk senior notices that Andile has seen the whole incident, and instructs his son to catch Andile. Having caught the frightened young boy, he is strangled and killed by Henk senior. The disappearance of the two boys is never solved, although initially rumours were going that they were abducted by a Chinese child dealer.

The workers' initial choice for an income above ownership puts a very pressing topic on the agenda, namely that of poverty, and especially the question of how poverty is represented in this series. It deserves, however, much more attention than I'm able to give here. As Kim Miller has explained, the tradition of representing poverty mainly has two branches: one romanticizes the conditions of poverty and the harshness of daily life under such conditions, while the other manner of representing poverty presents poor people as agentless victims who earn what they deserve (Miller 2007, p. 118). Both these approaches are present in *Stellenbosch*. The romantic tradition is evident in the way the harshness of a poverty-stricken context is often softened by presenting it as a visually poetic scenes (e.g. Henk who, desolate in his own miserable condition, stumbles along a township road while the early morning light renders a romantic atmosphere to the scene). The other tradition is evoked when drunken farm workers are shown to seemingly willingly buy into the notorious "dop system."[348]. A more systematic and careful analysis than I'm able to present here of the series would be necessary to search for indications where the representation of poverty may be read as disrupting this tradition.

Much may be said about the construction of a Dutch-South African identity in both series, and such an inquiry may find useful support in the work currently undertaken by Barbara Henkes who, from a historical perspective, is investigating the life stories of real Dutch migrants to South Africa. However, my interest here is how the South African 'other' is represented and made sense of and positioned socially, and especially how this 'other' then is inscribed into a representational system of meaning.

In the case of *Stellenbosch* the relation self/other is in the first episode already inscribed in the relationship between Henk and Shelley Yona, the daughter of one of the farm workers who left the country because she was a member of the ANC. When the series introduces Shelley, she is living in the Netherlands where she works as a nurse. Shelley is portrayed as a friendly, social character and one of great sensuous and exotic beauty too. Henk, however, is presented as a somewhat autistic character. His dream of making a top-notch wine was thwarted in 1982 when the security policy raided the farm Arkadia in search of ANC members who were given shelter there by Betty. The relationship between Henk en Shelley is best described in terms of spectacle/desire, and Shelley's character is a long way removed from being a subject or agent in her own right. Within the story she is ascribed the role of a 2-year old character when her brother, Andile, disappears. She cannot recall the events of that time and is dependent on the mostly absent, or insufficient memory of Henk (who was 11 at that time) to fill in the blanks for her. Only problem is that his memory fails him on this point and it is his meeting the adult Shelley and returning to South Africa that triggers a process of fragmentary memory reconstruction. There are many questions around Shelley's character: why does she live in the Netherlands, when did she go there and why did she leave South Africa?[349] Was hers a politically motivated decision to stay in the Netherlands, an economic one or perhaps one taken for romantic reasons? The answers to these questions are never formulated by Shelley herself, and where the viewer does get provided with (scant) information about her personal story, it is always in discussions of others about her. She is "forever the exegetical horizon of difference, never the active agent of articulation" as Homi Bhabha explains (cited by Maingard 1997, p. 17).[350]

In the end the differences that exist between Henk and Shelley seem to be reconciled or even solved. Much different is the process of "othering" that takes place at the end of series. In a pivotal scene in the series, a

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[348] The issue of alcohol abuse and the "dop system" is, apart from Betty's anger at the fact that her brother manages the farm in this manner – paying workers with wine rather than with money –, not explored further in the series. A meaningful link between alcoholism, labour conditions and the wine industry is implied in an extra item on the DVD set of the series. The item opens with a scene of a group of young children on the wine farm singing a rap song about alcoholism: "As die ma drink, is (dit) die pa se skuld; as die baba alkoholis is, is (dit) die ma se skuld" (if the mother drinks, the father is to blame; if the baby is an alcoholic, the mother is to blame"). This extra item promotes a foundation ("Small Change") set up by the leading actress in the series, Monic Hendrickx. Its aim is to aid the Lukhanyo Youth Development Organisation in the township of Mbekweni near Paarl. This organisation tries to offer meaningful activities for children as alternative for getting involved in crime, alcohol abuse and violence. However, the link between alcohol abuse and labour conditions on wine farms is not explored any further in this extra item. The topic emerges again in an interview with the director of the series, when he mentions that the payment of farm workers, who acted as "extras" in the series, presented itself as a complex issue, because "betaal je het loon aan de man, dan gaat het op aan drank" (when paying wages to the individual, it gets spent on liquor) (Van Wijngaarden 2007).

[349] The series suggests that Shelley was politically active in the liberation struggle and fled the country.

[350] The representation of Shelley in the novel *Stellenbosch* fares no better. On the contrary, Shelley is bewilderingly often reduced to not much more than the receptacle of Henk's fierce sexual desires. In explicit passages the interaction between Henk and Shelley is focalized from Henk's position and his desire for Shelley's body is emphasized rather than the narrator also voicing Shelley's account of the experience.

group of young black men ambushes Henk, who has just discovered the truth about Andile's disappearance, and destroys the bottles of wine he was transporting to the airport for shipment to Europe. In this scene, the process of "othering" reaches a climax with poor black men being written into a very definite position of radical alterity in the eyes of the Dutch spectator. The group is cast in the role of a screaming, unintelligible collectivity – irrational and violent brutes – while Henk is positioned here as a clearly defined individual, under attack, not only physically – facing the possibility of death – but also in terms of his ideals and aspirations (his wine is being destroyed).

The question that still needs to be answered is how *Stellenbosch* could be inserted as a meaningful text within the Dutch context. One might argue that the South African context acts as a screen against which to project the anxieties and fears of current Dutch society. On the one hand there is the Dutch treatment of its own colonial past, which is often shrouded in an atmosphere of nostalgia for that which has been lost: the "luxuriant colonial culture" of the Dutch Indies, as Francis Gouda formulates it. This nostalgia, as she also reminds us, functions as a form of mystification, "which converts former agents of colonial rule into guileless spectators by endowing the process of remembering former colonial societies with an elegiac aura" (Gouda 1995, p. 238). Romanticized memories of the past can nurture the impression that earlier policies of racial mastery and economic inequality were inevitable, natural or harmless: "*zo was het nu eenmaal*"(that's the way things were) (ibid.). Further analysis of the series might investigate how *Stellenbosch* relates to such "romanticized memories" of the past, for example.

On the other hand, there is the Dutch treatment of Dutch society itself, characterized by its multicultural composition. In *Stellenbosch* the notion of the "multicultural" is not a key theme and certainly not explicitly investigated, but referred to in a more off-hand, and unproblematic manner as a marker of Dutch society. For example, twice the family Keppel is shown dining at a Chinese-Indonesian restaurant (a typical "Dutch" phenomenon, with the Chinese part referring to the history of migrant labourers who came to the Netherlands, and the Indonesian part referring to the Dutch colonial past).

Conclusion

The visual text of *Stellenbosch* offers valuable material to investigate how the country, its history and South Africanness is understood from an "outsiders perspective". The fact that more cases of Dutch representations of South Africa exist, offers exiting possibilities for comparative analysis and interpretation. In my reading of *Stellenbosch* as a visual text, three issues resonate, which I hope to develop further in future research. Firstly, the juxtaposition of the private, personal story against the backdrop of the South African past and history.

