

**ASPECTS OF MEMORY IN THE SCULPTURAL WORK OF
JANE ALEXANDER: 1982 - 2009
Volume I**

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Abstract

Over three decades of research has shown that memories have significant effect on the behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and identities of individuals and collectives, revealing also how experiences of trauma and acts of narrativisation have pertinence to the ways in which memories are stored and reconstructed. In this thesis a link is developed between memory, trauma, narrativisation processes and the interpretation of works by Jane Alexander, a contemporary artist whose work is informed by observations about South African life.

Alexander's sculptures are revealed to be not only important vessels of collective memories and experiences, but also evocations of individuals' counter-memories and traumas that remain unarticulated and invisible. Through an exploration of the workings of memory and its relation to her art, it is revealed how the past continues to exert its influence on many of South Africa's present socio-political concerns and interpersonal dynamics. Indeed constantly changing memories have a significant effect on future generations' perceptions of, and connectedness to, the past.

While theories about memory have been deployed in Art History as well as the Humanities in general, Alexander's work has not previously been considered in light of the influence of these ideas. This thesis thus contributes a new dimension to literature on the artist.

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List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
DSM	Diagnostic and statistical manual
JAG	Johannesburg Art Gallery
MFA	Masters in Fine Art
NP	National Party
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PAC	Pan African Congress
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder(s)
SANG	South African National Gallery (Cape Town)
SWA	South West Africa
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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INTRODUCTION

In 2004 multiple award-winning South African artist Jane Alexander (b. 1959)¹ was invited to participate in curator Simon Njami's international exhibition *Africa Remix*. The aim of the exhibition was to explore international perceptions about what "African art" is and is not; and to counter what Njami (Kennedy 2007) referred to as "preconceived ideas and clichés about African art, still in place from the 19th century". This includes the notion of Africa and African art being immune to forces of change.² Alexander accepted the invitation and exhibited a complex multidimensional and multimedia installation titled *African Adventure* (1999-2002: fig. 1a, 1b and 1c).

Characteristic of her inflected style of work – influenced by sculptor Edward Kienholz's life-size theatrical installations and the graphic, butchered simulacra of Mark Prent³ (Williamson 1989) – this tableau³ consisted of projection, video works, photomontage and a sculptural installation. The sculptural component, set to the repetitive sound of shaking maracas, consisted of Alexander's distinctive hybrid creatures in what appears to be a paused performance (Alexander 2008). The company of figures is posed on a floor space of red soil and each figure has its own title, namely: *Pangaman* (fig. 1d), *Radiance of Faith* (fig. 1e), *Settler* (fig. 1f), *Harbinger* (fig. 1g), *Custodian* (fig. 1h), *Girl with gold and diamonds* (fig. 1i), *Dog* (fig. 1j), *Ibis* (fig. 1k), *Beast* (fig. 1l), *Young man* (fig. 1m), *Doll with industrial-strength gloves* (fig. 1n), as well as a male informal security guard.⁴

This installation first appeared in January 2002 as part of the DaimlerChrysler exhibition (fig. 1c) and launched the beginning of Alexander's subsequent site-specific works. Alexander states: "[It] has always been my aim to display my

¹ Jane Alexander obtained her Master's degree in Fine Art from the University of Witwatersrand in 1988. In 1982 she was awarded the Martienssen Student Prize from the University of Witwatersrand, as well as being announced the winner of the National Fine Artist Award. In 1995 she received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award and the following year the First National Bank Vita Art Now Award. In 2002 she was announced as the recipient of the DaimlerChrysler Award for Contemporary Sculpture, and in 2004 she was awarded the University of Cape Town Fellowship. She is an Associate Professor at the Michaelis School of Fine Art in Cape Town, a city where she lives and that informs many of her works (Alexander 2008).

² For evaluations of *Africa Remix* see Christina Kennedy (2007) "Exhibition explodes myths and clichés", in *The Weekender* 30 June – 1 July.

³ See Bottenburg (2007) for discussion of Mark Prent's work.

⁴ Alexander (2008) states that the individual was a refugee from Zaire and wanted to remain anonymous. Zaire became the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997, thus the individual identifying as an "obsolete" Zairian may be an example of the many complexities associated with identities and heritage.

sculptures site-specifically although this has only been possible since 2002 when the tableaux was installed in the British Officers' Mess of the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town" (Alexander 2006: fig. 1c). As part of Njami's *Africa Remix* exhibition this installation appeared in Düsseldorf, London, Paris, and Tokyo from 2004 and in Johannesburg in 2006 (Alexander 2008).

African Adventure received critical acclaim and many interpreted it as revealing contradictions of South African life in comparison to picturesque and idealised tourist brochures (Martin 2002). Njami (2002: 18) observed that *African Adventure* alluded to fragmentation and diasporas reflecting "elements of a sparse, scattered world. Like the end of a historical period, of a section of life". Ziese (2003) pointed toward the work's complexity and nuance, suggesting that "constant intertextualising [revealed that] nothing is closed" (Ziese 2003).

Even with its degree of acclaim⁵ *African Adventure* received some negative criticism: Ziese (2003) laments the attitude of many critics who felt "that the work is too complex, leaving them simply describing the artworks, without engaging with them properly", while Jonathan Jones of London's *The Guardian* deduced that it had "obviously, irritatingly, been selected [for *Africa Remix*] because, in a photo, it looks like an African answer to the Chapman brothers" (Donaldson 2005: 9). Perhaps criticisms of *African Adventure* can be explained by the work's departure from Alexander's previous "clinical austerity" (Martin⁶ in Ziese 2003), or because of critics' reluctance to depart from safe interpretations (Ziese 2003). Arguably one of the primary influences on the complex installation's reception, though, is Alexander's long-known and at times frustrating silence related to her works. Indeed, Kerryn Greenberg (2003) wrote that as a result of Alexander's silence she has been referred to "as South Africa's most difficult and least definable artist".⁷

While reasons for refusing commentary have included that Alexander is wary of being misrepresented (Williamson and Jamal 1996), that she prefers her works to speak for themselves through the use of realism (Williamson 1989), and that she is not interested "in being famous for being famous, for being rather than doing" (Geers

⁵ Jo Burger, Senior Librarian and Archivist at Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), described it as one of Alexander's "big five" in personal correspondence, 5 August 2009.

⁶ For further discussion, see Martin, M. 2002, "Art in a State of Disquiet and Metamorphosis - reflections on the work of Jane Alexander". A paper for the Exhibition Talk DaimlerChrysler Contemporary Berlin, 15th September 2002.

⁷ Powell (2007:32) holds similar sentiment and describes Alexander as being "a fugitive from the commercial art market".

in O'Toole 2007: 11), it might simply be because, as she observed to Frohling (2001: 4), "I'm not comfortable with speaking". While her discomfort means that she does not normally give interviews, she has given an open-ended commentary on this installation. Alexander (Watterson 2009: 97) describes *African Adventure* as "a confluence of related fragments linking experience in South Africa and its recent history with other parts of Africa. Elements refer to tourism, racism, proselytism and aspects of war".

Alexander's statement is intricately related to the issues I explore in this thesis, namely that Alexander's work might be examined from the perspective of multiple confluences and fragments that make up South African memories, histories, heritage and identities on an individual and collective level. Orientating interpretations from this angle reveals that the seeming inaccessibility of Alexander's works has a significant link to memory: memory research, much like the work of Alexander, is the site of much debate, ambiguity and contradiction. Similarly, like popular interpretations of Alexander's works that are often located in the apartheid past, historical memory is constructed, socially informed and subject to media and political influences. I argue that these links to memories, politics and histories (and their associated changeability) are evident in signifiers and changing stylistics of selected works. The influence of external factors such as trauma and narrative construction are also evident in the manner to which works are interpreted and received.

One of the more significant problems with linking memory research to interpretations of Alexander's works is the tendency for some postmodernist theorists to conflate their arguments with essentialist readings of memory function. The modernist mode of thought contends that the fixity of an "original" or "core" state of memory is subject to "distortion". This allusion to an essentialist state is not compatible with the postmodernist stance of Alexander. From a postmodernist perspective, memory (like identity) is viewed as inherently fragmented, negotiable and socially informed. To suggest any form of fixity, therefore, would be incongruous with this study. I suggest that this problem area is fundamentally an issue of language. My use of or allusion to the word "distortion" should not be read as essentialist but suggestive of varying degrees of manipulation and alteration occurring upon fragmented and constructed memories.

The process of alteration and fragmentation is arguably visually represented in

African Adventure, where subtle changes in layout and signifiers occur. For example, if one views the installation in its different exhibition locations, one becomes aware that *Pangaman* (fig. 1d) sometimes appears wearing a white cloth bag over his head, while at other times is naked from the waist up (see fig. 1b and 1c). This interrupted or disturbed familiarity through elements that appear and disappear is inextricably linked to Alexander's *modus operandi* of rejecting fixed or unitary meaning.

Alexander's intentional use of interruption blurs the boundaries between that which is known versus that which is not. The outcome of such a strategy allows for figures to be recontextualised from previous installations to create new meanings. Thus while the belief persists that memories (like Africa) are the same from the moment of their formation and internalisation, they are in fact continuously changing from one recall to the next. They are also adaptable to the motives for their recall. Likewise, while Alexander's art may be popularly interpreted as being informed by apartheid, it also, as Enwezor (2004: 41) observes, "extends beyond the history of apartheid, even if, contextually, it is apartheid that permits and authorises its inaugural reading".

It is for this reason that *African Adventure* (1999-2002) is a salient and intriguing installation. While Alexander's works are typically retrospectively interpreted (for example in 2007 Ivor Powell [2007: 35] wrote that "the *Butcher Boys*...[is] probably the most enduringly iconic image of the sinister and apocalyptic brutalisations of apartheid"), *African Adventure* arguably reflects the more contemporary orientation and forward-looking aspects of memory research. I suggest that this installation visually alludes to the notions that memories are constructed, negotiable, fragmented, liable to manipulation and, importantly, that memories of the past inform both individual and social behaviours and beliefs in the present.

Questions raised by notions of fragmentation, manipulation and construction, are themes that Alexander explores in her work.⁸ These themes, however, also present obstacles and complications with narrativising and interpreting her art. Fragmentation, ambiguity and contradictions hinder the process of structuring a logical and coherent interpretation or account that fits with viewers' personal conceptions of reality. This is significant when considering the role of memories, narratives and interpretations in

⁸ Alexander's body of work is not exclusively sculptural and her explorations of such themes are thus not limited to this medium. Alexander has practiced photomontage in conjunction with her sculptural work since the beginning of her career. While photomontage makes up a substantial component of her body of work, I have chosen to focus specifically on her sculptural pieces.

forming national consciousnesses and personal identities.

In a discussion of her sister's work, Lucy Alexander (2001: 196) points out "[the] process of making images, sculptures, art does not always begin with narratives or historic moments. Nor are all artworks autobiography". For viewers this could pose an interpretive quandary. When examining selected works by Alexander it is evident that some have become politically interpreted over time by forces external to the artist and not through their initial intention. As an example I suggest a 1985 piece *Untitled* (fig. 2). This is a slightly smaller than life-size male figure (67 cm x 44 cm x 77 cm) huddled with his head between his legs. Though lacking arms to protect his body and head that appears to be split to the bone, the foetal position could be interpreted as a protective response by the figure to a threatening situation. What the threat may be is unclear, but the figure is finished with oil paint and creosote to give a grotesque, charred effect that conjures gruesome imaginings of the figure's final moment.

According to Williamson (1989), the piece was informed by a personal experience of Alexander: a disabled man, who worked in the building Alexander lived in at the time, died under suspicious circumstances. Williamson (1989: 44) observes that the victim's body was supposedly found in the furnace of the boiler building "although as a cripple it would have been impossible for him to climb up there". The figure, however, came to be seen by many viewers "to be a comment on death in detention" (Williamson 1989: 44). Nevertheless, while Alexander's works have been informed by personal experiences the larger proportion of her sculptural work has not been autobiographical in the strict sense. Alexander's sculptures have been *informed* by her engagement with the subject matter and its source rather than direct reference: Alexander (Williamson 1989: 44) comments, "I don't want to try pretend a suffering I haven't had some contact with, or undergone myself. My work is from my own experience".

Because Alexander's experiences inform her work one may expect the figures in her tableaux to have limited appeal and response, or to perhaps exclude viewers who lack contextual knowledge. The varied and emotive responses to her works, however, suggest the opposite. Alexander depicts bodies in pain, and while pain may be conceptualised as a localised sensation, the human ability to empathise means that viewers are able to associate their own experiences of pain and suffering with those that the figures are unable to verbally articulate.

Being able to empathise with or articulate another individual's memories of

pain and suffering by linking them with one's own memories is of great social significance. Empathy not only acknowledges an individual's suffering, but also allows unarticulated traumatic experiences to be expressed (albeit as an interpreted account and through a secondary medium). Furthermore, if an individual's memories resonate with a large number of people, the memories of individual pain and trauma can potentially take on collective, historical and political weight, as is suggested with popular interpretations of *Untitled* (1985). Conversely, collective memories have the potential to be integrated into personal narratives in the sense that knowledge based on inherited memories from one's community may inform one's identities, behaviours and beliefs despite lacking the experiential knowledge that informed the memories.

Questioning of the notion of a stable 'narrative' in art is significant. An elementary aspect of interpretation is the construction of a narrative in order to gain understanding or glean meaning from the visual experience. As part of creating a coherent and flowing narrative, editing inevitably results in aspects being left out, added on, or in some cases fabricated. The formation and recall of memories are subject to the same system since one may think of memories as constructed narratives of an experience.

While individuals and collectives can edit information to form a neatly narrativised version of an event or experience for example, deleted information is not necessarily forgotten. Omitted details continue to exist much like a fray that disrupts an edge, and it is this blurred boundary that can cause contention and unease. In this way, then, both memories and Alexander's art are flummoxing and complex beyond initial examination – memories are not stable narratives and Alexander's art cannot be contained in a single interpretation. Examining the art of Alexander through a lens of current memory theory to explore past and present socio-political frayed edges thus prompts a rethink of how memories and interpretations interact with one another. By occupying the space between what is "real" versus "surreal", mundanely familiar versus transcendently unfamiliar (Stange 2009), Alexander's works call attention to the lack of interpretive fixity and shortfalls of narrative structure.

There is a strange dynamic between the personages in *African Adventure* (1999-2002) that blurs the boundaries between the familiar and unfamiliar. Their allusion to numerous stories confuses narrative clarity. Stories may be constructed from the myth of an untamed "Africa" that is promoted and perpetuated by tourist agencies, for example. But it may perhaps also point to stories lacking any sense of

sentimentality – ones that starkly reveal the reality of fragmented societies' daily existence in the midst of identity renegotiations. Indeed, the number of stories each personage has the potential to evoke, and the metanarratives the installation alludes to on the whole, may point to the multiple and anonymous versions of local history and points of view that are either in circulation or have been relegated to oblivion. The ability for Alexander's figures to evoke silenced and therefore hidden stories is a quality that makes her work especially compelling and unsettling.

Accessibility to the figures' stories is therefore key in relation to memories and interpretations. On the one hand, the three-dimensional installation allows for viewers to observe the figures from a multitude of angles: this in turn alludes to the multiple perspectives of South Africans. On the other hand, however – and not unlike many of Kienholz's works – vantage points and degrees of accessibility are limited, and viewers must experience a certain physical discomfort to examine the piece. All of the figures of *African Adventure* look outward beyond the space of the soil, and in order to make eye contact with the figures viewers are forced to change their perspective: they must kneel, crouch, contort, step forwards and backwards. Once viewers alter their perspective sufficiently, however, the figures' seemingly empty gaze transforms into a captivating and arresting engagement. In the process of manoeuvring to engage with an individual figure, though, the shift in perspective may result in inaccessibility to other elements or figures of the installation. To view *Harbinger* on his barrel, for example, viewers can only see *Pangaman's* back (fig. 1o). Similarly, in order to view the front of the figures of *Radiance of Faith*, the barrier of soil forces this encounter to be from at least two meters away (see fig. 1a).

Accessibility to information is a crucial factor for memory recall and this is visually suggested in *African Adventure*. The installation allows for multiple points of view, yet these views are subject to varying degrees of accessibility and control. The artist inhibits accessibility to particular visual information, and thus the interpretations or narratives constructed by viewers are also partial. In this thesis I suggest that access to memories and the subsequent interpretations of Alexander's works informed by such memories are limited and controlled either through the influences of trauma, or through narrativisation. In the case of the installation the red soil floor covering literally restricts viewers from entering the installation space; in the case of memory it may be argued to be subjectivity and affect.

Pangaman (fig. 1d) may be read as one such example of a South African

myth-cum-“reality” produced by limited and inhibited perspectives and ideologies from a racialised past. This full-size male figure may seem anonymous, ordinary or “generic” to viewers. He is characteristically colourless (a signifier employed perhaps as a means to negate racial stereotypes), and wears a pair of workman’s overalls tied around his waist baring his torso and arms. In his left hand he carries a panga and from his waist he drags behind him a trail of rusted pangas, sickles and toy tractors (fig. 1p). *Pangaman* may be thought to invoke reference to the continued fear of black men as the *swart gevaar*⁹, but also more literally to the actual serial killer named *Pangaman* who became an urban myth. Alexander comments:

When I was a child in Johannesburg, children used to frighten me by saying ‘the panga man will get you’, inspired by the serial killer of the 1960s. When a lone ‘black’ man walked in our smart suburban street, they would say ‘there’s the panga man’, whoever he was, whatever he was doing. The white suburban dweller had conjured up the imaginary panga man who became the *swart gevaar*, the black danger, the communist, an unidentifiable and ominous presence, a constant disquiet and threat perceived in ordinary men and women (Miki 2002: 27).

While the ambiguous signifier of the panga in his hand could suggest the genuine fear and danger experienced by many South Africans as a result of spiralling crime and corruption, *Pangaman*’s characteristically passive body language also contradicts such an interpretation. With his right hand turned outward to reveal his palm, feet together, and encumbered by the criminal and labourer profile he drags behind him, the figure is not posed as someone ready to attack. Ironically, and in further opposition to the perceived danger he poses, this figure is oddly diminutive, appearing the size of an adult female in comparison to the adult male security guard who patrols the installation.

The size and the ashen colour of the figure could also be read as signifying an individual who is ineffective or stunted from being malnourished, anaemic, or ill, rather than a dark danger. This is a theme Jamal (2009)¹⁰ explores in his essay “Jane Alexander: Hunger Artist”. He argues that Alexander blurs imaginary and subjective boundaries between victim and perpetrator profiles. He also observes, “hunger, by its

⁹ *Swart gevaar* translates literally from Afrikaans as “black danger”. This term refers to the sense of fear expressed by Westerners to those who are foreign and threatening to their sense of culture, race and values.

¹⁰ Many thanks go to Ashraf Jamal for providing me with this essay. At the time of writing it was unpublished.

very nature, presupposes lack” (Jamal 2009: 1). The lack that Alexander may be pointing to could be the continued neglect of marginalised lower echelons, and widening class distinctions.

Similarly, the figure titled *Settler* (fig. 1f) alludes to the long-term impact of colonialist and imperialist governance in present racial and class distinctions. These distinctions are also not peculiar to South Africa. *Settler* appears to be a strange, grey composite creature somewhere between boy and baboon and is seated passively in a rusted children’s push-car. While the car is literally a child’s toy it may be an allegory for larger systems of power in the sense that it will not move unless pushed by an external force.

To elaborate, on a micro-level this reliance on other systems in order to remain operational could allude to the collapse and renegotiation of social roles and modes of engagement within post-apartheid South African societies. In the past certain industries such as mining, for example, were free to exploit their predominantly black workforce. Today, in order to remain in operation mines must comply with Labour Union terms and conditions. On a macro-level, the car is a mode of transport and representative of technological and economic advancement: the production and use of vehicles are heavily dependent on political and economic/industrial systems in order to remain operational. This becomes evident in relation to the availability of fuel and spare parts, import and export of materials, and availability and training of work forces capable of correctly manufacturing equipment, to name some examples.

One can, however, read the figure in the car as an indicator of the impact such macro systems have on the ability for ex-colonies to develop. The figure appears too youthful to have either the knowledge or the experience necessary to operate or mend the broken toy. This reading is reinforced by the creature’s passive, almost limp posture. In the wake of many African countries gaining independence, the figure of *Settler* may allude to African leaders’ lack of experience in governing according to Western systems and ideals. These African leaders are nevertheless pressurised to do so by Westernised nations who provide loans and aid, as well as valuable investments and trade. The figure’s baboon-like face may, however, refer to the lingering and condescending stereotypes of Africans being unable to manage or maintain Eurocentric systems with “efficiency” and “competence”.

Girl with gold and diamonds (fig. 1i) can allude to further evidence of these

collapsed socio-economic systems of engagement. The dainty, composed creature is seated on a wooden box, yet disturbing signifiers mar the visual experience to create a sense of discomfort. A benign-looking duiker mask obscures the face of the creature so viewers cannot tell what she really looks like. Between the horns of the mask is what appears to be a miniature tiara made from real gold and diamonds and she wears archaic, delicate white Venetian clothing. These objects add considerably to the seemingly illogical combination of valuable objects and an anonymous, hidden girl. As she sits on the wooden box at the edge of the installation space, one can interpret a sense of isolation and exposure. One may even think of these objects as useless to the girl when it is likely that shelter, safety and food are her primary and unfulfilled needs.

Being adorned with valuable objects also exposes the little girl to the possibility of exploitation – a story of neglect and exploitation that holds true for many poor members of societies and ex-colonial states across the world. It is also possible to interpret the duiker mask as a deft and subtle use of African signifiers by Alexander. The duiker (indigenous to Africa) is typically a small, shy and elusive buck that easily takes fright. Yet, adorned with valuable objects, the introverted figure seems doomed to attract attention and an audience – the girl’s stiff composure and large watery eyes may serve as evidence of this discomfort.

The figure’s stiff composure and archaic clothing may also allude to Eurocentric ideals of decorum that were imposed on indigenous populations over the course of colonisation. The meek body language and clothes that belong to another culture and time reinforces the notion of a façade signified by the mask. Viewers realise that the impression of decorum she presents is a façade when they discover that she has stumps for hands. She has been rendered ineffective by the removal of her hands and also unable to remove the mask she wears. The discomfort this evokes may have its roots in memories of past exploitation, and the systematic demoralisation of indigenous populations by providing inadequate education, skills and resources.

The figure’s stumps and diamond tiara are also powerful referents to internal African conflicts and the involvement of international businesses in sustaining the trade in “blood diamonds”.¹¹ In countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola,

¹¹ These are also known as “conflict diamonds”. The definition of conflict diamonds, according to the United Nations, are diamonds that are mined in areas controlled by forces or factions in conflict with the legitimate or internationally recognised ruling government. The money obtained from their trade

for example, coup d'état and civil war has resulted in many individuals being forced to work for rebel militia as diamond miners. If individuals refused, or were caught stealing diamonds, their hands would be cut off. In other examples of conflict, cutting hands off served to prevent particular groups from voting thus making their political and/or ethnic affiliation clearly visible. Children have also been victims of political conflict: many have been (and continue to be) forcibly separated from their families to be trained as child-soldiers.¹²

The ability to interpret multiple identities, narratives and memories to *Girl with gold and diamonds*, as well as *Pangaman* and *Settler*, thus illustrates the skill with which Alexander questions and rejects the assignment of fixed meaning to individuals and collectives. These interpretations are also not temporally and geographically limited but span the past and present as well as numerous localities.

Possibly drawing on more contemporary social concerns are the little figures in Alexander's *Radiance of Faith* (fig. 1e).¹³ In *Radiance of Faith* three figures that appear to be young boys are smartly dressed in black suits. They stand rigidly upon upturned wooden crates that one discovers are danger-marked dynamite and ammunition boxes. The masked boys could point to ambivalent social and political responses to problems affecting youth in modern urban centres, as well as raise questions as to whether these children, disguised by animal masks, are in danger or whether they are, in fact, the source of danger. If one perceives these figures as street children, their small stature, theatrical poses on boxes and quizzical animal masks may evoke momentary feelings of sympathy for their destitution and vulnerability to drugs, gangs, abuse and exploitation via, for example, prostitution. They also evoke fleeting amusement as they pose comically to earn money.

As with many of Alexander's works, closer inspection reveals deeper meaning: looking closely at the figures' hardened eyes one is likely to recognise that although they appear small and comical, they are street-wise and have strong survival instincts. These street children, like those in Alexander's earlier *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3), are inaccessible. This is literally suggested by the figures' unsettling masks that are reminiscent of a masquerade ball. Their masks hide their identities, intentions and

are used to fund military action, buy weapons and prolong violent conflict (United Nations 2009).

¹² For more information on child soldiers, see the *Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers*: <http://www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/child-soldiers>. Date last accessed 10 January 2010.

¹³ The text "Radiance of Faith" first appeared in Alexander's *something's going down* (1993-94: fig. 4) as wording below the image of a young Aryan girl on a billboard.

evidence of their experiences – hiding scars from fights, malnutrition, neglect or the effects of drug abuse – while their suits construct a façade of respectability. Unlike a masquerade ball, however, concealing their identities is not for humorous effect, in some cases their survival depends on it. Alexander (Frohling 2001: 2) states “you can never access those children. You can talk to them but you will never know who they are or what they’ve experienced”.

The soil barrier aids a thematic interpretation of inaccessibility. This barrier literally prevents viewers from entering the installation space. Gallery etiquette and the presence of a security guard could also prove to be effective deterrents for viewers doing so. The dilemma of whether to walk up to the figures and risk changing the soil surface (as well as dirtying one’s clothes) or whether to maintain codes of conduct has great allegorical significance. The manner and level to which viewers are prepared to engage with the installation can be translated into larger socio-political commentary in the sense that there may be reluctance by individuals and communities to actively step into the space of social problems and address them directly.

Due to being neglected, these somewhat invisible children may turn to crime such as shoplifting, pick-pocketing, drug dealing, prostitution, or more violent muggings in order to survive. Typically ignored as social nuisances, however, these figures can be thought of as “lost boys”¹⁴. Continued neglect of vulnerable children also has significant future social implications: should these youths survive into adulthood, their lack of opportunity or choice will see them take over the roles of criminals, pimps, prostitutes, dealers, gang leaders etc.; the very roles played by individuals who exploited their vulnerability. Ultimately, these youths have the potential to repeat their abuse on new generations of street children. This interpretation is also suggested with *Young man* (fig. 1m).

Standing at the corner of the installation space and looking inward as though he is a tour-guide presenting the other figures to viewers, *Young man* wears a façade of respectability. The suit, hat, garish tie and sunglasses carry a sense of precociousness and conjure connotations with Charles Dickens’ “Artful Dodger” from *Oliver Twist* (1838).¹⁵ Like the “Artful Dodger”, *Young man* has been forced to grow

¹⁴ Like J.M. Barrie’s play *Peter Pan: or, the boy who wouldn’t grow up* (1904) (see Barrie, J.M. 1962), the boys of Alexander’s *Radiance of Faith* may be perceived as perpetually childlike, never to grow up. Barrie’s *Lost Boys* were said to be children lost by their guardians in public places such as parks and, if unclaimed for several days, were taken to Neverland to join a gang of other lost boys led by Peter Pan.

¹⁵ The “Artful Dodger” (Jack Dawkins) got his name from his infamous cunning and skill at picking

up too quickly and, in order to survive the realities of street-life, he stands ready and alert for his next dubious deal.

The title, *Radiance of Faith*, may also speak ambiguously of the hope associated with the emergence of a “new South Africa” and the belief that social inequities would finally be addressed. The figures’ vulnerability and façade, though, speak of situations more ironic and sardonic in the present such as increasing unemployment, poor resource delivery and growing economic segregation. In direct contrast to the billboard of *something’s going down* (1993-94: fig. 4) that depicts a cute Aryan girl and bears the same text, the *Radiance of Faith* figures are not manifestations of innocence and virtue. A social and political “clean slate” did not accompany the birth of South African democracy, a hope perhaps suggested by the Aryan girl. Instead, lingering problems and difficulty addressing them mars promises made at the start of democracy such as freedom and dignity for all.

The figures therefore appear to present the contradiction between promises made by the newly elected government and the practicality of implementing them, and so cast doubt on future progress. Until these figures make themselves visible by performance or by posing as direct threats to elite society, they continue to be ignored in favour of more visible concerns.¹⁶ As such it may be argued that one of the primary problems of fulfilling the needs of social misfits is what Edgar Pieterse (Jamal 2009: 2) describes as “the perennial problem of ‘political will’”. Jamal (2009) concurs with the critical observation that the government’s habit of throwing money at the problem will not make it go away.

The emphasis (and particular interest) of this installation would thus not be a *direct commentary* on past inequities, as is popularly interpreted with *Butcher Boys* (1985-86: fig. 5), but rather a broader and projected theatrical sense of present realities and future issues *informed* by the past. Through Alexander’s more recent ability to display site-specifically and retain her sculptures for interchangeable and intercontextual installations, her works encourage multiple interpretations and

pockets. Because of his skill and reputation he led a gang of criminal children.

¹⁶ In an interview with Pep Subirós (2001), Alexander focuses attention on the mysteries of street culture. She states she is curious about their own rituals, routines, and norms as they grow up until one day they disappeared without a trace. Subirós (2001: 51) asked “Are there more now than there were before?” to which Alexander replied: “There were probably always as many as there are now...but before you didn’t see them. Without ‘passies’ – the internal ‘passports’ that allowed the blacks to go to work in white areas – blacks couldn’t stay in the city especially not at night. The underprivileged were invisible. Now they have become [more] visible.”

dialogue rather than incurring fixed ones.

Importantly, this ability also directs viewers' attention toward contemporary South African and global concerns as opposed to just retrospective causes (Alexander 2006). An example of this would be that after *African Adventure* (1999-2002) figures such as *Bird* (2002-04: fig. 6a and 7a), *Bird* (2006: fig. 8a and 9a) and *Harbinger with protective boots* (2002-04: fig. 6c and 10a) have appeared in a number of other installations.¹⁷ The repeated signifiers such as pangas, machetes, industrial-strength gloves, and actors as security guards speak of contemporary, global subjects such as diasporas, commercialism, industrialism, and cultural tensions, to name some, rather than relating to what may be thought of as uniquely South African problems. History, after all, is not exclusive to, nor isolated by geographic boundaries, and historic events do not occur in a vacuum.

Significant to the interpretive scope of Alexander's works is that she is not affiliated with a gallery, choosing instead to manage her own exhibitions and sales. Her decision means that her works are not subject to the traditional (typically reductive) marketing pitches made by galleries that seek to elevate the status, value and popularity of artworks and their producers by providing neatly packaged and fashionable accounts (Powell 2007). By avoiding the constrictive labels of commercial galleries, Alexander's works are also provided with an interpretive environment that is as broad and varied as the viewers who look at her pieces. Various interpretations include: Williamson's (1989) focus on the figures' ability to examine violence, aggression, cruelty and suffering; Powell's (1995a) examination of their socio-political aspects in the midst of crumbling power structures; Jamal's (1996) suggestion of the continued presence of socio-political inequities; Brodie *et al.*'s (2004) exploration of the inheritance of history, identity and guilt through blood ties, and more recently Jamal's (2009) observations of the physical and metaphysical implications of hunger in urban environments.

Alexander has used the element of fantasy in order to evoke socio-political commentary since the outset of her career. While it may be argued that this serves as a mechanism to literally suggest metamorphosis through internal and external

¹⁷ Alexander was invited to participate in the 2006 Triennial Beaufort in Belgium. *Harbinger with barge and imperial landscape (North Sea)* (2006: fig. 10) was exhibited site-specifically on the Belgian coast. The figures titled *Harbinger* and *Bird* were first exhibited in *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002-04: fig. 6), New York.

influences, it can also serve as a catalyst for viewers' imaginations to liberate and express their own experiences (Arnold 1996). Mike Kelley, author of *The Uncanny* (2004), explains that a figure's size has influence on the degree to which viewers can successfully express their experiences on to figuration. Figures that are smaller than life-size allow viewers to project their fantasies or experiences on to them, making them replaceable substitutes once the created fantasy or recreated experience is in play. Life-size, or close to life-size figures, however, deny viewers' projections since they possess a sense of presence and autonomy. This, in turn, generates feelings of unease.

Furthermore, Alexander's figures confuse boundaries of life-size and miniature, and consequently the boundaries between subject and object. Viewers cannot be certain whether the humanoid creatures are real or not. As such viewers are not always able to successfully project their own experiences. Confusion may persist when viewers question whether the figures in *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3), *African Adventure* (1999-2002: fig. 1), and *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002-2004: fig. 6), for example, are "life-size" or diminutive representations. Viewers may be able to identify the human elements as being proportional to children, but the addition of animal features renders the figures as new creatures. The central question, then, is whether these figures occupy reality or fantasy.

Marion Arnold (1996: 38) suggests that fantasy allows one "to enter the unknown, to engage with other lives, to reconstruct drama and pain and joy, to conceive on a grand scale, to look from another angle, and to celebrate human existence across barriers of time and place". By grafting the element of realism onto seemingly fantastical figures, a sense of commonality and connectedness with viewers and their reality is offered, rather than the figures appearing detached. Ivor Powell (1995b)¹⁸ recounts a remarkable encounter with Alexander's *Integration Programme: Man with TV* (1995: fig. 11):

The cleaning lady pointed and giggled: "Our cousin over there, he just sits all day watching the TV. He never moves..."It's not really surprising that he doesn't move. He is made of paint and plaster of [P]aris...To be sure, you do have to do a double take. But that is not why the cleaner is giggling. She is giggling because this guy dressed in his Sunday best, [is] the sort of country-cousin city slickers would refer to as a *moegoe*...The cleaning ladies – there are now six of them

¹⁸ This information was gained from archives provided by the Johannesburg Art Gallery Library. No page numbers were available.

– are stroking the hands of *Man with TV*, loudly expressing wonderment and pointing out details like the bracelet he wears. This is life, something they can identify with in the gallery.

