Challenging Desire: Performing Whiteness in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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Sonja Smit

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Abstract

The central argument of this thesis asserts that in the process of challenging dominant subject positions, such as whiteness, performance creates the possibilities for new or alternative arrangements of desire. It examines how the creative process of desire is forestalled (reified) by habitual representations of whiteness as a privileged position, and proposes that performance can be a valid form of resistance to static conceptions of race and subjectivity. The discussion takes into account how the privilege of whiteness finds representation through forms of neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism in the post apartheid context. The analysis focuses on the work of white South African artists whose work offers a critique from within the privileged "centre" of whiteness. The research is situated within the inter-disciplinary field of performance studies entailing a reading and application of critical texts to the analysis. Alongside this qualitative methodology surfaces a subjective dialogue with the information presented on whiteness.

Part Two includes an analysis of Steven Cohen's *The Cradle of Humankind* (2011), Brett Bailey's *Exhibit A* (2011) and Michael MacGarry's *LHR-JNB* (2010). Each section examines the way in which the respective works engage in a questioning of whiteness through performance. Part Three investigates South African rap-rave duo, Die Antwoord and how their appropriation of Zef interrogates desires for an essential authenticity.

Part Four focuses on my own performance practice and the proposed value of engaging with a form of practice-led research. This is particularly relevant in relation to critical race studies that require a level of self-reflexivity from the researcher. It presents an analysis of the work entitled *Villain* (2012) as a disturbance of theatrical desire through a process of 'becoming'. This notion of meaning and identity as 'becoming' is argued as a strategy to challenge prevailing modes of perception which can possibly restore the production of desire to the

viewer. The thesis concludes with the notion that performance can offer a mode of immanent ethics which is significant in creating both vulnerable and critical forms of whiteness.

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The opinions expressed in this thesis are those of the author and not necessarily that of Rhodes University or the donor.

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Preface

Theft/Judgement/Desire

I have, for as long as I can remember, felt dissatisfied with the organisation – with the way things are organised. I am at odds with what I am expected to desire from life: the obvious process of acquiring things to gain a sense of stability (which is always fleeting, in my case), and security (an illusion). This may be because stability or security is not an experience I am familiar with or believe in. I am white, female, seemingly middle-class, educated and at odds with this description of myself. These markers of my "identity" subject me and are not how I desire myself to be recognised. Gilles Deleuze and Fèlix Guattari note that the Body Without Organs (BwO) "howls: They've made me an organism! They've wrongfully folded me! They've stolen my body!"[1] *There is an arrangement of desires and powers that create the effect of indifference – whereby one can absolve oneself from recognising one's own attachment to the organs. I realise my own attachment. Antonin Artaud's idea of the Body Without Organs is not a disavowal of the organs of the body, but a reaction against the stratification of the singular experience – the judgement of God. I am disturbed by a sense of entitlement that has, at times, surfaced within me, but which I try not to act on. I believe this sense surfaces as a direct result of the organs and more specifically (in my case) the organs of my "whiteness" and my "class". This is related to desire; to the ideas that inform my wants and impulses. Deleuze and Guattari hold that "The judgment of God uproots it from its immanence and makes it an organism, a signification, a subject. It is the BwO that is stratified".*[2]

There are some things that cannot be articulated and can perhaps only be hinted at or suggested. These are ideas that do not force themselves on one; they are ambiguous, like desire. Desire is not only used here as a better word for want, or as defining aspect of sexuality, but my attempt to recognise desire as the aspect that allows wanting to happen. To recognise that desire is reified and then attempt to name it, to identify it, would be another form of relegating desire. So one actually has to go by "way of not knowing" to reveal it. Desire is arranged along lines of power and knowledge that we are all implicated in, and capitalism's ability to profit from desire creates a situation where individual desires can be used for the purposes of commercial profit. To reify desire, to place it on the assembly line of the various institutions which construct the molar subject, is to relegate desire: to put it in its place. The assembly line structures desire, gives it a home: the unconscious. Desire can then become a slave of habits, so that it can desire its own repression, and the oppression of others.

The relationship between capitalism and imperialism is defined by the greed that justified the entitlement and the constitution of privilege that characterised the imperial and colonial projects. Both "privilege" and a "sense of entitlement" can be defined as the "habits" or

[1] Deleuze, G and Guattari, F. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (London: Continuum). p. 159
[2] ibid., p. 159

even "addictions" of the organisation of whiteness and thus the "burden" of whiteness studies. The molar subject represented by whiteness (as a field of studies): "needs to be delinked from its dialectics of power and forced to confront itself".[3] *To confront itself, whiteness needs to become conscious of the habitual complicity that aids in the desire for a white (reasonable and moral) universe. Artaud writes of the "endlessly renewed fatigue of the organs" which "require intense and sudden shocks to revive our understanding".*[4] *It is in the processes of artistic production (practicing and viewership) where I have found spaces in which to experience these "intense and sudden shocks" to my consciousness and it is here that my desires may, in moments, be reclaimed from the organs.*

[3] Braidotti, R. 2006. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. (Cambridge: Polity). p. 205.
[4] Artaud, A. 1958. *The Theatre and its Double*. (New York: Grove Press). p. 86

Challenging Desire: Performing Whiteness in Post Apartheid Performance Practices

Introduction and Method

The necessity of investigating whiteness

> Desires are political and politics begins with our desires.[5]

> We are all familiar with the global sanctity of the white body. Wherever the white body is violated in the world, severe retribution follows somehow for the perpetrators, if they are non-white, regardless of the social status of the white body. The white body is inviolable, and that inviolability is in direct proportion to the global vulnerability of the black body. This leads me to think that if South African whiteness is a beneficiary of the protectiveness assured by international whiteness, it has an opportunity to write a new chapter in world history. It will have to come out from under the umbrella and repudiate it. Putting itself at risk, it will have to declare that it is home now, sharing in the vulnerability of other compatriot bodies. South African whiteness will declare that its dignity is inseparable from the dignity of black bodies.[6]

Njabulo Ndebele's speech at the inaugural Steve Biko memorial lecture in 2000 captures the necessity of grappling with the position of whiteness in South Africa. Ndebele highlights a core ethical challenge; any privilege owned by the white body is no privilege if it means a violation of the rights and lives of non-white bodies. To benefit from a privilege which undermines any other ethnicity or skin colour cannot ethically be called a privilege. This call elicited by Ndebele to "share in the vulnerability of other compatriot bodies" is indirectly addressed in the works analysed in this thesis. That is not to say that performance and art absolve or redeem the past, but rather that grappling and interrogating the dominance of whiteness is a valuable process through which to challenge and disturb white desire, and create possibilities for alternative configurations of desire. As Awam Ampka argues, performance can clear a space for and reflect a "*desiring process* through which we can imagine and live alternative universes".[7] I assert that there is a desire for whiteness because it yields privilege, however this idea of privilege needs to be debunked. In this thesis I

[5] Braidotti, R. 2006. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. (Cambridge: Polity). p. 205.
[6] Ndebele, N. 2000. 'IPH' INDLELA? Finding our way into the Future'. Speech given at the First Steve Biko Memorial". unpaginated: Paragraph 44. Accessed online http://www.vc.uct.ac.za/speeches/?id=1 on 12 Februray 2013.
[7] Ampka, A. 2004. *Theatre and Postcolonial Desires.* (London and New York: Routledge). p. 2.

investigate ways in which whiteness may be reconfigured through performance practices particularly by acknowledging the notion of "becoming" over "being".

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming acknowledges the fluidity of being in the world rather than a static model for thought and being. Becoming unravels the "objective" world in which identity is tied to (the organs) dominant and fixed ideas regarding one's race, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity and so on. Deleuze and Guattari write about becoming: woman, animal, minoritarian, imperceptible – each as an activity; as a diversion from the standard.[8] Becoming-woman, for instance, is to depart from woman as "defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject".[9] This is why women themselves must become-woman, because one cannot enter a becoming, if one assumes the molar forms and tactics.[10] So becoming is not only a way to perceive the world, but also a way to approach it. The theory of becoming promotes a pragmatic approach which seeks to acknowledge the constant flux of the world and thus also the process of thinking: "what is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes".[11] Rosi Braidotti in accordance argues that it is easier to investigate concepts in isolation than to explore the processes and connections between concepts.[12] Becoming thus takes account of the inter-connectedness of concepts and the beings that create them, and is specifically visible in performance practices.[13]

Jesse Cohn holds that to "represent is to dominate".[14] Representations wield power through their omnipresence and can easily become the very premises on which people base their perceptions. To have one's interests represented is a very powerful means of perpetuating and elongating those interests and privileges. It is not only important that white people have representational power but that this power is productive – that it produces a white world, an exclusive world. Richard Dyer states that:

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[8] 1987, pp-231-309.
[9] ibid., p. 275.
[10] ibid., p. 275.
[11] 1987, p. 238.
[12] Braidotti, R. 2002. *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming.* (Cambridge: Polity Press). p. 2.
[13] Although Deleuze and Guattari do not refer to performance as a form of becoming, they do encourage their readers to experiment with concepts, as Brian Massumi puts it, "The authors [Deleuze and Guattari] steal from other disciplines with glee, but they are more than happy to return the favour". 1987, p. xv.
[14] Cohn, J. 2006. *Anarchism and the Crisis in Representation.* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press.). p. 12.

> How anything is represented is the means by which we think and feel about that thing, by which we apprehend it. The study of representation is more limited than the study of reality and yet it is also the study of one of the prime means by which we have knowledge of reality.[15]

It is therefore important to investigate representations which challenge the status of whiteness. Furthermore, representation takes part in the reification of desire within the modern world where individual desire is celebrated, but simultaneously reduced to branding for commercial purposes. This powerful profiting system infiltrates all areas of life, as Hal Foster puts it: "Today, in the midst of an advanced capitalism based on serial consumption, we are witness to a further reification and fragmentation – of *the sign*".[16] The sign, used as a means for capital (rather than as a means of communication) in which individual desires are taken for granted, enables a system of reification. Although the fragmented character of modern life clearly reveals a shift from traditional views of identity, "we fail, however, to bring them into adequate representation".[17] The aim of my research is to investigate the signs of whiteness, to discuss their reification and to reveal how performance challenges static representations of whiteness.

The investigation of whiteness and desire in this thesis is mainly focused within the context of South African performance practices. The examples that I will be exploring all challenge the notion of white power and desire. I will be approaching this theme via an analysis of the works of Steven Cohen, Brett Bailey, Michael MacGarry and Die Antwoord. Due to the need for self-reflexivity in the investigation of whiteness, the thesis includes an analysis of my own production *Villain* (2012), a practice-led practical exploration of my own artistic process through the creation of a performance. It is worth noting that by challenging white desire these examples produce their own desiring process and perform their own particular challenge to whiteness.

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[15] Dyer, R. 1997. *White*. (USA and Canada: Routledge) p. xiii.
[16] Foster, H.1996. *The Return of the Real*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Rebel Press.) p. 72.
[17] Braidotti, 2006, p. 85.

Performance Studies as Methodology

This thesis crosses into multiple disciplines and different modes of engaging with the idea of performance. It delves into philosophy, psychoanalysis, critical race studies and ethnomusicology, in line with the inter-disciplinary mode of Performance Studies. Jon Mckenzie observes how performance studies emerged in the 1960's in response to the emergence of critical theory.[18] Performance Studies became more prominent with the paradigm shift from a text based theatre to a more inclusive and holistic notion of performance.[19] This shift is marked by the desire to focus on the materiality and tangibility of performance,[20] and is observable in the study of performances that are not script-orientated such as dance, ritual, performance art, sports and political events, popular entertainment and performance as it occurs in everyday interactions. This is what Richard Schechner refers to as a "broad spectrum approach".[21] Yet, although performance studies is open to different ways of producing knowledge, this does not mean that it "lacks specific subjects and questions that it focuses on".[22] Rather, the field rejects a hierarchical approach to the production of knowledge. This means that there is no absolute theory of performance because the subject is inherently interdisciplinary, which Schechner understands as, "opposing the establishment of any single system of knowledge, values, or subject matter".[23]

The rejection of any particular system of knowledge in performance studies, according to Dwight Conquergood, "cuts to the root of how knowledge is organized in the academy".[24] Performance thus creates a new subject of knowledge that does not fit into a neatly defined theoretical space. This is because performance studies acknowledge the complex relationship between analysis and action, with its emphasis on an experiential knowledge gleaned from practice.[25] This relationship is based on the more practical aspect of reading/engaging with performance as an event or situation, and not only as a concept. The experiential aspect of performance is significant for my argument, which entails an investigation of the visual, aural

[18] Mckenzie, J. 2001.*Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance.* (USA and Canada: Routledge). p. 33.
[19] Lehmann, H-T. 2006. *PostDramatic Theatre.* (USA and Canada: Routledge) p. 4. and Schechner, R. 1988. 'Performance Studies: The Broad Spectrum Approach.' *The Drama Review.* Vol. 32. No.3. p. 4.
[20] Lehmann, 2006, p. 4.
[21] Schechner, 1988, p. 4.
[22] Schechner. R. 2002. *Performance Studies: An Introduction.* (London and New York: Routledge). p. 1.
[23]ibid., p. 19.
[24] Conquergood, D. 2000. 'Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research.' *The Drama Review.* Vol. 46. No.2. p. 176.
[25]ibid., p. 145.

and kinetic elements within the selected performances. These elements are analysed as signs transmitted through the experiential act/s of performance.

Part One provides the theoretical basis of the thesis in which I argue that whiteness is a privileged position that needs interrogation particularly in post apartheid South Africa. The production of white desire is investigated as something that was created historically through various discourses which supported the idea of whiteness as superior and therefore more deserving of privilege. The section goes on to discuss the value of perceiving desire in a different light. I argue via Deleuze and Guattari that desire has been co-opted and put into the service of social formations which privilege whiteness and suggest that revolt and anxiety are valuable strategies with which to resist molar desires attached to whiteness. In concordance with Julia Kristeva I argue that art can perform subtle revolts which disturb molar desire, and create new forms of desire. Thereafter I investigate reasons why it is still necessary to question whiteness in the aftermath of apartheid. I go on to discuss how performance practices and Performance Studies as both method and methodology are suited to questioning desire.

Part Two is an analysis of examples from contemporary performance/performance artists; Steven Cohen (*The Cradle of Humankind,* 2011) and Brett Bailey (*Exhibit A*, 2011) and the work of visual artist Michael MacGgarry (*LHR-JNB*, 2010). Part Three discusses Die Antwoord and how they challenge desires for authenticity and notions of whiteness. Part Four includes an analysis of my practice-led research project (*Villain*, 2012) in which I attempted to interrogate representations of whiteness and desire through my own choreographic process. It is worth noting that each part represents a specific and different way of responding to the notions of molarized whiteness through performance. By analyzing different performance practices, situated within different fields (contemporary theatre, visual and performance art, popular music performance and practice-led performance), the framing of each analysis (and the manner in which I have chosen to include these three areas in my thesis) disrupts the desire for a clear idea (or "knowledge) of the representation of whiteness in performance.

Performance analysis deals with a set of practices that are embodied through gestures, movements and sound (the languages or strands of performance) which happen in both "real" and "virtual" spaces. The analyses of Cohen and Bailey in Part Three are focused on live performances/installations while MacGarry's *LHR-JNB*, a short film, was part of an exhibition entitled *Endgame*. The analysis of Die Antwoord is situated in a more virtual

space, with a focus on music videos and documentary footage of the band. This particular research area relies largely on internet sources. The practical component, *Villain* is analysed in relation to my own artistic intention and process, which was aided by a framing document and accompanying peer reviews on the work.

A Note on the Writing Style and Terminology

Before proceeding, I would like to make a few notes on the style of writing adopted in this thesis. In the course of writing, I struggled to find an adequate language to describe racial difference, particularly in relation to the diversity of ethnicities in South Africa. I have grudgingly adopted the term "non-white" as used by Dyer in *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (1997). Dyer notes that the term non-white is self-evidently problematic, as it implies that; "people who are not white only have identity by virtue of what they are not".[26] Yet, this term is one that does not exclude the multiplicity of ethnicities that have been de-privileged by white desires, particularly in the context of South Africa.

In many instances I have taken up the style of the philosophers and theorists used in the research, specifically, the work of Gilles Deleuze and Fèlix Guattari and their use of terms like "desire" and "becoming". My understanding of "revolt" and "anxiety" are informed by Julia Kristeva and Jean Sartre. The use of the word "molar" or "molarized" is in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's sense of the word, which does not apply to size, but rather: "a molarized individual is a "person" to the extent that a category (cultural image of unity) has been imposed on it, and insofar as its subsequent actions are made to conform to those prescribed by its assigned category".[27]

In the bid to challenge the dominant status of white power analytically, one risks reifying the subject position. In the process of researching whiteness, I began experiencing a frustration with the idea of studying whiteness. It seemed that, although whiteness studies covered much ground in explaining the often unseen privilege of being white, it also reified whiteness. In the same way that any theory which attempts to speak on behalf of a nation or an ethnicity rarely does justice to its complexity, studying whiteness can actually reinstate its representational power, in some ways perpetuating the superiority it seeks to undo. This danger is perhaps particularly difficult when engaging with critical race studies, since the idea of race is itself so often generalised and stereotyped. As John Solomos and Les Back put it,

[26] Dyer, R. 1997. p. 11.
[27] Massumi, B. 1992. *User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* (Cambridge: MIT Press). p. 55.

"like many of the debates on the ontological status of culture, there is a danger of reifying whiteness and reinforcing a unitary idea of race".[28]

Due to my own anxiety (which will be considered in more detail) about researching whiteness, I have been driven to create a space within my academic research which reflects my insecurities with regards to the subject matter. These have been labelled "intermezzo's" and could be described as autoethnographic (or somewhat performative) writing. The intermezzo too, was inspired by Deleuze and Guattari who say that "the only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo".[29] Autoethnography, according to Tammi Spry, "can be defined as a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts".[30] Through a slightly more personal and intimate form of writing, autoethnography allows a more self-conscious and self-reflexive process and acknowledges that "the act of observing a phenomenon inevitably alters that phenomenon in some way(s)".[31] This method of approaching research is in accordance with Laurel Richardson who argues that writing is a form of enquiry[32], and with my own investigation which seeks to address, rather than ultimately answer, the research questions posed. Guattari elaborates on this idea of writing as enquiry, when he says that, "one never writes a book. One picks up on books that have been written; one places oneself in a phylum".[33] In relation to this, I would like to add that my approach to autoethnographic writing does not exclude other voices – those voices which helped construct my views. The intermezzos contain these references because as someone who has been within an academic context for most of my adult life, my perceptions and thus perspectives are informed by this experience. The notion of autoethnography emerges from within the academy itself and allows the reader to see aspects of the research process that are conventionally deemed unnecessary within the academic context. These aspects or glimpses into the research process and the context which inform it are important in relaying how the researcher and the research inform each other.

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[28] Solomos, J and Back, L. 2000. *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*. (London and New York: Routledge). p. 22.
[29] 1987, p. 277.
[30] Spry, T. 2001. 'Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis'. *Qualitative Enquiry*. Vol. 7 : 706. p. 710.
[31] Provencal, J. 2008. 'An Autoethnographic Miniature on the Tensions and Boundaries of Researcher Experiences. *Small Cities Imprint.* Vol. 1. No.1 p. 52.
[32]Richardson, L. 2000. 'Writing: A method of enquiry'. In Denzin and Lincoln. *The Handbook of Qualitative Research.*(California: Thousand Oaks).
[33] Guattari, F. 1996b. *Soft Subversions.* (New York: Semiotext). p. 57.

Approaching knowledge in this way emphasises the process of research rather than the production of an "eternal and universal manual".[34] Focusing on process means departing from knowledge as a hermetic object and acknowledging how research is a practical engagement. Michel Foucault argues that "In this sense theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice".[35] As a form of enquiry, this thesis is not only a drawing up of results, but also the mode of research production. Laura Cull explains that while the study of philosophy and performance are often involved in an interdisciplinary engagement with each other – performance is also form of philosophy.[36] My argument engages with this understanding of performance as a form of philosophy, a way of thinking.

[34] ibid, p. 57.
[35]Deleuze, G and Foucault, M. 1977.' Intellectuals and Power. A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze'. In Bouchard, DF (ed.). *Language, counter-memory, practice. Selected essay and interviews by Michel Foucault*. New York: Cornell University Press. p. 3.
[36] Cull, L. 2009. 'Performance as Philosophy.' *Theatre Research International.* Vol.37. No. 1. p. 21.

Part One:

The Problem of Whiteness and the Productivity of Desire

1.1 Colonial Masks

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) Frantz Fanon states that, "the black man wants to be white. The white man slaves to reach a human level".[37] Being aware of the way in which whiteness has been constructed as desirable; Fanon recognises the monolithic and oppressive desires that are attached to whiteness. He discusses how the desire to be acknowledged as a fellow human being leads to the production of a "white mask" because it is only when the "other" has assimilated the language of the colony that he/she becomes more human (i.e. more white).[38] The self has to be put aside in order to imitate the white man and adopt his manners and behaviours. Simultaneously, the white man/woman "slaves" to justify his/her privilege, the white human is enslaved by a sense of superiority.

In this "dual narcissism"[39] Fanon recognises how the colonial encounter separates the individual from his/her ethnicity and cultural practices to desire the production of a white world. Fanon's work highlights the dehumanising effects of colonial oppression on both sides of the particular racial fields he is analysing. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), he discusses the physical and psychological damage caused by colonialism on both the colonised and the coloniser. This is not to say that the coloniser's suffering equals that of the colonised, but that the process of colonisation involves the colonising of the coloniser at the level of individual desire. Fanon subverts the idea of whiteness by calling it a mask, of course this is in a dialectical relation to blackness, but it is important that Fanon calls it a mask because by doing this he reveals whiteness as a construction and not a natural fact.

Homi Bhabha observes that Fanon subverts the traditional grounds of racial identity: "*the Negro is not. Any more than the white man*".[40] Fanon displaces the colonial relation that is mapped out in *Black Skins White Masks*, in order to capture the possibility of change.[41] In Fanon's work there is a profound recognition of the "narcissistic myths of negritude or white cultural supremacy".[42] He unmasks these myths and reveals their naturalisation and the

[37] Fanon, F. 2008. *White Skin, Black Masks*. (London: Pluto Press) p. 3.
[38]ibid., p. 9.
[39] ibid., p. 2.
[40] ibid., 180.
[41] Bhabha cited in Fanon, 2008. p. xxiii.
[42] ibid., p. xxiii.

alienation they cause. While the coloniser created a set of stereotyped representations regarding the indigenous people of the places they colonised, they simultaneously constructed ideations to support their own sense of superiority, such as: explorer, missionary, civilising authority. It becomes clear through Fanon's work that this desire for whiteness needs to be challenged and resisted: "Oh my body, make of me always a man who questions".[43] Yet more than fifty years after Fanon's work and various processes of decolonization around the world, the desire for whiteness is still pervasive. This does not necessarily mean that non-white people desire to be white, but also that many (including white people) desire the privilege attached to this racial category. Although colonialism and the philosophies informing racial oppression have been politically challenged, the ambitious and patriarchal desire which thrives on imperialism has not been completely undone. As bell hooks has stated: "Politically we do not live in a postcolonial world, because the mindset of neo-colonialism shapes the underlying metaphysics of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy".[44] This may be because the desire for whiteness has found habitual representation, as the *face* of moral superiority and progress.

Georg Lipsitz and Shilpi Bhattacharya explain how whiteness is invested in and carries with it advantages that other skin colours do not experience.[45] These advantages are related to social status and buying power attached to white consumers. Bhattacharya argues, "whiteness is thus, an asset, a property which has crossed cultural differences to come to be universally valued and commodified".[46] This means that whiteness is "commercialised", that it can be bought and sold. These studies suggest that the world is an "easier" place for white people to live in while non-white people are often disadvantaged by this privilege. Whiteness as a commodity indicates that it affords white people a status that is desirable. Bhattacharya explains that this desirability for whiteness can be observed in the media in which a light skinned complexion on non-white actors is favored and almost omnipresent.[47] He also argues that resistance to white domination has not been completely successful in questioning "the fundamental desire for whiteness".[48]

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[43]ibid., p. 181.
[44] hooks, b. 1994.*Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations.* (New York: Routledge). p. 7.
[45]Bhattacharya, S. 2011. 'The Desire for Whiteness: Can Law and Economics explain it?' OP Jindal Global University. Research paper no. 8. Accessed online: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1743267 on 22 November 2012; and Lipsitz, G. 1998. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Benefit from Identity Politics.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press).
[46] Bhattacharya, 2011, p. 4.
[47]ibid., p. 4.
[48]ibid., p. 4.

1.2 Whiteness Studies and Reification

The desire for whiteness is challenged by Whiteness Studies which focuses on making visible a race and identity that is usually constructed as invisible, particularly to white people themselves. Studies on whiteness critique the pervasiveness and superiority of white discourses and the unquestioned "normalisation" of white ways of operating in the world. Dyer argues that we must assign a particularity to white identity, to de-familiarise it as a marker of the norm from which all other non-white identities are measured, arguing that, "whiteness needs to be made strange".[49] In other words we need to emphasise and undermine this normalised identity especially since it is reified as *the standard identity*. The scholarly move towards whiteness in critical race studies is concerned with emphasizing and challenging the privilege that constitutes the position of being white. This according to Ruth Frankenberg is especially important for white researchers to interrogate, since; "whiteness, as a set of normative cultural practices, is visible most clearly to those it definitively excludes and those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it".[50]

An investigation of whiteness is inevitably an investigation into race and racism. Part of questioning the status of white as "normal" is to identify white as a racialised subject position. The whole point of investigating white identity is to reinforce the idea that race is a constructed category which is complicated by the very "reality" of our differences. In terms of white identities, this is related to the way whiteness is constructed as a measure of normalcy as opposed to the "strangeness" of non-white identities. To recognise this is to realise that race is in collusion with reification – that in the process of attempting to make sense out of the world we also often take for granted the fact that we create the terms through which we perceive (make sense of) the world. Reification can be described as a practice whereby abstract concepts are thought of as concrete, tangible entities that exist independently of those who actually frame them. Taking it further, Axel Honneth, citing Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, maintains the view that, "All reification is a forgetting".[51] This is precisely related to taking for granted what we think and feel. Honneth notes that, "reification in the sense of 'forgetfulness of recognition'... means that in the course

[49] Dyer, R. 1997, p. 10.
[50] Frankenburg, R. 1993. *White women, race matters: the social construction of whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press). pp. 228-29.
[51] Adorno, T and Horkheimer cited in Honneth, A. 2008. *Reification: A new look at an old idea*. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press). p. 17.

of our acts of cognition, we lose our attentiveness to the fact that this cognition owes its existence to an antecedent act of recognition".[52] The process of fixing identities, of fitting identities into discrete categories, is also a process of reifying those identities. What is striking about reification is that it solidifies myths and stereotypes as a "given" reality. Race plays a big role in this by being a visually identifiable element of one's identity by token of one's skin colour. Yet race is about more than just the colour of one's skin, as Sander Gilman notes, "race is a constructed category of social organization".[53]

Intermezzo: Problems with Privilege and Whiteness Studies

I do not feel represented by these ideas of whiteness, the same way I have seldom felt represented by what I see on television. For me, white privilege is undesirable because it does not represent my experience. Or, is it that I do not desire this kind of privilege because it's based on exclusion. Yet, another part of me feels that although I do not see my whiteness as a privilege, perhaps my white skin tells another story, the narrative of privilege and benefit. Particularly being a white South African; my white skin, my Afrikaans heritage and my English education, all scream privilege. It would seem that I have inherited privilege and a sense of entitlement through being white, but this is not how I experience my whiteness.

I am white but I had no real choice in the matter, it is simply what I was born into (isn't that exactly what white people love to say). And I was born into the last remaining years of apartheid, so I did not live through it. Although I have inherited a legacy of shame, I am not a product of apartheid, but rather a product of the confusion and unrest of the breakdown of apartheid and the problematic "becoming" of democracy in South Africa.

Whiteness Studies interrogate and debunk the privilege and desires of whiteness through a theoretical lens. Since the language we speak and write is part of constructing this desire for whiteness and has been developed over centuries, the theory is not always conducive to its aims. The way we use language often reifies the very thing we are trying to deconstruct. The idea that whiteness constitutes privilege, for instance, is revealing of how language constructs perception. If privilege is what white people get from centuries of oppressing non-white people, what are we saying about privilege? Why would anyone want to keep these privileges? My understanding of the word privileged here is specifically in relation to whiteness studies and how privilege is embedded in discourses of whiteness. This idea of privilege is also constructed as inevitable, that being white means being privileged? How can injustice based on race be seen as a privilege? Perhaps this notion of privilege attached to whiteness perpetuates the advantages of being white. Perhaps we need to find a few different words to write critically about whiteness. Ndebele's comments (made in the introduction to this thesis) clarify how white privilege lacks any integrity – that in its attempts at superiority, whiteness has lost all claims to a moral superiority.

[52]ibid., 59.
[53] Gilman, S. 1991. *The Jew's Body*. (New York: Routledge) p. 170.

Often the study of whiteness is deemed indulgent as white people are so thoroughly represented. Why give more attention to the "molar par excellence... the standard upon which the majority is based: white, male, adult, "rational," etc., in short, the average European, the subject of enunciation"?[54]

Maulanga Karenga argues that privilege should not be the main focus of whiteness studies. Instead the focus should be on white power which guarantees white privilege: "focus on White-skin privilege can become a substitute for focus on White people's power, which is both the source and sustainer of White-skin privileges, which even poor and relatively powerless Whites are granted."[55] *Yet, this study of the symptoms of whiteness, for instance, the notion of privilege, is interrogated to challenge the power of whiteness. Particularly, because many white people live in an "atmosphere of alleged colour-blindness"*[56] *and claim ignorance of their power and the subsequent privileges attached to it.*

There are white people, and then, there is whiteness – which is a concept not necessarily attached only to the bearers of white skins. This position cannot be investigated only in relation to race, but to the capitalist imperialist machine supported by the idea of reason and objectivity, of an enforced idea of the world. It is this monolithic idea represented by whiteness that needs a process of de-reification, a recognition of the naturalisation of a certain way of life which is presumed to be a desire shared by all and therefore becomes monolithic, molar.

1.3 Creating White Desires

If whiteness is so omnipresent and desirable, how did it come to be this way? Why was whiteness constructed as desirable in the first place? In the following pages a brief context for the privileged status of whiteness will be given to explain some of the discourses of whiteness. This discussion is not a chronological narrative of whiteness and neither is it an exhaustive account of what whiteness means. Rather, these narratives of whiteness are utilised in order to understand how whiteness created itself as desirable.

Dyer highlights Christianity, race and imperialism as three key embodiments of whiteness.[57] Discourses connecting the white race with superiority were constructed to justify and secure white privilege to the disadvantage of non-white people and their cultures. These aspects are quite clearly representative of the way privilege is an embodied set of social practices which

[54] Deleuze and Guattari, 1987. p. 292.
[55] Karenga, M. 1999. 'Whiteness Studies: Deceptive or Welcome Discourse?.' *Black Issues in Higher Education*. Vol. 16. Issue 6. p 26.
[56] Sullivan, 2006, p. 5.
[57] Dyer 1997, p. 18.

are created or constructed rather than being the product of a natural order of things. Melissa Steyn has referred to these as "Master narratives" of whiteness which served as ideological fodder for the continuation of white supremacy.[58] She argues, "Criss-crossed with contradictions, mutating over time, and varying in different geographical and social contexts, this narrative was able to absorb conflicting evidence and remain resilient and long lived".[59] For instance, Dyer notes that while white racial supremacy was supported by genealogical research, biological research into whiteness was received with disinterest.[60]

The genealogical research to which they refer was focused on the Aryans or Caucasians, both considered as purer and nobler examples of human beings. Biological studies were more focused on non-whites and the white body was simply used as a standard or norm from which everything else deviated.[61] Claims supporting the view of a pure white race were supported by theories of Social Darwinism which emerged in the 1870's and argued that the dominance of a particular group was the result of social evolution. In this way, Charles Darwin's scientific account of evolution was incorporated into the social sciences.[62] Thomas McCarthy argues that Social Darwinism was formed out of diverse sources and was the result of "interrelated and somewhat indeterminate ideas".[63] The reason for a more dominant race was seen as the result of the Darwinian theory that only the "fittest survive". This "fittest survive" explanation for oppression was not really in accordance with Darwin's theory which was focused not on the strongest or the fittest, but the most adaptable. This view held that Africans as well as Native Americans, for instance, represent a lower level of evolutionary development while Caucasians are explained as further along the evolutionary line.[64] This would serve to explain and justify the subordination of people along colour lines.

In this sense non-white people are seen as biologically poorer specimens and white people are considered as racially neutral, or unraced, because to identify the white man solely on his/her physical traits, "would be to understand white people as, like non-whites, no more than their bodies".[65] Dyer argues that the lack of interest in biological research on white bodies was

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[58] Steyn, 2001. *Whiteness just isn't what it used to be: white identity in a changing South Africa*. (New York: State University of New York.) p. 21.
[59]ibid., p. 7.
[60] Dyer, 1997. p. 20-21.
[61]Dyer, 1997. p.23.
[62] McCarthy, T. 2009. *Race, Empire and the Idea of HumanDevelopment.* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press). p. 77.
[63]ibid., p. 76.
[64]ibid., p. 76.
[65] Dyer, 1997. p. 23.

related to the notion that whiteness was more closely aligned with the divine.[66] The spirit housed in the body of a white man was what separated it from non-white bodies and was not just an issue of skin colour. This can be seen in the example below in which two non-white performing bodies, Josephine Baker and Saartjie Baartman were treated according to the *degree of spirit* they were believed to embody.

1.4 Desire for "Civilisation": Josephine Baker as Primitive, Saartjie Baartman as Savage

To think of white people as more than just their bodies but also vessels of a civilised spirit was another way of marking the difference between them and non-whites. The "spirit" of the white person was seen as more morally developed than the bodies of those who needed to be colonised. For instance, Brett Berliner notes that in the French vernacular, a distinction was made between *sauvage* (savage) and *primitif* (primitive).[67] The term *sauvage* would often refer to black Africans while *primitif* referred to African Americans. In the 1920's when primitivism was embraced by artists, *primitif* people were regarded as having a capacity for civilisation, and were celebrated more so than their African counterparts.[68] An example of this can be observed in the celebrity status of Josephine Baker who was renowned for her "primitive" blackness in Paris in the 1920's. At that particular time in French history, the idea of the primitive was very fashionable and the body of the "other" was exoticized to the point of fetishism. This phenomenon is referred to as negrophilia – the love of all things African.[69] Baker personified the *sauvage* on stage but would likely have been considered a *primitif* celebrity. Baker was very critical of racist America and left the United States to perform in France in the early 1920's. She said of this relocation,

> One day I realized I was living in a country where I was afraid to be black. It was only a country for white people. Not black. So I left. I had been suffocating in the United States... A lot of us left, not because we wanted to leave, but because we couldn't stand it anymore... I felt liberated in Paris.[70]

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[66] ibid., p. 23.
[67] Cited in Lepecki, A. 2006. *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement.* (New York: Routledge.) p. 112.
[68] Berliner cited in Lepecki, 2006. 112.
[69] Burt, R. 1998. *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, Race and Nation in early modern dance*. (New York: Routledge). p. 61.
[70] Baker cited on Official Site of Josephine Baker. Accesses online from http://www.cmgww.com/stars/baker/about/biography.html on 22 April 2013.

While Baker was ironically celebrated as an object of desire for her difference in France, she was exiled and considered a political threat in America. Baker's example is quite significant in that it reveals these two distinct sides of white racism. One is more obviously deviant, she was ostracised from America because she openly expressed her political views regarding equality. Whereas the kind of objectification that she experienced in Paris was far more invisible as it was cloaked in admiration.

Baker used her stardom as a platform for subversion, for although she played the role of simple savage on stage, in her personal life she revealed a very different side to her persona. Baker was a human rights activist, she was part of the French resistance during the war, and was the first woman in France to be buried with military honours.[71] It could be said that Baker played the African "savage" in an opportunistic manner. The irony becomes apparent when her insistence on equality is juxtaposed with her performances in which she embodies the "other" and reveals the racist constructions that are inherent in negrophiliac views. As a *primitif* black performer, Baker's example reveals how there are certain degrees of other-ness, some more favourable than others.

Baker was referred to as the "African Venus", "Black Pearl" and the "Creole Goddess", but her narrative is very different to that of Saartjie Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus". Baker's specific African ethnicity was omitted as she was an African American, while Baartman's Khoi-koi heritage lends to the construction of her as a "savage". According to Z.S Strother, the travelogues and descriptions of the Khoi-koi were severely unsettling to the European imagination which "claimed for the Hottentot the role of the most debased group on earth".[72] Baartman left South Africa in 1814 and was used as a "freak show" attraction. Her physical appearance fascinated Europeans due to her enlarged buttocks (steatopygia) and extended labia. She was later sold to a Frenchman, a showman of wild animals and was taken to France where she was exhibited much like an animal. When she died of pneumonia, her remains were exhibited until the late 1970's at the Musée de L'Homme in Paris and were then put in storage. As a "savage" Baartman lacked the "civility" that Josephine Baker would possess in Paris when being black became fashionable and desirable. While Baker had some agency, she was a trained performer by the time she arrived in Paris, Baartman showed

[71] Dudziak, M. Josephine Baker, Racial Protest and the Cold War. *The Journal of American History.* Vol. 81. No. 2, (Sep,.1994) p.548.
[72] Strother, Z.S. 1999. 'Display of the Body Hottentot'. Lindfors, B. (ed). (Indiana USA: Indiana University Press) *Africans On Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business.* p. 3-4.

reluctance to exhibit herself, to perform the role of savage.[73] In 1994, then President Nelson Mandela requested that Baartman's remains be returned to South Africa and this was effected in 2002. Images of Baartman's body have become a synonymous with the violence and humiliation suffered by Africans at the hands of Imperialist Europeans. If one were to compare Baker and Baartman's experiences the distinction between "savage" and "primitive" become apparent. It also reveals the specific marginalisation of the feminine body in colonial discourses. According to Gordon-Chipembere, "Baartman's story has stimulated international discussions concerning the conflations between gender, race, representation and self-hood".[74]

While Baartman came from one of the "most debased groups on earth", Baker was closer to Western "civilisation" via her African American heritage; she was metaphorically "whiter" than Baartman. Yet, both Baker and Baartman were objectified by the colonial gaze; one performed the stereotype while the other was exhibited very much like an animal. This exoticization of the non-western individual is still prevalent today, promoting difference while simultaneously exploiting it for profit. As Braidotti argues, "contemporary racism celebrates rather than denies differences".[75] Cohen's *The Cradle of Humankind* and Bailey's *Exhibit A*, which will be analysed in Part Two, are works that engage critically with the exhibition of non-white bodies by white male artists.

1.5 God is White/the Devil is Black

The idea that white people are "more than their bodies" was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment with its emphasis on human endeavour and the power of reason. Steyn argues that, "the Enlightenment pride in its reason seems to contain more than an element of infatuation with its ability to rationalize existing European prejudices, and to justify its imperial ambitions…"[76] This view held that reason was something white people had at their disposal while non-white people lacked reason and were therefore in need of enlightenment. This placed an enormous amount of emphasis on the dualistic elements of Christianity and the Manichean dichotomies: of good and evil, light and darkness. These binary oppositions between civilisation and savagery (as well as heathen and Christian) were a means to justify the dominance of whiteness. Biblical narratives were used to rationalise the inferiority and the subjugation of non-whites. The narrative regarding Noah's curse on his son Ham's

[73] ibid., p. 33.
[74] Gordon-Chimpembere, N. 2011. *Representation and Black Womanhood: The Legacy of Sarah Baartman.* (New York:Palgrave Macmillan). p. 5.
[75] Braidotti, R. 2002. p. 4.
[76] Steyn, 2001. p. 16.

children, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers", was used to defend slavery.[77]

The Manichean dichotomy between notions of the material world in contrast with the spiritual was cast onto skin colour. Preference was given to white as closer to light and as akin to spirituality. This preference for whiteness was represented in art and can be seen in religious iconography and sculpture. Dyer observes the 'humanation' and whitening in representations of Christ's face from the 13th century onwards.[78] The whitening in representations of Christ has its history in the Crusades and the wish to establish Christianity and deliver Europe from Islamic powers. As Dyer notes, this is not to argue that Christianity is a "white" religion but that it "brought a tradition of black: white moral dualism to bear on an enemy that could itself be perceived as black".[79] By the end of the Renaissance Christ was fully whitened and represented as "not just fair-skinned but blond and blue-eyed..."[80]

This whitening influence can be seen in the Renaissance interest in Ancient Greek art which was categorised as Classic art. This attachment of white to Classic art is highly influenced by the artist Michelangelo, whose sculptures were often white, for instance the *Pieta* (1498-99). Michelangelo's bright white polished sculptures were seen as truly evocative of the Classic style. The Parthenon and ancient Greek sculpture is re-imagined as white since what remains of these ancient buildings and sculptures is mostly an off-white facade due to weathering and fire. It is interesting to note that the controversial Elgin marbles (some of the Parthenon's most intricate carvings) housed in the British Museum in London were stripped of their original colour by museum representatives in the early 1900's. Forensic tests and investigations into ancient Greek culture reveals a more colourful engagement with sculpture and architecture. The Parthenon in its original form was a vibrantly colourful building. In this way, greatness and civilisation have been interpreted through an aesthetic of whiteness. To attribute whiteness to a culture whose aesthetic was not white seems to provide a justification for the artistic desire to celebrate the aesthetics of the Ancient Greeks without celebrating their pantheistic and vibrant religious practices which did not sit well with the monotheistic religion that Christianity was becoming. Dyer notes that the belief that white people were descendents of the Aryans/Caucasians, functioned as a myth of origin which suited the

[77] Dyer, 1997, p. 22.
[78] ibid., p. 67.
[79] ibid., p. 67.
[80] ibid., p. 68.

European's sense of self.[81] While Ancient Greece was seen as the cradle of Europe, the 19th Century European needed a *whiter* origin for Greek society than that of the Egyptians and Phoenician cultures from which the characteristics of Ancient Greek culture were derived.[82] By whitening Greece, the European attempted to dissolve any claims to an African origin for white people.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that racism is not concerned with the "other" but with what is deviant in relation to the subjectivity of the racist:

> Racism operates by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face, which endeavours to integrate nonconforming traits into increasingly eccentric and backward waves, sometimes tolerating them at given places under given conditions, in a given ghetto, sometimes erasing them from the wall, which never abides alterity (it's a Jew, it's an Arab, it's a Negro, it's a lunatic…). From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside. There are only people who should be like us and whose crime it is not to be.[83]

From this point of view, European racism seeks to dis-identify the other and does not recognise any value in alterity. European racism does not function through exclusion but establishes a hierarchy of types from which the white male surfaces as the dominant major identity. The "White-Man face" is related to the representational force and power of white patriarchy symbolised by the white male and his gaze; a dominant standard. It began with the image of Christ as the image of God in the flesh, the embodiment of God, "not a universal, but *fades totius universi*"[84] (the sum of the whole universe). Kalpana Seshadri-Cooks in accordance with this view argues that whiteness is a master signifier, "what guarantees Whiteness its place as master signifier is visual difference".[85] The more you divert from the "White-Man face" the less likely you are to represent the interests of its arborescent model. Women, children, homosexuals and animals divert from this "face" and are thus minoritarian.[86] Deleuze and Guattari focus this critique within the context of representation. Racism works in the space which cannot tolerate difference, sometimes to the degree that it must destroy or abject what it cannot (and refuses to) identify.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that the representational focus on faciality creates the "other"; "Imposed by the model-enforcing grid of the white man's faciality machine, the face is

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[81] ibid., p. 21.
[82] ibid., p. 21.
[83] 1987, p. 178.
[84] 1987, p. 176.
[85] Seshadri-Cooks, K. 2000. *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race.* (London:Routledge) p. 21.
[86] Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 291.

always determined from the outside".[87] They suggest a dismantling of faciality as a universal signifier by which one is coded and subjectified by focusing on becoming.[88]

1.6 Whiteness and Imperial Capital

The power of whiteness was increased by economic desires. The success of industrialization in Europe in the 18th century led to an insatiable need for cheap raw materials. In order to source these materials and gain a profit the imperial powers needed a strong supply of cheap labor which resulted in slavery. This desire for profit and power would be provided by the colonies. Science, culture and religion supported the project of whiteness but it was the desire for capital that steered it on and made it possible. The rapidity of industrialization and the consequences of mercantile capitalism (which is the earliest form of capitalism), is based on a system of obtaining products at a low cost and selling those products at a high price, thereby achieving maximum profits, which had extremely detrimental effects on ex-colonies. In fact, Moeletsi Mbeki has said that Africa is fundamentally stuck in a form of early mercantile capitalism, meaning that Africa is still in an extremely exploitative relationship with the West.[89] This issue surfaces in MacGarry's short film, *LHR-JNB* (discussed in Part Two) which weaves a subtle critique of the consequences of European imperialism on the present state of the African continent.