Secondly, the construction and interpretation of the past through a visual medium, and in the case of *Stellenbosch* a fictive one at that too (one might think here of the problematic intermingling of fact and fiction, the relation between what Robert Rosenstone has called "false" inventions vs "true inventions" (Rosenstone 1988). Rosenstone explains one of the dangers of representing the past in film is that historical alternatives are denied through the "way each compresses the past to a closed world by telling a single, linear story with, essentially, a single interpretation (1988, p. 1174).

Finally, the representation of cultural identity (which implies categories of ethnicity, culture, race, religion, gender and class, to name but some; I'm sure the list can be expanded) is a third issue that informed my reading of this series. In the first instance it is the use of racial/ethnic lines as markers of identity that played a role: these were not only meaningful categories during the Apartheid era, but continue to be used as practical categories both within the country and by outsiders observing the country.

A reading of *Stellenbosch* shows that this series is certainly not a case of "images of yourself made up by outsiders stuffed down your throat", as JM Coetzee has said once in relation to the *World Cup Rugby* Ceremonies held in 1995 (Maingard 1997, p. 17). On the contrary: texts such as *Stellenbosch* offer a chance for fruitful exploration to compare and investigate various discourses on identity constructions and positioning, of the self, and the other, whatever way round this relation may be defined.

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Comic postcards and touristic representation

Introduction

In this paper, Cynthia Enloe's (1989:19) opinion that the apparently innocent act of selecting postcards has "become fraught with ideological risks" is considered in relation to a recent Namibian postcard that depicts

an indigenous Himba woman.[351] What makes this image different from countless similar images is the fact that her naked nipples are concealed by two strategically placed yellow stars and the text on the picture states: "Himba goes to Hollywood." Postcards are culturally produced texts and are therefore embedded in the signifying practices and 'circuit of culture' that both constitute and reflect the discourses of power, identity and representation (cf Hall 1997a:1). For the purposes of this paper, the pertinent issues addressed include the genre of ethnographic postcards and the politics of representation in relation to gender, race and ethnicity. The term ethnicity is generally still used in the discourse of tourism to designate non-western people (Morgan & Pritchard 1998:212) and to allude to (minority) groups in a country that have a "significant degree of separate ethnic, cultural or social identity … [that] 'marks' them as sights or attractions of ethnic or cultural tourism" (Cohen 1993:37). Similarly, gender has persistently been a determinant in the power relations between the West and its so-called Other (Morgan & Pritchard 1998:167), not only in colonialism but also in the practices of tourism.

My research can be located within a postcolonial perspective because it deals with the legacies of colonialism in Western ideologies of domination that continue to inflect contemporary tourism and the manner in which it refracts the identity of others through fantasy images. A postcard is interrogated here to illustrate how discourse analysis can be used to situate cultural meanings within the broader historical and social contexts in order to reveal the dynamics of power. This type of discourse analysis is concerned with interpreting cultural production on three levels: the image itself, its symbolic representation and its historical, geographical and cultural context (Ateljevic & Doorne 2002:652).

This paper is primarily exploratory; because of space limitations I do not intend to analyse a broad range of postcards of the Himba but rather to focus on this specific postcard as an example of a discursive visual tradition that was (and still is) used to generate and sustain difference. My aim is not to uncover the 'true meaning' of the postcard, but rather to offer a short critical engagement with its context and subject matter. I start with an overview of the points of contact between colonialism, tourism and visual culture and then briefly contextualise the Himba in relation to how they have been represented, specifically within the tourism industry. I end this paper with a discussion of the postcard and an illustration of the way in which it can be read.

Colonialism, Tourism and Visual Culture

Many critics have remarked that the language of empire and tourism are similar (cf Caton & Santos 2008:10) in that the politics of superiority and domination that emanated from colonialism resonate in the rituals, gestures and language of tourism. The colonial legacies of travel, discovery, adventure and exploitation are reproduced in the neo-colonialist structures and mechanisms of tourism and sustain global imbalances of wealth and power (Ateljevic & Doorne 2002:652, 658, 662; Caton & Santos 2008:10).

The ability of the tourism industry to evoke imperialist nostalgia or other related incentives for travel is embedded in its reliance on the visual objects of tourism such as photographs, advertising images and postcards that frequently "replicate colonial forms of discourse" (Echtner & Prasad 2003:662). Particularly in formerly colonised areas of the world, established codes and representations of tourist destinations predominate in promotional items such as postcards (Caton & Santos 2008:8). Tourists respond to the images in cultural circulation that they see about their destinations and hence visual culture has the power to construct the ideas and desires of the tourist (Crouch & Lübbren 2003:4, 6). Tourism imagery functions in a hermeneutic circle that creates expectations that are confirmed by tourists' own perceptions and are reinforced by the types of postcards they buy or photographs they take (Caton & Santos 2008:8; Morgan & Pritchard 1998:5, 27). Tourism imagery is therefore ideological because it naturalises and legitimates the values of the dominant system and both constructs and reflects a specific mode of envisioning racialised and gendered identities.

Postcards originated in the 1870s, and although pictures were only added in 1889, they were immediately embraced by colonialists; according to Cynthia Enloe (1989:42), "[c]olonial administrators, soldiers, settlers and tourists were looking for ways to send home images of the societies they were ruling, images that were

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[351] The postcard was bought by in Swakopmund, Namibia, in July 2008. The company that produces this and similar postcards and other tourist items, is called Maid in Africa.

appealing and yet made it clear that these alien societies needed the civilizing government only whites could bestow." Because postcards have a long shelf life, there is often very little difference between historical and more contemporary images, and some are deliberately nostalgic in style (Edwards 1996:204-205).

The ideological battle regarding the ethics and politics of touristic representation is fraught with complications and vexing issues. Cohen (1993:40) comes to the conclusion that indigenous people rarely represent themselves, are predominantly represented by others, but hardly ever represent others. But it would be simplistic to state that indigenous people have no agency – many postcards are indeed self-representational or produced by the culture itself and are thus auto-ethnographic (Pritchard & Morgan 2003:2). More pertinent is whether auto-ethnographic images perpetuate exotic self-representation in response to tourist demand by attempting to conform to tourist expectations (Edwards 1996:198; Albers & James 1988:137). Whilst it is certainly true that the objects of the tourist gaze often collude in their own objectification because of consumer demands, it is also possible to resist, negotiate or exploit the production of representations (Cohen 1993:37; Morgan & Pritchard 1998:223). Instead of then asking how Himba identity has been constructed by the tourist gaze (Kangumu 2000:132), it should be possible to argue for the construction of multiple or nuanced identities.

Locating the Himba

The population of Namibia is estimated at 1.8 million and comprises 11 ethnic groups and 15 languages, with English as the main language of the tourism industry (Papen 2005:82). Black Africans constitute about 86 percent of the population; the Himba are part of the larger grouping of Herero and are nomadic cattle herders who live in northern Namibia in the Kunene region. The Himba have come to be identified by the characteristic manner in which they adorn their bodies with animal fat and ochre as protection against the sun. They have been labelled one of the last 'unspoilt' or pristine 'tribes' of Africa whose isolation from Westerners during colonial times enabled them to keep their traditions and mode of dress (Pillinger 2001:1; Rademeyer 2000:2). The reality today is, however, that most Himba are no longer nomads – they have modernised and live in cities in permanent homes, and the 'Himba' of touristic imagination generally only pose for photographs for a fee (Kangumu 2000:131; Botha 2008:27).