Since Alexander's Masters in Fine Art exhibition in 1986, her experience of monumental changes in the South African socio-political landscape has informed her work. These changes have included the 1980s state of emergency, the collapse of apartheid, the transition to democracy, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and issues that concern the present day such as violent crime, and the desire to redress poverty and social inequities based on previous racial discrimination. At the heart of Alexander's sculptures' socio-political narratives lies one that is arguably the most important yet has thus far remained neglected by critics and academics – the influence of memory.

While thematic content and visual styles of Alexander's works have changed over time, as have broader socio-political environments, the influence of memories remains central in informing interpretations. The visual and experiential confrontation Alexander's figures have the ability to force viewers into can result in suppressed, unwanted memories re-emerging. In some cases, these memories may challenge popular, normalised narratives that have become generic and subject to dramatisation and political influence. It is these disputed, uncomfortable and controversial counter-memories that inform installations such as *African Adventure* and supplies its affective power.

In Part One of this thesis I explore the effects trauma has on memories and their recall. I argue that Alexander's works use the uncanny as a means to evoke unwanted and uncomfortable memories in viewers, as well as to draw attention to the influence of memory fragmentation in altering memories. I interpret Alexander's installation *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002-2004: fig. 6) from this perspective in order to explore the impact of distressing memories on contemporary social dynamics. I suggest that in more recent installations such as *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit*, *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004: fig. 7), and *Security* (2006 – 2009: fig. 8 and 9), disconcerting, repeated signifiers unsettle viewers' interpretive confidence that is usually supported by fixed locales, times and contexts. Nonetheless, these installations (among others) deftly deploy archival signifiers and systems of meaning to re-energise old, neglected, or seemingly passé subjects and conflicts. The renewed attention also focuses viewers on new conflicts incited by

inherited memories, histories and identities.

To explore the impact of traumatic memories I unpack the processes of memory storage and the disruptive effect of psychological trauma in Part One. The aim of this is to acknowledge that trauma is a valid affliction for many (in the form of post-traumatic stress disorders [PTSD] and other dissociative disorders), but it is not entirely responsible for a culture of amnesia. This “culture of amnesia” is thought to be particularly evident in the younger generation of South Africans born in the late 1980s and early 1990s, although some have observed that indifference to past struggles may be observed, more correctly, as political apathy.¹⁹

In Part One I also explore the TRC and problems associated with recalling traumatic memories. This controversial commission sought to reveal suppressed truth through testimony across all levels of South African societies, although discussions of memory changeability problematise the validity of documented testimonies. Some problem areas discussed are processes such as *repisodic* memory (McNally 2003), political interference and appropriation of individual trauma narratives and, more significantly, the lack of closure from testimony.

The outcome of this discussion reveals that Alexander’s art plays a pivotal role in keeping counter-memories active and problematising overarching ideologies of successful reintegration and “rainbow nation” rhetoric. Lisa Saltzman (2006), author of *Making memory matter: strategies of remembrance in contemporary art*, states that it is the role of sculptural work, as both sites of spectacle and remembrance, to broaden its aesthetic capacity to pursue the questions of memories in the present. She continues:

From the expressly memorialising to the forthrightly self-reflexive...contemporary art insistently establishes itself in relation to the work of remembrance. Pre-occupied with losses that reach from the broadly historical, to the acutely personal, to the strictly theoretical, such art comes to function as a catalyst for and an agent of memory (Saltzman 2006: 12).

In Part Two I examine the role collective memories play in the production, circulation and popularity of South African historical narratives. This section focuses on the nature of collective memories, narrative construction and the influence of the collective (and the state) in memory changeability. This discussion reveals the

¹⁹ For in depth discussion on the generation of “born frees” and their attitudes toward the past, see Gary Baines (2007).

influence of “marketability” in ensuring certain historical narratives remain visible, while others recede into obscurity. I argue that this process is particularly clear when comparing the narratives of Hector Pieterse and Stompie Seipei, as well as two works by Alexander namely *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) and *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86). Further, discussions of a selection of Alexander’s works reveal the extent to which collective narratives – and alterations to narratives by collectives – influence interpretations of periods of extensive socio-political change.

One of the main outcomes of comparing the differing popularity of *Butcher Boys* and *West Coast African Angel* is in revealing the extent to which narratives are involved in maintaining visibility of artworks as well as histories. I argue that Alexander’s *Butcher Boys* (1985-86: fig. 5) has achieved its enduring, iconic status not only because it coherently represents the brutality of apartheid, but also because it has been collectively narrativised to suggest an overall progression narrative that is in keeping with the desired (albeit questionable) “progress” of the “new South Africa”. I suggest that *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86) is an example of an artwork that fails to meet such marketing and narrativising criteria and has fallen into obscurity as a result. I suggest that this piece’s lack of visibility is not fully explained by its acquisition by an unknown private collector, but importantly, because of its inability to be merged into new narratives.

Another main finding of Part Two is how the perceived qualitative “density” of South Africa’s recent socio-political history has influenced interpretations and popularity of some of Alexander’s works. While many of her early 1990s pieces were sold to private collections, those acquired by public institutions – namely *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11), *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13), and *Integration Programme* (1992: fig. 14) – can be interpreted in light of prevailing political issues at the time which made them seem especially relevant. Discussion of pieces such as *something’s going down* (1993-94: fig. 4) explores the notion of integration, reconciliation and trauma associated with new systems of engagement, while also reflecting what may be conceived as a socio-politically “dense” period of history. The contextualising socio-political density as well as signifiers of realism and colour has arguably aided interpretation of figures such as these as political.

In contrast to the politically inflected interpretations of *something’s going down* (1994-95), are the interpretations of Alexander’s more restrained figures *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3). These youthful figures were created at a time that may be

described as a socio-political “lull” – the years after the apartheid government had collapsed and a democratic government had been elected. The conservative response to the work by popular media, I argue, may be compounded by increased international exhibitions that reduced time on display in South Africa, content that did not directly comment on the popular topic of apartheid, and lessened socio-political activity on which to base interpretations.

Thus, while Mike Nicol (1996) raises concern about whether, decades in the future, our heritage and the sombreness of the TRC testimonies will be remembered or forgotten,²⁰ he also affirms the power of art to preserve these testimonies: “[those] who come after us, who do not have the memories, will be able to recall the past. They will also have our art. For us and for them it is the art rather than the historic record which defines, and will define, our and their humanity” (Nicol 1996: 2). I argue in this thesis that Alexander’s art not only preserves testimonies, but also invites viewers to consider the function of memory in the construction of histories as well as the affective response to those histories. Through Alexander’s figures’ ability to convey their own reality “instead of colluding with a process of mimesis” (Arnold 1996: 114), they act as integral vessels of counter-memories that preserve testimonies of a traumatic past for future viewers.

²⁰ Nicol (1996: 2) writes “not being allowed to forget is, obviously, very different from the process of remembering”.

1.0. PART ONE: Individual memory, the effects of trauma, and the uncanny

Art is a way to express the chaotic emotions inside. Emotion is everywhere – and it's not necessarily positive.

Njami (in Kennedy 2007)²¹

Shivers down my spine

(Anonymous)²²

Sleepless nights ahead

(Anonymous)

Jane Alexander's sculptures force the viewer into an uncomfortable confrontation with reality.

(Powell 1995b)

Above are just some of the comments frequently made when entering the space of Alexander's personages. Viewers are left disturbed, perplexed and often asking themselves questions with either uncomfortable answers or simply more unanswered questions. Sue Williamson (1989) suggests this is perhaps because of the uncanny human element and the grisly appearance of Alexander's figures. Though writing specifically about Alexander's 1980s works, Williamson's observations are largely applicable to her whole body of sculptural work. Williamson (1989: 42) indicates that the experience of coming into the works' space is "not so much one of looking at art, as of being suddenly confronted with ghoulish aspects of one's own life".

The aptness of this insight twenty years ago has served as a foundation for the discussion to follow. Memories of "ghoulish aspects" (Williamson 1989) of South African life at the level of the individual serves as the basis for identities, behaviours and beliefs in the present as well as the future (Carsten 2007). Memories of traumatic experiences that have been further fragmented by decades of political oppression, violence and trauma are not forgotten but re-emerge when prompted by uncanny signifiers. In the works of Alexander, these signifiers appear simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar which evoke feelings of fright, confusion and discomfort.

In the discussion to follow I will unpack various memory theories, and problematise others. I will also discuss the effects of trauma on memories. This will be aided by visual analysis of a selection of Alexander's works, and an exploration of

²¹ This article came from archival material at JAG's library. No page number was available.

²² Both of the anonymous comments appear in the visitor's book of Jane Alexander's exhibition *Bom Boys* and *Lucky Girls* at the University of Cape Town's Irma Stern Museum in 1999. In depth discussion of *Bom Boys* appears in Part Two of this thesis.

her use of the uncanny. The deployment of the uncanny in Alexander's works reveals complex memory processes that may be argued to aptly reflect uncanny (and equally hidden) socio-political dynamics of a country renegotiating identities and historiographic narratives. Okwui Enwezor (2004: 33), author of the essay "Contemporary South African art at the crossroads of history", suggests that left wing South African artists practicing in the 1990s who were influenced by the TRC "took on enunciating the relationship between memory and history". Their explorations used systems of meaning that did more than reference the archive; they forced new confrontations by deploying archives as a mode of interrogating histories, memories and identities.

Fitting this description, Alexander offers complex and often uncomfortable examinations of identities and memories both locally and internationally. Like memories, Alexander's works evoke fragments of the familiar and present elements of the unfamiliar in viewers. The complexities of memories and memory processes on the psychology of individuals and collectives, however, make it a difficult field of research as contention about it spans decades and numerous disciplines. One of the primary contentions of memory research is that of fixity. This notion is particularly evident between modernist, essentialist modes of thought in favour of a "core" identity and memories, versus postmodernist theories that suggest identities and memories are multiple, fragmented, changeable and thus unfixed in their meaning.

Thus, before entering into a discussion of memories and uncanny signifiers in the works of Alexander, I will first discuss various theories of memory processes and the effects trauma has on memory recall. The notion of the TRC as a public confessional – a means for truth collecting and mass catharsis of suppressed trauma – will also be problematised. Subsequently, I will elaborate further on the uncanny by discussing theoretical notions of the familiar/unfamiliar, the "double" as threatening, and the influence of these on memory recall and identity construction in a post-apartheid context.

1.1. Memory and trauma

The workings and politics of memory

Janet Carsten (2007), author of *Ghosts of memory: essays on remembrance and relatedness*, argues that memory is not an isolated process of past recollection: rather it is a dynamic system of processes that impacts on behaviour, attitudes and identity in the present while also having significant influence over our futures. Since the process of remembering and recalling traumatic memories is not a straightforward one, how people are able to remember them is a divisive issue for psychologists. This is especially problematic for memories of something experienced by many people (particularly if there are numerous cultural or racial groups, for example) as it can be recalled quite differently from one person to another. An example one may consider is a civil war: individuals within a single nation state may support different forces in conflict, perceiving the opposition as an enemy or aggressor. Individuals may also detach themselves from any affiliation thus making their experiences, observations and memories of the conflict also different.²³

Contemporary debates about memories and trauma are therefore not confined to the realm of academia. Artists use memories as a means to explore histories, identities, and challenge popular versions of historic events. J.M. Coetzee (1998: 2) astutely observes in his essay “The Novel Today”, “history is nothing but a certain kind of story that people agree to tell each other”. If collectives agree to certain narratives then it is inevitable that other narratives will be ignored, and this is why the role of artists in exploring memories is particularly important.

At the centre of many memory debates is politics. Richard J. McNally (2003), *Remembering trauma*, suggests that these debates emerged and have remained ever since the Vietnam War. Penny Siopis (2001) also draws attention to the complexities of memory and politics by suggesting that personal memories may be resonant with profound political import. Siopis (2001: 1) argues that, although socio-political landscapes may have changed significantly over time, thoughts and memories remain marked, meaning that “the personal...can never mean being free from the political”.

McNally (2003) suggests that concerns for the psychological readjustment of veterans returning from the Vietnam War inspired the American Psychological

²³ This would be different to an experience of a natural disaster, for example, where the force of nature does not discriminate race, class or culture. I argue that individuals and mixed communities would perceive the experience quite similarly.

Association (APA) to officially recognise post-traumatic stress disorder in the 1980s. The criteria for such a diagnosis, according to the *DSM-IV* (1994), is that an individual must be directly exposed to an extremely traumatic stressor such as an event involving serious injury or threatened death. Witnessing an event that involves serious injury or actual death of family members or close associates can also cause this disorder. The individual's responses to the affecting trauma must be those of fear and helplessness, persistent re-experiencing of the event, and avoidance of stimuli that trigger re-experiences.

While many people, including survivors, welcomed the definition and inclusion of this disorder as giving a voice to those who had survived trauma, others were suspicious of its validity, suggesting it was an anti-war construct. In subsequent years, allegations of trauma – particularly of sexual abuse – that were then proven to be false due to what is called “false memory syndrome”, sparked widespread claims that memories of trauma were not always based on an actual event but could inadvertently be fostered by law enforcement investigators and therapists (McNally 2003).

The TRC has many similarities: while providing a space for “words and not weapons” (Hunter-Gault 2000: x), and where survivors could finally voice their long-suppressed traumas, the TRC process and testimonies have been criticised. Some of the criticisms raised were that the TRC was overtly politically motivated, and that prominent public figures such as Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu influenced the testimonies (and the response to the testimonies) brought to the public's attention.

Yet further criticism included that testifying did not necessarily equate with catharsis for individuals. Some researchers believe that traumatic experiences are engraved on the mind never to be forgotten, while others believe that the mind protects itself by removing memories from awareness. Nevertheless, accessing these memories has the potential to induce further trauma rather than providing catharsis. It is important to note, however, that moving traumatic memories away from the conscious does not mean that they are forgotten – it makes it difficult for an individual to remember traumatic experiences until many years later, but nevertheless, the experiences may continue to influence behaviour (McNally 2003).

In order to clarify that traumatic memories are not forgotten as a protective mechanism, McNally (2003: 2) draws on over thirty years of memory research to make the following three points:

First, people remember horrific experiences all too well. Victims are seldom incapable of remembering their trauma. Second, people sometimes do not think about disturbing events for long periods of time, only to be reminded of them later. However, events that are experienced as overwhelmingly traumatic at the time of their occurrence rarely slip from awareness. Third, there is no reason to postulate a special mechanism of repression or dissociation to explain why people may not think about disturbing experiences for long periods. A failure to think about something does not entail an inability to remember (amnesia).

Memory recollection is not a straightforward mechanism that can be likened to that of a tape recorder. This is especially true for memories of an autobiographical nature, as details of an experience are not “recorded” with exact detail, nor are they remembered in perfect sequence with each recall (Eber and Neal 2001). Rather, the process of storing information is a multifaceted set of mental abilities and, importantly, is largely subjective. Eber and Neal (2001), authors of *Memory and representation: constructed truths and competing realities*, argue that the mind filters information and retains only that which is of immediate interest to the individual. As a result of this filtering process, streams of information are discarded while others are fragmented through subjective perception and stored as pieces to be recalled and reconstructed as and when the need arises.

Importantly, the reconstructive nature is particularly evident for recurring episodes of the same type. For example, if a person experienced something for the first time, he or she would be likely to retain quite specific details about the event. If a person was to experience something repeatedly, however, his or her various memories would be liable to meld into a generic memory. What McNally (2003) suggests about this phenomenon, called *repisodic memory*, is that the more memories are constructed from repeated experiences, the harder it becomes to distinguish one instance from another. Thus the notion that the TRC might have provided a means to gain “truth” from memories is revealed to be problematic. At what point, if any, could individual testifiers and their audiences distinguish between testimonies based on generic memories of decades of oppression versus a vivid, individual experience of trauma?

Alan Parkin (1997), *Memory and amnesia: an introduction*, argues that sustained memory is a result of information transfer from the short-term to the long-term memory. The success of this informational transfer depends, crucially, on the degree of rehearsal. Additionally, McNally (2003) contends that a fundamental factor in determining how individuals remember or block out trauma is emotional stress since this has the ability to either enhance or impair memories of trauma. McNally (2003) claims that the degree of emotional intensity associated with trauma makes it difficult to recall a coherent narrative of what occurred and this makes rehearsal of fragmented information troublesome. When narrative gaps appear in reconstructed memories, repetition may occur until the gap is filled either by fabricated or altered information. A layman's example of this process would be a song "stuck in one's head" until all the lyrics are known in the right order.

In spite of the difficulty that may be experienced in recalling exact details of specific events, and with the absence or fabrication of some details, McNally (2003: 39) also states that:

... the gist of many experiences is retained with essential fidelity, and [this] is especially true for events having personal, emotional significance. The paradox of memory, as Daniel Schacter has said, lies in its "fragile power" (1996: 1).²⁴ Although subject to distortion, memory usually serves us well. It provides the core of personal identity and the foundation of cognition.

As problematised previously, this quote is an example of conflated arguments in memory research where postmodernist readings of fragmentation and reconstruction are combined with essentialist notions of a "core identity". However, accepting the "essential fidelity" of memory and applying this to the multiple identities of South Africans, it could be argued that South Africans faced a dramatic challenge to their identities after the traumatic struggle for freedom and the transition from apartheid to a democratic context. This fundamental shift in context would lead to memory alteration and manipulation that could then result in confusion about the past and an individual's various identities. Memories would thus not, as McNally (2003: 39) claims, provide the "core of personal identity" but could conversely facilitate continued fragmentation of identities and beliefs – a theme I explore in depth in this thesis.

²⁴ See Schacter, D.L., Verfaellie, M. and Padere, D. 1996. "The neuropsychology of memory illusions: false recall and recognition in amnesia", in *Journal of Memory and Language*. No. 35. p. 310-334.

This is not to say that information or memories of the past are entirely lost or serve no purpose. Chen (2001), author of the essay “Reconstructing the reality: unwanted memory in the courtroom”, points out that, given the strict censorship of the media under the apartheid regime, there are instances in which personal memories are, in fact, the only instrument available for exploring the past. In the case of traumatic memories, however, a process of suppression can occur that “locks” painful memories in the unconscious in order to protect the conscious mind from further trauma. This removal of memories from awareness makes exploration of the past difficult, but the key point is that the process is not *impossible*. Repressed memories emerge in forms such as nightmares, feelings of estrangement and emptiness (Eber and Neal 2001), as well as recurrent feelings of guilt, shame, fear and constant anger (McNally 2003).

The removal of trauma from awareness is also a highly debated topic. While the process of *repression* is said to be an unconscious process, *suppression* is believed to be a conscious attempt to remove disturbing or unwanted material from awareness (McNally 2003). While psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) uses the terms interchangeably, he suggests that the key point is that information is being kept away from the conscious. Debates about recovered memory pose the question whether removal from awareness is a process of repression (blocking unacceptable wishes or impulses) or more that of dissociation (the defensive process of blocking disturbing memories from consciousness resulting in an inability to recall important aspects of what happened). Freud and Josef Breuer (1842-1925) were of the opinion that using hypnotherapy to recall repressed memories would result in patients being immediately relieved from the symptoms of trauma. An important element in the success of this treatment, though, was the degree of affect in the description. The crux was that the patient had to experience an emotional catharsis while reliving the event (McNally 2003).

Veena Das *et al.* (2000), however, make the important argument that to pathologise trauma resulting from political upheavals into conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), amnesia, dissociative, or major depressive disorders, delegitimises personal suffering as moral commentary and political expression. This is an integral element of the South African socio-political landscape where much personal suffering and trauma was experienced in order to win the struggle. Supporting the point of view of Das *et al.*, McNally (2003) argues that the

appearance of pathologies such as PTSD in the *Diagnostic and statistical manual* (DSM) – a text that provides definition and diagnostic criteria for mental disorders – resulted in pathologising what would ordinarily be a normal human reaction to trauma.

Furthermore, although the apartheid regime was undoubtedly oppressive, many individuals did not directly experience state sanctioned violence. It would thus be unreasonable to suggest that the majority of the population had some form of PTSD. The lengthy exposure to psychological trauma and need for reparation and catharsis, however, is not in question here.

The influence of the TRC on memory and “truth”

With the conclusion of the TRC (1996-98) it was believed that the airing of the “truth” and a change from “repression to expression” (Siopis 2001: 2) would bring about redemption, resolution and closure for those who had perpetrated or had been victims of political crimes. A widely inferred meaning of the TRC as a public confessional was that the “closure” it provided would allow for the past to be remembered truthfully as well as left in the past. Ingrid de Kok (1998: 59) substantiates this by claiming one of the prevalent discourses of the time was to “[get] the past out of the way”. Given South Africa’s current socio-political issues (I refer in particular to the xenophobic attacks of 2008),²⁵ however, it may be argued that purging dissociated memories of apartheid trauma and gaining psychological resolution through the TRC were not achieved, and this is visible in continued interracial and intercultural hostile, aggressive behaviour.

While the TRC served the beneficial and dual function of collecting fragments of hidden truth from all levels of society through testimony (Hunter-Gault 2000), as well as claiming to provide a cathartic space where victims could verbalise their suppressed experiences (Gqola 2006), Harris (2006) suggests that the act of verbalising past trauma at the TRC revealed the inextricable link between

²⁵ In May 2008 a wave of xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals began in Alexandra township, north of Johannesburg. The violence quickly spread to a number of townships and informal settlements across South Africa. Approximately 62 people were killed, 670 wounded and over 100,000 displaced in refugee camps. While the official report by the International Organisation for Migration suggests a number of reasons for the outbreak of violence, including “a legacy of institutional discrimination and generalised mistrust among citizens, police, and the elected leaders”, central to the 2008 attacks was that “in almost all cases where violence occurred, it was led by local groups and individuals in an effort to claim or consolidate the authority and power needed to further their political and economic interests” (Misago, Landau and Monson 2009: 2).

remembering and forgetting. Harris claims that by bringing truth to light, once the pain of trauma had been healed there would be minimal recall and forgetting would occur. The TRC therefore “soaked up people’s fear and fatigue with the past, together with a desire to simply get on with things – thus becoming...an instrument of collective forgetting” (Harris 2006: 57).

Essential to remembering, forgetting, and catharsis is the formation of narratives. In his essay “Memory, metaphor, and the triumph of narrative”, Njabulo Ndebele (1998) writes that the passing of time has allowed for recalled memories to be given the power of narrative. Ndebele (1998: 20) observes: “where in the past the State attempted to compel the oppressed to deny the testimony of their own experience, today that experience is one of the essential conditions of the emergence of a new national consciousness.” A key issue in this assertion is that of state involvement. While the apartheid state discouraged expression of memories of trauma, the democratic state is equally involved in manipulation and circulation of memories.

With the progression of time, younger generations have become less able to understand the affective impact of apartheid on themselves and their families due to a lack of experiential knowledge.²⁶ The “memories” of the post-apartheid generations, therefore, might be considered as “inherited” – a phenomenon Hirsch (1997: 22) calls “post memory”. This may arguably result in a dependency on school curricula to provide historical “fact”. Where this becomes problematical is that the state is then able to produce, refresh and recycle particular collective historiographic narratives that are in keeping with government ideologies, and appropriate serviceable individual experiences for its own agenda such as the tragic death of Hector Pieterse.

The fundamental problem with this process is the phenomenon Das (1995: 175) calls “the privileging of speech”. Das (1995) states that not only are there idealised speech communities and processes, but even in a thriving democracy certain rights over articulation are claimed by the state. “Rainbow nation” and “the struggle”

²⁶ As an example, Senzeni Marasela, a practicing South African artist, expresses feelings of ambivalence toward the past in her art. These feelings can be representative of many individuals who experienced a similar, removed upbringing. Educated at a Catholic school in a white Afrikaans suburb, Marasela was removed from the heated conflicts and student action in township schools. Not content to rely on public archives to inform her works and her identities, Marasela explores the past and her place in it through archives with personal significance: “I believe that by revisiting the past, by giving myself a place in it, I’ll be able to forgive myself for my indifference” (Smith 2000).

rhetoric are examples of the lengths to which the state might go in order to establish ideologies of unity, equality and dignity for all, as well as a version of the past that is on the one hand, to be remembered, and on the other hand left in the past.

The problem associated with state appropriation of trauma narratives as well as leaving the responsibility of recording and circulating the past to the government (and its institutions) is eloquently articulated by Das (1995: 175):

I am not suggesting that the experience of the victim can speak to us pure and neat, unmediated by intellectual reflections. I am suggesting, however, that the conceptual structures of our disciplines ... [lead] to a professional transformation of suffering which robs the victim of her voice and distances us from the immediacy of her experience. In the memory of an event as it is organised and consecrated by the state, only the voice of the expert becomes embodied.

It is in this respect, then, that Ndebele (1998: 20) rightly suggests that searching for meaning may set in motion more narratives which “have less and less to do with the facts themselves and with their recall than with the revelation of meaning through the imaginative combination of those facts. At that point, facts will be the building blocks of metaphor”. These building blocks have the potential to result in either generic depersonalised accounts of the past, or imagery that is elevated into the realm of the cherished and revered (Smith 2000).

Siopis (1999: 245) observes that art is not, as is sometimes implied, “the domain of ‘correctness’, of non-violence, of political relations”. The affective quality of art means it is not always “a sanitised, entirely civil activity” (Siopis 1999: 245), especially when works question political and social systems. In South Africa, works of art that interrogated the system of apartheid spawned the term “resistance art” (Williamson 1989). In 1985 the apartheid government enforced a state of emergency and contravening censorship laws became punishable under the Terrorism Act. Any form of representing the state exercising repressive action was equated with terrorism and penalties were severe (Williamson 1989). These included interrogation, house arrest, detention without trial for up to ten years, and torture (McKendrick and Hoffmann 1990).

It can be argued that as a result of overt censorship of media and public records, surviving public archives are as constructed as an individual’s own memories of the past. Interestingly though, because of the seeming “exclusivity” and “inaccessibility” of the fine arts in the minds of the general public during apartheid

(and even now), and because those who were able to interpret content as being political were not seen as a threat to the state, art may arguably provide the most accurate, un-tampered-with account of the past.

Strategies used by South African artists to avoid censorship were varied. One involved using imagery that could be argued to refer to contexts and situations outside the referent of apartheid and its atrocities: Alexander's first solo exhibition in 1986 included one of her earliest, arguably most famous and iconic work *Butcher Boys* (1985: fig. 5). Now assuming its place as part of the permanent collection of the South African National Gallery in Cape Town (SANG) (but not restricted to this location), three life-size, mutilated, castrated figures sit passively on a wooden bench. Stripped of their agency and ability to speak (fig. 5a) as well as their potency, these glaring figures have in time been popularly narrativised to represent the apartheid era and heavy-handed state action. Their evocative name, *Butcher Boys*, could also be literally suggestive of violence and oppression, the murdering of activists, and the destruction of family units and communities through separating laws such as the Immorality Act (1950-85) and the Group Areas Act (1950-91). The seemingly arbitrary link of this title to the mutilated, fantasy figures arguably presented no overt political critique, however, and public commentary of Alexander and her works was not within an apartheid context but rather that of "disturbed" and "satanic" individuals.²⁷

Another technique was the use of more overt signifiers in the art but avoiding political reference in its title. Alexander's *Untitled* (1985: fig. 15) is an example of this strategy. Sitting passively in a chair with a rubber belt bent around his neck that acts like a yoke or perhaps a torture device (fig. 15a), a mutilated figure is represented staring into nothing with a look of terror on his face. Like the figures of *Butcher Boys* (1985: fig. 5), this male figure is castrated and unable to speak as his mouth is all but smudged out. The depicted body also appears to be rotting because of skin parting to reveal bone and necrotic discolouration on the skin around his knees, genitals, torso and arms. While perhaps alluding on one level to a victim of torture, the constraints and palpable violence inflicted upon his body could easily be read as a metaphor for the brutal treatment of the black population of South Africa under apartheid. The figure's gangrenous wounds can also be interpreted as an allusion to a society in a

²⁷ Personal correspondence with Jane Alexander, 8 April 2009.

condition of irredeemable decay. Nevertheless, the application of the title *Untitled* along with Alexander's deliberate avoidance of prescribing its interpretation can also account for it escaping censorship.

Alexander was not the only artist to use the strategy of evasive titling, nor was this restricted to artists – institutions were equally involved. An example was the acquisition of Paul Stopforth's highly critical 1979 charcoal triptych (fig. 16) by SANG. The piece used an innovative, experimental technique of graphite powder on scratched wax canvas making it an appealing acquisition. Additionally the piece had weighty political commentary by depicting the faces of the interrogation officers involved in the assault and murder of Black Consciousness leader Bantu Steven Biko while in police custody in 1977. In a revealing interview conducted by Emma Bedford and Jane Taylor (Bedford 1997: 30),²⁸ Professor Neville Dubow, Chairperson of the Acquisition Committee of SANG 1982–1995, explained the process:

Well, let me tell you about the acquisition of a work by Paul Stopforth. This was in a way a key acquisition...I think it was 1979; the Director was Raymund van Niekerk...The work was originally called Interrogators. The title of course, gave the clue to the work...there were certain uneasy feelings as to whether this would be acceptable to the full Board, or not...It was [thus]...simply labelled Triptych. I think that only the Director...and myself knew what the work was about and what its real provenance was...the work was acquired; it went on display...after a certain passage of time the bland title Triptych was withdrawn and the real title of the work reappeared and it was there under the rubric of Interrogators.

It is perhaps because of this strategy adopted by SANG that Alexander, who studied under Stopforth, observed it “caused no significant reaction”.²⁹ Jane Duncan, former Executive Director of the Freedom of Expression Institute, suggests, however, that the lack of impact on the general public and only mild concern expressed by the censorship committee was probably because fine art was not perceived as a genre that would spark a revolution, unlike more accessible media such as music, mass literature and protest art.³⁰

With the passing of time, however, the works that I have discussed from

²⁸ Emma Bedford was the Head of Curatorial Departments at the South African National Gallery; Jane Taylor had become Chairperson of the Acquisitions Committee in 1996.

²⁹ Personal correspondence with Jane Alexander, 8 April 2009.

³⁰ Personal correspondence with Jane Duncan, 2 April 2009.

Alexander's 1986 exhibition have become ever more historically contextualised and layered with political import. These figures may be thought of as evocative of apartheid and memories of the state of emergency for older South African generations, while tending to serve allegorically for apartheid itself to the younger generations. Alexander's multifaceted works might thus be analysed in terms of their function "as archives of memory and counter-memory in relation to the colonial and apartheid past" (Brodie *et al.* 2004: 19); as heavily metaphorical visual representations of unnarrativised and unfixed traumatic pasts and present; as well as suggestive of state appropriation of traumatic memories. It is Alexander's use of the uncanny, however, that returns the traumatic past to the present individual experience.

1.2. The Uncanny

Uncanny theory and its place in sculpture

Alexander's allegorical, hybrid forms may be thought to exist somewhere between human and animal, real and fantasy, past, present and future; a space that is both recognisable and utterly unfamiliar. This space, Okwui Enwezor (1996) observes in his essay "Note from the edge of nation", is not consigned to the realm of the unreal, but is part of every individual's and collective's realities. Enwezor (1996: 6) writes that these realities consist of "history, culture and identity" that are often "hybrid, incomplete, suffused with 'impurities', rebellions, impermanences and contingencies". These bewildering complexities have the ability to unsettle the certainty and stability of an individual's perception of his or her reality. By drawing these elements together coherently, Alexander's figures have strong affective qualities that evoke a sense of fascination, discomfort and unease. Freud suggested a term for these feelings – the uncanny.

The sensation of the uncanny can be described as the feeling of horror mixed with confusion and allure, the atmosphere of "creepy" or "weird", a class of terrifying that leads us back to something long familiar but long forgotten (Kelley 2004). It may also be thought of as an act of recalling memories.³¹ Freud cited Ernst Jentsch in his

³¹ The uncanny differs from the phenomenon of *déjà vu*. *Déjà vu* is thought by some scientists to be an anomaly or malfunction of memory to give the feeling of eeriness and a compelling sense of familiarity, like a previous experience being "recalled" (Phillips 2009). *Déjà vu* is also known as paramnesia, which translates literally as "contrary to memory" (OED). The uncanny, on the other hand, has its roots in actual memories and the unconscious. Rather than a malfunction, the uncanny is a legitimate memory recall.

essay on the uncanny, suggesting that it could be situated in doubts about “whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not in fact be animate” (Freud 1919: 378 in Kelley 2004: 2). This prompts the question whether forgotten memories are alive somewhere or long dead.

In the introduction to *Art in South Africa: the future present*, Williamson and Jamal (1996) suggest that the physical, tangible reality of sculpture plays a substantial role in evoking memories since viewing three-dimensional objects is a more inclusive sensory experience. For Williamson and Jamal (1996: 20), “life-size [sculpture] creates visceral power by occupying viewers’ actual space. Physical parity invades, disturbs and complicates perception”. Mike Kelley (2004), artist and author of *The uncanny*, is also of the opinion that life-size (or close to life-size) sculptures resist viewers’ desire to project onto them. Unlike the way a doll or stuffed animal invites a child to project fantasy onto it and thus enable the object to become entirely replaceable once the fantasy is in play, a life-size sculpture invites viewers to empathise because of its ability to remain present and physical (Kelley 2004). In the same way, life-size sculptures also invite feelings of dread, disruption and confusion by their unnatural presence occupying viewers’ physical reality.

The liminality and ambiguity of Alexander’s figures raises endless questions as to whether they are fantasy or metaphors of truth, apartheid artefacts or critiques of post-apartheid circumstances, familiar or unfamiliar, carriers of memory or false memory, invocations of present or past generations, narratives of trauma or cues to create narrative, memory locked in the past or haunting the present, subject or object, and various other queries. Yet perhaps most significantly, the lingering questions may be whether these figures are alive or dead? Could they actually be mutilated, petrified human beings?

The hyper-real style of Alexander’s art as well as the body language of some of her figures suggesting “movement-at-any-moment” lends itself to an experience of the uncanny: although the works are largely made of solid, inorganic materials, parts have been cast from living models giving the detailed appearance of something or someone alive (Arnold 1996).³² Further confusing viewers’ certainty of the figures’ state of being is that some works include hints of organic material peeping through, rendering them abject and horrifying in their lack of containment – such as *Guardian*

³² See Powell (1995b) for an account of viewers recognising the figure in *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995).

who exposes stuffing (fig. 6d). The boundaries between alive and dead are also further blurred with the inclusion of everyday, real objects such as clothing, work implements and toys.