Melissa Steyn suggests that whiteness became more thoroughly emphasized with the advent of colonialism;

> While not particularly unifying across troublesome ethnic boundaries within Europe, the invention of whiteness provided people from Europe with a supranationalism that enabled them to ensure that the emerging social formations brought about by European expansion were articulated to their greatest self-interest…In other words, Europeans whitened as they expanded and conquered, developing a common identity by using Africans as the foil against which they defined themselves.[90]

The idea of whiteness or a white race thus developed more thoroughly with the colonial conquests in the Age of discovery. These narratives reveal how whiteness; as racially superior was invented, and that white privilege is not a natural historical progression. These master narratives or embodiments of whiteness reveal the macropolitical or molar dimensions of white domination. It is quite evident that white desire has been very productive in ensuring

[87] Watson, J. 'Theorising European Ethics and Politics with Deleuze and Guattari'. In Buchana. n, I and Thoburn, N,(eds). 2008. *Deleuze and Politics.* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press.) p. 209.
[88] Deleuze and Guattari, 1987. p. 188.
[89] Mbeki, M. 2009. *Architects of Poverty: Why Africa's Capitalism needs changing*. (Johannesburg: Picador).
[90] Steyn, 2001, p. 5.

the privileges of white people. It also becomes clear that capital (economic power) guarantees the perpetuation of white power. Yet, this molar dimension or grand narrative of whiteness must also be investigated in relation to the micro-political (the personal) investment in perpetuating these narratives.

Intermezzo: Memories of a community outside Bloemfontein

When I was born in 1984, South Africa was still in the violent throes of Apartheid. My dad and my uncles had all done their compulsory military service on the border in Angola. I lived on a small plot outside of Bloemfontein and I had no understanding of the political. My world was not a segregated one, I lived less than a minute from my domestic worker Nicky and her husband. Five minutes from Sam and Anna and their sixteen children. Our gardener taught me how to ride a bicycle where everyone else failed. I rode horses and played in the mud with my brother and my consciousness consisted solely of this small world. My family was very far from rich but privileged compared to the black people who lived around us. My mother had owned a shop for a while, but her heart was too good to profit from a small rural shop which was used mainly by the black community. She gave out too many loans and was far too kind to be a good capitalist, so she eventually had to sell the shop. Today, the little shop is much larger and the owner unashamedly exploits the poor rural people who do not have the means to drive into the city to get what they need. The white shop owner also has pictures of black politicians on the shop walls giving the facade of him being a "comrade"- a friend of the people.

My mother shared a close relationship with the black community and in 1993, when my dad lost his business; she started an informal moving business. She would take people and their few belongings into the township where they would quickly construct homes from corrugated iron and some bricks to keep a roof over their heads. She was helping them become squatters at their behest. She would also take them to the shebeen to get cases of beer because they were much cheaper than in town. I realised later that the exodus from the rural area by so many of the Sesotho community was because they believed the promise of RDP[91] homes. Their faith in politicians and social workers still amazes me as I have always instinctively distrusted those in authority. My mind still wanders straight to those individuals when I hear references to RDP homes. Did they get their homes? Or, make another plan?

On the ground level….the mundane level, segregation was not the norm in my life. I do not want to idealise this time, but it was the closest I ever came to a community, or to what I think a community feels like. Although my family and I were clearly beneficiaries of apartheid, we were also symbolic of its failure to keep the white person privileged. It was really absurd: I was in one of the best schools in Bloemfontein, but my mother sometimes had to borrow

[91] The Reconstruction and Development Programme was implemented in 1994 to address the socio-economic inequality and poor social services in South Africa. One of the RDP's purposes is to provide homes to the many who were de-privileged by apartheid. "RDP homes" are reference to these government housing schemes.

maize meal from the domestic worker so we could eat something. I was ashamed of my "position", I lived two lives: the mask of privilege and the rural poverty at home. I had my black friends at home and my white friends at school. Segregation. People don't live politically correct lives. Now, I feel that the poverty I experienced (which is nothing compared to those we moved to the squatter camps) gave me a unique experience of South African life. My context created in me a split being: both poor and privileged, both Afrikaans and English, grafted in Sesotho and Christian narratives.

My mother was not a politician and she was not a saint, but she showed me that all people are equal. She did not live the life of an ignorant white women, she was involved. Her micropolitics was evident in her immanent approach to the problems we faced as a family and those "others" she came to include as part of her "family". I did not realise then how incredibly subversive some of her actions were at that time.

1.7 White Privilege as a Habit

Shannon Sullivan argues that white privilege operates more subtly than does white supremacy. While the latter is quite evidently racist (as can be seen in extreme forms such as the Klu Klux Klan in North America or the militant right-wing Afrikaner Resistance Movement AWB in South Africa) the former comes under the more subtle guise of habit, often unconsciously reproduced through our social practices.[92]Sullivan argues, "In a world filled with white privilege, habits that privilege whiteness will result, and these habits in turn will tend to reinforce the social, political, economic, and other privileges that white people have".[93] Sullivan is particularly interested in how we habitually reproduce white privilege through our daily behaviour in our relations with the world around us. She is especially critical of the naïve view that white people are ignorant of the negative effects white privilege has had on the lives of non-whites.[94]

If white privilege is constructed as a habit that is reproduced unconsciously, we can argue that it is constructed as a norm that is materialised through representations and actions without always being aware of the structures that govern this norm. It is therefore important to realise that whiteness and white supremacy are concepts that were created and constructed. Whiteness would not be so dominant if the interests of white people had not been so thoroughly represented or promoted in historical contexts. Since racial thinking is discouraged to promote a colour-blind social engagement with the world, many white people

[92] Sullivan, 2006, p. 5.
[93] ibid., p. 4.
[94] ibid., p. 18.

will live unaware of the constructed nature of their whiteness. If whiteness is presently constructed as "normal" it is because it was historically recognised as a supreme and desired position. It is also significant to remind ourselves that those who recognised white as a superior position, were themselves white people. Ruth Benedict observes that all civilisations "believe that all that is important in the world begins and ends with them";[95] but whiteness is striking in perpetuating an idea of white as supreme.

1.8 The Micropolitical Production of Privilege

In Sullivan's investigation of the unconscious habits of white privilege, she frames habit not as an excuse for white power but as an explanation for the production of privilege at the level of the individual. Sullivan's strategy which is centred on social habits and the individual's transactions with the world is significant in that it shifts the focus from a macropolitical level to the micropolitical level of everyday experiences.[96] Deleuze and Guattari stress the need to address one's own micropolitics, believing that working in an ascending analysis, starting with molecular mechanisms of power one can start to affect the dominant or molar systems. They argue that:

> Only microfascism provides an answer to the global question: Why does desire desire its own repression, how can it desire its own repression? The masses certainly do not passively submit to power; nor do they "want" to be repressed, in a kind of masochistic hysteria; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure. Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from microformations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potentially gives desire a fascist determination. Leftist organizations will not be the last to secrete microfascisms. It's too easy to be antifascist on the molar level, and not even see the fascist inside you, the fascist you yourself sustain and nourish and cherish with molecules both personal and collective.[97]

Guattari's notion of "micro-political analysis" shares a common thread with Kristeva's intimate revolt: to determine how we ourselves influence and perpetuate repressive systems.Guattari states that, "the micro-fascist elements in all our relations with others must

[95] Benedict, R 2000. 'Race: What it is not.' In Solomos, and Back (eds).p. 117.
[96] 2006, p. 5.
[97] 1987, p. 215.

be found because when we fight on the molecular level, we'll have a much better chance of preventing a truly fascist, a macro-fascist formation on the molar level".[98] An active micropolitics can reveal individual complicity within structures of power and recognizes the potential for transformation within these structures. In this way, white power is not something inherited from our racist ancestors, but something reproduced in one's own life. As Sullivan states: "unconscious habit is not a theater of representations, but a psychosomatic machine that actively and directly produces and is produced by a social world invested with unconscious desire".[99] Whiteness is not only conceptual but something produced, something at work within the world. Sullivan's observation that white power is produced is related to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of desire as a productive rather than repressed aspect of the unconscious.

1.9 Challenging theories of desire

Deleuze and Guattari challenge the notion of desire by removing it from the realm of fantasy and lack (as it had been theorized by Freud and Lacan[100]). Following Nietzsche they think of it as a productive and creative aspect that drives life.[101]Desire is reified to suit the ever increasing needs of a profit-oriented world and is thus repressed. They propose that desire is machinic, that desire produces the real. Therefore desire is not restrained so much as it is reified and like a good performer or concept, "it takes that mask on under the reign of the repression that models the mask for it and plasters it on its face."[102]

One of these masks is that of the myth of Oedipus on which Freud based the development of his concept of the ego. This can be seen in Sophocles' characterization of Oedipus Rex who is deemed powerless by "fate", a character doomed from the start. He seems to be at the mercy of forces beyond himself, fulfilling the promise of the Delphic oracle and unknowingly commits patricide and incest. By attempting to avoid a prophecy Oedipus runs straight into it, a common motif in Greek Tragedy. He becomes a victim of fate, seeming to have little choice in the matter. Strangely enough, he has sense enough to answer the riddle of the sphinx. Yet, this ability to solve the riddle, to solve problems, is not enough. Oedipus is

[98] Guattari, F. 1996. *Soft Subversions*. (Semiotext(e): New York.) p. 57.
[99] 2006, p. 89.
[100] Deleuze and Guattari, F. 1983. *Plateaus Anti*-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia . (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.) p. 63.
[101]ibid.,. p. 26.
[102]ibid., p. 120.

aware that the situation is beyond his control and surrenders to it: "Some savage power has brought this down on my head".[103] Even when he becomes aware of this fate he continues to enact it by acknowledging this "savage power" as his master. Free will and fate are almost indivisible here. Oedipus freely (of his own choice) does the very things he does not desire to do.

Freud used the Oedipus myth as a system to account for, or give a symbolic understanding to the psychosexual development of the subject. For Freud, Oedipal desire is universal and an innate part of the human psyche. Like Oedipus, the subject experiences an unconscious sexual desire for the mother as well as a desire to destroy the father. Since the ego cannot deal with these desires, the subject represses them. In *Anti-Oedipus* (1983), Deleuze and Guattari detach the concept of desire from Sigmund Freud's Oedipal construction of it. They criticise the way in which desire's potentiality is fixated on the foundation of fantasy;

> Production is reduced to mere fantasy production, production of expression. The unconscious ceases to be what it is – a factory, a workshop – to become a theater, a scene, a staging. And not even an avant-garde theater, such as existed in Freud's day (Wedekind), but the classical theater, the classical order of representation.[104]

What these theorists are arguing is that the unconscious cannot be reduced to a linear tragedy. Desire in psychoanalytic discourse has been relegated to fantasy and "nothing but fantasy".[105] They criticize the Oedipus complex as a reduction of the unconscious (and therefore also the notion of desire), observing that in psychoanalytic discourse, desire is constructed as something to be repressed. Although the criticism seems aimed at Freud, Deleuze and Guattari are equally concerned about the relationship between the psychic and the social and how "psychic repression is such that social repression becomes desired".[106] This concern is extended into a critique of Marxist theory itself for a certain degree of reification or forgetfulness in that "social production and relations of production are an institution of desire…affects and drives form part of the infrastructure itself."[107]

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[103]Sophocles, Knox, E (Intro). 1984. *Three Theban Plays: Antigone; Oedipus the King; Oedipus at Colonus*. (United States of America: Viking Penguin). p. 207.
[104] 1983. p. 55.
[105]ibid., p. 30.
[106]ibid., p. 119.
[107]ibid., p. 63.

1.10 Desire as Fluid and Productive

Desire is what creates the terms on which we base our lives. This assertion is based on Friedrich Nietzsche's writing on the drives or cravings in *The Dawn of Day* (1881) which as Daniel Smith argues is where Nietzsche first developed the idea of the will to power "at the level of the drives".[108] Nietzsche highlights the idea that there are a multiplicity of drives and impulses within individuals and that it is the drives and not our intellect which interprets the world around us, "Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm".[109] For instance today my impulse to dance in the studio is overridden by my desire to write my thesis. In order for the thesis to combat the desire to dance, the drives which elicit the desire to write must combat the drives attached to the desire to dance. The dancing and the writing are both forceful desires and any decision I make will be informed by the way in which these two contradictory desires are arranged within the multiplicity of drives within me.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that "drives are simply the desiring-machines themselves".[110] If the desire to write wins over the desire to dance, it is not because it is a more reasonable decision, but because of the way it was assembled and composed on a particular day. Thus what we believe is a conscious decision is really only an interpretation, a drive that is "merely one impulse which is complaining of another".[111] If for example, I argue to myself that my dancing will not get me my PhD degree and I base my decision to write on that premise, it is because my desires are already invested in a social formation which makes my interest to receive a PhD possible. *"If I do not write this thesis, but rather dance, I will not get my doctorate."* Similarly, many people can convince themselves that race is not important, that they do not see it, specifically because they are invested in a privileged social formation which makes it feasible to deny the effects of race. Racial privileging will persist in a colour-blind society that professes to be anti-racist because colour-blindness reveals a lack of interest in, and ignorance of one's own complicity in the production of white privilege and this is true, Sullivan maintains, "whatever one's race".[112]

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[108] Smith, D citing Nietzsche, F. 2007. 'Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward and Immanent Theory of Ethics.' *Parrhesia*. No. 2. p. 69.
[109] Nietzsche, F. 1968. *Will to Power*. (New York: Random House). p. 267.
[110] 1983, p. 35.
[111] Nietzsche, F. 1911.*Daybreak*. (New York: MacMillan). p. 95.
[112] 2006. p. 11.

Deleuze and Guattari's conception of desire is closer to the "force" which Nietzsche describes as the "will to power". Jon Mckenzie argues that the will to power, "is not the will of an individual or group, not the power of human appropriation and representation but rather the chaosmosis of forces from which subjects and objects emerge and into which they dissolve".[113] Since desire is neither a lack nor solely related to the unconscious, as a productive force desire is always positive – an active force that is not necessarily good or bad, but which simply and ceaselessly produces. As Nietzsche states, at length:

> And do you know what "the world" is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by "nothingness" as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be "empty" here or there, but rather as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple out of this abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years, blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness: this, my *Dionysian* world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my "beyond good and evil," without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will toward itself-do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men? - *This world is the will to power-and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power-and nothing besides.[114]

This idea of desire as a force – as a "will to power" is a departure from the idea of a fixed and finite universe that can be objectively defined. Rather, "will to power" is a way of explaining desire's ability to produce reality.

Deleuze and Guattari differentiate between molar and molecular desires. When Guattari suggests, "Through a systematic decentring of desire, micropolitical analysis will lead to soft subversions and imperceptible revolutions that will eventually change the face of the

[113] Mckenzie. J. 2001. *Perform or Else*. (London and New York: Routledge). p. 258.
[114] 1968, p. 549-550.

world"[115] he is referring to the decentring of desire that is invested in totalizing and arborescent schemas; molar desire that reifies desire. The potential of desire forced to find representation through dualisms, creates stagnant and habitual desire.Desires produced rhizomatically, however, do not operate arboreally. Deleuze and Guattari use the image of a tree in nature as a metaphor for arborescent culture.[116] The type of thinking manifested in such culture rests on static concepts of the world whereas their preferred model of "rhizomatic" thinking is more lateral, fluid and dynamic. Rhizomatic thought rejects the top/bottom distinctions in which thought is characterized by a hierarchy of importance: "in nature, roots are taproots with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification, rather than a dichotomous one. Thought lags behind nature".[117] Rhizomatic thinking is a movement towards thinking beyond binaries –a departure from the desire to construct thought and being through dualisms.

Deleuze and Guattari's resistance to coding the unconscious in the manner that Freud does is significant in redefining desire. If the unconscious and therefore desire, needs to be repressed or sublimated one cannot be held wholly responsible for one's behavior and actions. For example, Oedipus being at the mercy of his own repressed desires. In this way something like white power and its subsequent privilege seems inevitable and beyond one's control. By arguing that both psychic and social repression are part the same equation, Deleuze and Guattari open up a "line of flight" which decolonizes desire. The notion of desire as productive and creative helps to challenge white power because it reveals how micropolitical desire is neither inevitable nor inherited, but rather, an active production of the macropolitical.

Lines of flight are creative openings which allow an endless space in which to escape or reformulate standardization and social repression. The words flight/escape translated from the French *fuite*, cover "not only the act of fleeing or eluding but also flowing, leaking, and disappearing into the distance".[118] To propel desire along a line of flight is to release it from molar desires, to create one's own desires, to take responsibility for one's own desires rather than to passively accept molar representations. This does not mean that singular desire will not be reterritorialized within new mechanisms of control and constraint; lines of flight can

[115] 1996, p. 111.
[116] 1988. p. 5.
[117]ibid., p 5.
[118] 1987, p. xvi.

end very badly – in fascism, madness, and so on. But it does force a confrontation or renegotiation between the psychic and the social.

1.11 Desiring Anxiety and Revolt: the ability to challenge

Julia Kristeva interprets revolt as the need to question consistently and continuously so that we do not take for granted how we perceive the world. Etymologically, this particular concept of revolt emphasizes "return, returning, discovering, uncovering and renovating".[119] Kristeva's sense of revolt as questioning is a far cry from the idea of revolt as open and violent rebellion against authority. Kristeva argues that, "Revolt is not simply about rejection and destruction; it is also about starting over. Unlike the word violence, revolt foregrounds an element of renewal and regeneration".[120] Here revolt is not understood as a violent means to change but rather as a process that has no particular end in sight.

Revolt (or any revolution) should be an active, ongoing process, a means rather than an end. Kristeva states that "people find stability in their new values instead of also questioning".[121] With revolution new values are added but questioning ceases leading inevitably to a stagnant and arborescent new order. Kristeva argues that, it is "precisely by putting things into question that 'values' stop being frozen dividends and acquire a sense of mobility, polyvalence and life".[122] This form of revolt finds resonance with Deleuze and Guattari when they observe that, "Becoming-revolutionary is indifferent to questions of a future and a past of the revolution; it passes between the two".[123] Understood this way, successful revolts are those which continue to question after "revolution".[124]

To participate in revolt is thus an active engagement and not without anxiety. Kristeva reformulates revolt as a consistent questioning *resulting* from anxiety. In Kristeva's discussion on anxiety as essential to revolt she states: "It's a kind of language that accompanies this state of anxiety and that allows the individual to remain both anxious and at the same time harmonized, a language which does not reject or exclude him or her".[125] In this

[119] Kristeva, J. 2002 a. *Revolt, She Said.* (New York: Semiotext(e).p. 6.
[120]Ibid., p. 123.
[121]ibid., p. 6.
[122]ibid., p. 6.
[123] 1987, p. 292.
[124] 2002 a. p. 12.
[125]2002 b. *Intimate Revolt.* (New York: Columbia University Press) p. 6.

way anxiety is not conceived as a negative aspect of one's consciousness that needs to be done away with but instead assists and accompanies the process of revolt. Rather than being a negative aspect, anxiety can foster revolt and open new ways of perceiving a given situation.

In *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Jean-Paul Sartre uses the example of vertigo to describe anxiety. Sartre acknowledges Søren Kierkegaard's distinction between fear and anxiety, noting that:

> Vertigo is anguish to the extent that I am afraid not of falling over the precipice, but of throwing myself over. A situation provokes fear if there is any possibility of my being changed from without; my being provokes anxiety to the extent that I distrust myself and my own reactions in that situation.[126]

In this case, fear is conceptualised as a threat from the outside while anxiety manifests within the person who experiences it. Having no identifiable object, anxiety exists, for instance, when we are "afraid of being afraid".[127] Anxiety reminds me that I am actively involved in a process, taking responsibility for my own existence. Fear refers to something definite, anxiety refers to possibility, and is therefore a more reflective process.[128] Fear confines thought and being and can become an excuse (a scapegoat if you will) to justify a micropolitics of injustice. Anxiety can be described as symptomatic of revolt as it accompanies the process of insistent questioning.

As Sartre states, "Freedom, manifesting itself through anguish, is characterised by a constantly renewed obligation to remake the self which designates the free being".[129] In this way anxiety obligates a revolt through insisting on a continuous renewal of self. Anxiety should ultimately lead to a process of questioning in which we do not cut ourselves off from other possibilities. As Timothy Bewes observes:

> Anxiety signifies a superfluity, an excess of individuality, in which the subjective response is far from predetermined by external circumstance; it is thus akin to what Derrida sometimes calls a situation of undecidability – yet the very existence of anxiety is also a testament to the non-deconstructibility of consciousness itself. Anxiety implies freedom, individuality. It is because we are free beings (...) that we experience anxiety.[130]

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[126] Sartre, J. P. 1965. *Being and Nothingness*. (Great Britain: Methuen).p. 116.
[127] Sartre, 1965. p. 117; Bewes, T. 2002. *Reification, or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism*.(London and New York) p. 188.
[128] 1965, p. 117.
[129] ibid., p. 123.
[130] 2002, p. 190.

To decide means to cut off other possibilities and reveals our need to categorise, to classify and thereby make sense of the world. Our decisions, however, are always at the mercy of our micro-political desires, and desires need constant re-evaluation. Revolt in this sense is an action, a verb. Of course, constant questioning is not easy, as it is focused on processes which do not condone a "suspension of thought".[131] Bewes argues that, "Anxiety, indeed is 'entangled freedom', meaning that freedom is not free in itself but entangled, not by necessity, but in itself".[132] The anguish of existentialism; is not that one has to live with the awareness that life is meaningless, but rather the anxiety in how we choose to make it meaningful. Revolt in the sense of permanent questioning as Kristeva argues, is a pragmatic approach, because revolt insists on process over product.

Kristeva removes the meaning of revolt from political revolution and situates the concept as a practice that occurs at an individual level. It is a dialogic event with self as multiple. By this I mean that revolt reveals the multiplicity of one's identifications and thereby calls attention to a shifting sense of self and environment. Revolt is thus a personal task which we experience at an intimate level, because, "The intimate is where we end up when we question apparent meanings and values".[133] Revolt begins with a personal questioning of values which should lead to a permanent state of self-investigation. In this way revolt de-reifies our values and perceptions. One could describe revolt as an active micropolitics that challenges one's desire. Revolt is self-reflexivity. Acknowledging that revolt is an intimate process means also recognising that revolt can be almost imperceptible at the macropolitical level.[134]

Intermezzo: White Guilt

To be able to research whiteness is a privilege itself. It is thus necessary to remain cautious of producing a self-righteous picture of myself as someone liberated from prejudice and judgment. Yet, more importantly, this thesis is not an exercise in absolving a sense of white guilt. White guilt is problematic as it focuses too much attention on the suffering of white people. Whiteness has this privilege of feeling guilty about its privileges. Sullivan argues that whiteness studies should not "increase white guilt about racism – which too often results in white people's narcissistic wallowing in their own suffering – but rather to demonstrate how

[131] 2002 b. p. 6.
[132] ibid., p. 250.
[133] 2002 b. p. 43.
[134] 1987, p 216.

action can be taken".[135] *This is one of the reasons I have taken up the idea of anxiety rather than guilt and have perceived my anxiety with regards to race as a necessary means to interrogate white desire. I am naïve enough to think that the individual can alter the present by remaining as Kristeva argues: "both anxious and at the same time harmonized".*[136]

1.12 South African Whiteness: From Apartheid to Neo-liberalism: Prolonging the Desire for Whiteness

This section briefly discusses the context of South Africa and the complexities of democracy after apartheid, but not the particularities (arrangements of white desire) of South African whiteness during apartheid. South African whiteness is historically tied not only to colonialism but also to the Apartheid system. Racism in South Africa reached a climax when it was institutionalized under Apartheid rule in 1948 which secured and protected white supremacy. Yet, these notions of innate superiority were well developed by the time Hendrik Verwoerd systemized them by establishing the Apartheid regime. Since members of the Dutch East India Company settled in the Cape from 1652 the political and social climate of South Africa was charged with white desire that enabled the development of colonialism into Apartheid. Various scholars argue that Apartheid was very much defined by and not isolated from the other forms of Western racism.[137] In many ways, Apartheid was a way to continue colonialism and slavery and meant a forced separation between the white and non-white populations in the country. The Apartheid state lasted for almost fifty years before succumbing to pressure from outside as well as inside the country. South Africa was boycotted culturally and economically as the rest of the world condemned the oppressive state. The end of Apartheid was marked with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and was consolidated with the first multi-racial representative election held in April 1994.

In the aftermath of Apartheid in Post-election South Africa, the country experienced a rapid political metamorphosis into a democracy. Racist attitudes that were encouraged by the apartheid state are no longer permissible. Although whiteness is described as an invisible identity which is taken for granted, Steyn observes that white people in South Africa have not

[135] Sullivan, 2006. p. 90.
[136] Kristeva, J. 2002a. p. 6.
[137] Minh-ha, Trinh. 1989.*Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press) p. 80. Steyn, 2001, p. 38.

experienced their whiteness as invisible or non-racial. She argues that the power relations set up by the Apartheid system prevented any sense of invisibility; racism was actually an acceptable part of daily life as people were socially and spatially divided on racial terms.[138] Steyn notes that, "what was taken for granted, however, was the "naturalness" of being thus privileged".[139] With the advent of democracy and the emphasis on equality in Post-Election South Africa the "naturalness" of this privilege is being challenged, as Liese van der Watt states: "analysing whiteness, interrogating and challenging it, is one of many ways in which the new South African nation is being 'imagined', at least by some".[140]

Having lost its political stronghold in the country, whiteness has been destabilised. Furthermore, with the emerging black middle class in the country and the loss of privilege solely geared towards the white population, whiteness has undergone changes. Yet, what has not been challenged enough are the ideas that informed colonialism and apartheid.

1.13 The New Whiteness: Neo-liberalism

Although it is important to question whiteness in South Africa, it is also valuable to question the philosophies and myths that supported the hegemonic power of whiteness. Neo-liberalism surfaces today as a new form of paternalism and exploitation. Political scholars argue that South Africa's democracy is threatened by neo-colonial and neo-liberal politics.[141] Like molarized whiteness, neo-liberalism wears the mask of good intentions, such as the free-market and its policies whose consequences are most notable in low-income and developing countries. What ensues is a form of neo-colonialism which refers to the way that the legacy of colonialism has continued in different guises within post-independent (or democratic) states. Peter Kagwanja writes that South Africa's democracy has "become increasingly uncertain.[142] He asserts that the "nationalist euphoria of the liberation period ...that held together the elite consensus has come to an end.[143] The euphoric context of the New South Africa has been displaced by the stark reality of centuries of inequality whose effects are still

[138] Steyn, M. 2005. 'White South Africans and the Management of Disaporic Whiteness.' In López, A. *Postcolonial whiteness: a critical reader on race and empire.* (New York: State University of New York Press). p. 122.
[139]ibid., p. 122.
[140] Van der Watt, L. 2001. 'Making Whiteness Strange'. *Third Text.* Vol. 12. No. 56. p. 65.
[141] Bond, P. 2000. *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to NeoLiberalism in South Africa.* (Sterling: Pluto Press). Ashman,S; Fine, B; Newmann, S. 2011. 'The Crisis in South Africa, Neoliberalism, Financialization and Uneven and Combined Development'. *Socialist Register: The Crisis this Time.* Vol. 47.
[142]ibid., p. xv.
[143]ibid., p. xv.

being felt. Kagwanja argues that ex-President Thabo Mbeki's turn to the idea of the African Renaissance was a calculated move to endorse neo-liberalism.[144]

The inequality can be seen in the growth of an elite minority within the country while a vast majority struggles. Any grand notion of equality in South Africa after Apartheid is problematic because people may be represented as equal in terms of the law, but they are certainly not equal in social and economic terms. The theory often is not reflected in the practice. In the context of the economy this rings true in many ways, as Economist Jan van Heerden observes, South Africa has a peculiar economic structure.[145] Classified as a developing country, South Africa is a country of "two societies", one which is ranked 18th (top deck) and the other 118th (bottom deck) based on the GDP per capita.[146] South Africa is economically and socially divided between a wealthy minority and a poor majority; yet, as Kagwanja observes these "two countries" share one of the most liberal constitutions in the world.[147] The idea of South Africa as a nation is thus very complex, and although people are constructed as free under democracy this very freedom is undermined by a lack of vision as to what democracy means.

Neo-liberal interests show (in an allegedly colour-blind manner) the continuation and production of supremacy to the disadvantage of many. It would seem that although South Africa is no longer an apartheid state, it still manages to produce white power (or molarity) through neo-liberal politics. Whiteness is more than just a skin colour, but a desire that is able to produce itself both despite and even by notions of unity and equality.

1.14 Colour-blind Desires

The "rainbow nation" myth is a good example of a neo-liberal strategy which emerged after the first democratic elections in 1994. Many scholars have been critical of the multicultural rainbow nation discourses which have been endorsed by both politicians and the media.[148]

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[144] Kagwanja, 2009, p. xviii.
[145] Van Heerden, J.H. Gerlagh, R. 2006. (eds) 'Searching for Triple Dividends in South Africa'. *The Energy Journal.* Vol. 26. No. 2.p. 113.
[146] ibid., p. 113.
[147] Kagwanja, P and Kondlo, K. (eds). 2009. *State of the Nation 2008.* (Cape Town HSRC Press). p. xvi.
[148] Flockemann, 2001, 'The Aesthetics of transformation: Reading Strategies for South African theatre entering the new millenium'. *South African Theatre Journal.* 15. Scholtz, B 2008. 'The Most Amazing Show': Performative interactions with post-election South African society and culture. Unpublished thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University. Krueger, A. 2010. *Experiments in Freedom.* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars).

These representations have been engaged mainly in a bid towards unity and nation building within a previously (racially, economically and socially) fractured society. A good example example of this discourse is the SABC's "Simunye, we are one" slogan from the 1990's. Although representations of a "rainbow nation" are ultimately an attempt to unite a fractured society, their unproblematic content hampers the process of social, political and cultural transformation.[149] Brink Scholtz notes that, "representations of a somehow already-achieved harmony can preclude attempts to really achieve this, drawing attention away from problematic areas of divergence and conflict".[150] The point that most critics of the rainbow nation trope make is that these premature representations of a colour-blind and harmonised society, neglect the need for recognition. Anton Krueger asserts that, "Perhaps, instead of providing a reflection of society, the rainbow nation trope may be an indication of the aspiration for something which sounds like a paradox: a multi-cultural homogeneity".[151] Krueger notes that within South Africa's melting-pot of a cultural landscape, the idea of unity within diversity is exceptionally complex.

Sullivan argues that the liberal strategy of colour-blindness (which comes across in the idea of a unified rainbow nation) used to approach racial issues is problematic as it asserts a neutral individual who does not see race.[152] Since whiteness has been deemed a neutral identity, it reinstates white desire to leave race unacknowledged, as something which does not affect white people. Not seeing race is thus equated with being anti-racist, meaning that one does not even recognise the privileges that come with being white. Sullivan argues that, "in this atmosphere of alleged colorblindness, racism continued and continues to function without the use of race-related terms".[153] Since race has been an incredibly reified phenomenon it is actually very important to acknowledge and interrogate racial issues instead of remaining silent about them. This is especially important in a country like South Africa where the white population has benefited from black slavery for centuries. This is in relation to Colonialism, but also Apartheid which can in many ways, be seen as a continuation of slavery. The idea of colour-blindness in a country like South Africa is unfeasible since race and racism has played such a role in the history and development of the country. Each of the works analysed in this thesis reveals a self-conscious awareness of racial issues without

[149] Scholtz, 2008. p. 39.
[150] ibid., p. 39.
[151] 2010, p. 209.
[152] 2006, p. 61.
[153] ibid., p. 5.

giving a consolatory representation of unity and well-being. For instance, Die Antwoord who will be discussed in Part Three, problematize race and class through their creation of "Zef" subculture.

1.15 The Effect of Capital Interests on Cultural Production

The interest in capital above the needs of citizens has specific effects on the arts in South Africa. Helen Gilbert notes that neo-imperialism, "is even more insidious than overt domination because its hegemony often masquerades as a form of aid, advice, or non-partisan support".[154] Here again a kind of "mask" is created in which the West "takes responsibility" for the injustice of colonialism, but re-enacts a more subtle form of colonial violence by attempting to regain the mask of moral superiority. Neo-imperialism is powerful in that it infiltrates life in ways we may not always comprehend, since it often "tends to operate in less formalised and more covert ways".[155] Although these aspects seem far removed from artistic production, it has an effect on the way in which art is produced. For instance, these molar desires can affect the way in which people are represented. It also comes to the fore in what is considered relevant and representative of a country.

The lack of funding allotted to the arts in South Africa, for example, betrays the attitude that cultural production is considered a "soft issue", that does not warrant attention. Lliane Loots notes how an assumed binary between "soft" (feminine: culture, arts) and "hard" (masculine: politics and economics) issues has a detrimental effect on cultural production:

> In the context of a country like South Africa, (and indeed other developing countries) placing culture on the backburner while the more important (real or hard issues) command resources and national attention, has had the adverse effect of undervaluing the connectedness of culture and governance.[156]

Loots' observation is related to the ways in which cultural practices have been undermined by patriarchal forces determining the significance of cultural production as marginal. This is reflected, for instance, in the lack of funding to the arts in South Africa. Yet, it is within this marginal space that artistic practices (and therefore cultural production) can become, "a moment of self-definition and a political act that challenges how, for example, patriarchy and

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[154] Gilbert, H and Tompkins, J. 1996. *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, practice, politics.* (London and New York: Routledge). p. 258.
[155] ibid., p. 257.
[156] Loots, L. 2001. 'Introduction: Resituating Culture in the Body Politic.' *Agenda,* No. 49. Culture: Transgressing Boundaries. p. 9.

capitalism define us".[157] Loots argues that the creation of alternative cultural constructions challenge the mainstream.[158] These "alternative" constructions are particularly important because they expose the underlying tensions of a developing democracy. In a post-euphoric context, this is about learning from the apartheid past, but also about re-negotiating the discourses of unity and nation that shape the contemporary image and experience of South Africa. Unconventional cultural constructions also question the habitual reproduction of stereotypes (and molarized identities), exposing the day-today difficulties of living with extreme differences.

1. 16 The Challenging Desire of Performance and Performance Studies

One area in which Kristeva observes the potential for revolt is in the area of artistic practice, which she deems a far more subtle response than the aggression inherent in political revolutions.[159] Whilst Kristeva's discussion on this subject is focused on anti-representational art and literature, this discussion is centred on performance. Performance is particularly well suited to provoking a process of revolt through the embodiment of gestures, images and sounds; by grounding itself in the experiential. This goes for both mediatised and live performance, in that both produce an experience for the viewer. In this way, representation becomes an effect of performance, rather than necessarily being its goal.

According to Hans-Thies Lehmann, performance does not necessarily represent politics but performs a "politics of perception" and this is simultaneously, an "aesthetics of responsibility".[160] Performance does not necessarily have to engage with a representation of politics for it to be explosively political; rather, the politics of performance is a "politics of perception".[161] The political dimension of performance is revealed precisely by a negation of the classifications of the political through resistance. In fact, the act of negating the political is a strategy of the "politics of perception". Performance can thus be a challenge to the reification of desire by instituting a sense of intimacy which is derived from consistent questioning. Rather than reflecting or establishing the reification of desire, performance practices can reveal the connections between the personal and the political:

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[157] ibid., p. 10.
[158] ibid., p. 9 .
[159] 2002a, p. 120.
[160] ibid. p. 185.
[161] Lehmann, 2006, p. 183.

> Instead of the deceptively comforting duality of here and there, inside and outside, it can move the mutual implication of actors and spectators in the theatrical production of images into the centre and thus make visible the broken thread between personal experience and perception.[162]

In *Perform or Else* Mckenzie argues that, "the desire produced by performative power and knowledge is not modeled on repression".[163] Performance has the ability to reveal the repression of desire by questioning perception. In a similar vein, Guattari identifies performance as a way to "crush" the dominance of a body that is for the most part defined by discourses that seek to centre and define the subject: "each time the body is emphasised in a situation – by dancers, by homosexuals, etc – something breaks with the dominant semiotics that crush these semiotics of the body."[164]

Performance has an ability to create cracks within the dominant representational structures – to challenge dominant desires.Performative desire does not operate like the disciplinary desire Michel Foucault discusses in *Discipline and Punish*. Performance does not produce "docile bodies", concepts or subjects, but intensifies desire.[165] Desire produced by performance is active, multi-layered and can be invested in the de-centering of molar desire. As Mckenzie puts it, "More and more desire on the performance stratum is becoming undisciplined –*it performs"*.[166]

Judith Butler's notion of performativity, whilst not completely focused on cultural or embodied performance practices, is nonetheless a term borrowed from the language of the theatre. Butler has investigated how gender is materialized as an act that has been rehearsed observing how this materialisation is made possible by repeatedly performing certain actions.[167] In this sense gender is not an expression of what one is, rather of something one does. The power of repetition, the forces that construct the subject, can be the same force with which one can resist "playing the part". This idea can be related to Sullivan's notion of white privilege as a habitual performance of white desire. Through repetition (or the creation of alternative habits) of another kind one may be able to undermine the normative

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[162]ibid., 186.
[163] 2001, p. 19.
[164] 1996, p. 47.
[165]ibid., p. 188.
[166] ibid. p. 188.
[167] Butler, J. 1990. 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: an essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.' In Case, S-E. *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre.* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press). p. 270

construction of gender or race. The ramification of Butler's theory of performativity is significant in perceiving the constructed-ness of social norms.

Performance scholars have taken up this notion of performativity to argue that performance has the potential to be more than an imitation or reflection of social circumstances and can provide a site for the reconstruction of identity.[168] Performativity is thus seen as a key to transformation as it represents performance's potential to alter the present. While the issue of transformation is itself an idealistic one, as it too implies a unity, performativity as a concept takes into account the possibility of change or "becoming" which acknowledges a process rather than an end point. Since performance offers a site for the exploration of different ways of being in the world, it can also reveal how identity is in a state of becoming. This notion of becoming rather than simply being takes account of the complexity of a developing country like South Africa in which any notion of transformation is recognisable at the level of process. Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge that "the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities".[169]

1.17 Performance's Potential

It is very important to recognize that our conceptions of race are, in fact, constructed. The various myths surrounding race have been created and perpetuated and not only because, "some savage power has brought this down"[170]on our heads, but because we habitually repeat the reification of race at a personal level. We create the stereotypes and we perpetuate them through our representations, and this is often done by attempting to do the very opposite. To recognize that race is reified is to destabilize it and to reveal that there are other possibilities, other ways of being in the world. Performance creates the possibility of imagining alternative configurations of identity and can be a platform for experimentation. Performance has the potential to expose the habitual and repetitive ways we engage with issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity.

Performance's ability to divulge habits is a clear indication of its potential to challenge social constructions. In some cases, performance practitioners seek to undo habits and repetitive

[168] Flockemann, M. 2001. 'The Aesthetics of Transformation: Reading strategies for South African theatre entering the new millennium.' *South African Theatre Journal*. Vol. 15. Jamal, A. 2003. 'Faith in a practical epistemology: on collective creativity in theatre.' *South African Theatre Journal,* Vol.17. Pp. 37 – 64.
[169] 1987, p. 249.
[170] Sophocles, 1984, p. 207.

ways of engaging with the world. For instance, the work done to find "emptiness" or an erased body within Butoh training practices, is an effort to undo the intense socialization of the body and the "rules" that subject the body to certain prescribed ways of moving. My own experience with Butoh has made me intensely aware of how repetitive patterns are not conducive to entering into a physical becoming – that habits constrict an acknowledgement of one's intense inter-connected-ness and one's capacity "for acting and being acted on".[171]This is something that performance practices are able to reveal to us. Although this attempt to break down one's own habitual behavioral patterns may seem like it has nothing to do with the neo-liberal atmosphere we are confronted with, the perceptual shift that is demanded from the performer challenges his/her perceptions and awakens alternative ways of being (as becoming).

The value of performance is its ability to create "living meaning" (affect).[172] The "product" of performance, its ephemerality and metamorphic potential is desire – performance is the product and process of desire. While the objects of performance are actively engaged in processes of becoming, so is the field of performance studies. Mckenzie states that, "challenging, in fact, may be one of the most insistent gestures of Performance Studies."[173] Arguing that both performance as well as performance studies, the theoretical lens from which to investigate performance, stakes a challenge. Performance Studies in its mode of questioning can be described as a form of revolt and therefore a valuable means to question whiteness as a mode of desire.

[171] Massumi, p. 36.
[172] Diprose, R and Reynolds, J. 2008. *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts.* (Stocksfield: Acumen). p. 171.
[173]ibid., p. 32.

Intermezzo: Anxiety and the border and ~~–I~~[174]

When my dad passed away, two years after my mother, we (myself and three siblings) had to permanently leave the home we had grown up in. In order to get out of debt, the plot was signed over to someone else. Everything had to be removed from the property including an elderly Sesotho couple who had lived there for about thirty years. The pair had kept their cows on our property, and after so many years as tenants had long stopped paying any form of rent. According to some they could be called "squatters", but they seemed to belong there just as much as we. After all, they had lived there for so long and with such tenacity. The plot was not an easy place. On my last visit to the plot, I went to see them at their small house. The old man was in his nineties and seemed to be going blind. I had to say goodbye because we now lacked any ownership. My father's death changed our situation in a radical way. Leaving that area permanently also meant leaving all the people we had come to know in the course of our lives there.

Anxiously ~~I~~ approach the keyboard and ~~I~~ must silence many parts of myself to make the keyboard find its own rhythm. Not a beautiful sound but aleatory and filled with anxiety. Here ~~I~~ reduce everything to words, but that is also the challenge of writing. Ideas affect me (change me, show me "living meaning") and this is through some form of recognition but it is a physical process because my brain and what it thinks is a part and parcel of my body. Yes, ~~I~~ am socialized and can "reason" but ~~I~~ make sense of what happens through processes that are bodily. Surely our very understanding of "reason" was arrived at through reasoning? It is the way that "reason" has been structured that alienates me from it. That is why my artistic sensibilities have always turned away from "reason". ~~I~~ receive the world entirely through my body and in this way ~~I~~ physically undermine the phallogocentric logic which has no place for my becoming. ~~I~~ have always known myself as a body, when all other concepts fail, my body remains until it loses this bit of consciousness and dies: which is why ~~I~~ can own nothing. And so ~~I~~ perceive only through this body which connects to other bodies, concepts, objects, animals and spaces. In order to find a reason to be not anxious. But ~~I~~ remain anxious. ~~I~~ cannot make out where ~~I~~ begin and they connect.

Death approaches as ~~I~~ breathe because it is after all this constant intake and exhalation of breath that slowly degenerate our cells and leads us to our death. But ~~I~~ know nothing of death except for how ~~I~~ have felt when those ~~I~~ love died…~~I~~ cannot know for sure what death may mean except that it is the end of something: that thing being my body. "The eyes of our dead tell us the "why" of life, showing us the secret fire that burns in our mystery. In that our secret mystery that nobody has sung up to now…"[175] *Death is neatly ambiguous while life and performance are ambiguously untidy. Part Two considers the border, subtly references the*

[174] The strike through the ~~I~~ is a way to deal with my own difficulty in accepting autoethnographic writing practices. It acts as a sign of the tension between an academic voice and the vulnerability (and insecurity) that became heightened while writing the Intermezzo's. I refer to this tension as a positive aspect of the research in the conclusion of this thesis.

[175] Novatore, R. *Toward the Creative Nothing and Other Writings.* (Portland: Venomous Butterfly Publications). p. 35.

border of death. Each example draws on the border which reminds me of my mortality. To be reminded of one's mortality also means to become cognisant of the trivialities of ownership, the impossibility of owning anything. Ownership, owning anything, is meaningless because where death takes you not even your body may go. But death also signals the inevitability of change. Death is sign of flux, a sign of becoming, but of a becoming that cannot perceived. Death is the antithesis of knowing, death always reminds me that ~~I~~ do not know, of what ~~I~~ cannot know, which is a valuable insight. Death clears a space for not-knowing.

Part Two: Accentuating and Problematising Whiteness

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to investigate the questioning of and resistance to white desire within the context of selected South African performance practices. In Part Two, I analyse how the desire for whiteness is been challenged and inverted by Steven Cohen's *Cradle of Humankind* (2011), Brett Bailey's *Exhibit A* (2011), and Michael MacGarry's *LHR-JNB* (2010). These works have been chosen for analysis because each in its own way delivers a critical stance on the concept of whiteness as desirable. Each of these artists interrogate the foundations of whiteness as being a stable monolithic entity, and their work seems to disturb the desire for whiteness by accentuating it.

Cohen, Bailey and MacGarry are engaging in a representational politics of resistance rather than one of transgression. Jon Mckenzie writes about the shift from transgressive to resistant strategies within performance practices.[176] Transgressive efficacy situates itself as outside of the representational system it critiques. Transgression has become something which the capitalist system has quite easily been able to take on board. Resistant efficacy, however, emerges from within and is "necessarily inscribed in the very forces of power whose arrangement of presence and absence it seeks to challenge.[177] Transgressive practices are recognised by the desire to "overthrow" while performative strategies of resistance "seek(s) to subvert".[178] Bailey, Cohen and MacGarry are self-reflexive about their own positions within the work they produce. Their own subjectivities are enmeshed in what they are questioning. That is, while these artists question whiteness, they also self-reflexively take their own whiteness into account. This reveals a self-consciousness about the way one's micropolitics effects power, which enhances the ability to question (or revolt as Kristeva puts it). Furthermore, all three examples discussed here are engaged in questioning white desire through performance practices.

Bailey and Cohen's work is situated within theatre and performance art while MacGarry's work is positioned within the field of fine art, design and writing. All three works analysed here can be considered as multidisciplinary (or transdisciplinary) as they straddle various artistic forms and fields. Bailey becomes more of a curator than a director in *Exhibit A*, while Cohen's work overlaps performance and visual art in *The Cradle of Humankind*, while

[176]Mckenzie, J. 2001. *Perform or Else.* (USA and Canada: Routledge). p. 43.
[177] ibid., p. 43.
[178]ibid., p. 43.

commenting on the evolution of representation. And then, MacGarry's film *LHR-JNB* reveals a diasporic and vulnerable whiteness between two worlds. All three works disturb theatrical desire by an absence of linearity, and a multiplicity of narratives and perspectives.