Contemporary Namibia is largely the product of more than a hundred years of colonial rule, and a legacy of this has been its photographic construction as a site of 'fantasy' about the so-called natives (Miescher & Rizzo 2000:11). Namibia was colonised by Germany in 1884 and the majority of Europeans who visited the territory thereafter were explorers, adventurers, missionaries and hunters. In 1915, during World War I, the German colony was conquered by South African military forces and in 1920, the League of Nations granted South Africa mandate over the territory. During German colonial rule the region where the Himba lived was declared a reservation, and only when Namibia became independent from South Africa in 1990 did that area become a popular destination for international tourists (Rademeyer 2000:2). Tourism currently contributes significantly to the economy of Namibia and the majority of tourists come from South Africa, Germany, Europe and North America (Papen 2005:82).

Representing the Himba

The role of photography in the development of a new mode of seeing that transformed areas of nature and other cultures into objects of the possessing Western gaze has been well documented. The seemingly artless, unmediated and naturalistic representation of the exotic Other by means of photography led to the seamless incorporation of typical visual tropes from nineteenth century anthropology in contemporary postcards (Albers & James 1988:136; Edwards 1996:205). Photographs of Himba women were actually quite rare during the German period, which tended to show groups of anonymous and inactive men or natural resources and the landscape (Miescher & Rizzo 2000:14-15, 18). Patricia Hayes (2000:59, 61) adds that photographs of the Himba in the 1920s emphasised their "raw tribal state" and that the colonial mastery of the area was expressed more compellingly through evocative photographs of the vast landscape.

The late 1940s to 1950s is mainly represented by so-called expedition discourse photography that recorded the exploits and adventures of male groups; at the same time, Himba women were photographed doing domestic chores and this predictably characterised the region as feminine (Miescher & Rizzo 2000:30-31, 34). This feminisation of the land is a typical strategy of colonialism and indicates a metaphorical gesture of

domination that surfaces later in the rhetorical imagery used by tourism. One of the typical tropes that came to constitute the Himba was firmly established by the 1960s and consisted of photographs of a "single woman, portrayed in a 'traditional dress,' standing in front of the camera and looking at the photographer and at the observer" (Miescher & Rizzo 2000:15, 26). During the 1970s and 1980s, images of Himba women were used for advertisements to represent the notion of 'unspoilt natives,' and in the next decade women were associated with overwhelming natural scenery, the private sphere, beauty and the body (Miescher & Rizzo 2000:36, 41). The compositional conjoining of a lone Himba woman with a dusty, arid background became the iconic signature by which the 'Himba' came to be represented.

Himba goes to Hollywood

The image on the 'Himba goes to Hollywood' postcard can be traced back to the context of colonial representations of the exotic Other that often disseminated imagery that was insensitive, anachronistic or derogatory. That is not to suggest that this image was deliberately chosen to be offensive, but given the genealogy of visual representations of racialised and gendered otherness, it relates to a number of potent signifying practices. Images of the 'primitive Other' have remained remarkably consistent from the nineteenth century to the present and include depictions of sexually compliant women, primitive customs and dress, the noble savage, and bare-breasted African women; this continuation is not just a visual correspondence but also denotes a "similarly grounded consumption of culture" (Edwards 1996:205). Accordingly, the metaphorical function of postcards that enables them to stand for something else by means of analogy is rooted in an established lexicon of binary oppositions such as civilised/uncivilised, tame/savage, unnatural/natural, urban/rural, white/black, contained/unfettered, moral/licentious, fractured/harmonious and rational/irrational (Edwards 1996:202; Albers & James 1988:141).

A basic description of the Himba postcard yields the following: it comprises a half-length close-up shot of a young black woman, naked from the waist up, standing against a natural background. The original photograph has clearly been manipulated to mimic a dominant sepia tone for both the background and the woman. Her naked nipples are covered by two yellow stars that were added post-production. She can be identified as a Himba woman by means of her characteristic body adornments and hairstyle, and this is corroborated by the anchoring text: "Himba goes to Hollywood."[352] The way in which she is presented and posed is typical of comparable postcards and photographs of the Himba from the 1920s onwards – she is depicted standing immobile, turned towards the spectator; she is smiling and her body language is friendly and inviting. The background of this image is severely cropped but it is nonetheless obvious that she is standing outside in a rural environment; although no cultural artefacts are shown, the ornaments around her neck and her hairstyle are effective metonymic markers of her ethnicity. Establishing the temporal variants of this photograph based on what is depicted is problematic because there are no indicators that point to any specific timeframe. Indeed, the photograph could equally well have been taken in 1958 or 2008, but as I suggest later in this paper, this atemporarility is part of a trope that is usually used deliberately in tourism imagery.

Cohen (1993:36, 43, 45) offers a differentiation between serious, neutral and ludic tourism images that correspond to the differences in the tastes of tourists. Serious images usually convey the beautiful or exotic whereas ludic images focus on the cute or comic; both exotic and comic images are used metaphorically. Cohen (1993:45, 47) furthermore stresses that comic images are usually overtly staged and rely on exaggeration or incongruence for their ludic effect, and the body is customarily the most important vehicle for conveying humour, the bizarre or grotesque, or sexual innuendo (Markwick 2001:424). It is therefore possible to state that the 'humour' of the Himba postcard is embodied in the manner in which the woman is depicted. In their study of Welsh comic postcards, Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan (2005:54) conclude that comic postcards function by ridiculing the language, customs or sexuality of someone else and that ethnic minorities are frequently seen in racist terms. In addition, they state that the sexual availability of women as a key ingredient in comic postcards is embedded in the way in which landscapes and women are intertwined, "inviting interpretation by a colonialist, male discourse" (Pritchard & Morgan 2005:67, 69). Although the Himba postcard does not seem to evoke the degrading connotations of childishness, indolence and mental inferiority than characterised comic postcards of black people in the American south produced

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[352] The reverse side of the postcard has no explanatory text and only bears an e-mail address of the production company (weird@iway.na).

during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries (Mellinger 1994:756, 772), it is important to remember that humour and entertainment are potent apparatuses that underscore dominant ideologies (Pritchard & Morgan 2005:57). Stuart Hall (1995:21-22) thus maintains that racist stereotypes in the contemporary media that still perceive the Other as primitive, sexually available and as a source of entertainment merely re-enact established imperial narratives of adventure and conquest.

It is apparent that this postcard eludes easy classification and is typical of the postmodern blurring of genres and temporal dislocation. What seems at first sight to be a straightforward documentary photograph is subverted by the addition of the stars that were typically used to censor images of nudity in the South African press in accordance with legislation such as the Publications Act, no 42 of 1974.[353] This is confirmed by Andrew Weir (2008), the creator of the postcard:

> … it is merely a send up on the old southern African way of putting stars on nudity in order to print the material in such magazines as Scope and then a parody on the fact that so many tourists travelling through Africa claim to find these people fascinating whilst lecturing [sic – read 'letchering'] over the nudity. On a deeper level it is also due to tourism the people themselves start aspiring to the connotation of nudity in a different way thus Hollywood. I guess it is my way of showing that nothing is sacred unfortunately.

The potentially serious documentary nature of the image is undermined by the addition of the text 'Himba goes to Hollywood' and the stars, which not only connote censorship but also the Hollywood 'star system.' There is thus an ambivalent slippage between levity and gravity as the image comments on the hypocrisy of the voyeur audience but also titillates the viewer by means of the same code. Female nudity has always been a staple subject in tourist postcards but although it has not always had a uniform meaning, one of the most important strands has been the "ethnographic depiction of nudity that emphasises 'primitiveness'" (Albers & James 1988:142). Albers and James (1988:142) continue that these kind of ethnographic representations often suppressed or denigrated sexuality. What makes the Himba image remarkable is that it seems to combine the depiction of nudity as primitive with a knowing sexuality that engages with the gaze of the tourist-spectator. This double coding taps into the so-called ethnographic or anthropological alibi for voyeurism that has haunted and legitimated sensational representations of the Other, but also validates that the Himba's aspiration to nudity is consensual, as suggested by Weir above. Traditionally, the Himba have not considered their nudity to be erotic (Rademeyer 2000:2-3), but by "aspiring to the connotation of nudity" it seems that they have started to become complicit in the construction of a (Westernised) sexualised identity that has monetary value.