This categorical confusion also impairs the temporal element of Alexander's figures, as blurring the line between sculpture and theatre begs the question of what constitutes "truth". Kelley (2004: 30) wonders, since "truth is not a timeless given but a socially constructed fact", what "truths" are "*in* time, and what [are] *out of* time" (Kelley 2004: 33)?³³ What this question may refer to is the creation of myth and theatre (which are *out of* time) on the basis of "truth". Jerome Neu (1992), author of *The Cambridge companion to Freud*, suggests that fantasy (an element of myth and theatre) is a sign that memory is not to be fully trusted. Fantasy serves the purpose of reliving and defending against facts, but still refers to real events, even if obliquely. Neu (1992) goes on to say that since the access of memory is never without motive (as part of Freudian wish-fulfilment), fantasy is, in part, a façade constructed in order to prevent access to suppressed memories – a sometimes-glossy finish over horrible events.

McNally (2003: 13) also warns of the problems associated with fantasy interpretation:

the entire Freudian enterprise of interpreting dreams rests on the dubious assumption that dreams are a kind of language...dreams are not like language. Although one might translate dream imagery into narrative, one cannot translate narrative into dream imagery...No back translation is possible.

This is a crucial element of the uncanny and the fragmented nature of Alexander's art. The desire to impose narratives or fixed meaning on to her enigmatic, nightmarish works in order to gain a sense of closure to the visual experiences is continually denied. The activities of imposing logical meaning, fixed categories, and explanations for feelings of discomfort or (un)familiarity are not ones that will result in resolution. The liminal qualities of Alexander's figures have the ability to cause any given interpretation to not sit comfortably as a final interpretation of meaning.

The frustration experienced by viewers through the figures' evasiveness to one set meaning may be explained using McNally's suggestion that no "back

³³ Emphasis in the original text.

translation” of dream imagery is possible. While it may be possible to discern symbolic meaning from dream imagery (and perhaps also signifiers in Alexander’s fantasy figures), this is not a universal constant as interpretation varies between individuals and cultures. McNally (2003: 113) furthers this point by asking: “How do we know whether our translation (interpretation) is correct? There is no universal dictionary enabling us to decode the symbols of dreams”. Similarly, Alexander (in Williamson 1989: 42) states “[people] can make their own interpretation, and if it’s different to my idea it doesn’t matter”. Hence, a definitive interpretation and conclusion to the visual experience based on memories and experience is perhaps impossible.

Another exploration of what it is that is uncanny focuses on the word *unheimlich*, which translates literally as “unhomely”. Understood through this term, the uncanny may be thought of as that which is from the outside, a secret that is threatening, dismal and horrible (Dolar 1991). Mladen Dolar, who writes on Lacan and the uncanny, suggests that the invention of the word “extimité” by French philosopher Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) was a means to describe the ambiguity of the uncanny in a word not available in French.

While great effort in Western traditional philosophical and religious thought sought to draw distinct lines between interior/exterior, body/mind, subject/object, essence/appearance, to name some examples, the dimensions of “extimité” blurred these boundaries. In blurring such distinctions the paradoxical realm of being between the living and the dead emerged. As with Jentsch, who describes the uncanny as doubting whether inanimate is animate or vice versa, the Lacanian sense of the uncanny is that which is “the irruption of the real into ‘homely’, commonly accepted reality. We can thus speak of the emergence of something that shatters well-known divisions and which cannot be situated within them” (Dolar 1991: 6).

According to Dolar (1991), the universality of the uncanny suggested by Freud is specifically located in, and brought about by, the Enlightenment. Modernity, Dolar (1991) suggests, saw the removal of the pre-modern veil that hid the uncanny behind untouchable areas of the sacred and religious. This privileged and excluded space, he argues, became no more and as a result the uncanny became unplaceable – a counterpart to modernity.

The idea of the uncanny being that which is long familiar but long forgotten can be included as a central theme to the twentieth century metanarrative of identities

interlinked with histories. Carsten (2007: 2) suggests that as a consequence of the Holocaust, the imperative to witness and record details of these events encompassed not only collective memories of traumatic events, but also “the personal and intimate aspects of loss” – the loss of Self by internalising histories that belong to collectives. This loss of Self, of an essentialist and thus fixed identity, became further disrupted and unplaceable by the deconstructionist, interrogatory nature of postmodernism. The collapse of the categorical and empirical movement of modernism into the postmodernist fragmented, indefinable and further uncanny Self, is eloquently embodied in the hybrid figures of Alexander.

The emergence of the double

A significant component of the uncanny is that of “the double”, an experience of confrontational tension when the subject encounters his or her double. In that moment the subject’s accustomed reality starts to disintegrate (Dolar 1991). Dolar (1991: 11) contends that, as a rule, “the moment one encounters one’s double, one is headed for disaster” and the outcome is likely to be tragic. The disaster and tragedy that Dolar speaks of is the inevitable split that occurs when the subject recognises his or her double in reflection, and his or her sense of uniqueness is lost. This realisation is accompanied by feelings of anxiety and dread, particularly when the reflection presents differences to the subject’s perceived sense of Self.

In this sense, the uncanny represents attempts to recuperate the loss of Self. Paradoxically, however, “the lost part destroys reality instead of completing it” (Dolar 1991: 15). Alexander’s figures, which are born out of observations and experiences from South Africa, can therefore be conceived as “doubles”. They have the capacity to disrupt viewers’ sense of reality and Self by confounding their ability to link Self identities with histories. The moment viewers identify aspects of themselves in Alexander’s figures, albeit only briefly and with uncertainty, a sense of horror and anxiety is evoked by the subsequent split and loss of Self. As such, the recognition of the Self within the double becomes an exercise of Othering the Self.

It is important to note that the act of transference is not isolated to the Self/Other dichotomy. According to H.F. Stein (1984: 8), who writes on the relation of the uncanny with Jewish sense of history after the Holocaust, history, like religion and mythology, “must be emotionally apposite if it is to be believed ... Equally in our unconscious collusion to make events ‘happen’ and in our tailoring of a useable past,

we conform historical time to the group-fantasy of *what should have occurred*. Events become ‘history’ only when they bear the burden of fantasy”.³⁴ In short, the double acts as much on the collective level as it does on the individual, only the collapse and Othering of collective Selves is experienced on a far greater, more destructive scale.

It may be argued then, that the intention of the TRC to serve as a means to reconcile a split nation through shared individual testimonies, also acted as an exercise for constructing group-fantasies of the past in an attempt to recover lost/oppressed social Selves. A subsequent consequence of the TRC, however, led to many South Africans further suppressing their memories, and trauma narratives being appropriated by the state. The reduction of the emotional intensity of the experience through this process (and perhaps by overexposure by the media) thus denied the successful production of a group fantasy and allowed for continued negotiation and conflict of South African histories. This overall lack of consensus may be represented through the double – the figure of the Other. The double may therefore be thought to embody cognitive and emotional dissonance within viewers and serve as a mirror for uncomfortable revelations of the Self.

1.3. The troubled South African spirit

During April 2002 an exhibition by Alexander took place in New York City in the cathedral of St. John the Divine (a cathedral that is ever under construction). Before the traditional, golden All Souls’ Altar depicting a luminous Christ and his disciples appeared a band of odd-looking creatures that constituted the cast of *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002–2004: fig. 6).³⁵ As with those in the slightly later *African Adventure* (2006: fig.1), these figures are somewhat different to those of Alexander’s early career. While they are characteristically mutated, and possess a sense of passivity, resignation and indelible presence, they are less likely to invoke a sense of shock and horror than the macabre personages in, for example, *Domestic Angel* (1984: fig. 17), the life-size *Untitled* (1982: fig. 18), *Untitled* (1985: fig. 15),

³⁴ Emphasis occurs in the original text.

³⁵ *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002-04) was a multimedia installation for the collaborative exhibition *Personal Affects: power and poetics in contemporary South African art*. This exhibition was curated by David Brodie, Laurie Ann Farrell, Churchill Madikida, Sophie Perryer and Liese van der Watt, and showcased several South African artists to coincide with ten years of South African democracy.

and *Stripped* (“*Oh Yes*” *girl*) (1995: fig. 19). Instead, these more recent figures are curiously alluring in their peculiar, hybrid appearance, smooth, polished forms and diminutive stature.

In front of the ornate high altar is the off-white creature called *Bird* (fig. 6a) picking its way through a pile of machetes and sickles. Treading carefully, with its off-centred gait and claw-like feet the colour of rust, or perhaps dried blood, *Bird* appears frozen mid stride. The pose is reminiscent of a skulking animal that has been disturbed by the viewer and freezes to render itself inconspicuous. A curious engagement develops between viewers and *Bird* as one cannot tell who is watching whom: viewers look carefully, as though the creature might put its foot down or turn its head, or perhaps blink, while *Bird* stares into the cavernous cathedral, offering no hint about its thoughts. Whatever its thoughts, the startled *Bird* cannot fly away as it has neither feathers nor wings, only smoothed mounds where there may have once been or perhaps never were ligaments for flight.

Bird seems familiar – not in the sense that is triggered by *déjà vu*, but rather as if it was an echo or faded memory from the past. Its head appears vulture-like, but could perhaps even be based on a flamingo form. If one recognises the flamingo form, it seems as though this creature can be an evolved form of *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86: fig. 12). Perhaps *Bird* is the physical incarnation of catharsis. Housed in the sacred space of a church, it seems to have emancipated itself from its past trauma through Christian ideals of forgiveness and mercy. The “healing” process of forgiveness and reconciliation, however, has rendered it different to its original form. As *Bird* stalks below the image of Christ, the epitome of forgiveness, mercy and reconciliation, by contrast the mutant figure seems utterly ugly and deformed. The action of forgiveness and forgetting, albeit insincere perhaps, has created a malformed façade rather than transfigured the creature.

Perhaps the figure could be interpreted as *West Coast African Angel*'s offspring. Unlike its progenitor, though, temporal distance has removed *Bird* from its bicycle, allowed it to stagger onto its bloodstained, rickety legs, and for scar tissue inherited from its parents to distort its form. Curiously, in spite of its gross distortion, the figure carries a sense of naivety and nonchalance. Its posture does not suggest fear nor the need to flee; rather it appears ready to continue cautiously but unfazed by the audience of its potential aggressor – the viewer. Indeed, supposing this creature is the offspring of *West Coast African Angel*, the behaviour of *Bird* leads viewers to

speculate whether it can have any memories of the social, environmental and political forces that influenced its form.

To the left of *Bird* stands *Hobbled ruminant with rider* (fig. 6b). With its back legs tied together at the ankles by black rubber straps and its front legs parted wide in order to stay balanced, the ruminant creature is reminiscent of a tripod. The stocky ruminant has its head lowered toward a mat of unused red industrial workers' gloves and its closed eyes give an ambiguous message: is it hanging its head in resignation and subjugation to the rider? Or is it investigating the smell of the new red rubber surface at its feet? The creature's doleful expression, however, suggests that it is at the mercy of the small burden on its back.

The rider upon the hobbled ruminant's back is not there by force nor is it at risk of being thrown off – it sits bare-backed and unbridled with the confidence of an experienced rider. The small, child-like, curiously frank stuffed rider is cloaked with an air of superiority and entitlement. Despite its diminutive size it raises many questions as to whom it may represent. Its crudely stitched leather body reminds one of Frankenstein's monster.³⁶

In the country's haste to fashion a new national consciousness, elements of old and new histories, memories and identities were patched together. The figure's crude stitching and pieces of stuffing poking through seams can be suggestive of the maker's inexperience, and it is a matter of time before the creature disintegrates. Presented with these possibilities, one may speculate whether this creature, like Frankenstein's monster, will take revenge on its maker for creating its misshapen identity and modes of social engagement. The question of who the creature's maker may be is difficult to answer, though. Is it the ruminant that carries the rider like a beast of burden would? Or is the maker unseen? One may think of the beast as a facilitator, like the generation of the apartheid struggle, for bringing about the privileges and opportunities that younger generations have come to expect.³⁷

³⁶ Shelley, M.W. 1797-1851. *Frankenstein*. Edited by J.M. Smith. 1992. London: Macmillan Education.

³⁷ In his essay "The master narrative of South Africa's liberation struggle", Gary Baines (2007) draws attention to the emergence of the "born-frees" or "kwaito generation", terms used to describe the generation that has come of age since the official end of apartheid in 1994. "Kwaito" refers to a musical genre that promotes consumerism and conspicuous materialism. Baines (2007) writes that earlier generations are increasingly hard-pressed to inspire the "born-frees" to commemorate the sacrifices made for "the greater good" and generate similar levels of commitment to the country's struggles. Essop Pahad, the Minister in the President's Office from 1999-2008, bemoaned: "[it] was painful to realise how little South African youth knew of the struggles that had been fought to buy their

Issues surrounding heritage and the ethics of inherited memories are not confined to these two figures. In front and to the right of *Hobbled ruminant with rider* is a tall, slender, nude figure that appears mostly humanoid. *Harbinger with protective boots* (fig. 6c) tentatively walks through the hundreds of red rubber gloves. Outsized black gumboots protect *Harbinger's* feet, and his body appears to be supported like a geriatric by a walking stick in each outstretched hand. One wonders whether this grey harbinger, a foreseer, can see past the mask of a gemsbok partly obscuring his youthful, lamb-like face. The announcement he brings is not clear though as he is made of solid materials and cannot speak. The only clue of the warning he brings is a red flag that hangs from one of the gemsbok horns suggesting caution or “abnormal”. The other horn suggests further warning as it is deformed at the base and incomplete. This could be read to signify a series of events in the past that dramatically altered the future growth of the horn.

The boy figure³⁸ is completely naked except for the boots and mask he wears. It is a combination that seems absurd when considering the figure's naked vulnerability in contrast to the protective nature of the mask and boots. The figure seems to have no natural defences to external threats except for the accessories he has been provided. Why does he have boots and a mask and not clothes? Where are his clothes? Who gave him the things he wears?

Questions such as these may lead viewers to ask what is being done to help the creature. One of the answers, though, may point to the new government's propensity to commemorate events and legislate rather than initiating effective solutions. An example one may consider is amending children's rights to be more comprehensive and protective than they were in the past. While on the surface this appears to be progressive and beneficial, in reality such amendments are structures that are insufficiently supported by social services and civil resources. Hence many youths continue to lack access to clothing, shelter, safety and education even though their rights to these are legislated.

The mask *Harbinger* wears can be suggestive of the older generation's desire to have the new, free generations carry memories of the past with them in their

freedom...the present generation need to be constantly reminded of those who fought in the struggle to make the vision of a non-racial South Africa a reality” (Baines 2007: 301).

³⁸ This is the only figure in the installation to carry obvious gender signifiers in the form of exposed male genitals. The other figures in the installation appear androgynous, alluding to their sex only through feminine or masculine clothing.

behaviours and identities, and to acknowledge the sacrifices made for present privileges. Yet the mask the harbinger wears could allude to the more insidious consequences of remembering the past. Made from the carcass of a gemsbok, the unsightly mask obscures the lamb-like face beneath it. This raises questions as to whether memories of the past force identities on the figure. Is the figure inhibited by its mask/identities? To what degree does the mask influence responses to the figure?

While the youthful figure (suggested by a small, trim body and immature genitals) has the potential to develop normally his mask and out-sized boots, perhaps placed on him by concerned members of an older generation, can encumber his development. While the intention of the older generation is not to hinder the development of a young, free generation, the detrimental effects of placing identities and histories onto youth can be inferred by *Harbinger's* need for white canes like a disabled or blind person.

Indeed, the inability of the young figure to “fill the shoes” he wears may point to pressure experienced by the post-apartheid generation to be responsible future leaders that are mindful of the sacrifices made during the struggle. The knowledge of the past that obscures his sight and the shoes he has to fill in spite of his lack of maturity may cause a situation of “the blind leading the blind”. Indeed, the mask strapped around the figure’s muzzle may suggest that he cannot speak his mind or express his own stories or identities even should he desire to.

To the right of the altar stands another diminutive creature dressed in grey fleece with a jackal tail tied around its waist by a piece of rough string. This elfin creature, called *Guardian* (fig. 6d), mimics the all-embracing pose of Christ depicted on the altar behind it. Its expression is placid and patient and its gaze, not directed at anyone, appears blank and soulless. What this creature is a guardian of is difficult to say, particularly because of its location toward the back right corner of the installation. In addition, its small size, grey pallor, and eyes that are clouded over like a corpse, are in direct contrast to the holy Guardian it mimics.

Looking at the figure longer, one wonders whether, like *Harbinger with protective boots*, this figure is in control of what is happening to it. It seems as though the figure is entirely uninterested in its role – its arms are outstretched as though welcoming but its expression contradicts the gesture – comically appearing like an insolent child that has been instructed by overbearing parents to apologise and hug the neighbour’s child after a fight. It may be that the older generation’s desires to

mend and perhaps overcompensate for the conflicts of the past through the younger generation are represented in the child-like figure's tired expression. Additionally, while the figure stands with arms outstretched waiting to give a reconciliatory hug, one is aware that there is no one to receive the gesture, suggesting that reconciliation has yet to occur.

Standing in front of *Guardian* is the group's only seemingly feminine figure: *Lamb with stolen boots* (fig. 6e). This figure, smaller than *Harbinger* but larger than *Guardian*, stands upright dressed in a crisp, pretty, white smock. She wears bluish gumboots that are better fitted than those worn by *Harbinger*. *Lamb* is posed with arms outstretched but, upon closer inspection, one discovers that her arms are sticks of wood with red rubber gloves at their ends to signify hands, much like a scarecrow. It is *Lamb*'s face that is most arresting. Appearing half-human-half-lamb, much like *Harbinger* but bearing no mask, she has no mouth to speak and her eyes bear the expression of one worn-out and burdened by a struggle too great for her years, a stark contrast to the pure white little girl's smock she wears.

The pity that this figure evokes from viewers begs the question: what are the effects of placing a traumatic heritage on children? Appearing demoralised and dispirited, figures such as *Lamb*, *Harbinger* and *Guardian* hint to the weight of the burden the "born-free" generation has to assume for conflicts of the past that they are not responsible for. While it may be argued that inherited memories in the guise of heritage are harmful or oppressive, it is also necessary that new generations acknowledge the privileges they have as a result of their predecessors' struggles and sacrifices. The histories associated with the gain of these privileges should not be deemed "boring" or passé, nor viewed with embarrassment or contempt. The title *Lamb with stolen boots* may also be thought to question identities and heritage in the sense that, to understand someone's experiences, you need to "walk a mile in their shoes". Since the title suggests that the boots do not belong to the creature, one wonders who they belonged to, who that person was. What is the significance of *Lamb* now having them?

At *Lamb*'s feet and standing no higher than her knees is an absurd rodent-like creature with unusually large ears and tiny narrow eyes. The odd-looking creature rides what appears to be an indistinguishable bundle of animal furs. As viewers are drawn in to look closer at this collection, *Bat-eared doll riding a bat-eared fox*

wearing a black-backed jackal skin³⁹ (fig. 6f) emerges. The aloof little creature rides a fox cloaked in a jackal skin as though it is a chariot, and its long-winded title gives it an air of pomp. However, the unavoidable connotation of the “chariot” as road-kill juxtaposed with the rodent’s air of superiority creates a sense of absurdity. To viewers this figure may allude to a refusal to accept blame and to carry on regardless of past errors, but also to an air of self-importance held by many South Africans after the overall successful liberation in 1994.

As suggested by the International Organisation for Migration, one of the contributing factors to the xenophobic attacks in May 2008 was the sense of exceptionalism among South Africans who believed they were superior to people of other African countries (Misago *et al.* 2009). In an ironic twist of social dynamics, previously disadvantaged and discriminated black South Africans can be seen to exercise the same discriminatory and hostile attitudes as their white apartheid oppressors by evicting foreign nationals from their communities.

The jackal skin might also be considered to be a referent to the expression “jackalling”, which refers to work done by subordinates in order to save the time of a superior. With new opportunities for economic development, and lingering memories of subordination, many South Africans look upon menial labour as degrading and condescending. Thus while foreign nationals may be perceived to “steal” employment from local workers, the little, rat-like creature riding a mangled chariot bears an element of sarcasm – evidence of what Sack (1995)⁴⁰ calls Alexander’s “lurking, wicked wit that parodies her own deep seriousness”.

Positioned in front of all these creatures and territorially guarding the perimeter of the red rubber-glove mat is the last creature – *Small beast* (fig. 6g). Unlike the passivity of the other figures, this creature postures like a threatened dog that looks as though it will bare its teeth at any moment. Its dark eyes glare out into the cathedral with malice and aggression, threatening harm should anyone venture too close. Perhaps *Small beast* may be read as Alexander’s interpretation of a mediator that restricts access between the conscious and the unconscious, a mediator that will inflict pain in order to deter investigation into memories and psychological wounds.

Whatever the interpretation, the figures of the installation are unique in their character and mannerisms, each telling their own multiple stories and evoking yet

³⁹ Hereafter referred to as *Bat-eared doll* for brevity.

⁴⁰ This information came from archival material from JAG’s library. No page numbers were available.

more stories from viewers. Their interpretations gain an even more complex dimension when examining the dynamic between the figures and their environment. Though they are in the refuge of a church, a place of sanctuary and solace, they suggest a sense of fragmentation and isolation, of being lost in an in-between space that has the contrary potential to redeem or condemn them.

These figures act like puzzle-pieces, although they are not neatly formed and the picture they create, like themselves, is incomplete, volatile and unsettling. If viewers are not deterred by feelings of discomfort, in order to get closer to the scene they would have to get past *Small beast*, the security guard (fig. 6h)⁴¹ and the thick dark red rope that cordons off the creatures into their separate Other world. The installation may thus be paralleled with Njami's (2002: 13) observation that "South Africa is a shut-off world, suspect in the eyes of others and, more disturbingly, in its own. [It is a] world that simultaneously generates attraction and repulsion".

All of these figures are presented in meticulous detail, unique in their character, each with its own quirks and expressions that play off one another to create an alluring yet disturbing company. It is Alexander's attention to detail and ability to depict figures on the brink of movement that makes it difficult for viewers not to personify them. It is a challenge to remain aware that these vivid creatures are inanimate. Equally disturbing is that viewers are aware the creatures are not completely human; they are strange animal-human hybrids, yet their expressions evoke interpretations of emotions thought to be unique to humans. McNally (2003: 86) writes that:

unlike fear, which can be experienced by rats, guilt and shame are complex emotions emergent only in animals possessing a sense of self ...only human beings, who can conceptualise themselves as objects worthy of praise or censure, can experience these emotions. In humans, moral threats often loom larger than mortal ones.

This creates a dichotomy for viewers as it becomes difficult to determine whether these creatures are either more human or more animal. The ability to recognise emotions that are associated with consciousness from them might suggest

⁴¹ Alexander states that the inclusion of a security guard was not intended as part of the installation unlike their deliberate use in subsequent installations such as *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004) and *Security* (2007 and 2009). The guard was requested to be present at all times by the exhibition host as the presence of sickles and machetes in the installation were viewed as potentially dangerous to the public (Alexander 2008).

they are more human, yet their appearances suggest otherwise – animals such as ruminants and rodents that inform the figures' shapes are not typically perceived as intelligent or conscious. The figures' expression of complex emotions also raises questions of the extent to which these creatures are autonomous and possess Self.

One might feel like one is hallucinating these strange, unearthly creatures, particularly if one were to agree with McNally (2003) that non-humans are incapable of feeling emotions such as those described for some of the figures. They are solid and tangible, however, rendering them part of viewers' reality not fantasy or hallucination. One wonders what these strange creatures are doing or how they came to occupy the sacred space of a church – perhaps they are similar to ghostly apparitions as their pallor starkly contradicts the warmth and richness of the altar. One might think they come from a dream and it is only a matter of time before one blinks and they disappear as figments of the imagination. One may even think they have been seen before. But where? Why are they so familiar? And then they have the ability to release an unnerving epiphany. These figures act as mirrors of viewers. Viewers may balk, simultaneously recognising and rejecting their revealed monstrosity. Questions overwhelm viewers and their sense of the uncanny collapses into a larger critical and horrifying moment.⁴²

The viewer may have discovered parts of himself or herself in these malformed creatures; their external presence is born from an internal kernel of the Self, only instead of a double, a company of doubles greets the viewer. The fragmented, schizoid congregation seems to play host to numerous traumas, memories, experiences and identities. The viewer may ask: "Have they appropriated my story, or have I created them from my own? These fantasy creatures cannot be me, they are not real!" The experience of trying to explain them, however, is real, and it may well facilitate an abundance of unwanted memories and questions returning to the conscious. The "homely" existence of viewers can be shattered, and their sense of

⁴² Veena Das (Carsten 2007:4) describes critical events as "moments when everyday life is disrupted and local worlds are shattered". This can take the form of ethnic violence leading to displacement, state repression, racial dislocations, to name some examples. More than this, "they bring into being new modes of action which in turn change the categories within which people operate. People learn to relate to each other in new ways" (*ibid.*). These new modes of engagement are not confined to particular institutions, actors or localities but are trans-local, open to expression in many registers and involve individuals, families, communities, institutions such as law courts, business corporations, and the state. Carsten (2007: 4) suggests that as a result of the chaos, accounts "may be faltering or inarticulate, experiences of time may be discontinuous and fragmented". The encounter with Alexander's *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* can be construed as a metaphorical representation of socio-political critical events.

reality and identity unsettled.

The title *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002-04) is derived from verse 17 “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit” of the penitential Psalm Number 51 (see Appendix 1). This biblical reference is further included in the installation with an emotive sound recording of Gregorio Allegri’s choral arrangement of the psalm, *Miserere Mei* (c1638). The sound recording adds an evocative dimension to the installation, aiding interpretation towards one of penitence and sorrow. In a shift from burnt offerings, the sacrifices of God are said to be a broken spirit and contrite heart.

Exploring the common theme for this exhibition of using “the body, personal histories, and the construction of personal mythologies” (Brodie *et al.* 2004: 19), Alexander may be thought to deploy the uncanny as a means of contemplation and confrontation of past misdeeds that have been suppressed and left to haunt the psyche. Indeed Alexander (in Brodie *et al.* 2004: 61) explains “reference is made to blood primarily as a conduit of genetic inheritance, but also...the various circumstances of extensive spillage on the continent and the relationship of all these aspects to blood in a historical and genetic context”.

The figures may therefore be construed as the manifestation of transgression and sacrifice since the installation occupies what may be thought of as a liminal space between real and unreal, between remembering and forgetting, between forgiveness and punishment, between eternal life and never-ending death. The figures congregate in the sacred space of a church beneath the merciful gaze of Christ at the altar, yet their pause in time, their grey pallor in contrast to the luminescence and vibrancy of the altar, their malformation, may be read as punishment for their transgressions – their purgatory.

With the knowledge that Alexander is a South African socio-political artist, the reaction to her work may shift from a religiously informed interpretation to an almost reflex interpretation that finds the root of transgressions and trauma in the apartheid era. While the past that Alexander may be thought to be representing is indeed that of apartheid and the struggle, it should not to be confined to that epoch. Rather, the recurrent historic role of suffering and victimisation (Stein 1984) from colonisation through to the present should also be considered. This is pertinent to *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* where the theatrical appearance and paradoxical living/dead space render it in some sense *out* of time and consequently part of a realm of fantasy and memory.

If one were to explore a thought experiment of the installation's implications by assigning the root of one's transgressions to apartheid (a common impulse reaction when interpretation is difficult), and apartheid to the realm of an organising metaphor, the results are simultaneously revealing and unsettling. The sense of burden expressed by the figures and the title of the installation may further its possible allusions to the dichotomy between the transgressions of an older and younger generation.

Feelings of guilt and shame (emotional signifiers of suppressed traumatic memories) expressed in verses two and three of Psalm 51 "Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin / for my sin is always before me" may be seen to correspond with the sins of oppressors during apartheid and further back to South Africa's colonial past. The modernist dissection and categorisation into higher/lower, black/white, civilised/uncivilised, holy/unholy has long-standing affect on new generations with no memory of apartheid. The sins of the older generation may be thought to confront them daily. With the dissolution of apartheid (and by proxy modernist hierarchies) verse fourteen "Save me from bloodguilt, Oh God" aptly describes the inherited and uncanny burden of the new (postmodern) generation for a past over which they had no control. This new generation now seeks to redefine their identities and separate themselves from past transgressions. Their daily reminder of the sins of their fathers, the "bloodguilt" they carry, and the dissolution of systems of classification may be embodied in the figures' hybrid, deformed appearances and the imperative to fashion identities different to their parents yet still belonging to South Africa.

The thick red rope cordoning off the installation may be thought to provide an additional reference to the temporal and modernist dichotomy. As suggested by Dolar (1991: 7), "in pre-modern societies the dimension of the uncanny was largely covered (and veiled) by the area of the sacred and untouchable...assigned to a religiously and socially sanctioned place in the symbolic form from which...values emanated". With the advent of Modernism the pre-modern dimension of the uncanny – as obscured by the sacred and religious – collapsed. This excluded, symbolic space now became unplaceable, uncanny in the strict sense. While Freud gives the impression that the uncanny possesses universality, the uncanny is in fact "the return of something long surmounted, discarded, and superseded in the past" (Dolar 1991: 7). The collapse of apartheid into democracy may therefore be thought to mirror the collapse of the pre-modern into the modern and subsequently into the postmodern. What may seem to be

a leftover is actually modernity's counterpart, and post-apartheid as apartheid's counterpart (Dolar 1991).

By barring access to the installation, the rope can also be construed as the resultant dichotomy of the Enlightenment: Cartesian mind/body separation and the subsequent focus on the mind (as separate from the brain) saw the establishment of psychoanalysis. The foundation for psychoanalysis was the division of the mind into that of conscious and unconscious. The rope in the installation could therefore serve to signify a metaphorical denial or restriction of access to the unconscious and the memories it holds. Alexander may be thought to tease viewers in a similar manner to the way uncanny signifiers draw attention to, and tempt viewers to, memories that are out of reach but close enough to re-emerge, disturb and distress. Further still, the malformation of the figures has the semantic effect of situating them in the realm of fantasy: the space in the unconscious that acts as a façade to guard against conscious access to traumatic memories.

The figures of this installation may disturb sensibilities because of their personal affect (a central theme to the exhibition as a whole), as well as their child-like bodies' display of both physical and psychological injury. In a South African context where oppression, exploitation, violence and trauma may be argued to have been the foundation for social interaction ever since colonisation in the seventeenth century, the figures may be read as creators of discord through their simultaneous passive and innocent, as well as monstrous appearance. One could suggest that these figures represent a physical manifestation of bodily and psychological trauma, but in contrast to the forgiveness they seek – to be washed whiter than snow and purged of their iniquity and blood-guilt – the need for contrition and punishment may be read as a form of Freudian wish-fulfilment.

The figures' mutation may thus be thought to originate from holding on to memories in an attempt to punish themselves for past transgressions, while the state simultaneously exercises systematic erasure and/or modification of interpretations of the past in order to moralise it. Siopis' essay "Home movies: a document of a South African life" (2001) refers to post-apartheid art made by progressive artists and their desire to deconstruct and explore hidden aspects of the past. The following quotation could also be applied to the works of Alexander. Siopis (2001: 1) writes:

It is that our very sense of the present, the very idea of being a "new South African" is predicated not only on a shared, politically charged

history, but on the imperative to look back, unpick and unpack that history, to understand not only what happened...but also, most importantly, the psychic and affective dimension of that experience.

In this sense the malformation of figures such as *Bird* that is missing wings, feathers, and treads through implements for agriculture and death; *Lamb with stolen boots* possessing false, strapped on arms; the dead, cloudy eyes of *Guardian*; and *Harbinger with protective boots* tentatively hobbling through a sea of unused workers' gloves, could serve metaphorically for both conflict and construction, pointing to the desire to both share histories and their associated traumas but also to remove unwanted aspects of South African identities and leave them in the past.

Featuring in *Personal affects: power and poetics in contemporary South African art 2002-2004* in New York and again (slightly modified) in 2008-2009 in the Galilee Chapel of Durham Cathedral for the exhibition *On being human, The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* is removed from the inhabitants of the country Alexander draws from, examines and critiques. This may not be coincidental and Alexander may in fact be using her ability to exhibit internationally to increase the impact of her work. The installation may be understood to suggest that all is not "ok" after the euphoric transition to democracy that was closely watched by an international audience. It may also speak specifically to those tens of thousands of white former South Africans who emigrated, hoping to see the last of the country and its problems. Ironically, and like a bad memory, this installation appears without warning in first-world countries they had fled to in the hope of forgetting their origins.

The 'unhomely' past

Eber and Neal (2001: 6) suggest that it is through systems such as language and art that we create "a reality of the past that informs our present and provides a basis for our memory". Not all memories, however, are wanted memories, and awareness of them does not always result in catharsis. In the case of traumatic events such as apartheid, its collapse, the transition to democracy, and the TRC, the exercise of bringing "truth" to light through testimony, and the ostensible linking of memories and "truth" creates an uncanny environment. Once familiar then forcibly repressed, and then subsequently re-emerged memories caused further alteration and negotiation to identities, psychological traumas and collective suppression.

The question of catharsis thus remains a pertinent one. The arguable overexposure to past traumas during the proceedings of the TRC and then subsequent lack of media attention once it reached its conclusion had significant influence on collective connection to the past. In conjunction with *repisodic* memories (McNally 2003), apartheid serving as an organising metaphor (Stein 1984), and the state privileging speech (Das 1995), it is probable that connectedness diminished and thus inhibited catharsis. Given the constructed and unfinished nature of memories, identities, and social orders, trauma associated with socio-political upheavals would be set to recur incessantly until properly addressed by individuals, collectives and the state.

Addressing aspects of South African histories and identities thus remains a prominent focus for many South African artists. The process of bringing ambivalent emotions and memories to awareness is perhaps key to aiding interpretations of Alexander's works. Siopis (1999: 245) writes that, as an interrogatory mode of expression, art

[is not] the domain of "correctness", of non-violence, of political relations, as is sometimes implied. Art might well be all of these things in certain instances, but its potency lies perhaps more fully in the places it offers for the exploration of things which are emphatically tentative, painful, fragile, violent, even angry.