Bailey and Cohen's performances effect a "reversal of seduction" rather than seducing an audience through illusion. Emilyn Claid discusses the way in which theatrical desire is often constructed for the audience member to be "seduced" by the illusion created on stage. Focusing on Yvonne Rainer's Postmodern dance *Trio A*, Claid argues that this process of seduction is reversed by the non-spectacular performance of the piece. The absence of illusion and the opacity of the audience's identification are two aspects that break with the Aristotelian tradition.[179] Claid observes that:

> the performer's denial of illusion becomes the seductive strategy in reverse for the spectator. No longer searching for the real body through the illusion, the spectator searches for illusions (meanings/images) through the real body.[180]

The denial of mimetic illusion does not necessarily break the audience's identification with the performance, but it does transform the process of theatrical identification. Although Claid's theory springs from postmodern dance, it can be applied to performance forms which do not shy away from their own artifice. All three works of the works I will discuss are clearly "staged" and do not require the audience's suspension of disbelief. Bailey and Cohen's work does not allow the audience to buy into any illusion. For example, Cohen and his nonagenarian childhood nanny focus on evolution and Africa's contribution to civilisation in *The Cradle of Humankind*. *Exhibit A* deals with historical facts about Western forms of imperialism and puts these on display. Although Bailey is ostensibly imitating the zoos' of the nineteenth century he reconstructs the event making one aware of the purpose of this construction. Likewise, MacGarry's film with it cyclical plotline and odd camera angles in *LHR-JNB* denies a sense of illusion through the self-consciousness of form in the filming.

[179]Claid, E. 2006. *Yes? No! Maybe… Seductive Ambiguity in Dance.* (USA & Canada: Routledge). p. 66.
[180]ibid., p. 99.

2.2 The Search for a More Desirable Origin: Steven Cohen's *The Cradle of Humankind* (2011)

Cohen has been creating controversial performances in South Africa and abroad since 1988. His performance style is aptly captured by Rebecca Schneider's description of "explicit" body performance practices:

> a mass of orifices and appendages, details and tactile surfaces . . . a site of social markings, physical parts and gestural signatures of gender, race, class, age, sexuality – all of which bear ghosts of historical meaning, markings delineating social hierarchies of privilege and disprivilege.[181]

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Cohen's queer, white and Jewish subjectivity are woven into the tapestry of his interventions and the intention of his work. In *Cleaning Time (Vienna): a Shandeh un a Charpeh (A Shame and a Disgrace)* 2007, Cohen dresses in his drag make-up, with a horn headdress sporting a fake diamond on his anus: to re-enact the humiliation of Austrian Jews in the second World War who were forced to clean the city's streets with toothbrushes. So with an oversized toothbrush Cohen crawled on the streets of Heldenplatz, Vienna, performing the historical shaming of Jewish culture during the holocaust. As a live artist working through his body, he constantly exposes himself as a marginalised identity and his performance of very personal aspects are brought to bear upon audiences who have not invited him. *Ugly Girl at the Rugby* (in which Cohen intervenes at a rugby match (1998), in *Dog* (1998), (Cohen visits a dog show performing a queer canine, and *The Chandelier Project* (2001) wherein Cohen adorned in a chandelier and drag costume, pays a visit to a squatter camp) are some of the interventions in which Cohen has exhibited himself unexpectedly in public spaces.

Cohen has said of his performance art that it is "really about vegetarians eating blood and men fingering their cunts; it is art eating itself and art fucking itself for the first time every time".[182]As this quote suggests Cohen's performance strategies reveal an investment in risk taking and a provocation, specifically in relation to his sexuality. When he took *Ugly Girl* to a rugby match at Loftus Versveld Stadium in Pretoria, Cohen forced the presentation of a 'queer' masculinity within a "hyper-masculine" space.[183]The danger of this kind of performance is that Cohen deliberately preys on the stability of hetero-normative desires

[181] Schneider, R. 1996. *The Explicit Body in Performance*. (London: Routledge). p. 2.
[182] Cited on Official Steven Cohen website under "Thoughts": paragraph 5. Accessed online from http://vweb.isisp.net/~elu@artslink.co.za/stevencohen on 20 April 2013.
[183] Du Plessis, R. 2006. 'Exhibiting the Expulsion of Transgression.' In van Marle, K. (ed). *Sex, Gender and Becoming: Post-Apartheid Reflections.* (Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press.) p. 25-27.

within a space in which he has not been invited to perform. Cohen also exposes himself to harm in the gallery space, where, for instance, in *Faggot* (1998), he inserted a sparkler into his anus which was then set alight. This investment in his work regardless of the risk it entails recalls the performance art practices of Marina Abramovic and the Viennese Actionists. By displaying the ambiguities of his subjectivity through abject processes Cohen forces audiences to confront difference.

2.2.1 Cohen's Abjection

Cohen's work can be described as abject in that his work often involves using his own body and bodily processes to challenge social norms and reveal his own marginal experience. In *Limping into the African Renaissance* (1999), for example, Cohen dances with a prosthetic leg and consumes his own faeces. He says of this work, "I swallowed my pride - together with a glass of goo from out of my arsehole".[184] By working with his own marginality Cohen disturbs notions of the purity of the white body and constructs a very particular subjectivity.

A term mostly associated with psychoanalysis, "abjection" attempts to account for how human beings cast off some aspects of the self in order to construct a clearer sense of identity. Abjection is also used to describe works of art that engage with or embody this concept. One can describe Andres Serrano's controversial photograph *Piss Christ* (1987) which depicts a small crucifix submerged in urine, as an example of abject art. The presentation of the sacred submerged in filth (urine) provokes a sense of the abject. Urine is something that we have to get rid of in order to remain healthy, it is a material waste product which needs to be eliminated. On the other hand, Christ was himself a historically abjected figure, who disturbed the Jewish faith into which he was born. He was also perceived as a threat to the Roman law. So in this sense, Christ is also the human scapegoat, the vessel of atonement; abjected in order to atone for the sins of his people. Like the goat the Israelites would send into the desert as a sacrifice for atonement, Christ becomes a vessel of sin (filth, darkness and depravity). Serrano's image also evokes the abject nature of the crucifixion in which Christ died. *Piss Christ* disturbs the desire to view Christ's death (through the image of the cross) as an aesthetically pleasing image when the crucifix itself evokes an image of human sacrifice.

[184] Cohen's Official Website, Under "Reviews": paragr aph 4. Accessed online: http://vweb.isisp.net/~elu@artslink.co.za/stevencohen on 20 April 2013.

Piss Christ is an interesting example because of the existence of the sacred alongside this human waste. Kristeva observes that religion and art are purifiers of the abject.[185]

Kristeva distinguishes between the "condition of being abject" and the "operation to abject". The operation of abjection is a regulatory function which is performed toward off those non-objects which threaten one's stability as an individual within the symbolic order: "Abjection is what the symbolic must reject, cover over or contain."[186]One separates from these unwanted parts in order to assimilate a sense of self even though the abject persists in defiance of the desire for "identity, system, order".[187]This waste being a reminder of our mortality threatens our stability. Kristeva states:

> …refuse and corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These bodily fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and difficulty, on the part of death. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. Such wastes drop so that I might live, until from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit - *cadere*, cadaver.[188]

Abjection reveals the instability of the individual's sense of identity, as it underlines the potential of the subject to be drawn back into the "chaos which formed it".[189] The condition of abjection, however, subverts both the subject and society and thereby highlights its fragility. The abject works in these two ways, in one instance it assists in upholding the symbolic order: its operation. And in the other, is a constant reminder of the instability on which language or symbolic functions are founded: its condition. Since the knowledge of the abject is based on one's corporeal existence and since the body cannot escape its own abjection; it makes sense that it has become a central site for artists engaged in abject art.[190]This is true of Cohen's work, as Wendy Gers observes:

> The body in these and other – physically gruelling – performances is a central concern, serving as both canvas and clay – it is painted, polished, manipulated, worked and reworked, both literally and metaphorically.[191]

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[185] Kristeva, J. 1982. *The Powers of horror: An essay on abjection.* (New York:Columbia University Press). p. 17.
[186]Grosz, E. 1989. *Sexual Subversions: three French Feminists*. (Australia: Allen and Unwin.) p. 73.
[187] Kristeva, 1982, p. 4.
[188]ibid., p. 3.
[189] Grosz, 1989. p. 74.
[190] Foster, H. 1996. 'Obscene, Abject, Traumatic'. *October*. Vol. 78. (Autumn, 1996). p. 112.
[191] Gers, W. 2012. 'Out of the Cave and into the Cauldron'. *Art South Africa.* Issue, 10.3. March, 2012., p. 48.

The response to Cohen's work manifests unease at the disturbance of desire through abjection. Marilyn Jenkins, commenting on the annual Dance Umbrella held in Johannesburg, has written:

> The Umbrella stage is free and psychiatrists are expensive, but the festival certainly hit rock bottom in every way with the sadly disgusting spectacle of Stephen Cohen (sic). As he relies on attracting any kind of audience through producing crap on stage and through publicly generated controversy, the less said about his personal hang-ups the better.[192]

Take the example of Jenkins mentioned above, who describes not only Cohen as "sadly disgusting" but also infers that the audience he attracts is as "crap" as the work he produces. Here one's viewership of Cohen's work is constructed as perverse and voyeuristic, implying that one debases oneself by viewing the work. Hal Foster asks an important question regarding the use of the abject in artistic practices, "can abject art ever escape an instrumental, indeed moralistic, use of the abject?"[193] According to Foster, contemporary approaches to the abject can be interpreted as regulatory impulses; by revealing the condition of abjection, the works evoke the operation of abjection. The attempt to reveal the instability of representation in the symbolic order re-endorses the regulatory functions of abjection to restore the stability of the symbolic. This is partly due to the fact that abjection often yields moralistic responses from its viewers. Kristeva, for instance, notes that disgust and repugnance are what protects the subject from the abject.[194] Another critic, Heather Mackie, says, "Cohen has a certain cult status and a voyeuristic following eager to see what outrageous act he will commit next"[195] thereby revealing her moralistic view of abjection as something that should be contained.

This disgust that the abject exacts from viewers, however, reveals the relevance of Kristeva's theory, that abjection "the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses".[196] If the abject is something that must be covered over or rejected rather than be exposed to, it has an effect on the one who desires for it be contained and sublimated. This is perhaps why Serrano's *Piss Christ* offends some viewers and why some people cannot stand watching a horror film or a Steven Cohen performance as these

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[192] Cited on Cohen's Official Website under Reviews: paragraph 1.Accessed online: http://vweb.isisp.net/~elu@artslink.co.za/stevencohen on 20 April 2013.
[193] Foster, 1996, p. 114.
[194] Kristeva, 1982. p. 2.
[195] Cited in Cohen's website under "Reviews": Paragraph 23. Accessed online: http://vweb.isisp.net/~elu@artslink.co.za/stevencohen on 20 April 2013.
[196] Kristeva, 1982. p. 2.

disturb their sense of stability and safety. Of course this suggests a particular understanding of meaning as derived from the operation of abjection. For instance, that meaning (and reason) is formed through the rejection and expulsion of certain elements (and people) and aids in constructing the symbolic order. Therefore, being in a condition of abjection (revealing one's corporeality) challenges the way in which meaning has been constructed.

Since abjection in art does not aim at presenting a consolatory image to its viewers, it can be seen as a resistant strategy within performance practices. While a confrontation with the abject may provoke the operation of abjection, it may also reveal the crisis in the symbolic order and expose the limits of meaning. Hans-Thies Lehmann proposes that performance's ability to break taboos by revealing them in the moment of performance is at the heart of the "politics of perception".[197] When Cohen exposes himself in his public performances he achieves the inverse of the operations of abjection by revealing what has been socially forbidden. When he consumes the contents of his own enema, for instance, he not only shocks his audience and debases himself, but also highlights the fragility of the symbolic order. Revealing how the human need to contain and to socialise is part of a fragile process which could be undone. Confronting this aspect in oneself and the world creates an opportunity to identify the self as in a constant process of assimilation. It also challenges the symbolic order as the only means of expressing ourselves and brings attention to the corporeal existence of the individual.

Abjection's most powerful aesthetic effect is to disturb desire, as something which both attracts and repels the viewer: "It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries and fascinates desire which nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced".[198] There is thus a tension created between the demand for attention created by the inclusion of the abject in art, and the simultaneous repulsion experienced by the viewer. The abject both attracts and repels creating a position that is not limited by binary connections. This ambiguity of abjection is the force which questions dominant ideas and desires.

In relation to Cohen's artistic oeuvre, the subject matter and concerns of *The Cradle of Humankind* extend this notion of abjection to views which have in the past been ascribed to Africa. In his essay entitled 'Abjection and its Miserable Forms', George Bataille argues that certain parts of the population, "the dregs of the people, populace and gutter" are excluded

[197] Lehmann, 2006. *PostDramatic Theatre*. (USA and Canada: Routledge). p. 187.
[198] Kristeva, 1982. p. 1.

from representation as moral outcasts.[199] In the case of colonial or apartheid systems, this marginalisation is the result of an invented idea of racial inferiority. In *The Cradle of Humankind,* Cohen is not only dealing with his own peculiar subjectivity, but the abjection of the African continent itself. He thus moves away from his usual performance style and approaches this concept of abjection in a different way. Rather than represent himself as the abject outsider as he does in so many of his works, Cohen practices a resistant strategy in *The Cradle of Humankind.* As I mentioned earlier in this section, transgression seeks to overthrow while resistance seeks subversion from within the "arrangement of presence and absence it seeks to challenge".[200]

It would certainly do a disservice to *The Cradle of Humankind* to describe it in a chronological or linear fashion. It is after all a live art performance and does not lend itself to any easy description.[201] Cohen himself feels that this is one of his works that needs to be seen to be understood: "in the retelling the essence of it, is lost".[202] *The Cradle of Humankind* is a complex and provocative performance which deals with human evolution and seeks to undo racial presumptions regarding the inferiority of Africa and the African body. The production exposes myths of racial difference by referring to evolutionary theory with two fragile and aged bodies, Cohen's and ninety year old Nomsa Dlamini who performs with him in this work. Cohen and Dlamini challenge the persistent desires for white power that surface in philosophies regarding non-white people – desires which influenced and justified the imperial project and subsequent processes of colonization as outlined in part one.

The Cradle of Humankind is also quite unique in Cohen's repertoire as it is a stage performance rather than a site-specific intervention. The title is borrowed from a World Heritage site located in Sterkfontein, which is believed to be the birthplace of the first human beings with fossil evidence that dates back three million years. As Cohen notes, "It was supposed to be a work about evolution, instead it turned out to be a work about love".[203] He challenges the racist ideas that placed Africans on a lower evolutionary level. Cohen has created a work which subtly tells the story of Africa's contribution to civilization weaving the narrative of evolution within the story of a white man and a black woman. For Cohen it's all about one's perception:

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[199] Bataille, G in Lotringer, S (ed). *More or Less.* (Cambridge: MIT Press). p. 9.
[200] McKenzie. p. 43.
[201] I watched *The Cradle of Humankind* at Rhodes University Theatre at the National Arts Festival in July 2012.
[202] Cohen cited in Cue Interview http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkfjlh3QPCg
[203] Cohen cited Grid Lab at Extra 11 Festival Interview. 2011. Accessed online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&feature=fvwp&v=QNzF8k77_ 22February 2013

> We are all from Africa. White people are just mutant black people, and we don't acknowledge that in the Western world, we feel that we are superior when in factwe're the same ape in different drag.[204]

In the beginning of the performance, Cohen is (re)born from an opaque ball structure which the nonagenarian Dlamini helps him out of, metaphorically giving birth to him and mankind.Dlamini has known Cohen for most of his life, working for his parents and looking after Cohen as his childhood nanny. The result of this collaboration is an intensely moving image of their long relationship, the micro-narrative of which brings the private into the politics of this display. Under the Apartheid regime, their relationship was premised on a servant/master dichotomy. The middle-class South African family, even today, will most often have a domestic worker to help with household chores and the needs of younger children. Although the relationship clearly represents the asymmetrical class relations between people in South Africa, it also reveals the complexity of these relationships as Cohen and Dlamini expose a kind of intimacy that develops between people via their social standing.

Dlamini's performance shifts between that of a maternal figure as a matriarch of humanity to images which recall the exploitation of Saartjie Baartman as she is topless, manacled and made to measure herself against an almost ridiculously tall ruler. In an interview Cohen states provocatively that, "she is my Saartjie Baartman and I brought her to France, and I am completely culpable of all that and I take credit for being guilty. I am proud to be guilty of making a 90 year old woman walk naked for money and take pleasure in it".[205] Yet, Cohen's choice to exhibit Dlamini is part of the conceptual intention of the piece, revealing Cohen's desire to challenge his audience members, who paid, just like they paid – to see Baartman on stage. Dlamini's body becomes a vessel of representation for those abjected others who suffered at the hands of the imperialists. Cohen's reference to Baartman is significant (as I mentioned earlier she was seen as a specimen of the "most debased group on earth" – the Hottentot). To the Europeans, Baartman was associated with savagery – as someone who lived closer to nature; she was not seen as civilized human being. This uncivilized notion of Baartman alongside her femininity, contributed towards her abjection. For instance, the physical differences between Baartman and her audiences were also based on exclusion; her enlarged buttocks and extended labia disqualified her as a human being and positioned her as a "freak show" attraction.

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[204] ibid.,
[205] ibid.,

In response to the work, critics have wondered just who is leading whom in the performance?[206] Is it the white master leading the savage woman out of the wilderness and onto the European stage, or is it Dlamini ("Mother Africa") leading the white man into the future? The visual signifiers combined with the historical evidence of white on black exploitation is simultaneously a simple image of a white man and elderly black woman who have known each other for more than forty years. Cohen uses what is already in existence as the basis of the work. It might therefore be seen as an ode to Dlamini who is like a mother to him. In an interview, Cohen talks about the way he followed Dlamini around as a child and how he still does.[207] This simplicity/complexity of their relationship disturbs any neat sense of coloniser/colonised or victim and oppressor.

Dlamini and Cohen's presence on stage is like a discomforting wound in the eyes of those who would rather not be confronted with the fragility of the human body, especially one old enough to have suffered both colonialism and the Apartheid system. Cohen speaks of the vulnerability of Dlamini's body in relation to the human showcases in which Africans were displayed and de-contextualised in European countries, "A hundred years ago Nomsa could have been killed, stuffed and put into a museum".[208] Cohen's body at the age of fifty is also no longer a picture of youth. Neither of these two fit into the neat, ordered and desired image of the body that one is exposed to in the popular media. They reveal the unspectacular bodies of the aged and marginalized. Cohen attacks notions of beauty and ugliness notably in relation to the ways in which African aesthetics have been regarded as a site of ugliness in Western conceptions of beauty and form. This work challenges the "inscription of Africa in dominant Western aesthetic discourses as the figure of the ugly".[209] Cohen and Dlamini expose what is often considered ugly and inferior by exhibiting themselves as a "modern day human zoo".[210]

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[206] Buys, A. 2012. The Evolution of Love. *Mail and Guardian Online*. Accessed online: http://mg.co.za/article/2012-07-05-the-evolution-of-love/art-and-culture/theatre/mail-and-Guardian 12 March 2013.

[207] CueTV interview with Steven Cohen. 2012. Accessed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkfjlh3QPCg on 12 February 2012.

[208] Cited in Grid Lab Interview, 2011.Accessed online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&feature=fvwp&v=QNzF8k77_ 22February 2013.

[209] Nuttal, S. 2006. *Beautiful Ugly: African and Diaspora Aesthetics*. (Cape Town: Kwela). p. 22.

[210] Kennedy,C. 2012. Theatre Review: The Cradle of Humankind. *Business Day Live.* Accessed online athttp://www.bdlive.co.za/articles/2012/07/05/theatre-review-the-cradle-of-humankind;jsessionid=F3C855F9CE5517419725AA49AC57DC47.present1.bdfm on 12 February 2013

Although the performers are mostly nude, the design of the bodies is carefully considered. This simplicity is part of the conceptual basis, "not [his] usual glamour".[211] Cohen is painted white and Dlamini is naked without make-up, and at one point dressed with a fluorescent green tutu in a parody of ballet. There is a questioning of Western standards of beauty and harmony through these aged bodies which are a far cry from the attractively, make-up clad performers audiences might be used to seeing on their television screens. The pedestrian quality of this performance reveals Cohen's sensitivity in relation to the subject matter. Cohen litters the stage with items that reference slavery and early anthropology. The stage is filled with objects that evoke both the past but also the present, such as the opaque ball from which Cohen is born, the ruler to measure Dlamini, as well as a small coffin.

One of the most powerful images in this piece is that of spot-lit Dlamini, manacled by Cohen with a pair of animal paws. After this, a large visual projection of an anus is manipulated so as to appear to animate the singing of the Afrikaans verses of the multi-lingual South African National Anthem. These sections of the anthem are what remain of *Die Stem*, the original hyper-nationalist poem by C.J. Langenhoven, which served as the national anthem of apartheid South Africa (Cohen uses the anthem of whatever country the piece is performed in). The singing sphincter in turn evokes the entrance to the Sterkfontein caves, images of which are projected earlier on in the performance. The inference is that civilisation as we know it was originally spawned from the "dark cave" (anus) that Africa is perceived to be. The imagery repeats Cohen's assertion that we are all Africans – we are all from this Cradle of Humankind. Or, as Dlamini told one journalist, "Even if you are white you are black".[212] The anus, a sign of the abject, the space from which waste falls, and the place where meaning collapses, paradoxically becomes the birthplace of meaning.

Cohen then uses a projection of a larger primate killing and devouring a smaller monkey to comment on the savage desires of human beings. The violence represented by the primate fight relates to humankind's potential for violence and destruction. Cohen says of this footage that it "is the most human behaviour I've ever seen in apes".[213] The reference to cannibalism is significant as it represents humankind's ability to consume. Cohen often attacks an idea by

[211] CueTV interview, 2012.Accessed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkfjlh3QPCg on 12 February 2012.
[212] Blignaut, C. 2011. Beneath the Skin.*City Press.* Accessed online at http://www.citypress.co.za/features/beneath-the-skin-20111208/ on the 13 Februrary 2013.
[213] Cited in Gridlab interview, 2011.Accessed online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&feature=fvwp&v=QNzF8k77_ 22February 2013.

presenting a literal image, such as cannibalism, to convey something he means quite metaphorically. In this instance, one of the possible meanings might include a reference to the consumption of Africa by the Western gaze. Europe has, of course consumed Africa in many other ways, robbing the continent of its resources and enslaving many of its inhabitants. According to Bill Ashcroft, cannibalism is probably the "central trope of the colonial myth of savagery".[214] In *The Cradle of Humankind* this savagery is inverted into the gaze of the spectator.

The differences between Cohen and Dlamini are also emphasised. In one scene, for example they each stand in separate square pools of light with their names, nationalities, identification numbers, dates of birth and other markers of identity written in text around them. Her femininity alongside his masculine figure, and the shape and proportion of their bodies in relation to each other emphasises the differences between them. In one scene, Dlamini measures herself with an extremely long ruler, which keeps on doubling in size as Cohen extends it to bizarrely exaggerated proportions, radically dwarfing her much shorter body. The verticality of the measuring apparatus and its straightness provides an almost comic juxtaposition in contrast to Dlamini's actual body, her shape and being.

The Cradle of Humankind dismantles the faciality machine which affords the white male face its determinant identity: "This is about negation, it's about accentuating my whiteness".[215] Deleuze and Guattari's discussion on faciality subtly critiques Levinas' idea of the face-to-face encounter as a kind of blueprint for an ethical relation with others.[216] They argue that when the face does not meet the requirements of the molar white male, this ethical encounter with the other is diminished by the "determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face".[217] Without his usual glamour, Cohen disrupts the importance of the face and emphasizes his and Dlamini's bodies in the work. He attempts to make his whiteness strange and even undesirable in relation to Dlamini.

One scene in particular deals with whiteness quite directly (see image 1). Here, a rich, smokey voice-over in the style of old cigarette advertisements accompanies a text projected

[214] Ashcroft, B. 2001. *On Post-Colonial Futures: Transformations of a Colonial Culture.* (London: Continuum). p. 45.
[215] Cohen cited in CueTV interview, 2012.Accessed online:http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkfjlh3QPCg on 12 February 2012.
[216]Tutt, D. 2012. 'What's a Face? Why Dismantle It?' Accessed online: danieltutt.com/2012/01/26/what's-a-face-why-dismantle-it/ on 17 October 2013.
[217]1987, p. 178.

onto a large, white moon-like ball on stage: “that’s an off-white white...The proper colour for flesh to be is the proper colour it is, varying from complexion to complexion”. This perhaps pertains to aspects of Cohen’s identity as Jewish and queer and thus “off white”. Richard Dyer has observed how there are degrees or “gradations of whiteness: some people are whiter than others”, he mentions Latin Americans, Irish and Jews, who are often cast as non-whites compared to Anglo’s and Nordics.[218] The tone of the voice over-theatricalises notions and degrees. In this short scene, whiteness is represented as something that is consumable, through the allusion to the logic of an advert, as something that can be bought and sold.

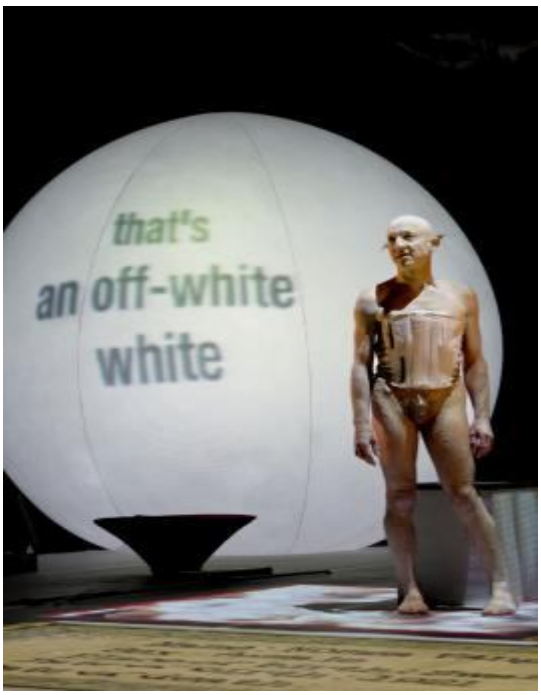

Image 1: “White” voice over with accompanying text.
Photo by Sara Garrun.[219]

Cohen negates his own whiteness by exposing it. Without his usually audacious theatricality he plays a role that goes beyond his personal marginalisation, deliberately creating a provocative image of himself as exploiter, and becoming something of a savage: oppressor, object, curator, child, man, animal. Dlamini already embodies aspects of the minoritarian, while Cohen *becomes minoritarian* through his critique of whiteness. Deleuze and Guattari argue that, “a determination different from that of the constant will therefore be considered minoritarian...” “all becoming is minoritarian”.[220] Cohen enters a becoming which is made possible through his body in performance.

[218] Dyer, R. 1997, p. 12.
[219] Accessed online: http://cuepix.ru.ac.za/main.php?g2_itemId=91463 on 6 May 2013.
[220] ibid., p. 106.

He disturbs desire through performance by accentuating his whiteness and exhibiting himself with Dlamini. As much as he is displaying her, he is also displaying himself as a marginal figure. By portraying the curator as well as an object of display Cohen immerses himself within the performance. Everything Cohen does, however simple or mundane it might be seem to an audience, reveals his concerns.

In a later scene, Cohen dances with a taxidermied baboon – a strange duet between the living and the dead. He also dresses himself with a prosthetic monkey's posterior, wearing it as a sort of skirt over his pelvic area which has a certain humorous, grotesque element to it. This reference to the baboon can be related to the belief that Africans were previously regarded as closest to apes, genetically speaking, on the evolutionary scale. Conceptualised as primitive, Africans were thus seen as closer to nature and akin to animals. Dlamini and Cohen both sport small trees on their heads as they become mythological creatures in a search for origins. The relationship between human beings and animals is continuously referenced. Gers has argued that Cohen's work hints at ecofeminism as a critique of anthropocentricism—the idea that humans are the most significant and important life form on earth.[221] This view is challenged by situating Africa with its image of wildness and natural plenitude as the birthplace of reason. Cohen's duet with the baboon could be seen as a sign of "going native" where the indigenous soil is seen provoking people into wildness by adopting the lifestyles of the local inhabitants. It also relates to the threat of miscegenation.

The placement of a baboon's posterior may also signify homosexual sex and the idea of bestiality. Perhaps this is a comment on the myth that the Aids virus first originated in Africa from men having sex with apes, before it was passed on to other men. One may argue that Cohen is issuing a commentary on the idea of homosexuality as a virus, but also of Africa as a continent which produces viruses since it "lacks civilisation" or is in the developmental phases of what is determined to be the path to civilisation. The idea of bestiality as well as miscegenation is clearly part of the inferred meaning of this image; as Cohen baldly states: "it's about interspecies fucking".[222]

Cohen's unspectacular presentation of these signs also provides a commentary on humankind's treatment of animals:

[221] Gers, 2012, p. 50.
[222] Cited on Grid Lab Extra 11 Festival, Accessed Online http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNzF8k77_uw on 14 March 2013

> I feel a little guilty about working with the baboon because I don't have the baboon's permission and it's a big sacrifice on the part of another primate and baboons are really intelligent animals and they are the last tailed monkeys before great apes, before us. We are the final great apes.[223]

While Cohen critiques white "morality", he also questions anthropocentricism and points out the voiceless-ness of the deceased baboon he dances with.

2.2.2 Designing the Sterkfontein Enlightenment

Cohen's use of a proscenium arch creates an interesting perspective on the notion of evolution, and particularly in relation to the evolution of representation. The proscenium arch sets up certain expectations, as it divides the audience and performers and frames the stage space. As an aid in the construction of the fourth wall, the proscenium arch creates two worlds, that of the performers (illusory space, make-believe) and that of the audience members (real space). Cohen uses multiple references and set pieces (technological equipment, projections, bows and arrows, and balls) in this work, the "world" he and Dlamini inhabit span millions of years. In an interview with CueTV Cohen speaks of how the caves reveal an eclectic mix of styles from Baroque to futuristic art.[224] The design does not entail the construction of an imaginary world but an exhibition of objects which represent the multiplicity of images and symbols evoked by his explorations in the Sterkfontein caves. In identifying these disparate objects the audience member is alienated and dissuaded from trying to place the performance in a particular time frame or setting, and one becomes acutely aware of the careful staging of this performance.

The stage decor is unusual. A cherub/ seraph is positioned on stage right (see Image 2), which is a hallmark of the Baroque period of theatre design. It was during this time that theatre practitioners shifted their attention from divine and religious themes to that of human accomplishments and politics. The Enlightenment or "birth of reason" in the 17th and 18th centuries identified with the Greek mythological Prometheus who stole fire from the Gods and gave it to mankind. This "fire" is symbolic of reason and human capability beyond the limits of religion. As was pointed out in part one; enlightenment philosophies, such as these, often justified and promoted imperial desires.

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[223] ibid.,

[224] CueTV Interview 2012. Accessed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkfjlh3QPCg on 12 February 2012

The cherub, suspended from the "heavens" recalls the elaborate stage design of the Baroque theatre. The Gods or angels would be flown down from the stage heights to solve the problems of mankind below via the *deus ex machina* (the god machine). The *deus ex machina* (borrowed and adopted from the Ancient Greek theatre) became a spectacular effect as audiences in the Baroque period would visit the theatre to see the stage craft rather than the performers. Audiences were enamoured by the spectacular quality of theatre design and going to the theatre was a multi-media experience. Cohen's reference to the stage practices of the Baroque period aids his pictorial and performative critique of the "birth of reason."

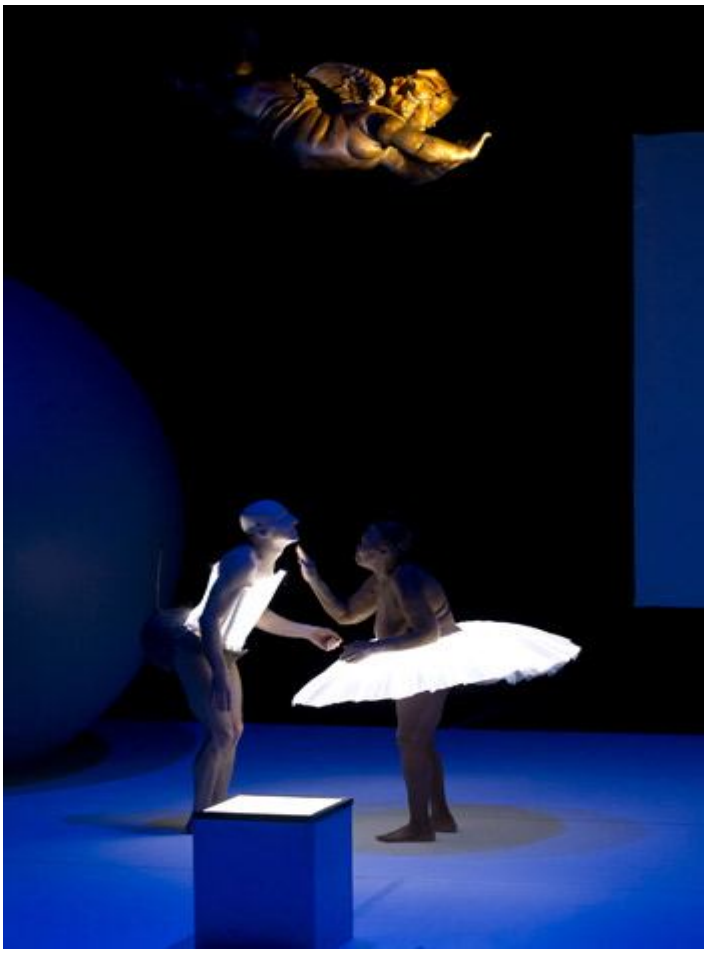

Image 2: The Seraphim, Cohen and Dlamini. Photo by Alain Monot.[225]

Cohen's reference to different movements or stylistic periods in art history, particularly the Enlightenment, is related to the Sterkfontein Caves which he redefines as the true scientific enlightenment: "I think we need to remember, Africa is and was civilised and is not a dark

[225]Accessed online:http://www.liberation.fr/theatre/2012/07/05/steven-cohen-baroud-d-horreur_831403 on 6 May 2013.

continent".[226] Cohen's "birth of reason" is not only related to social enlightenment but to the Sterkfontein caves which become the birthplace of art-making and representation—through the presence of parietal art. Specifically the first time humans became bipedal and the first time humankind could use light (fire) for making art. As Cohen has it, "performance art, theatre, visual art, [started] in the caves, in the rock paintings, it all happened then".[227]

2.2.2 Slow Ontology

The Cradle of Humankind could be argued as engaging in a "slow ontology". This notion is described by Andrè Lepecki in *Exhausting Dance* (2006) through his attempt to account for a lack of interest in contemporary choreography, at least where dance is concerned. Lepecki highlights the movement of dance from a theatrical to a performance paradigm in which dance is no longer exclusively attached to the demands of virtuosity or flow.[228] The contemporary philosopher, Peter Sloterdijk argues that modern life demands speed and sheer mobility:

> The categorical impulse of modernity is: in order to be continuously active as progressive beings, man should overcome all the conditions where his movement is reduced, where he has come to a halt, where he has lost his freedom and where he is pitifully fixed.[229]

Sloterdijk argues that this mobilised conception of modernity is a form of "kinetic complicity with movement of the world processes".[230] He thus argues for slowness and silence as modes of interruption, "for beings who are through-and-through condemned to act".[231] This notion of slowness and stillness is also evident in Nadia Seremetakis' idea of the "still act" when the subject disturbs the incessant flow of history to engage in historical interrogation.[232] This finds resonance with *The Cradle of Humankind* in relation to the "historical interrogation" taking place in the work. For instance, neither Dlamini nor Cohen reveal any urgency in their

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[226] Interview with Steve Cohen. 2011 at La Batie Festival. Accessed online at http://vimeo.com/29382148 on 13 February 2013.
[227] ibid.,
[228] Lepecki, A. 2004. 'Concept and Presence'. In Carter, A. *Rethinking Dance History*. (New York: Routledge) p. 172.
[229] Sloterdijk, P. 2009. 'Mobilisation of the Planet'. In Lepecki, A and Joy, J. (eds). 2008. *Planes of Composition: Dance, Theory and the Global*. (London and New York: Seagull) p. 5.
[230] ibid., p. 11.
[231] ibid., p. 12.
[232] Seremetakis, N cited in Lepecki, A. 2006. *Exhausting Dance:Performance and the Politics of Movement*.(New York: Routledge). p. 15.

performance which recovers the silence and slowness of evolution evoked in the Sterkfontein cave footage. Cohen states "It's about Nomsa...about me taking the pace from Nomsa".[233] The distrust of speed or absence of it, is evident in Cohen's opinion of anthropocentricism. The slowness of the performance also critiques the speed with which we are impelled to "get over" things or to accept the aftermath of imperialism and colonialism, or apartheid. As Lepecki puts it:

> The kinetic spectacle of modernity erases from the picture of movement all the ecological catastrophes, personal tragedies, and communal disruptions brought about by the colonial plundering of resources, bodies, and subjectivities that are needed in order to keep modernity's "most real" reality in place: its kinetic being.[234]

Modernity's speed becomes another way for us to abject history in the fast paced capitalist world bent on satisfaction. The measured pace of *The Cradle of Humankind* does not rely on conventional ideas of rhythm or a climax to seduce the audience or to offer an opportunity for some kind of "catharsis". This is resonant with Sloterdijk's idea of demobilisation, "to be still in the midst of the storm".[235] The lack of a formalised beat structure to guide the performance alters the sense of time, absent is the fast-paced frenzy of narrative driven plots which audiences have become accustomed to. Deleuze and Guattari write about a sense of time that is not chronological but an "indefinite time of the event" linked with the notion of *Aeon*.[236] This indefinite notion of time is evoked through the deliberate and organic slowness of the two older bodies on stage. This timeless-ness is manifested by the engagement with the evolution of humankind as a process which stretches over an indefinite period of time. The lack of rhythmic devices which conventionally aid in constructing a sense of time adds to the quality of measured and deliberate stillness.

The performance's time exists in a different time/space to the demands of mobility and consumer satisfaction. Lepecki argues that, "while the slow-act does not entail rigidity or morbidity it requires a performance of suspension, a corporeally based interruption of modes of flow".[237] Although Cohen's work is not situated within the European dance scene discussed by Lepecki, *The Cradle of Humankind's* sustained pace and Cohen's lack of

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[233] CueTV Interview. 2012. Accessed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkfjlh3QPCg on 12 February 2012.
[234] ibid., p. 13.
[235] Cited in Lepecki and Joy, 2009, p. 1.
[236] 1987, p. 262.
[237] Lepecki, 2006, p. 15.

"glamour" (the lack of his usual spectacularly abject performance) is unspectacular. Lehmann observes how time has become an "object of the aesthetic experience" of performance: "for only an experience of time that deviates from habit provokes its explicit perception, permitting it to move from something taken for granted as a mere accompaniment to the rank of a theme."[238] The presence of these performers becomes the predominant element of the performance which lacks coherence or any dramatic sense of urgency, which disturbs "modes of flow".

In *The Cradle of Humankind,* Cohen works against his "usual glamour" and creates a non-spectacular performance. The "shock" value is already there with the presence of Dlamini which makes Cohen culpable as a transgressor within an allegedly colour-blind society. As one critic states, "*Cradle* lacked awareness of the politics of display" and Cohen "became the facilitator to this mass objectification" of Dlamini.[239] According to this accusation, Cohen commits a crime within the politics of display by attempting to represent the "other". To say that Dlamini lacks agency is to subject her to being the "other" when it is in fact, her minoritarian singularity that Cohen reveals to his viewers – that behind every "other" is an individual with his/her own particularity. Cohen reveals the minor narrative of Dlamini: "I made the work because it wasn't there".[240] The notion of abjection and exclusion are provoked subtly without being forced on the audience, they are, rather, inferred throughout the work. Cohen manages to reveal the vulnerability of his and Dlamini's friendship built on asymmetrical class relations, but the work is also an affirmation of Africa. Furthermore, his attitude is deliberately antithetical to the demands of the theatre industry, "I didn't make the work to sell tickets and I didn't make the work so it could be a success.[241]

Cohen's statement that, "I don't make performance for satisfaction, not for them and not for me",[242] is extremely significant. The work is not about satisfaction, it does not want to cater to the emotional needs of its viewers. Cohen would rather that spectators do not arrive at conclusions from his work but that they remain undecided:

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[238] Lehmann, 2006, p. 156.
[239]Sizemore-Barber, A. 2013. 'South Africa's National Arts Festival (review). *Theatre Journal.* Vol. 65. No. 2. p. 263.
[240] CueTV interview 2012.Accessed online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xkfjlh3QPCg 13 January 2013.
[241]ibid.,
[242]ibid.,

> If people encountering my work wonder about what they see, I am happier than if they conclude something – I would rather be the cause of wonder than of conclusion. The value of my work is more in its being a speculum than a suture.[243]

Cohen's desire for his work to be a speculum – as a tool of investigation, is a resistance to enforced and prescriptive meaning. As a "speculum" the work demands a deep investigation into the cavities of symbolic violence. This is why the abject is so important to Cohen's work, as it disturbs any easy reading of his art. Cohen disturbs the desire for meaning to be fully present and affords his audiences the opportunity for wonder, rather, meaning surfaces as in the form of becoming. Cohen's strategy to disturb desire for clear-cut meaning is clearly significant to *The Cradle of Humankind.* This is because the exploitation and oppression of the African continent and its inhabitants under colonialism and apartheid, begs for a reason and a meaning, which is ethically impossible to argue or justify.

[243] Cited on Official Website. Accessed online: under "Thoughts" : Paragraph 7

Intermezzo: White People Problems

Worry about (the gardener) disturbs me. to deal with him when landlords moved away. He comes to work three times a week. ~~–~~I have to tell him what to do otherwise he sits around reading books. seen him reading Tolstoy, sensational tabloid magazines. he likes to talk to appreciate his job. better suited to academic job, but left school girlfriend pregnant, few opportunities to find something more financially secure than a casual gardening job. anything goes missing property both extremely upset. body language becomes defensive as if accusing crime. stigma blackness criminal left mark on them. about R780 a month three children care. ~~I~~ often feel paternalistic. Role. our relationship. he should find other jobs, finish schooling, make a better life. 2013 his mother passed away, inherited her RDP house. seemed so happy explaining. ~~I~~ was thinking how little. he asks me for extra money, try to explain. "~~I~~ am just a student". don't make money, doesn't believe me. understandable, seem middle-classlooking cosy life. not how experience though, at some level as powerless as he. I incapable changing life feel egotistical paternalistic attempts to encourage him. moving off property worried. sense of agency possibility diminishes when remember/recognise how marginalised. Small. agency disappears. because how. poor white woman make? easier without charity case? I receiving of charity. what gives me the right? how to live a life. to presume unhappy with lot in life? Who am I to claim knowledge of what desires and how he should desire....

> *such people know that they are close to grass, almost akin to it, and that desire needs very few things – not those leftovers that chance to come their way, but the very things that are continually taken from them – and that what is missing is not things a subject feels a lack of somewhere deep inside himself, but rather the objectivity of man, the objective being of man, for whom to desire is to produce, to produce within the realm of the real.*[244]

little dramatic, white people's problems, but no lucky or privileged compared. surrounded inequality of the Eastern Cape. escape it—it lives you. Empowered to be exploited.

[244] Deleuze and Guattari. 1983. p. 27.

2.3 Returning the gaze: Brett Bailey's *Exhibit A*

Exhibit A is part of *The Exhibit Series* (*Exhibit B* and *C*) which considers the effects of imperialism in Africa. The work was created specifically for European audiences. *Exhibit A* refers to the performance installation that was exhibited in Grahamstown during the National Arts Festival in July 2012. *Exhibit A,* like much of Brett Bailey's work reveals the complexity of racial relations and post-colonial issues in South Africa. One could argue that Bailey's whiteness *problematises* his productions. As a white South African, he shares the privileges brought about by colonialism and apartheid. Furthermore, Bailey never appears as a performer within his works, and this helps to achieve a revolt (through questioning) by being calculatedly complicit, "conscious of this irony and aware of the paradoxes"[245] involved. Bailey's company, Thirdworld Bunfight, has been active since 1996 and the name of his company alludes to his fascination with the "collisions between first and third world consciousness".[246] His focus on these "collisions" can be seen in his early work in which he incorporates traditional African rituals with aspects of Western performance forms. In works such as the *Plays of Miracle and Wonder* he weaves together Xhosa and Christian rituals (2003), creating a "syncretic" form of theatre in which the "primary mode is the tragic".[247] Bailey's work is a good example of the layered-ness and complexity of performance practices in the post-apartheid context:

> The shifting stylistic modes and thematic emphases of Bailey's productions over the past decade trace a trajectory of transformation for the South African psyche during the same period, from the exuberant optimism of the mid-1990s to the anxious disaffection of the new millennium.[248]

Exhibit A is an example of the "anxious disaffection" that Larlham observes in Bailey's other work. In it, Bailey is deliberately provocative with his handling of the atrocities of colonialism and racism in Africa. The work also critiques consequences of neo-colonialism; such as xenophobia and contemporary forms of racism cloaked in neo-liberal guises.

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[245] Krueger, A. 2010. *Experiments in Freedom.* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars). p. 162.
[246]Larlham,D. 2009. 'Brett Bailey and the Third World Bunfight: Journeys into the South African Psyche.' *Theater.*Vol. 39. No. 1. p. 10.
[247] Krueger, 2010, p. 169.
[248]Larhalm, 2009, p. 7.