The intrinsic 'meanings' of this postcard are undoubtedly located in the key image of the female figure who is used as the vehicle for a number of signifiers and codes that convey the following clusters of meaning: feminisation and nature; exoticism, Otherness and primitivism; and timelessness. The depiction of the Himba woman operates in the tradition of colonial discourse that condoned the (often) derogatory objectification of *black* women. As previously states, one of the most well known strategies employed by colonial powers to establish power was to feminise conquered landscapes. This had an important ideological function because colonial images of possession and control of a receptive and feminised Africa articulated the premise (and promise) of an empty land. Accordingly, the "association of indigenous women with colonized land legitimated perceptions of both women and land as objects of colonization" (Blunt & Rose 1994:10). This strategy persists in tourism images where women signify the exotic character of a place and are presented as welcoming and available in their femininity (Morgan & Pritchard 1998:192; Enloe 1989:32). When feminised, land and nature stand for that which is wild and seductive, waiting for the penetrating gaze and exploration of the male subject (Morgan & Pritchard 1998:198, 202). Images of friendly young women on postcards reiterate the notion of the 'family of man' and Africans as "noble, innocent and simple savages" (Morgan & Pritchard 1998:178; Edwards 1996:213-215). In this regard, it is significant that indigenous people like the Himba have commonly been represented anonymously in photographs; consequently, the Himba woman becomes a stereotype of her entire 'picturesque' ethnic group and individual identity is rendered impossible.

The anonymity of indigenous people is underscored by their ubiquitous alignment with images of nature that emphasise that their lifestyles are closer to nature, simpler and more authentic (Edwards 1996:202-203;

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[353] The legislative history of censorship in South Africa dates from 1892 and the most recent Act was the Films and Publications Act, no 65 of 1996 (see Film and Publication Board http://www.fpb.gov.za/docs_publications/publications/publications.asp).

Markwick 2001:428). From the nineteenth century onwards, idealised representations of 'noble savages' in their 'natural' state assumed a new significance to offset the reality of European urbanisation and industrialisation (Ateljevic & Doorne 2002:656). Colonial photography rendered indigenous people "rooted in the soil, subsumed in nature, an extension of another natural world" (O'Connor in Markwick 2001:428), and by extension the tourism industry depicts them as part of the environment, reflecting the total ambiance or atmosphere of a destination (Cohen 1993:49). The 'essence' of Namibia is thus supposedly captured in the postcard of the Himba woman – she is shown against a natural background that echoes her colouring, and the brown earth and arid landscape identity a typically 'African' landscape (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:454).

The stars that ostensibly conceal the woman's breasts place her in an uneasy liminal space, neither 'tribal' nor modern. This ambiguity is typical of depictions of indigenous peoples and is underlined by the way in which they are represented as static and fixed in a timeless vacuum that suggests an atemporal 'pastness' (Edwards 1996:203). This mystification decontextualises, disconnects and fragments the culture of others to create an essentialised vision that appears to accord with touristic expectations.

Conclusion

In reading the Himba postcard, it is inevitable that a critique of the representation of gender and race takes predominance because the fact that a *black woman* is depicted already implicates a whole range of discriminatory practices. It is certainly true that tourism images reflect the context that produces them rather than any external "reality" of the destination (Caton & Santos 2008:12), but the perception that is created by this type of image enshrines power relations in terms of race and gender that are untenable, precisely because they are derived from imperialist narratives. As Morgan and Pritchard (1998:197) point out, the sheer number of tourism images that represent women in a traditional role both constitute and sustain inequality. In terms of an economy of signs, the volume of images that are embedded in colonialist ideologies (Caton & Santos 2008:23) does not seem to have been effectively disrupted or dismantled by post-colonial critiques. The Himba postcard taps into stereotypical depictions of the Himba that show them as essentially backward, "mythologised 'primitives', as ethnically exotic, harmless and friendly human beings" (Kangumu 2000:130). This type of image clearly has its genealogy in the tradition of documentary ethnographic imagery that purports to present so-called ethnographic reality accurately and objectively (Edwards 1996:198). Because postcards function metaphorically, they perpetuate an ethnographic discourse that ostensibly says one thing, but signifies another.

One of the issues at stake here is the manner in which "humour" is used in the postcard. Albers and James (1988:141) note that the way in which figures are posed in postcards often reveal metaphoric intentions; in terms of my reading of the image, the Himba woman becomes an objectified commodity, the object of a joke that mocks her aspirations and cultural identity. The entertainment economy commonly uses humour to express ideological messages regarding identity (cf. Wolf 1999), but no product of cultural production can ever be "merely entertainment". By means of misrepresentation, distortion or falsification a comic postcard has the capacity to objectify and ridicule, often without leaving the potential for oppositional readings. Edwards (1996:212-213) and Pritchard and Morgan (2005:54, 69) express the opinion that the imagery in (comic) postcards should be able to be read in different or oppositional ways that subvert the intended meaning, but I believe that is difficult here, if not impossible, in terms of the overwhelming power of the stereotype. The objectification of the Himba (woman) is complicated – some say they are complicit in their construction as "primitive" objects of the tourist gaze that ultimately generates income for them, whereas others detect resistance to how they are imaged and represented for the tourism market (Kangumu 2000:131-2). The reality is that tourism in Namibia still "reflects the hierarchies and inequalities inherited from the colonial and apartheid past" (Papen 2005:83) and the main beneficiaries are this are white people. In an attempt to elide the inequities of the past in order to present a politically reconciled image of Namibia, a simplified tourist discourse has been created that thrives on stereotypical imagery (Papen 2005:88-89). One of the results of this is the production of postcards by white designers and photographers for an "essentially white audience … [that depict] a quaint and simple rural life" (Mellinger 1994:759, 761).

The problem with the Himba postcard is that although the designer, Andrew Weir, acknowledges the ambivalent and hypocritical position of the audience for which it is created, his intention of creating a parody fails, as it does not ridicule the audience, but rather the Himba woman. The contextual contingency of the

image overrides all attempts to invest it with levity and humour; what the postcard does is to foreground one narrative and to erase the possibility of multiple or complex identities, fixing the Himba (woman) in the (neo-)colonial imaginary as the epitome of a (comic) Other.

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Sehnsucht *in the art of Adriaan van Zyl*

Edmund Burke, whose Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful was published in 1757, believed that "terror is in all cases whatsoever… the ruling principle of the sublime" (Burke 1990: sp). Terror may be interpreted to mean mythopoeiac fear (fear of the dark or of the unknown) or astonishment, but it may also be interpreted to mean a kind of appreciation for or awe of the beautiful. In religious terms, the fear of God may be said to conflate these two interpretations so that one simultaneously experiences a sense of fear, in the traditional sense of being scared (in the face of the creator's power), and awe at the beauty and wonder of his creativity and creation. In this paper, I hope to highlight how the land and seascapes of Adriaan Van Zyl capture just such a sublime dialectic.