Alexander's figures' ability to evoke such emotions through their confrontational, naturalistic appearance and varying degrees of deformity and restraint may point toward a lack of catharsis in the minds of the populace. Inherited memories of a past that cannot be experientially placed for post-apartheid generations may thus be thought to act like ghosts: intangible and unplaceable, yet haunting. As a result these figures act as metaphors that evoke unexpected and unnerving emotional responses.

Alexander produced three works that preceded but nevertheless uncannily pre-empted testimonies and issues of the TRC hearings: *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11), *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13) and *Serviceman* (1994: fig. 20). While one of the aims of the TRC was to establish a clear chain of command from top to bottom (Shea 2000), and in so doing create a particular historiographic interpretation of the past, the multiple voices of both victims and perpetrators – arguably doubles of each other – confused the sought-after boundaries.

It could be argued, however, that the desire to categorise (both a modernist throw-back and need to narrativise suppressed psychological trauma to gain closure),

and the perpetuation of historic roles of suffering and victimisation, suggested by Stein (1984), continue to foster a dichotomy between a white perpetrator and a black victim. Vivian Patraka (2001: 139) makes the important observation, however, that on a collective level no history or narrative “is stable, transparent in its meaning, agreed upon in its usage, or even engaged with in the same way by any large group of people”. The input of multiple, individual testimonies thus saw the boundaries between perpetrator and victim blurred – a conflation that would seem to be invoked in the above-mentioned works.

Serviceman (1994) can be interpreted as an example of the above argument, raising questions such as whose histories were being represented at the TRC? What perceptions were encouraged? Was the process of confessing a beneficial exercise? Indeed Powell (1995a: 30) alludes to the more insidious effects of narrative appropriation by suggesting that *Serviceman* can be read as a “creature of utility”, and his function is more that of usability “in the broader scheme of things”.

The male figure of *Serviceman* stands with arms limp at his sides and dressed in combat boots and pants. His long-sleeved shirt reminds one of surgical scrubs, alluding to agents of the apartheid state cutting out political threats. Most noticeable and disturbing is the figure’s masked face: bagged, with holes cut out for his eyes that appear dazed and panic stricken, and for his mouth that looks as though the lips are about to part. The bag signifier can be suggestive of several things: fear and guilt of bringing atrocities committed under order to public awareness, the desire to be unburdened of their terrible memories and guilt, as well as the anonymity of many perpetrators/victims.

McNally (2003: 86) raises an interesting argument about the constructedness of a perpetrator/victim dichotomy: while one would not normally presume a perpetrator to be traumatised by his or her own actions, torture can in fact “destroy the torturer”, particularly if the acts of violence violate the individual’s moral code. An example during the apartheid era was conscription. Faced with the alternative of being sent to jail, some servicemen may have been forced to carry out violent orders that would result in severe psychological trauma. Furthermore, considering the results of the Milgram experiments,⁴³ extreme psychological trauma could occur to

⁴³ This was a series of psychological experiments conducted in the 1960s by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram. The aim of the experiment was to observe and measure individuals’ obedience to authority figures that instructed them to perform acts conflicting with their personal

servicemen not just from the experience of inflicting violence but also from knowing that they were capable of atrocious acts under authoritarian order.

The borderline between perpetrator/victim can also be questioned through the risk associated with revealing classified state information. While the TRC offered amnesty from prosecution and a questionable “catharsis” in exchange for testimony, revealing secrets of the apartheid state and its security operations held the real risk of testifiers being persecuted by the previous government. Indeed, because of the traumatic nature of many of the testimonies and the influence of the commission on the types of memories revealed, the report could be argued to be problematic in some respects. The solid, immovable figure of *Serviceman* (1994), with his hood that conceals and cannot be removed can therefore be thought to visually represent an inability to fully access the truth behind the façade.

The bagged head of the figure can also be suggestive of the anonymity of apartheid agents. It may be argued that these agents of the state were not confined, literally, to servicemen and freelance terrorists who then subsequently testified at the TRC – relinquishing their memories into the hands of the commission. The servicemen could also be thought of as anonymous men and women who enabled or supported the system of apartheid either through indifference or through support. These “servicemen” did not testify at the TRC, nor did they add to the body of “truth through testimony” since the TRC was primarily concerned with testimonies of (narrowly defined) politically motivated acts rather than acts rooted in ingrained racial discrimination. One could therefore surmise that they did not achieve the closure that would ostensibly be the outcome of confession and amnesty questionably pitched by the committee. Indeed, supposing that the TRC did act successfully as a cathartic mechanism, the inability for auxiliary individuals to testify would result in members of society continuing to carry their memories and guilt into the present day. Their histories remain unheard and anonymous raising further questions about the efficiency and validity of the TRC.

The whiteness of the bag and greyness of the figure’s clothing evoke reference to the garments worn by the Ku Klux Klan, the white supremacist terrorist group that exercised violence on black people in the southern United States, particularly during the period of the Civil Rights Struggle in the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, as a referent to

morals. For an in depth explanation and analysis of the experiments see Milgram, S. 1974. *Obedience to authority: an experimental view*. New York: Harper and Row.

South Africa's violent past, the white bag over the figure's head could be suggestive of the trademark disguise of right-wing white South African freelance terrorists operating during the brutal struggle for freedom.

The bagged head does not allude only to terrorists, however. As suggested, prior shame and guilt associated with misdeeds is an equally valid interpretation. The pale grey figure and the clean white bag could allude to ghosts of past memories, experiences and victims that haunt perpetrators or victims. The bag, however, has the ability to mask both identities and expressions of guilt and shame.

The lack of clear indication of who the figure is and what his motivations for testifying are also causes confusion and disruption to viewers' interpretations. Is the figure testifying to avoid future convictions? Is he testifying to aid reconciliation? Is he a serviceman? Is he my neighbour? Is he myself? Indeed the confusion the figure evokes deftly blurs boundaries of previously conceived world-views and social orders. The complex and unfinished answers require one to rethink what it means to be a victim of South African political upheaval.

Themes of blurred views in the stories and memories of apartheid would also seem to be invoked by Alexander's *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13). *Hit (poor Walter)* is a small, multimedia piece (96 cm x 73.5 cm x 36 cm) consisting of what appears to be a black male figure dressed in a suit, tie and hat. The figure is off-white and is suspended in a crucifix pose in a purple velvet-lined box, synonymous with a coffin. One can only tell that the figure may be black because of this facial features.

This figure's signifiers point toward a lack of distinction between the political space and personal space since, with the passing of time, its Christian signifiers have guided popular interpretations toward an innocent individual martyred by the brutality and heavy-handedness of the apartheid government. Notwithstanding the political implications, this piece also evokes feelings of pity for the loss experienced by individuals and families caught in the violence of the struggle. Appearing like a plaque, *Hit (poor Walter)* functions as a means to remember loved ones who went missing or were killed during the struggle.

The signifiers associated with death and loss could also trigger the appearance of the "double". When viewers are confronted with the double they may experience a death of the Self, a collapse of particular realities, and a sense of being haunted by ghosts of dead identities. This is achieved through connotations associated with Walter posed like the crucified Christ. The spilt blood of an innocent evokes the

realisation that one's own innocence (or at least perception of innocence) has been lost, whether by victimisation or the appropriation of trauma narratives by the state. Nonetheless, the viewing experience is sufficiently uncanny to cause memories of trauma to surface and feelings of guilt and shame to skew memories and previously conceived identities.

The title of the piece, *Hit (poor Walter)*, has its own set of signifiers: it may be thought to echo rhetoric prevalent during the TRC testimonies. One of the aims of the commission was to establish a clear chain of command (Shea 2000). Hunter-Gault (2000) writes, however, that the types of words used during the commission by top officials of the former government pointed to the continued denial that they knew black activists were being systematically murdered by its agents (its servicemen). The linguistic strategy involved denying that they had used words such as “eliminate”, “neutralise”, “wipe out” and “destroy” with the intention of meaning “kill”, despite the fact that people whose names appeared as the direct object of these verbs had in fact ended up dead. The word “hit” also connotes assassination, but linking the euphemism (the purpose of euphemism being to soften connotations believed to be too harsh) to the figure and including the individual's name returns the work to the personal, tragic level. This strategy may be thought to effectively locate, contextualise and humanise his sacrifice in viewers' realities.

The title also functions as a pun in the sense that *Hit* plays with the notion of popularity and success. As Harris (2006) warned about the influence of the TRC creating particular historiographic narratives, *Hit (poor Walter)* evokes a divine or heroic sacrifice to reveal the state appropriation and sanctification of an individual's death for its own means. The Christian iconography within this piece may be thought to refer to the sanctification and reverence of the struggle proliferated by the state. Positioned like the crucified Christ, Walter – an ordinary citizen – has made a sacrifice for oppressed South Africans. While the figure's clothing locates him most probably (and tragically) as an innocent bystander caught in the crossfire of the many battles of the struggle, his pose points to a divine sacrifice, or at least the appropriation of his death to symbolise martyrdom. The conflicting histories of the past could therefore be emphasised in the pun “hit”: from the perspective of the apartheid state he was a “hit”, a target, whereas the liberation movement's interpretation of “hit” was the achievement of popularity and success through one's actions.

In spite of Alexander's *modus operandi* of avoiding prescription to her artworks, the signifiers of this piece may be thought to position viewers' responses to the figure by drawing attention to sacrifices made by ordinary South African citizens during the struggle. Unlike the reverence afforded to popular struggle figures such as Nelson Mandela, O.R. Tambo, Bantu Steve Biko and Chris Hani, for example, ordinary (and unrecognised) individuals such as *Walter* played an important role too by participating in work "stay-aways", refusing to carry pass books, and other such defiant action against apartheid legislation.

Hit (poor Walter)'s theme of lack of acknowledgement is exemplified when contrasted with Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1981: fig. 21) in Washington. Lin's public monument bears the engraved names of almost every American casualty of war on large slabs of polished, mirror-like stone. After the TRC reached its conclusion and media coverage faded Alexander's diminutive figure, whose name is in brackets almost as if an afterthought, hangs in silence, ghost-like, unresurrected and isolated in a gallery space as opposed to publicly and heroically commemorated.

A comparison such as this should not be read as a criticism but rather as an ironic observation that many South African "heroes" remain invisible. Thus, while the TRC purported to provide a space for "words and not weapons" (Hunter-Gault 2000: x) and where names and actions were laid bare, once the excitement and theatricality of the proceedings had passed so too did interest in individuals' traumas and their ongoing personal pain and loss. Memories of identities and experiences had once again become lost in the "unhomely" past since the window of opportunity to express pain, anger and guilt had closed.

The arguable diminishing of importance and interest in personal traumas and memories are keenly expressed in the dimensions of *Hit (poor Walter)* – small and inconspicuous. While attention is now focused on the broad-scale story of the struggle, *Hit (poor Walter)* may be thought to deploy subtle mnemonics to remind the viewer that, as suggested by Powell (1995a: 9), in his "heroic" mode *Walter* the person is "presented as meaningful, [and his] implied experience and identity are rendered worthy of contemplation". His story, however, after brief consideration, lingers unfinished and unresolved post-TRC – parenthetical, much like the stories of survivors and perpetrators of apartheid and the transition to democracy.

The small dimensions of the figure also plays into Kelley's (2003) suggestion

that non-life-sized figures encourage fantasies to be projected on to them by viewers, and that once the fantasy is in play the figure is entirely replaceable. Once the organising metaphorical interpretation of apartheid is in play (Stein 1984), the death and identity of the depicted individual can arguably become entirely replaceable by identifying the Self within the Other/double. Viewers could therefore be thought to vicariously project their own memories and experiences on to the figure and so further deny the individual's expression of trauma (McNally 2003).

Social integration programme

Carsten (2007: 1) suggests that although individuals' cultural and personal backgrounds vary, identities, behaviours and memories are subtle and complex articulations of the interconnections between the present, memories of the past, and "the wider political contexts in which they occur". These interconnections are manifested in "subjective dispositions to the past and in the imaginings of possible futures" (Carsten 2007: 1). In *Violence and subjectivity* Das *et al.* (2000: 1) also claim "transformations in cultural representations and collective experiences of suffering reshape interpersonal responses to catastrophe and terror". *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11) may be seen to provide a representation of this tension, acting as an uncanny reminder of the transition from apartheid to democracy over the 1990s.

A mixed media installation, *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995) consists of a realistically sized and coloured seated black male figure who uncannily resembles the figure of *Walter*. He is dressed in a conservative black suit and tie, wears a hat and has a simple kitbag at his side. He expresses tension and uncertainty in his body language as he sits upright, leaning slightly forward, and hands placed tentatively on his knees.

The source of his tension appears to be the television on a pedestal in front of him, at which he stares transfixed (fig. 11a). Playing on the television is a repetitive black and white video of a white male figure pacing nervously on a street corner in front of a large building. The figure pauses repeatedly to fix his tie in the reflection of one of the supporting pillars (fig. 11b). While the manner in which the white figure paces is reminiscent of a father awaiting the birth of his child, his anticipation can be read as the expectation of the birth of democracy and the growing pains that are to accompany it.

Indeed the growing pains associated with the unification of a nation could be implied by the text displayed at the top of the television screen that boldly reads: “INTEGRATION PROGRAMME”. The tension and suspense embodied in these two figures could be read as highly evocative of the transition from apartheid and its oppressive system of rule, to a state run by those the white minority feared the most. In contrast to a state run with distinct racial lines of black and white, the video playing is artfully filmed in umpteen shades of grey.

It may be inferred that the emotional tension and subjectivity displayed by both figures’ body language and behaviour is a legitimate response of social actors who inhabit what Das *et al.* (2000) call violence prone boundaries. As a result of collapsed socio-political systems there emerges a situation where “social actors who lived in the same local worlds and knew or thought they knew each other” are forced into new modes of engagement (Das *et al.* 2000: 1). The figures’ “stalemate” could arguably be allegorical of groups of people forced into a new, non-violent confrontation and context in which they have to renegotiate their existence in compliance with “rainbow nation” ideologies.

Over the course of the transition, close scrutiny by the international community may account for the nervousness displayed by both the white and the black male figure. I suggest, however, that the nervousness may be accounted for by the fundamental shift in interpersonal relations: the white male who had previously enjoyed and abused authority would perhaps rightly be nervous to relinquish power for fear of the unknown or potential revenge from oppressed racial groups. The suspense that may be inferred from the black male’s body language could be read in light of the responsibility of assuming power.

Even with the more or less peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy that was met with international praise and two Nobel Peace Prizes, the process of renegotiating identities and interpersonal relations was accompanied by localised eruptions of violence. Indeed, one of the popular interpretations of Alexander’s *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995) was that he was a victim of long standing ethnic rivalry and murdered on account of his clan name (Powell 1995a). This interpretation suggests that integration was not purely a matter of white and black racial groups, but also integrating ethnic groups within the black population.

Tense interpersonal relations between foreign nationals and South Africans which were made manifest in the 2008 xenophobic attacks also serve as evidence of

violence prone borderlines in a country still negotiating identities and establishing new boundaries and roles. These are undoubtedly influenced by memories of an oppressive past. The titling of the artwork as an “integration programme” may thus be suggestive of the deep implications of state involvement in reintegrating segregated racial and social groups.

The title, *Integration Programme*, has its roots in sociological study. Historically, Western integration programmes served to deinstitutionalise mentally ill or developmentally impaired patients and to functionally reintegrate them into society. The purpose of these programmes was to enable individuals to feel that they had something in common with their community and a sense of “home” in their social reality (Adams and Serpe 2000). But this process has been described as disastrous as a result of gross neglect following patients’ release from institutions. Neglect and inadequate preparation often resulted in patients becoming homeless, victims of assault and theft, or imprisoned.

It may be argued that this is applicable to the collapse of apartheid in that social actors were *deinstitutionalised* from the systems of racialised engagement and social orders and left with the bewildering exercise of integrating. The nervous pacing of the white male and the seemingly catatonic response of the black male could be thought to speak of the enormous challenge and responsibility of reforming South African society. Furthermore, in Powell’s (1995b) account of the cleaning ladies examining the seated figure, they described him as a country-bumpkin or *moegoe*, suggesting that the integration was not just on a racial basis, but also brought about by the dissolution of “homelands” allowing rural black people to move freely into urban spaces.

It may be thought that the TRC was meant to act as a form of “therapy” to facilitate segregated social groups integrate with each other through shared testimonies of suffering and violence. It would seem, however, that although some effort was made to aid the reconciliation process, instead of “contributing to the impression that it is safe to walk around the street at night and reducing the fear one feels” (Adams and Serpe 2000: 606), subsequent social problems continue to speak of the lack of integration and perhaps a *reinstitutionalisation* of the South African population. Now, instead of the brutal institution of apartheid, the “new” institution is a fragmented and disorganised society experiencing neglect of individuals’ needs.

The state was not alone in its efforts toward facilitating reintegration.

Interestingly in 1992, the year *Integration Programme* (1992: fig. 14) was acquired by the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), JAG hosted an “integration” workshop organised by the Joint Management Development Programme and conducted by artist and critic Nina Romm. The title of the workshop was *Multiculturalism – the ‘art’ of change management in the new South Africa*, and the aim of the workshop sought to facilitate the acquisition of more representative art in South African cultural institutions (Annual report, JAG, 1992-93).

Perhaps the xenophobic attacks in May 2008 and the subsequent reaction to the violence can be seen as further evidence of the historical failure of integration programmes. In response to the violent and occasionally deadly attacks, the South African government initially put into action a policy of quick reintegration with a deadline of July 2008. A change in policy, however, resulted in no “‘forced’ reintegration programmes” (Molefe 2008). In May 2009, a year after the attacks, the city of Cape Town applied for an eviction order to remove the remaining 461 refugees from the campsites essentially forcing foreign nationals to either return to their countries of origin or, with little additional state assistance, to return to the locations from where they were violently displaced (Molefe 2008). In late May 2009 xenophobic related activity resurfaced in Western Cape townships.

Integration in the “unhomely” present

To continue on the theme of integration and the development of “new” South African identities, Adams and Serpe (2000), authors of “Social integration, fear of crime, and life satisfaction”, explore the relationship between the dynamics of local communities, fear of crime, and subjective well-being. They propose that feelings of vulnerability and fear have significant effects on life satisfaction. Of key importance to their discussion is the suggestion that social disorganisation stresses relationships between various demographics.

Psychological and sociological research has shown that the impact of fear on individuals is made manifest in restricted behaviour, feelings of alienation and distress, as well as overall lack of control or “mastery” of their environment and self (Adams and Serpe 2000). In conjunction with these feelings Adams and Serpe (2000) suggest there is poor role functioning and reduced social participation, both of which have significant social consequences. Alexander’s installation *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004: fig. 7) may be thought to comment on just such social consequences.

According to Alexander (2008), this installation was commissioned by the Fundament Foundation for the 2004 Netherlands exhibition *Disorientation by Beauty*. The installation was one of twenty-eight by other international artists and was located in an eighteenth century pleasure garden (Alexander 2008). Situated outdoors and in stark contrast to the natural greenery and beauty of the garden, *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004) consisted of the figure *Bird* (fig. 7a) from *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2004: fig. 6a). Fenced in on this occasion, *Bird* is shown treading through the familiar piles of red rubber gloves, machetes and sickles. In contrast to *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit*, however, the rubber gloves are dirty, having been coated in red dust that was imported from Bushmanland in Namibia.

The machetes and sickles used in this installation do not appear in separate piles, as with *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit*, but instead lie mixed among the dirty gloves. Appearing to have rusted from exposure to the elements and lack of use (fig. 7b), the implements could perhaps allude to the dramatic socio-economic changes within South Africa that has allowed many black individuals to move away from menial labour and achieve greater career success. The opportunity to choose one's career has also meant that for many black individuals the derogatory influence of modernist ethnic taxonomy (that had categorised blacks as "lesser than" whites), and oppressive apartheid education policies could finally be cast aside.⁴⁴

Perhaps to further suggest the effects of restrictions and the influence of racialised stereotypes, a high wire fence contains the implements and *Bird*. To warn that the fence is electrified at the top, a traditional trilingual warning sign "DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI" is displayed in bold red print and with the universal symbol of danger: a skull and crossbones (fig. 7c). A black male actor is included in this installation posing as a stereotypical South African security guard, generally employed by private security companies, to patrol the installation perimeter (fig. 7d).⁴⁵ Additionally, the quiet of the installation and the garden is pierced with the sporadic and alien recording of an African Fish Eagle, a bird endemic to the African

⁴⁴ Dr Hendrick Verwoerd, the Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958 to 1966, famously stated "there is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour...What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. Education must train people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live" (Clark and Worger 2004:48-52).

⁴⁵ The actor's name is Loyiso Qanya and is a student of Alexander's at the Michaelis School of Fine Art in Cape Town. Unlike *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit*, Qanya was not included as a matter of public safety but deliberately displaced from South Africa to Europe as a component of the tableau. His experiences as part of the installation can be read in Alexander's curriculum vitae (2008).

continent whose cry is synonymous with freedom and idealised wild open spaces.

Adams and Serpe (2000) suggest that from a social stress perspective, a situation arguably as a result of the collapse of apartheid (and more largely of globalisation and diasporas), there is an imperative need to restructure socio-political systems of engagement. Adams and Serpe (2000: 606) comment that positive “social relationships directly improve life satisfaction by offering people social support when they face a stressful social situation, such as crime. Social integration also indirectly protects people from fear by improving their sense of control over the environment”.

DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI can be thought to act in stark contrast to this statement. The figure of *Bird* confined within a cage and stalking as though fearful or paranoid is suggestive of restricted movement, perhaps due to feelings of vulnerability to crime and fear of harm and violence. While these feelings may be based on residual memories from a brutal past, perhaps more aptly Alexander may be representing reactions to fear and vulnerability experienced in the present as a result of social disorganisation. In this installation the exercise of reintegration, as discussed with *Integration Programme: man with TV*, could thus be thought to have been, as historically proven, disastrous. Alexander’s inclusion of the cry of the Fish Eagle is thus ironical. A bird associated with open spaces, majesty and freedom of movement is in diametric opposition to *Bird* (arguably a double of viewers) that can neither fly nor move freely.

One of the psychological consequences of feelings of fear and vulnerability involves complex changes in bodily responses to danger or perceived danger. As Adams and Serpe (2000) suggest, these changes are not necessarily harmful, especially if the threat of danger is real. Without the presence of overt danger, however, they may result in dysfunctional behaviours and physical health problems caused by stress.

Perceived stressors also have far-reaching effects on subjective well-being because of their influence on an individual’s sense of identity. The disfigured creature of *Bird* can be read as a visual representation of an individual’s bodily and behavioural response to social and environmental stress. In an attempt to gain well-being through controlling his or her environment and behaviour, some aspects of an individual’s identities can be compromised. Unable to express aspects of his or her identities can result in an individual feeling dissonance, angst and confusion. These emotions can be made manifest in dysfunctional pacing behaviour in a restricted

enclosure, much like a zoo animal.

Adam and Serpe (2000) suggest that one of the coping mechanisms for addressing feelings of fear and vulnerability and achieving a sense of well-being is to exercise mastery. Mastery may be thought of as the ability to positively modify one's environment and/or aspects of one's behaviour in order to gain a sense of control and agency. With the collapse of apartheid, ordered systems of engagement of white rule and black subjugation disintegrated. In this sense feelings of mastery in the dictatorial form of "white master and black servant" collapsed and were arguably replaced by a desire for mastery (control) of an individual's own or immediate environment and behaviours.

What may be described as dictatorial mastery, suggested by Adam and Serpe (2002), is that it can be depleted by over-use. An example one can consider would be the apartheid state exerting inflexible control over the population by using mechanisms of fear of the Other. The state was not able to maintain this degree of control, however, and it officially collapsed in 1994. In contrast to the apartheid state's large-scale sense of environmental mastery in the form of the Group Areas Act, post-apartheid South African communities attempt to regain mastery in more immediate behaviour and environmental alterations. This is readily visible in fenced and guarded suburbs, and is arguably alluded to in *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI*.

This installation can be interpreted as depicting the widening gap between the "new South African" dream of unity, peace, and safety, and the reality of crime, poverty and social isolation. Alexander's inclusion of an African Fish Eagle sound recording might thus be read as ironic in the sense that freedom and open spaces associated with the eagle remain an unattained dream. South Africa's "culture of fear" signified by barbed wire, electric fences, threatening armed-response signs, private security companies, ferocious dogs, armed households, and enclosed communities and places of work, reinforce this irony.

Das *et al.* (2000) suggest that multiple cultural transformations occur in response to the effects of environmental and social stresses. Among these are collective representations and experiences of suffering that reshape interpersonal responses to catastrophe and terror. A result of reshaping is the increased potential for feelings of social isolation and thus an increased perception of "strangers" occupying the neighbourhood. An increase in the number of "strangers" – a result of the dissolution of the Group Areas Act – may invoke fear amongst whites who find that

their conceptions about such “intruders” are bound up uncannily with their memories of childhood myths such as the *Pangaman*.

When surrounded by strangers it may seem like a normal reaction to feel a degree of fear or vulnerability along with a feeling of isolation. When these feelings are expressed on a collective level and for extended periods of time, however, relations between demographic and class groups can become strained. Adam and Serpe (2000) claim that individuals and communities will only tolerate these feelings of insecurity for a limited period of time before they take actions toward achieving a sense of well-being. They propose that “people do not passively accept everything that happens to them. Safety precautions such as buying a gun or hiring a security service can increase people’s feeling of safety and lower perceived vulnerability” (Adam and Serpe 2000: 610).

It is with this argument in mind that one can read Alexander’s *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* as invoking a sense of action to achieve well-being, albeit through short-sighted solutions. The security guard patrolling the perimeter of the installation, electric fencing and danger signs can thus be interpreted as attempts to protect oneself from the perils of social disorganisation such as crime, violence and undefined codes of social interaction in lieu of poorly managed socio-economic development. Ironically, though, creating a fortress around oneself does not address the source of one’s insecurities but may exacerbate feelings of isolation and vulnerability.

In her installation, Alexander seems to provide a vehicle for viewers to examine their “realities” from an “outside” perspective: when one becomes accustomed to a particular way of life it is often difficult to see its effects from that perspective. When viewers experience the restricted dimensions of the installation from the outside, however, the installation draws attention to the degree to which many South Africans enclose themselves. The mythologised meta-narrative of South Africa’s emancipation from apartheid and its subsequent entry into a “free”, “dignified” and “new” South Africa – an idea made popular by the Mandela/Mbeki government – is revealed to be fallacious.

Since the collapse of apartheid and its narrowly prescribed social roles, fragmented and confused identities have proliferated as alluded to by rusty sickles and dusty industrial rubber gloves. Das *et al.* (2000: 1) suggest social discourses of fear, vulnerability, unfamiliar neighbours and visual representation of such discourses reflect “how people engage in the task of daily living...in full recognition that the

perpetrators, victims, and witnesses come from the same social space”. As Alexander does in her work, Antze and Lambek suggest in the introduction of their book *Tense past: cultural essays in trauma and memory* (1996: xxii) that “when memories are not in question, neither are identities”.

Adhering to the lack of fixity and contextual changeability in Alexander’s works, interpretations that explore the perceived problems of renegotiating social interactions as well as feelings of vulnerability and isolation should not be restricted to this installation only, nor are they peculiar to the South African context. Perhaps as a clearer representation of problems associated with the global phenomenon of diasporas and migration, Alexander constructed a larger scale installation in which she reused many signifiers from *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI*.

Security/Segurança (2006: fig. 8) was presented at the 27th São Paulo Biennale exhibition *How to live together* held in 2006.⁴⁶ The installation consisted of another bird-like figure also titled *Bird* (2006: fig. 8a). Larger than the earlier *Bird* (2002-04: fig. 6a), it has disproportionately small male genitalia and it treads on a mat of germinating, growing, and dying wheat sprouts. These sprouts can neither sustain their growth in this harsh artificial environment, nor can the bird-like creature feed on the seedlings as it has a distinctly raptor-like bill. A double-layered razor wire fence standing 12m x 6m across surrounds the creature and the sickly plantation. In between the two fences is a perimeter gap filled with dirt, machetes, sickles and hundreds of used red industrial rubber gloves. Guarding the enclosure are five Brazilian men dressed in the black uniforms of security guards and carrying batons. The entire installation is indoors and lit by powerful and harsh floodlights suggesting the security measures of a penitentiary.

Viewed in light of increasing measures to control the influx of immigrants (“Others”) to numerous countries, as well as increasing fears of potential terrorist attacks, this installation may be understood to allude to snowballing fear of the *swart gevaar*. Escalating confusion over what was once believed to be stable boundaries of histories, heritages and geographies further aggravates defensive action to create a sense of well-being. This installation may be inferred as representative of collapsing

⁴⁶ This exhibition was curated by Lisette Lagnado. The work was also shown at the 2007 Gothenburg Biennale, Sweden. The Swedish exhibition, *Rethinking Dissent*, was curated by Joa Ljungberg and Edi Muka. The title of the installation was modified to incorporate Swedish rather than Portuguese and therefore read *Security/Säkerhet* (2007). For this installation five African men were used as security guards and they too carried batons.

social orders since the end of colonialism and imperialism, as well as fear associated with integrating emerging nations into the global community and economy.

Unlike the South African experiences represented in *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI*, however, this installation has double the security measures in order to restrict and control movement. This may be thought of as a powerful signifier of mastery and control by nation states as well as an uncanny representation of local and international matters of perceived identities and historiographic narratives. Virginia MacKenny (2009: 274) aptly questions whether “security assures or reiterates danger, exposes vulnerability or reasserts strength”.

These installations confront sensitive issues. Alluding to “cultures of fear” that are threatened by seemingly unstoppable diasporas, they also invoked reference to the measures communities and nations use to try ensure their ways of life remain unchallenged. While based on South African experiences, they may refer disconcertingly to politics of other countries’ histories as well: Alexander (2008: 12) remarks “after initial interest, [*DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004)] was declined for an exhibition in the United States of America. This was apparently on the basis of associations with certain components of the work, particularly the fence and the allusion to the import of Africans”.

Security (a version of the previous installations) was presented in South Africa for the 2009 Johannesburg Art Fair (fig. 9) where the Gordon Schachat Collection presented her as the featured artist. Virginia MacKenny (2009) interprets this installation as embodying the concerns of the continent and not necessarily being distinctive to South Africa specifically. In her interpretation, MacKenny (2009) eloquently argues that the root of viewers’ discomfort and unease may lie in the lack of clarity: the nature and dynamics of the installation reveals ambiguity as to “whether the bird is being incarcerated or protected, or both. The clarity of the inside/outside dichotomy is disrupted” (2009: 274). It may be inferred then, in the fading glow of liberation and South Africa joining the international community, that installations such as above raise the uncomfortable realisation that one fenced enclosure has merely been substituted for a larger one, and while South Africa battles with social integration programmes, the international community is engaged in its own, larger ones.

1.4. Conclusion

In summary, I have unpacked memory theories and processes to establish that memories are constructed as well as both socially and politically influenced. By examining the effects of trauma, memory recall has been shown to alter, and in some cases to undergo a process of suppression. By examining the nature and affect of the uncanny, it has been revealed that the uncanny has the ability to evoke suppressed memories of painful and uncomfortable past South African experiences.

Through the use of the uncanny, Alexander's figures have the ability to call to mind previously hidden narratives or reveal fragmented, inarticulate narratives of pasts. I have argued that these memories can be subject to a process of systematic remodelling through appropriation and "rainbow nation" ideology and, as a result, post-apartheid individuals may have difficulty accessing the past or developing an emotional attachment to it. I have aimed to reveal the failures of the TRC in providing the collective with a means for catharsis and how, in some instances, the TRC served to provoke the emergence of suppressed memories without the follow-through of catharsis, resulting in continued trauma affecting present living, feelings of well-being, and visions for the future.

I have also elaborated on the visual representation and problematic nature of integration programmes as a means to reintroduce social "strangers" and facilitate renegotiations of social roles and modes of engagement. Through visual analysis of Alexander's *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995) as well as her later works *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004) and various versions of *Security* (2006-2009), I have linked these social complexities to both past and present realities. These, I have argued, may be representative of the complexities of South African existences.

I have pointed out, however, that these interpretations should not be isolated to the South African context, but that the processes of memory as well as the effects of trauma and the uncanny speak more broadly of collapsing social roles and modes of engagement in the face of globalisation. In this light, Alexander's works may be thought to hold international appeal as the microcosm of South African experiences uncannily reflect global concerns of renegotiating identities in the wake of trauma, and the fragmentation of memories and heritage in the face of diasporas.

2.0. PART TWO: Collective memory, changeability and narrative construction

I was born in Poland in 1955 – the world in which we were growing up would have been quite incomprehensible without reference to World War II and its aftermath. I could not directly remember the war, of course. I learned about it in school, listened to stories told by my parents and their friends, read books, watched movies and, later, television programs, recited poems at various commemorative occasions...At first, as a child, I tended to see that past in terms of high drama and adventure; even my Jewish father's accounts of the fate of the family fitted the pattern...Later, the picture acquired a far more sombre tone, and, as I was trying to understand my Jewish heritage, I would rapidly become aware of the pieces that had been missing, missing in my city, my books, and the lessons at school.

Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 3)

In the above recollection Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, author of *Frames of remembrance: the dynamics of collective memory* (1994), speaks specifically to post-Holocaust Jewish experiences of memories, histories and heritages. It nevertheless expresses sentiments that could be paralleled with those of many post-apartheid South Africans. For young South Africans the abuses of the apartheid era are beyond their own immediate experiences and their only connection to this era lies in the memories and stories of their parents, communities, public figures, and media, and the stories they tell.

By working from a consideration of Irwin-Zarecka's observations, my discussion in Part Two focuses primarily on the nature and influences of collective memory on the visibility and popularity of a selection of Alexander's sculptures across years and socio-political changes. The effects of memory changeability on the construction and maintenance of historical narratives on a collective level are thus crucial elements to this discussion. I argue that these elements are visible in the stylistics of Alexander's sculptures; that they make poignant commentary on the processes inherent in constructing new national consciousnesses and narrativising histories.