Exhibit A disarms the viewer. The audience member is given a numbered ticket and led into a waiting room, remaining there until one by one your number is called. You are instructed to be quiet throughout this process. When your number is called you leave the waiting room and start your journey through the exhibition. In *Terminal*, made in 2009, audience members were accompanied by young street children through the installation whereas in *Exhibit A*, the focus seems to be on the individual audience member and their experience of the exhibition. The voyeuristic relationship between audience and performer is undermined through inversion by having a living, human, *tableau vivant.*

The exhibition of living human beings returning the gaze of the spectator is a very powerful aspect of *Exhibit A.* Within a museum setting, one is often distanced from what one witnesses because the objects represent events that happened in the past. The objects or artefacts represent history in the sense that, what one sees in the museum space is usually for educational purposes. In *Exhibit A*, however, the "objects" on display return the gaze which creates a tension that confuses the traditional relation between spectator and performer. At some level one starts to feel like a performer as well, as if one has been ambushed into complicity just by being present in that space. According to Nathanael Vlachos the cast were instructed by Bailey to treat the audience as the performance.[249] The audience is activated by the performance while the performers remain in the static position of museum exhibits. The power of the gaze is disrupted, reversed and inverted by the gaze of performers in this live installation.

Bailey critiques the German *Volkerschau* (folk-show or ethnic show) or human zoos which exhibited live human specimens from different (non-white) cultures for German audiences. These ethnic shows were justified as educational even though the presentation of these cultures was often inaccurate and exoticized.[250] These ethnic shows exhibited people in a de-contextualised manner and often aided the imperial project by representing "human specimens" from foreign places, as savages. In this way, curators or showmen who presented these exhibitions aided in justifying the process of imperialism by representing Africans as inferior to Europeans. Bailey's piece reminds or educates viewers of this historical injustice by re-constructing the *Volkerschau*. The blurb for *Exhibit A* in the National Arts Festival booking kit reads, "this exhibition of live Africans provides an opportunity for you to gaze at

[249] Vlachos, N. 2013. 'Brett Bailey's Travelling Human Zoo: Fragmentations of Whiteness Across Borders'. p. 3.
[250] Ciarlo, D.2011. *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 79.

a variety of people from different parts of the continent – to have a good, hard look at 'Difference' – and maybe to reach some kind of understanding".[251]In a manner of speaking, Bailey's *Exhibit A* is also educational, except in postcolonial rather than a colonial manner. The programme note handed to audiences at the show is informative and descriptive. There is very little room for ambiguity in this critique of colonialism.

Each object seems carefully selected for a specific room. Consider the way in which the objects are exhibited in Images 3 and 4. This part of the exhibit re-enacts and represents ideas surrounding Social Darwinism which became a convenient theory for the ongoing process of colonialism. The two performers are exhibited much like the animals around them and with numbered plaques on their outfits for identification. Behind them is a diorama-like background of what seems like a jungle to help contextualise where these "specimens" are from. In the foreground of the image, are two books: Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* and *The Descent of Man.* Next to these books is a small bust of a black female (known as a "Gaper") which has been depicted in an overtly racist manner with traits stereotypically associated with racist ideas of blackness. She has large red lips, a gaping mouth and her head is oddly shaped while her arm reaches out in a begging gesture. This small bust is an example of the overtly simplified images of black people and comments on the way in which non-white people have been represented in the past. In front of the small bust is a skin palette which was used to identify where in the world the particular "specimen" came from.

Image 3:*Exhibit A*. 2012. Photo by Lauren Rawlins.

[251] 2012. National Arts Booking Kit.

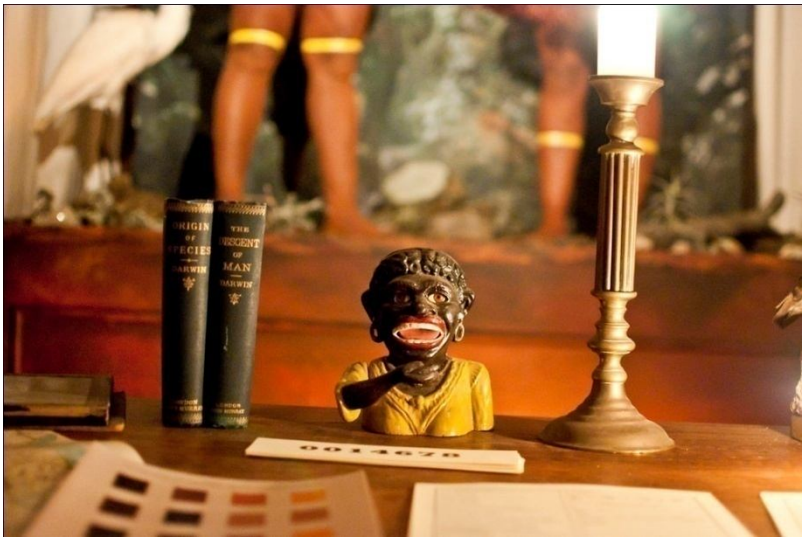

Image 4: *Exhibit A*. Signifiers of Imperialism, references to Darwin (Origin of the Species and The Descent of Man), skin plaques and bust. Photo by Lauren Rawlins.

Bailey makes one aware of the uncivilised treatment of the non-white body whether through representation or via the exhibition of real bodies as objects. A found object attains aesthetic value by being placed within a new context by the artist. For example, Duchamp's urinal *Fountain* (1917), is a well-known example of this. Within the museum space, the artefact is imbued with a set of images, symbols and ideas which are absent to the viewer. Curators assign labels with which to classify and identify artefacts. Bailey uses these curatorial tools in *Exhibit A*; such as labelling each part of the exhibition and identifying the materials within each site. For instance, consider the label in Image 5: "Found Object #2 Zimbabwean Immigrant". Calling the immigrant a found object may be seen as dehumanising, but at the same time it refers to the history that is attached to the "object", in this case the reference to the Zimbabwean immigrant is loaded. It refers to the political problems in Zimbabwe which have had devastating social effects on the population. The labelling of the live human specimens positions them as objects rather than subjects which undermines and takes away their agency. Bailey's *Exhibit A* consistently calls attention to the differences between objects and subjects and the collision between these two within the politics of display. This labelling can be seen other works by Bailey's, such as *Orfeus* (2007) and *Terminal: Blood Diamonds* (2009). In *Terminal* for instance, Found Object #2: "Cage, fruit seller, fruit" (See image 6), describes the materials used to construct the image, like an artist would in a gallery setting. These among other strategic placements within the exhibition, reference the symbolic violence that continues after colonialism. They act as the evidence of these crimes.

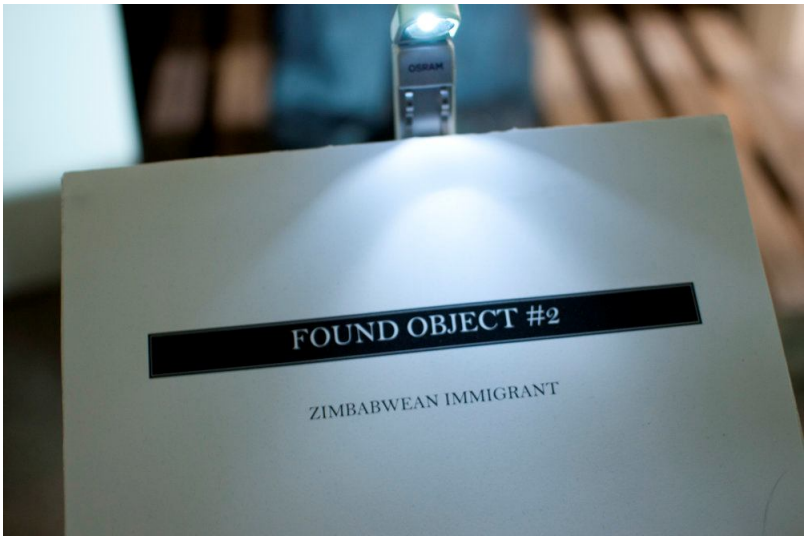

Image 5: An example of Bailey's Found objects. Photo by Lauren Rawlins.

A major difference between Bailey's *Exhibit A* and the ethnic shows he has recreated and critiqued is the quiet solitude that the audience experiences for most of the walk-through. There is no "festive atmosphere" here as there would have been in the German *Volkerschau*, rather the mood is decidedly mournful in tone which reinstates Bailey's understanding of tragedy, but without the spectacular quality of works like *Macbeth* (2002) and *Orfeus* (2007) which could serve to buffer the emotional devastation of his imagery. He creates a quiet space in which European audiences are invited to reflect on the history and continuing reification of non-white people without the theatricality of illusion. Due to the inversion of the gaze onto the audience members and the activation of the audience through the exhibit, whiteness is heightened and becomes a performance. Since Bailey's focus is not only on the history of colonialism but also touches on neo-colonial injustice, some of the exhibits contain the victims of xenophobic violence and represent the plight of refugees and asylum seekers.

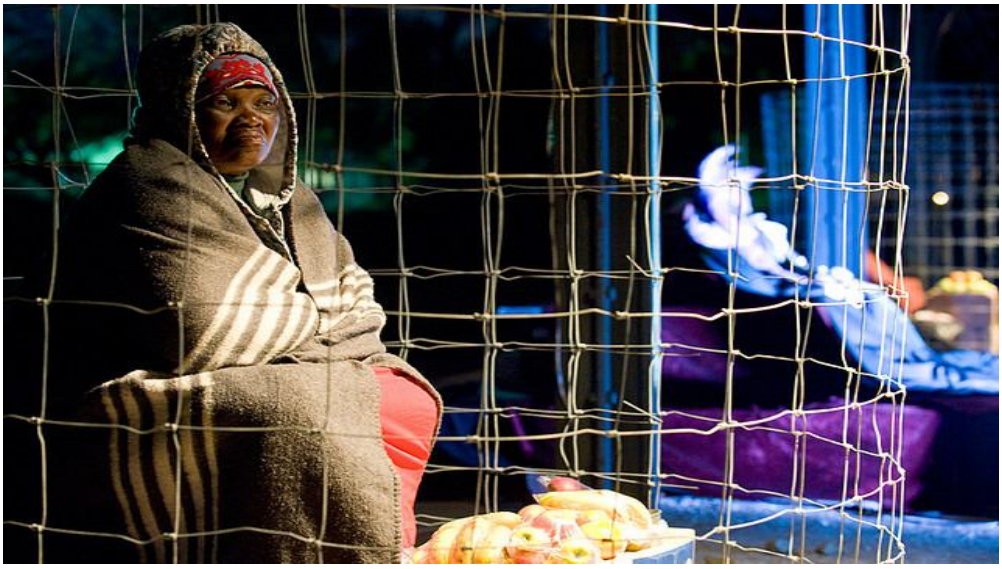

Image 6: Scene from *Terminal*. Photo by Christo Doherty.[252]

The room labelled, "Dr Fischer's Cabinet of Curiosities", contains four disembodied[253]heads atop clean white pedestals from which they sing a mournful harmony. This is a Namibian choir put together by Marcelinus Swartbooi whom Bailey met while researching the destruction of the Herero in Namibia. This might be argued as the most provocative installation in the exhibit and is according to Bailey the "central incident" of the exhibition.[254]The heads resting on pedestals are signifiers of a relatively unknown genocide which took place in German South West Africa (Namibia). Bailey placed plaques in each room bearing explanations of the scenes depicted, that from 1904 until 1907, the Herero and Namaqua people were exterminated by German colonial invaders. The Herero who rebelled against German rule were driven from their homes and many died from thirst in the Namib Desert. Others were put into concentration camps, such as at Shark Island, where they died from exhaustion and privation while others were thrown into the sea where they either drowned or were killed and eaten by sharks.

[252]Accessed online: http://www.pinterest.com/pin/522839837961077326/ on 14 May 2013.
[253] Bailey has created pedestals in which the actual bodies of the singers are hidden.
[254] Krueger, 2013. p. 7.

Image 7: The disembodied head quartet. Photo by. Lauren Rawlins.

The beautiful, harmonious quality of the singing heads work in opposition to the horrific narratives of colonial oppression that are signified in the installation. The macabre disembodied heads are placed upon pedestals which are heavily used in museum and gallery spaces, thereby extending through implication Bailey's critique of the symbolic violence of African bodies by Western representational practices. The four disembodied heads highlight the power of abjection to both attract and repel the viewer.[255] The abject has an ambiguous ability to create a complication of desire within the one confronted by it. Abjection also confronts one with what is not desired, with what one hopes to avoid. The aesthetic of the installation space is beautiful, but it is occupied by four heads referencing the horror of genocide. On one level, there is a recognition of horror but at the same time, there is also an experience of beauty in the way that Bailey has constructed the image. This is due to the balanced composition of the installation, containing four white pedestals positioned in the same direction as three framed and enlarged photographs of decapitated Herero heads. Krueger observes a "curious mixture of shame and beauty" in the piece.[256] The disembodied heads signify death and the horror of dismemberment but the choice of light and the song being sung is aesthetically pleasing and melodious. Bailey explains that:

> I wanted to create images where you are seduced by beauty – you want to look – but the content is so horrific you also don't want to look. You don't know where to look. Somehow you find yourself between these two levels.[257]

[255] Kristeva, 1982. p. 1
[256] Krueger, 2013. p. 3
[257] Bailey in Krueger, 2013. p. 3.

Bailey's comments highlight the effect of this abject scene on its audience. Kristeva argues that the corpse "is the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything".[258] The corpse which is without life is a form of pollution, a body without a soul: "the corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject.[259] In the presence of death, one is confronted with the inevitability of one's mortality, the corpse becoming a border between the known and the unknown. These four performers are not dead, but they represent a history of death and human cruelty which is painted by their bodiless voices which filter through the exhibition. Bailey's "cabinet of curiosities" presents an alternative representation of genocide and death which is usually a lot less repellent when screened on film or television. In this presentation the heads are alive and singing, they are playing at being dead – in this room the dead come to life. Perhaps Bailey is commenting on the manner in which death and brutality are represented in contemporary culture which one can become psychologically acculturated to through the sheer saturation of this kind of imagery.

The construction of this installation emphasizes the role of the gaze and Western voyeurism; as this is the only room where the performers do not direct their gaze at the audience. These singing disembodied heads take the audience to what can be considered an aesthetically pleasing but ethically difficult space. As a spectator one's complicity in viewing this presentation is made evident in this softly lit area. In aestheticizing horror and death, Bailey takes something horrific and contextualises it in a different space making it pleasing and yet disturbing at the same time. Bailey's design seduces and horrifies but it also reminds the audience that this has been carefully constructed for their viewing.

Dr Fischer, to whom the exhibit refers, was a German scientist who studied the offspring of inter-racial mixing in Namibia. Fischer referred to this field research as "Bastard Studies" and was against interracial marriages.[260] He was also involved in the study of eugenics; a movement which developed in the late 1800's which was focused on the improvement of human hereditary traits through the right combination of genetic qualities. The politics tied to

[258] Kristeva, 1982. p. 3.
[259] ibid., p. 4.
[260] Steinmetz, G. 2007. *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press). p. 216

eugenics favoured whiteness as a "superior state". The Herero and Nama were also used for "scientific" experimentation and an estimated three hundred skulls were taken to Germany for further studies. Image 8 is a reference to the concentration camps in which women were forced to clean the skulls of their own people. The skulls are tokens of extreme racism which influenced Nazi ideology. Craniology, the study of the size and shape of the human skull became a way for scientists like Fischer to prove the inferiority of non-Western cultures. In Bailey's exhibit, he places the woman inside a wire cage and sets a German warning sign "Geerdet Achtung!" (Pay attention: Warning!) next to her.

Image 8. Exhibit of Woman Cleaning Skulls. Photo by Lauren Rawlins.

The notion of shame surfaced frequently in response to the work. Bailey mentions that the work was not made to shame people rather it was an excavation. *Exhibit A* was a form of research into the mechanisms of colonialism, particularly focused on the way the colonial subject was represented. Bailey elaborates on this when he states:

> What were the images that I was fed and that my ancestors were fed in order to perpetuate this myth that one race is better than the other? I wasn't out to deliberately create images of shame, except a lot of the stuff I came across shamed me and then I tried to find the images that articulated that.[261]

A significant aspect of this work is the position Bailey puts himself in as an artist and *Exhibit A* reveals the paradox involved in his approach. Although Bailey is not part of the installation, he is the facilitator and instigator of the event. As a white male from a middle class background, it would seem that Bailey has no way to ethically justify his

[261] In Krueger, 2013. p. 3.

representations of African art and culture, or to speak on behalf of the people and their stories he represents in this work. As the director/curator of *Exhibit A*, the hierarchical slave master dialectic is rehearsed in the process of making the piece. Bailey tells his actors what to do where they should sit/stand or sing, and that they should stare at the audience members. He plays the role of the "white man" as a "master". This is part of Bailey's *Exhibit A*, namely his own desire to deal with his own complicity as a white South African. Bailey reveals his anxiety about his ethnicity, his whiteness and what that means in relation to Africa and particularly his home country South Africa.

Neither Cohen nor Bailey try to absolve "white guilt". Rather, they express their own anxiety. Cohen's reveals the minor and personal narrative while Bailey reverses the gaze and turns his viewers into the objects they have come to see. Both artists are also dealing with the politics of representing the "other" as white men. They are using the power relations to expose those age-old power divides and inequalities between Africans and Europeans. In exhibiting African bodies to European audiences both Bailey and Cohen accentuate their whiteness. This is specifically a whiteness that is associated with the oppressive consequences of imperialism such as the Apartheid system in South Africa in which Cohen and Bailey were both raised.

One of the main differences between Bailey's *Exhibit A* and Cohen's *The Cradle of Humankind* is the former's extreme manipulation of the audience in the space. While Cohen's work leaves a space for ambiguity, Bailey's exhibit is very straightforward. He refers to the inversion of the gaze of the performers as a "trick" for the audience.[262] This "trick" works as a device to disarm the audience, engineering an emotional reaction from them and bringing many to tears at the recognition of their own complicity, or at least to the sites of horror within the exhibition. The audience's movement in the space was also strictly controlled. I remember attempting to go back into the building as I wanted to have another look at the exhibits (specifically because I wanted to write about this work) and being sternly told that I could not re-enter. Outside the exhibit, a fire was lit and audience members could ask Bailey questions and discuss the work with him. Bailey's control of the space: the audience as well as the performers of *Exhibit A* revealed the hierarchies of power present in the work and more specifically who owns this representation of suffering and horror, namely Bailey. While *Exhibit A* brings the horror of racial injustice to the fore, there is no undoing of power, but

[262] Bailey cited in Krueger, 2013. p. 3.

rather an experience of culpability for those who witness the work. Perhaps this is part of Bailey's concept, to make one aware of how easily one is manipulated by those in positions of power whether one is a performer or a witness.

Intermezzo: Memories of England

Exhibit A fuelled my anxiety about my whiteness and the micropolitics involved in creating art. The piece was brutal and unkind. I felt such enormous empathy for those trodden down by history and for those performers, and yet I'm not sure exactly what I was supposed to do with the in-form-ation Bailey presented me with. I could not. I could not engage in the discussion around the fireplace after the show. What good would talking about it do for anyone?

After the National Arts Festival in 2011, the first year of my doctorate, I attended what was called the First Global Conference on Whiteness at Oxford, United Kingdom. It was the first time that I had left South Africa. I had two experiences there that I found very disturbing. On the 3rd day of the conference, as the conference delegates were having breakfast I found myself in a very awkward situation. Sitting across a white South African artist, I heard her and another delegate discussing how white people living in SA do not really have a claim to belonging – that ultimately white people do not belong in Africa. I understood their argument, that white people had come from Europe and violently took South Africa from its inhabitants, yet I was born in South Africa and it is the only place I know. I disagreed and was met with silence. The one-sided debate had to end because someone deviated. As if having the idea that white people do not belong in Africa somehow absolves you from your whiteness. Feeling quite vulnerable already as one of the youngest delegates, I left the breakfast table, walked in the manicured garden outside the breakfast hall, and started to weep (silently). My thoughts: "I don't understand. Why Africa? If I am not African? I certainly do not have any other passport. I have known only this place." I was angry because although I could totally see their point – where else could I belong? Furthermore, I know that a sense of belonging is a creation, and that when one dies, the sense of belonging or owning anything is futile. I also had to present my paper shortly afterwards, to what had suddenly become to me, a hostile group of people. I nervously presented my paper, performing my anxiety to these privileged scholars of whiteness.

After the conference, I visited a friend in London who took me to dinner at a photographer's apartment. I walked into the house and was greeted with the following: "Don't worry, we

have lots of biltong[263] and there are no kaffirs here". ~~I~~ was shocked by his words...even though he claimed to be making a joke, it was so offensive. ~~I~~ had just finished a conference in which was ~~I~~ immersed in critical race studies, and there ~~I~~ was in this "first world country" being told that ~~I~~ need not worry about "kaffirs". So ~~I~~ got a harsh taste of how white South Africans are perceived in the popular imagination.

[263] Biltong (similar to beef jerky), is a cured meat which originated in South Africa.

2. 4 Privileged Diaspora in *LHR-JNB* (2010)

The work of Michael MacGarry steers away from the representational politics of Bailey and Cohen towards a presentation of whiteness that exists without the presence of non-white performers (to accentuate racial difference). Theories are of particular importance to MacGarry, but he employs concepts in a subversive and Dadaist[264] manner, as is evident in his work with Avant Car Guard, a three-member collective with artists; Zander Blom and Jan Henri-Booysens. In the early days, his official website *All theory No practice* was full of ideas for artworks that were never intended to be made. The rejection of a finished work of art reveals a strong Dada influence, as witnessed in the work produced by the Avant Car Guard collective. By keeping the work in the form of a concept, one is able to prevent it from being a commodity within the art industry. This was one of the reasons Dada artists turned to performance to evade the commodity form. Consider Avant Car Guard's *Protected by Theory* (2007) a photograph, which satirically comments on the Fine Art world's dependence on theories about art (see image 9); the three members of Avant Car Guard are literally covered in theoretical texts in a gallery space with easels and a Greek sculpture of a male model. The group's title for the piece establishes a sense of self-reflexivity as they poke fun at the art establishment without which their work would not be possible.

There is clearly a strong theoretical and conceptual underpinning that informs MacGarry's art-making practices. This lucid understanding of representation and visual culture can be observed when reading his writing on his art practice. The focus of this analysis is on MacGarry's *LHR-JNB*[265], a 12 minute short film, which forms part of his *Endgame* exhibition. *Endgame* was the artist's offering after receiving the Standard Bank Young Artist's award in 2010. According to MacGarry, the *Endgame* exhibition deals with "the ongoing ramifications of imperialism on the African continent".[266] This is part of his conceptual interest in the relationship between centre and periphery; the extension of the colonial process in Africa. Of particular interest to him is continued Western exploitation of areas (such as Angola, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa) which contain much desired

[264] The Dada art movement started in the early 1900's is known for its critical attitude towards the academy and the production of art. The short-lived movement was engineered by artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Kurt Schwitters, and so on.
[265] Video Accessed online: http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyZaKlpcgq0 on 15 September 2013.
[266]Official Website of Michael MacGarry. Accessed online:http://www.alltheorynopractice.com on 12 May 2011.

hydrocarbons (fuel) which as Awam Ampka has put it in relation to oil in Post-Independent Nigeria, has "lubricated the machinery of the neo-colonial state."[267]

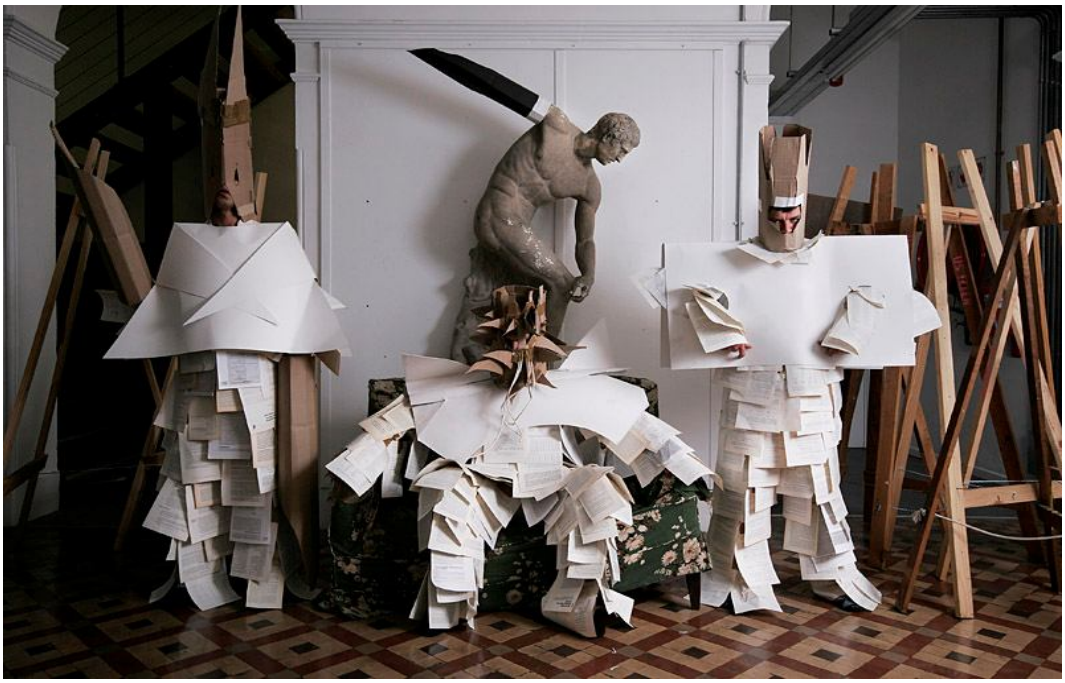

Image 9: Avant Car Guard. *Protected by Theory*(2007).[268]

MacGarry specifically engages with the effects of imperialism and the sapping of resources from the African continent. His critique thus extends to a critique of political leaders of African countries who practice neo-colonialism. Moeletsi Mbeki has referred to African economies as neo-colonial referring to the way in which the legacy of colonialism has continued in different guises within post-independent or democratic states. Mbeki argues that, "African political elites today sustain and reproduce themselves by perpetuating the neo-colonial state and its attendant socio-economic systems of exploitation, devised by the colonialists".[269] Kwame Nkrumah, author of *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), argues that neo-colonialism is perhaps the last but most dangerous stage of imperialism.[270] Nkrumah observes that, "foreign capital is used for exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world".[271] The West's obsession with oil creates a continuation of crude mercantile capitalism (the earliest form of capitalism) and

[267] Ampka, A. 2004, p. 8.
[268] Accessed online: http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitionsbs/acg/theory.htm on 15 June 2013.
[269] Mbeki, M. 2009, p. 16.
[270]Nkrumah, K. 1965. *Neo-colonialism, the Last stage of Imperialism.* (London: Nelson).
[271]ibid., p. x.

which focuses on achieving maximum profits. This is accomplished by obtaining products at a low cost and selling those products for more which leads to the exploitation of African resources as under imperialism.

LHR-JNB is a short film in continuous loop showing an airplane from London to South Africa crashing into the Mediterranean sea. The film goes on to reveal four white men trying to survive in a lifeboat, but their lifeboat is then damaged by some of the airplane's debris still floating in the water and eventually sink. There is a chance of rescue at one point but it is not realised. The short film ends with them floating dead on the surface of the water. The film is brief and seems almost unremarkable amid the rest of the *Endgame* exhibition, but I believe that it contains a very interesting critique of post apartheid South African whiteness happening in this short take.

The film has four characters played by Jan-Henri Booyens, Marcel Waldek and Jaco van Schalkwyk and MacGarry himself. The poetic script which was also written by the artist is narrated by van Schalkwyk. The short film's narrative is inspired by two years MacGarry spent abroad in the "centre", that is, the United Kingdom and Ireland. He discusses how he was actively contributing to the "brain drain"[272] of the periphery by participating in the work force of a foreign country more advanced than his own both economically and technologically. He discusses his search for a narrative that "could articulate, as well as mimic, the voluntary South African alienation and London-induced drowning of identity I was experiencing at the time".[273] In *LHR-JNB* MacGarry is less focused on the history of colonialism and more focused on the present continuation of colonial desires in sub-Saharan Africa, dealing as he does with the relationship between First and Third Worlds, the "centres" and "peripheries" in which voluntary positioning is one of the privileges owned by South African whiteness.

Melissa Steyn locates whiteness as a diasporic identity in the post apartheid context: "Positioned at the intersections of the African and European, South African whiteness has the quality of shifting layeredness that is so characteristic of diaspora".[274] The superiority of whiteness and the idea of belonging in South Africa was taken for granted under Apartheid. Within the current dispensation, the idea of belonging has been destabilised, as "the logic of

[272] MacGarry cited on his website. Accessed online: http://www.alltheorynopractice.com.12 March 2012.
[273]ibid.
[274]Steyn, M. "White Talk": White South Africans and the Management of Diasporic Whiteness. In López, Alfred, J. 2005. *Postcolonial whiteness: a critical reader on race and empire.* New York: State University of New York Press. p. 126.

conquest has been delegitimized".[275] The notion of a stable identity for white South Africans in relation to geographical and historical placement thus disintegrates with the new dispensation:

> Deprived of the archaic identity as the settler, it also conceivably deprived them of citizenship in the present. It presented them with spectre of privilege without belonging, and hence with the task of negotiating new forms of whiteness.[276]

South African whiteness is complicated, for as Steyn observes, the notion of diaspora is usually linked with those who are "dislocated from their own centres of identification".[277] Since white identities are both displaced and privileged, their experience is remarkably different to the experience of other diasporic people who have been oppressed by colonial and neo-colonial powers.[278] According to Steyn, new discourses or "White Talk" have emanated from this displaced but privileged minority. "White Talk – "is a set of discursive practices that attempts to manage the intersectional positionality of white South Africans to their greatest advantage, given the changes in their position within the society.[279] Some of the examples Steyn lists in her discussion of "White Talk" surface in MacGarry's critique of post-apartheid whiteness in *LHR-JNB*. One of these is the link to European and American "centres" of mainstream whiteness and the broad privileging of the global over the local.[280] Both are convenient ways for the continued production of white desires even after the dismantling of white power in South Africa. While a diasporic identity is typically associated with displacement as a negative effect, in the case of South African whiteness, it reinstates white privileges and desires.

MacGarry's filming of *LHR-JNB* is a metaphor for the destabilized identities of the four white men.The crash lands the four survivors in the (Mediterranean) sea, between Europe and Africa between "centre" and periphery".[281] This sense of instability is provoked through the images of the sea and the fluidity of the waves. The manner in which the waves are filmed evoke the disorientation of sea sickness and vertigo. The survivors find themselves between two continents, two "homes": the "settler" homeland (Africa) and the "mother" homeland

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[275] Nuttal, S. 2001. 'Subjectivities of Whiteness.' *African Studies Review.* Vol. 44. No. 2. Ways of Seeing Beyond the New Nativism. p. 118.
[276]ibid., p. 118.
[277] Steyn. p. 124.
[278]ibid., p. 126.
[279]ibid. p. 120.
[280]ibid., p. 128.
[281] MacGarry cited on his official website. Accessed online: http://www.alltheorynopractice.com.12 March 2012. Of course, the idea of centre and periphery is not as clearly delineated in our contemporary context.

(Europe). But neither of these places can rightfully be called home, as witnessed by the narrator: "We will never go home. We made this, and it has created us".[282] Desire is withheld here and there is no rescue or conclusion for the doomed survivors of flight 747. The film loop condemns them to be endlessly reborn so as to crash and drown again and again.

MacGarry explains how the short film was influenced by a beer advertisement he had seen whilst living in London. The advert focused on the survivors of a boat who upon rescue would rather have the particular brand of beer advertised than water—brand power becomes a matter of survival. So while MacGarry reveals the instability of South African whiteness he simultaneously mocks it in a self-referential manner. The actors in the film are not depicted as attractive; they cannot sell themselves as appealing to viewers as they struggle to survive on the life raft. Their unattractiveness is emphasised by their sea-sickness which is shown by their vomiting into the sea. They discover small bottles of alcohol from the airplane and consume these drinks while laughing grotesquely at the irony of the situation. The next morning they fight over the small bit of food and drinking water they still have left, revealing their growing desperation.

The use of a life raft in the film is quite significant in its subtle references to Gericault's *The Raft of Medusa* (1818-1819) and other paintings of shipwrecks. The painting depicts an historical event that took place in which a hundred and fourteen people were set adrift on a life raft after the French naval ship sunk when it went off its course near present day Mauritania. After thirteen days out at sea, only fifteen people were found to survive, having suffered dehydration, near-starvation and cannibalism. The painting by Gericault depicts the thirteenth day right before the sailing raft was discovered. MacGarry asserts that the most powerful element of the painting is also the one with the smallest detail, the ship coming to rescue the survivors "is so tiny and so far away that surely it cannot possibly see the raft in the vastness of the ocean?"[283] Since it is this particular moment that Gericault decided to focus on with the survivors looking towards the ship, the painting suggests both the despair of the shipwreck survivors, as well as their hope of rescue. In *LHR-JNB*, MacGarry has paralleled this tension by creating a circular narrative in which the survivors drown but are resurrected. This sense is achieved in the exhibition of the short film which is played on a loop in the installation.

[282]MacGarry cited on his official website. Accessed online: http://www.alltheorynopractice.com.12 March 2012.
[283]ibid.,

Although these white men are suffering in the video, there destabilisation was brought about by their own privileged positions. Their lot cannot be compared to asylum seekers or political refugees, MacGarry expands on this;

> These awkward colonials trapped in a life raft are no more plausible as 'boat people' as are their claims to be economic refugees. Their mortal journey from centre to periphery is directionally opposite to the typical migrations of 'boat people', coupled with the fact that they are going home to family and hot weather to spend saved-up Sterling, aided by a favourable exchange rate. Most South Africans move to London because of familial connections, the language advantage or want of 'a change of scene' but not because they face certain political persecution or poverty in their home country.[284]

The "brain-drain" or loss of a skilled workforce has negative effects on the country which is similar to the exploitation of resources on the African continent. By sapping Africa of its skilled professionals, the rest of the world benefits from and produces the desire to exploit the African continent. This is exacerbated by the desire to be in a First World country which is attractive, since it is less challenging than having to deal with the complexities of a developing democracy. MacGarry's critique of these male survivors doomed to drown repeatedly, heightens the absurdity of the situation.

MacGarry's commentary extends to the absurdity of suffering, when the narrator of *LHR-JNB* asks: "Do you imagine your sufferings to be less? Do you imagine they are important? That they will be remembered?"[285] This theme of suffering seems to be a direct reference to Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* the title of which MacGarry borrows for his own exhibition where, in one scene the character Hamm asks: "My father? My mother? My dog? Oh I am willing to believe they suffer as much as creatures can suffer. But does that mean their sufferings equal mine? No doubt. No. All is Absolute. The bigger a man is the fuller he is. And the emptier".[286]

Beckett's plays often contain the theme of absurd meaninglessness which is invested in the mundane lives of their characters. This purposelessness is often shown through the banal habits of people who are trying to convince themselves through habitual actions that their lives have some significance: "To think perhaps it won't all have been for nothing",[287]as Hamm puts it. The two characters in Beckett's *Endgame*, Clov and Hamm, are habitually

[284] ibid.,
[285]ibid.,
[286] Beckett, S. 2009. *Endgame and Act Without Words.* (New York: Grove Press). p. 9
[287] ibid., p. 41.

stuck in an existence from which they cannot seem to escape. Their routines are merely a "farce" so that they have something to do as they await death or some life-changing event that never materialises. Clov has a desire to leave Hamm but never does. The play is a typical example of Beckettian absurdity and alienation, and like most of his plays has a cyclical style and a lack of linear structure. This cyclical structure can be observed in *LHR-JNB* with the looping of the video. *Endgame is* itself is a reference to the last phase of a game of chess. This reference is symbolic of the inevitability of death regardless of one's life choices and actions. In *LHR-JNB* the four survivors are doomed to repeat their crash into the sea, to survive on a life raft, to die and to repeat the process all over again. MacGarry reveals a critical view of these privileged but fated survivors whom he submits to an endless drowning.

MacGarry emphasises the meaninglessness of their suffering which is related to the formation of identity, "where the absence of material time becomes a metaphor for an absence of meaning, with meaning in this instance closely linked to the formation of identity".[288] The characters are lost in a no man's land from which they cannot escape. Eugene Ionesco, an Absurdist playwright, argues that the "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose...Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless."[289] In *LHR-JNB*, this sense of being lost is tied to the perception of the white South African man as someone caught between the shame of the past and the "loss" of privilege in the present.

Nomusa Makhubu in a review of the *Endgame* exhibition makes the claim that, "in these narratives the outsider is simultaneously a hero and an antagonist who seeks to create an ideal world but gradually, through human flaw, contributes to its destruction".[290] This is an interesting comment if read in relation to the theme of the absurd which surfaces in this work. MacGarry creates a kind of limbo or purgatory for these characters whose tragic accident is endlessly looped and repeated. Alongside their tragedy is the very real tragedy of colonialism and neo-colonialism which although senseless is also repeated and cyclical. The colonialists through their enlightenment philosophies and paternalistic attitudes towards the indigenous peoples of the countries they colonised also thought that their actions were creating an "ideal world". The cycle of colonial violence persists with new forms of exploitation and violence.

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[288]MacGarry cited on his official website. Accessed online: http://www.alltheorynopractice.com.12 March 2012.
[289] Ionesco cited in the Esslin, M. 1972. *The Theatre of the Absurd.* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books)
[290] Makhubu, N. 2010.cited on *Artsmart.* Accessed online: http://news.artsmart.co.za/2010/09/end-game.html. last accessed: 16 June 2013.

MacGarry's film occurs in limbo, between two worlds. It expresses the displacement of South African whiteness, but also the complications of living in a globalised world. One's ability to cross borders has increased, but is also heavily controlled by the law. *LHR-JNB* is a commentary on the notion of belonging via characters who belong to neither the destination they were flying to or from. The lines: "From what sea, what course, did this sinew grow? This rope of sentiment. This human chain. Dragging us, willingly, to the bottom",[291] echo the consequences of one's privileged history as a white person in South Africa. They also reveal the often unrecognised ethical dilemmas that arise through one's own personal ambitions and how these ambitions (desires), although seemingly innocent, can contribute to a micropolitics which aids in perpetuating the production of white desire.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

I have engaged in an analysis of *The Cradle of Humankind*, *Exhibit A* and *LHR-JNB* as examples of desires which seek to challenge the status quo through artistic practices. These works reveal a micropolitics of revolt (through questioning) because they challenge static notions of white identity. This is achieved by accentuating whiteness and acknowledging the symbolic and real violence of imperialism. In *Exhibit A*, this is evident in the subversion of the gaze, while in Cohen's work monolithic ideas attached to whiteness as "civilised" are complicated by Cohen and Dlamini's subjectivities. Both Cohen and Bailey use non-white bodies to emphasize whiteness which unsettles and lends an irony to the work. They are both displaying the body of the "other" and in a way repeating the cycle of colonial violence. This raises important questions concerning the politics of representation, especially regarding the issue of a white male speaking on behalf of the "other". Yet one could argue that this particularity of the works in question emphasize the critical stance of the artists. This is specifically notable in Cohen's work as he inserts himself into the work and becomes vulnerable with Dlamini. Bailey's exhibit of "othered" bodies is more problematic as he is physically absent from the work and in terms of a hierarchal relationship with his cast, he re-performs the role of the coloniser. MacGarry's film does not use any black bodies to emphasise its whiteness, but instead focuses on the destabilised identity of white South Africans whose ties to European centres disturbs their sense of identity. All three these works acknowledge the past in a critical way and this de-reifies the past by recognising its effects on

[291]MacGarry cited on his official website. Accessed online: http://www.alltheorynopractice.com.12 March 2012.

the present. MacGarry illustrates the legacy of imperialism embodied by whiteness which continues to have an influence on the African continent. These artists effect a disturbance of white desire by evoking a questioning through performance as a challenge to their audiences.

Part Three

Die Antwoord: Challenging Authenticity

3.1 Introduction

> Popular culture, commodified and stereotyped as it often is, is not all, as we sometimes think of it, the arena where we find who we really are, the truth of our experience. It is an experience that is *profoundly* mythic. It is a theater of popular desires, a theater of popular fantasies. It is where we discover and play with the identifications of ourselves, where we are imagined, where we are represented, not only to the audiences out there who do not get the message, but to ourselves for the first time. – Stuart Hall

This section explores how the performance practices of Die Antwoord[292]call into question desires for an essentialist idea of authenticity. This is specifically in relation to cultural constructions of white identity and "realness" in hip-hop music. My analysis on Die Antwoord focuses on the rejection of essentialist notions of identity through their performance of Zef characters namely; Ninja and Yo-landi Visser. Die Antwoord are a Zef rap-rave musical outfit who perform their music both nationally and internationally. The Zef movement started in 2009 with the popularity of Die Antwoord's "Enter the Ninja" and Jack Parow's "Cooler as Ekke". Die Antwoord have been criticised for a lack of authenticity (and their appropriation of cultural signs) in their performance of Zef which they created alongside Jack Parow in 2009. I argue that these responses to Zef reveal a problematic expectation of authenticity which rest on static concepts of identity. Furthermore, I would like to elucidate through examples from their music videos and interviews, how Die Antwoord engage with the notion of simulation via Baudrillard as a strategy of resistance to clear meaning which aids in the disturbance of desire.

Die Antwoord are not limited to a conventional performance context as theirs is a performance of persona. This section will also consider the implication of the act's popularity and fame outside of South Africa where the receptivity to their play on desires for the "exotic" African or "other" is an integral part of their appeal. This phenomenon also was evidenced in the colonial era via the dehistoricized and decontextualized appropriation of non-Western or so-called Primitive art. This is an interesting paradox to analyse as band members Ninja and Yo-landi Visser are white people whose "normative" subject position

[292] The Answer

problematizes and challenges this desire for the "other" and simultaneously subverts the totalising ideas of Africa and the African subject.

It might seem that the entertainment value of this act cancels their artistic value, but as Richard Dyer observes, "Any entertainment carries assumptions about and attitudes towards the world, even if these are not the point of the thing".[293] The performative element of music must also be taken into consideration, given the multiple components of the medium. John Walker proposes that rock (one could include Rap) music is multi-media; that it is "not only about music, singing and records", but also about "stage acts, light effects, clothes, make-up, body language, graphic design, photography, film and video".[294] The performative element of Die Antwoord will be analysed here so as to account for how music (and other artistic) practices reveal an immersion in, rather than a reflection of, life. This analysis is drawn from various documentations of live events, music videos, lyrical content but also the design or "look" of the band in question. I would first like to discuss the notion of authenticity as an active becoming rather than an essential aspect of being. To consider authenticity as a possibility through becoming is a departure from the idealistic expectations that surround this notion.

3.2 Ambiguities of Authenticity

According to Mark Willhardt, "the criteria by which we judge authenticity is always multiple and most often not transparent."[295] Willhardt's discussion pertains to a particular discussion of folk music, but his observation quoted here may also be used to describe authenticity in relation to identity and popular music. Notions of authenticity are contentious and complex. Dennis Dutton for instance, argues that authenticity is "a term whose meaning remains uncertain until we know what dimension of its referent is being talked about".[296] He distinguishes between "nominal" and "expressive" authenticity, the "nominal" relates to the identification of an object or artwork's genuine origins (an empirical authenticity).[297] While "expressive" authenticity is related to existential philosophy and refers to the truth or

[293] Dyer, R. 1992. *Only Entertainment.*(London: Routledge) p. 2.
[294] Walker, J. 1987.*Cross-overs: Art into Pop. Pop into Art.* (New York: Methuen), p. 10.
[295] Willhardt, M. 'Available Rebels and folk authenticities: Michelle Shocked and Billy Bragg.' In Peddie, I. 2006. *The Resisting Muse*: *Popular Music and Social Protest*. (Aldershot, England: Burlington VT, Ashgate.) p. 45.
[296] Dutton, D. 2003. 'Authenticity in Art'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*), p.258.
[297]ibid., p. 259.

sincerity of the artist's or subject's intention.[298] Both these ideas of the nominal and the expressive may be used to determine the value and truth of the object, person or performance to which the term "authenticity" is applied.

Charles Lindholm holds that, the notion of authenticity is reified as, "authenticity in its multiple variations, exalted and ordinary, is taken for granted as an absolute value in contemporary life".[299] This reification of the notion of authenticity is also observed by Phillip Vannini and J. Patrick Williams who argue that authenticity is a socially constructed phenomenon that changes with time.[300] With the foreclosure of the unitary subject in post structuralist thought, the notion of authenticity becomes a more difficult and contentious topic.

Jean-Paul Sartre's writing on "bad faith" destabilises the notion of sincerity via the existence of consciousness – the knowledge of having knowledge: "all knowing is consciousness of knowing".[301] To live in bad faith is to live in denial of one's own part in shaping one's experience of the world. Authenticity is made impossible by the attempt at being sincere, "the essential structure of sincerity does not differ from that of bad faith".[302] Bad faith is the ability to live with the knowledge that one has fled one's freedom. Consciousness (and the knowledge of consciousness) makes it possible to live in "bad faith" – by which one can avoid the responsibility of choices and accept a reified form of consciousness (a project undertaken at the level of the individual and the social).