Van Zyl was born in Vredenberg, in the Western Cape, a small provincial town about 20 minutes inland from the sea. He studied Fine Art at Stellenbosch University and settled in the picturesque university town until his death in 2006 at the age of 49. He was not a prolific artist but left a significant body of work. In execution and conceptual scope he was a great talent.

My interest in Van Zyl began as a child with a painting that I now remember only as a rumour. It hung in the sitting room of a most beloved aunt and uncle and was a depiction of a dark-haired man in a swimming costume standing alone on Saldanah beach. Behind him was the cheerless skeleton of an affecting shipwreck. I didn't know then about Ingres' odalisques or Friedrich's ruins but this painting evoked a Romantic longing in my girlish heart.

Sehnsucht may be described as the separation from that which is desired. It is the German word for 'longing'. *Sehnsucht* implies a close relationship between ardent yearning (*das Sehnen*) and addiction (*die*

Sucht). In the preface to the third edition of The Pilgrim's Regress, CS Lewis (2002: 7), explains *Sehnsucht* as follows:

> The experience is one of intense longing. It is distinguished from other longings by two things. In the first place, through the sense of want which is acute and even painful, yet the mere wanting is felt to be somehow a delight. Other desires are felt as pleasures only if satisfaction is expected in the near future: hunger is pleasant only while we know (or believe) that we are soon going to eat. But this desire, even when there is no hope of possible satisfaction, continues to be prized, and even to be preferred to anything else in the world, by those who have once felt it. This hunger is better than any other fullness; this poverty better than all other wealth. And thus it comes about, that if the desire is long absent, it may itself be desired, and that new desiring becomes a new instance of the original desire, though the subject may not at once recognise the fact and thus cries out for his lost youth of soul at the very moment in which he is being rejuvenated.

When I stand in front of the land and seascapes of Van Zyl I am reminded of my own longing. Although Van Zyl's oeuvre covers a large range of themes I would like to highlight three motifs that seem particularly expressive of his *Sehnsucht* or longing.

The first motif is Van Zyl's preoccupation in the late nineties with lighthouses. The second is his depiction of domestic houses in the sombre landscape of Namibia around 2003 and 2004. The third is his unsettling representation of hospital rooms juxtaposed with seascapes that occupied his time during 2004. In her profound analysis of Van Zyl's work the celebrated Afrikaans writer, Marlene Van Niekerk identifies three themes that she believes form the heart of Van Zyl's artistic endeavours. She describes the first as Van Zyl's interest in "*grense en oorgange wat 'n ritualistiese gewig kry deur die telkense herbesoek daarvan*" (boundaries and crossings that gain a ritualistic weight through repeated visits) (Van Niekerk 2004: 6). Second, she underscores his concern with "*tyd en verganklikheid, dit wil sê die 'natuurlike' verval van die grensstrukture*" (time and fallibility, meaning the 'natural' ruin of boundary markers) (Van Niekerk 2004: 6). Finally, Van Niekerk suggests that Van Zyl's work depicts the "*spanning tussen enersyds die 'rou' geskiedenis van aftakeling, ontbering, ontheemdheid, en andersyds die afstandelike weergawe daarvan in 'koel' en uitvoerige detail*" (tension between the raw history of decline, hardship, displacement and a distant version thereof in cool and precise detail) (Van Niekerk 2004: 6). For the purposes of this paper I would like to align these three themes with the three motifs in Van Zyl's work that I am focusing on.

Thus, Van Zyl's fascination with boundaries is apparent in his paintings of lighthouses, his interest in the passing of time and fallibility ("*vergangklikheid*") is evident in his portraits of Namibian houses and his images from Hospital Time reflect the tension between loss or displacement and a calculated or seemingly unaffected style and technique. Each of these themes is fluid and thus evident in all his work but, perhaps, it is helpful to deal with each motif individually. What follows, then, is a discussion of three artworks, each iconic of a particular genre of Van Zyl's work.

To the Lighthouse

In Virginia Woolf's 1927 novel of high modernism, *To the Lighthouse*, we are introduced to the Ramsay family who want to take a boat trip from their summer home in the Hebrides on the Isle of Skye to a nearby lighthouse. It is particularly the seven-year-old James who is keen to visit the lighthouse and who is disappointed when bad weather prevents them from taking the trip. They leave the summerhouse only to return a decade later after the war. The novel is divided into three parts and it is only in the last section that Mr Ramsay, James and some other guests return to the now dilapidated summer house. They also, finally, venture a boat ride to the lighthouse. As the Ramsay's boat nears the lighthouse James reflects on images of the edifice that are competing in his mind.

> The Lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye, that opened suddenly, and softly in the evening. Now—James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it? No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other Lighthouse was true too. (Woolf 1927: Chapter VIII)

His first notion is from his childhood, when the lighthouse, seen from a distance, was a "silvery, misty-looking tower." The second image, formed as he sails closer, is stripped of its shadows and romance. The structure appears hard, plain, and real. Its barred windows and the laundry drying on the rocks present nothing mysterious. James's first impulse is to favour the current reality over his memory, but he corrects himself, realizing that the lighthouse is both what it was then and what it is now.

In an era of geographic positioning systems and modern electronic navigational aids lighthouses have become beacons of aesthetic nostalgia but they once functioned as towers of light warning sea farers of hazardous coastlines and perilous shoals. In Van Zyl's paintings lighthouses exist as both realities: simultaneously functional signals of safety as well as emblems of a bygone era.

His representation of the lighthouse at Cape St Francis (1998) is a powerful portrayal of the dualism of this structure. The lighthouse is painted in off-white tones with grey-blue shading forming the cylindrical effect of the rounded structure. There are two grey hued buildings on the ground – one with arched windows. In the foreground we see an almost abstract rendering of barren land in beige, brown and brick coloured tones. The painterly splats and sprays of the forefront are thus in sharp contrast to the smooth, opaque mass of sky in the background. It is a soothing and tranquil painting, the more so because of the obvious absence of the ocean, the usual backdrop to images of lighthouses. In Van Zyl's portrait, the Cape St Francis lighthouse is a towering ode to stability and aesthetic serenity. This lighthouse signifies a prominent signal of safety and security to all who might be lost.

In this way, Van Zyl's lighthouse represents the dual notions of a nostalgia for the past (with all the associations of sanctuary and refuge this typically connotes – whether justified or not) and a present pragmatism that deems lighthouses redundant aesthetic markers of a forgotten era. He seems sensitive to the fact that this lighthouse is still an architectural signifier of safety. It is vital that, since it is day, the light of the lighthouse is not illuminated. In the lexicon of things illuminated, this beacon is defunct and as such becomes a paradoxical articulator of safety, a random signifier that no longer serves its purpose.

In Van Niekerk's (2004: 6) terms the lighthouse is, furthermore, a purveyor of the boundaries surrounding our known world. It marks the liminality of our geographical space and demarcates 'land' from 'sea', 'margin' from 'mainstream'. In this sense lighthouses are the sentinels of our pedestrian lives, guarding us against tragedy and suffering, reminding us that we are safe. Through this work Van Zyl seems to articulate a collective longing for the poetry of the past, the security of fixed boundaries, the goodness we associate with light and the physical safety that lighthouses extol. In Burke's (1990: 65-67) terms, "the principle of pleasure derived from sight is the same in all. Light is more pleasing than darkness."

"There's no place like home …"

The depiction of ruinous houses in Namibia represents a slightly more sombre, less cheerful, phase in Van Zyl's oeuvre. Here prosaic homes are juxtaposed with the feral brush of Namibia in a subtle subversion of the picturesque. In *Diaz Point 1* (2002-2004), Van Zyl depicts a double story house with dark windows and a taupe, sink roof. The sandy dunes and rocks surrounding the house are apparently as featureless as the inconsequential building itself. In the distance the grey ocean merges with the mono-toned sky. It is a landscape of stark contrasts: light and dark, hot (sand) and cold (water), land and sea.