While conducting research and historically contextualising information for this section, a collated list of Alexander's sculptural pieces from 1982 through to 2009 (see Appendix 2) revealed gaps and stark distinctions between examples that are

barely visible or known versus those that have acquired iconic status.⁴⁷ This prompted the question why some works, such as the legendary *Butcher Boys* (1985-86: fig. 5) have achieved the degree of visibility and socio-political significance they have while others have not achieved the same success. *The Municipal Crucifix* (1986: fig. 22), for example, is similar in appearance to *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) in the sense that it included two mutilated humanoid figures sitting on a bench. While both pieces debuted at Alexander's MFA exhibition in 1986, *The Municipal Crucifix* was ultimately destroyed and now exists only in photographic records. Alexander comments that some of her works had to be destroyed (including *Self Defence and Stability Unit* [1995: fig. 23]) due to storage limitations before she knew she would make a career as a practicing artist,⁴⁸ but I argue here that the destruction of pieces is not the only factor in regard to limitations of visibility.

As stated in Part One, Alexander is not represented or managed by a commercial gallery. Her sculptures have also not been available for purchase since 1999 because of her preference to exhibit site-specific installations using recontextualised elements and figures from previous installations. Instead, current sales consist of her photomontages that she has practiced simultaneously with sculpture since the start of her career (O'Toole 2007).

While tracing and collating a list of Alexander's sculptures since 1982, locating seven pieces was not possible.⁴⁹ The collated list (see Appendix 2) did help establish the locations of sculptures up to and including 1999 when she began retaining them. Of the thirty-three sculptures listed in Appendix 2, two are known to have been destroyed,⁵⁰ eleven are part of unknown private collections,⁵¹ four remain

⁴⁷ The *Butcher Boys* have become such visible and popular images that representation of them appeared in playwright Brett Bailey's 2007 *The Butcher Boys in motion* (fig. 5b) in Kayelitsha, Cape Town. Actors dressed in costume to mimic the figures (Lamprecht 2007; fig. 5c and 5d). Similarly, representation of the *Butcher Boys* appeared again as the three witches in the operatic *macbEth* in 2007 as part of the annual Spier Arts Summer Season. Lore Watterson (2007:73) writes "these menacing and eerie figures are sitting on the stage staring at the audience...this time the Butcher Boys are...human".

⁴⁸ Personal correspondence with Alexander, 25 April 2008.

⁴⁹ The following sculptures' existence or locations could not be traced during research: *Untitled* (1982), *Five Torsos* (1983), *Untitled* (1983-84), *Hobby Horse* (1984), *Goose* (1984-85), *Dog* (1984-85), and *National Bird* (1983-86).

⁵⁰ These were *The Municipal Crucifix* (1985-86: fig. 22) and *Self Defence and Stability Unit* (1995: fig. 23).

⁵¹ These are: *Domestic angel* (1984: fig. 17), *Untitled* (1985: fig. 2), *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86: fig. 12), *Untitled* (1985-86: fig. 15), *Black Madonna* (1991: fig. 24), *something's going down* (1993-94: fig. 4), *Serviceman* (1994: fig. 20), *Integration Programme: man with Poweralls (extra tough, reinforced throughout, guaranteed fully shrunk)* (1996), *Street cadets with harbinger: wish, walk/Loop, Long* (1997-98), *Racework – in the event of an earthquake* (1999), and *Lucky girl and*

in the artist's collection,⁵² and only nine are part of public collections.⁵³ While three of the sculptures in public institutions are not on display due to space limitations,⁵⁴ the *Butcher Boys* (1985-86), acquired by SANG as part of its permanent collection in 1991, has remained on almost permanent public display as one of the main attractions to the gallery. The only time this popular piece has not been on display is when it has been on loan internationally: in 1995 for the Venice Biennale, in 2002 for the exhibition *The Short Century* in Berlin and Chicago, and again in 2008 for the exhibition *Apartheid – The South African Mirror* in Barcelona (Alexander 2008).

Arguably of most significance for facilitating visibility, however, is the degree to which the art community and the media “market” particular pieces to the public. Alexander is as silent as her figures about their possible interpretations, and, as will be suggested in later discussions, the ease of interpretation and its associated socio-political commentary play a significant part in popularity. When asked why she felt *Butcher Boys* achieved the attention it did in comparison to other components of her MFA exhibition, Alexander states “I did feel it was probably the strongest component of my submission, the most coherent and resolved”.⁵⁵

When considering the lack of response to the other components of her MFA exhibition in comparison to *Butcher Boys*, Alexander remarks:

I did not know the work would generate any interest beyond the worker staff and some students...and the usual sort of positive feedback from lecturers...At the time there was no ‘art world’ interest in these works and not much ‘art world’ in SA at the time, so no apparent prospect for them.⁵⁶

Similarly, in 1989 Alexander (Williamson 1989: 43) questioned whether

monkey with rattling maracas (1999).

⁵² These are: *Beauty in a Landscape: born Aliwal North 19-?, died Boksburg 1992* (1993: fig. 25), *Integration Programme: man with wrapped feet* (1993-94: fig. 26), *Erbschein: An den Bergen* (1995: fig. 27), and *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3).

⁵³ These are: *Untitled* (1982: fig. 18), University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; *Butcher Boys* (1985-86: 5), South African National Gallery, Cape Town; *Integration Programme* (1992: fig. 14), Johannesburg Art Gallery; *Cake* (1993: fig. 28), Standard Bank Collection, Johannesburg; *Stripped (“Oh Yes” girl)* (1995: fig. 19), Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg; *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13), Sandton Civic Art Gallery, Johannesburg; *Pastoral Scene* (1995: fig. 29), Gauteng Legislature, Johannesburg; *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11), South African National Gallery, Cape Town; and *Cadet* (1997-98), collection of the town of Fellbach, Germany.

⁵⁴ These include *Untitled* (1982: fig.18), University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; *Integration Programme* (1992: fig. 14), Johannesburg Art Gallery, and *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11), South African National Gallery.

⁵⁵ Personal correspondence with Alexander, 13 August 2009.

⁵⁶ Personal correspondence with Alexander, 13 August 2009.

Untitled (1982: fig. 18) would have generated the success it did if it had different subject matter:

I wondered, would I have won if it had not been that sort of subject? Violence imposes itself easily. The public is drawn to violence. It intensifies reality, disrupts mundane daily existence and perhaps creates a sense of worth. People are fascinated by car accidents, for instance.

But awards have also highly effective in generating public awareness and popularity. In 1982 Alexander won both the University of Witwatersrand's Martienssen Student Prize and the National Fine Art Student Competition for *Untitled* (1982: fig. 18), the University of Witwatersrand then purchased it as the winning piece the same year.⁵⁷ In 1995 Alexander won the prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist Award and the following year won the First National Bank Vita Art Now Award. The SANG then acquired *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11), and the Sandton Civic Art Gallery acquired *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13). In 2002 Alexander won the coveted DaimlerChrysler Award for Contemporary Sculpture for *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3), although by this time she had stopped selling her sculptures.

The recognition afforded by these awards helped launch Alexander's international career and, from 1994 to 2009, only twenty-one of the seventy-one group exhibitions she has participated in have been in South Africa. These exhibitions have also not been comprised exclusively of her sculptural works but have also included her photomontages. Furthermore, since 2000, of the six solo exhibitions Alexander has presented, only two have appeared in South Africa (Alexander 2008: see Appendix 3).⁵⁸

As a result of her international exposure Ivor Powell (2007: 35) complains “[in] the past year or so, Alexander has produced three major pieces for major international showcase exhibitions, to the accompaniment of barely a whimper from local media...much of Alexander's work...deserves a whole lot more attention than it has received”. Njami (2002: 13) observes, however, that South Africa “is a shut off world”, insinuating that not much attention is paid to activities beyond its borders.

⁵⁷ Personal correspondence (13 August 2009) with Julia Charlton, Senior Curator at the University of Witwatersrand Art Museum. Charlton states that the piece is not on display, as (at the time of research) they do not have a public art gallery.

⁵⁸ The information for Appendix 3 was compiled by listed exhibitions in Jane Alexander's CV (2008) and *On being human* catalogue (2009).

Njami's argument is important to this discussion in the sense that memories may be linked to physical geography. Anthony Smith (1996)⁵⁹ suggests memories can be subject to a process of "territorialisation" in that "shared memories become attached to particular terrains".

Thus, in order to contextualise the analysis of the visibility (or lack thereof) of Alexander's pieces within South African collective memory processes, a foundation of collective memory processes, narrative construction and manipulation of South African histories needs to be explored. Revealing the distinctions between particular socio-political periods is thus pertinent. However, because of the range of literature and varied theories about collective memory, this chapter is segmented into four discussions, namely: the functioning and nature of collective memories in a South African context, how and why collective memories are subject to manipulation and alteration, how socio-political narratives of South African histories are structured, modified, and subsequently, how they influence interpretations and relative popularity of Alexander's sculptural works. This chapter's findings about collective memory manipulation and collective political narrative construction are then applied to three works, namely *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86: fig. 12), *something's going down* (1994: fig. 4), and *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3).

As discussed in Part One, memories consist of complex sensory and mental processes that are influenced by many internal and external factors. Memories are not confined to individual experience, however. Growing research suggests that memory is as much a *social* process as it is an individual process (see Irwin-Zarecka 1994, Schacter 1997, Zerubavel 2003, Bell 2006, Carsten 2007). Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 4) suggests that

making sense of the past...is motivated by our personal experience but facilitated (or impeded) by public offerings...[that] are a mixture of presences and absences. A "collective memory" – as a set of ideas, images, feelings about the past – is best located not in the minds of individuals, but in the resources they share.

Like memory processes on the individual level, many theories and debates surround the nature and influence of collective memories on identities, narrative construction and maintenance and, most interestingly, on what histories a community deems

⁵⁹ This text was transcribed from a lecture presented by Smith. No page numbers are available on the electronic transcript.

meaningful and thus worthy of remembrance and commemoration in the present and future.

Although a variety of arguments are raised in this discussion regarding aspects of South African histories, their interpretation and forms of preservation, it is not meant to insinuate a covert and malicious conspiracy theory of erasure or modification of the apartheid past to suit present political purposes. While erasure and modification of historical narratives do occur with varying degrees of state influence, this discussion aims to make evident the role of collective narratives on perceptions of the past. Revealing these roles and processes will aid awareness of the possible implications for future identities and historical perceptions.

The works of Jane Alexander are thus of particular interest and importance as they act in the dual capacity of repositories of collective memories, as well as archival counter-memories to normalised narratives of South Africa's past. Alexander's works thus reveal themselves to serve in a preventative capacity by preventing memories of collectively "undesirable" histories falling into oblivion.

2.1. The nature and functioning of collective memory

Duncan Bell, author of *Memory, trauma and world politics: reflections on the relationship between past and present* (2006), proposes that at the heart of identity politics is historical memory – memory, he suggests, that has emerged as “a key organising principle of scholarly and artistic work” (Bell 2006: 1). Collective memory, also known as social or cultural memory, refers to widely shared perceptions of the past that shape the stories groups of people tell about themselves both past and present. Collective memory is what keeps “realities of the past” (Irwin-Zarecka 1994) – or at least highly selective versions of it – alive in the present. As Bell (2006: 2) affirms, this does not have to be an accurate or verifiable account of the past as memory “is *knowledge from the past*. It is not necessarily *knowledge about the past*”.⁶⁰ Importantly, while memories are related to histories, the two are separate from one another even though their boundaries are elusive. History may be thought of as the study of past events and the record of human activities, while memories are concerned with the past as it is remembered (Bell 2006). Through memories the past is made present and has affects on personal and collective identities.

⁶⁰ Emphasis occurs in the original text.

South African collectives provide complex and enlightening examples of the effects of national myth and history-making in the aftermath of apartheid and the struggle to define new national identities. Bell (2006) argues that traumatic and harrowing events, such as the struggle against apartheid and the subsequent transition to democracy, often pose enormous challenges to communal self-understanding. The memories of such traumas “play a significant and sometimes elemental role in shaping subsequent political perceptions, affiliations and action” (Bell 2006: 5). Since identities are constructed, negotiable, malleable and largely influenced by perceptions of the past, collective memories have a significant impact on determining present and future identities.

In a lecture titled “Memory and modernity: reflections on Ernest Gellner’s theory of nationalism”, Anthony Smith⁶¹ (1996) suggested that attachment and identification with the past are elemental in forming collective identities. In a country historically divided and with different national identities subsequently encouraged to negotiate new national consciousnesses, it may be argued that collective memories serve an important purpose. The purpose, Smith proposes, is this: “the very act of remembering together, of commemorating some event or hero, creates a bond between citizens whose self-interest often brings them into conflict” (Smith 1996). He further concludes that “one might say: no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation” (Smith 1996). Communal memories are thus pivotal in sustaining a sense of social solidarity.

In the wake of several decades of conflict and social identity changes – in the form of apartheid, its collapse, and the birth of democracy – Allan Megill’s suggestion that “memory is valorised” when identity is threatened may be considered as pertinent (1998: 40). Bell (2006: 6) elaborates further by suggesting that “as identities are challenged, undermined and possibly shattered, so memories are drawn on and reshaped to defend unity and coherence, to shore up a sense of self and community”.

Rainbow nation discourse may be thought of as one such example of previously undermined individuals being encouraged to put aside their traumas and differences. According to Smith (1996), banding together as a diversified yet united nation is predicated on collective memories of the past. Smith (1996) contends that “a

⁶¹ Anthony D. Smith is Professor Emeritus of Nationalism and Ethnicity at the London School of Economics.

sense of national destiny presupposes a well remembered past, a history of a unique trajectory along which we are destined to travel". Indeed it may be thought that the shared histories of apartheid serve as the "common denominator" in new identity structures and orientate trajectories for new identities. The past is thus not left in the past but can be mobilised to generate new and future identities of nationhood.

Interestingly, Jeffrey Alexander (2004) believes that, while traumas may be legitimate afflictions on the individual level, collective trauma is entirely a social construct. Alexander (2004) suggests that events are not in themselves (collectively) traumatic but that "trauma" occurs when a group feels that they have been subject to something horrendous that leaves a permanent mark on their consciousness and memories. In this way, traumas may be attributed to real or imagined experiences because they are *believed* to have disrupted, harmed or affected collective identities.

This poses a complex dichotomy for South African identities: there are many individuals and communities who have encountered trauma through socio-political upheavals (for example the community of District Six who were forcibly relocated as part of the Group Areas Act). However, there are also many individuals and communities who have not been directly affected yet have inherited the belief of having been traumatised in the past.

The narratives of apartheid can arguably function as what Neil Smelser (2001) calls *quintessential cultural trauma*: an event or series of events that are experienced as violations but are subsequently endowed with a sacred character. Smelser (2001: 265) uses the example of 9/11 as an ambiguous trauma, one that is "simultaneously shocking and fascinating, depressing and exhilarating, grotesque and beautiful, sully and cleansing – and leaving a country feeling both good and bad about itself". This holds many parallels with the collapse of apartheid and transition to democracy. The sustained, and at times violent, struggle for democracy and equal rights that resulted in victory in 1994 has been imbued with a sacred quality of the triumph of good over evil in historical narratives told at the individual, collective and even global level. Nevertheless, Lynn Meskell (2006: 158) writes that the past "occupies an ambivalent role in [post-apartheid] South Africa. For some it is seen as a vast reservoir of trauma and loss, while for others it can be mobilized as a source of pride and redemption".

Jenny Edkins (2006) makes the weighty argument that in the aftermath of traumatic events, the state moves quickly to create linear narratives of origins that are

told in the form of memorialisation and commemoration. These narratives usually emphasise the importance of forgetting the often recent and violent origins in order to provide a sense of longevity and continuity. From a “new” South African perspective, public holidays and street name changes, as well as the construction of museums and memorials are key in illustrating the linear narratives of the origin of democratic South Africa from a dark past: March 21 as Human Rights Day to commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, June 16 as Youth Day to commemorate the 1976 Soweto Youth Riots, August 9 as National Women’s Day to commemorate the march of 20,000 women to the Union Buildings to resist pass laws in 1956, the Apartheid Museum alongside Gold Reef City Casino, the Hector Pieterse Memorial in Soweto, street name changes from the apartheid architect D.F. Malan to apartheid activist Beyers Naude, to mention a few. Even the age of democracy is celebrated and commemorated as the beginning of a peaceful and prosperous journey of a diversified yet united nation.

These are only some examples of the many processes in action, ones that reveal how political transition from one state form to another has significant influence on what is regarded as being historically relevant. South African politics may be argued to be a clear example of how perceptions of the past in the minds of collectives are essential for delegitimizing previous regimes: arguably the apartheid government was undermined by excavating and confronting political crimes through the TRC, while the ANC’s new claims to political legitimacy as South Africa’s liberators was reinforced by struggle narratives (Bell 2006).

Christopher Kutz (2004) maintains that reparation movements such as the TRC serve the chief function of creating and hallowing a particular set of memories and to set into “common sense” otherwise obscured official histories. Molly Andrews, author of *Shaping history: narratives of political change* (2007), substantiates this claim by suggesting that in the process of creating a new national consciousness primarily through story-telling at the public TRC, certain narratives of reconciliation and forgiveness were favoured over those that did not contain the required elements. Bell (2006: 21) describes one of the elements as “ethics of difference with the promotion of a tolerant historical consciousness”.

Another element includes the ethics of forgetting. W. James Booth (2006) argues for the importance of “memory-justice” whereby a collective is morally obligated to remember the victims so as to avoid endangering the future. Bell,

drawing on philosophies of Nietzsche,⁶¹ counter-argues that memories are not always beneficial – that they may in fact be counter-productive by impairing visions of alternative futures and fostering generational conflict. In addition to the ethics of forgetting is the transformation of collective memories into myth. As suggested by Bell (2006: 27), collective memory can be understood as the process by which groups of individuals “to some extent harmonise...memories of past experiences, and it is therefore limited spatially and temporally”. Myths on the other hand are independent of the bounds of space and time, are simplified, highly selective and “widely shared narrations of an imagined past” (Bell 2006: 27).

The danger associated with this process is argued clearly by Ian Hacking⁶² (quoted in Bell 2006: 27) who claims that, whether deliberately or not, “mnemonic discourse often exhibits a theological tenor”. The myths that were generated around the incarceration and silence of Nelson Mandela after the Rivonia trials in the 1960s, for example, arguably aided converting a political activist into a messianic living legend, the saviour of the oppressed South African public. Upon his release in 1990 Nelson Mandela received unprecedented adoration both locally and internationally as the veritable father figure “Madiba”, and continues to do so.⁶³

Framing, then, is of particular interest as it directs attention to “the powers inherent in public articulation of collective memory to influence the private makings of sense” (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 4). Collective memories, as socially constructed and maintained processes, thus reveal the limits of interpretation allowed to individuals and communities when narrating the past. Irwin-Zarecka (1994) points out, however, that the aim of collective memory is not to freeze a particular interpretation of the past as the “right” one (as part of collective memory is the continued contestation of narratives by various forces within the collective), but rather to establish an “acceptable” range of meaning dependent on shared strategies and devices.

One of these frames is that of the “authorial voice”, i.e. who produces and

⁶¹ Bell (2006:24) references Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations* to make the following point about the ethics of remembering: “to live actively and creatively was essential to be able to escape the chains of history: “Forgetting is essential to action of any kind, just as not only light but darkness too is essential for the life of everything organic”. If the past is not to become the “gravedigger of the present” it is essential to try and forget as much as it is to remember”.

⁶² See Hacking, I. 1995. *Rewriting the soul: multiple personality and the science of memory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁶³ At the time of writing in 2009, Nelson Mandela was due to celebrate his 91st birthday. The international community called for global attention and commemoration by designating July 18 as “Mandela Day”.

maintains the “text”. From a South African perspective it may be argued that the authorial voice during the formative years of democracy largely fell on the media and the committee members of the TRC, as well as on influential political figures such as then-president Nelson Mandela and Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in order to produce particular narratives, interpretations, and responses to the past and then-present.

As Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 8) suggests, collective memories become activated when people engage in “memory-projects”, what she claims are “concerted efforts to secure presence for certain elements of the past, efforts often coupled with self-justifying rationales”. Although how much people remember is influenced by many idiosyncratic factors, frames of remembrance are arguably the devices with most influence. Through frames of remembrance, memories and histories are intricately linked to senses of collective and individual identities. They imbue moral imperatives – lessons of right and wrong – for future generations, since Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 12) purports “to pretend moral neutrality on morally troubling issues would be...pretence”.

An important factor of memory-projects is their intended audience. Though collective memories consist of multiple and sometimes conflicting voices, they also have what Irwin-Zarecka (1994) believes are mundane qualities. Since collective memories require much work, time, energy and, of course, money – resources that are often in short supply when more pressing and immediate social issues need addressing – the process of producing commemoration ceremonies, memorials, for example, are “sites for articulating priorities, obligations, goals, and intended audiences” (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 13). Even in instances where public discussion is not predominant, community involvement, government sponsorship or commercial interests are pivotal in revealing who deems what past as important and why.

The Apartheid Museum at Gold Reef City Casino, Johannesburg, is an example of these factors in play. Built in 1995, just one year into democracy, the privately funded institution was conceived as part of a government initiative that required tourism stimulation and job growth before issuing gambling licences. Listed as a “section 21 company” (non-profit), the development and maintenance of the institution therefore relies on public donations, contributions and sponsorship. In this way government interests have been satisfied by commercial investment, but reliance on public support reveals the necessity to accommodate their perceptions of the past.

Taking the above point into consideration, it is nevertheless imperative to emphasise that the formation of collective memories is not a “discursive free-for-all” (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 17). These memories are framed by socially constructed and maintained discourses.

Irwin-Zarecka (1994) observes that one of the dangers of collective discourses is running the risk of losing the experiential bases on which memories are recalled. This may be because of increasing familiarity with accounts of the past, the processes by which history may be subject to manipulation for political ends, and how aspects of history can be embellished or completely forgotten. This danger is significantly higher in collectives since memories on an individual level have reference points located in and maintained by emotions and experience. Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 17) uses physical injury to exemplify the argument: “someone who suffers great physical pain is not likely to define what happened as a pleasant diversion...the sense that others are making of one’s experience, in short, can only fall within a certain range” (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 17).

This becomes more complicated on the collective level, however, because it involves representing a past to which many (younger) people have little experiential access, and which thus “cannot be subject to the same reality checks” (Irwin Zarecka 1994: 18). As such, to secure remembrance, according to Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 26), “one must first be able to tell what happened. Experience must be named, words found to describe it in detail, metaphors perhaps added for further depth”. With the addition of these elements in history-making, it is thus inevitable that manipulation and alteration occurs. The next section discusses these processes and their impact on collective memories in depth.

2.2. Memory changeability and manipulation

It is important to state explicitly that my use of the terms “memory manipulation” and “changeability” differs from the more commonly used “distortion” in other literature. Although working from a postmodernist perspective the term “distortion” could be thought to have modernist, essentialist connotations of fixity and origin that are contradictory to the arguments in this thesis as well as to the works of Alexander. From a postmodernist perspective there is not an “original”, “true” or “real” memory that is then subject to distortion (pulled out of shape) at an individual or collective level. The paradigm of postmodernism suggests that memories, like identities, are

inherently fragmented, constructed and liable to change. I do, however, suggest that memories are liable to change and manipulation from both internal and external forces that renders memories different from the experience that generated them.

Changeability and alteration of memories is also not necessarily an abnormal process as a result of psychological or physical trauma. If one were to perform an exercise of having several people watch a scenario, each person's recollection of it would differ according to his or her individual needs, biases, beliefs and even degrees of attention paid to the material. Each individual, more often than not, has complete confidence in the validity of his or her version of what happened. Considering all the accounts together, however, may result in confusion about what did or did not actually occur. This, according to Daniel L. Schacter, author of *Memory distortion: how minds, brains, and societies reconstruct the past* (1997), is because information output differs, sometimes quite substantially, from the input as a result of informational alterability. While it may seem of little consequence when relating information of an experimental scenario, when considered at the macro-level of collective memory, changes of memories and stories of the past may result in narratives that bear little semblance to the events that initially gave rise to them, resulting in what could be called "false" history (Schacter 1997).

On the basis that memories and their reconstruction are heavily influenced by an individual's pre-existing knowledge or frames of remembrance and mental schemas, "interference theory" holds that forgetting "is not attributable to passive loss or decay of information over time, but rather to the interfering effects of events that occur after initial learning – the...phenomenon of *retroactive interference*" (Schacter 1997: 9).⁶⁴ These may take the form of voices of the experts (Das 1995), whether those of the media or influential public figures, for example, that may undermine confidence in one's own account. In addition, according to Ernst Kris (quoted in Schacter 1997: 10), even the most confident autobiographical account is fundamentally alterable due to "the firm outlines and richness in detail [that] are meant to cover significant omissions and distortions".

On a collective level Ceci and colleagues (see Schacter 1997) have suggested that inaccuracies in recalling memories may in part be influenced by lack of source memories. To apply this to post-apartheid South African generations, it could

⁶⁴ Emphasis occurs in the original text.

arguably relate to the lack of or indeed literal changes to source material of apartheid era events. Whether these changes to source material are the effects of apartheid censorship or the outcome of struggle narratives is a complex and lengthy debate.

Loftus, Feldman and Dashiell (1997) add dimension to the question of source memories by suggesting that false or manipulated memories in adults can result from compiling fragments of genuine memories to form a false one. Schacter (1997) draws on the example of constructing the image of a dinosaur from a few stored bone chips. In light of heavily censored information of the 1980s in South Africa as well as reliance on memories to glean truth of the past over the course of the TRC, it may be argued that it is somewhat inevitable that information now available has been subject to some degree of change.

It is necessary to emphasise, however, that although a degree of manipulation is inevitable and debates surrounding recovered memories remain heated, understanding the nature of memory changeability is crucial in order to preserve integrity and believability of memories that are constructed on accounts that actually occurred as much as accounts that are grounded in objective reality. Thus, while obscurity and evasiveness surrounds accounts of the death of Hector Pieterse and ANC youth activist Stompie Seipei, for example, the fundamental truth remains that the youths were tragically killed. Accordingly, while accessibility to Alexander's pieces may be considered to be obscure and interpretations of them remain questionable, the narratives that are evoked by their half-real half-fantasy forms are as worthy of contemplation and consideration as already established interpretations based on grounded historical fact.

According to Loftus *et al.* (1997), the generally accepted notion that memories do not exist in isolation but rather work in conjunction with one another is paramount to interference theory. Witnessing complex events, such as a violent attack, and subsequent exposure to misleading information has been proven through almost two decades of research to have significant influence on recall errors. In this event, research suggests that while misleading information can impair the ability to recall accurately, misinformation is “not simply due to a blind trusting of the postevent narrative” (“misinformation acceptance”) (Loftus *et al.* 1997: 51). Their findings further implicate poor source memories as a contributor to memory changeability.

Michael Schudson, author of “Dynamics of distortion in collective memory” (1997), problematises the notion of a “truthful” “original” memory by complicating

the semantic implications of the term “distortion”. He (1997: 346) suggests the notion that memory can be distorted

assumes that there is a standard by which we can judge or measure what a veridical [i.e. truthful] memory must be. If this is difficult with individual memory, it is even more complex with collective memory, where the past event or experience remembered was truly a different event or experience for its different participants.

In a South African context this rings particularly true for the various actors for and against the anti-apartheid struggle: while some felt they were under persecution for their resistance, others felt their way of life was under threat and the use of force to contain an uprising was justifiable action.

Schudson (1997) suggests that, unlike personal memories that are contained within the individual, collective memories are located in institutions.⁶⁵ Within these institutions Schudson (1997) identifies the main processes involved in memory changeability, including *distanciation*, *instrumentalisation*, and *narrativisation*. Each of these processes will be discussed in turn.

Distanciation refers to the receding of time and its influence on reshaping memories and reducing their emotional intensity – “as a general rule, time heals all wounds” (Schudson 1997: 349). Schudson (1997: 349) quotes Austrian writer Robert Musil’s 1927 essay “Monuments” in which Musil claims “there is nothing more invisible as a monument...anything that endures over time sacrifices its ability to make an impression”.⁶⁶ This process according to Schudson (1997: 349) has its merits as well as its drawbacks:

The major gain is perspective – distance can give people historical perspective on matters that may have been hard to grasp at the time they happened. With time, not only does emotional intensity diminish but individuals can increasingly view from multiple perspectives events they originally could only see from one. Sometimes this is because the past changes – and should change – with time. In an era of liberalisation and the cultural enfranchisement of groups denied a voice in the past, a history told from the viewpoint of elite white males is rewritten from multiple viewpoints. Often new information becomes available about events experienced at the time through a veil of

⁶⁵ Schudson (1997:346) writes that the social aspect of collective memories means they do not lie in individual minds but in institutions. They exist as “rules, laws, standardised procedures, and records, a whole set of cultural practices through which people recognise a debt to the past (including the notion of “debt” itself)...These cultural forms store and transmit information that individuals make use of without themselves “memorising” it”.

⁶⁶ For an edition of Musil’s essays translated from German see Musil, R.; Wortsman, P. (trans.). 1995. *Posthumous papers of a living author*. London: Penguin.

misinformation and ignorance. The past, at any rate the significance of the past, is not a constant.

Drawbacks of *distanciation*, however, include loss of detail and emotional intensity. This makes memories vaguer in their retelling, can cause grievances to persist across generations through family and community attachments, and in attempts to sanctify horrific experiences, may cause sentimentality to dominate. Schudson (1997: 349) writes:

The question of sentimentality we might think of as a Stephen Spielberg problem. If it is granted that human beings not only write poetry after Auschwitz but about it, what kind of poetry will that be? Is it doomed to demean, reduce, or sentimentalise the events it seeks to sanctify?

Instrumentalisation is the next process and describes memory selection and manipulation for the service of present interests, perhaps fashioned to support a current strategic end. In a South African context, it may be argued that the Mbeki government, in forming a new national consciousness, drew upon the struggles of the past prolifically in order to contextualise and justify socio-political changes and undermine the previous regime. Lynn Meskell (2006: 163) articulates the strategy:

In 1999, President Mbeki pointed out that the great racial divide began when the first commander of the Dutch East India Company's revictualling station at the Cape of Good Hope, Jan Van Riebeeck, planted a hedge of 'almond and thornbush...to ensure the safety of the newly arrived white European settlers by keeping the menacing black African hordes of pagan primitives at bay'.

Instrumentalisation, Schudson (1997) argues, while mostly formed by intellectuals and not necessarily calculated in all instances, is also reflected in the bias of recalling success stories more than that of failures, or seeing oneself as responsible for the success at hand. This operates not only at an individual level but also at a collective and indeed national level. Evidence of it can be found in stories recounted at the TRC about the Soweto uprising in 1976. These stories arguably underwent screening and gate keeping. As Gary Baines (2007: 291), author of "The master narrative of South Africa's liberation struggle", suggests, "public records were mediated into an officially sanctioned narrative...by community leaders, cultural entrepreneurs, and the political elite". Political organisations such as the ANC and PAC also vied to claim involvement and/or responsibility for the riots even though their involvement remains unclear. "Still," Baines (2007: 293) maintains, "the TRC

report provided a vehicle for the ANC as the ruling party to appropriate the story of the Soweto uprising at the expense of the other liberation movements”.

The ability of the ANC to appropriate and make visible these narratives of trauma and loss (albeit for its own means) is an important and powerful indicator of which personal memories of the apartheid past and more recent transition attained collective remembrance. It can be claimed that, as a result of the ANC’s election victory in 1994, memories of the struggle are more readily accessible. Although one can only speculate, the orientation of memories of this period of time would have been markedly different had the apartheid government prevailed. Indeed another example of *instrumentalisation* is the preferential focus on the victory of democracy within South Africa rather than the military failure and loss of the “fifth state” South West Africa (now Namibia) in 1990.

Narrativisation is the third of Schudson’s (1997) influences on collective memory. He suggests that in order for a version of the past to be passed on it must be encapsulated into a cultural form. This cultural form is typically a narrative “with a beginning, middle, and end; with an original state of equilibrium, a disruption, and a resolution; with a protagonist and obstacles in his or her way and efforts to overcome them” (Schudson 1997: 355). Importantly the narrative needs to be simplified and have a marketable aspect, something that makes it “interesting” in order to remain in circulation. Schudson (1997: 357) suggests that successful narratives “often foreground individual protagonists and antagonists rather than structures, trends, or social forces”.

Two key narratives to exemplify *narrativisation* are that of twelve-year old Hector Pieterse (died 1976) versus fourteen-year old Stompie Seipei (died 1988). Both stories may be thought of as simplified narratives from the apartheid struggle yet have differing degrees of visibility in collective memory. The story of Hector Pieterse came to the world’s attention through the iconic photograph taken by Sam Nzima (fig. 30). The normalised narrative follows: On June 16 1976 Soweto youth took to the streets in a peaceful show of resistance to apartheid legislation governing that black scholars be taught in the medium of Afrikaans. The protestors were confronted by National Security forces who opened fire on the crowd of youths with live rounds. Many youths were shot in the back as they fled and Hector Pieterse was

one of those who were fatally injured.⁶⁷ Photographer Sam Nzima captured Pieterse's final moments in the internationally iconic pieta-like photograph.⁶⁸ Today, this event is nationally commemorated as National Youth Day to honour young people and to bring attention to their needs. On June 16 2002 the Hector Pieterse Memorial was opened near the place where he was shot in Orlando West, Soweto, and commemorates Pieterse and other youths who died (*Wikipedia*).⁶⁹

The story of Stompie Seipei and his degree of visibility is somewhat different, in fact, the perceived "messiness" of the narrative and its lack of a distinctive moralising event and clear antagonist/protagonist makes it difficult to simplify and thus more likely to fall into obscurity. The narrative, as provided by the web-based *Wikipedia* goes as follows: Stompie Seipei, also known as Stompie Moeketsi or James Seipei, was a teenage ANC activist suspected of being a police informer. He was found murdered with his throat slit in Soweto after he was kidnapped following a school rally on December 29 1988. Stompie is believed to have been murdered by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's bodyguards known as the Mandela United Football Club.