An authentic life, in Sartre's formulation, is based on the ability to insert one's "nothingness" (potential) into the external factors (facticity) which may define or determine one's existence: one's birth, gender, race.[303] These molarized aspects are often imbued with essentialist claims regarding a fixed sense of identity. Sartre's discussion of bad faith seems to suggest that it is an inescapable aspect of existence, but he later makes it clear that authenticity is possible: "Authenticity reveals that the only meaningful project is that of doing (not that of being)...The one meaningful project is that of acting on a concrete situation and modifying it

[298]ibid., p. 267.
[299] Lindholm, C. 2008. *Culture and Authenticity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers). p. 1.
[300] Vannini, P and Williams, J.P. 2009. *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society*. (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishers). p. 2-3.
[301] Sartre, JP. 1978. *Being and Nothingness.* p. 53.
[302]ibid., p. 65.
[303] Detmer, D. 2008.*Sartre Explained: From Bad to Authenticity.* (Chicago: Open Court). p.78

in some way [...] So, originally, authenticity consists in refusing any quest for being".[304] By rejecting the quest for "being" authenticity is the activity of engaging and recognising one's freedom and it comes with anxieties that result from the knowledge of freedom. Due to the reflective ability of consciousness and the ability to choose, an authentic life does not rest on the foundation of an essential identity. Authenticity can thus be argued as in process, a form of becoming. Expectations for authenticity can become problematic as signs of authenticity are culturally mediated and created. Challenging these fixed notions of whiteness are particularly relevant for critiquing whiteness as a mode of being which organises identities and cultures into stagnant edifices of being.

3.3 The Desire for the In-Authentic

Trinh Minh-ha discusses authenticity in relation to identity politics, particularly the manner in which notions of authenticity circulate around non-western subjectivity. She illustrates the problematical idea of authenticity in relation to self-hood vis-a-vis the Occident, that is, the Western desire for authentic representations of African, Asian or Native American subjectivities and how this plays itself out within academic discourses. Using the example of speaking publicly to a Western audience, Minh-Ha notes this problem succinctly:

> Now I am not only given the permission to talk, i (sic) am also encouraged to express my difference. My audience expects and demands it; otherwise people will feel as if they have been cheated: We did not come to hear a Third World member speak about the First (?) World, We came to listen to the voice of difference likely to bring us *what we can't have* and to divert us from the monotony of sameness.[305]

Here Minh-ha observes the way in which she is expected to behave/perform in a manner which resembles her cultural heritage "authentically" to an audience who desire to see it represented through her because they themselves lack it. Minh-ha argues that "notions of *pure origin* and *true self* are the outgrowth of a dualistic system peculiar to the Occident".[306] Such desires for authenticity creates a reductive binary between someone/something that is either "real" and "true" or "fake" and "insincere". To remain true to these essentialist ideas of authenticity, the object, person, band or piece of music must embody traits which attest to whatever authenticity it is expected of them to possess.

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[304] Sartre, JP. 1992. *Notebooks for an Ethics.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press). p. 475.
[305] Minh-Ha. 1989. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press) p. 88.
[306] ibid., p. 90.

According to David Pattie the "live" performance is thought to capture something more authentic through the lived interaction between audience member and performer. It is also expected that the performers live up to the documented and recorded materials in which they are presented. The anxiety of the *liveliness* of live performance is conceivably related to the marketability and success of mediatised performance.[307] The success of mediatised forms of performance specifically relates to their accessibility and availability, which is often cited as a loss for live performance.[308] Live and mediatised forms of performance are then cast in opposition to each other. However, Phillip Auslander argues that our notion of "liveness" would not be possible without mediatised forms:

> Whereas mediatised performance derives its authority from its reference to the live or the real, the live now derives its authority from its reference to the mediatised, which derives its authority from its reference to the live, etc.[309]

The feedback loop established between the live and the mediatised is more ambiguous than at first glance. While the direct encounter between spectator and performer cannot be overlooked, the relationship between the recorded musician and listener is more complex than it is when performed live. Listeners *live* to the music of their favourite bands. The music becomes a part of their lived experience which may be tangible, but is nonetheless an experience that is mediatised for their listening. According to Pattie, "it makes more sense to see these terms not as opposed, but as engaged in a multi-stranded dialogue".[310] Live music, then, is never entirely live; rather, *liveness* and replication are in conversation.[311] The authenticity of the live act is thus constructed and created through the mediation of that event. Liveness escapes commodification, but it does not escape representation which is the inevitable effect of performance.

Andrew Quick notes that some descriptions of performance indicate the possibility of being real, "of a real that might evade the operation of the frame".[312] Although Quick is specifically addressing theatre performance, this applies very well to popular music in which a desire for spontaneity exists alongside an expectation to live up to a specific role. He observes that since there is always a frame (context) within which performance takes place, performance

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[307] Auslander, P. 2008. (2nd ed). *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatised Culture.* (London, New York: Routledge) p. 13.
[308] ibid., p. 48.
[309] ibid., p. 43.
[310] Pattie, D. 2007.*Rock Music in Performance.* (Hampshire:Palgrave Macmillan). p. 23.
[311] ibid., p. 22.
[312] Quick, A. 1996.'Approaching the Real: Reality Effects and the Play of Fiction'. *Performance Research.* Vol. 1. No. 3, Autumn, p. 14.

can never escape the implication of being a work of art, a representation which takes place in a situation between spectator and performer.[313] In considering the "material context" of the spectator's participation,[314]one could say that performance is always part of a process of representing and never quite the "real" thing. Yet this is not the experience of those who watch live music performances, since the idea of authenticity is shaped through the audience as much as the performer. The performance of authenticity seduces the audience:

> [A]n audience accepts reality, or authenticity, as a performance, without necessarily accepting that its status as a performance invalidates it as a true expression of the star's authentic self. The audience, it could be said, believes in the star's performed self, while being aware that that self is itself a performance, and must be judged as a performance.[315]

The desire for realness is located in the inauthentic: performed, imagined and created authenticity of the band or artist. This is significant in relation to Die Antwoord who create their own form of authenticity which is ironically based on appropriation and in-authenticity.

3.4 Substituting the Real

In *Mythologies* Ronald Barthes discusses the manner in which signs become naturalised to represent popular myths: "things lose the memory that they once were made".[316] This naturalisation that arises from myth making can also be described as a process of reification in which society forgets the part played in the construction of myth.[317] Signs and codes are created through myths which in turn serve to sustain those myths. Hal Foster, interpreting Barthes, identifies a historical transformation of the sign in relation to the conversion from feudal society to bourgeois society, associating the latter with the sign and the former with the index.[318] Whereas the index has a reference and origin, the sign does not; the sign is unlimited in its references, and can be bought and sold.[319] The sign, penetrated by capital no longer represents its reference in reality, but rather refers to other signs. Much of the experience of contemporary Western societies is to some extent characterised by this saturation of the sign.

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[313]ibid., p. 14.
[314]ibid., p. 17.
[315]Pattie, 2007.p. 11.
[316] Barthes, R. 1972. *Mythologies*. (New York: The Noonday Press). p. 142.
[317]ibid., p. 142.
[318]Foster, H.1996. *The Return of the Real*. (Cambridge Massachusetts & London England: Rebel Press.). p. 74.
[319]ibid., p. 74.

A sign, can for instance, signify the attainment of happiness through the advertising of a pair of shoes. Not only should one desire the shoes but one should also desire to attain the signifiers of happiness and fulfilment that are attached to possessing these shoes. The recent global advertising campaign for Converse sneakers "Shoes are Boring. Wear Sneakers" is a good example of capitalising on the desire for "coolness". In the case of Converse sneakers, one is not only sold a simple pair of shoes, but also "creativity, mischief and rebellion" which the advertisers have attached to the image of these shoes.[320] Converse got its "street credibility" when it switched its target market from the sports scene (most notably basketball) to subculture phenomena, such as The Ramones, an American punk-rock band, who re-popularised the shoes during their public appearances. Due to their long history on the market (since 1917) Converse shoes are imbued with a multiplicity of signifiers from basketball to counterculture music. So, these sneakers which are much "cooler" than shoes contribute to and sell the various myths that enable the sneaker's "cool" factor.

Jean Baudrillard elaborates on this saturation of the sign in contemporary culture and describes his theory of "simulation" as the "liquidation of all referentials".[321] This indicates an absence of reality external to representation which is replaced by the "hyperreal", described by Baudrillard as a strategy of simulation, by "substituting the signs of the real for the real".[322] As audiences of a Disney movie, for example, one (most likely) knows or can at least guess as to what the conclusion will be; an endorsement of the ideal as reality, if not, compensation for the lack of the ideal in reality. Baudrillard argues that hyperreal spaces, like Disney World and Monte Casino, compensate for a lack of reality.[323] These signs become substitutes for a reality that has become "hyperreal":

> When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality - a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity. Escalation of the true, of lived experience, resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. Panic-stricken production of the real and of the referential, parallel to and greater than the panic of material production: this is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us – a strategy of the real, of the neoreal and the hyperreal that everywhere is the double of a strategy of deterrence.[324]

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[320] Radovanovic, J. 2013. 'Converse Proudly States: Shoes Are Boring wear Sneakers'. Accessed online. www.brandingmagazine.com/2013/03/19/converse-shoes-are-boring-wear-sneakers 22 December 2013.
[321] Baudrillard, J. 1983. *Simulations.* (United States of America: Semiotext(e). p. 4.
[322] ibid., p. 4.
[323] ibid., p. 25.
[324] ibid., p. 12.

As Baudrillard observes above, the perceived loss of reality is met with desperate attempts to cling to an "authentic" world which can be meaningfully and objectively determined. Signs act to compensate, (in fact to over-compensate) for this perceived lack of the "real thing". Simulation as a strategy is "not only the loss of reality, but also its very possibility. The aim of simulation is not to do away with reality, but on the contrary to realize it, to make it real".[325] The result of this hyperreality is "totally oppressive" and prescriptive, leaving little space for the enigmatic, as Baudrillard puts it: "the inaccessible secret".[326] In *The Vital Illusion* he suggests that: "for, facing a world that is unintelligible and problematic, our task is clear: we must make that world even more unintelligible, even more enigmatic."[327] I would like to suggest that this is exactly the strategy of Die Antwoord who manipulate the desire for the real through the creation of Zef.

Die Antwoord appropriate from multiple reference points, treating culture as a found object with which to create their particular brand of Zef. Liese van Der Watt points out, "Die Antwoord's illegibility and ambivalence is achieved by their obsession with surface and their consistent erosion of depth, continually frustrating our desire to find deep meaning or consistency in their act".[328] Borrowing from the "subcultural signifiers available to them"[329] in South Africa as well as from popular culture, their act heightens the non-reality of the signs they borrow. One of the ways Die Antwoord do this is through a comic exaggeration and celebration of what many may deem as vulgar taste. The band manipulates the desire for authenticity to reveal the deep inconsistency of this expectation, and thereby they de-naturalise the signs they employ. Neil Pendock humorously asserts that:

> Afrikaans zef-rappers Die Antwoord are neo-Baudrillardians in the Boland. Zef Baudrillard, if you like. With a philosophy based on "PC computer" games on the interweb with the aim to get to "the next level", these Belville Baudrillards embrace simulation as the new reality.[330]

Both Ninja and Yo-landi are creations by Watkin Tudor Jones and Anri du Toit, and as constructed characters they do not qualify for an authenticity that is based on essence. Their

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[325] Butler, R. 1999. *Jean Baudrillard:The Defence of the Real.* (London, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage). p. 23.
[326]Baudrillard, J. 1990. *Revenge of the Crystal: Selected writings on the modern object and its destiny, 1968-1983.*(London: Pluto Press.) p.147.
[327] Baudrillard, J. 2000. *The Vital Illusion.* (Columbia University Press). p. 83.
[328] Van der Watt, L. 2012.'Ask No Questions, Hear No Lies: Staying On Die Antwoord's Surface. '*Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies.* Vol. 13. No. 3-4. p. 401.
[329] Woodward, S. 2011. 'Ownership and Power: Debate and Discourse around the subcultural phenomenon of Die Antwoord'. In Kerr, D. *African Theatre, Media and Performance.* p. 18.
[330] Pendock, N. 2012. 'Baudrillard in Belville'. Accessed online http://neilpendock.com/baudrillard-in-bellville/comment-page-1/ 11 December 2012.

use of alter-egos and multiple personalities is not unusual in hip-hop performance practices. For instance, Nicki Minaj, a popular American hip-hop artist has multiple personalities, such as Roman Zolanski, Roman's Mother and Barbie (among others). Die Antwoord rarely, if ever, drop their performance of Ninja and Yo-landi. Ninja had previously been active in the South African music industry as the front man for MaxNormal.TV (1995-2002) and the Constructus Corporation (2003). He was known for creating onstage characters and for his satirical performance style in these two musical products. Yo-landi Visser, a former Fine Art student from Pretoria, was also involved in these projects. Die Antwoord have produced two albums 0 (2009) and Ten$ion (2011).

3.5 The Relationship between Rap Music and Authenticity

Die Antwoord engage with a dense "tapestry of references" in their performance of Zef rap-rave. I will focus first on their appropriation of rap or hip-hop music which is imbued with a desire for authenticity. In a similar way to rock music, hip hop's authenticity or realness is related to its development outside the mainstream and "dominant" culture as represented by commercial music. Claims to authenticity are constructed through an MC's resistance towards the mainstream and the refusal to "sell out" or succumb to commercial pressures. The commercialisation and popularity of hip-hop, however, reveals how it too has been subsumed into mainstream popular culture in the same way that punk and grunge were. Thus, hip-hop's authenticity is threatened by its assimilation into the music industry.[331] Yet, this has not deterred artists from identifying hip-hop as something outside the "dominant" culture. Die Antwoord's identification with Zef is related to the "rags to riches" trope which is presented in hip-hop narratives of authenticity: "fokkel kos, skraal/till I hit triple 7 at the ATM".[332] This preoccupation with authenticity is played out and performed in the production of Zef music in South Africa and abroad.

Rap is an intentionally subversive form of music which emerged in the 1970s as an expression of marginalised black youth in urban America. Rap often celebrates blackness and intercity culture with its roots in the South Bronx in the 1970's and 80's. Die Antwoord are influenced by Gangsta Rap, which emerged in the 1980s in Los Angeles as a subgenre of hip

[331] McLeod, K. 1999. 'Authenticity Within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation'. *Journal of Communication.* Vol. 49. Iss. 4. p. 134
[332] Lyrics from "Enter the Ninja"(2009). Fuck all food, skinny.

hop[333] with groups such as N.W.A (Niggaz Wit Attitudes).[334] Gangsta rap lyrics often deal with violence and the experiences of marginalized black youth in urban settings. Rap narratives are said to bear witness and testify to the oppression and poverty of ghetto life. This style of music has been strongly criticised for its negative value system with songs referencing pimping, dealing drugs and murder.[335] bell hooks, amongst others, has been highly critical of the materialism and misogynist values espoused by gangsta rap and hip-hop generally. hooks argues however, that these are not specifically black issues, but rather a reflection of the values endorsed by white patriarchal culture: "It is much easier to attack gangsta rap than to confront the culture that produces that need".[336]

Since blackness plays a major part in the construction of authenticity in rap music, an initial glimpse at Die Antwoord instantly reveals their in-authenticity in relation to this trope of hip-hop authenticity. R.A.T Judy relates rap's authenticity to blackness, but states that rap is about "nigga-authenticity".[337] In this view, rap/hip-hop is the "utterance" of black people, as Judy puts it, "rap is for African American society".[338] This argument suggests that black rappers share the sole domain of real hip-hop. Yet, as Williams notes, hip-hop authenticity is not bound to blackness but crosses cultural and racial boundaries.[339] Hip-hop's closeness to blackness as a trope of authenticity is complex. Since hip-hop originated as a resistance to a predominantly white American culture, Hess argues that "whiteness stands outside hip-hop culture as a force that threatens to appropriate its culture".[340] This would appear to indict Die Antwoord as they are privileged white South Africans who have little claim to the racial and class-based issues of African American life:

> Hip-hop's representations of whites' privilege leads to mistrust of any white artist who performs within a music culture created in underprivileged minority communities, a culture where authenticity remains tied to the performer's biography of social disadvantage.[341]

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[333] Rap is a form and style of music making which fits under the larger commercial cultural style of hip hop.
[334] Martinez, T. 1997. 'Popular Culture as Oppositional Culture: Rap as Resistance'. *Sociological Perspectives*.Vol. 40. No.2. p. 266.
[335] Adam, T and Fuller, D. 2006. 'The Words have changed but the Ideology remains the same: Misogynist lyrics in Rap Music'. *Journal of Black Studies.* Vol. 36. No.6.p. 940; and Haupt, A. 2003. 'Hip-Hop, Gender and Agency in the Age of Empire.' *Agenda*. No. 57. pp. 21-29.
[336]hooks,b. 1994. *Resisting Representations.* p. 122 .
[337] Judy, R. 1994. 'On the Question of Nigga Authenticity'. *Boundary 2*.Duke University Press. Vol. 21.No.3. p. 213.
[338]ibid., p. 216.
[339] Williams, D. 2007. Tha' Realness: In Search of Hip-Hop Authenticity.' College Undergraduate. p. 6-7.
[340] Hess, M. 2005.'Hip-Hop Realness and the White Performer.' *Critical Studies in Media Communication* Vol. 22. No.5. p. 375.
[341]ibid., p. 281.

Kembrew McLeod observes that one of the most emphasised aspects of hip-hop realness is related to street credibility (thug for life status) and being true to oneself.[342] A white rapper can be authentic by proving him/herself through a sincere and honest presentation of self through hip-hop. Hess argues that white rappers accentuate their whiteness thereby challenging the invisibility and privilege of whiteness.[343] He regards Eminem as a white hip-hop artist who manages to represent his low-income background while at the same time highlighting his privilege as a white male working within an industry dominated by African Americans. Although Eminem is white he manages to represent hip-hop authenticity by responding to his own whiteness within the context of hip-hop.

Other white hip-hop artists have not enjoyed the success and acceptance from the hip-hop community that Eminem has. For example, in the 1980s white rapper Robert Van Winkle (known as Vanilla Ice) pushed hip-hop into the mainstream. *Ice Ice baby* was the first hip-hop song to top the Billboard charts. Working under the SBK imprint of the EMI label, Van Winkle was encouraged to adopt a more commercial appearance in order to gain a wider fan base. The label also published false information regarding Van Winkle's background claiming that he had lived a violent and low-class life in Miami which was later found to be a fabrication. After this news was made known to the public, Van Winkle's rap performances were seen as inauthentic and he was labeled a "sell out". His rapping was perceived as a mere imitation of black hip-hop artists to make himself rich.[344] From this narrative one can see that a disadvantaged background is a defining trope of realness in hip-hop performance and that faking this is considered a serious offence. Van Winkle failed to live up to the "authenticity" because his class roots were exposed as false, whereas Eminem succeeds by remaining "true" to hip-hop tropes of authenticity through his . Despite being a white artist, Eminem can get away with a song like *Nigga* and have support from black rap artists like 50 Cent for doing it. Snoop Dog, for instance, refers to Eminem as, "the great white American hope" in the *Bitch Please part* 2 feat.[345]

[342]McLeod, K. 1999. 'Authenticity Within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation'. *Journal of Communication.* Vol. 49. Iss. 4. p. 140-142.
[343]Hess, 2005, p. 382.
[344] Hess. 2005. p. 374.
[345] A feat refers to a song that features one or multiple artists on the same track.

Although there are exceptions to the "rules" of hip-hop sincerity and a claim to disadvantage is more important than one's race, David Pattie argues that the figure of the *nigga* represented in hip-hop, fed the popularity of rap music. He states;

> Somewhere in the reception of the music, a complex dialectic was playing itself out around the figure of the nigga – a figure imagined as enshrining a localised resistance to the powers of an oppressive society.[346]

Pattie Smith, sums it up well in the song *Rock n' Roll Nigga*, that the cost of being a *nigga* is to be, as the lyrics assert, "outside of society". Part of the authenticity of being a hip-hop artist is to represent this *nigga* who resists authority through an uncensored performance style. Although using the word *nigga* is still very controversial among African Americans and there is no consensus as to its usage, it is commonly used by hip-hop performers. The late gangsta rapper, Tupac Shakur, distinguished between the terms *nigger* and *nigga*; "Niggers was the ones on the rope, hanging off the thing. Niggas is the ones with gold ropes, hanging out at clubs."[347] Shakur also coined the acronym Never Ignorant Getting Goals Accomplished.[348] While the "nigger" is the servant and victim of white domination and oppression, the "*nigga*" is someone who has power and is at leisure "hanging out at clubs". The word *nigga* has been used by African American gangsta-rappers to reclaim the word from its historically negative and oppressive context. In a similar way that queer has been reclaimed as a positive word by homosexual communities.

Die Antwoord use this idea, this myth built around the *gangsta-nigga*, but place it within a South African context and call their style Zef. It is important to note that hip-hop in South Africa is not new, but it has mostly been produced by Cape Coloured crews on the Cape Flats, such as Brasse Vannie Kaap, Black Noise, Prophets of Da City and Godessa, amongst others. In the 1950s the Cape Flats became a dumping site for the Coloured victims of the apartheid government's policy of forced removals. The area is known for its high crime rate related to gangsterism, but it also has an incredibly rich cultural industry. The hip-hop emerging from within the Cape Flats definitely has a strong influence on exponents of the Zef style. Before he became a well-known name in the South African music industry in 2009, Zander Tyler (now known as Jack Parow another exponent of Zef) rapped with different

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[346] Pattie, 2007. p. 147

[347] 2Pac Interview with Tabitha Soren. Accessed online http://m.youtube.come/watch?v=NfHJGj4-oJs on 5 February 2012.

[348] Hunter, D. 2007. Racial Slur takes Center stage at Stillman. *The Tuscaloosa News.* Accessed online http://www.tuscaloosanews.com/article/20070224/NEWS/702240362?p=3&tc=pg on 15 May 2013.

crews including black and coloured rappers from the Cape Flats.[349] Having an affiliation with the Cape Coloured community adds street credibility and helps construct a sense of his "realness" as a hip-hop artist.

Die Antwoord piece together their Zef-rap-rave outfit by referencing the particular form of rap emanating from the Cape Coloured community, yet this is done in an obviously surface manner.[350] Ninja's tattoos are similar to the tattoos of the Numbers Gangs[351], but they do not actually come from this context. Die Antwoord use their particular style of rap in combination with rave (electronic dance music) party music bringing together two styles of music which spawned their Zef style. The rave scene from the 1990's was known for drug-induced all night dance parties, referred to by Simon Reynolds as the space for a modern "Dionysian paroxysm".[352]

3.6 Becoming Zef

When one considers the importance of a disadvantaged background in hip-hop it becomes more evident why the idea of Zef is able to accommodate and embody tropes of hip-hop authenticity, since Zefness is defined by a lack of wealth. Parow states that Zef "is like, well, like the opposite of posh, like plastic…fur on the dashboard".[353] Zef is described by Die Antwoord's Ninja and Yo-landi Visseras an appropriation of aspects of American popular culture. Ninja explains: "Zef is, like, American style, it's like the debris of American culture that we get in dribbles. We tape it together and try to be American… The Zef style is a coarse style".[354] Visser: "Zef is, you're poor but you're fancy. You're poor but you're sexy, you've got style".[355] Clearly Zef is not an unambiguous term, butit is a very specific way of incorporating the mainstream and commercial "debris" into a South African idiom. While

[349] Cooper, R. 2009. 'Jack Parow Pirate of the Caravan Park'.Accessed online http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/432/42102.html 2 April 2011.
[350] Van der Watt, p. 410.
[351]The Numbers Gangs refer to prison gangs that operate in and outside South African jails. Members of these gangs are divided into numbers; 26's, 27's and the 28's. The history of the Numbers Gang goes as far back as 1830's. Aboobaker, S. 2013. 'A Numbers Game for the Forgotten Folk.' Accessed onine: www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/a-numbers-game-for-the-forgotten-folk 15 April 2012.
[352] Reynolds, S. 1999. *Generation Ecstasy:Into the World of Techno and rave Culture.* (New York:Routledge). p. 5.
[353] Samson, L 2011.'Straight Outta Parow'.*Sunday Times Newspaper*. p. 20.
[354]Ninja cited in Chris Lee, 'Die Antwoord Interviewed: On "Zef Style," Harmony Korine and a Movie Featuring a Drug Dealer Named "The Elf"', *Los Angeles Times*, 25 October 2010.http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/music_blog/2010/10/die-antwoord.html.
[355]Visser cited in Hoby, H. 2012. 'Die Antwoord: Are we awful or the best thing in the universe'. *The Guardian:The Observer* (Online). http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2010/sep/12/die-antwoord-music-feature.

Parow argues that Zef is the antithesis of posh, Yo-landi interprets Zef as stylish. It will become more apparent throughout this chapter that Zef cannot really be defined in any simple or definite way and that Zef constitutes a multiplicity of references. These different semiotic codes operating within the cultural construction of Zef offer ways to analyse Die Antwoord.

The word Zef derives from the Ford Zephyr car of the 1950s and 1970s, and was used as a derogatory term to identify poor whites who lived in caravan parks.[356]Although the Ford Zephyr was not necessarily representative of poverty it was associated with a less educated and working-class background of those, for instance, who worked on the mines in Johannesburg. Die Antwoord's *Enter the Ninja* and the accompanying release of the *Zef Side* video, introduced the world to Zef subculture. The *Zef Side* video reveals the three members of the rave-rap trio in their urban environment as Ninja, Yo-landi and DJ Hitek. They explain their relationship to one another in front of a picket fence. Ninja describes how all three still live with their families; DJ Hitek with his "granny", and Ninja with his parents. Visser lives nextdoor to Ninja and tells the interviewer that her mom cuts her hair which serves to explain her odd hairstyle which has become fashionable among their young fans. Ninja performs an odd sequence of movements with his semi-erect penis swinging freely inside a pair of shorts emblazoned with the band name Pink Floyd (also referenced in the title of the video is Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* album), while Visser looks on longingly. Visser is then shown dancing in front of her banal-looking house to a sample of Bronski Beat's *The Perfect Beat*.[357]

Zef Side illustrates the context of the characters in a humorous and playful manner, giving viewers a sense of what Zef means in relation to this band. Other images in the short video show an elderly man with missing teeth drinking a Black Label beer. Someone drives past on a motorcycle and neighbours of the Zef rappers engage in conversation over the walls of their suburban houses. All these are visual clues that expand the concept of Zef as a poor or working-class phenomenon. The signifiers used in this video also give the viewer a sense of the inter-relational "debris" that constitutes Zef culture. The video demonstrates a pastiche of popular culture, albeit through outmoded fashion accessories, such as, for example, Ninja's Pink Floyd shorts and his yin-yang shirt. Visser's hairstyle and the use of a Bronski Beat

[356] Krueger, A. "Zef/Poor White Kitsch Chique: Die Antwoord's Comedy of Degradation". *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies.* Vol. 13. No. 3-4. p. 401. Brock, M and Truscott, R. 2012. 'What's the Difference Between a Melancholic Apartheid Moustache and a Nostalgic GDR Telephone?' *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*. Vol. 18, No. 3. p. 320.
[357]British synth-pop trio of the 1980s.

track further exemplify the anachronous elements that comprise the Zef style. The debris of popular culture is seen in the countless reproductions of the *Dark Side of the Moon* emblem and the symbol of the yin-yan which become disassociated from their original context:"You see a kid in Liberia wearing a Tupac T-shirt. That's so Zef".[358] Die Antwoord have reinterpreted the idea of Zef: "what we see here is not a picture of original Zef, but the re-birth of Zef as a contemporary style, "next level Zef" as they call it".[359] In this way the outmoded and defunct idea of Zef becomes relevant and mainstream through Die Antwoord's re-appropriation of the term.The narrative of Die Antwoord's origin in *Zef Side* is of course completely fictitious as neither Yo-landi nor Ninja have ever lived in this neighbourhood. The new versions of Tudor Jones and du Toit have usurped their former selves.

3.7 Poverty of appearances

The references to poverty and a disadvantaged background operating within the performance of Zef is a simulated one. It is an appearance of poverty pertaining to the idea of "white trash" or the "poor white" as it comes to fore in the imagery of the band. When asked about their "white trash" aesthetic, Die Antwoord were dismissive: "We're not trashy…maybe it's because your country is like much more first world than our country so maybe we look a bit trashy to you".[360] In attempting to defend Zef style, Ninja also points out dominant, but sometimes invisible perceptions about African countries. Ninja's response, although humorous, is politically charged and brings attention to the "tripartite" division between First, Second and Third worlds. Theo Goldberg observes that the term First World is rarely used; these spaces are more often referred to as European, American or Western.[361] Goldberg maintains that the conceptual division serves to racially map the earth and in so doing, "perpetuates, conceptually and actually, racialised relations of domination, subjugation and exclusion".[362] First world countries, according to Goldberg, are capitalist, technologically advanced with greater economic and social status while the Third World is conceptualised as

[358] Lee, C. 2010. 'Die Antwoord Interviewed: On "Zef Style," Harmony Korine and a Movie Featuring a Drug Dealer Named "The Elf"', *Los Angeles Times*, 25 October 201o. http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/music_blog/2010/10/die-antwoord.html on 12 August 2011.
[359] Van der Watt, 2012. p. 411.
[360]Visser cited in Interview Gone Wrong. YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiyzJU4RoSM
[361] Goldberg, T. 2000. 'Racial Knowledge'. In Back, L and Solomos, J (eds.). *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*.(London and New York: Routledge). p. 163.
[362] ibid.,164.

an underdeveloped and therefore less civilised, rational and democratic.[363] Agreeing with Ninja, Yo-landi states: "We don't like to be referred to as trash, we see ourselves as fancy, sophisticated people".[364]

Die Antwoord's Zef style can also be seen as a response to a global interest and fascination in the media with white trash or poor white subject positions. Alongside this local appropriation of subculture is the popularity of white trash and working-class life in the media which has intensified in the 2000s. The Canadian mockumentary (mock documentary) *Trailer Park Boys* (2001-2008), the American series such as *Roseanne*, (1988-1997), *Married with Children*, *My Name is Earl* (2005-2009), *East Bound and Down* (2009), *Its always Sunny in Philadelphia* (2005) and *Shameless* (2004) are a few examples of television shows which present narratives of working-class or white trash as comedy. On the other hand, *Gummo* (1997), an independent film directed by Harmony Korine, reveals a more disturbing and ambiguous side of "white trash" life in Ohio. Besides films like *Gummo*, however, the lives of poor or working-class individuals are often presented as comic failures. In a manner of speaking, these marginalised subjects are portrayed as clowns who fail to achieve middle-class desires because they lack the know-how and willpower. In *Trailer Park Boys*, Julian and Ricky are usually thrown into jail at the end of each season of the series, only to resurface back at the Canadian trailer park in the next season of the series. This narrative device is reminiscent of the myth of Sisyphus, and the fates of these trailer park characters appear equally absurd.[365] Their fates are similar to the doomed air crash survivors in MacGarry's *LHR-JNB*.

It is important to remind oneself that these representations of poverty (as they come across through fashion styles, music and performance), are not necessarily accurate portrayals of the poor. Instead, as Halnon observes, these mediatised images are a manner of consuming the poor.[366] She argues that the impersonation and consumption of the poor through fashion accessories and so on, is exploitative since it makes a profit out of fetishizing poverty. Furthermore, the consumption of poverty reveals a particular image of the poor. The trailer park, for instance, becomes less an image of an underprivileged position than a symbol of

[363]ibid., p. 164.
[364]Visser cited in *Interview Gone Wrong*. YouTube.2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiyzJU4RoSM.
[365]Albert Camus defined the absurd life through the figure of Sisyphus whose punishment for stealing his life back from the Gods was to roll a heavy stone up a steep hill. As soon as he is about to reach the top it rolls back down and the task must begin anew.
[366]Halnon, K. 2002. 'Poor Chic: The Rational Consumption of Poverty'. *Current Sociology*. Vol. 50. No. 4.p. 501.

delinquency and low status. Those who embrace Zef culture or white trash are appropriating a set of stereotypical symbols associated with Zef. Halnon notes that the "Tourist masquerading as vagabond, Poor Chic, controls the possibility of becoming one by dehumanizing it, by reducing it to a commodity. Envelop it, consume it, before it consumes you."[367] Nobody consuming these images necessarily desires the other side of the coin. Many hip-hop artists escape a life of poverty and marginalization by embodying it.

Die Antwoord's interest in marginalised subjects can be seen in their collaborative work with artists who share the same interest, specifically Harmony Korine and Roger Ballen. In their first album 0, Ninja raps, "I am the Roger Ballen of rap".[368] American born Ballen was heavily criticized when he produced images of poor urban and rural South Africans. He received death threats when he published *Dorps* (1986) and *Platteland* (1994) as it offended middle-class notions of white Afrikaners in South Africa. Some believed that he was trying to make a political statement that South African whites are "poor and stupid" and thus did not deserve to govern the country.[369] Ballen's photographs are formally beautiful photographs that in some ways aestheticise his subject matter. When Ninja raps that he is the "Roger Ballen of rap" it becomes more clear that he was never one of these "poor people", rather, Ninja is more interested in the representation and aestheticization of this marginalised position emphasizing the "in-authenticity" of his intentions. This fascination with poverty (evidenced in Ballen, Korine and Die Antwoord) can be read as a gratuitous exploitation of the disadvantaged, but the real significance of these representations is that they signify the failure of the systems that should support the marginal and the poor. Die Antwoord have since their breakthrough collaborated with Ballen on music videos, such as *I Fink You Freeky* (2012) and *Fatty Boom Boom* (2012).

3.8 *Umshini Wam*

In *Umshini Wam*[370](2011) a short film directed by Harmony Korine, Visser and Ninja are wheelchair-bound vagabonds living on the periphery of a banal urban setting. They wheel around in pink and yellow animal suits, smoking enormous cartoon sized marijuana joints

[367]Halnon. 2002. p.508.
[368] Lyrics to "I Don't Need You" from 0.
[369] Lambrecht, B. 2011. Geoloog-Fotograaf wat in donker tonnels grou. http://rogerballen.wordpress.com/2011/03/06/geoloog-fotograaf-wat-in-donker-tonnels-grou-bettie-lambrecht/
[370] Accessed online: http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=eMVNjMF1Suo on 6 May 2013.

and “playing dead”. Homeless and unhappy with their lot in life, they decide to rob a wheelchair salesman and kill him, and do the same thing in an accessory store to “pimp up” their wheelchairs with holographic mags. That the two can in actual fact walk, suggests that perhaps the wheelchairs are used to get disability handouts from the government. The fifteen minute movie ends with Ninja telling Visser about a dream he had in which he was “like, the greatest rapper in the whole world”.

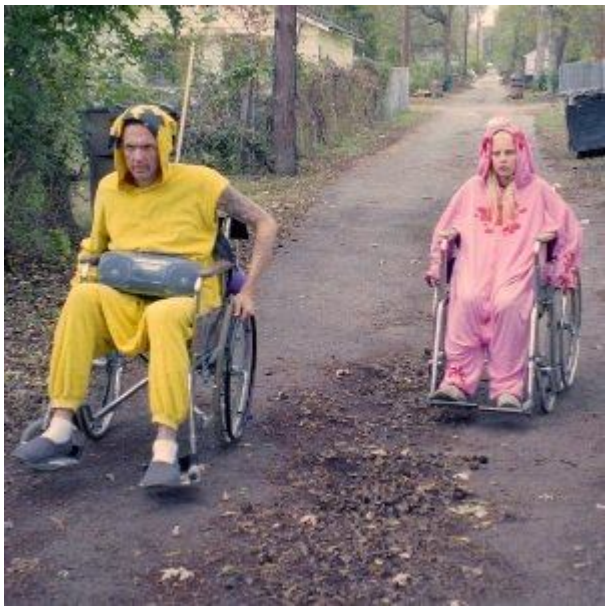
The title is taken from the Zulu struggle song which translates to “Bring me my Machine” (the word machine referring to a machine gun). The song has sparked controversy in recent years due to its popularity with President Jacob Zuma, as an anti-white message, due to its historical origin in the struggle against white power under apartheid. *Umshini Wam* was filmed in Nashville in the United States (home of Korine), but the space is referred to as South Africa, indicated by the GP (Gauteng) number plates on the wheelchairs and Ninja’s “Goeie Môre Suid Afrika” (Good Morning South Africa) which was also the name of a live morning show in South Africa. Ninja shouts this into the open air of Nashville Tennessee which becomes a simulated South African space, a substitute for the “real” South Africa.

The short film seems like another narrative of origins which has clearly been staged for the film in the decontextualized setting of Nashville, which emphasizes the contrivance and lack of “authenticity” in the film. Another world of surfaces is created by this collaboration with Korine, who is known to deal with marginalised characters and unconventional filming techniques. Unlike Korine’s previous movie *Trash Humpers* (2009) which was shot with an old VHS (Video Home System) home camera, *Umshini Wam*, was filmed in high definition. While the VHS is pixelated and grainy lending a grimy and a sinister edge to *Trash Humpers*, the high definition production of *Umshini Wam* lends to the surface aesthetic of Die Antwoord as a performance of the dysfunctional. With the rise of high-definition film and television where clarity is pushed to the extremes, Baudrillard’s comments below, seem prophetic in his discussion of the “true to life” lucidity offered by technological advancements in the media:

> It ‘gives you more’. This is already true of colour in film or television: the colour, the sharp resolution, the sex in high fidelity, with bass and treble (true to life) - it gives you so much that you have nothing more to add, which is to say give in exchange. It is totally oppressive: by giving you *a little too much*, everything is taken away from you.

> Beware of that which is so well 'rendered' to you without you having ever given it!"[371]

It is important to note that Korine rarely uses "stars"[372] in his movies and prefers to cast unknown or non-actors, he also often rejects script-driven narratives in his films. So his use of high-definition in *Umshimi Wam* is not necessarily to keep up with the media's current inclination towards this format, but to comment on its extreme rendering where nothing is suggested or left to the imagination. The extreme clarity rendered on screen furthers the appearance of a reality at the service of the screen. What is masked by the sheer visibility of high-definition film is the lack of such in the "real" world which is not as defined or clear as this filming technique suggests. What Ninja and Visser's presence on screen also confuses distinctions between their "real" and "performed" selves who have become popular oddities on the internet and who play to sold-out shows. The collaboration between Korine and these two *gangstas* who already have a defined status pushes the artifice of the film and its content, as does the high definition quality of the filming.



Ninja and Visser in *Umshini Wam.*[373]

[371] Baudrillard, J. 1990. *Revenge of the Crystal: Selected writings on the modern object and its destiny*, 1968-1983.(London: Pluto Press.) p.147.
[372] It is important to mention that Korine's *Springbreakers* (2012) had a cast of "stars", such as James Franco, Vanessa Hudgens and Selena Gomez, but these casting choices were specific for the form of the movie which comments on the American Spring Break season.
[373] Accessed online: http://www.mio.co.za/article/die-antwoord-in-us-short-film-2011-03-22 on 22 September 2013.

Their costumes (yellow and pink pyjama "onesies" or jumpsuits) are non-realistic which heightens their in-authenticty as gangsta's. The jumpsuit looks like an adult babygrow which gives it a distinctly anti-fashion feel – the jumpsuit hides one's figure, giving little indication of one's position in society and is seen as a fashion *faux pas*. These animal onesies are a mask placed onto an already established mask of Zef-ness, cloaking the two, and giving them the appearance of infantile innocence. Ninja and Visser also adopt the mind frames of idle consumers who desire status: "no one takes us seriously", because they drive around in unfit wheelchairs. Here they invoke the idea of a world in which the appearance of success is perhaps more important than success itself. Ninja and Visser are willing to kill to obtain "signs of success": holographic mags. They make a parody of consumer desire: in the sheer ridiculous desire to obtain "next level" wheelchairs. These wheelchairs also provide the most important clue to the failure of an authentic representation of gangsta status, as they are clear signs of the simulation at work as neither Visser nor Ninja need them, as Van Der Watt points out: "we are invited to believe what we see, and so to accept the incommensurability of what we might know and what we see".[374] The wheelchairs are stand-ins for cars as the defining signs of status and wealth, and which are often seen in hip-hop music videos.

Issues of race and class are evident when the backdoor wheelchair seller tells Visser that she is, "A waste of a white skin. A white *kaffir*". What comes to the surface here is the narrative of white as pure: that some are *more* white than others, and thus more deserving of their white skin. Visser lacks the privilege to be white in the wheelchair dealer's eyes because she does not have the finances or class to earn her skin. As I discussed in Part One, the master narratives of whiteness support the idea that the spirit housed in the white body should meet certain requirements which Visser and Ninja do not, due to their perceived lack of worth.

3.9 The threat of poverty: a stain on whiteness

Zef, like white trash, is related to class and race, as Matt Wray observes.[375] White is associated with purity and cleanliness, while trash refers to the dirty, impure and profane – the abject.[376] As initially a derogatory term it thus implies a complex position in relation to the normative understanding of white identity. White is a privileged subject position, and to

[374]Van der Watt, 2012, p. 411.
[375]Wray. 2006. p. 3.
[376]ibid., p. 2.

be on the trashy side of white implies that whiteness has been soiled. This further implies that white trash, as Wray's central thesis argues, is "not quite white".[377]Since this slur is linked with poor white subject positions, it relates to class differences between white people in the heydays of apartheid. The idea of the "trashy" working-class white person recalls the "poor white problem" in South Africa in the early 1900s. According to Lis Lang, the poverty of the white Afrikaans speakers after the South African War had a major influence on the institutionalisation of Apartheid.[378] Some scholars argue that Apartheid was a solution to the "poor white" problem, which threatened the rising Nationalist government with miscegenation as poor whites often lived in close proximity, and in similar conditions, to non-whites.[379]

The scorched earth policy taken up by the British during the war, droughts and financial depression left many farmers destitute and with no other option than to move to the cities in the early 1900s for work and sustenance.[380] In 1924 General Barry Hertzog instituted a "civilised labour" policy to deal with the threats posed by the growing poor white population which encouraged the employment of white workers over black workers.[381]Regarding the wage scales between white and black workers, Hertzog is quoted as follows:

> The European must keep to a standard of living which shall meet the demands of the white civilisation. Civilisation and standards of living always go hand in hand. Thus a white cannot exist on a native wage scale, because this means that he has to give up his own standard of living and take on the standard of living of the native. In short, the white man becomes a white kaffir.[382]

Hertzog betrays a certain discourse related to the poverty of white people – the poorer you are, the less white you become. For Hertzog, material wealth also equalled civilisation. The danger of inter-familial and inter-racial breeding was something that needed to be controlled wherever it could not be avoided. The poor white was such an affront that the government would go out of its way to civilise those who seemed to have grown too close to their black counterparts. Lang notes that Social Darwinism influenced the reports of the Transvaal

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[377]ibid.
[378] Lange, L. 2003. *Poor, White and Angry: White Working-Class Families in Johannesburg.* (Aldershot: Ashgate). p. 135.
[379]Lange, 2003. p. 130; and Harrison. 1983. *The White Tribe of Africa: South Africa in Perspective.* (Johannesburg: MacMillan).p 71.
[380]Giliomee, H. 2004. *The Afrikaners: A Biography.* (Cape Town: Tafelberg). pp. 316-325.
[381]Harrison, 1986, p. 82.
[382]Hertzog cited in Harrison, 1986, p. 82.

Indigency Commission to explain and organise a typology of the poor.[383] In these reports, poor whites were described as those who failed to live up to the ideas of what constitutes a white person. She observes that although these reports clearly described the socio-economic reasons for poverty and the solutions available, "poverty was also seen as a pathology", a disease from which the poor suffered.[384] These "victims" of poverty were described as dirty, their children as "retards" who ran around "naked like kaffirs in Congoland".[385]This is perhaps a reason why Ballen's photographs were so offensive to white South Africans in the years preceding the end of apartheid, because they were proof that apartheid failed to "improve" the conditions of the poor white.

Poverty and a low class status is not shameful, but they are often represented as such. hooks observes that poverty is often represented by negative stereotypes in the media which reflects the idea that to be poor is a shameful social position.[386] The language and images associated with poverty often signify the poor as lazy and dishonest individuals who will do anything to attain monetary wealth. This desire for an easy life is emphasised in representations of poor or working-class characters in popular media: being poor is synonymous with a lack of integrity. According to hooks: "Fear of shame-based humiliation is a primary factor leading no one to want to identify themselves as poor".[387] What is interesting about Die Antwoord is how they invert the shame of poverty and recreate it as something desirable. Their production of Zef as desirable marks a shift in the way class is perceived and overlooked in other quarters. This is particularly relevant in a country that has a "torturous relationship to race" in which class is often disregarded.[388]There is something deeply threatening about the poor white which disturbs the civilised and privileged status of whiteness.

Intermezzo: Memories of a White Kaffir

When I was young, I went to a very good English school that my parents couldn't really afford. Compared to my peers, I would be categorised as poor but because we all wore the same uniforms my "poverty" was concealed by uniformity. Compared to the black children I

[383] Lange, p. 45.
[384]ibid., 147.
[385] Harrison, 1986, p. 71 .
[386]hooks, b. 1994. p. 167.
[387] ibid., p. 169
[388]Falkof, N. 2012. 'Entering the Ninja: New Cultural Strategies of the White South African Male'. *On Whiteness*.

was friends with, in the rural area where I lived just outside of Bloemfontein, I was considerably more privileged. I always felt a tension between these two categories: my working-class Afrikaansness (and growing up in this area) and my privileged English education. At one point, when I was about nine years old, my parents couldn't afford petrol to take us home directly after school, so we would wait at a play park till my dad finished work. My mother would sit in the car while we would play. On one of these days, after my brothers and I had become bored with the swings and jungle gyms, we noticed a hole in the fence of a traffic training park for young children. Being curious we decided to climb through the hole in the fence. We were in the little park for less than a few minutes when an old white man started yelling at us for breaking into the park and called us "wit kaffirs". He probably presumed that we had broken the fence, which only "kaffirs" would do and since we were white and were playing in there, we could only be white kaffirs. My grandfather had a similar view of us as we weren't baptised and didn't attend church. The neighbourhood we lived in also liked to label us as "kaffir boeties" (brothers of heathens/kaffirs) because my mother fraternised with the black people in that area (even though this wasn't necessarily in a political way). It seems that being poor or less privileged, and associating with black people at that particular time (this was in 1993), made one less white. When I was a toddler my mother called me "kaffertjie" (diminutive for kaffir) which although quite questionable was used in an endearing way. I was then all the more confused to discover that the word kaffir became an insult, rather than an affectionate term used by a mother for her child.