Yet again, Van Zyl draws attention to boundaries. The house itself is demarcated by a Vibracrete wall, apparently designed to keep something out. The image also seems to imply an emphasis on the imaginary boundaries that we draw around the spaces we occupy as if to suggest that in doing so we can demarcate our national, ethnic and personal identities. The "natural ruin of the boundary markers" (Van Niekerk 2004: 6) is evident in the fact that the house seems abandoned, vacant. There is no sign of human presence to soften the demeanour of the house. Instead, it is a bleak, barren space that echoes the longing for home rather than the fulfilment of that wish. This may be a place where children play and parents make love but Van Zyl has chosen to strip the structure of all references to human presence and confront the viewer with an architectural shell, pregnant with the meaning of absence. Here we see the real unfocussed gleam of truth falling on human imagination. The absence of occupants in the house makes of the viewer's imagination a divinely given pointer to something and someone outside natural experience.

Through Van Zyl's painting, the soul is made to enjoy a longing for something or someone that is never fully given, cannot even be imagined as given. The immediate sense of nihilism and uncertainty connoted by this

painting is only the first layer of 'aesthetic emotion'. Beneath this veneer is the longing for what may be termed the sensuous delight of being home, the delight of comfort.

The malady of the sea

In 2004 Van Zyl started work on a series of paintings he collectively called *Hospitaaltyd* or Hospital Time. This series comprised various depictions of the unsympathetic waiting rooms, X-ray machinery, operating theatres and gurneys Van Zyl encountered at the Tygerberg hospital in Cape Town during the last years of his life. The portraits of these maladous spaces proffer an insider perspective on the sterile operational area where, without defence, one is forced to accept that your right to existence and life has been placed in the hands of another (Botha 2007: 20). Often his representations of the hospital are juxtaposed with images of the sea as in *Hospital Diptych 3*. On the left is a stripped down likeness of a bare-boned bed in front of a grey-green curtain. On the right, a rendering of an unsettled sea.

The image on the left portrays a space where the daily drama of the hospital room is denied with a quasi-religious stillness. The "starkly simple symmetries of the composition permits the spectator a maximum of empathy" (Rosenblum 1975: 21) for he can easily take his place within the room. The elemental clarity of the scene may not be confused with a prosaic documentation of malady. For in this juxtapositioning of hospital room and sea there is the rumour that the boundary between the natural and the supernatural has been dissolved.

The luminous transparency of Van Zyl's art and life merge here to create the sense of a memory of an echo of a voice. Here, in this room, we, the affected viewer, hold on to the thought that things will be better somewhere, sometime, even if there's not very much we can do about it here and now.

It was the Romantic artists who first asserted the ultimate import of landscape. When Philipp Otto Runge mused in 1802, "everything is becoming more airy and light than before, … everything gravitates towards landscape," he seemed to be predicting the prevailing theme of the century (Vaughan 1978: 132). William Vaughan (1978: 132) has noted that it would be difficult to find a painter of the early nineteenth century who would not have asserted the importance of 'content' for landscape: even John Constable talked of its 'moral feeling'. The point at issue was whether the representation of the forms of nature could in itself have such deep worth. And it was by asserting that it could that, according to Vaughan (1978: 132), Constable and the other key landscape painters of his generation established the basis of their art.

Van Zyl had a deep respect for Casper David Friedrich so it seems fair to compare his representation of the ocean with Friedrich's *Monk by the s*ea (1809). Robert Rosenblum (1975: 10), described *Monk by the sea* as a "renunciation of almost everything but a sombre, luminous void". Both Van Zyl and Friedrich's works strike an alien, melancholy note, daringly bare and devoid of narrative incident. The transcendental expectations of the viewer are met with an affirmative echo of meaning beyond. A mood of intense communion draws the viewer into an almost palpable conversation with nature and thus God.

Van Niekerk's (2004: 6) belief that Van Zyl's art embodies a "tension between the raw history of decline, hardship, displacement and a distant version thereof in cool and precise detail" is evident in this work more than any other as this work so clearly illustrates Van Zyl's communication of sublime longing through an almost obsessive documentation of material reality.

In conclusion

The art discussed in this paper does not merely depict the *Sehnsucht* for the unattainable but the hope that what is longed for may be realized. Van Zyl spreads the rumour of hope. Hope of safety, home and health. Hope that there is more. He poses the possibility of another world without undermining the present reality of this world.

A few short months before Van Zyl's death, his nephew stumbled upon him having a *braai* in the backyard. He was in fact burning some of the paintings that he was not happy with and wanted to destroy. Among these painting was the image of the man on Saldanah beach that I had admired in my aunt and uncle's house as a child. I now know it was a self-portrait of the artist. According to Van Zyl, the paint he had used in the creation of this work was substandard and had begun to discolour.

When I stand before Van Zyl's paintings they seem to embody a longing that I have felt all my life – an ineffable suggestion by which I am transported. I realise that all the things that have possessed me have been but hints of my own deep *Sehnsucht* and I am moved by this realization of the echoes that died away just as I thought I heard them.

List of figures

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A van Zyl, *Diaz Point I*, 2002 – 2004

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Looking backward - looking forward: The changing emphasis of Christian imagery in South African art

When Christianity was originally introduced in South Africa it was as much part of the colonialist imperative as it was responding to a biblical directive to convert the heathen over all the earth. As Jean and John Comaroff (1991: 198) explain : "the missionary...cast the native as a savage 'other', whose difference was to be 'converted' into the currency of the Christian commonwealth". In other words, quite apart from the moral necessity of 'saving the poor savages', the influence of Christianity was hoped to imbue them with a Calvinistic work ethic which would make them productive cogs in the colonial machinery. In the process they would remain forever beholden to the colonial 'master' who had saved them from 'hell and damnation' so freedom from sin came at the price of permanent inferiority and indebtedness.

Christianity was also actively engaged in the abolitionist movement, which one might expect, as slavery is morally indefensible. It was not the moral aspect of slavery alone, however, that seems to have made the most impact politically, but the argument "that slave labour was costlier than free, since persons debarred from acquiring property had no incentive to work" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 119). This notion was put forward by Adam Smith (1937:365) and reinforced by Wesley and the might of the Methodist Church, resulting in the official embracing of abolitionism in South Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 119). Like other ideologies, therefore, abolitionism was not only about human rights but arose within arguments about productivity and national interest.

It is interesting in this context to analyse the appropriation of Christian art and ideas into an awakening black consciousness that had been actively suppressed and controlled through this agency, with the view to managing and maintaining a subservient and unquestioning work force. I will begin by 'looking backwards' therefore at selected examples of Christian iconography in South African art from the apartheid era, much of which was adapted in service of raising 'black consciousness' against the suppression of apartheid. I will then chart the shifting emphasis in visual expression as the political adaptation and co-option of Christianity is replaced by responses that critique religious constructs in contemporary examples.