Jerry Richards, one of the club's members convicted for Stompie's murder, claimed that the order to kill him came from Winnie Madikizela-Mandela herself. Madikizela-Mandela, persuaded to testify at the TRC by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, maintained that the accusations were politically charged and lodged by former comrade Katiza Cebekhulu who she claimed was a former "mental patient" and hallucinated the facts. Though revealing little about the circumstances surrounding Stompie's death Madikizela-Mandela finally conceded "things went horribly wrong".

⁶⁷ 566 individuals were killed on June 16 1976 (Meskell 2006).

⁶⁸ It is argued by many that June 16 1976 signified a turning point in the struggle against apartheid. Baines (2007:52) writes that Sam Nzima's photograph "is often referred to as the single most important photograph to emerge from the struggle against apartheid", much like the image of the naked, napalm-burned Saigon girl Kim Phuc taken by Nick Ut (Kerckham Simbao 2007: fig. 22). It spelled the beginning of the collapse of apartheid and generated "world abhorrence of apartheid's child killers" (Baines 2007:52).

⁶⁹ I have deliberately chosen to use *Wikipedia* as a source of information as its contents are generally accepted as being automatically truthful and not in need of verification by many non-academic readers. Where information is regarded to be true in the form of "common sense" or a "social given", no citation is required. This plays directly into my examination of the influence of collective memory on history making. *Wikipedia*, as will emerge in subsequent discussions, is elemental in my exploration of "periodising" and narrativising sections of time – a process that marks some periods as more socio-politically dense than other periods of equal or even longer duration. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hector_Pieterse (date last accessed 10 January 2010) and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stompie_Moeketsi (date last accessed 10 January 2010) for the narrative of the youths.

The social nature and importance of narrative construction are amply evident in these two examples. From them one can see the influence the clarity or simplicity of a narrative can have on what a collective deems meaningful and worthy of remembrance and thus visibility. While the narrative of Hector Pieterse may be perceived to be of greater collective significance because it consolidates greater socio-political issues of the time into a structured story, as well as serving as an allegory for the struggle, Pieterse's particular story has arguably achieved its level of visibility and "marketability" because of the degree of dramatisation and manipulation it has been subject to.

Baines (2007) and Kerkham Simbao (2007) reveal instances within this narrative where manipulation has occurred in order to form a coherent, simplified account. Both authors suggest that Pieterse was not a member of the Black Consciousness Movement, nor was he a political activist. Pieterse, rather than "a symbol of the sacrifices made by the youth to win freedom" (Baines 2007: 284) was, more correctly, in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was not part of the student march and was struck by a stray bullet in his torso. Unlike the popular narrative, Pieterse was not deliberately targeted and was not the first youth to be shot – this fell on the front-line youth activist Hastings Ndlovu who was shot in the head (Kerkham Simbao 2007).

Mbuyisa Makhubu, the male adolescent figure carrying Pieterse away from the violence, was also neither politically active nor involved in the march. Makhubu did not know Pieterse or his sister Antoinette (the crying female figure) yet he "became politicized through force of circumstance" (Baines 2007: 290). Indeed, while Pieterse's name is widely known and recognised, Makhubu is all but invisible.⁷⁰ Equally, Sam Nzima was not present at the march when shots were fired; the picture he captured was from several blocks away.

Stompie Seipei's legacy, however, remains undramatised and obscure. While Baines (2007) suggests that part of the appeal of Nzima's photograph is the anonymity (and therefore universality) of Pieterse since his face is in profile and no other images of the boy exist, Seipei's image (the only known image of the boy) is not as popularised and internationally recognised. Indeed only small appearances in art

⁷⁰ After Nzima's photograph was published and gained national and international attention, Makhubu feared for his safety and was forced into hiding. To this day the whereabouts of Makhubu is still unknown. Some speculate he was murdered by apartheid agents under the suspicion he was a political activist (Baines 2007).

works such as *Stompie Seipei, died 1989, Age 14* by Senzeni Marasela (1998: fig. 31) suggest commemoration and remembrance for his equally tragic sacrifice.⁷¹

These two accounts also raise necessary points about narrativisation in visibility and popularity whether in literature or in art. A narrative may be described as a story told by a story-teller. The story-teller has a distinctive voice, has agency in directing and structuring the narrative, as well as the ability to modify its telling and retelling according to audiences responses (Scholes *et al.* 2006). This becomes a key issue when interpreting the works of Alexander since the position of narrator is multiple and unclear. While Alexander may be thought to position viewer's responses by using particular signifiers, one is prompted to question whether the figures she produces are narrators or whether viewers are. With either case, this holds influence over the interpretations made and the degree to which changeability is likely to occur with each experience of the pieces.

In the next section the effects of changeability and manipulation in the processes of narrativisation will be discussed at length. Through examining the formal features of existing narratives, the effects of these changes will suggest which aspects of the past are kept in circulation and which are discarded.

2.3. The creation of time maps through narrative changeability

As suggested by Loftus *et al.* (1997: 65), “misinformation can lead people to have false memories that they appear to believe in as much as some of their genuine memories. That misinformation can lead to small changes in memory [such as colour changes] or large changes [such as events that never occurred, or locations that were never visited]”. Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 15) suggests that, as sensitive as we have become “to biases, distortions, gaps, and contradictions in the presentations of “the past”, our very ability to detect them rests on *us* constructing a baseline historical reality...[allowing] us to evaluate different tellings about the past, [and] most notably, to see what has been included – and excluded – within the various “texts””.

Eviatar Zerubavel (2003), author of *Time maps: collective memory and the social shape of the past*, dedicates the content of his book to the exploration of what

⁷¹ Senzeni Marasela used Stompie's image screened on to a lace-lined calico tray cloth (fig. 31) in a bid to elevate his sacrifice to the realm of the cherished and respected. Kathryn Smith (2000:1) writes that “although deeply political, Marasela's work bespeaks an ambivalent attitude toward past atrocities from which she was guarded and protected”. Marasela explains (Smith 2000:1): “I believe that by revisiting the past, by giving myself a place in it, I'll be able to forgive myself for my indifference.”

has been included and excluded in historical texts. Like other academics, Zerubavel puts forward that memory is a social process and histories are organised in our minds as social map-like structures that he calls *socio-mental topography* (Zerubavel 2003: 2). From this perspective the focus of history is less on the events and figures of the past than on how we, as social beings, remember it. As has been established already, memory is not always an objective and reliable process and a host of cultural factors influence what is remembered and what is not. Thus what one would conventionally call “history” is not in fact a truly comprehensive account – continued mnemonic battles about what South African history is publicly commemorated is one example of the multiple versions in existence.

The social nature of human memory, according to Zerubavel (2003: 4), is evident not only in the actual content of what communities recall, but also by “the way in which they are mentally packaged”. Objects play an important role in creating a sense of “connectedness” to narratives of the past and the present as well as orientating the direction of the narrative itself. Even if the memories are not connected to a specific location, relics help provide physical continuity and thus allow us to live in the present while simultaneously holding on to aspects of our past.

An example of the function of relics to provide a sense of continuity is the previously discussed iconic image of Hector Pieterse. The image’s context is located in 1976, three decades ago, serving as a reminder of past violence and trauma. Complicating the matter of continuity, though, is Jane Alexander’s *Butcher Boys* (1985-86). While the figures have come to be popularly narrativised as representative of apartheid brutality, their temporal and spatial independence in spite of these locating processes renders them as poignant in the present as they were 25 years ago.

“Mnemonic transitivity” (Zerubavel 2003: 6) spans many forms of expression such as oral tradition, photographs, portraits, statues and videos. Through analysis of objects, in this case the sculptural works of Alexander from 1982 to 2009, the following features are revealed: the perceived “densities” of South African history, the “shape” of historical narratives, the segmentation of essentially continuous historical stretches of time into distinct periods, and highly structured collective mnemonic distortions of actual historical distances (Zerubavel 2003). Of particular interest are the formal patterns of general plots and subplots in the stories that narrate segments of time as well as the perceived markedness or “eventfulness” of specific South African periods in contrast to historical “lulls” (Zerubavel 2003).

It is through processes of mnemonic socialisation that individuals and communities learn to narrate the events of the past. While Zerubavel (2003) uses examples of autobiographical accounts of born-again Christians and recovering alcoholics, it can be argued that, within a South African context, communities have been socialised to relate highly formulaic memories of depravity and “hitting rock bottom” (in the form of June 16 1976) that are associated with the apartheid past – a past that is separate from the progress of the new South Africa. Through published reports of the TRC, school curricula, and commemorative holidays, for example, both subtle and obvious tactics reveal “the socially appropriate narrative forms for recounting the past as well as the tacit rules of remembrance that help separate the conventionally memorable from that which can – or even ought to – be relegated to oblivion” (Zerubavel 2003: 5).

While mathematically time is continuous, unitary, homogenous, and most essentially unilinear (Grosz 1999), emotions and experiences have a substantial affective influence on the way we perceive time as they have the capacity to expand, constrict or even obliterate stretches of time (Zerubavel 2003). An example of this influence would be recalling our personal experience of age: while each year consists of the same 365 days, the year one turned 13 may be recalled as less memorable than the year one turned 50. This is not necessarily because of temporal distance but also because of what a society deems meaningful in the progression of one’s life and the eventfulness of the particular year.

Being able to “erase” or forget stretches of time due to their lack of eventfulness reveals that various mental and mnemonic strategies maintain the illusion of historical/autobiographical continuity even though chunks have effectively been removed while others have been inflated in the narration. This process occurs on the collective, historical level too, where the year 1976 may be collectively perceived as more historically memorable for South Africans than 1977.

Working simultaneously with the process of creating continuous, flowing accounts of history is the diametrically opposite process of separating the progression of time into seemingly distinct “periods”. For example the apartheid era/period may be conceptualised as the onset of apartheid with the National Party (NP) coming to government in 1948 and ending in 1994. This periodising and segmentation does not, however, reveal that the onset of apartheid was enabled by previously existing oppressive colonial legislation (including a form of pass law) beginning as far back as

the nineteenth century. The collapse of apartheid also, more accurately, took place over the course of negotiations between the NP and the ANC from 1990 to 1993. In this time many political parties were un-banned, Nelson Mandela was released from prison (1990) and the country's first democratic elections took place (1994). Apartheid legislation was also systematically abolished over the course of 1990 to 1996, with emphasis on a smooth, peaceful transition. The collective memory of this period of time, however, typically narrates the collapse of apartheid and succession of democracy as back-to-back events in the year 1994. This is characteristic of *Wikipedia*, for example "South African general election, 1994".⁷²

Critical events, such as those above, are what Zerubavel (2003) calls "watersheds" of socio-mental topography. These events demarcate one period of time from another and are pivotal in the construction and narration of histories. "Punctuation" in historical narratives serves to create separators in time to form what Zerubavel (2003: 8) would call "pre-historical" moments, the time before what we typically regard as a beginning point of a given history. If one were to narrate the birth of the "new" South Africa, for example, the beginning point would be 1994, with the past acting as a means to contextualise the progression story as well as to meld events into a seemingly coherent historical narrative.

According to Zerubavel (2003: 13), what is designated as meaningful in the narration of histories is the process of presenting earlier experiences and accomplishments "as somehow prefiguring what we are currently doing". From a formal perspective this reveals three key plot structures: that of "progress"/"decline", "zigzag", and "mountain"/"valley" (Zerubavel 2003). As the first suggests, progress and decline narratives respectively relate rags-to-riches stories or the pessimistic decline from former glory to ruin. A zigzag narrative provides a combination of both optimistic development and pessimistic decline. Mountain and valley narratives denote the "eventfulness" of a period of time or its perceived "density" – to speak reductively, the amount of pages a period of time receives in a history textbook. This qualitative social demarcation effectively separates time into seemingly characterless, unmarked time that is inevitably forgotten versus eventful, marked and commemorated time.

It is important to note, however, that these narrative forms do not operate in

⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_general_election_1994. Date last accessed 10 January 2010.

isolation. A progress narrative from a colonial or NP perspective marks the socio-politico-economic development of South Africa over the colonial and apartheid era from “primitive origins” to a Western “civilised” culture. In opposition to this an indigenous perspective marks this period of time as a decline narrative of decades of oppression and human rights abuses. Similarly, as resistance against apartheid gained momentum, from an NP perspective this would mark the collapse or decline of a “golden age”, while marking the progress and optimism of change from an ANC perspective. Subplots also exist within the structures of these narratives and this explains the zigzag narrative. While post-1994 could arguably be marked as a general “progress” narrative, the many growing pains associated with the transition, subsequent equality initiatives, socio-economic adjustments, crime, and corruption within civil services, as some examples, would result in pessimistic “dips” on the continuing incline (Zerubavel 2003).

It is the perceived mnemonic “density” of narratives, however, that reflects how much we, as members of collectives, actually remember or deem meaningful of particular periods of time (Zerubavel 2003). An example would be from *Wikipedia*: if one were to conduct a search of South African history, the article “South African history under apartheid”⁷³ is in-depth and has multiple links to individual events and public figures resulting in a substantially larger document to encapsulate events since 1948. The article “South African history since 1994”⁷⁴ has significantly fewer links to similar articles related to the last 15 years of history, suggesting that post-apartheid may be considered an historical “lull”. Mountain and valley narratives are thus of particular interest because of their applicability to existing interpretations of Alexander’s body of work and the visibility/invisibility of particular pieces. Some of Alexander’s most recognisable, acclaimed and socially inflected artworks were created in what would be described as a politically “dense” period of South African history – the 1980s and 1990s.

Importantly, even with local discourses leaving the past in the past, as suggested by Ingrid de Kok (1998), Zerubavel (2003) claims that despite seeming distinctions between the past and the present, and the collective desire to regard them as separate entities, the present is a continuation of the past as an integrated whole.

⁷³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa_under_apartheid. Date last accessed 10 January 2010.

⁷⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_South_Africa_since_1994. Date last accessed 10 January 2010.

The effects of apartheid do not remain in the past with the passing of 1994 and the birth of a “new” country, but continue to linger in the form of social and economic problems and memories of a by-gone regime: Karl Marx’s observation that “the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living” rings particularly true of South African experiences (in Zerubavel 2003: 38).⁷⁵ The maintenance of continuous identities is thus “virtually impossible without the essentially ‘adhesive’ acts of memory” that work in opposition to the ever-increasing disposability and planned obsolescence of modern societies and economics (Zerubavel 2003: 40).

Quite remarkably, Zerubavel (2003: 45) suggests that the creation of social histories are not passive activities, but that collectives have the ability to design “future sites of memory...in advance” in the form of year books, or, in the case of Alexander’s art, perhaps with award-winning work such as *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3). Alexander’s figures, particularly those of the 1980s and 1990s, would seem to reveal processes of collective interpretation and narration that fulfils the expected requirements of historical periods. Those pieces that have been more difficult to narrativise and integrate with the norms of South African historical periods have mostly fallen out of observation and contemplation – much like the histories they represent. That being said, Alexander’s pieces act as vessels for socio-political commentary, playing an important role as tangible affective evocations of alternative histories and the continuation of collective narrative discord.

While Zerubavel (2003: 82) suggests that there exists the desire to create gapless historical continua, in some cases the goal is, in fact, to encourage “a vision of actual historical gaps”. Unlike gradualist narratives that feature imperceptible graded changes (such as the evolution of a species over time), episodic narratives feature discrete historical eras with “pronouncedly sharp breaks” (Zerubavel 2003: 82). The staccato feature of historical discontinuity serves the purpose of periodising stretches of time as distinct from one another. Such a periodic grouping of South African histories (as described by *Wikipedia*) is: before 1652, 1652-1815, 1815-1910, 1910-1948, 1948-1994, 1994-to present.⁷⁶

These periods are explicitly articulated and delineated by collective memories,

⁷⁵ Zerubavel quotes Karl Marx’s “Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” (1852). A transcript can be found at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm>

⁷⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_South_Africa. Date last accessed 10 January 2010.

some examples being the Dutch settlers in 1652,⁷⁷ the arrival of English settlers in 1815, the end of colonial rule, the collapse of the Union of South Africa and the succession of the NP government in 1948, the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the first inclusive national election in 1994. Zerubavel (2003: 85) clearly articulates, though, that the process of segmenting histories into distinct periods is a reflection of mental discontinuity:

Historical discontinuity is a form of mental discontinuity, and the way we cut up the past is thus a manifestation of the way we cut up mental space in general...the temporal breaks we envision between supposedly distinct historical “periods” helps articulate mental discontinuities between supposedly distinct cultural, political, and moral identities.

This observation is crucial when examining the functioning of collective memory processes embodied and evoked by Alexander’s pieces. In the manner that collectives may distinguish between “pre-colonisation” and the Dutch settlers marks the major cultural contrast between “indigenous” and “European”, in the same way the collapse of apartheid and the introduction of democracy marks a cultural shift between “oppression” and “freedom”. As discussed in detail in the next section, these are arguably evident in the stylistics and metaphors used in Alexander’s pieces.

The temporal distances that the collective creates in the periodising of histories are arguably evident in the manner in which the collective tends to inflate the perceived mental distances between periods (Zerubavel 2003). South Africa, in a temporal sense, very recently came to democracy. Although just 15 years ago, the apartheid era seems to be further away, as though it belongs to another era. That may be a result of historical discontinuity and the active process of dissociating certain periods of time from others. Indeed, the “new” South Africa is celebrated and aged from its “birth” in 1994 and history predating it is perceived as a series of “dark ages” that lead up to the new progress narrative, meaning that generations born after 1994 are “outside” of apartheid time.

In the next section, a selection of Alexander’s pieces will be analysed in light of

⁷⁷ The settlement of the Cape of Good Hope is an important indicator of historical narrative construction and alterability. Traditionally recounted as the arrival of Dutch sailor Jan van Riebeeck in 1652, before this time the Cape of Good Hope was a regular stopover for Portuguese sailors. The “first settlers” were a band of Dutch sailors who were shipwrecked at Table Bay in 1647 who settled and built a fort where they lived until they were rescued a year later. See Noble, J. 1893. *Illustrated official handbook of the Cape and South Africa: a resumé of the histories, conditions, populations, productions and resources, of the several colonies, states and territories*. Cape Town: J.C. Juta and co.

the above arguments to reveal periodising and narrative construction, and how these might be seen to manifest in stylistic changes in Alexander's works. These stylistic changes may be considered to be examples of what Zerubavel (2003: 89) would call "rites of separation": acts that are "specifically designed to dramatise the symbolic transformations of identity involved in establishing new beginnings, essentially implying that it is indeed quite possible to 'turn over a new leaf' and be somehow 'reborn'".

2.4. Alexander's figures and the stories they tell

If one were to apply the above discussions to the last 60 years of South African history, the simplified and structured story would read along the lines of the dark apartheid past (1948–), a struggle against "forces of evil" resulting in a crisis (1950–1990s) followed by victory and resolution (1994–). If one were to page through Ivor Powell's 1995 catalogue of Jane Alexander (Powell 1995a), written to accompany her Standard Bank Young Artist Award exhibition, one becomes aware of the visual representations of these distinct periods: *The Butcher Boys* (1985-86: fig. 5) is representative of the apartheid era, *something's going down* (1994: fig. 4) and *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13) may be seen as invoking the transition to democracy and "laying trauma to rest" in the form of the TRC, and *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11) could be regarded as representative of the continued social problems faced by the new nation.

Commentators of Alexander's works have also suggested that her pieces offer socially and politically dense commentaries of South African experiences. For example, in a review in the *Mail & Guardian*, Powell (1995c: 5) comments: "The *Butcher Boys*...have captured...the brutalised spirit of a disturbed time – the rampant violence of the mid to late 1980s". Ruth Sack (1995)⁷⁸ observes in the *Sunday Independent*: "*Integration Programme: man with TV*...is a haunted and yearning image...trapped...(to go where? Waiting for what?)". What these interpretations demonstrate are the processes of narrativising figures and events into "acceptable" and structured stories that ignore other aspects of South African histories occurring simultaneously. Alexander's deliberate lack of prescription and the figures' flummoxing ambiguity, however, stand in stark contrast to the desire to structure,

⁷⁸ This article is part of an archival collection at JAG's library. No page numbers were available.

cohere and narrate a progressive history.

West Coast African Angel (1985-86: fig. 12) is one piece that wedges a metaphorical spanner into the history production mechanism. This piece is an enigmatic, curious and disturbing figure that featured in Alexander's MFA exhibition in 1986 and again in the Standard Bank Young Artist Award exhibition in 1995 before being sold to an unknown private collector. The hybrid carcass-like figure is made up of a skull of a flamingo, wings that appear to be from a migratory stork instead of arms, a humanoid belly, and legs grading from pink to bright red and ending with disproportionately small feet. This mutant creature is seemingly impaled on the seat of a black metal bicycle with training wheels. Unsettlingly, the metal shaft that would ordinarily end in handlebars melds, instead, into the base of the flamingo skull making the two objects inseparable.

The seemingly obscure combinations of animal parts, cast limbs, and mass-produced mechanical object renders it alien and inaccessible upon initial examination. It is also particularly difficult to integrate an interpretation into a story that holds reference to one's own autobiographic narrative.⁷⁹ Furthermore, a narrative based on the events of apartheid seems forced and over-stretched. Should one turn to other art historians' interpretations for guidance, as I did, the results are of little help. This piece is not particularly well-known, very little literature and interpretation exists on it and, since entering into a private collection in the mid 1990s, it has in a sense disappeared from art and public histories.

Although it may present similar mnemonics to *Butcher Boys* (1985-86: fig. 5), such as mutant combinations and the lack of an interpretation by the artist, *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86: fig. 12) requires considerably more effort to narrativise its signifiers. While searching for an entry point to the macabre figure, the title and date provided some initial mnemonic and interpretive indicators. From an interpretation informed by the title, the following became apparent: in the aftermath of World War I, South West Africa (SWA), a former German colony, was relinquished into the

⁷⁹ In the case of the researcher, this piece was created a year after she was born (1984). According to Zerubavel (2003), children are socialised and contextualised into their history. For the youngster who has little in the way of historical context, current-affairs stories in a newspaper will be altogether inaccessible. As time progresses, however, and the individual finds himself or herself able to contextualise events, there will be much greater reliance on ever changing public records. The works of Senzeni Marasela add dimension to Zerubavel's argument in the way histories or lack of histories shape future identities. Martin (2002:337) writes, "Senzeni Marasela (1977-) was born a year after the Soweto uprisings. Using images from press photographs for her embroideries and etched mirrors, she reclaims a history of which she has a sense, but no personal experience".

custodianship of South Africa (then a member of the British Commonwealth). Over the course of the 1960s Britain granted independence to many of its colonies and pressure was placed on South Africa to do the same with SWA. South Africa, however, was reluctant to relinquish its trusteeship because SWA was (although never officially) administered as a *de facto* fifth province. Resistance beginning in the 1960s by the military South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) against South African forces and administration resulted in conflict until SWA officially gained independence in 1990 and renamed itself Namibia (see Cliffe *et al.* 1994, Herbstein and Evenson 1989, Leys and Saul 1995).

Mnemonic indicators such as the blood-red colouring of the creature's legs combined with the skull and wings taken from found carcasses could point to a literal suggestion of damage, death and destruction caused by conflict. Melding together the bicycle and the hybrid creature reflects deeper relationships and contentions between forces in conflict, though. Powell (1995a) writes that this installation is representative of the conjunction of first and third world culture, technology and native Africans. His suggestion could be read further to suggest the reluctance of the seemingly "superior" white-ruled South African government to give up the territory: substantiated by signifiers that suggest forced and unnatural combinations. These inferences have the ability to lead interpretations toward colonial-type connectedness between industrial/economic development and indigenous resources.

Ironically though, that both elements are connected to each other in this installation – the flamingo skull attached to the bicycle shaft – is suggestive that neither is more important than the other, forming instead a symbiotic relationship. The bicycle cannot work or move without a rider, and the creature's underdeveloped feet would not be able to support its body if it were to stand. This negative effect of the relationship is also represented through the creature's lack of well-being. The creature does not appear healthy and the union seems entirely uncomfortable in spite of seemingly smooth and seamless joins.

When analysed from a current perspective, however, *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86: fig. 12) takes on completely new dimension and could be thought to allude to the far more insidious effects of collective memory processes, narrativisation and distortion. The non-congruous combination of metal and organic matter, human and animal, may be argued to represent segmenting and merging of historical time to conform to a continuous narrative of separate events, as well as visually allude to

narrative manipulation to design a suitable history and perception. An example one may consider is the South African public's perception (informed by heavily censored media) of SWAPO as a terrorist faction despite the United Nations declaring South Africa's administration of SWA illegal (Cliffe *et al.* 1994, Herbstein and Evenson 1989, Leys and Saul 1995).

This piece holds particular interest for theories of historical narrative construction because of its seeming invisibility in the tableaux of Alexander and the larger South African art scene. While Alexander has achieved acclaim both locally and internationally, the question remains why some pieces, such as *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86), have fallen into obscurity while others, such as *Butcher Boys* (1985-86), have enduring, iconic, international status.

The answer perhaps lies in collective memories and history-making. While both *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) and *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86) were made during the same period, their interpretations are markedly different. As Powell (1995a: 15) writes:

[The *Butcher Boys*] are images of brutalisation...they emerge from a specific time and place. In their woundedness and their bestiality, they are personifications of the appallingly spiralling violence, the anarchy, the necklace killings, the civil war, the police brutality, the child detentions, the burnings and lootings of South Africa in the 1980s.

The three figures arguably embody the features that Schudson (1997) suggests are elemental to a successful narrative: protagonists, and antagonists and allusions to structures, trends or social forces.

Powell (1995a: 19) writes more obliquely of *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86), suggesting:

The piece is not a racist characterisation of the African as an inferior being; it is a sympathetic and nicely observed personification of a particular but more or less irreducible energy in third world culture.

It may thus be inferred that, as a consequence of *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86) evoking stories unrelated to those of apartheid and individual experiences (stories that are central to "new South African" identities and consciousnesses), it has fallen into the vaguer realms of interpretation. Lacking the required narrative appeal, *West Coast African Angel* therefore fails to capture the general public's attention.

More crucially, Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 94) raises the poignant question "how much presence should be granted to a morally problematic, challenging past? Can one

be asked to commemorate mistakes and failures?” Though *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86) and *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) hold several similarities in their commentaries of power abuse, they seem to diverge because of narrative outcome. To elaborate, Meskell (2006) suggests that negative heritage occupies a dual role – the first acting as a means for positive didactic purposes (such as the narratives of Hiroshima and Auschwitz), while the second, alternatively, erases memories if they cannot be integrated into national conceptions of Self.

In the case of *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) the negative history that is associated with the figures is eclipsed by the positive outcome of the transition to democracy, fundamentally the rise from “rags-to-riches”. The affective imagery and memories evoked by the figures perhaps serve as moral warnings that the past should not be repeated and also acting as positive reminders of “look how far we’ve come” in the reinforcement and production of progression narratives. Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 92) substantiates this by suggesting “myths emerge almost naturally here, as the sense of loss acquires permanence. The narrative of ‘this is where we come from’, in other words, draws strength from the physical reminders of the past”. In the case of *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) its near constant display and physical presence at a public gallery reinforces its role as a reminder of a specific version of the past.

Equally, the potent affective power of these figures has the potential to connect emotional experiences that are perhaps only tentatively linked. When coming into the space of *Butcher Boys* for the first time, I felt a sense of trepidation – perhaps because these creatures who had, up until then, only existed on paper were about to enter my reality. This may be linked to trepidation felt through various stages of transition in South Africa’s recent history as well as for the future in the sense that people and contextual boundaries are under constant change.

When viewing the figures, momentary feelings of disappointment and confusion caught me unaware. My prior exposure to the work had been through photographs, and these have the ability to significantly alter the visual experience. By viewing the figures through a secondary medium that lacked cues to aid proportion I had envisioned them to be much larger than they actually were. The photographs had also effectively placed a barrier between the figures and me, so hindering my emotive response to the work. My experience of the actual figures was markedly different to viewing them through photographs as the ability to closely examine details from many angles and their tangible presence created a more nuanced engagement. In this

way, public archives of the past are powerful tools for shaping the narratives and emotional attachments to the past: as Irwin-Zarecka (1997) has suggested, engaging with the past through secondary, interpreted mediums can alter the perception of it to one of adventure and high drama, as opposed to one of sombreness.

While Alexander goes to lengths to avoid fixed interpretation of her works, the translation of three-dimensional sculptural pieces into two-dimensional photographic form can have a significant limiting effect on the visual experience and subsequent interpretations (an example of the misrepresentation Alexander might be seeking to avoid). Popular photographic depictions of *Butcher Boys* are commonly from a centre-front angle (fig. 5), which literally limits the possible points of view. Walter Benjamin, author of the 1935 essay “The work of art in the age of mechanical production” (in Morra and Smith 2006), suggests that media such as photography lacks the presence in time and space that accompanies the original work of art. Transposing a sculpture into mass-produced photography would thus deplete what Benjamin describes as a unique work of art’s “aura”, or the feeling of awe and reverence evoked by the original.

To return to the question of remembering morally problematic pasts and their mistakes or failures, *West Coast African Angel* arguably acts in the second capacity suggested by Meskell (2006) – namely, to erase histories from collective memories if they cannot be integrated – through its lack of compatibility with the kinds of constructions about apartheid in the national imagination. My interpretation of *West Coast African Angel* refers to failure and loss of territory, as well as shame and embarrassment about the past. I suggest the uncomfortable combinations of materials and posture of the figure invoke this reading.

Furthermore, the metaphor and connotation of an ostrich that is unable to bury its head in the sand (and is therefore forced to acknowledge as opposed to deny its actions) is made more uncomfortable by the fact that the head is a skull and the eyes have rotted away. These signifiers evoke a sense of futility as the creature will never be able to acknowledge its socio-political surroundings because it is dead. The skull also suggests this creature has been deceased for some time, referring to the reality that many of those who were responsible for conflicts and trauma of the past are also long dead.

Because historical narratives are merged with personal identities, *West Coast African Angel* may allude to defunct identities in the wake of South West Africa

gaining independence and reforming its own independent identities in 1990. The subsequent loss of SWA undoubtedly rendered identities associated with it defunct. New memories and identities of South Africa without the territory of Namibia may thus be thought to all but erase this conflict from the minds of the collective. It is only through concentrated analysis of artwork, such as *West Coast African Angel*, and focused studies in the social sciences that collective memory process are revealed to show directionality and degrees of importance in historical narrative construction.

Directionality and ambiguity of progress/decline narratives are also evident in a later piece by Alexander titled *something's going down* (1994). As suggested by K.M. Fierke (2006: 117), author of “Bewitched by the past: social memory, trauma and international relations”, “the concept of social memory is distinguished by its focus on the political use of memory, as distinct from the supposedly ‘hidden’ nature of trauma”. In this instance, *something's going down* (1994: fig. 4) offers dense commentaries on the use of collective memories in the production of new political and social landscapes.

This heavily inflected piece is small in size (only 58 cm in height and 128 cm in length) and appears, as its title suggests, like a snapshot of something in the process of happening – an impending yet unknown climax/crisis in a story. Upon the platform, which is painted in browns and greens reminiscent of army camouflage, a gathering of four naturalistic figures peer into the distance at something unknown but nonetheless captivating. At the front of the group a beacon-like black female figure wearing a conservative red dress leans forward and shades her eyes in order to see further into the distance. Behind her a small black boy, dressed in school uniform and a balaclava (arguably a child activist), and who appears to be only ten years old, runs toward the action.

The boy is passing the tallest of the figures (about 35 cm), a male that Powell (1995a) suggests could possibly be albino. The man is conservatively dressed, wears a hat and bears an uncanny resemblance to other figures of Alexander such as *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13) and *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11). This man, like the other figures, appears transfixed with what lies on the horizon as he distractedly drags behind him a bundle connected by a string (possibly suggesting he is a migrant worker). The fourth figure, behind the grown man, appears to be a black teenage boy with a cleanly shaven head and is neatly dressed in a modest coat and trousers.

The figures' attention is focused to the right of the installation and they seem unaware of the billboard that they are all passing. The billboard carries ambiguous signifiers such as ominous text and the duplicated image of a pretty, rosy-cheeked Aryan girl. The 1970s-style little blonde girl, who is smiling sweetly, looking up with her big blue eyes, and holding her hands together in virtuous prayer under her chin, appears the picture of innocence. She appears so sweet that the text below her, "Radiance of Faith", might be read to suggest she is the epitome of Christian ideals. If she is perceived in such a way, she arguably draws attention away from the other (opposite) figures' own innocence amidst political crisis.

Their presupposed lack of innocence through entrenched racial stereotyping is further suggested by the ominous text that appears on the back of the billboard. Reading like an Orwellian-type message of controlled reintegration the sign states:

We are here to:

** Search for stolen property*

** Search for unlicensed firearms and ammunition*

** Identify suspects and arrest them*

*This is necessary to maintain law
and order and to protect [sic] you from troublemakers.*

You have no reason to fear us.

Thank you for your co-operation

(Powell 1995a: 28)

In 1994, the time of this piece's creation, the future was wholly uncertain and the threat of anarchy weighed heavily on the minds of many – as is suggested by the tentative postures of the figures. The addition of "[sic]" after the word "protect", however, points to a general mistrust toward state forces that, after decades of oppressive control, now claim to "protect" the public from "suspects" (although it is unclear what type of suspects they seek to arrest) and "troublemakers" in their own community.

When the text is read it is difficult to gauge the sincerity of the message. While the message may illustrate authentic concern for the public's safety over a tumultuous period of transition, continuation of long-standing codes of social engagement can be read from the message's domineering tone and its display to a black audience. The intention of the message to mediate public behaviour, arguably for the "greater good", has connotations with apartheid police control.

According to Fierke (2006: 125),

social memory is articulated memory, not only in speech but in ritual. It is not only put into words but is acted out. Much memory...is the memory of context dependent information. As long as actors remain in a context they will be surrounded by clues that prompt a memory”.

From a contemporary perspective, the mnemonic indicators of *something's going down* suggest that the context of apartheid's collapse and the transition to democracy are still as much a part of present-day South Africa as they are part of our past.