Although Die Antwoord claims to poverty are not "authentic" their reference to this term is a reminder of the historical context of whiteness in South Africa. Coming from middle-class homes, neither members of the band come from disadvantaged or uneducated backgrounds. Their claims to Zef-ness and poverty are seemingly in-authentic. Rather, their Zef-ness is something created and performed and yet it also has a historical and social context. What is significant about this context is its historical connection to poverty stricken whites who posed a threat to the hegemony of the white Afrikaner (of what was constructed as essential to Afrikanerdom) in that they decreased the gap between white and non-white. This poverty and the pathology it represented threatened the privilege of whiteness which was also secured by apartheid. The idea of Zef put forward by Die Antwoord is an identity born from a slur. On another level to say that Die Antwoord are not sincerely Zef is also to imply that this definition actually existed when clearly it was a name given to a particular class of people

and is a construction and not a reality. Wray brings our attention to the ease with which identities become reified through representations:

> relying on our shared representations, we treat the category as if it were a fixed, naturally given thing and then assume the person we are fitting into that category shared some or all of the traits and characteristics of the category. In short we reify the categories into identities.[389]

Dick Hebdige argues that the punk subculture in the 1970s was a way of dealing with "that amorphous body of images and typifications made available in the mass media in which class is alternately overlooked and overstated, denied and reduced to caricature".[390] This attention to class is quite relevant to the situation in South Africa. Die Antwoord's performance speaks to the behaviour and mindset of the upwardly mobile in contrast to the many South Africans who live on the breadline. Schenk and Seekings note that "in South Africa as a whole, chronic unemployment is the normal experience of most young men and women".[391] The approach of the new government in post-Apartheid years has focused on economic development rather than the redistribution of resources and social support. This means that a shift has been instituted in South Africa, but this has been a modification from "a racially-polarised to an increasingly class-divided society",[392] or as Herman Wasserman has pointed out, "While race has become a political liability, economic positioning is seen as the ticket to the future".[393] Zef draws attention to South Africa as a country that is still economically and socially divided between rich and poor. Nadine Dolby observes in an ethnographic study of schools in Johannesburg, that regardless of racial differences, students "were united by their commitment to a consumerist culture".[394]

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[389] Wray, M. 2006. p. 8

[390] Hebdige, D. 1988.*Subculture: the Meaning of Style*. (London: Routledge). p. 85.

[391] Seeking, J and Schenk. 2010. 'Locating Generation X: Taste and Identity in Transitional South Africa'. *Centre for Social Science Research.* Working Paper. No. 284.p. 15.

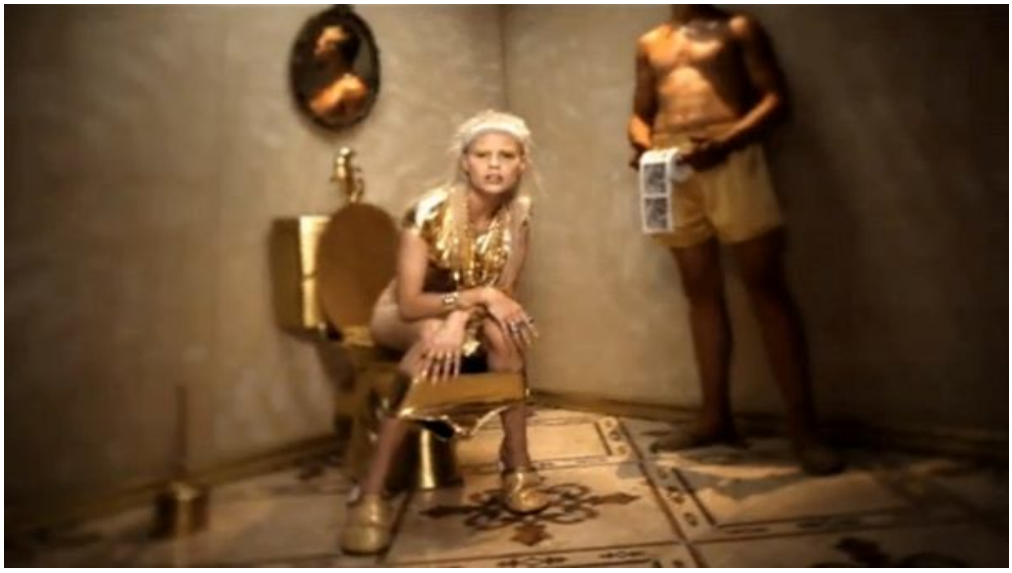
[392] Southall , 2007. Introduction: the ANC State: More dysfunctional than Developmental? State of the Nation: South Africa. (Cape Town, SA: HSRC Press). p. 21.

[393] Wasserman, H. Learning a New Language: Culture, Ideology and Economics in Afrikaans Media After Apartheid. *International Journal of Cultural Studies.* 16. p. 12.

[394] Dolby cited in Schenk and Seeking. 2010. p. 13.

3.10 *Ritch Bitch*

The music video and song, *Ritch Bitch*[395] engages with ideas surrounding the privileged financial status of whiteness in South Africa and displays this through an exaggerated *kitsch* embrace of wealth at the expense of others. *Rich Bitch* is Visser's narrative of her rise to fame from a "poor girl" who could not make it work to a "rich bitch" who can afford to wipe her bum with money. In this video, directed by Ninja and Kobus Holnaaier (butt-fucker), Visser is dressed in gold, wearing gold rings on her fingers and her long nails are also painted gold, thereby referencing hip-hop fashion styles, but in a hyperbolic manner. This garish display of wealth is heightened with the vulgarity of the refrain "I'm a rich bitch". Visser is shown lying on a bed being fanned by male servants while reading what seems to suggest a romance novel whose cover features a black, muscular man holding a white woman. According to the lyrics, Visser shops at Woolworths and her sandwiches are thickly smeared with Nutella chocolate spread which gives her a chocolate handlebar moustache of her own. These humorous references in the song point to the consumer power that money affords the privileged, creating a caricature of privilege.



Visser in *Ritch Bitch.*[396]

In a later scene, Visser is seen dancing in a gold catsuit wearing a cat mask which recalls Michelle Pfeiffer's catwoman suit from the film *Batman Returns.* The music video follows the narrative located in the lyrics of the song. For instance, at one point the phone rings and Yo-landi says, "maybe I answer maybe I'm busy". In another scene Visser is seated on a gold

[395]2011. Rich Bitch. Accessed Online: http://vimeo.com/23221778 12 June 2013.
[396]Accessed online: http://www.ifc.com/fix/2011/03/die-antwoords-yo-landi-is-a-ri on 22 September 2013.

toilet holding toilet paper embossed with the image of Julius Malema's face. She points to the image of Malema and says "I've got connections". Malema who is currently the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters, has occupied a controversial position in South African politics and media for antagonising the African National Congress and because of his singing of the controversial liberation-era song, "Shoot the Boer, Shoot the farmer". At the time, Malema was still a member of the ANC but has since been expelled. The image of Malema on the toilet paper is symbolic of a threat to South African whiteness, but also to the integrity of the "black elite".

The narrative of attaining wealth is recalled through a small television screen in black and white. Visser can be seen waking up on a pillow that contains the words "Fok life".[397] When she goes to the bathroom the toilet paper has run out and a man (perhaps her sibling) comes in and teases her, revealing her lack of privacy at home. Her family members are shown on a couch presumably watching television. Their treatment of Visser is quite disrespectful as the oldest looking man on the couch grabs her buttocks when she walks past hinting at sexual abuse. Visser has her revenge though as she covers the space in petrol and sets the house alight in a later scene. The black and white scenes suggesting the past, show that her wealth was attained through an insurance pay-out after the death of her family.

The "rags to riches" narrative is a hip-hop trope of realness: Visser used to be a victim of the system, but is now a "rich bitch" who profits from it. She disturbs the typical misogyny in hip-hop though, particularly in gangsta rap, by embodying this as a female. This disturbance of the typical roles associated with gangsta-rappers' lyrics can also be seen in the performances of Nicki Minaj who in her lyrics to *Did it On 'Em* states: "All these bitches is my sons/ and I'ma go and get some bibs for 'em/A couple formulas, little pretty lids on'em/ If I had a dick, I would pull it out and piss on 'em". Rather than urinating on them, however, Minaj raps that she defecated on them. In this song, Minaj refers to males as "bitches" which is usually how women are referred to in hip-hop music. She also constructs herself as a mother who has to get bibs for her babies, suggesting that these "bitches" need to be disciplined. The song *Did it on 'em* also makes a subtle allusion to the scandal surrounding R Kelly (an R&B singer) who urinated on an underage girl. Both Visser and Minaj problematize the traditional role of the female as an object in hip-hop music.

[397] Trans: "Fuck life".

This misogyny (or reversed chauvinism) within the lyrics of female rappers, like Minaj and Visser's, seem at a first glance like a senseless embodiment of patriarchal values that work against the empowerment of female subjectivity, but it is through this senselessness that female rappers subvert the misogyny of gangsta rap. Minaj's reference to the penis is related to the rap industry which is dominated by males, but even though Minaj lacks this penis power, she is still a very successful hip-hop artist. In fact, the "penis" is displaced by Minaj; it becomes an empty sign that can be used ironically to challenge the power associated with it. One can argue that both Minaj and Visser play with expectations that have been constructed around hip-hop culture with its images of dangerous *gangstas* who refer to all women as either "mammy" or "bitch". Their incorporation of these lyrics can be argued as a resistance to this popularised image of the *gangsta*, but through an exaggerated and parodic display of misogyny. This could be seen as a strategy of resistance, as Baudrillard notes:

> And so the strategic resistanceis that of the refusal of meaning and the refusal of speech-or of the hyperconformist simulation of the very mechanisms of the system, which is another form of refusal by overacceptance.[398]

By embodying and conforming to the misogyny of rap lyrics, Visser and Minaj empty the trope of any significance. The parody is not aimed at hip-hop itself, but at the desire for an authentic portrayal of hip-hop as a masculine and anti-feminine style of music. The significance of masculinity as a trope within hip-hop authenticity is related to the African-American struggle against the disempowering white patriarchy and is the result of white hegemony. As hooks has observed, there is a (white) culture that produces the need for sexist lyrics in hip-hop which is less easy to confront than the hip-hop artists who perform this misogyny.[399]

Furthermore, in relation to the South African context, Visser is the antithesis of the *Volksmoeder*; "the nurturing, patient, loyal and forthright mother of the nation".[400] In *Rich Bitch* she murders her family and presents the viewer with a lethal femininity. Although the embodiment of roles associated with males is problematic in that it may reinforce the predominance of masculinity, this disturbance of gender roles emphasises the performativity of identity. However any simple coding of Yo-landi is dismantled by the manner in which Yo-landi self-consciously adopts these "masks" of femininity. Indeed, the persona that Visser

[398]Baudrillard, J. and Maclean, M. 1985. 'The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media'. *New Literary History*, Vol. 16, No. 3. p. 588.
[399] 1998, p. 122.
[400]Falkof, N. 2012. 'Entering the Ninja: New Cultural Strategies of the White South African Male.' In Falkof and Cashman-Brown, O. *On Whiteness.* p. 103.

has created (apart from Anri du Toit) in Die Antwoord, testifies to her ability to perform an identity.

The garish display of gold in almost every scene is symbolic of white privilege and the rather successful mining industry that was built on the backs of cheap black labour under apartheid. As Gavin Steingo asserts, "Gold mining shaped and developed South Africa maybe more than anything else".[401]This gold also has a subtle reference to the white working-class miners who were given the label of Zef. The use of gold (bling) is also a well-known component of hip-hop fashion, specifically "thug fashion", which is worn to convey the outlaw status of the rapper, and is symbolic of his/her prestige and wealth. Bling as an accessory is also a surface indicator (since bling is often gold-plated) of wealth or thug status as it rarely the real thing. While gold has a particular connotation within hip-hop fashion as a sign of success, in the context of South Africa, the sign is laden with historical significance. Visser's exaggerated desire for gold points to the surreptitious greed that underlines the neo-liberal policies that operate within a democracy, but simultaneously fits into hip-hop aesthetics. At a certain level, one can argue that *Ritch Bitch* parodies the neo-liberal and profit orientated democracy of South Africa focused on a rather superficial redistribution of wealth.

3.11 Kitsch Classes

Kitsch is the name given to art objects related to sentimental, vulgar and pretentious "bad taste". The term is also associated with the inability to consume "tasteful" aspects of culture – Zef is closely related to the notion of kitsch. The overabundance of gold clothing and the romance novel in *Ritch Bitch* could be considered as kitsch objects. Although Visser now has the financial means to appropriate valuable objects, she does not have the "taste" to acquire them. As Van der Watt points out, the Zef was a label given to a section of society "that was mostly, though *not necessarily,* poor white, and lacking in formal or tertiary education".[402] Clement Greenberg's critique of Kitsch in *The Avant-garde and Kitsch* (1939) as a threat to aesthetic standards, revealed a somewhat elitist opinion of avant-garde art. The opposition between so called high and low art was challenged by Pop artists like Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg (among others) through their appropriation of aspects of popular culture and the advertising industry. According to Greenberg, Kitsch art could easily

[401] Steingo, G. 2005. 'South African Music after Apartheid: Kwaito, the ''Party Politic", and the Appropriation of Gold as a Sign of Success'. *Popular Music and Society.* Vol. 28. No. 3. p. 334.
[402] Van der Watt, p. 411.

be enjoyed by "peasants" whereas a Picasso painting worked on the "reflected effect" – the viewer who enjoyed Picasso's austerity was a "cultivated spectator".[403] Although Greenberg later rejected some of his theories of what constitutes kitsch the ideas in the above mentioned essay reveal the tensions between what is considered high or low, that is, good or bad, art.

Die Antwoord partly subverts this "reflected effect" through their conceptualism which treats low and high art as being of equal value. Ninja and Visser have repeatedly made comments about those who "get it" and those who do not understand what Die Antwoord are doing, in a way mirroring elitist attitudes about "high" or avant-garde art. As Ninja puts it, "People are unconscious and you have to use your art as a shock machine to wake them up. Some people are too far gone. They'll just keep asking, 'Is it real? Is it real?"[404] The academic interest in the band has shown a desire to construct a meaningful idea of Die Antwoord. This need to explain Die Antwoord, to analyse their work in a meaningful way is disturbed by the contradictions of the band, their lack of, but claim to, authenticity, and their refusal to acknowledge their own strangeness. Van Der Watt argues that "[d]espite Die Antwoord's certainty that they have found the answer to something, most responses to their work fall squarely in the category of incomprehension".[405] Van Der Watt acknowledges that their value lies in this ability to confuse and disrupt meaning and the way meaning is constructed.

The Zefness attached to Die Antwoord may not have emerged from an actual experience of marginalized whiteness, but its appropriation creates an interesting tension in the desire for authenticity. Zef is appropriated, performed and contextualised in a new way: "Zef is staged and performed; the historical origins of the term are sidelined by a new interpretation that positions Zef as something to be chosen and tried on at will, almost like a fashion accessory".[406] By revealing the constructed-ness of Zef as an identity, Die Antwoord challenge monolithic idea of whiteness and the desire to fix beings into discrete categories. This appropriation is still a relevant and critical art practice, because it so clearly reveals the structures which shape our mediated experience, or as Verwoert phrases it, "the undiminished

[403] Greenberg, C. 1986. 'The Avant-garde and Kitsch'. In O'Brian, J. *Clement Greenberg Collected Essays and Criticism.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press.). p. 16.
[404] Ninja cited in Marchese, D. 2012. Die Antwoord's Totally insane words of wisdom. http://www.spin.com/articles/die-antwoords-totally-insane-words-wisdom/
[405]Van der Watt, 2012. p. 409.
[406] Van der Watt, 2012, p. 410.

if not increased power of capitalist commodity culture to determine the shape of our daily reality."[407]

3.12 *Evil Boy*

Evil Boy[408] (2010) is a song which deals with the cultural practice of circumcision as an initiation into manhood. It was directed by Ninja and Rob Malpage and released on YouTube in October 2010. Below is a description of the visual material of the music video:

> The camera travels down a dark hallway littered with boxes covered in graffiti. Like a horror movie the lights flick on and off. There is a sudden glimpse of a hairy creature who represents the Tikoloshe (a mythological monster known in South Africa) and then the familiar face of Visser, who has white rats crawling on her shoulders, and Ninja, both grimacing at the camera. The camera zones in on Ninja's gold rings spelling out Evil boy. The viewer is then introduced to the supposed evil boy (who sports an erect penis under his trousers, accompanied by two full-bodied black girls). Ninja raps with unusual lizard appendage, arm decor and a handcuff necklace. In one scene he signs "Ninja was here" on a female fan's breasts (which oddly have no nipples), while singing: "Sign my name on your boobs/Fuck a piece of paper." A blanket-wearing group of Black men in white face-paint (indicating that they are initiates) call out to evil boy to engage in the ritual practice, but he refuses to join them. He says, "my penis is clean, I'm not gay". The set is littered with fake trees and erect penises. Ninja wears a strange penis-like pipe attached to himself which he treats as a microphone. Yo-landi, wearing a faux fur coat of rats as well as some real ones who scurry around on her shoulders, plays a kind of femme fatale/dominatrix in a boudoir-like scene with the producer Diplo.

Evil Boy is a collaborative project between Ninja, Visser, DJ Hi-Tec, American producer Diplo and amaXhosa artist, Wanga. Evil Boy's refusal to undergo a traditional African circumcision is the main theme of his lyrics. This is controversial subject matter as it relates to the disappearance of established cultural practices whose legitimacy has been severely eroded by both colonialism and globalisation. The initiation ritual often referred to as "going to the bush", symbolises a passageway from boyhood to manhood and involves a change of

[407]Verwoert, J. 2007. 'Living with Ghosts: From Appropriation to Invocation in Contemporary Art.' *Art and Research.* Vol. 2. No.1.Accessed online :http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/verwoert.html on 1 March 2013.

[408] 'Evil Boy'. Accessed online:http://vimeo.com/17607134 16 September 2012.

status and a new identity.[409]Claire Scott argues the music video depicts the clash between traditional and urban values.[410]Those who choose not to participate in initiation rituals are considered "incapable of moral worth" in the eyes of traditionalists.[411] Men who decide not to go through such rituals remain immature "boys" and are often seen as homosexual in a cultural context which deems homosexuality taboo. This is why Wanga raps, "Don't touch my penis/ I'm not a gay/ this penis is for the girls". Evil boy desires to remain "dirty" in the eyes of "tradition" and insists that his penis is "clean". Ninja explains the inspiration for the song as follows:

> We've known Wanga since he was a street kid. He lives in this house in Cape Town and squats on a farm. This year, Wanga was supposed to go to one of these rituals because he wasn't circumcised. We thought maybe he just shouldn't go because 60 kids fucking died this year because their penises didn't work properly afterward and shit. So I asked him what would happen if he didn't go to the bush, and he said that he wouldn't be a man and he wouldn't be able to speak to the other men. So I asked him why he was speaking to me and he said, "Because you're cool, Ninja." Then he looked at my tattoo and said he wanted to be "Evil Boy for life."[412]

Ninja is referring to the frequency of botched circumcisions which have endangered and claimed the lives of many young men who undergo initiation. Evil Boy fears the medical complications of traditional circumcision enough to remain a boy albeit an "evil boy" for life. The refusal to "become a man" suggests a disavowal of patriarchal power, however, this break with the norms of his culture can also be perceived as an assimilation of Western desire. A Zulu phrase meaning "Spear of the Nation" is appropriated as a signifier for Evil Boy's penis: "Take your dirty hands off my umthondowisizwe". This is deliberately spelled incorrectly to *Umkhonto We Sizwe* which was the armed wing of the National African Congress. It was banned by the South African government and classified as a terrorist organisation by the United States of America during Apartheid. In *Evil Boy* Die Antwoord focus on the surface of the initiation ritual and reduce it to the aspect of circumcision.

The set pieces for this feat were designed by Ninja himself and sculpted by Marcia Vermaak: "We put care into every single detail so that the background got as much force as the

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[409]Gwata,F. 2009. Traditional male circumcision: What is its socio-cultural significance among Xhosa men? CSSR Working Paper.p. 4.
[410] Scott. C. 2012. 'Die Antwoord and a delegitimized South African whiteness: a potential counter-narrative?' *Critical Arts.* Vol. 26. Iss. 5. p. 756.
[411]ibid., p. 12.
[412]Dombal, Ryan (October 29, 2010). *"Director's Cut: Die Antwoord: "Evil Boy""*. Pitchfork.Accessed Online: 21 January, 2013.

foreground".[413] The result is comic since although masculine power is subliminally referenced in many hip-hop music videos, it is made ridiculous through the multiplicity of penises in the music video. For instance, the trees in the background are covered in small penises. The representation of penises which forms such a big part of the aesthetic of this music video is clearly associated with masculine power. Considering the misogynistic lyrics that are associated with rap and the celebration of masculinity in hip-hop, Die Antwoord deliver another satiric commentary on penis-power in rap representation.

Aspects of the horror movie are also present in *Evil Boy* via the presence of the dilapidated hallway and the general darkness of the scenes all pointing towards an aesthetic of horror. They become "evil" characters known to the horror genre. All the characters in the video are "evil" by some standard (except for Diplo who appears as the innocent and unknowing American). They seem to exist outside of the symbolic (phallic/patriarchal) order. Evil boy is "wicked" because he refuses to fulfill the cultural injunction to become a man. In Kristeva's argument, society engages in rituals to ward off the abject. Circumcision, for instance, divides the unclean (uncircumcised) and the clean (circumcised). Visser's sexuality is displayed as powerful and evil because she represents feminine monstrosity while Ninja embraces a criminal lifestyle as "gangsta nommer 1"[414]. Furthermore, the references and images of the *Tikoloshe*, a mythological creature is another signifier of the monstrous in this music video. The *Tikoloshe* (also known as *Tokoloshe*) is unique to certain elements of South African folklore and is similar to a vampire or a succubus as it feeds off the life force of women and is said to have a ferocious sex drive. The reference to the Romanian Dracula is quite pertinent in relation to ideas about Eastern European myths which have been framed as dark and sinister in the movies and books about Count Dracula, for instance, this can be seen in Francis Ford Copolla's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. The further away the character, Jonathan Harker moves from his home in London and the closer he gets to Dracula's castle in the Carpathian Mountains, the darker and more ominous the scenery gets. The Romanians are portrayed as superstitious and backward folk who try to warn Harker of the dangerous territory he is entering. In some ways, the movie perpetuates stereotypes of Romany people and represents Eastern Europeans as unsophisticated. This is similar to the way in which Africa is imagined as the "heart of darkness", a space in which the uncivilized still roam.

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[413]Dombal, Ryan (October 29, 2010). *"Director's Cut: Die Antwoord: "Evil Boy""*. Pitchfork.Retrieved 21 January, 2013.

[414] Gangsta Number One

Visser plays the role of the *femme fatale* or a dominatrix in*Evil Boy* when she seduces Diplo only to steal his money. During her vocal part she relates her rap talents to the occult: “I’m a badass chic with my black magic” and “fuck a pen and pad I write my raps with ouija board”. She draws a pentagram on Diplo’s chest with lipstick and steals his large American dollars. The pentagram and the reference to the Ouija board emphasize the idea of Yo-landi as someone who engages with the occult. Visser presents her viewers with a dangerous and somewhat monstrous femininity. For instance, she attracts hordes of white rats, in the boudoir scene, which recalls depictions of Dracula in horror movies as a shape shifter. The boudoir scene is also reminiscent of *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* when Jonathan Harker is seduced by the Count’s female vampires (known as the Brides of Dracula) who feed on his blood. In this scene, however, Yo-landi steals Diplo’s money instead of sucking his blood: “Go through your wallet, woo! What a lot of paper/ What a fuckin sucker! See you later masturbator!” Yo-landi also inverts the objectifying gaze by revealing breasts with eyes in the place of nipples which stare at and challenge the viewer. In this scene one of the most objectified parts of the female anatomy are displayed, but the seeing nipples confront the expectations of the viewer. She becomes both attractive and repellent, revealing the ambiguity of the abject.[415]As Barbara Creed notes, “the subject is constantly beset by abjection which fascinates desire but which must be repelled for fear of self-annihilation. The crucial point is that abjection is always ambiguous.”[416] This ambiguity of the abject is the most powerful aspect of its significations of waste, death and horror which challenge the security of the social order. Yo-landi has likened Die Antwoord to a car crash, stating that, “When there’s a car cash, everyone looks.” This is a good way to describe the effect of the abject on its viewers: something which both attracts and repels the subject.

[415]Kristeva. 1982. p. 9.
[416]Creed. 1993. p. 48.

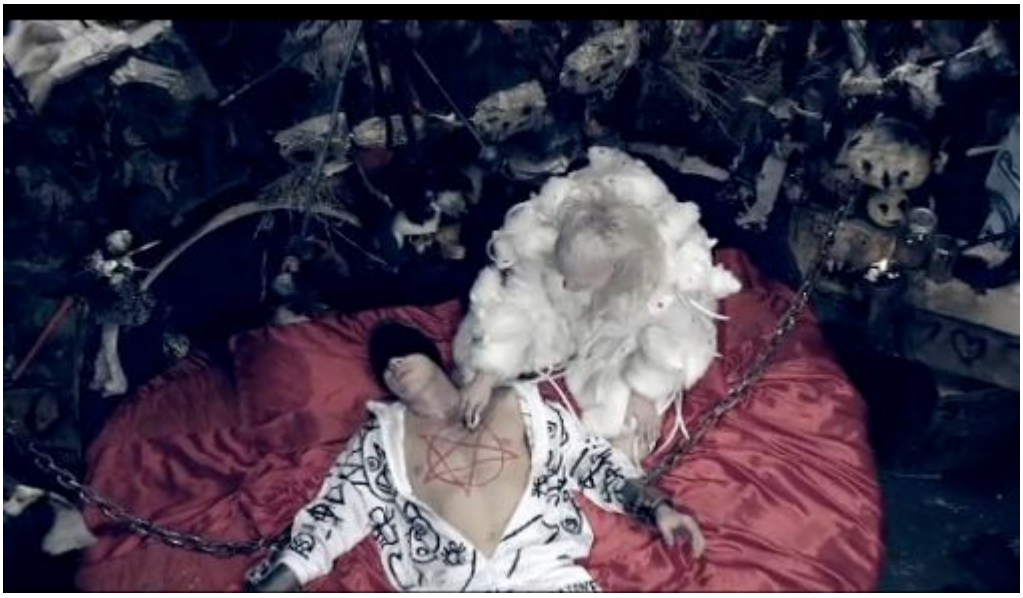

Image 10: Still from the *Evil Boy* music video—Yo-landi Visser in her rat outfit with producer Diplo[417]

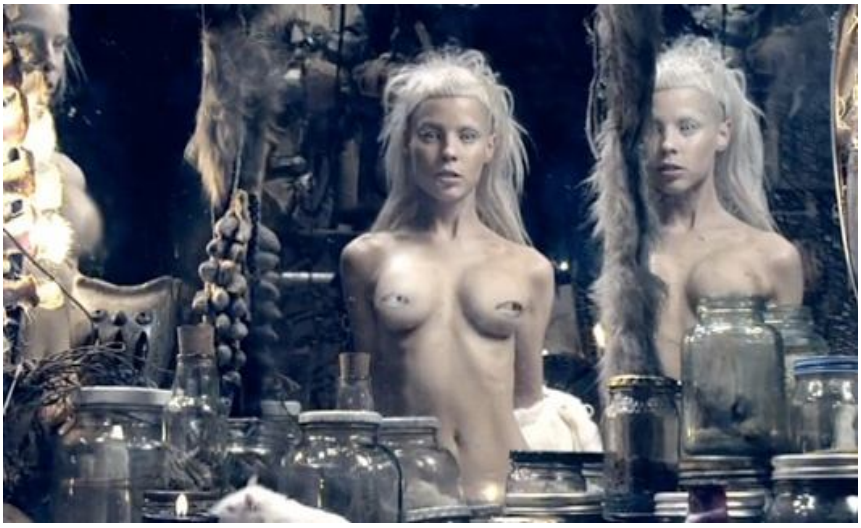

Image 11: Still from "Evil Boy" music video—Visser's eye-nipples.[418]

One could argue that Yo-landi embodies a form of abject femininity, Liese Van der Watt observes, "Foulmouthed, crude, and flitting between being sexy and embodying the abject. Yo-landi is never what one expects her to be".[419]Yo-landi's horror-filled femininity connects with the idea of the monstrous feminine theorised by Barbara Creed, which deals with film representations of the female as a dangerous force threatening order and stability. In her role in Die Antwoord, Yo-landi certainly manipulates both the archetypal binary images of

[417]Accessed online: http://knotoryus.com/archives/8242/13 September 2013.
[418]Accessed online: http://iamalaser.com/sound/sound-tv/die-antwoord-evil-boy/ on 13 September 2013.
[419] Van der Watt, 2012, p. 414 .

women as "mother" and/or "whore". In*Enter the Ninja*, she appears as a young girl (in school uniform) in love with a criminal in prisonin other images she is shown as the partner of Ninja and mother of Sixteen. Visser is both mother and whore. Kristeva argues that the feminine body is doubly abject, that it "betrays its debt to nature".[420] This is related to the female's reproductive cycle, her ability to physically create life and also her menstrual cycle. Excrement, waste, disease, and the cadaver endanger identity from the outside, while menstrual blood threatens identity from within.[421] Creed has elaborated on this notion of feminine sexuality as a devouring force relating it to the myth of the *vagina dentate*, Latin for "toothed vagina".[422] The link to the fear of feminine power (represented as the fear of castration) is evident in *Evil Boy* by the presence of Yo-landi as a dominatrix.

Die Antwoord also use this song to vilify Koos Kombuis: "Yo I'm bigger than/Koos Kombuis jou ma se fokken poes".[423] Kombuis is synonymous with the anti-apartheid alternative Afrikaans movement and one of the stars of the *Voëlvry* movement.[424] He has been outspoken in his disdain for Die Antwoord, arguing that their music is nihilistic, boring, and sexist and that he rejects them not from a moral position but on aesthetic grounds.[425] In his article, Kombuis expressed dismay that Die Antwoord has become *the* major export of South African music, and that he is concerned about the way in which they are representing South African culture.

[420]Kristeva, 1982.p. 102.
[421] ibid., p. 71.
[422]Creed, B. 1993.*Horror and Monstrous-Feminine: Film, feminism, psychoanalysis.*(London and New York: Routledge) p. 2.
[423] Trans: "Koos Kombuis your mother's fucking cunt".
[424]The *Voëlvry* movement emerged in the late 1980s and was highly critical of the Apartheid regime. Regarded as a threat to cultural authority and named after a nation-wide, but predominantly campus-based tour of the same name in 1989, *Voëlvry*has come to be regarded as the defining moment of alternative Afrikaans music. The most prominent members were: Johannes Kerkorrel, BernoldusNiemand and KoosKombuis all came of age through *Voëlvry.* Schenk and Seeking. 2010. 'Locating Generation X: Taste and Identity in Transitional South Africa'. *Centre for Social Science Research.* Working Paper No. 284. p. 7.
[425] Kombuis, K. 2010. Die Antwoord is geen Antwoord nie. *Rapport.* Accessed online http://www.rapport.co.za/Rubrieke/KoosKombuis/Die-Antwoord-is-geen-antwoord-nie-20100220. on 15 March 2013.

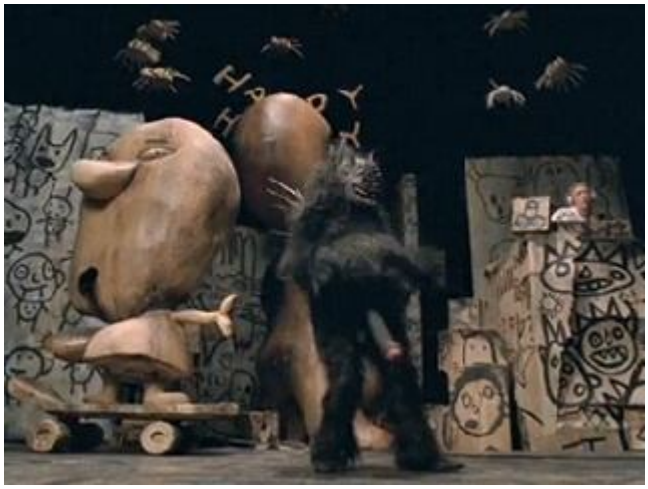

Image 12: Still from "Evil Boy" music video. The *Tikoloshe* with long penis.[426]

Whether Kombuis is being serious is hard to discern since his own lyrical content can be considered sexist depending on one's awareness of the subversive impulse of the music. Consider his song *Springbokheld* (1994) in which a rugby field is personified as a female body to be penetrated. Once again, depending on one's perception, Kombuis' early albums are as misogynist as any gangsta rap song. While Kombuis sublimates profanities by placing them alongside notions of beauty and love, "liefde uit die oude doos"[427]for example, it could be argued that Die Antwoord desublimate. According to Richard Murphy, desublimation can be understood as a strategy of de-aestheticization. Instead of representing the ideal, some artists reveal the unpolished reality hidden by traditional representation. In this way, desublimation could be simplified as the opposite of sublimation. Sublimation in the Freudian sense is the refining of libidinal drives into more noble and acceptable forms such as art and philosophy. Murphy states that desublimation acts to "…counter the idealizing and consolatory effects of sublimation".[428]

In *Evil Boy*Die Antwoord in collaboration with Wanga, create an "unsatisfying" representation of "multiculturalism" – by weaving the traditional myth of the Tikoloshe with elements of the horror movie. The comedy also explodes the "seriousness" of ritual superstition. *Evil Boy* is a politically incorrect music video which satirises perceptions of South African culture revealing Yo-landi and Ninja's whiteness as monstrous and ludicrous in a sublimated landscape.

[426]Accessed online:http://my.opera.com/diezefling/blog/2012/03/26/the-infamous-tokoloshe-in-the-video 13 September 2013.
[427]Trans: "Love out of the old box/cunt". Doos in Afrikaans may mean either "box" or "cunt".
[428]Murphy, R. 1998. *Theorizing the Avant-garde*. (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.) p. 287.

3.13 Die Antwoord's Refusal: The Critique of a Multicultural Society and Die Antwoord's Response to Criticism

Die Antwoord have been consistent in resisting the question of their authenticity. In *Fok Julle Naaiers*, Ninja raps;

> Yo-landi: Is it real?
> Ninja: No its just a big black joke
> When dealing wif an idiot dere's really nuffing u can say
> Next time u ask me 'is it real'? i'm gonna punch you in da face
> 2 help u feel me, bitch I get paid to b funky
> But b nice or i'm gonna change to be ugly

Ninja's response here is refusal to "sell out" his manufactured and performed authenticity of Zef. Both Ninja and Visser get exasperated when interviewers question their "realness" as an act. When asked by a Norwegian interviewer, "What do you feel about the debate on the internet that you are a piece of conceptual art?" Ninja responded as follows; "We are a rap group from South Africa. Some people think too much…other people fucking get it. Do you consider yourself to be an intelligent person? What do you think?"[429] Visser interjected with "What the fuck is 'ceptual art?"[430]A statement that has been repeated in previous interviews, as Ninja's reply to Los Angeles Times reviewer, Chris Lee, "Conceptual art, I don't even know what that is."[431]As a former Fine Art student, Anri Du Toit, should know what conceptual art is, but remains true to the persona of Yo-landi Visser. In refusing to drop the characters of Ninja and Yo-landi, in refusing to perform Jones or Du Toit in interviews Die Antwoord are in their own way producing a kind of neo-pop art.

Ninja highlights the absurdity of their claims to authenticity; he has referred to himself as "die wit kaffir" in the track *Never le Nkemise*. In *Fishpaste*, he raps, "I am a fucken coloured cos I am a fucken coloured if I want to be a coloured/My inner fucken coloured just wants to be discovered". In the intro to *Enter the Ninja* he states "Blacks. Whites. Coloureds. English.Afrikaans. Xhosa. Zulu. Watookal (whatever). I'm like all these different people, fucked into one person'. Ninja manipulates and subverts ideas surrounding not only hip-hop

[429] Ninja cited in 'Interview Gone Wrong'. Accessed online:http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bG9ZtQ3phoE on 12 May 2012.
[430] ibid.,
[431] Ninja cited in 'Die Antwoord Prompts a Big Question'. *Los Angeles Times.* 2010. http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/25/entertainment/la-et-die-antwoord-20101025m on 12 December 2013.

authenticity but the construction of race and ethnicity in South Africa. In the post-election context since the democratisation of South Africa and the breakdown of Apartheid a lot of emphasis has been placed on the notion of diversity. Brink Scholtz observes how work that represents diversity receives more support and funding.[432] This support is largely related to the discourse of the "rainbow nation". Scholtz argues;

> Importantly, this notion speaks of differences, but not differences that would threaten an overriding unity. Particularly marked in representations of the rainbow nation circulated for purposes of tourism and advertising, are depictions of cultural diversity reduced to superficial representations of difference that fail to do justice to the richness or complexity of cultures, or to the real material differences in people's lives. Such depictions also reinforce a South African propensity for stereotypes, particularly racial.[433]

Ninja's statements regarding his "mixed" identity is a threat to this idea of unity by his attempts to channel and embody the rainbow nation in his problematic white skin which is a marker of the continuing privilege of whiteness in South Africa. By claiming that he is "all these different people, fucked into one person", he challenges but also reveals the cracks in the desire for unity within diversity. In fact, it is these claims to diversity that many of Die Antwoord's detractors criticize. Die Antwoord are often criticized for appropriating cultural codes and dialects from both poor white and coloured ethnicities. Adam Haupt repetitively reminds his readers how ironic it is that Ninja is not coloured nor is he Afrikaans.[434] It is interesting to note that Haupt's critique of Die Antwoord was made before the release of "Fatty Boom Boom"[435] in October 2012. Haupt's concern at that time was focused on Ninja's tattoos and in particular, the use of expletives originating from the Cape flats dialects of Afrikaans, in the music video for *Enter the Ninja*.[436] While *Fatty Boom Boom* seems to be centred on insulting Lady Gaga and international perceptions of South African life, it also seems like a deliberate attack on this accusation of black face. It is in this music video that Die Antwoord quite literally use body paint to erase their whiteness and represent the "diversity" of South African culture.

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[432] Scholtz, B. 2008. 'The Most Amazing Show': Performative interactions with post-election South African society and culture.' Unpublished thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University. p. 34.
[433]ibid., p. 36.
[434]Haupt, A. 2012. "Part IV Is Die Antwoord Blackface". *Safundi*: *The Journal of South African and American Studies.* Vol. 13. No. 3-4.p. 41.
[435]Die Antwoord. 2012. "Fatty Boom Boom"
Accessed online: http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=AIXUgtNC4Kc on 13 December 2012.
[436]ibid., p. 421.

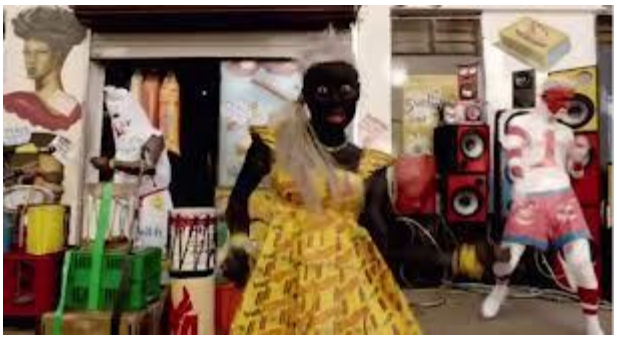

Image: 13 Die Antwoord in “Fatty Boom Boom” as street performers.[437]

Image 14: Visser in blackface in “Fatty boom Boom”.[438]

Like most of Die Antwoord’s music videos, the design of *Fatty Boom Boom*is tightly conceptualized around an unfolding narrative. The product placement of South African brands in the music video, such as Sunlight Washing powder, the Lucky Star canned fishbrand on Ninja’s pants, and Visser’s yellow Lion Matches dress, parodies big industry product placement. The music video for *Fatty Boom Boom* starts in a minibus taxi in which the driver takes Lady Gaga (wearing the well-known meat-dress) on a tour through the urban jungle of South Africa. Die Antwoord had been asked to be the opening act for Lady Gaga on her tour in South Africa in 2012, which they refused. The sign on the minibus reads “Big Five tours” and the video includes wild animals on the street, hyenas eating rubbish, a lion and a panther. These wild animals playing as pets to street vendors, is a subversion of stereotypes related to Africa as a place where wild animals walk in the streets and children go to school on the backs of elephants. This trip can also be related to the popularity of “township tours” where foreigners get the “authentic experience” of township life. The tour guide shows Gaga a band of street performers (Die Antwoord) who are performing in the

[437]Accessed online: http://www.egotripland.com/die-antwoord-blackface-fatty-boom-dis-lady-gaga-black-eyed-peas/ 18 September 2013.
[438]Accessed online:http://www.gangstersaysrelax.com/blog/2012/10/16/die-antwoord-fatty-boom-boom-video-premiere.html 18 September 2013.

street, and she remarks that she would like to have them as an opening act. The minibus is hijacked and the Lady Gaga impersonator flees the scene in fear which eventually leads her to the office of a dentist/gynecologist. The doctor removes a parktown prawn (a King Cricket) from her vagina and she is then mauled by a lion when she leaves the office.

Fatty Boom Boom comments on the discourses of the tourist industry with its "highly selective representations of various countries…constructed for the western viewer's specular consumption".[439] The "Big Five" (the most popular wild animals: lions, elephants, rhinos, leopard and wildebeest) mentioned earlier, is one of the attractions for tourists on holiday in South Africa. Although these tours clearly bring foreign money into the townships, it is an insidious way of cultivating tourism in South Africa. Consider the Emoya Private Game Reserve outside Bloemfontein in the Freestate, which sports its own Shanty Town complete with a "long drop toilet effect" and is described as "the only shanty town in the world equipped with under-floor heating and wireless internet access".[440] This simulated township increases the opportunities for privileged travellers to "develop a commodified relation to the non-western other".[441] While the tourist industry is a lucrative business bringing capital and foreign investment into the country, the effort put into maintaining a steady inflow of tourists is questionable. By this I mean specifically the effort that is put into maintaining stereotypes and certain versions of South African cultures. The commodification of the township life seen in tours and holidays resorts such as Emoya, creates another form of exotification and can be argued as a unique form of blackface. Helen Gilbert argues that the tourist economy "typically repeats many of the same power games and struggles of initial imperial endeavours".[442]

[439] Gilbert,1996. p. 287.
[440]See: www.emoya.co.za.
[441] Gilbert, p. 287.
[442]ibid., p. 7.

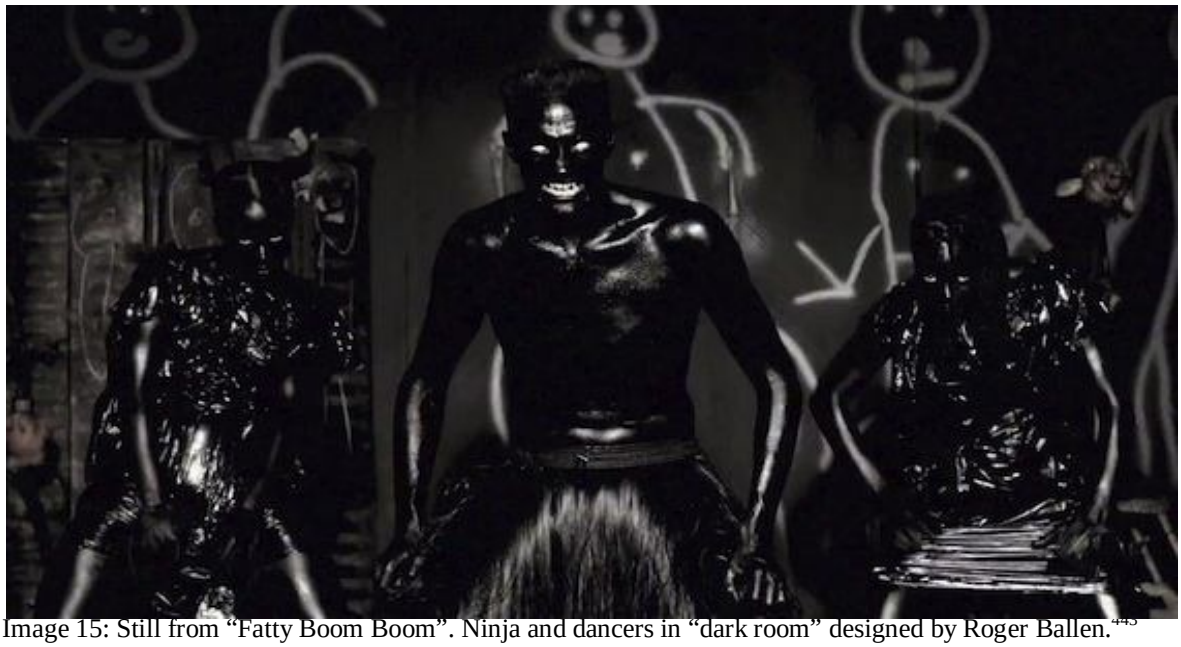

Image 15: Still from "Fatty Boom Boom". Ninja and dancers in "dark room" designed by Roger Ballen.[443]

In *Fatty Boom Boom* Visser is completely covered in black paint which alludes to the images of blackface performance which developed in America in the 19th century. Haupt points out in his discussion that blackface is more revealing of white racist perceptions about black people than black people themselves.[444] The images of blackface are typical of Die Antwoord's ability to create a caricature. While original blackface was used to effect the appearance of blackness, in this case it is completely ludicrous. As a white South African woman completely covered in black paint, Visser confronts one with an incredibly problematic image, in fact a forbidden image in the eyes of a politically correct and racially "readjusted" society. In a society attempting to disentangle itself from its racist history, blackface imagery is probably the most unfashionable reminder of the past. It presents one with the fragility (and failure) of so called objective morality in the claws of profit and entertainment. Here blackface can perhaps be read as a condemnation of the manner in which African cultures are represented in the popular media, which do not necessarily employ blackface, but which nonetheless further objectify the "third world". Yet, Yo-landi is entirely covered in black paint and this use of blackness is different to the "mask" which was created in conventional black-face minstrelsy. *Fatty Boom Boom* blackface is pasted onto an already established "mask" of Zef-ness, creating a satirical presentation of this practice, specifically within the network of signs in the music video that underline a satirized performance of misguided views about South African life. At the same time, Die Antwoord is questioned

[443]Accessed online:http://swelllness.com/tag/fatty-boom-boom/ 18 September 2013.
[444] Haupt, 2012, p. 418.

about their misguided representation. Furthermore, Yo-landi's black body paint, unlike black face covers the entirety of her body and is glossy and reflective, instead of the matte burnt cork in traditional minstrelsy. This heightens the notion of a simulated surface where appearances are more valuable than the real.