Azaria Mbatha, of Rorke's Drift fame created an early linocut called *David and Goliath* (1962) while he was a patient at the Ceza mission hospital (Hobbs and Rankin 2003:46). It is a straightforward illustration of an old-testament biblical incident, showing a black David holding a white Goliath's head while white soldiers are fleeing in the foreground watched over by a group of black Israelites in the background. On first encountering this image one might consider that Christian missionary teaching has merely been assimilated and adapted to suit an African idiom. Mbatha, however, has made a political point, as Hobbs and Rankin point out, (2003:174) by inverting the traditional European convention of white as a metaphor for good and black for bad. To clarify his moral judgement of each group the Israelites are dressed in religious robes while the Philistines are clad in what looks like Roman military uniforms. Goliath is not only white but is expressively exaggerated in both demeanour and garb, to suggest a frightening ogre, while David is a young, heroic African. It is not difficult to associate this image with the rise of black consciousness in South Africa although Mbatha himself denied that this was his purpose (Mbatha 1998:57). Hobbs and Rankin (2003:174), however, see this, with its moral high ground and promise of victory and strength, as the beginning of an alternative approach in black artmaking, in opposition to "self pitying or sentimental images of poverty and suffering". Mbatha's use of religious iconography in works like this, and his story of Moses leading the Israelites out of bondage (*The Story of Moses,* 1964), among others, could be interpreted as themes of deliverance and the forging of a black national identity, acceptably wrapped in allegory at a time when overt political imagery would have invited censure or punishment[354].

The inversion of black and white extended to images of Christ where his martyrdom and unjustified suffering provided metaphors for the plight of black people in South Africa. For black theologians the concept of a black Christ as a liberation figurehead was central to the Black Theology movement that emerged during the late 1960s and functioned as a theoretical underpinning to the liberation struggle[355] (Hobbs and Rankin 2003:186). There is a certain amount of irony in this concept if one considers that the doctrine of the white Christ introduced by the first missionaries was employed partly to legitimise colonial domination. However the 'black Christ' is not just depicted as a passive martyr but as a struggling victim of torture in images such as Charles Nkosi's series of linocuts entitled *Pain on the Cross* (1976). This series was made in the same year as the Soweto uprising and an increasing militance in black resistance groups, and these prints consequently exhibit a more insistent promotion of political agendas than earlier works by Mbatha. Nkosi uses dramatic angles, expressive distortion and depicts various forms of torture or repression such as bonds and manacles or a grotesquely twisted and tied body, to forcefully depict extreme suffering in the visual tradition of artists such as Grunewald or Nolde. Often a cross is not visible but the hands clearly display stigmata to identify the victim. The religious identification of Christ as an innocent sacrificial victim and the knowledge that he will rise again in glory, creates a particularly useful metaphor for the suffering of black people and the promise of their redemption and ultimate victory. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection is therefore fundamental to political impact in this case.

Another example of such direct 'borrowing' can be seen in Paul Stopforth's graphite drawing *Elegy* (1980), which simply depicts the prone, naked, dead body of Bantu Stephen Biko, the black consciousness leader who was murdered by security police in 1977. This image bears a marked reference in both composition and effect, to Holbein's *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1521/22). Okwui Enwezor (2004:34) draws a similar comparison with Andrea Mantegna's *Dead Christ* (c.1490), pointing out the correlation of death, trauma, violation and martyrdom that makes the Biko work "both elegiac and heroic"(*ibid*.). There is an insistent pathos in these images, despite differences in medium and execution, and the sense of death is

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[354] Mbatha extended his critique of the status quo in later works such as *Herod and the Wise Men* (1964) where the holy family and shepherds are clad in Zulu traditional garb while the white Herod is not only associated with Verwoerd but is dressed in the ruffled collar worn by older missionaries. Mbatha thus comments on the complicity of Christianity in the oppressive South African political regime. (Hobbs and Rankin 2003:174)

[355] Black theologians saw 'blackness' as an identifying motif in the liberation theology of the 1960s. Blackness was a "life category" and "Christ [was] 'black' in being oppressed" (Hobbs and Rankin 2003:186)

overwhelming. The resurrective message in Christ's Biblical story becomes more dramatic, however, through contrast with such graphic lifelessness seen in Holbein's and Mantegna's images. In Stopforth's case Biko's corpse is not only dead but already looks ghostly due to his working method of scraping away the wax material to produce a 'negative' of Biko's body. His form is rendered insubstantial by contrast with the insistent flat red ground on which he lies. Red is a colour which not only refers to the violence of his martyrdom but is associated with anger and defiance. It is allied to the red often used in resistance posters, and infers that this death is not the end. Christ's death and resurrection again becomes a statement of political resurrection and triumph over apartheid through visual congruences. This is forcefully portrayed in another work from the same series entitled *Biko I* (1980). Biko's naked feet are depicted as though they are the feet of Christ on the cross with what looks like rays of light emanating from where the nail wounds might be found. The Christian message is thus appropriated by Stopforth, almost directly for a political agenda, without any loss of reverential/religious meaning or need for alteration.

During apartheid co-option of such imagery reinforced the underlying Christian message of sacrifice and blamelessness, as these connotations were necessary for a suitable reading of Christian imagery in a political sense. Even immediately post-apartheid the biblical metaphor is still employed to reinforce a message of resistance and triumph. Samkelo Bunu's colour etching of *Daniel in the Lion's Den* (1995) for example illustrates the story of how one man's faith can result in major social change. This becomes a contemporary allegory showing how resistance to conquest and oppression can alter the course of history as displayed in the recent democratic elections of 1994. Again it is an almost direct appropriation of the religious message for social and political ends.

The relative freedom from oppression that white artists faced during the late 1980s and the transitional period in South Africa's politics sometimes led to a more critical approach to various mechanisms of power. This criticism included the Christian church and its imagery which to a large extent was seen as legitimising the Calvinist patriarchal regime espoused by the Nationalist party. Rather than accepting and re-using the religious message, Diane Victor's drawing, *The Problem with being a God These Days* (1988), parodies religious imagery for political purposes. It blatantly displays a critical response to the underlying power structures of organized religion and its connection with the political manipulations of patriarchal regimes. In this image Victor has presented a bloated, ludicrous, semi naked patriarch with the face of John Vorster. His reign is legitimized in religious terms by a halo made from the insignia of the South African Police force who reinforced and maintained Vorster's political rule. The police insignia is also floating in the upper register on the left encircling an anonymous face as if it is an early image of God in heaven, traditionally shown as a disembodied head or upper torso looking down on the world disapprovingly. Power wielded from heaven is indicated by heavy black thunderclouds and rain falling on an insignificant, blasted landscape and, in the foreground, John Vorster is teetering precariously atop his ivory tower, on which he has aligned himself with the altitude and viewpoint of the god on the left hand side. The inference here is that these male authority figures are supremely indifferent to the actual plight of the people they rule.

Guns and grotesquely twisted bodies that seem to perform the function of Gothic gargoyles protrude from the tower and serve to isolate the demi-god from the common masses. They form a barrier between his arrogant superiority and the devastating results of his policies far down below. He has attempted to literally wrap himself in the firmament by draping himself in a cloak of stars to visually reinforce his status, and he clutches what looks like a rabid dog under his arm instead of the expected nurturing prototype of a rescued sheep draped across the shoulders of a saviour. A rose is tucked into his chest in a parody of the flaming heart of Christ in Catholic imagery and at the same time reminiscent of the corsage habitually donned by Vorster for his public appearances[356]. This subversion of Christian iconography is intensified by his facial expression which is neither loving nor benevolent; his mouth is drawn up in a petulant sneer and his heavy lidded half closed eyes betoken both overindulgence and disinterest. His grotesque distended body visibly represents the rotting misshapen mind it harbours[357]. Such a critical appropriation of religious imagery presages a shift that is developed further in the approach of post-apartheid artists; who often employ such

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[356] Victor (2007) worked from photographs of John Vorster for this drawing and noticed that both he and other men in power in the Nationalist Party at the time often wore a carnation in their buttonholes. She found this rather soft and feminine touch incongruous in the light of their rigid and often violent enforcement of inhuman policies and power structures.