Although the collapse of apartheid saw legislation such as the Group Areas Act abolished, many people continue to live in townships where violent protests occurred. For them, the environment fosters cues for memories of the struggle. Indeed, as part of National Youth Day commemoration, a re-enactment of the student march takes place. Individuals (some of whom were participants of the original march) can walk the route and contemplate the events that ensued.

Stylistically, these figures could serve as metaphors for progress and optimism – perhaps even “evolution”. The year 1994 represented a socio-political watershed as well as serving as an opportunity to “turn over a new leaf” as suggested by Zerubavel (2003). In 1980s works such as *Butcher Boys* (1985-86: fig. 5), *Untitled* (both 1982: fig. 18 and 1985-86: fig. 15) and *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86: fig. 12), Alexander's figures are distinctly mutilated as well as half-human and half-beast – tropes of power abuses and oppression. Alexander's figures in works such as *Serviceman* (1994: fig. 20), *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995: fig. 13), *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995: fig. 11) and *something's going down* (1994: fig. 4), by contrast, appear hyper-realistic, indeed so life-like that viewers wait for them to move. Analysis of historical narratives of the 1990s reflects many members of the South African collective basking in the glow of a challenging but largely successful resolution to decades of conflict. The figures can thus suggest a turn towards optimism and, like other fairy-tale endings, “magically” transform into recognisable human figures that represent the “transformative power of reconciliation” encouraged by the state.

A progress narrative is not the only interpretation of *something's going down*, however. As suggested in previous discussions, directionality of progress/decline narratives may be ambiguous. The years 1994 and 1995 have been narrativised as extraordinary periods in South African history and reflected on with much nostalgia. In a marked shift South Africa moved almost seamlessly to democracy: the

constitution was amended, and South Africa's first black president (an inter-/national hero) was inaugurated.

Adding to the romance of local and international reconciliation, South Africa was readmitted into many sporting events after a decades-long international ban because of apartheid. In 1995 South Africa hosted and won the World Cup Rugby competition, and the perception that rugby was a "white sport" shifted when then-President Nelson Mandela wore a Springbok rugby jersey to present the team with the trophy – a symbolic and significant gesture. In 1996 South Africa hosted the twentieth African Cup of Nations soccer competition, in which local team Bafana Bafana won. Team captain Neil Tovey became the first white player to raise the trophy (BBC news 2004).

As Kelley (2004) suggests in his essay on the uncanny, the small size of the piece allows for the projection of fantasy. In my interpretation I located the work in the mid 1990s, based on its date. Reflection and contemplation of the piece thus seemed to result in fantasy, nostalgia and romantic notions about this period being put into play – I was ten years old and on the brink of a new stage of life, and South Africa too was about to enter a new stage.

Indeed, contemplation of this piece still manages to conjure hope and intrigue for the future of South Africa. The highly detailed figures allude, however, to the reality and magnitude of the desired changes and, in light of subsequent socio-political challenges facing South Africa, may represent the beginning of a decline narrative. Decline arguably continues to be represented in Alexander's subsequent figures that, ironically, have begun to revert to their hybrid mutant forms. Alexander's 2002 DaimlerChrysler Award winning installation *Bom Boys* (1998: fig. 3), I suggest, is a stark example of such backslide.

Cast from the same mould, perhaps to suggest a perpetuation of social difficulties, there are nine child-like figures comprising *Bom Boys*. The figures stand upright with their feet slightly apart, arms gently extended from their sides and with their palms facing outward – non-threatening body language that, coupled with their diminutive size, suggests they are benign. Despite being cast from the same mould the figures are distinguished from one another by their various stages of dress or undress: one is stark naked except, absurdly, for his polished black shoes, while another is shirtless but wears shorts, for example.

All of the figures have their faces obscured to varying degrees by an unsettling

animal mask, a blindfold or a cloth (fig. 3a, 3b and 3c). The curious installation gains a more sombre, worrying tone when the viewer realises the vulnerable figures are not just randomly grouped but are instead positioned on a floor of large grey squares suggestive of the board used in a game such as chess: this game, however, has no apparent rules and is being controlled by unseen players.

One also cannot be sure about the figures' state or degree of sentience. While they are distinctly and unsettlingly 'real' or palpable, their pale grey colour renders them like ghosts. Their ambiguity would seem to serve as a representation of greater social and political trends. As Carsten (2007: 14) suggests, "divergence between generations results in a kind of unresolved suspension in time, a present that is caught between the past and future". While South Africa commemorates the youth of the past with National Youth Day (arguably a political manoeuvre and an example of instrumentalisation), it tends, as has been argued previously, to neglect or overlook the vulnerabilities of its present-day youth.

Alexander tends to work specifically from her observations and experiences, and *Bom Boys* (1998) was prompted by her perceptions of gangs of street children on Long Street, Cape Town. While one could historically narrativise the figures as being representative of the ANC encouraging youth activism during the struggle (resulting in what is commonly known as "generation X"), these figures may also allude to the continued invisibility and neglect of present day youth in favour of other more visible issues. Indeed Jamal (2009) explores the implications of individuals who are left perpetually hungry and unsatisfied: quoting Edgar Pieterse (Jamal 2009: 2) who suggests that one of the main issues is "the perennial problem of 'political will'", Jamal's continued argument, that the habit of throwing money at the problem to make it go away, is all too evident with these little figures.

Along with their neglect is a sense of invisibility. Bell draws on the work of historian Joanna Bourke⁸⁰ (quoted in Bell 2006: 9) to suggest "wide-spread use of trauma discourse in western societies has led to an abdication of individual and political responsibility and the emergence of an undifferentiated 'victim' culture. It has had a politically neutering effect". Bourke's (Bell 2006) argument thus suggests that trauma discourses (and indeed narrativisation of histories within certain bounds) that have been co-opted by the state serve to justify inaction in addressing problems

⁸⁰ See Bourke, J. 2006. "When the torture becomes humdrum", *Times Higher Education Supplement*, February 10. p. 19.

faced by the present youth. Therefore, in contrast to *something's going down* (1994), where the youth are implied to have agency and to be participants in politics and the struggle against apartheid, these figures appear static and exist only as marginalised social nuisances.

Indeed, the ambiguity of *Bom Boys* may be thought to lie in their occupation of liminal contemporary and historical spaces. As suggested by Schudson (1997), the passage of time removes the past from present communal responsibility and thus justifies reduced attention. He adds, however, that the passage of time imbues the past with a moral quality and should, as it acquires greater universal significance, increase focus. To which group of youth does *Bom Boys* then refer? Their unusually tanned bodies and ashen, ghost-like colouration have the power to confuse and mask their age and context. Are they the lost generation of the 1970s? Are they adults trapped in the bodies of small children who will never grow up or recapture their youth? Or are they the children of today, forced to grow up too quickly in order to survive? Is their ashen colour suggestive of the death of childhood?

The visibility, or indeed invisibility, of these figures may also be thought to be due to a distinct lack of temporal distance. While figures such as *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) have had almost 25 years of socio-political upheaval to accrue popular meaning in the minds of South Africans, and a piece like *something's going down* (1994) may be interpreted in light of socio-political events current when it was made, *Bom Boys* (1998) arguably lacks a specific and definable historical context.

Perhaps these figures, as Zerubavel (2003) would suggest, are archives made in anticipation. With the progression of time the question is raised whether these figures will come to represent another watershed in South Africa's histories. They may also fall into obscurity like *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86) – their commentaries of struggling youth in present South Africa being incompatible with the overarching meta-narrative of progress. Perhaps, in fact, they may fall into obscurity because of a distinct socio-political “lull” in the constructed narratives of contemporary South African histories.

2.5. Conclusion

As Bell (2006: 3) suggests, “interpretations of the relationship between past and present not only shape contemporary identities...[but they also] help to frame the horizon of the future”. Through discussion of selected pieces from Alexander's

tableaux the aim has been to reveal the effects of narrativisation, manipulation and changeability on collective memories. While Alexander has maintained a high level of socio-political critique in her work, the question that has been raised, through collective memory research, is why some of her pieces have seemingly fallen into obscurity while others have obtained international recognition.

One of the driving forces behind the construction of collective identities and their maintenance is the standardisation of historical narratives in order to create a sense of cohesion, solidarity and progress. The desire to construct new national consciousnesses that are markedly different from those of the apartheid era has arguably resulted in construction of narratives that conflate and expand some periods of history or historical events, while decreasing attention on those that are not congruous with the overriding national narratives.

I have suggested that *Butcher Boys* has been subject to such narrativisation in the sense that the figures have, over the course of time, come to be seen as emblematic of the brutality of apartheid. I argue that it is *because* of the figures' affiliation with apartheid that they have achieved the visibility and permanence they have. I have argued that *West Coast African Angel*, conversely, has not achieved the same level of visibility because of its lack of association with popular narratives of apartheid.

Of marked interest, particularly because of the process of instrumentalisation and the necessary "marketability" of narratives for collective interest, *Butcher Boys* serves as a reminder of a dark past but ultimately acts as part of a progress narrative that culminates in victory and democracy in 1994. *West Coast African Angel* on the other hand bears reminders of an extended conflict that terminated in defeat and loss of territory – a territory that now hosts its own set of identities independent of South Africa, and is arguably of little use in the construction of new South African identities.

I have also interpreted *Bom Boys* (1998) in light of identity construction and the narrativisation of South African histories in relation to an apartheid past. While many aspects of the struggle have been commemorated in the form of public holidays and memorials, the long-term effects of apartheid on ordinary contemporary South African citizens is not necessarily acknowledged. Like Schudson (1997) observes, from Musil's astute commentary, that nothing is more invisible than a monument, while the youth of South Africa are commemorated, their plight and vulnerability in

present society remains unaddressed. This is an issue that I suggest Alexander explores in *Bom Boys* (1998): continued focus on social fragmentation as a formative element of new South African identities renders socio-political problems faced in the present invisible. This is ironic considering that they are equally formative in future identity and social construction.

While some may maintain that this is due to a lack of temporal distance, or because of variable frames of remembrance, it is equally valid that the increasing invisibility of South African socio-political issues perhaps lies with the construction and maintenance of periods of “dense” histories and contrasting “lulls”. With the linguistic focus on “victory” against apartheid and the resolution of decades of conflict as opposed to its collapse, it may be argued that contemporary South Africa is in a state of “equilibrium” and a new disruption, conflict or crisis is on the horizon. Perhaps that is what the figures of *something's going down* (1994) are looking at, perhaps that explains the static poses, masked faces and chessboard positions of the *Bom Boys* (1998), the new “balaclava-clad generation X” of future struggles.

3.0. CONCLUSION

Bell (2006: 10) makes the pertinent argument that “in the end, torture is about us. But perhaps the most damaging function of trauma discourse is the removal of individual agency – which lies, of course, at the root of responsibility”. Alexander pays close attention to the notion of bodies in pain, and while her installations now reach broader, international audiences, pain is a localised sensation dependent on frames of reference and remembrance. In spite of collective and individual attempts to narrativise suffering into a universal trope and negate responsibility, Alexander’s figures flout such attempts by defying fixed interpretations and contexts. They have an ability to return responsibility to the individual by acting as reflections of individuals’ experiences and agencies, or lack thereof.

As suggested in discussions of *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) and *Untitled* (1985-86), for example, these figures’ grisly outward appearances arguably suggest localised pain and perhaps even locate the source of pain. I have argued that through narrativising processes interpretations, aided by direct or readily readable signifiers, have become politicised over time to point toward the literal brutality of apartheid. I have also argued that these figures have the ability both to evoke traumatic memories from the past and to attribute responsibility to particular agents within the past by their ability to occupy physical and temporal space and exert an uncanny presence.

Artworks occurring in Alexander’s later body of work, such as *Bom Boys* (1998) and the figures that constitute *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002-04), for example, could be argued to reveal the impact of memories of trauma and pain on the psychology of both individuals and collectives. These figures’ smoothed appearance do not immediately suggest trauma, yet their obvious mutilation suggests the effects of trauma and alteration of memories on individual and collective identities.

Importantly I have suggested that the physical appearance of Alexander’s newer works may be suggestive of what Bell (2006) claims is one of the most damaging functions of trauma discourse – “victim culture”. With South Africa’s preoccupation with forming new identities that are separate from, yet informed by, the apartheid past, the narrativising process (that includes manipulation of memories) has arguably distanced the sense of affective immediacy and moral responsibility in correcting present socio-political issues such as a vulnerable youth.

While Alexander has been referred to as “South Africa’s most difficult and least definable artist” (Greenberg 2003), this claim is arguably representative not just of Alexander but of the broader socio-political environments of South Africa and internationally that inform her works. Rejecting modernism and its delineated categories, social roles and their associated fixed, essentialist meanings, has meant that Alexander’s art reflects the fragmented and difficult to define postmodernist, increasingly globalised world. Within this world, notions of unfixed identities, memory construction, changeability of histories and heritage, and the fluidity of individual and social dynamics prevail.

Works that I have argued to represent this process are *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004) and *Security* (2006-09). I have suggested that both of these installations’ re-use of elements from previous installations (such as the figure *Bird* (2002-04) and workmen’s tools such as pangas and sickles) have the dual function of creating a sense of temporal progression from one installation to the next, but also confusing the temporal and contextual environment to generate an uncanny sense of familiarity. While these installations have been exhibited in an international context and may be thought to allude to themes of globalisation and diasporas, they are also able to be interpreted as explorations of local experiences. These interpretations are, of course, never stable, just like the environs, memories and subjectivities that inform them.

By examining multiple confluences and fragments that make up interpretations of Alexander’s personages and their socio-political contexts, a link is developed between her art and the functioning of memories on individual and collective levels. The seeming inaccessibility to, and contradictions in, her artworks may perhaps be argued to be a deliberate manoeuvre by Alexander in order to draw awareness to processes inherent in memory production, circulation and perpetuation. Examples I suggest are *West Coast African Angel* (1985-86) and the narratives of Stompie Seipei and Hector Pieterse.

Through processes of history narrativisation and the manipulation of memories it is evident that certain highly selected versions of the past are kept in circulation. I suggest that *West Coast African Angel*’s lack of visibility may extend beyond the fact that it was sold to an unknown private collection in the mid 1990s, and may in part be due to the inability to narrativise the piece into historiographic narratives currently in circulation.

This process is also visible in regard to the fates of the two mentioned youths. While the narrative of Pieterse's fate underwent manipulation to fit neatly into struggle ideologies and the role of the youth in the struggle, Stompie's narrative, I suggest, is not as easily structured. It may therefore be suggested that to continue to remember the fragmented and unfinished story of Stompie Seipei may be more traumatic than the narrative of Hector Pieterse because, by being incomplete, the former is likely to haunt one's consciousness.

Trauma as well as processes of narrativisation influence memory functions at individual and collective levels, and these have a marked effect on interpretations of Alexander's work. While working primarily from personal experiences, albeit not entirely autobiographical, some interpretations of Alexander's art have emerged as highly politicised and of great social significance as they evoke memories and counter-memories. This I suggested may be seen with figures Alexander created during the 1990s such as *Serviceman* (1994), *Hit (poor Walter)* (1995), and *Integration Programme: man with TV* (1995).

These figures were created in the transition stage of South Africa's recent political history and may be argued to represent confused socio-political spaces, social roles and modes of engagement. Through the public proceedings of the TRC I suggest that instead of greater clarity of victim/perpetrator boundaries, the roles grew less easy to define. The TRC literally and metaphorically blurred black and white distinctions. Emotions such as guilt and shame evoked by recalling memories of the past point to remorse for previous actions, while psychological trauma experienced by perpetrators of violence requires a more nuanced reformulation of who were victims of the apartheid system. These responses, I argued, are readable in the above-mentioned sculptures.

While modernist notions of memory suggest that experiences are engraved into the mind and remain unchanged from one recall to the next, narrativisation and trauma reveal the extent to which memories are subject to manipulation and, in some cases, significant alteration. Memories are not stable but, like Alexander's art, are flummoxing, and an area that requires greater critical examination of social influences, subjectivities and traumas. Thus, when Renate Wiehager (2002: 10) suggests that Alexander's figures may be read as examples of "psychological deformations of the social body, showing human beings in extreme stages of metamorphic transformation", Alexander's figures foreground issues of confusion and

the complex overlappings of boundaries of what is known and what is strange, what is real and what is fabricated.

Closer examination of *African Adventure* (1999-2002: figs 1a-1p), for example, reveals that these pertinent questions arise. Many of the figures are in some stage of transformation although the direction they are transforming to is difficult to tell. Are they turning into humans or animals? Or are they destined to remain as liminal indefinable creatures? In the same way, how are our memories and versions of histories forming future identities and notions of the past? Are we going to be forever in the liminal transition space?

These are important questions to ask when examining Alexander's figures. While the figures should be read with the knowledge that they are informed by the highly changeable past and its associated experiences, whose versions are sometimes multiple and conflicting, the temptation to impress a fixed interpretation on to them should be resisted. In this sense, while *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) has come to be popularly narrativised as an example of the violence of apartheid, its experiential enigma and resistance to be confined to one interpretation, time and context serves as a visual representation of the intercontextual nature of memories and their recall. *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) may equally serve as the brutalisations of present day South Africa and beyond – as a mirror of the violence and struggle of everyday existences.

I suggested that uncanny elements also reveal the distinctions in interpretations between older and younger generations of South Africans: for the former, the experiences evoked by Alexander's figurations are sometimes very real, traumatic, and belonging to their own personal histories, while for the latter (who reached adulthood only after the demise of apartheid) the tortured figuration could perhaps serve in a metaphorical capacity without affective attachment, resulting in distanced and inherited histories. As Bell (2006: 3) suggests, "interpretations of the relationship between past and present not only shape contemporary identities ... [but] in so doing they help to frame the horizon of the future".

Discussion of the uncanny serves the purpose of revealing the nature and extent of suppression of traumatic memories in the minds of individual South Africans, yet this reading should not be confined to South Africa only. "Rainbow nation" rhetoric and the supposed cathartic TRC experience are shown to act as a barrier between the conscious and the subconscious, and uncanny signifiers in selected works of Alexander demonstrate how suppressed, fragmented memories

continue to manifest themselves in behaviours, beliefs and social interactions. These I have argued are particularly evident in *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit* (2002-04) as well as *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004).

In regard to the former artwork, I suggested that the burden of inherited memories has physically and psychologically altered a younger generation lacking the experiential base from which these memories stem and thus remains haunted by ghosts it cannot place. Equally, the installation *DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI* (2004) reflects the realities of existing in a fragmented, undefined social space. In attempts to regain a sense of control and wellbeing, inhabitants of violence prone boundaries take action in the form of security, the owning of weapons and alteration in behaviour. The paradox of these actions is that the threat of strangers occupying the same space is exacerbated by socially isolating security measures.

The other significant memory process discussed in this thesis is the system of collective narrativisation. By gathering fragments of histories and assembling them into continuous, coherent narratives containing necessary elements such as antagonists, protagonists, beginnings, middles and resolutions, selected pieces from Alexander's tableaux reveal the changeability of collective memories. Through the process of narrativising and modifying histories, some of Alexander's works may be thought to act as visual representations of the favouring and popularising of certain narratives over others.

As made clear in discussions of *Butcher Boys* (1985-86), the popularity these figures have gained through collective narrativisation has resulted in their emergence in other media. The readily recognisable narrative of the figures literally "comes to life" in Bailey's musical interpretation of *macbEth* (2007: see Watterson 2007) and again in a live performance in 2007 (see Lamprecht 2007). The transformation of these iconic figures is also suggestive of the extent to which South Africa's past holds influence on present identities. While responses to seeing the figures released from the confines of the gallery into public spaces may be those of surprise and enjoyment, they nevertheless prompt the question of how much of the brutal past has been internalised and assimilated into the new consciousnesses of South Africans. *Butcher Boys* is in some sense an allegory for those ghosts of apartheid not remaining in the past but instead walking freely amongst the living.

One of the driving forces behind the construction and maintenance of collective identities (and thus also individual identities) is the standardisation of

historical narratives in order to create a sense of cohesion, solidarity and “progress”. The desire to construct new national consciousnesses that are markedly different from those of the colonial and apartheid era has arguably resulted in the construction of narratives that conflate and expand some periods of history while limiting focus on timeframes or events that are not congruous with overriding national narratives.

It is with this in mind that future research into the works of Alexander should be considered. I believe that focused examination of Alexander’s photomontages would reveal these processes. The very act of manipulating images in order to create photomontages may be thought to represent processes of standardisation, narrativisation and instrumentalisation draw attention to the large, fluxing bodies of counter-memories.

Survey: Cape of Good Hope (2005-2009)

For this dissertation I have focused specifically on aspects of memories, traumas and changeable narratives in Alexander’s sculptural works but, because of space constraints I have not included the photomontages she has been making since the 1980s. Alexander’s photomontages may be thought to mirror processes of memory as many of her sculpted figures appear in the montages in shifting contexts and degrees of visibility.

Svea Josephy (2004: 157) writes that, like the functioning of memories, the montage process [used by Alexander] is one of radical editing and restructuring of her original photographs...[Hence, like memories] we can see new relationships, multiple points of view; we see simultaneously with more than just one set of eyes. Alexander’s work, like much post-apartheid photography, acknowledges that there is nothing such as only one point of view and no fixed position, but rather contested or shifting positions as the single linear narratives of the past are being replaced by histories, stories and identities that are multiple and dispersed...[Alexander’s] photographs...seem to have been culled from different times and spaces...[and they] coexist, creating dialogue.

Between 2005 and 2009 Alexander produced a large series of black and white photomontages that could be thought to articulate the dialogue that Josephy (2004) refers to. This series of photomontages titled *Survey: Cape of Good Hope* consists of approximately sixty images, three of which will be discussed below. As the title suggests, Alexander’s montages depict familiar figures from her collection in both

familiar and unfamiliar settings, acting like a survey of the contemporary South African socio-politico-environmental landscape.

Alexander (2009: 21) explains that these images may act as “a contextual backdrop against which the origin of the sculpted figures can be considered”. As Anthony Smith (1996) suggests, memories can also be subject to a process of “territorialisation” in the way that that shared memories become associated with certain landscapes. The memories of collectives and individuals may thus be inferred by this visual survey.

One of the images from this series I have chosen to discuss is *Transmitter* (fig. 32a). In this montage (printed in black and white as opposed to its 2007 colour version *Landscape with transmitter*) one of the *Butcher Boys* (1985-86) appears in the front right hand corner of a landscape containing a telephone pole and a radio transmitter in the distance. The figure appears blurred and, while this may be a deliberate means to draw attention to the constructedness of archives, I consider two alternative interpretations for the blur, each with its own implications.

The first is that the figure has moved while a long exposure shot was being taken. This is a situation that many photographers have experienced and it may point allegorically and literally to the constant change and movement of human beings in their social contexts. The use of black and white may also be thought to invoke a feeling that the image is a document or archive and therefore “real” or “truthful”. Yet the shift of the figure could point to a lack of clarity and understanding of the past and present lived experiences of many. Indeed suggesting that the figure has “moved” carries its own implications: suggested in previous discussions it may point to the assimilation of *Butcher Boys* into the lived reality of many individuals.

The second interpretation is yet another situation that many photographers have experienced. When admiring the landscape from a moving vehicle and framing a shot of something in the distance, once the camera has been steadied and the trigger pressed, the image created is a clear, picturesque background and an unsightly streak of an unexpected pedestrian in the foreground. This interpretation has links to idealised perceptions foreign tourists may have about the beautiful South African landscape. While many overseas tourists may enjoy “whirlwind tours” of “Africa”, this image might suggest that they may move so quickly past the realities and less picturesque aspects of South African life that the impression they leave with is “blurred”.

The figure also appears curiously “at home” in the environment, away from the confined gallery space. The figure’s gaze suggests surprise as though it seems to ask “what are you doing here?” or perhaps “you can see me?” The expression of the figure, as though it is the master of this space, leaves one wondering whether the photographer (i.e. the viewer) is the intruder and the alien creature, not the figure. This in itself raises questions about the extent to which Alexander’s figures have “come to life” and acutely reflect the haunting spirit of the past occupying present localities without “a second look” by other local inhabitants.

While *Transmitter* evokes questions of validity and notions of “reality” through obvious tampering, in “*For the entertainer*” (fig. 32b) it is difficult to see how the image has been modified, if at all. In the black and white image of a grand house that only the very wealthy could afford is nestled at the foot of Cape Town’s mountainous landscape. The house appears unoccupied, however, and in the beginning stages of disrepair. A sign, “ERROL KOHN”, on the chained-closed gate belongs to an “upmarket estate agency” and the title text “For the entertainer” could be thought of as a catchy by-line used to lure potential buyers eager to live an elite life.

The image suggests, however, that there have not been occupants or interested parties for some time. The framing of the shot also seems peculiar. Unlike an advertisement shot that would showcase the house’s best features, the view is partly blocked by a large, unfinished brick pillar. This, I argue, evokes a sense of voyeurism where the “have-nots” on the pavement look in with longing at those who “have”.

When one notices that the pillar is unfinished, lacking a coat of plaster to hide the cheaper bricks, one might question whether the dream house was ever completed. This interpretation may also extend allegorically to the broader socio-political environment of South Africa. Where the dream of an idealistic future democracy once existed there now stands an incomplete structure that remains to be finished.

Furthermore, like the transition of many colonial countries to independently governed states that resulted in many white ex-patriots losing their social and economic privileges, “*For the entertainer*” may allude to the collapse of echelons in South African society. Where in the past the predominantly white section of society lived comfortable and privileged lives by nature of their skin colour, many have now been forced into different, harsher economic environments.

Disintegrating social and economic echelons discussed above are also evident in my final example, “*CANDY BOY Lonely Boys*” (fig. 32c). This montage consists of

Alexander's distinct merging of urban landscapes with blurred figures from her sculptural tableau. Depicting houses and a street, this image points toward an urban environment as opposed to the rural landscape of *Transmitter*. An eerie, masked figure from *Bom Boys* (1998) appears in the foreground of the image and he appears to be separated from the community by a flooded storm-water canal. On the opposite side of the canal is a vandalised perimeter wall bearing graffiti that perhaps marks the "territory" of resident gangs "Candy boy" and "Lonely Boys".

As Smith (1996) suggests, memories can be subject to a process of "territorialisation" in that "shared memories become attached to particular terrains". It may be argued that the extensive gang culture in the Western Cape is a product of the Group Areas Act's forced removals and destruction of established communities. By removing communities and destroying individuals' feelings of security and stability within communities, the text can point to the reality of "lost boys" and "lonely boys" seeking out gangs for a sense of security and belonging.

The mask the boy figure wears also reinforces this interpretation in that the disturbing smiling mask acts as a façade for the harsh life these displaced and anonymous adolescent boys live. Seen in relation to some communities' continued occupation of territories associated with a traumatic past, Alexander's use of contemporary urban environments may serve as commentary on lingering "unhomeliness", an effect of histories of forced removals.

I suggest that Alexander's use of photomontage, particularly for this series, functions in a similar manner to her sculptural work as vessels of memories and counter-memories. In the way that Alexander's sculptural works defy fixed interpretation through ambiguous signifiers, the photomontages play with the appearance of being "objective" and "truthful", like "a document or a report in images rather than text" (Alexander 2009: 21). What this may imply is that, once again, Alexander provides the visual cues of everyday existence and it is the responsibility of viewers to construct their own interpretations from the their experiences and information provided. Alexander (2009: 21) states, "[*Survey: Cape of Good Hope*] is intended to *evoke an impression* based on observational and theoretical research rather than *form a narrative, document essay or fixed interpretation* of the landscape or history".⁸¹

⁸¹ Emphasis added.

Thus, while Marion Arnold (1996: 104) suggests that the power of sculpture (and therefore Alexander's personages) is their intrinsic "physical, tangible reality", photomontage has its own evocative power. Sue Williamson (1989) draws attention to the political implications of photomontages blurring truth and falsity in authoritarian "documentary quality" photographs. Williamson (1989: 42) writes that Alexander's atmospheric grainy, black and white photomontages "evoke memories of news photographs taken subversively and in difficult circumstances; conversely, since we know these images have been manipulated, they raise questions about the validity of photographed documentation".

As described with *Survey: Cape of Good Hope* (2005-2009), it may be argued that the lack of sentimentality expressed by these photomontages point toward the realities of living in fragmented, disorganised social contexts, but also, importantly, that these environments are constructed. One may even be perplexed by the implications of realising the photographs, and thus the "reality" they reference, are constructed. Since it is possible to manipulate images to appear as "reality", then the logical conclusion would be that it is also possible for reality to be manipulated into particular images. It is for this reason that I suggest an extended study of Alexander's photomontages through the lense of memory would be a worthwhile undertaking.

Alexander harnesses the ways in which photography can create a sense of reality, "truth" and connectedness with contexts and environments that encourage viewers to create histories, narratives and biographies for her figures – further embedding them in our lived reality. It can also be observed that her montages from the 1980s and 1990s are reminiscent of over-exposed images and multiply facsimiled archives, resulting in poor quality images – metaphorical of history and memory processes.

These secret, subversive archives (perhaps reminiscent of the images of the Bang Bang Club)⁸² are now available to the public and may be argued to reflect the exposure of histories and "truths" over the course of the TRC. Alexander's subsequent photomontages, however, expose the realities of present South African life for marginalised and at-risk communities and individuals. Their blurred, barely-there existence represented in Alexander's montages can allude to the invisibility or

⁸² The Bang-Bang Club was the associated name of four photographers (Kevin Carter, Greg Marinovich, Ken Oosterbroek and Jaoa Silva) active within the townships of South Africa over the period of apartheid and 1990-1994 (Marinovich and Silva 2001).

denial of current socio-political fractures, and perhaps over-arching apathy toward addressing them – a destructive side effect of trauma discourse’s ability to negate individual responsibility and agency.

Considering the above discussion, I would suggest further research be done to establish links between Alexander’s photomontages and the processes of memory recall and manipulation. The fleeting, uncertain appearance of Alexander’s figures in photography generates a feeling of unease and confusion. Not only are these images vaguely familiar by including sculptures one has seen in a gallery, as well as depicting recognisably South African landscapes that one has travelled through, these images can cause confusion by depicting unfamiliar experiences. This renders the interpretive response to the photomontages as markedly similar to the processes of memories and reconfiguring fragmented or suppressed experiences.

In closing, I want to return to Alexander’s sculptures by referring to commentary made by W.G. Sebald in *Austerlitz*, a literary work largely concerned with themes of personal and collective memories in the wake of the Holocaust. Sebald (2005: 33) writes:

And for some time, too, I have known that the more one has to bear, for whatever reason, of the burden of grief which is probably not imposed on the human species for nothing, the more often do we meet with ghosts...now here now there, without expecting it, you may meet one of those beings who are somehow blurred and out of place and who, as I always feel, are a little too small and short-sighted; they have something curiously watchful about them, as if they were lying in wait, and their faces bear the expression of a race that wishes us ill.

The above quote has a significant and uncanny association with the experience of coming into the space of Alexander’s figures and the reactions they evoke. The affective quality of the figures provides an entry point into the realm of memories and the confrontation of suppressed traumas but also, significantly, for the exploration of alternative perspectives and moralities. It is through a socio-politically informed art such as Alexander’s, where questions are not always answerable, that personal truth allows for remembrance and catharsis.

Appendix 1

The Holy Bible: New International Version

Psalm number 51

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your unfailing love;
 according to your great compassion
 blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash away all my iniquity
 and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me.
- 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight,
 so that you are proved right when you speak
 and justified when you judge.
- 5 Surely I was sinful at birth,
 sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
- 6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
 you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
- 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
 wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
 let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins
 and blot out all my iniquity.
- 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
 and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me from your presence
 or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
 and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
 and sinners will turn back to you.
- 14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God,

the God who saves me,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.