The music video for *Fatty Boom Boom*was released on Youtube amidst the internet hype surrounding Gaga and Interscope (Die Antwoord's record label at that time).Die Antwoord refused to open for Lady Gaga and also broke with Interscope to release their Ten$ion album on their own label, Zef Recordz. Ninja remarked that:

> Weird shit's been happening, like Lady Gaga asked us to tour with her and we're like, 'No, don't worry about it' Our stuff is like fucking hardcore like solid heavyweight! We want it to be like a secret mind-fuck!...We like making pop music, but we like making hardcore music at the same time, mixing them, but they've got like, soul. It's not like weak, superficial shit. You know? [445]

This split apparently occurred because the label wanted to steer the band in a more mainstream direction: "they also tried to get involved with our music, to try and make us sound like everyone else out there at the moment".[446] This refusal to work with the established and popular artist, Lady Gaga and the band's split with Interscope, gives Die Antwoord more street credibility as "thugs for life". This attitude plays into the tropes of hip-hop authenticity as being distinctly anti-mainstream. Ninja's desire to keep Die Antwoord "a secret mind-fuck" is to keep the sense of ambiguity that the band has established for themselves. So it is not that Die Antwoord are not sell-outs, but that they are quite specific about what they would like to "sell out" to.

Haupt states that "Die Antwoord's work reminds us, that in many ways, the past is still with us".[447] Although I do not completely agree with Haupt's reading of Die Antwoord as blackface, I agree that the popularity of this group, particularly to international audiences, reveals the ongoing narrative of white hegemony in South Africa. Die Antwoord are consumed as "exotic" specimens which feeds into the Western objectification of African subjects. What is peculiar in this case is that Die Antwoord are white subjects embodying this

[445] 'Die Antwoord, Lady Gaga battle it out over NSFW Video'. 2012. *Times Live*. Accessed online: www.timeslive.co.za/entertainment/music/2012/10/18/die-antwoord-lady-gaga-battle-it-out-over-snsfw-video on 13 December 2013.
[446]ibid.,
[447] Haupt, A. 2012. *Static: Race and Representation in Post-Apartheid Music and Film*. (Cape Town: HRSC Press). p. 215.

notion of other-ness. Haupt observes how the reception to Die Antwoord in the media is a form of cultural imperialism.[448] Haupt argues that it is Die Antwoord's media savvy approach and access to high quality production tools together with their "self-referential parody of *white* and/or *coloured* working-class subjects" which have underlined their success.[449]He notes how ironic is that "it was the work of socially conscious hip-hop activists in Cape Town that ensured that hip-hop found an audience in South Africa",[450] but who did not garner the kind of mainstream success that Die Antwoord has. This pertains to the representational power of whiteness which seems to remain intact in the "new" South Africa. Yet, Die Antwoord's treatment of culture as a found object, as "debris", also reveals the impossibility of a representation that does justice to the complexity of South African life.

This is the ironic aspect of Die Antwoord whose subversion of "keeping it real" is simultaneously soaked up by international audiences, revealing the West's inability to recognise (or to take responsibility for) their prejudiced perceptions of the South African "other".

3.14 Conclusion: The Inadequacy of Essentialist Ideas of Cultural Authenticity

Minh-ha argues that "authenticity as a need to rely on an 'undisputed origin,' is prey to an obsessive fear: that of losing a connection".[451] Deleuze and Guattari agree when they argue that flights toward free and autonomous positions away from the connections of representation, interpretation or symbolization are full of dangers such as, for example, fear: "We are always afraid of losing. Our security, the great molar organization that sustains us, the arborescences we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us – we desire all that".[452] Through the desire to connect, to "represent, interpret or symbolize", one easily ends up categorising people, nations, ideas, in order to make sense out of life. As one categorises one might end up reifying concepts, forgetting one's own involvement in their creation. Perhaps this is more harmful than the fear of losing a sense of security which is based on ill-defined premises. Homi Bhabha speaks of a "*creation* of cultural diversity and a *containment* of

[448] ibid., p. 2.
[449] 2012, p. 115.
[450] Ibid., p. 2.
[451]Minh-Ha, 1989.p. 94.
[452]Deleuze and Guattari, 1987.p. 227.

cultural difference".[453] Bhabha recognises the limit of Western liberal and universalist perspectives to accommodate difference and argues that no culture is complete in itself "because its own symbol forming activity, its own interpellation in the process of representation, language, significance and meaning-making, always underscores the claim to an originary, holisitic, organic identity".[454] Desires for authenticity constructed around visions of an objective and well-defined world result in the reification of authenticity which ultimately hampers the emergence of new forms and modes of experience. Here again I return to Braidotti's point that with the realization of difference "comes also the quest for alternative figurations to express the kind of internally contradictory multi-faceted subjects that we have become."[455]

By positioning themselves as quirky oddities who blur the distinctions between themselves and the personas they create, they reveal the "becoming" of identity. This "becoming" played out through Zef is what disturbs and unsettles the desire to read their work as a static reflection of South African representation as Adam Haupt has argued in his book, *Static: Race and Representation in Post-Apartheid Music, Media and Film* (2012). One can argue that Die Antwoord engage in an incredibly critical practice in which they use various myths of South African culture which provides an illustration of the impossibility of supplying an adequate representation of a multi-cultural society: the limits of representation. Die Antwoord create a strange whiteness by disturbing molarized ideas of identity. Their representation of zef problematizes South African whiteness, revealing the complexity of identity within a post apartheid context.

Die Antwoord presents us not with a representation of politics but with a "politics of perception". They are disinvested in an objective or rational world, rather they work within a simulated world, they are attached to the world of appearances. Die Antwoord's strategy is not subtle and they push this simulated world of Zef appearances to its nth degree. Die Antwoord gives you more, but *more than more*, by supplanting signs of the real as their real. They abuse the rules of simulation and do not attempt to simulate an objective reality, but to create their very own. So, in their own unsubtle and unstable manner they cross into opacity – into a form which seems to lack coherence or meaning. But as Baudrillard keenly observes

[453] Bhabha, H. 1990. 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha'. In Rutherford, J. *Identity: Community, Culture.* (London: Lawrence and Wishart). p. 208-209.
[454]ibid., p. 210.
[455]Braidotti, R.2002. *Metamorphosis: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming.* (United Kingdom, Cambridge: Polity Press) p. 6.

we are never identical or present to ourselves, and this impossibility and lack of meaning (or rather the process of meaning-making), this "radical alterity is our best chance".[456] Die Antwoord's whiteness is an embrace of alterity and the confusion and discomfort that exists within the notion of difference. It is thus a useful way to think in terms of reconfiguring ideas around whiteness. In this way Die Antwoord are able to challenge static ideas of identity and culture in South Africa.

[456] Baudrillard, 2000, p. 71.

Part Four

***Villain:* An Experiment in Disturbing Desire**

4.1. Introduction

Artistic responses (whether they are direct or indirect) have the ability to disturb the desire for whiteness. Shannon Sullivan argues that, "…something more indirect than and much different from conscious argumentation against white privilege is needed to combat it".[457] Since self-reflexivity is necessary when writing about whiteness, (especially for a white, South African female) I decided to weave a practice-led investigation into my doctorate research. To this end, I created *Villain* which was performed on the 2012 Fringe programme of the National Arts Festival in the Nun's Chapel at Rhodes University, Grahamstown.I have attached a DVD copy of *Villain* to provide a sense of the work to readers of this thesis. Due to the complex seating of the audience, the footage does not really provide one with the experience of watching the work, and is purely a documentation of the event.

The inclusion of a practice-led research project forms part of what Laurel Richardson calls the "crystallisation" of information,[458] a deconstruction of traditional notions of validity or of a single truth, and in its place, the embracing of a multiplicity of voices and perspectives. As Richardson argues, writing is a form of enquiry, and not the final product of knowledge making. As an artist I am aware of the distance constructed between the practical and the theoretical and the need to address this gap. In my proposal to the higher degrees committee for this practice-led element I wrote:

> Part of this research will therefore be conducted within the methodological framework of performance-led research which recognises the experiential and interpretative aspect of creation and the process of performance as a viable method for collecting data. This is part of a qualitative process of collecting and engaging with critical texts related to the goals of the proposal. One of these 'texts' being the production (and process) of a performance event which interfaces with the concerns of the research.

This is consistent with the notions of revolt and anxiety (which was discussed in part one) as a means through which to respond to issues of desire and whiteness. The construction of a performance that presents many of the theories discussed in this thesis becomes another way of deconstructing whiteness and revealing the becoming/desire of the research process.

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[457] Sullivan, S. 2006.*Revealing Whiteness: The Unconcious Habits of Racial Privilege*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press). p. 1.
[458]Richardson, L. 2000. In Denzin and Lincoln. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research.* (Thousand Oaks: California). p. 934.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson claim that, "the mind is inherently embodied".[459] One understands the world through one's body. A body is in *becoming* through a multi-sensory engagement with the world around and in it. This embodied idea resonates with practice-led research. It marks the shift away from the objective knowledge gleaned only from "academic" or textual research and takes the researcher's position into account. This idea of embodied research is well suited to performance studies which utilises performance as both it's primary concept and object of study.[460] This applies to my research into desire and whiteness because of a personal investment and obsessive interest in my topic. When Antonin Artaud asks not to be healed, "I have been sick all my life and ask only to keep it up"[461], he recognises the impossibility and "disease of organic closure".[462] He asks for a continuity of his anxiety and thereby acknowledges the limitlessness of becoming and the confusion and joy that come with it.

4.2 The Conceptual Parameters of the Experiment

Villain was essentially an academic exercise as it was not made for profit or commercial success but as a form of enquiry, a process of questioning though performance practices. Being practice-led, it was not measured in terms of a percentage mark but was assessed via peer review. Two peer reviewers (Joni Barnard and Nicola Elliott) assessed *Villain* in relation to a supporting document which framed the practice-led element into the broader framework of my research with its focus on desire and whiteness. The peer reviewers were peers in the very sense of the word as both were choreographers who had studied with me at Rhodes University and had had exposure to my research and performance practice work. The following section is from my framing document which set up a context for the reviewers:

4.2.1 Ideas and concerns

> Through a systematic decentring of desire, micropolitical analysis will lead to soft subversions and imperceptible revolutions that will eventually change the face of the world. – Fèlix Guattari

[459]Lakoff, G and Johnson, M. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh.* (New York: Basic Books) p. 3.
[460]Conquergood, 2000, p. 145
[461]Artaud, A. 1965. *Artaud Anthology.* (California: City Lights Books). p. 191.
[462]. Scheer, E. 2009. 'I Artaud BwO: The uses of Artaud's *To be done with the Judgement of God*." Cull, L (ed). *Deleuze and Performance.* p. 44.

> What I mean is that the relation to the body, what I call the semiotics of the body, is something specifically repressed by the capitalist-socialist-bureaucratic system. So I would say that each time the body is emphasised in a situation –by dancers, by homosexuals, etc – something breaks with the dominant semiotics that crush these semiotics of the body. – Fèlix Guattari

A. Guattari identifies performance as a way to "crush" the dominance of a body that is for the most part defined by discourses that seek to centre and define the subject. With Deleuze Guattari argues that identity is a becoming - a process - which we move through and which is determined by desire. This is in line with the (general) notion in post structural discourse that identity is a fluid concept. Here desire is perceived as the indelible aspect of one's ability to create the world.

B. *Villain* aims to disturb desire through a careful investment in the physical presence of performing bodies. This is to remove the body from a clearly defined representational performance experience. *Villain* is an attempt to refocus the performer's body via a performance form that does not aim to make clear meaning[463] for the audience member – a body that revolts against conventional semiotic codes.

C. I also investigate the figure/body/character of the villain as a complex position in contemporary society. In line with Jean Baudrillard's assertion that 'evil' has disappeared in the contemporary world. This is in relation to the Western and capitalist framing of our society with its complicated power relations and hierarchical structures, in which 'evil' becomes relative – micropolitics–our relationship with the world. Particularly, that one can be taught to desire what oppresses one and through one's apathy become "evil". I am interested in how one is personally implicates in these systems.

D. Furthermore, I am interested in the notion of "possession", whether this is through one's own desire or one that has been forced on one. This possession of desire is connected to capitalist, profit-orientated systems and the infiltration of the public into the private and vice versa. This pertains to the colonisation of one's subjectivity and the need to question this mode of existence.

E. On an even more significant level, *Villain* looks to the position of white subjectivity in South Africa and the privileged, but fractured position that whiteness now occupies (even if

[463]I say all of this knowing full-well that meaning emerges and dissolves through the attempt to make meaning out of the situation.

that is only a theoretical observation). Specifically, the way the colour of our skin can signify things about us which we cannot control (Fanon's reading of blackness, for instance, as something that exists outside of one's control). In *Villain* there are no antagonists or protagonists, only people, neither good nor bad, but indifferent.

4.2.2 Questions for Peer Reviewers

The peer reviewers were asked to respond to *Villain* in relation to two questions:

1. How would you as an audience member describe/process the complication of desire in *Villain*?

2. How does *Villain* perform whiteness? As indifferent / as a scapegoat / as invisible? It would be useful to have examples of how you experience this in the piece.

It is difficult to describe the performance of *Villain*, because it was made for viewing in the very specific context of the Nun's chapel. I have also included a script of Villain as an appendix which contains the text and lyrics used in the work, as well as some stage directions. The piece started five minutes before the show with the chorus members walking around the space in a line in the Butoh posture. One or two would leave the group intermittently to physically engage with the chapel space. Meanwhile the "Voortrekker woman" recited lines related to the weatheras the audience move past her to be seated. Once the audience settled, the "Cloaked figure" began its song "Mythical Kings and Iguanas" while the chorus members begin their circular rotations through and around the audience members. The audience is placed in the middle of the performance space opposite one another (alley spacing) and surrounded by the performance. While the cloaked figure sings, the voortrekker woman drags herself across the space towards the cloaked figure, accompanied by her sewing machine and a small wagon. As the cloaked figure is unveiled, she is revealed as a lethargic, boozed-up "couch potato" who flicks from channel to channel, her gaze focused into the alley between audience members. Behind the cloaked figure, the chorus plays a game of "butoh rugby". Seated on the side of the cloaked figure, is the "lecture machine" who sits quietly with a book on his lap. On two occasions, six chorus members anoint the cloaked figure with gifts: firstly, their earphones and second time they anoint her with a mobile phone, a mobile phone battery charger, a flashdrive, and a crown fashioned from a construction helmet and television aerials "bunny ears". The lecture machine presents on the subject of gravity while the

chorus circulate the space reciting the line: “Dis lekker om te kak as jy geêet het” in English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Tswana and IsiXhosa building in speed and volume. Near the end of the performance, a planted performer, moves into the cloaked figure’s space and preaches about the consciousness of carrots and suggests that focusing on the present is a valuable strategy: “History is now and South Africa”. She helps lead the cloaked figure out of the chapel space and into the night. The performance ends as all the performers, except the voortrekker woman, exit the space.

4.3 The title

The title was chosen because it described the subject and object of my interests. The villain is recognizable as the antagonist, the foe, fiend, and troublemaker. This idea was very influenced by my readings on whiteness in which the narratives of colonisation and apartheid constructed whiteness as evil in my mind. The villain is often represented as the antagonist and is a very important character in the construction of a good plot line. Yet, the villainy I was most interested in presenting was the villainy of everyday life in its most banal forms. The way in which our micropolitics perpetuate the kind of world we live in. The villainy of apathy and indifference was very prominent in my mind as a response to the past and even the present situation. There was no real “evil” character in the conventional sense of the word but every performer was cast as a villain.

Villain was inspired by my engagement with Jean Baudrillard’s notion of evil in *The Intelligence of Evil or The Lucidity Pact* (2005). Baudrillard is concerned with the inevitability of being subjected to the dualist framework of good/evil, light/dark, male/female, active/passive which is a result of so called “objective reality”. He argues that, “the hypothesis of objective reality exerts such a hold on our minds only because it is by far the easiest solution”.[464] The other hypothesis, that objective reality is an illusion and that freedom too is a subjective one, is unbearable which is why the idea of a rational world persists.[465] In Baudrillard’s viewpoint philosophy must “unmask the illusion of objective reality”.[466]He observes how evil is rationalised in contemporary politics and has disappeared or is explained away as misfortune: “This retrospective compassion, this conversion of evil

[464]Baudrillard, J. 2005. *The Intelligence of Evil or The Lucidity Pact.* (United Kingdom: Oxford: Berg Publishers.) p. 47
[465]ibid., p. 47
[466]ibid., p. 40

into misfortune, is the twentieth century's finest industry".[467]Evil deeds are explained away as misfortunes which can be profited from in the name of democracy and humanitarianism:

> This impossibility of thinking evil is matched only by the impossibility of imagining death. ...Hence the question how an entire people was able to follow the Nazis in their enterprise of extermination is one that remains hopelessly insoluble for a rational thought, an Enlightenment thought that is incapable of thinking beyond an ideal version of man, incapable even of envisaging the absence of a response to such a question.[468]

If it is impossible to conceptualise evil, that is because Western moral consciousness is unable to bear the thought of evil: "Any analysis other than the moral is condemned as deluded or irresponsible".[469] For example, the events of September 11 were considered immoral, but this event was a reaction to the equally immoral hegemonic global power symbolised by the Twin Towers. Baudrillard suggests that one must look beyond the simplistic dichotomies between Good and Evil (echoing Nietzsche) arguing that goodness does not reduce the occurrence of evil but rather that they are both "irreducible to each other and inextricably interrelated".[470] His argument forms part of a critique of Enlightenment values which were also used to justify the Imperial project.

The concept of evil as complicity rather than the opposite of good was something I wished to address through *Villain*. My desire was to comment on whiteness, but without creating a work that dictated what whiteness is and how one should react to it. I did not want to take a moral standpoint, neither did I want to make a work about "white guilt" or to redeem or attempt to rehabilitate whiteness. Rather, my intention was to create an experience for the audience where they are made aware of indifference and complicity, not only in relation to history but to the present moment.

4.4 Audience Desire

One way to create a work that does not dictate a certain moral "message" to the audience is through the disturbance of audience desire. There is no way to define the needs or wants of the spectator since there is really no way to define who the audience is. Herbert Blau points

[467]ibid., p. 144
[468]ibid., p. 141
[469] ibid., p. 23
[470]Baudrillard, J. 2002. *The Spirit of Terrorism.* (London: Verso). p. 407

out that the audience is unthinkable, and defined by "odds and anonymous needs".[471] No qualitative or socially cohesive idea of an audience exists, as Alice Rayner puts it: "One of the first problems in trying to understand the word 'audience' comes with the assumption that it signifies a collective version of a single consciousness rather than just the desire for such unity".[472]Both Blau and Rayner's theories of spectatorship are in line with the awareness that individuals and groups cannot be reified into distinct units, that no unitary idea of the individual or the group exists. If the audience is "odd and anonymous" as Blau argues, then it makes sense that the desire of the audience cannot be defined. Rayner, makes the significant argument that, "the dissolution of the unitary subject does not eliminate ethical obligations, it puts them in the foreground".[473]

One of the more unfortunate ways of conceiving desire is to relate it to acquiescence – that desire necessarily implies a lack as Deleuze and Guattari point out in *Anti-Oedipus*.[474] The idea that the spectator needs to fill a gap through an understanding of the performance – that subjective desire implies and wants to receive, to acquire, does not hold in relation to performance which is ephemeral and fleeting. Rather as Anne Ubersfeld argues the "relationship between the spectator's desire and the stage is one of endless wandering but also one of permanent frustration. And it is not desire alone that is frustrated; the totality of the stage space is the object of demands that cannot be met."[475] If the audience's demands cannot be met through the performance alone, what exactly is the point of watching a performance? Perhaps "permanent frustration" is the point of performance? When the audience cannot come to a conclusion or find what they desire on stage, perhaps their "endless wandering" becomes the force of desire.

In the process of acknowledging the lack of any unitary description of the viewer, there has been a desire to awaken the audience out of their passive positions in the theatre. The idea put forward by many scholars on the subject is that theatre must make active participants out of audience members if it is to be considered an ethical site of representation. In this view, theatre must bridge the gap between sender and receiver because these two aspects have been

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[471]Blau, H, 2003. 'Odd, Anonymous Needs: The audience in a dramatized society'. In Auslander, P. *Performance: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Vol. 2. (London and New York: Routledge). p. 275-277.
[472] Rayner, A. 'The Audience: Subjectivity, Community and the Ethics of Listening'. In Auslander, P. 2003. p. 249.
[473]ibid., p. 252.
[474]Deleuze, G and Guattari, F. 1983. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press). p. 26.
[475]Ubersfeld, A. 2003. 'The Pleasure of the Spectator.' In Auslander, 2003, p. 247.

alienated from one another by the crack of modernity in the social fabric. Since theatre involves a gathering of both senders of messages and an audience who receives these, it is up to theatre to lessen this gap, in order to construct a sense of community.Attached to this desire is a mourning of the "lost community" that was once attached to the spectator. In his *Emancipation of the Spectator* (2009), Jacques Rancière argues against the idea that spectators are passive recipients of what they view and experience.

Rancière debunks the critique of the spectacle[476] as an elitist activity which is itself involved in the passifying of the viewer.[477] From this perspective the spectator's engagement is interpreted as non-active, as if viewing excludes any activity on behalf of the viewer. Rancière's project is thus to (at least) theoretically emancipate the viewer from his/her presumed passivity as a spectator. He conceives of the spectator as someone who has the capacity to render meanings and understandings from works of art through the active process of viewership.[478] Importantly Rancière observes that what the audience member gleans from a performance or work of art in not necessarily congruous with the intention of the artists.[479] This is the ethical freedom that is permitted by art; the interpretation of the audience is not definable. For Rancière it is important that the artist "does not teach his pupils *his* knowledge, but orders them to venture into the forest of things and signs…"[480] This means that perhaps the intention of the artist is not as important as the journey of the spectator.

Audience desire is repressed or made passive by constructing the audience as ignorant recipients of predetermined desires. There are inherent contradictions in the critique of the spectacle, Rancière observes that very often this critique presents itself "as a luxury commodity pertaining to the very logic it denounces".[481] This is similar to the way that desire is repressed under capitalism so that it may be "liberated" under the auspices of democracies which are sustained by the market economy. The critique of the spectacle is fuelled by a desire to *recapture* a sense of community, of a move away from the spectacle to bridge the gap between the sender of signs and the receiver. Rancière asks: "What is more interactive, more communitarian, about these spectators (theatre audience) than a mass of individuals watching the same television show at the same hour?"[482] He notes that the idea that theatre is

[476]Debord, G. 1992. *The Society of the Spectacle and other films.*(London: Rebel Press).
[477]Rancière, J. 2009. *The Emancipated Spectator.*(London and New York: Verso). pp. 44-45.
[478]ibid., p.14.
[479]ibid., p. 13-14.
[480] ibid. p.11.
[481]ibid., p. 30.
[482]ibid., p. 16.

a community activity comes from a presupposition that theatre is "in and of itself communitarian".[483] This belief in a community of active spectators that have to be reclaimed from the spectacle undermines the intelligence of the audience member and betrays a melancholic belief that once upon a time there was a united community ready to become active participants of their society.

Why would it be dangerous to conceive of an audience united in concern and active in response to what it sees? This hardly sounds like a negative desire, but if we think modernity put an end to community, we believe that ignorance is a form of bliss. Since there is no proof that a unified community ever existed, the desire for such is a mourning of something that may never have existed. The critique of the "system" can become a pointless academic indulgence. Rancière explains that these melancholic reactions to the "loss" of community due to modernity and the rise of the commodity driven capitalist system, forget that they form a part of the system they critique:

> Melancholy feeds on its own impotence. It is enough for it to be able to convert it into a generalized impotence and reserve for itself the position of the lucid mind casting a disenchanted eye over a world in which critical interpretation of the system has become an element of the system itself.[484]

What I find most useful about Rancière's argument is how it destabilizes the assumption that the audience member is non-active in the construction of desire on stage. In *Villain* I attempted to complicate the spectator's desire for meaning both through the form and the content of the work. The most obvious means to create this disturbance of desire was to reject chronological narrative structures and to use alienation devices to reveal a multiplicity of viewpoints. This approach was to aid in destabilising "signs" of whiteness.

4.5. The Rehearsal Process

The rehearsal process did not involve hours of talking about desire or whiteness. As a choreographer my instinct in the process of making is always first aimed at the body. In other words, I did not wish to dictate any particular "decision" on whiteness or desire or a clear

[483]ibid., p. 16.
[484]ibid., p. 37.

conceptual direction for the piece. *Villain* was not a workshopped production in which the performers contributed though their own narratives. This also means that I was not interested in the performer's intellectual or language based responses to themes. In my own experience in devising or choreographing performance, I prefer not to impose an idea or narrative but rather to provoke physical responses through imagery, sound and text.[485] Rehearsals were focused on training the performers. This was imperative as I was working with very young performers who had no experience performing the Butoh quality I desired for the work. *Villain* was mainly engaged in a task-based rehearsal process meaning that the performance was in many ways presented as a task for the performers. This was done in order to keep the responses of the performers fresh rather than rehearsed and perfect. Through this method the performances were not polished because I wished to frame *Villain* as an event and sensation, as a living, breathing event for both the performers and the audience members – a becoming.

Villain was inspired by the idea of haecceity within becoming which was a very important concept in the making and eventual performance of the work. So much so that Deleuze and Guattari's writing on the subject matter was included in the work as spoken text, and was used repeatedly. The medieval philosopher, John Duns Scotus first coined the term haecceity to refer to the "this-ness" of a particular object or the unique aspect that makes an object identifiable.[486] The haecceity is the specificity of an event or a person; the distinct qualities of a particular thing which separates it from others of a similar kind. Since haecceity is not a transcendental concept it is difficult to describe, something that perhaps cannot be adequately defined but rather experienced through the process of becoming. What Deleuze and Guattari try to communicate is that "essence" is itself a becoming which establishes its "thisness" (haecceity) through the process and the simultaneous interactions with multiple becomings. Thus unlike quiddity, haecceity does not refer to a "universal" construction of essence but to a "mode of individuation", any one particular manner of becoming.[487] Haecceity is our singularity: "For you will yield nothing to haecceities unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that".[488] Haecceity is very relevant in relation to the kind of

[485]This is not to say that I do not have any clear ideas but that I prefer not to voice them through a linear dialogue with performers, but prefer to provoke responses through sensorial rather than a purely cognitive process of direction.
[486] Hickey Moody, A. 2009. 'Becoming-Dinosaur: Collective Process and Movement Aesthetics.' In Cull, L. *Deleuze and Performance.* (Edinburgh University Press). p. 173; Rosenkrantz, 1993. *Haecceity:An Ontological Essay.* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers). p. 1-2.
[487]Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 261.
[488] ibid.. p. 262.

performance I desired. By giving tasks rather than asking for a "performance" or a show I was in some ways able to establish the performance as an event and an experience. These lines from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* were used as spoken text in the production;

> Climate, wind, season, hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them. This should be read without a pause: the-animal-stalks-at-five-o'clock. The becoming-night of an animal, blood nuptials. Five o'clock is this animal! This animal is this place! "The thin dog is running in the road, this dog is the road," cries Virginia Woolf. That is how we need to feel.[489]

These lines describe the idea of haecceity very well as it refers to one's interaction with the environment and how relationships within a specific space are defined by a particular character – a way being or becoming. The reference to Virginia Woolf who attempted to write the haecceity, to event-ify her writing, is well suited to the description of the concept which is linked to becoming. The haecceity is the visibility and experience of becoming.

4.6 Space

Although there should perhaps be no assumptions about the role of spectator as I have been arguing, the traditional expectations that audiences may have of theatre work was disrupted through a unique setting. *Villain* was performed in, and made for, a deconsecrated Nun's Chapel on Rhodes University campus. In many ways it can be described as a site-specific performance because the choreography was designed and inspired by that particular space.I chose this site primarily because it provided an intimacy with the audience. Peer reviewer, Barnard notes that: "Site-specific work challenges the traditional audience/spectator relationship. The proximity between spectator and performer becomes far more intimate: the spectator cannot sit passively and watch the action from a distance, but is immersed in the action that takes place all around and up close".[490] Although deconsecrated, the building remains visually suggestive of its original religious function through its architecture, allowing an easy framing as a meditative and reflective space. Furthermore, Christian religious doctrines are also focused on dichotomies between good and evil and thus add to the construction of a moral universe in which good prevails.

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[489] ibid., p. 263.
[490] See Appendix B, p. 176.

The Nun's Chapel offered the opportunity to split the focus of the audience, to have different things going on at once, to surround them with the performance, and essentially, for the audience and performers to share the performance space. I wanted to overwhelm the audience with the proximity of the performers so that they were implicated in the action but stuck in their seats. Only forty people were admitted into the venue for the performance, which added to the intimacy of the experience. The seating arrangement proved to be very challenging to conceptualise, and the final decision to seat the audience in two lines facing each other was made with the help of colleagues and supervisors. By placing viewers in this position they were confronted with the gaze of other audience members and were put "on show" themselves. This seating arrangement meant that they were not positioned towards any specific focal point but had to turn their heads to see the performance. After the work, I heard from many audience members how uncomfortable they felt with this arrangement which was a way to gauge its success in my mind. As Nicola Elliott put it:

> A chapel space is traditionally one of harmony, peace and quiet reflection. A theatre space is traditionally one of becoming invisible (as the audience member) and anticipating the show (or settling down for it) which soon starts on the stage...Our expectations for either a traditional chapel space or a traditional theatre space are unfulfilled.[491]

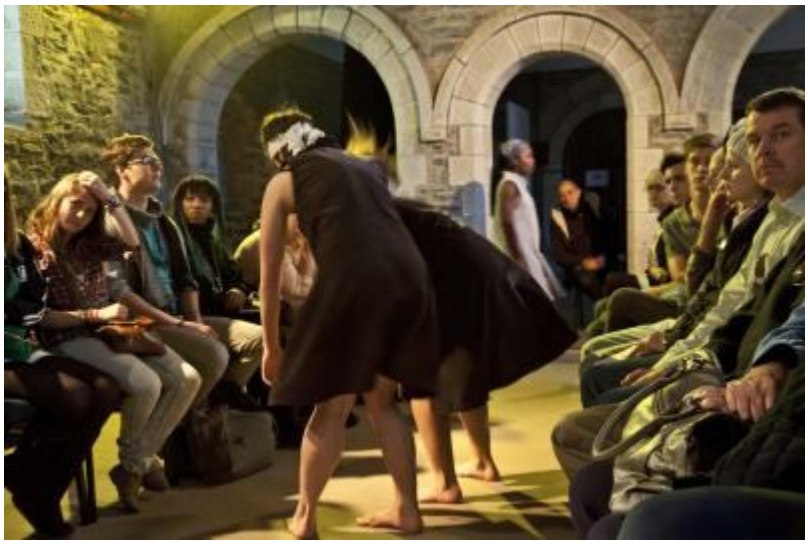

Image 19: The seating arrangement for *Villain* Nun's Chapel. Photo by Chris de Beer.

[491] See Appendix A, p. 168.

4.7. A Butoh Becoming: (non) Chorus Work

Conceptually, I hoped to reveal a becoming through the practice of Butoh inspired movement. *Ankoku* Butoh is an avant-garde performing art developed by Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno in Japan in the late 1950's. For the purpose of this thesis, I have focused more attention on writings by and about Tatsumi Hijikata, since his influence has more directly impacted on my own experience of Butoh, specifically the *Hakutôbô* (White Peach) Butoh body. Butoh practices are usually described through a phenomenological lens using theory that relates to the way one experiences consciousness. Although Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming is often interpreted as a way to describe the non-linearity of thought in relation to literary or psychoanalytic concepts it is also a very useful in relation to the somatic process of Butoh performance practices. For example, Hijikata in his "dance of utter darkness"[492] endeavoured to evoke the immediacy of the body through performance. Jean Viala notes:

> Hijikata conceives of dance as the need to break through the shell formed by social habits, which keep the body lagging behind the revolutions already accomplished in contemporary thought. For him the body is not a means but an end, not to be used to transmit ideas, but on the contrary, to question, to rethink, to recreate. Dance is not a linear composition, not a syntactical arrangement of body movements, but rather the exploration of the exemplary depth of the body itself; not a desire to pronounce a discourse, but to search for meaning.[493]

Deleuze and Guattari in their writings on the subject often describe 'becoming' through negation. For instance, becoming is never imitation – becoming is not to identify with something or someone. As Deleuze and Guattari argue:

> Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfills, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire.[494]

[492] To clarify, Ankoku means "utter darkness" (coined by Hijikata) and Butoh refers to dance in a more general way, Kurihara Nanako notes, "The word "buto" is used in compounds such as buto-kai, a European-type ball danceor shi no buto, the medieval European dance of death (Nanako Kurihara. 2000. Hijikata Tatsumi: The Words of Butoh. *The Drama Review*. p.12. The notion of "darkness" in Butoh does not operate as a binary between light and darkness and good or bad, rather the "dance of utter" darkness strives to empty the dancer's consciousness of binaries between the body and the environment it inhabits- the subject strives to become object.

[493] Viala and Masson-Sekine. 1988. *Butoh: Shades of Darkness.*(Tokyo: Shufunotomo). p. 64.

[494]1987, p. 272.

Becoming initiates a focus on the immanence of being (as multiple and always specific) which is propelled into new ways of thinking through an interconnectedness with other terms and modes of being. Deleuze and Guattari state; "Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, 'appearing,' 'being,' 'equaling,' or 'producing.'"[495] Becoming understood as a transformative process is notable in many performance practices and philosophies of performance and not only in Butoh. Antonin Artaud states:

> It seems, in brief, that the highest possible idea of the theater is one that reconciles us philosophically with Becoming, suggesting to us through all sorts of objective situations the furtive idea of the passage and transmutation of ideas into things, much more than the transformation and stumbling of feelings into words.[496]

Artaud identifies the intimate relationship between becoming and performance. Words may be the means but not necessarily the end intention of a performance. For Artaud, the words themselves have to transcend their incapacity to fully represent or perform ideas. Artaud's vision for performance is one that moves away from a representational towards an embodied performance. Artaud presents a critique of the majoritarian scriptocentric context he existed in and enters into a becoming-minoritarian through his theories. Crucial to Artaud's writing about the Theatre of Cruelty is the notion of the "Body without Organs" (BwO)—"a zone that is not already infected with the disease of organic closure".[497]Artaud's desire for theatre to make itself a BwO was, as Edward Scheer explains a desire to free life "from its attachment to representation".[498] In Artaud's radio play "To Have Done with the Judgement of God" (1947) he issues a rejection of the "organs" and "judgement" which can be understood as the mechanisms of power which subjugate the body and reify the subject. According to Deleuze (who with Guattari appropriated the concept of the BwO), "Judgement prevents the emergence of any new mode of existence".[499] In his war against judgement Artaud bids us to reject masterpieces and embraces the notion of becoming as a valid means to create.[500]

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[495]1987, p. 239.
[496]Artaud, 1958, p.109.
[497]Scheer, E. 2009. 'I Artaud BwO: The Uses of Artaud's *To Have Done with the Judgement of God.* In Cull, p. 44.
[498]ibid., p. 45.
[499]Deleuze, G. 1998. *Essays Critical and Clinical*. (United Kingdom: Verso). p. 135.
[500]Artaud, A. 1958. *Theater and its Double*. (New York: Grove Press). p. 74

A copy of Artaud's "To Have Done with the Judgement of God" reached Tatsumi Hijikata in the 1960's and had a considerable influence on the development of his Butoh practice. Similar to Artaud's desire to rid the body of organs, Hijikata desired to evoke the immediacy of bodily experiences and to undo the intense socialization (codification) of the body through dance. This desire can be seen in Hijikata's dance works and his writing which also carries the surrealist tone of Artaud's: "I am desperately trying to escape from the cellar of the freedom of being tied and from the relationship between the ropes used for tying".[501] Hijikata's words echo Artaud's when he states:

> For you can tie me up if you wish, but there is nothing more useless than an organ. When you have made him a body without organs then you will have delivered him from all his automatisms and restored to him his true freedom.[502]

In *Ankoku* Butoh the body is not used to communicate aesthetically or through literal meaning, but as "a defiant entity that owns its own abilities to generate meaning".[503] To focus on the immediacy of experience is to embrace the process of becoming. The embodied performance desired by Artaud, and later Hijikata, acknowledges corporeality – a recognition of the multiple facets that constitute the performers presence on stage. As Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Anna-Sanchez-Coleberg note; "Corporeality sees the human body as a body that is personal, social, emotional, animal, mineral, vegetable, sexual, biological and psychological, as well as an agent of motion".[504] This multiplicity of the subject and his/her becomings was very important in the creation of the choreography for *Villain*.

Becoming is the dynamic aspect of being, and can involve a metamorphosis and transformation, yet this is not necessarily perceptible. The word becoming thus does not enter the space of transformation, but remains centred on the process, the continuity of the transformation. These concepts of continuity and process over product, have been at the forefront of my experiences with Butoh dance. Although I had no formal training in Butoh dance I had been exposed to it in my studies and my own developing aesthetic also leaned towards this particular style of performing. This was notable in my interest in the surreal, the grotesque, and a rhythmical orientation in my work towards the condensed energy that is

[501]Hijikata, T. 'To Prison'. *The Drama Review.* Vol. 44, No. 1 (Spring, 2000), p. 42.
[502]Artaud, A. 1988. *Selected Writings*. (Berkeley: University of California Press). p. 571.
[503]Truter, V. 2007. *The originating impulses of Ankoku Butoh: Towards an understanding of the trans-cultural embodiment of Tatsumi Hijikata's dance of darkness*. Half thesis: Rhodes University, Grahamstown. p. 34.
[504]Preston-Dunlop, V, and Sanchez-Coleberg. 2002. *Dance and the Performative*. (London: Verve Publishing.) p. 9.

often associated with Butoh performances. My training in formal Butoh practices is limited which is why *Villain* is argued as Butoh *inspired*. I first experienced the metamorphic form of Butoh becoming when in 2009 Frauke (Caroline Lundblad) had a brief residency at Rhodes Drama department and led a number of workshops. The opportunity to gather more research on this form was made possible when she returned in 2010 to create *Ama-no-gawa* with the First Physical Theatre Company. She was trained in various forms of Butoh, but her teaching to us was mainly focused on *Hakutôbô* (White Peach) Butoh. The *Hakutôbô* form is notable in the round back of the performer, a deep contraction of the torso which can be likened to Martha Graham's contraction of the back in her dance language.

Butoh scholar, Sondra Fraleigh, notes that "becoming other" is not a new idea and is related to spiritual practices of many non-Western cultures such as the transmigration into the body of another.[505] This is written about in depth in Carlos Castaneda's autoethnographic accounts of the teachings he received from Don Juan Matis. In one narrative, Don Juan teaches Castaneda to morph into a crow which confuses the writer who cannot accept the plausibility of this transformation. Don Juan replies to this doubt with; "Am I man or a bird? I'm a man who knows how to become a bird."[506] Don Juan is aware of the possibilities of becoming by entering into a filiation with the crow. By becoming a crow he gains an insight into himself and his surroundings. His perception plugs into what he refers to as non-ordinary reality. Through this becoming-crow Castaneda experiences his body (he becomes a crow) and his thoughts (he s*ees* through the eyes of the crow) differently. Don Juan does not become a half-crow-half-human but enters a relationship with the elements available to him. This instance of Castaneda becoming-crow reminded me of my experience of Butoh performance. While one does not transform "literally" into another form, one shares a becoming through the morphing Butoh body in practice. Fraleigh describes Butoh as a "somatic process of becoming".[507] This becoming may be imperceptible for a rational or logocentric perception of reality. Rosi Braidoitti argues that becoming:

> mark processes of communication and mutual contamination of states of experience. As such, the steps of 'becoming' are neither reproduction nor imitation, but rather empathic proximity and intensive interconnectedness.[508]

[505]Fraleigh, S. 2010. *Dance*: *Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy*. (University of Illinois Press). p. 44.
[506]Castaneda, C. 2008. *The Teaching of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*. (Berkeley: University of California University Press). p. 27.
[507]Fraleigh, 2010, p. 42.
[508]Braidotti, 2002, p. 8.

When "performing" Butoh one desires to enter a becoming by trying to narrow the gap between self and environment – by becoming aware of one's "interconnectedness" with a particular material. In my own experience Butoh moves away from imitation and attempts to *embody* materials and this is where the idea of becoming is most intense. Fraleigh notes, "the butoh body is relational and not representational".[509] Since Butoh performance is about becoming rather than representing the performance of a material is akin to a strict improvisation. In over-simplified terms, the material can be described as the source of the movement, and the body's response to this stimulus is the dance. The "material" is not necessarily the performance of rehearsed dance steps, but rather an attempt to find the immediacy. The performance of the material is an immediate reaction to the physical imagination/intelligence of the body. Hijikata was himself obsessed with transformation: to dissolve the space between the subject and object.[510]In order to enter this becoming a great amount of effort is placed on finding an 'erased' and 'empty' body to be able to embody the material. Since Butoh demands physical and mental concentration the performer needs to be put aside social concerns and expectations.

In Hijikata's writing one can see the intense inquiry and questioning of the socialised body. The Japanese word for this "body stamp" is *Inkantai*; a personal seal or stamp which is used instead of a signature.[511] As Hijikata points out:

> This form, (…) is [just] a shabby "body stamp". It's lacking, but because it's a body thing, you can't just recklessly make it vanish. Because this body has no written contract, it just arises as a simple credo of faith".[512]

The "body stamp" Hijikata refers to is the social body which has been developed from childhood, our own signature as an individual. The stripping of the "body stamp" or social mask is both physically painful and confusing as a process, but very necessary for the body to take part in becoming. Hijikata himself observed that it is a complex and sometimes painful process, that shifting into a body can make one cry.[513]

During the preparation for *Villain*, I put a lot of rehearsal time into creating a "ready" body for the performers. This idea is similar to Jerzy Grotowski's *via negativa* in which the

[509]Fraleigh, 2010, p. 48.
[510]Truter, 2007. p. 61.
[511]Polzer, 2004. Polzer, Elena. Hijikata Tatsumi's *'From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein'*. Dissertation. Humboldt University, Berlin. p. 41.
[512]ibid., p. 40.
[513]ibid., p. 40.

performer must learn to let go of the "bag of tricks" s/he usually (and habitually) resorts to in a given situation:

> The education of an actor in our theatre is not a matter of teaching him, we attempt to eliminate his organism's resistance to this psychic process. The result is freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction in such a way that the impulse is already an outer reaction. Impulse and action are concurrent the body vanishes, burns and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses.[514]

Grotowski's explanation regarding the practice of *via negative* resonates very well with Butoh training which attacks the performer's habitual physical patterns in order to "kill the body" as Hijikata puts it.

The training process was necessary since I was working with young and inexperienced performers, and trying to work against "showy" (obvious, representational, virtuosic) physical responses. I incorporated the training practices I received from Frauke to provoke moments of Butoh language from the performers. I focused mainly on one material called "darkness", which involves a very intense response in the body. Darkness is understood here as a verb, not an intellectual or conceptual idea of darkness. It involves an extreme contraction in the body which is focused on the gravitational force of a black hole sucking matter into itself. The performer focuses on the sensation of being surrounded by darkness – to experience one's body as a black hole, a dark cave, or a pit of dark slime at the bottom of a dark lake. The idea was to get the performers to embody this force, to become darkness or at least to have them work at provoking this sensation in their bodies. While the material "darkness" is specifically related to a physical task for the performers, the notion of "sucking" matter is related to the capitalist mentality of consumption. As Barnard observes: "The capitalist system perpetuates the culture of commodification, which is directly related to whiteness and 'white culture'."[515] This capitalist manner of being absorbed in consumption is tied to the history of imperialism with its understanding of desire as something that must be obtained, rather than the idea of desire as a creative and affirmative aspect of life.