[357] Victor (2006b) has said that she was fascinated by the 19th Century 'scientific' studies of physiognomy as a physical example of intellectual and moral traits (ie. The size and shape of the skull betokening intelligence or criminals having certain shaped features and so on). A discussion of these studies which were used to entrench racism in the 19th Century can be found in McClintock 1995: 49-51.

imagery in a subversive way, to question its source and to deconstruct certain 'truths' and expectations that are promoted by religion.

Contemporary use of Christian iconography is often downright transgressive, and has sometimes even been considered blasphemous. One of the reasons for this shift is the introduction of a democratic dispensation in South Africa where the need for identification with a martyr-like figurehead is no longer necessary. Once art is no longer in the service of liberation politics, the notion of identification of any sort becomes problematised and forms the subject of many post-apartheid works. Liese van der Watt, in her essay accompanying the *Personal Affects* exhibition (2005:46), explains that our identities were fixed in the binaries upheld by apartheid, indeed, as discussed here, the forceful promotion of black nationalism was a recurring agenda in politicised artworks. Van der Watt (2005:46) goes on to point out, however, that identity now is fluid and may be actively claimed or discarded at will. Such freedom requires us to question the structures that once upheld those identities and the social forces that exert pressure on us to conform. Thus a black Christ can be morphed into a gay pinup by Diane Victor in *The Ultimate Adoration,* or turned into a metaphorical commentary on the mechanisms of state power in *Commune: Suspension of Disbelief* by Wim Botha. Their critical approach dovetails with Foucault's (1986:88-96) call to critically investigate the particular historical conditions that result in 'truths' and values underpinning our society today, as a necessary step towards re-inventing our position for the future[358]. In an era of questioning, and an era of enormous social change, it is probably unsurprising that one of the socio-political regulatory structures to come under investigation is that of Christianity. As we have seen, at the outset it was one of the formative discourses to legitimise colonialism and inform certain policy decisions in the colonies, and ultimately was to underpin the apartheid political regime.

Stained Gods (2004), is a work that demonstrates Victor's subversion of religious authority by exposing the ineptitude of religious efficacy in today's world. It was conceived of as a diptych where the icons of Christianity - God the father, the Son and the Virgin - are positioned opposite a wall filled with smoke portraits of missing children who they were unable or unwilling to help. These icons are identified with both religious and social infrastructures (which tend to use religion to legitimize their authority) as they are beautifully rendered line drawings conforming to traditional religious iconography; but they represent a support system that failed and are therefore stained and smudged with charcoal and water [359]. This surface intervention not only suggests the besmirching of something once pure and pristine, but also evokes obsolescence as it creates an effect similar to 'hazing' from damp or mildew that affects old, unwanted books and pictures abandoned in attics and basements.

Victor explains that the portraits of children facing the stained gods were taken from websites advertising missing children, where the quality of images is often very poor and hardly recognizable. Some of the children had been missing for several years and sometimes it was the only photograph a parent had. When printed out the result was a strange amorphous image which was echoed in the quality of smoke drawings[360] and this created a room full of sad, half forgotten little souls blurring into obscurity that functioned as an indictment on the three icons of religious salvation facing them.

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[358] Foucault termed this investigation an "ontology of the present" (Foucault 1986:88-96). As Mc Houl and Grace (2000: 60) explain: "To produce an ontology of the present involves detaching oneself from ones cultural surroundings. It poses a series of questions intended to undermine the familiarity of our 'present', to disturb the ease with which we think we know ourselves and others." While Foucault deployed this method to investigate the 'scientific' truths used to bolster state power, I suggest that it is equally suitable to investigate the ways in which religious iconography has been bound up with the regulation of society – and it is these regulations specifically that are the focus of works by Victor, Dixie, Botha and other contemporary artists.

[359] Victor created the staining technique after a pregnant friend hung herself. She was asked to make a commemorative drawing for an exhibition to celebrate the friend's life but was so traumatized at the nature of her death that she needed to find a suitable medium to express this without being too bleak and graphic (Victor 2006a). The result was a stained pregnant Madonna - *Dead Nikki* (2004) where the stain allows the image to seep into the paper as if it is dissolving.

[360] The smoke portraits are a marked departure for Victor in terms of imagery, style and medium. They are made quite literally with smoke (carbon), from a burning candle held beneath the paper, a technique which is extremely difficult to control and renders a fragile end result as it can be damaged very easily. While on a teaching contract at Rhodes University, Victor was invited to take part in a German exchange show dealing with HIV and AIDS which she was rather anxious about as she felt it presumptuous to 'speak' on a subject of which she, personally, had no knowledge. In an attempt to help a student with experimental drawing media Victor suddenly realized the possibilities of drawing with candle smoke, and in terms of her project the transience and ethereal quality of the medium made it ideal for portraits of HIV infected people (Victor 2006a). Working from photographs of infected people from a nearby HIV community centre, she perfected the technique, and that was the starting point which subsequently developed into the portraits of lost children as part of *Stained Gods* and the HIV portraits used for the Sasol Wax installation - *The Recent Dead* (2006).

These portraits were the inspiration for a later work called *In Smoke and Stain – The Recent Dead* (2006) which was Victor's submission for the *Sasol Wax Art Awards* in 2006. It consisted of a completely enclosed, white-screened area which contained a disembodied gallery of lost and damaged people delicately drawn in smoke. This wistful collection of ghosts was ranged around three sides of the enclosure and starkly contrasted by the all too solid images of depravity and moral turpitude embodied in *The Good Preacher*, *The Good Doctor*, and the *Honest Politician*. On entering the enclosure one was cut off from the gallery space and encountered a world of spirits whose sad eyes stared collectively at the intruder as if asking why they had not been protected from the abuse and exploitation of these morally corrupt 'upholders of society'. The white walled enclosure became a pseudo religious sanctuary, with the smoke portraits in rows on the wall like smoky stained glass windows or religious icons, and the triptych of corruption on which they were sacrificed placed appropriately where the altar should be.

The three 'pillars of morality' are finely etched but defaced with stains and even slashed with a razor blade to more forcibly indicate that, like the *Stained Gods*, they are not only ineffectual in their positions of leadership and support but have become the cause of the problem. The physical release of slashing, staining or destroying finely worked labour intensive surfaces provides a cathartic effect for Victor that relieves the emotional tension derived from working with distressing subject matter. It also becomes a form of wish fulfilment or catharsis for viewers of the work who are outraged at such abuses of power. Although this work does not employ religious iconography, per se, the inference is that the Stained Gods of the first work are as culpable as these politicians and social leaders, who actively perpetrate crimes in a regime upheld and legitimised by a Christian dispensation.

In conclusion, apartheid era artists like Mbatha and Stopforth, through political expediency, have ironically treated the Christian message with a certain amount of reverence by appropriating religious doctrine as a vehicle for 'struggle' propaganda. Contemporary artists, however, seem to critique the fundamental role of religion and Christianity itself by using Christian imagery as a vehicle for subversion. The right to "freedom of artistic creativity" enshrined in our post-apartheid South African Constitution, and a reworking of censorship laws may have made this approach possible; but it is motivated by a critical response to the role religion has played in upholding certain norms and constructs in the regulation of our society. As Foucault (1986:88-96) maintains, we must first expose the fact that such controls are still firmly in place before we can move beyond them.

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