18 In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;
build up the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings to delight you;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Appendix 2

Collated list of sculptures from 1982-2009

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sculpture</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Dimensions</u>	<u>Materials</u>
1982	<i>Untitled</i>	University of Witwatersrand	220 x 160 x 100 cm	Plaster, bone, watercolour, wax
1982	<i>Untitled</i>	Unknown	Unknown	Plaster, bone, watercolour, wax
Submitted for MFA*				
1983*	<i>Five Torsos</i>	Unknown	Approx. 180 x 180 cm	Plaster, bone, hair, wax, steel
1983-84*	<i>Untitled</i>	Unknown	Unknown	Synthetic clay, oil paint
1983-84*	<i>Domestic angel</i>	Private collection	40 x 14 x 17 cm	Synthetic clay, wings, oil paint
1984*	<i>Hobby Horse</i>	Unknown	Unknown	Plaster, bone, oil paint, wax
1984-85*	<i>Goose</i>	Unknown	87 cm	Plaster, goose wings, bone, oil paint
1984-85*	<i>Dog</i>	Unknown	Approx. 62 x 120 cm	Plaster, bone, creosote, wax, polish, oil paint
1985*	<i>Untitled</i>	Private collection	64 x 77 x 44 cm	Plaster, bone, creosote, oil paint, sand, wood
1985-86*	<i>West Coast African Angel</i>	Private collection	84 x 87 x 44 cm	Plaster, bone, wings, flamingo skull, oil paint, bicycle
1983-86*	<i>National Bird</i>	Unknown	Unknown	Plaster, creosote, oil paint, wood
1985-86*	<i>Untitled</i>	Private collection	132 x 64 x 80 cm	Plaster, bone, oil paint, wood, rubber, chair
1985-86*	<i>Butcher Boys</i>	Collection of South African National Gallery	129 x 213 x 88 cm	Plaster, bone, horn, oil paint, wood
1985-86*	<i>The Municipal Crucifix</i>	Destroyed	127 x 200 x 160 cm	Plaster, bone, oil paint, wood, aluminium
1991	<i>Black Madonna</i>	Private collection	130 cm	Plaster, oil paint, leather, wood ammunition box, thorns
1992	<i>Integration Programme</i>	Collection of Johannesburg Art Gallery	192 x 69 x 81 cm	Plaster, clothing, oil paint, steel, wood, rope
1993	<i>Beauty in a Landscape: born Aliwal North 19-?, died Boksburg 1992</i>	Collection of artist	45 x 78 x 29 cm	Synthetic clay, plastic toys, feathers, synthetic fur, brass, glass, wood
1993	<i>Cake</i>	Collection of Standard Bank	50 x 47 x 47 cm	Wood, synthetic clay, plaster, oil paint, cowrie shells, reflectors, glass beads, silk organza, ostrich feather

1993-94	<i>something's going down</i>	Private collection	59 x 128 x 36 cm	Synthetic clay, oil paint, wood, aluminium, leather, prints
1993-94	<i>Integration Programme: man with wrapped feet</i>	Collection of artist	198 x 83 cm	Plaster, oil paint, wood, glass, clothing
1994	<i>Serviceman</i>	Private collection	165 x 60 x 60 cm	Plaster, oil paint, clothing
1995	<i>Stripped ("Oh Yes" girl)</i>	Collection of Tatham Art Gallery	182 x 63 x 51 cm	Plaster, oil paint, lace, twine, hair, synthetic finger nails, steel, plumber's hair
1995	<i>Self Defense and Stability Unit</i>	Destroyed	Approx. 132 x 64 cm each	Plaster, oil paint, wood chairs
1995	<i>Erbschein: An den Bergen</i>	Collection of artist	180 x 46 x 46 cm	Wood, synthetic clay, plaster, oil paint, miniature cranes, found objects, salt, leather, wing skeletons
1995	<i>Hit (poor Walter)</i>	Collection of Sandton Civic Art Gallery	96 x 74 x 36 cm	Synthetic clay, oil paint, wood, velvet
1995	<i>Pastoral Scene</i>	Collection of Gauteng Legislature	155 x 209 x 186 cm	Plaster, oil paint, clothing, wood, aluminium
1995	<i>Integration Programme: man with TV</i>	Collection of South African National Gallery	138 x 100 x 220 cm	Plaster, oil paint, clothing, found objects, video film
1996	<i>Integration Programme: man in Poweralls (extra tough, reinforced throughout, guaranteed fully shrunk)</i>	Private collection	174 x 170 x 130 cm	Plaster, oil paint, leather, steel, cotton, wood, "Poweralls"
1997-98	<i>Street cadets with harbinger: wish, walk/Loop, Long</i>	Private collection	110 x 70 x 21 cm	Plaster, oil paint, clothing, found objects, sheep skin, rabbit skin, wood, steel
1997-98	<i>Cadet</i>	Collection of the town of Fellbach	122 x 48 x 56cm	Plaster, oil paint, sheep skin, leather, found objects
1998	<i>Bom Boys</i>	Collection of artist	105 x 360 x 360 cm	Fibreglass, acrylic paint, clothing, wood
1999	<i>Racework - in the event of an earthquake</i>	Private collection	97 x 133 x 91 cm	Fibreglass, acrylic paint, synthetic clay, found objects, cotton, velvet, synthetic hair, clothing
1999	<i>Lucky girl and monkey with rattling maracas</i>	Private collection	94 x 84 x 84 cm	Reinforced plaster, oil paint, found objects, shoes, wood
1999-2002	<i>African Adventure:</i>	Collection of artist	400 x 900 cm (variable)	Reinforced plaster, oil paint, fibreglass, acrylic paint, synthetic clay, ammunition boxes, clothing, Venetian gloves, gold, diamonds, jackal

	<i>Pangaman</i>		Approx. 140 cm	skin, pangas, sickles, toy tractors,
	<i>Radiance of Faith</i>		Approx. 100 x 120 cm	child's car, child's push chair, oil
	<i>Settler</i>		Approx. 70 x 100 cm	drum, wood, steel, Bushmanland earth
	<i>Harbinger</i>		Approx. 90 cm	
	<i>Custodian</i>			
	<i>Girl with gold and diamonds</i>		Approx. 80 cm	
	<i>Dog</i>		Approx. 55 cm	
	<i>Ibis</i>		Approx. 60 cm	
	<i>Beast</i>		Approx. 45 cm	
	<i>Young man</i>		Approx. 80 cm	
	<i>Doll with industrial-strength golves</i>		Approx. 80 cm	
2004	<i>DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI:</i>	Collection of artist	2,500 x 3,000 cm	Security fence, barbed wire, 500 used industrial-strength gloves, 43 used sickles, 15 used machetes, danger signage, earth, recording of an African Fish Eagle
	<i>Bird</i>		Approx. 100 cm	
2002-2004	<i>The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit:</i>	Collection of artist	Approx. 550 x 300 cm	Leather, rubber strapping, irregular Gemsbok horns with skull fragment, rubber boots, walking sticks, cloth, felt, jackal skin, bat-eared fox skin, girl's dress, gold thorns, 200 pairs new industrial strength gloves, 40 used sickles, 16 used machetes, sound recording of Gregorio Allegri's choral arrangement of Psalm 51, <i>Miserere Mei</i> (c1638)
	<i>Hobbled ruminant with rider</i>		Approx. 70 cm	
	<i>Harbinger with protective boots</i>		Approx. 130 cm	
	<i>Small beast</i>		Approx. 60 cm	
	<i>Guardian</i>		Approx. 80 cm	
	<i>Lamb with stolen boots</i>		Approx. 100 cm	
	<i>Bat eared doll riding a bat-eared fox wearing a black backed jackal skin</i>		Approx. 70 cm	
2006	<i>Harbinger with barge and imperial landscape:</i>	Collection of artist	38m x 8 m	46 year old grain and/or coal barge, 1000 machetes, 100 sickles, 500 pairs new industrial-strength gloves, international maritime signal flags, emblem by Ishmael Fiifi Annobil
	<i>Custodian</i>		Approx. 100 cm	
2006-2009	<i>Security:</i>	Collection of artist	12 x 6 m (variable)	Double diamond mesh fence, razor wire, steel, Brazilian/Swedish earth, germinating/growing/dying wheat, 1000 machetes, 1000 sickles, 1000 used

				South African worker's gloves
2006	<i>Bird</i> <i>Courtroom 21 (in the absence of Judge Woo Bih Li) Courtroom 21 Title withdrawn Verity, Faith and Justice:</i>	Collection of artist	Approx. 120 cm	Oil painted fiberglass 100 smooth black thread sewn gilt edge 100gram 1000 page blank wood free books, 1000 new industrial- strength gloves, 1 Singaporean judicial ceremonial robe, 1 set South African pre- democracy prisoner's clothing issue, 3 black suits with under garments, 3 pairs formal shoes, 3 white cotton bags, 3 sets handcuffs, 1 set shackles loaned from Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison, CT. 2 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie and 2 British East India Company replica flags
	<i>Monkey boy</i> <i>Offenders (x3)</i>		Approx. 100 cm Approx. 100 x 120 cm	Triple diamond mesh fence, razor wire, steel, 1000 machetes, 1,000 sickles, 1,000 used industrial-strength gloves, 100 type inner tubes, 1 knobkerrie carved from alien wood, 1 African lynx pelt, found clothing, 20 cubic meters of European earth, 100 grams African earth
2007	<i>Security with traffic (influx control):</i> <i>Official Convoy (trade)</i> <i>Ghost</i>		Unknown Unknown Unknown	

Appendix 3

The following list of exhibitions was collated from Jane Alexander's curriculum vitae (2008) as well as her most recent exhibition catalogue *Jane Alexander: On being human* (2009).

EXHIBITIONS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- *Security*. Featured Artist of Gordon Schachat Gallery. Johannesburg Art Fair. April 2009.
- *Survey*. Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. March – April 2009.
- *Being Human*. Galilee Chapel, Durham Cathedral, for interdisciplinary research project on being human, Institute of Advanced Study, Durham University. March 2009.
- *Survey: Cape of Good Hope*. Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna. August 2005
- *Jane Alexander: African Adventure and other works; DaimlerChrysler Award for Contemporary Sculpture*. Touring exhibition Germany and South Africa: Stuttgart, Berlin, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Cape Town. May 2002 – July 2003.
- *Jane Alexander*. Gasworks London. Curator Sunil Gupta. The Organisation for Visual Arts. Feb – March 2000.
- “*Bom Boys*” and “*Lucky girls*”. UCT Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town. July 1999.
- *Standard Bank Young Artist Award*. Sponsored national touring exhibition: Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Pietermaritzburg, Durban. Cape Town 1995-96.
- *Sculpture and Photomontage*. Market Gallery. Newtown, Johannesburg. 1986.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS 1994 - 2009:

2009

- *Meeting Point*. 10th edition of the Havana Biennial, March 2009.

2008

- *Modern and Contemporary Art – Then, Now and Beyond*. Polokwane Art Museum. August – September 2008.
- *Cities in Crisis: Photographs of the South African Urban Landscape*. FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg. April – May 2008.

2007

- *Apartheid - The South African Mirror*. Curator Pep Subirós. CCCB Centre de Cultura Contemporània, Barcelona. 27 September – 13 January 2008.
- *Imbacu: Art from the Inside - Outside*. Curator Loyiso Qanya. South African National Gallery. 1 August – 21 October.
- *The Exposed Animal*. KISS Kunst im Schloss Untergröningen e.V. (AdKV). 20 May – 23 September.
- *Re-Thinking Dissent: Fourth Gothenburg Biennial*. Curators Edi Muka and Joa Ljungberg,

Gothenburg Sweden. August.

- *Africa Remix*. Curator Simon Njami. Johannesburg Art Gallery. June – September.

2006

- *Bamako 05*. Curator Pep Subirós. Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB). 3 October 2006 – 28 January 2007.

- *How to live together: 27th São Paulo Biennale*. Curator Lisette Lagnado. São Paulo. October – December 2006.

- *Belief: Singapore Biennale*. Curator Fumio Nanjo. Singapore. September.

- *Zoo*. Curator Fabienne Dumont. La Centrale Electrique, Brussels. June.

- *Africa Remix*. Curator Simon Njami. Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. May.

- *Triennial Beaufort 2006*. Curator Willie Van den Bussche. PMMK Museum of Modern Art in Ostend and the North Sea Coast of Belgium. April – October.

- *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in South African Contemporary Art*. Curators Sophie Perryer, Churchill Madikida, David Brodie, Lisa van der Watt and Laurie Farrell. The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu. 24 February – 7 May.

2005

- *Another World*. Curator Simon Njami. 6th Bamako Photography African Encounters. November.

- *Becoming Animal*. Curator Nato Thompson. MASS MoCA, North Adams. 28 May 2005 – 20 June 2006.

- *Africa Remix*. Curator Simon Njami. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. May – August 2005, and June – September 2006.

- *New Identities: Contemporary South African Art*. Curators Hans Günther Golinski. Sepp Hiekisch-Picard and Ralf Seippel. Pretoria Art Museum. March – April.

- *Il Bello e le bestie*. Curators Giorgio Verzotti and Lea Vergine. MART- Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rovereto, Italy. 11 December 2004 - 8 May 2005.

- *CURIOSITY CLXXV*. Curators Pippa Skotness, Gwen van Embden and Fritha Langerman. Hiddingh Hall, Michaelis School of Fine Art. November 2004– April 2005.

2004

- *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art*. Curators Sophie Perryer, Churchill Madikida, David Brodie, Lisa van der Watt and Laurie Farrell. Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Museum for African Art, New York. October – December.

- *Disorientation of Beauty*. Curator Chris Driessen. Lustwarande, Tilberg. 14 August – 17 October.

- *Africa Remix*. Curator Simon Njami. Düsseldorf, museum kunst palest; London, Hayward Gallery; Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou; Tokyo, Mori Art Museum. July– November 2004, January–April 2005, May – August 2005, June – September 2006.

- *New Identities: Contemporary South African Art*. Curators Hans Günther Golinski. Sepp Hiekisch-Picard and Ralf Seippel. Museum Bochum. 31 July – 7 November.

- *Tremor: Contemporary South African Art*. Palais de Beaux-Arts De Cherleroi. Curators Emma

Bedford and Fabienne du Mont. April – June.

- *Decade of Democracy*. Curator Emma Bedford. South African National Gallery, Cape Town. April.

- *Democracy X*. Curators Lalou Meltzer, Rayda Becker, Sandra Klopper, Andries Oliphant, Peter Delius, David Koloane, Fiona Rankin-Smith and Irene Mafune. Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town. April – January.

2003

- *Mapping Trajectories*. Curator Simon Gush. University Corner Gallery University of the Witwatersrand. October.

- *RETREKS: unSUNG CITY, Stockholm car park*. Curator Rodney Place with an independent curatorial team. Museum of Modern Art Stockholm. October.

- *Month of Photography*. Curator Calvin Dondo. National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare. July.

- *DaimlerChrysler Collection*. Curator Renate Wiehager. Museum für Neue Kunst, ZKM Karlsruhe, Detroit Institute for the Arts, Pretoria Art Museum, South African National Gallery. May 2003 – Jan 2005.

- *Coexistence: Contemporary Cultural Production in South Africa*. Curators Pamella Allara & Marilyn Martin. The Rose Art Museum, University of Brandeis New England, and South African National Gallery. Jan– June 2003, and Sept 2003 – March 2004.

2002

- *Intersections*. Curator Kendell Geers. RMIT Gallery Melbourne. November – March 2003.

- *Africa Apart*. Curators Thomas Michalak and Ingo Taubhorn. Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin. December – February 2003.

- *Surviving Apartheid*. Curator Caroline Bourgeois. Maison Européenne de la photo; Paris Month of Photography. November.

- *Tracing the Rainbow: Contemporary Art from South Africa*. Curators Indra Wussow and Ralf Seippel. Sylt; Kunstverein Zehntscheuer, Rottenburg, Germany. June – August, and September – November.

- *DIS - LOCATION*. Curator Daniella Tilken. PhotoEspana 2001. Circulo de Bellas Artes Madrid; Sala Rekalde, Bilbao. June – July 2001, and March – May 2002.

2001

- *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994*. Curator Okwui Enwezor. Museum Villa Stuck, Munich; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center New York. February 2001 – May 2002.

- *World Wide Video Festival*. Director Tom von Vliet. Amsterdam. October.

- *Africa today, the Artist and the City*. Curator Pep Subiros. Barcelona Center for Contemporary Culture. May.

- *Head North*. Co-curated by the staff at the BildMuseet and SANG as part of the exchange project 'Visual Cultures in Dialogue'. BildMuseet Sweden. Feb – April.

2000

- *A.R.E.A.* Curator Gavin Younge. Kjarvalsstadir, Reykjavik, Iceland. November 1999 – January 2000 .
- *Seventh Havana Biennial*. Director Nelson Herrera Ysla. Wilfredo Lam Centre, Havana City. November 1999 – January 2000.
- *Voices of Southern Africa*. British Museum London; November 1999 – January 2000.
- *RETREKS: unSUNg CITY, How the other half...* . Curator Rodney Place. Kings Parkade, Eloff Street Johannesburg. September.
- *Secure The Future: care and support for women and children with HIV - AIDS in Africa*. Fundraising exhibition, International AIDS Society Conference Durban, Washington DC, Brussels, Boston. July.
- *partage d'exotismes – sharing exoticisms*. Hubert Martin. 5th Lyons Biennale; halle Tony Garnier, Lyons. June – September.
- *Cross Currents: contemporary art practice in South Africa*. Curators Robert Loder and Len Green. Atkinson Gallery, Millfield School, Somerset, United Kingdom. June – September.
- *South meets West*. National Museum Accra. Kunsthalle Bern and Historisches Museum Bern. Curators Bernard Fibicher, Yacouba Konate and Yvonne Vera. Nov - Dec 1999 - April 2000.

1999

- *Staking Claims*. Curator Emma Bedford. The Granary, Cape Town. September – October.
- *Lines of Sight. Securing Shadows: The Role of Women in South African Photography*. Curator Marilyn Martin. South African National Gallery, Cape Town. July.
- *Emergence*. Curators Julia Charlton and Fiona Rankin Smith. Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Albany Museum. Grahamstown. June.

1998

- *Triennale der Kleinplastik: Europa, Afrika*. Curator Werner Meyer. SudwestLB forum, Stuttgart. October 1997 – January 1998.
- *Africa Africa*. Curator Toshio Shimizu. Tobu Museum of Art, Tokyo. September – November.
- *Bringing up Baby*. Curator Terry Kurgan. Grahamstown Arts Festival; The Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town; Standard Bank Gallery. July – December.
- *Alborough. Alexander. Nel. Lipson. van der Merwe. Wilson*. Curators Julia Charlton and Natasha Fuller. Gertrude Posel Gallery, Johannesburg. July – August.
- *DAK'ART: Biennale de L'Art Africain Contemporain*. Curator YoYacouba Konate. Dakar. April.
- *Showing and Telling*. Curators Jane Taylor and Fiona Rankin Smith. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg. April.

1997

- *Lifetimes: An exhibition of Southern African Art*. Curator Ruth Sacks. "Out of Africa" Cultural Festival, Art Bureau Munich. November. – December.

- *South African Aborescence: End of the century's Artists*. Arts Festival Nantes, France. October.
- *Photosynthesis: Contemporary South African Photography*. Curator Kathleen Grundlingh. Standard Bank National Arts Festival. Grahamstown. July.

1996

- *Contemporary South African Art 85 – 95 from the South African National Gallery Permanent Collection*. SA National Gallery, Cape Town 1996 - 97.
- *Fault Lines – Inquiries around truth and reconciliation*. Curator Jane Taylor. The Castle, Cape Town. July.
- *Colours – contemporary art from South Africa*. Curators Alfons Hug and Sabine Vogel. Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. May – August.
- *First National Bank Vita Art Now*. Award exhibition, Johannesburg Art Gallery.

1995

- *Identita e alterita*. Curator Jean Clair. Venice Biennial, Palazzo Grassi.

1994

- *Die 5 Biennale von Havana*. Ludwig Forum for Contemporary Art, Aachen.
- *un art d'Afrique du Sud*. Galerie de L'Esplanade, La Defence, Paris. Curator Jane-Yves Jouannais. Paris.
- *The Fifth Havana Biennial*. National Museum of Fine Arts, The Moro & Cabana fortresses, the Wilfredo Lam Centre, Havana City.
- *Xit (first democratic election exhibition)*. Curator Malcolm Payne. South African Association of Arts, Metropolitan Life Gallery, Cape Town.

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**ASPECTS OF MEMORY IN THE SCULPTURAL WORK OF
JANE ALEXANDER: 1982 - 2009
Volume II**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTERS IN ART HISTORY AND VISUAL CULTURE

of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

Tracy-Lee Nicol

2009

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Top and middle fig. 1a and 1b:
 2006
African Adventure
 Africa Remix exhibition
 Collection of artist
 400 x 900 cm (variable)
 Mixed media
 Pangaman, Radiance of Faith,
 Settler, Harbinger, Custodian, Girl
 with gold and diamonds, Dog, Ibis,
 Beast, Young man, Doll with
 industrial-strength gloves.

Left fig. 1c:
 2002-2004
African Adventure
 DamilerChrysler exhibition
 British Officer's Mess, Castle of
 Good Hope, Cape Town.



Fig. 1d
Pangaman
Approx. 140 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, clothing,
pangas, sickles, toy tractors.



Fig. 1e
Radiance of Faith
Approx. 100 x 120 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay,
ammunition boxes, clothing.

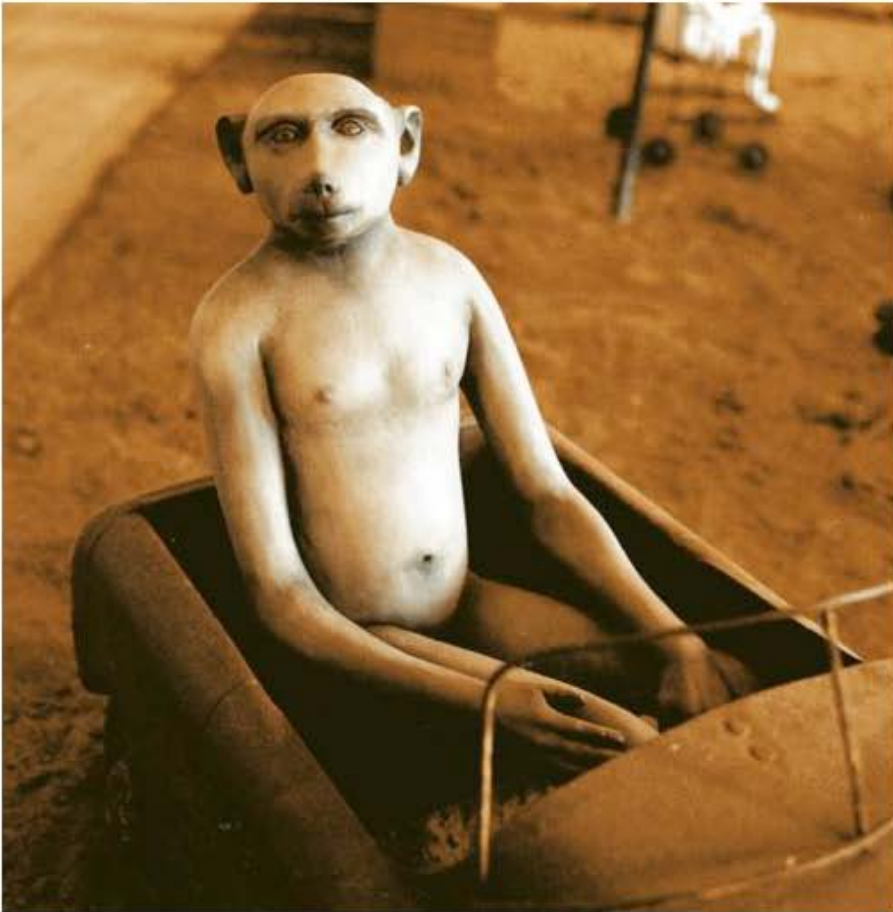


Fig. 1f
Settler
Approx. 70 x 100 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, child's
push-car.



Fig. 1g
Harbinger
Approx. 90 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, oil drum,
steel.



Fig. 1h
Custodian
Approx. 90 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, steel.



Fig. 1i
Girl with gold and diamonds
Approx. 80 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay,
ammunition boxes, clothing,
Venetian gloves, gold, diamonds.



Fig. 1j
Dog
Approx. 50 x 100 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, jackal
skin, steel.



Fig. 1k
Ibis
Approx. 70 x 30 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, steel.



Fig. 11
Beast
Approx. 45 x 55 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, steel.



Fig. 1m
Young man
Approx. 90 x 40 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, clothing,
steel.



Fig. 1n
Doll with industrial-strength gloves

Approx. 80 x 40 cm
Reinforced plaster, paint,
fibreglass, synthetic clay, clothing,
child's push chair, industrial-
strength gloves, steel.



Fig. 1o
Detail of *Harbinger* and
Pangaman.



Fig. 1p
Detail of *Pangaman's* train



Left: fig. 2
Untitled
1985
Private collection
64 x 77 x 44 cm
Plaster, bone, creosote, oil paint,
sand, wood.



Fig. 3
1998
Bom Boys
Collection of artist
105 x 360 x 360 cm
Fiberglass, acrylic paint, clothing,
wood.



From top left: fig. 3a, 3b
From bottom left: fig. 3c, 3d
1998
Bom Boys (detail)
Collection of artist
105 x 360 x 360 cm
Fibreglass, acrylic paint, clothing, wood.



Fig. 4
1993-94
something's going down
Private collection
59 x 128 x 36 cm
Synthetic clay, oil paint, wood,
aluminium, leather, prints.



Top: fig. 5
1985-86
Butcher Boys
Collection of SANG
129 x 213 x 88 cm
Plaster, bone, horn, oil paint, wood.

Above left and above right: fig. 5a, 5b
Butcher Boys (detail).

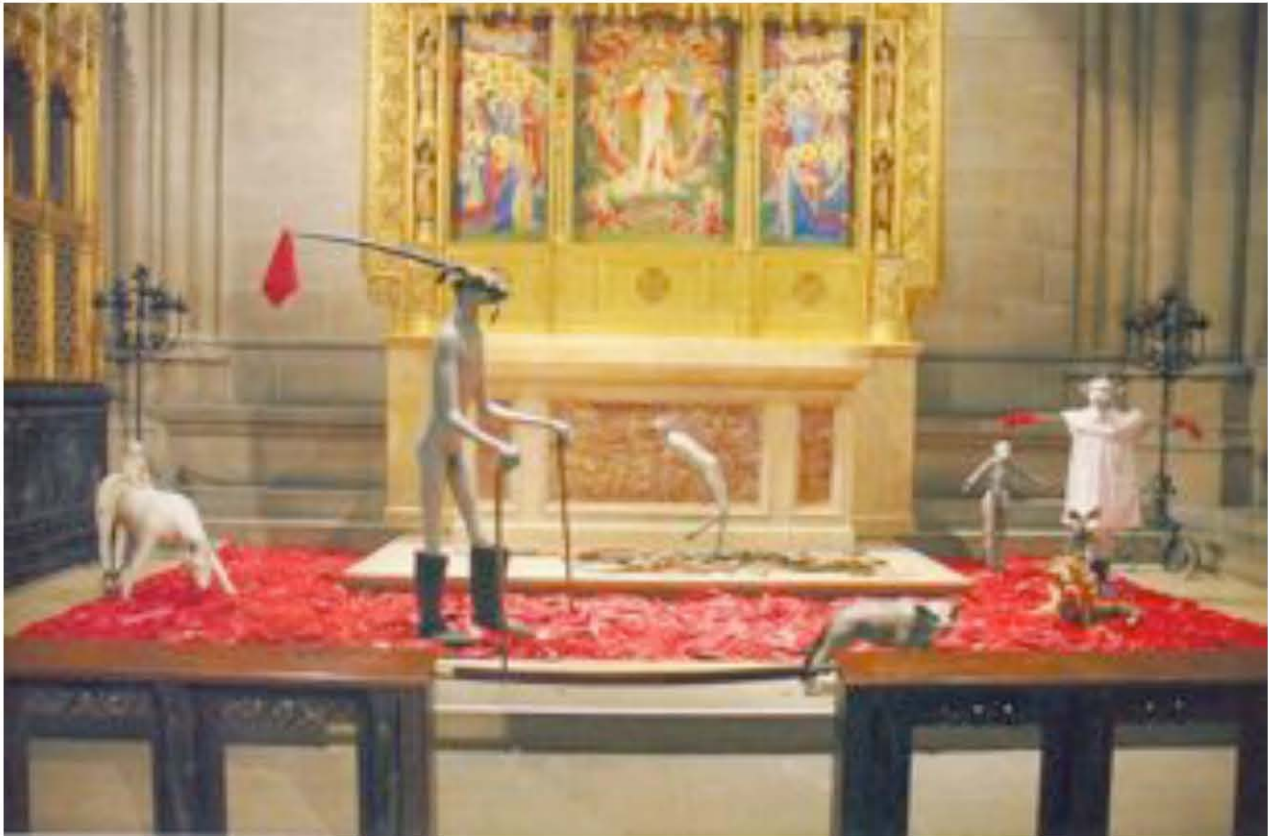


Fig. 5b
Brett Bailey
2007
Butcher Boys in Motion
Khayalitsha, Cape Town.



Left and below: fig. 5c
Brett Bailey
2007
macbEth.





Above: fig. 6

2002-2004

The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit

Collection of artist

Approx. 550 x 300 cm

Cathedral of St John the Divine, New York

Mixed media: Hobbled ruminant with rider, Harbinger with protective boots, Small beast, Guardian, Lamb with stolen boots, Bat-eared doll riding a bat-eared fox wearing a black-backed jackal skin, security guard.



Far left: fig. 6a

Bird (detail)

Approx. 100 cm.



Left: fig. 6b

Hobbled ruminant with rider (detail)

Approx. 70 x 110 cm



Top left: fig.6c
Harbinger with protective boots (detail)
Approx. 120 x 50 cm.

Middle left: fig. 6e
Lamb with stolen boots (detail)
Approx. 100 x 90 cm.

Bottom left: fig. 6g
Small beast (detail)
Approx. 60 x 80 cm.

Top right: fig. 6d
Guardian (detail)
Approx. 80 x 70 cm.

Middle right: fig. 6f
Bat-eared doll riding a bat-eared fox wearing a black-backed jackal skin
Approx. 70 x 70 cm.

Bottom right: fig. 6h
Security guard (detail).



Fig. 7
2004

DANGER GEVAAR INGOZI

Disorientation by Beauty, Netherlands

Collection of artist

2,500 x 3,000 cm

Security fence, barbed wire, 500 used industrial-strength gloves, 43 used sickles, 15 used machetes, danger signage, earth, recording of an African Fish Eagle, Bird (approx 100 cm).



Fig. 7a
Bird (detail).



Fig. 7b
Floor covering of rusty pangas and sickles (detail).



Fig. 7c
Danger sign (detail).



Fig. 7d
Security guard (detail).



Above: fig. 8
2006

Security/Segurança
São Paulo Biennale
Collection of artist

1,200 x 600 cm (variable)

Double diamond mesh fence, razor wire, steel, Brazilian/Swedish earth, germinating/growing/dying wheat, 1,000 machetes, 1,000 sickles, 1,000 used South African worker's gloves.

Left: fig. 8a

Bird (detail)

Approx. 120 x 40 cm



Above: fig. 9
2009
Security
Johannesburg Art Fair.



Above and above right: fig. 9a and 9b
(detail).



Above: fig. 10
2006

Harbinger with barge and imperial landscape
Triennial Beaufort, Belgium

3,800 x 800 cm

46 year old grain and/or coal barge, 1,000 machetes, 100 sickles, 500 pairs new industrial-strength gloves, international maritime signal flags, emblem by Ishmael Fiiifi Annobil, *Custodian*.

Left: fig. 10a
Harbinger (detail).



Above: fig. 11

1995

Integration Programme: man with TV

Collection of SANG

138 x 100 x 220 cm

Plaster, oil paint, clothing, found objects, video film.



Left: fig. 11a

Face detail.

Below: fig. 11b

Video still detail.

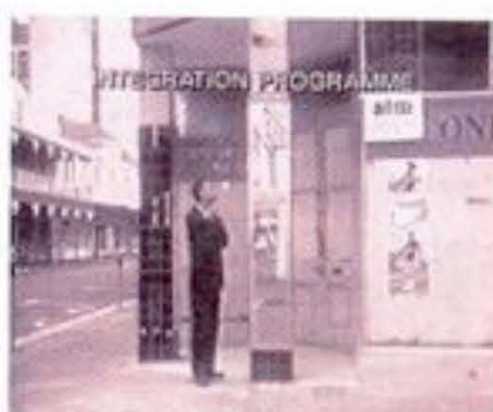




Fig. 12

1985-86

West Coast African Angel

Private collection

84 x 87 x 44 cm

Plaster, bone, wings, flamingo skull, oil paint, bicycle.



Fig. 13
1995
Hit (poor Walter)
Collection of Sandton Civic Art Gallery
96 x 74 x 36 cm
Synthetic clay, oil paint, wood, velvet.





Left: fig. 14
1992
Integration Programme
Collection of Johannesburg Art Gallery
192 x 69 x 81 cm
Plaster, clothing, oil paint, steel, wood, rope.

Below left: fig. 15
1985-86
Untitled
Private collection
132 x 64 x 80 cm
Plaster, bone, oil paint, wood, rubber, chair.

Below: fig. 15a
Untitled (detail).





Fig. 16
Paul Stopforth
1979
The Interrogators
Collection of SANG
275 x 182 cm
Wax and graphite powder on paper and wood panel.



Left: fig. 17
1983-84
Domestic angel
Private collection
40 x 14 x 17 cm
Synthetic clay, wings, oil paint.

Below: fig. 17a
Domestic angel (detail).





Left: fig. 18
Untitled
University of Witwatersrand
220 x 160 x 100 cm
Plaster, bone, watercolour, wax.



Above left and right: fig. 18a and 18b
Untitled (detail).



Above left: fig. 19
1995
Stripped ("Oh Yes" girl)
Collection of Tatham Art Gallery
182 x 63 x 51 cm
Plaster, oil paint, lace, twine, hair, synthetic
finger nails, steel, plumbers hair.



Above right: fig. 20
1994
Serviceman
Private collection
165 x 60 x 60 cm
Plaster, oil paint, clothing.



Above: fig. 21
 Maya Lin
 1981
Vietnam Veteran Memorial
 75 m x 3 m
 Washington, DC.



Left: fig. 21a
Vietnam Veteran Memorial
 (detail).



Above: fig. 22
1985-86
The Municipal Crucifix
Destroyed
127 x 200 x 160 cm
Plaster, bone, oil paint, wood, aluminium.



Above and above right: fig. 22a and 22b
(detail).



Fig. 23
1995
*Self Defense and Stability Unit
Destroyed*
Approx. 132 x 64 cm each
Plaster, oil paint, wood chairs.



Fig. 24
1991
Black Madonna
Private collection
130 cm
Plaster, oil paint, leather, wood
ammunition box, thorns.



Fig. 25

1993

Beauty in a Landscape:
born Aliwal North 19-?,
died Boksburg 1992

Collection of artist

45 x 78 x 29 cm

Synthetic clay, plastic toys,
feathers, synthetic fur,
brass, glass, wood.



Fig. 26

1993-94

Integration Programme: man with wrapped feet

Collection of artist

198 x 83 cm

Plaster, oil paint, wood, glass, clothing.



Above left: fig. 27
 1995
Erbschein: An den Bergen
 Collection of artist
 180 x 46 x 46 cm
 Mixed media.



Above right: fig. 28
 1993
Cake
 Collection of Standbard Bank
 50 x 47 x 47 cm
 Mixed media.



Above: fig. 29
 1995
Pastoral Scene
 Collection of Gauteng Legislature
 155 x 209 x 186 cm
 Plaster, oil paint, clothing, wood, aluminium.



Left: fig. 30
Sam Nzima
1976
Hector Pieterse
Photograph.



Left: fig. 31
Senzeni Marasela
1998
Stompie Seipei, Died 1989, Age 14 (detail)
28 x 28 cm
Silkscreen on calico, lace.



Left: fig. 32a
2005-09
*Survey: Cape of Good Hope:
Transmitter (detail)*
Photomontage.



Left: fig. 32b
2005-09
*Survey: Cape of Good
Hope:
"For the entertainer"*
Photomontage.



Left: fig. 32c
2005-09
*Survey: Cape of Good
Hope:
"CANDY BOY Lonely Boys"*
Phomontage.