The development of the Butoh language in *Villain* was itself only a layer of the work as it was not my intention to create a "pure" Butoh dance but something inspired by it. Fraleigh observes; "When I am watching something entertaining, I may simply expect to be

[514]Grotowski, J. 1968.*Towards a Poor Theatre*. (New York: Routledge). p. 16.
[515] See Appendix B. p. 177.

entertained. But I don't attend to butoh in this way."[516] Since Butoh is not merely a source for entertainment it can effect the viewer's expectations of dance and performance. In a post-capitalist context where desire is predetermined and regulated through mediation, Butoh practices focus on developing the physical knowledge of the body to institute a fresh approach to dance performance.Butoh can institute a decentring of desire by focusing on the notion of becoming rather than representing. Peer reviewer Joni Barnard acknowledges this non-presentational style of performance when she notes that; "The performer is disengaged from the idea of presentation and we, as audience, as spectators, are not presented with a product, but are witness to the process of a performer's internal experience".[517]Although the body might never achieve this full becoming or total transformation it aims to, and perhaps it is this desire, this intention to transform that becomes the Butoh dance. Elliott's comments on the chorus' performance elaborates on this attempt:

> When the performer attempted to achieve the becoming (from Butoh and from Smit's own tradition), what we witnessed was a becoming *within* the becoming. The young, partially trained performers presented desire in striving to construct themselves within Smit'sButoh inspired aesthetic and within Butoh itself. We watch them not so much imparting meaning as grappling with the tools to construct it...I was overwhelmed with this very powerful and moving element in the work, which forwent Butohesque virtuosity in favour of an exquisite failing. For me it presented one of the great successes of the work as a whole and significantly reinforced the complication of desire in the work, especially in light of the context reference of "disturb[ing] desire through a careful investment in the physical presence of performing bodies".[518]

Elliott's comment reveals a paradoxical element of Butoh: the rejection of codified movement in Butoh is traversed with the contradiction of codes and techniques to make this revolt possible. Although Hijikata's originating impulse for *Ankoku* Butoh was principally a revolt against codification, today Butoh has trailed off in many different directions and a range of codes and methods have been developed to find this body in revolt.[519] Hijikata's stripping of socialized body, for instance, became a method of Butoh training. For Elliott the success of the chorus' becoming was their "failure" to attain a virtuoso display of Butoh as pure dance.

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[516]Fraleigh, 2010, p. 42.
[517] See Appendix B, p. 173.
[518] See Appendix A, p. 169.
[519]Roquet, P. 2003.'Towards The Bowels of the Earth: Butoh Writing in Perspective.' Diss. Pomona College, California. pp. 49-50.

4.8. Butoh as a "line of flight"

Toward the end of the performance of *Villain*, after the cloaked figure had left her "throne", one of the chorus members inflated a balloon and formed it into the shape of dog. Balloon modelling is often done to entertain people (especially young children), but the act of balloon modelling is not considered a "real" job. Although the balloon twister may simply enjoy the act of creating balloon animals, the skill of this act is not necessarily interpreted as having much value except as entertainment. The balloon is morphed and twisted into a shape that becomes recognizable as a particular form, an animal for instance. The making of the balloon animal in *Villain* "flaunts it aimlessness" and is a commentary on form and the skill needed to perform something that may be interpreted as useless in a profit-oriented society:

> All the power of civilized morality, hand in hand with the capitalist economic system and its political institutions, is utterly opposed to using the body simply for the purpose, means, or tool of pleasure. Still more, to a production-oriented society, the aimless use of the body, which I call dance, is a deadly enemy which must be taboo. I am able to say that my dance shares a common basis with crime, male homosexuality, festivals, and rituals because it is behavior that explicitly flaunts its aimlessness in the face of a production oriented society.[520]

Guattari argues that the body and the way one chooses to use one's body can be a way to challenge social repression.[521] Although Butoh may be reterritorialized, codified and aestheticised for profit, it may also be used as a "line of flight". One can make something like Butoh or balloon twisting a "line of flight", a way to escape the pressures of repression and standardization. This escape is not a flight away from "reality" but an act of creating one's own reality with all its difficulties and dangers. Connecting oneself to a desiring machine does not necessarily mean that one's "lines of flight" will not "reproduce the very formations their function it was to dismantle or outflank?[522] Deleuze and Guattari argue that one must have an understanding of what is repressive in order to connect to a line of flight; "Here, the program, the slogan, of schizoanalysis is: Find your black holes and white walls, know them, know your faces; it is the only way you will be able to dismantle them and draw

[520]Hijikata, T. 2000. p. 44-45.
[521]Guattari, 1996, p. 4.
[522]Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 3.

your lines of flight".[523]The focus on apprehending the socialised body and creating a different body, as part of the becoming of Butoh, reveals the form's "line of flight".

As the rehearsal process continued I noticed that as the performers became more comfortable with this idea of "erasing the self", their unique-ness became more apparent. Ironically, as the chorus worked to come together as a whole, each person's physicality was heightened, instead of being subsumed within the group. The performers' "thisness" (haecceity) became pronounced as they fought against their habitual movement patterns. Since they had not been given "steps" to perform they had to respond to the materials and ideas presented to the best of their ability. Due to the improvisational or task-based nature of the dance the performers interpreted the idea of "darkness" each in their own way. This observation influenced the design of the work as a decision to reveal certain idiosyncratic elements of the performers through their costume. They were allowed to keep their jewellery on and could choose their own hairstyles. This decision seemed an aid in the disturbance of desire. Elliott observes how the display of elements from their "real selves" enabled a complication of theatrical desire;

> These things are neither featured nor hidden, but nonetheless function as an alienating device reminding us that the performance is a construct, a technique, rather than a magical transformation, or an illusion to consume us.[524]

Alongside this process of engaging with Butoh movement and physical ideas of becoming another layer of becoming was established by incorporating the movement language developed by the chorus with elements, images and actions specific to a contemporary (South African) context. One example is the inclusion of the rugby ball and the playing/dancing of a rugby game by the chorus members. Scholarship on Butoh practices often portray the dance form as a sacred kind of event, with a tendency to focus on the mystical qualities of the form. These attempts to intellectualise the form, at times seems to contradict the deeply physical nature of this performance. Butoh's comic elements are often unmentioned and yet, in terms of form, has great potential for absurd comedy. Butoh is regarded as a serious dance form, the idea of a "dance of utter darkness" seems to connote a solemn kind of performance. On another level, humour was important in breaking down the seriousness of the subject matter, and to break any illusion that may have been created through the solemn quality of the

[523]ibid., p. 188.
[524] See Appendix A, p. 169.

movement, as Barnard notes: "The use of irony and humour play a significant role in *Villain.* This becomes a device to disarm the audience." Growing up in a house filled with rugby supporters provided me with empirical evidence that rugby itself can be experienced as a sacred and special part of existence. In connecting Butoh with rugby we created another layer of becoming in which two very physical roles are brought together. Both rugby and Butoh require strenuous physical training procedures and reveal an almost desperate kind of dedication to dance or sport. The incongruity of connecting the avant-garde form of Butoh with a popular sport like rugby created an absurd scene, "hysterical," as peer reviewer Joni Barnard observed.[525]The rugby ball is significant in the context of South African whiteness as it is symbolic of Afrikaaner culture. The inclusion of the rugby ball as a prop challenged the austerity of Butoh while the Butoh aesthetic undermined the "sacredness" of the rugby.

4.9. The "Characters"

Besides the ten chorus members, the cast of *Villain* also included four "characters": the cloaked figure, the lame woman, the lecturing machine and a planted female "audience member".

The idea of the goat as symbolic of evil was of particular importance so as to represent the Devil who was cast out of heaven and is to blame for tempting mankind into sinful behaviour. Satan becomes a scapegoat as the initiator of sin—an ancient mythological sign of the villain. Scapegoating and the process of blame-shifting informed the conceptualisation of the performance. While figures of authority are expected to make decisions on behalf of others, the public can be quick to blame the condition of their lives on the mistakes of these authority figures. The word scapegoat comes from the Jewish rituals of sacrifice when a goat was used to atone for the sins of the community. During Yom Kippur, the high priest would symbolically lay the sins of the community onto a goat (chosen by lot) who would be led into the desert and cast off a cliff. The scapegoat was also known as a sacrifice for the demon Azazel while the goat "for the Lord" was presented as a living sacrifice.[526] Alongside this Judeo Christian reference to Satan was the symbol of the Greek goat-god Pan. The goat god relates to the Dionysian element with its references to the "liberation" of desire.

[525] See Appendix B, p. 175.
[526]Holy Bible: New International Version. 1984. (Cape Town: International Bible Society) p. 127.

René Girard first observed a connection between scapegoating and what he refers to as "mimetic desire". Mimetic desire as Girard argues is related to humanity's tendency to imitate desires – that one desires what other people desire which is the cause of violent actions.[527] According to Girard, societies are united by centring their mimetic desires on the annihilation of a scapegoat. He argues that mimetic desire is the driving force behind collective violence. Although Girard's notion of desire is limited to the unconscious and the theory of mimetic desire cannot account for the multiplicity of desire, the notion of scapegoating is pertinent. The blame shifting desire mirrors the morality for "slaves" as Nietzsche and Deleuze would argue, and as Cull observes, "a slave attitude to life is characterised by the attribution of blame".[528] Furthermore, the notion of scapegoating and the symbolic understanding of the goat as evil or a carrier of sin was particularly relevant to whiteness in the South African context. The idea of "carrying" both shame and privilege within one body.

The goat aspect in *Villain* was most notably in Thalia Laric and Hannah Lax's "goat duel". These two cast members performed a movement language that was completely different to that of the rest of the chorus. Their fight began violently and climaxed in aggressive headlocks as they charged at each other as goats are known to do in their natural setting. Their movement vocabulary was used to create rhythmical variation with their impactful movement, which worked in contrast to the condensed energy and slow/continuous quality of the rest of the chorus. This contrast aided in creating a split focus for the audience. The two goats are representative of the two goats chosen by lot as is done in the Jewish ritual; one to be sacrificed to God and one as the scapegoat. Since the impotent cloaked figure is unable to perform the ritual, the two goats attempt to figure out their "roles" as either the scapegoat or the sacrificial goat through this duel. They fail at this attempt and in their exhausted states fall asleep in a heap on the floor. Afterwards, the two blindfold each other and become an image of the "blind leading the blind". This notion of blindness is related to indifference and more specifically the "blindness" of whiteness. Therefore it aims to comment on the inability to see one's complicity and privilege as a white person. It is important to note that the scene was not constructed or introduced in a clear manner. The two performers were not introduced as scapegoats and the biblical narrative was not told to the audience. Rather, the idea itself was

[527] Girard, R. 1987. *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press. p. 15-17.
[528] Cull, L. 2013. *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics. of Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan). p. 214.

used as a source for the construction of movement for the duet. It alludes to this without making it clear, leaving space for interpretation. While the goat duel was perhaps the most obvious reference to the scapegoat, this idea was also to be seen in the cloaked figure who has to journey out of the space as a willing sacrifice.

Image 16: Collapsed at the end of the "Goat duel". Photo by Chris de Beer.

The cloaked figure, played by Jennifer Schneeberger, was cast as the centre of "evil" within the space around which the chorus swarmed. Of particular interest to me was the fragility of anyone who assumes a position of power, as this fragility is masked by the *idea* of power itself. Rather than portray Lucifer or Pan as he is described in poems and prose, I wanted to present a more nuanced and contemporary idea of evil. Every person in the room was a villain in my mind because everyone was equally complicit in their own life. Since the cloaked figure occupied the central area or focal point of the performance venue, the father/mother aspect was "set up" as a figure around which the performance revolved. At the start of the performance she was revealed as a cloaked and mystical figure singing a melodious song behind a fox pelt which was used as a kind of puppet. However, as Elliott comments, she was then "revealed as a drunk couch potato" which comments on the bathos created through this role. Her costume beneath the cloak brought together disparate periods: aspects of early 19th century fashion in the sleeves and collar, with a 1990s t-shirt portraying an image of Kurt Cobain. The character also slips between gender roles as she embodies a male father figure, a matriarch and an androgynous vagrant.

The actions she performs are mundane, everyday actions such as pouring a glass of whisky and flicking through DSTV (satellite television) channels. The cloaked figure's actions are

not violent and she displays no urgency; she is sad, crying, tired and remains seated for most of the performance. She is "set up" as the most important character but does very little to earn this role. Contrary to the expectation of playing the villain, the performer played a passive, impotently omnipotent force within the piece. Although she does nothing but drink, sleep, and channel surf, she still has power over the chorus members.

The cloaked figure is attached to the couch and television which evokes a banal existence lived vicariously through television. She gives a performance of watching television, she flicks from one channel to the other, falls asleep, and quotes well-known lines from television adverts, for example: "You can stay as you are for the rest of your life, or you can change to Mainstay". This was the tag line from an advert for a brand of alcohol promoted by commercials which used the imagery of yachting and young white adults in beach attire to conjure the idea of paradise. Mainstay Cane, a brand unique to South Africa, was launched in 1954 and is produced using sugar cane grown in KwaZulu Natal. The newest advert for Mainstay, made in 2011, also represents this idyllic or paradisiacal lifestyle. The narrator refers to the island they are travelling to as a "republic" and describes it as a place where "everybody is one colour". Shortly after the release of the commercial, perhaps realizing the "whiteness" of those lines, the producers reverted to, "here, everyone is exactly the same: gorgeous". My insertion of the tag line into *Villain* was a very subtle reference to the fantasy images we are presented with on television, but was also a reference to the 1980s in which fantasy images of paradise were presented to viewers in a difficult political atmosphere.

At one point within the performance the cloaked figure is crowned with a headdress which has been made out of a construction helmet adorned with fur, insulated wiring, and a television aerial. The crown is a reference to Christ's crucifixion but also to goat horns symbolized by the old "bunny eared" portable television aerials. The chorus members hand over their earphones, flashdrive, cell phone and battery charger as gifts to their scapegoat king/queen. The receiving of these gifts reveal her power but she is simultaneously weighed down by them. As the reviewer Sarah Robeson noted, "Jen Schneeberger transforms herself into a final still image of nothingness, once she's been smothered and consumed by the technological 'Now'".[529] After receiving these gifts she begins a journey out of the building while simultaneously eating liquorice sweets and singing the Dory Previn song, "Mythical

[529] Robeson, S. 2012. 'Villain Attacks Comfort Zones'.*Reviews:Artsblog* Accessed online: http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za/show/villain-attacks-comfort-zones/ on 6 July 2012.

Kings and Iguanas". While whiteness comes with privileges attached to it, these are the result of a history of inequality. The technological gifts sacrificed to the "cloaked figure" are symbols of middle-class life in which one is tied to technology or separated from the world. These are the "tools" that can be used by the cloaked figure once she has escaped the static space of the chapel. Although this character seems completely excessive or extraneous, it accepts its role as scapegoat and leaves the throne and, eventually, the chapel.

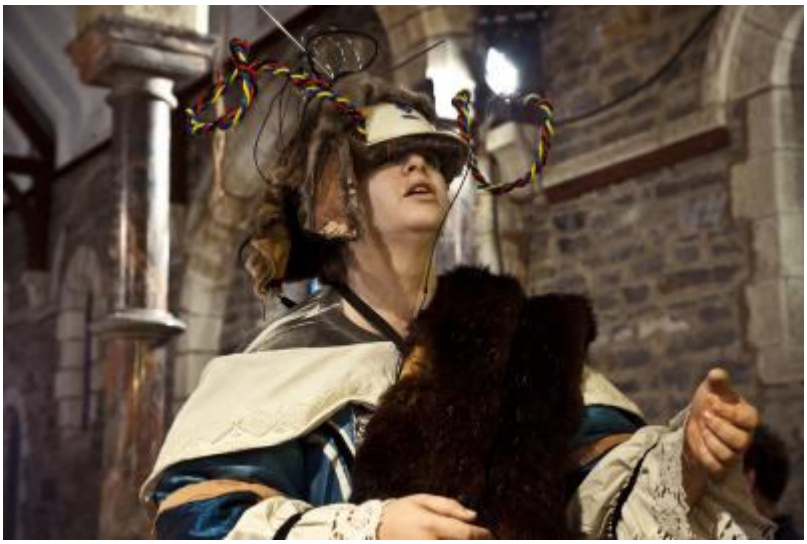

Image 17. The Cloaked Figure with headdress. Photo by: Chris de Beer.

Jessica Harrison played a lame woman who drags herself through the Nun's Chapel towards the pillars. She is disassociated from the rest of the cast, in that her focus is on the space and her two objects; a small wagon and a sewing machine. This character was inspired by Eija-Riitta Berliner-Mauer, a woman who fell in love with and married the Berlin Wall in 1979. Berliner-Mauer's condition has been diagnosed as Objectum Sexuality in which a person develops a fetish for or simply falls in love with an object. The lines spoken by the lame woman, "I find long, slim things with horizontal lines very sexy" is a direct quote from Berliner-Mauer. The tragedy of her love for the Wall is that it has largely been torn down. The lame woman is thus someone who has experienced a loss which for some may seem ridiculous. Her loss is similar to the loss of power and the destabilised position of white South Africans in post apartheid South Africa - a loss which would be politically incorrect (and even ridiculous) to acknowledge. She slides and pulls herself along the floor carrying a small wooden wagon and a sewing machine all the while speaking to the space and her objects. The lame woman's love for her objects and the space she occupies also mirror the obsession with objects the other cast members share. Her collapsing frame and inability to

move with ease is a subtle commentary on the loss of political stability and power once held by white Afrikaners. This also relates to the inability of young white Afrikaners to establish positive role models that are not tainted by the history of colonialism and apartheid.

Her costume and her props reference the Voortrekkers and what is referred to as the Great Trek. The lame woman's journey to the pillar makes a subtle allusion to the difficult journey into the interior away from British rule. The trek into the interior had/has a mythological status for Afrikaners as it represented their tenacity and resistance to British rule. At the same time it revealed their arrogance in laying claim to land that was not really theirs to claim. The very name Voortrekkers (pioneers) is as paradoxical as any colonialist or imperialist justification as the lands they found were not unchartered territories. Elliott comments on this role as follows:

> Instead of being brave, practical and pioneering (as we may imagine the Voortrekkers to have been), she is in fact senseless, directionless and disabled (without the use of her legs)… The position of clarity and self-knowledge characterized and enjoyed by Afrikaner pioneers is presented as unstable in this feeble character. Whether this is a comment on the position of Afrikaner culture in present-day South Africa or whether it is a comment on the Voortrekker culture itself is open to interpretation.[530]

When the lame woman achieves physical promixity to the chorus, they file up one by one and lie down next to her. She then runs the little wagon over their bodies. In this way, the bodies of the performers become the colonized land the wagons traverse. Other chorus members are positioned to aid her dragging the wagon over the bodies. I was also attempting to make a subtle reference to the psychological damage that both colonised and colonisers endured, and to the formation of colonial identities into the roles of the coloniser and the colonised as analysed by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*.[531] Specifically how the construction of the master/slave dialectic within colonial systems aligns identity into these specific categories. Fanon's nuanced reading of the effects/affects of colonisation on the subject reveals how the violence of colonialism has affected the psyche of both "master" and the "slave".[532] The chorus' strict regulation of their bodies also points to this dialectic.

When I first choreographed the imagery for the "lame woman", I used only the bodies of black and coloured performers while I used the white bodies to aid the lame woman in her

[530] See Appendix A, p. 170.
[531] Fanon, F. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth.* (Grove Press: New York).
[532] Fanon, 1963.

trek. But after a few viewings the statement seemed too obvious for me and I decided to place white performers into the position of the colonised as well. I felt that this was a more nuanced treatment of the idea of colonisation as it reveals the complexity of systems of oppression and servitude in South African history such as the oppression of the Boers by the British, the oppression of the Khoi-San, Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu and various other ethnicities by both the Boers and the British. On another level, the image also had to resonate with the present, and the colonization of subjectivity: their performers willingly laying themselves down to be trodden on by history. The lame woman speaks mainly in English but her journey is also punctuated by other indigenous South African languages such as IsiXhosa, Sesotho, Zulu and Afrikaans making her more ambiguous and difficult to understand. The construction of her performance of the Voortrekker is also facilitated by means of this incorporation of diverse South African languages. At the end of the performance, when she makes it to a stone pillar which has become the object of her desire, she attempts to dance a waltz with the pillar. An old Afrikaans song, "Dans met die Rooi Rok", plays in the background. This is another moment crafted to create both pathos and a sense of bathos. The performer's inability to dance with the pillar on her lame legs is representative of the destabilization of whiteness in South Africa. Specifically, how whiteness in South Africa lacks ethically sound historical role models. The voortrekker vrou is symbolic of the loss and failure of the mythic notion of the Afrikaner. This desire to create opposing emotions within the viewer can be seen as a part of the complication of desire.

The character of the "lecture machine" is an academic influence I obtained from Jon Mckenzie's *Perform or Else* (2001). Mckenzie describes the "lecture machine" as follows: "In addition to lectern and university, I will also use 'lecture machine' to refer to any system that processes discourses and practices, any assemblage that binds together words or acts".[533] Before I had read McKenzie's book, my idea was to present the audience with a white man who is very sure of himself, and through a monologue reveals prejudices of which he is oblivious. As with the cloaked figure, the inspiration here was gained from the idea of someone in a position of authority, specifically the intellectual authority of a lecturer within the context of the university. I cast my own academic supervisor Anton Krueger in this role as he already performs a lecturing role and as an author, is also a "man of words". Together with the lame woman and the mother/father he explained the concept of the haecceity, and his second lecture dealt with the notion of gravity. The major part of his performance saw him

[533]Mckenzie, 2001, p. 21.

seated in a chair near to the mother/father with a book in his hand, (a signaling of his occupation), silently awaiting his turn to deliver his lecture. The lecture machine needed to be slightly disembodied, someone through whom knowledge passes without any physicality, a "talking head". Mckenzie emphasizes the concept of performance as it has infiltrated contemporary life and has become defined by the injunction of "perform or else". Lecturing can be described as kind of performance of knowledge. In *Villain*, the chorus drowns out the efficacy of his lecture about gravity. Their language is non-academic and crass: "Dis lekker om te kak as jy geëet het",[534]a veiled allusion to the privilege of being an academic.

As someone immersed within the academic world and whose frame of reference is closely tied to the university, the idea of the lecture machine is very specific to my own experience. There is something terrifying about the act of imparting knowledge to others. The desire to do this fairly and without dictating what should be done with the knowledge one presents is a difficult desire to lecture with. I often have, as Baudrillard puts it, "the frenzy to explain everything, attribute everything, footnote everything."[535]The Lecture Machine gave two lectures both of which ended in cacophony. As disciplined as the chorus were in their movements as drones, they would not indulge the academic lecture. They reject the white lecturer's knowledge and his language as unimportant – his voice is silenced.

Lastly, I "planted" a performer as an audience member who eventually came forward to perform a monologue. Her performance was inspired by religious naiveté and was played by Rachael Clark, a performer whose petite frame and rather comic presence was effective in revealing a very complex character. Her role characterized the desire for a saviour, for someone to put things right. She is presented as an arbitrary member of the audience, who suddenly feels the need to express a vision she has had. Her monologue is partly taken from a song by the band Tool (whose music also featured in the piece), as well as some lines from T.S. Eliot's "The Four Quartets". The song is called "Digustipated" and deals with a revelation that carrots have consciousness, that vegetables are also sentient beings, and that harvest time means the holocaust for these beings. Her epiphany does not bring about clarity as she gives a rather surreal monologue, yet this lack of clarity is a sign of health and "becoming". One of the lines from the monologue states: "If God is our Father, then Satan must be our cousin", which reveals a change in the priest's black and white vision of the world. Satan becomes something different to the Reverend after her revelation. He is no

[534]Trans: "It's nice to take a shit because you've had something to eat".
[535]Baudrillard, J. 1990. *Fatal Strategies.* (New York: Semiotext(e).p. 12.

longer a far off and mythical metaphor for evil and sin, but something/someone close to her, such as a cousin. The planted performer and her monologue were designed to bring the audience back to the present moment, and further implicate them in the performance. The lines, "On a winter's evening, in a secluded chapel/History is now and South Africa", a play on T.S Eliot's "History is now and England, from "The Four Quartets", are used to "end" the performance with the Reverend leading the cloaked figure out of the Chapel.

The "failure" or "inefficiency" of the four characters suggests the instability and fragility of being in a position of power and the inevitability of the cessation of that power. After every cast member has left the building, the lame woman takes up the throne as the new "couch potato", creating the final image, suggesting a cycle that is repeated endlessly.

4.10. Stage Properties

Villain made use of various props (such as the rugby ball) which aided in deconstructing the sacredness of the chapel space. These included objects that one may interact with in one's day to day life such as remote controls, a whisky tumbler, earphones, a cell phone, a cell phone charger, and a flash drive. Attachments to such everyday objects can seem fetishistic– contemporary amulets of sorts. The notion of possession, of being possessed by something outside oneself, was very important. The Butoh language, for instance, requires one to become "possessed" by the material, while the props arguably possess the owner as much as they are owned. These items are symbols of our consumer culture and issue a commentary on our attachment to objects which in turn become extensions of the people who own them. My close connection to my ipod, for instance, becomes an extension of my body, an extra appendage. Six of the chorus members wore headphones and "sacrificed" these along with their flashdrives and cell phones, etc, to the cloaked figure. The lame woman's love for the space and her two objects, the little wagon and her sewing machine, are also related to the object's power over the owner, even if this power is created by the owner. Robeson noted:

> Tools of middle-upper class lives are employed evocatively (and provocatively) in the work. Headphones, flash drives, cell phone chargers, DSTV remotes have us questioning their significance from the beginning (the headphones remind me of the youngsters who walk zombified through the streets all day). The reliance on technological advancement has transformed us and the way we relate to others and our environment.[536]

[536]Robeson, S. 2012. 'Villain Attacks Comfort Zones'.*Reviews:Artsblog* Accessed online: http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za/show/villain-attacks-comfort-zones/ on 6 July 2012.

4.11. Vocal and Soundscore

The sound score for *Villain* was layered with recorded music and vocal scores of the chorus and cast members. On three occasions the chorus sang the words, “I want to have snow in the summer, I want warmth in the winter, I want to feel always better”. The words relate to how any desire may be complicated by the contradictory desires which can live in a body and with that, the inability to satisfy all those desires. The melody for the song called *Nautilius and Zeppelin* was created by Jenn Schneeberger and my commission to her was to transform the words, which derive from a black metal band called Samael, into a “religious” hymn. Black metal (or death metal) is a subgenre of heavy metal music that developed in Northern Europe (particularly in Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Sweden and Denmark) in the 1980s and 1990s. Black metal is synonymous with anti-Christian attitudes, an intricate approach to melody and the use of “corpse paint” (black and white makeup suggestive of a corpse) by musicians. Like many alternative genres of music black metal musicians seem to prefer to remain underground. I developed a connection with black metal as a teenager and still enjoy listening to this music which many of my friends label “noise”. Furthermore, metal is often used as a scapegoat for the behavior of young adults who commit crimes, for instance, the way in which Marilyn Manson was blamed for the Columbine shootings. In a simplified way the use of black metal in *Villain* was to force this particular “noise” onto an audience that may not have appreciated it (in a way similar to the Butoh-inspired movement was used to disturb desires for flow and line in dance). While the transformation of the metal lyrics into a hymn was obviously a subversion of religious orthodoxy, the words chosen were not offensive, violent or sinister, but rather reflected experiences of the Scandinavian climate.

For the recorded music I sourced different sounds: the hum of a refrigerator, the white noise of television, a vibration (from an ion), and the sound of cards been shuffled. These were arranged and layered to create an underscore which added texture to the space, with a mixture of various different strains of music from different genres. I used Lydia Lunch’s cover of *Spooky*, *Gebrechlikheit* by Burzum (a black metal band from Norway), Beethoven’s *Rage for a Lost Penny*, 16 Horsepower’s *American Wheeze* and Vitamin String Quartet’s cover of Tool’s *The Grudge* and *Ticks and Leeches*. Furthermore, the performance used lyrics from Amorphis and Samael (also Scandinavian black metal bands), the Beatles, Celine Dion and Dory Previn. My musical choices were mostly intuitive. The choice to layer the music was partly to prevent the austere or ritualistic qualities of the work from overwhelming the

audience through the insertion of more contemporary references into the work. Elliott notes that the music aided in the complication of desire:

> The intertextual play in the work also serves to pique and complicate our meaning making process. Several of the songs sung are recognizable. The familiarity of the Western songs is contrasted by the juxtaposition of the more alien Butoh-inspired aesthetic. This use of recognizable music was very successful in positioning the experience of the work somewhere between 'known' and 'other', keeping the audience in a constant state of meaning-making desire.[537]

An example of this is the duet from Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On"(made famous by the movie Titanic), sung by the cloaked figure and a chorus member. The song's lyrics are mawkish but the rendition by these characters with their Butoh inspired language and ill-suited vocal range precluded any suggestive reference to the love affair in the movie Titanic, or comfortable identification with the "strangeness" of the physical language of the performers. The construction of the scene was also slightly contrived so as to work against the organic quality of Butoh dance: while the cloaked figure sat fastened to her seat, the chorus member performed a rotation often not facing her. This created a vulnerability in the performers which in turn produced a comic effect.

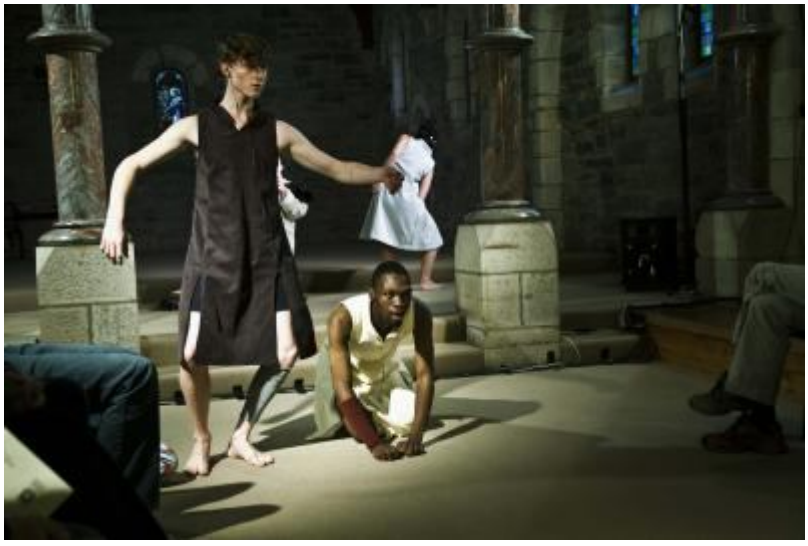

Image 19. Chorus member sings "Titanic Song" to the Cloaked Figure. Photo by Chris de Beer.

The final scene has the cloaked figure leaving the chapel while singing Dory Previn's "Mythical Kings and Iguanas" (a rendition of which also opens the performance. The song's

[537] See Appendix A, p. 168.

lyrics establish a tension between the soul/mind and the body: “Curse the mind that mounts the clouds in search of mythical kings and only mystical things”. Iguanas by contrast, as the song suggests, embody the knowledge of beings who live close to the earth’s surface. The cast meanwhile speed up their circular journey, the “lecture machine” joins them, and they too leave the space. The exit from the chapel was inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s statement that, “[a] schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch. A breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world.”[538] This idea was taken quite literally as the whole cast, except the lame woman, leave the chapel and disappear.

Time

The arrhythmic quality in *Villain* created an anti-climactic experience, disturbing any chance for the audience member to immerse themselves in the work. The sense of time in *Villain* frustrated the desire for rhythm to supply a comfortable journey through the work. For instance, the cloaked figure’s journey to pour a drink took almost five minutes to complete. This seemingly banal journey to pour a drink is given a significance that may seem ludricous, and yet highlights the cloaked figure’s almost religious devotion to alcohol as she stumbles and falls but manages to secure her glass of whisky, lending a sacred aspect to this banal action. Revealing the “bare bones” of Butoh training within the piece (the circular motif of the chorus is used by some Butoh practitioners to aid in readying the performer for the Butoh becoming) was juxtaposed with the impulse and slow continuous quality of Butoh movement. It is as if nothing really “happens” in *Villain*.

4.12 Concluding remarks

Villain was an atypical investigation of the antagonist. While critical of the desire for a “white” and “reasonable” world, the performance does not attempt to define a solution to the “problem of whiteness”. Although there is a level of empathy for figures of authority, a kind of “sympathy for the devil”, this was done to comment on the absurdity of power, in particular, the way in which blame-shifting reveals a micropolitics of apathy, a means to justify one’s own indifference by assuming that figures of authority (or villains) alone should be held responsible for the wrongs in society. Elliott suggests that the performance of whiteness in *Villain*, “hint[s] at Peggy MacIntosh’s discussion of the unconscious and

[538] 1983, p. 9.

uninterrupted experience of privilege as inhibiting the subject's personal development".[539] The disruption and subversion of whiteness and white power in South Africa, although not explicit, is suggested as a valuable process and situation in which to find oneself as it challenges static and outdated ideas of race and selfhood.

The ambiguity of signification in *Villain* is part of a strategy to open the play of signification for the audience and to disrupt "objective" or linear constructions of meaning. The performance aims to place the audience in a position of questioning since meaning is not delivered in a clear cut way. I believe that by clearing space for individual interpretation, and that by provoking questioning, one can return the desiring process to the audience. So while meaning is not handed on a "silver platter" or dictated to the audience, there are elements in place to provoke or stimulate this process.

[539] See Appendix A, p. 170.

Intermezzo: Creating a BwO

"To make yourself a body without organs is both to find and to construct that immanent processuality as it is manifested in the processes of writing, performing, thinking, living".[540]

Writing this thesis challenged my perceptions. I realised early on in the process that this thesis is a risk. This is especially true for a thesis dealing with whiteness in which one must find a balance between the academic demand for coherence and the simultaneous necessity of challenging one's clarity – to construct a Body without Organs. Nietzsche asks: "why must we proclaim so loudly and with such intensity what we are, what we want, and what we do not want?"[541]*This research process will thus continue long after its conclusion, as I have not found clarity. This lack of clarity is vital to any investigation which recognises reification. Bewes discusses how anxiety accompanies the consciousness of reification, which inevitably also reverses that process: de-reification.*[542] *Simply put, researching the grand narratives of whiteness was a traumatic endeavour for me. Revealing some of my own narratives within an academic context made me feel incredibly vulnerable and exposed, but I found that this was also a useful means of grounding the research. Often I would erase my intermezzo's before submitting a draft to my supervisors because I felt that my own voice was insignificant in relation to the "master" narrative of whiteness, that I was subsumed by the organs:*

> *because they were pressing me*
> *to my body*
> *and to the very body.*[543]

My discomfort was also a reaction to the discourse of race which does not supply one with an ethical language. The discourse of race erases difference. Non-whites, blacks, whites, coloureds – these are words that evade the possibility of an ethics of becoming. I had to take the risk in order to practice my anxiety and therefore my becoming. I am still convinced that performance which has a wide range of possibilities available to it, offers a unique and embodied space to interrogate whiteness. Since race is stamped onto the body, it is a necessary to create a Body without Organs which involves, as Cull puts it: "a process of disorganization and destratification".[544] *Performance offers a space in which one can build a Body without Organs.*

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[540] ibid., p. 247.
[541] Nietzsche, p. 14.
[542] Bewes, 2002, pp. 191-210.
[543] Artaud, A. [1947]1988. From 'To Have Done with the Judgement of God.'
[544] Cull, L. 'How to Make Yourself a Theatre Without Organs? Deleuze, Artaud and the Concept of Differential Presence'. *Theatre Research International.* Vol. 34. No. 3. p. 246.

Conclusion

Performance as an Immanent Ethics

In this thesis I have attempted to clarify that an actively anxious position is a strong place from which to challenge dominant desire. This anxiety is an affirmation of becoming. Since desire is creative, there are alternative possibilities and ways of resisting the molar subject positions that one may be subjected to. Since desire is a creative force, it is an aspect that must be constantly re-evaluated. Although desire is a force, it is made vulnerable by being co-opted and put into the service of social formations, which make its repression possible. Desires require evaluation otherwise they may become habits: "frozen dividends".[545] Habits are desires gone stagnant. This means that one must remain conscious of one's values which may become stagnant in the attempt to find a definite course. Such as the resolution to be colour-blind, which is a habit white people engage in taking for granted their privileged position that grants them the ability to make race invisible. While I do understand the value of structure and the need to categorise, I do not believe that categories should be written in stone. There is nothing wrong with reason, but the ways in which one makes use of it can be problematic. A certain way of *reasoning* was after all used to justify slavery, colonialism and apartheid, and yet today those reasons seem unreasonable. On the other hand, in this thesis I have been employing reason in arguing for the denotation of desire and reification.

In this thesis I have argued the value of investigating post-apartheid whiteness and the connection to desire critically through artistic processes centred on performance practices. Part one functioned as an introduction to concepts of whiteness and desire and the connections between these two ideas. In order to reveal how white privilege is not a natural fact I discussed some of the "master" narratives (or myths) on which white power was constructed. By establishing a link between desire, reification and race, I attempted to show how the personal is implicated in the political. This pertains to how one's own micro-politics may be implicated within a discourse that privileges whiteness. Using Sullivan's notion of white privilege as a habit, I proposed that desire becomes enslaved to habits and thus creates micro-fascisms, even if it is employed in the attempt to resist race through colour-blind strategies. My argument rested on the basis of anxiety as a form of revolt (questioning) in relation to race and whiteness studies. Furthermore, I suggested how performance (and

[545] Kristeva, 2002. p. 6.

performance studies), are viable ways to challenge and interrogate totalising ideas of whiteness and desire.

In Part Two I analysed the work of contemporary artists; Cohen, Bailey and MacGarry, whose work challenges whiteness by accentuating it. Each of the works I investigated contributes to a critique of whiteness which challenges the audience member. Part Three focused on Die Antwoord's creation of Zef as a strategy that challenges essentialist notions of authenticity. I also consider the desire for authenticity in hip-hop music and Die Antwoord's manipulation thereof in their music videos and interviews. In Part Four, I analysed my own work *Villain* as potentially instituting a disturbance of theatrical desire through the opacity of signs within the work. This could be referred to as a process of de-signification by which the meaning of particular signs are fragmented and deconstructed in the course of performance.

Perhaps my failure to find a "neutral" or objective position towards the notion of whiteness and race has been for me the most successful aspect of the research process. During the course of the three years of reading and writing towards my doctorate I have realised that any claims to an "objective" position is dangerous when investigating whiteness. This is because in some ways my own white body (and the preservation of white desire) eventually earned me the privilege of being able to critique whiteness itself. This ethical dilemma has been accompanied and exacerbated by anxiety. Clearly, the study of whiteness reveals a desire to make an ethical world possible – to decentre whiteness by deconstructing its power through theory. While theory does indeed manage to question white desire, the performance practices I have analysed in this thesis, bring to light the value of performance as a means of questioning.

The affective ability of performance practices reveals a relationship with immanence. I would like to return to Lehmann's notion of a "politics of perception", (that was outlined in Part 1. 15 of this thesis) as the affective ability of performance to challenge reified notions of identity and culture, and in order to approach the thorny issue of ethics. Since performance studies acknowledges the experiential act of making and viewing as valid tools of knowledge, performance is able to connect to an immanent ethics through the "politics of perception" which Hans-Thies Lehmann argues "could at the same time be called an aesthetics of

responsibility".[546] Lehmann observes that theatre is impossible without the "infringement of prescriptions, without transgression".[547] Performance can disturb the idea of a "moral universe" and is political "precisely because it "interrupts the categories of the political itself, deposing of them instead of betting on new laws (no matter how well-intended)".[548] This "politics of perception" can in a significant way also aid in restoring desire to the audience becoming an ethics of performance. This is how performance can challenge molar notions of race. The work's discussed in this thesis reveal an experimental and risky response to the discourse of whiteness and could be said to engage with an immanent (becoming) ethics.

Deleuze makes a distinction between ethics and morals; while morality reduces and judges existence in terms of "this is right and that is wrong", immanence appeals to the subject's "mode of existence".[549] An immanent ethics is one which allows for the process of becoming, allowing one to make decisions that are not based on universal values, but to focus on the particular and specific mode of existence at hand. Daniel Smith notes that the question of an immanent ethics is not "what must I do?", but rather "What can I do?"[550] Immanence thus suggests an involvement and closeness to the problem rather than espousing an objective and transcendent distance from it. This is what I mean by the work discussed as revealing an immersion rather than only a reflection of reality. In relation to the "problem of whiteness" which perpetuates white desire, an immanent ethics seems worthwhile, particularly since the system of judgement favoured by objective reasoning with its emphasis on dichotomising, has created a "moral universe" based on exclusion.

The idea of an immanent approach to the question of ethics is well suited to performance practices. Cull, author of *Theatres of Immanence,* interprets Deleuze's ethics through the idea of encounter; "For Deleuze, to live a good life, is to live at the limit of what your body can do and this limit can only be tested through and as affect, as encounter".[551] The "good life" is not to be mistaken as a desire for personal pleasure or even a moral imperative, but the idea of accepting meaning as a living component that undergoes constant fluctuations and needs constant alterations. This experimental form of ethics based on encounter may seem dangerous, especially since experiments can easily fail, yet as Cull argues "so too are those of

[546] Lehmann, 2006,p. 185.
[547]ibid., p. 178.
[548]ibid., p. 179.
[549] Smith, 2007, p.67.
[550]Cull, L. 3013. *Theatres of Immanence.* (London: Palgrave MacMillan) p. 221.
[551] ibid.,p. 221.

a transcendent morality based on an assumed capacity to predict the future and on the application of principles and laws to perpetually changing contexts".[552] This applies specifically to performance practices which create the possibility of encountering and creating affect, revealing becoming. Affect shows an allied relationship between ethics and aesthetics, enabling new configurations for becoming. An ethics of immanence therefore also takes into account the ethical dilemmas of everyday life in which one must consistently rethink one's world. Immanence allows space for anxiety.

One might draw a parallel between the philosophical desire for an immanent ethics and the desire for the immediacy of bodily experience in, for instance, Butoh dance practices. Both allow the *process* to take precedence, and focus on the immediate situation at hand whatever it may be. Body oriented practices are valid, but under-valued forms with which to undo habits and to undertake experiments with alternative configurations. Likewise, an immanent ethics is also focused on encounter and experience over the use of a predetermined set of moral rules and constraints. This reveals how performance is also a form of philosophy, as Laura Cull puts it: "thinking as a kind of doing and doing as a kind of thinking: philosophy as a kind of theatre and theatre as a kind of philosophy."[553]

Through the process of writing this thesis I have realised that there is no way to combat white desire if this desire is perpetuated through one's micropolitics. While the study of whiteness may reinstate its omnipotence, it is also a valuable means of deconstructing this desire. Each example chosen for analysis revealed a complex challenge to static conceptions of whiteness. While whiteness in South Africa still largely occupies a position of privilege, the works analysed represent a questioning of this privilege and the desires attached to it. None of the examples offer a "message" or clear "solution" on the *problem of whiteness* discussed in Part One. In fact, the works chosen for analysis reveal rather than attempt to rehabilitate it. In the main, the examples show an entanglement and engagement with problem of whiteness rather than issuing a moral standpoint from which to judge. This strategy in itself can be seen as a departure from the discourses of whiteness.

The works I've investigated inspire debates which activate an ethico aesthetic paradigm for the practice and thinking around performance, and specifically the performance of whiteness

[552] ibid., 221.
[553] Cull, 2009. p. 252.

in South Africa. Guattari notes that, "The new aesthetic paradigm has ethico-political implications because to speak of creation is to speak of the responsibility of the creative instances with regard to the thing created".[554] The artists discussed show their entanglement within the politics of representation which strengthens the works' ability to challenge static notions of desire. This artistic immersion within the politics of representation through performance practices also makes it possible for whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa to put "itself at risk" and to "share in the vulnerability of other compatriot bodies".[555] I believe that it is this vulnerability that must be affirmed and encouraged in order to clear the way for processes of becoming and the de-reification of desire.

[554]Guattari, F. 1005. *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press). p. 107

[555]Ndebele, N. 2000. 'IPH' INDLELA? Finding our way into the Future'. Speech given at theFirst Steve Biko Memorial 12 September 2000. umpaginated: Paragraph 44. Accessed online http://www.vc.uct.ac.za/speeches/?id=1 on 12 Februray 2013.

Appendix A: Nicola Elliott

Peer Review by Nicola Elliott of *Villain* by Sonja Smit

Live performance witnessed at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, June – July 2012 (Venue: Nun's Chapel)

It is difficult for me to imagine what someone unfamiliar with Smit's work would experience in witnessing *Villain*. It must thus be acknowledged that I have known Smit as a friend and as a colleague for nine years and have had the privilege of seeing most of her work (and its development) as well as performing in one. While her style, technique, ability and aesthetics have surely changed and developed, Smit's work may be alien to others where it is familiar to me. I do not, however, see this as problematic. Given how the audience is positioned in the work – a small group of about thirty people in two rows facing each other, under bright lights, in a small chapel, the entirety of which (in front, behind, around the audience) is used as the performance space – my subjective reading seems appropriate, as no one in the audience could have the same experience, or see the same things.

To experience *Villain* fully one cannot simply approach it cognitively, neither can one fail to apply cognitive functions. If one treats the layered texts as parts to a music score and simply allows them to wash over one, one misses the aspect of desire. Similarly, if one only addresses the symbolism and applies oneself purely cognitively to the meaning making, one is left without being moved or transformed. Balancing on a thin line between sensory experience (sound, smell, proximity, etc) and cognitive processing, the work is very powerful experientially and thus cannot be consumed as a reified object. Experiencing the work in this way fulfils the researcher's aim of disrupting semiotic codes.

How would you as an audience member describe/process the complication of desire in *Villain*?

I have approached desire in *Villain* in the following ways:

- the audience's desire to make meaning that is tempted, complicated and undermined in the textual layering and in the presenting and undermining of authority figures and spaces in the work;

- the quality of 'becoming' in the performances.

The audience is seduced into making meaning, but ultimately discovers that meaning is in a process of construction rather than being a fixed point to discover. The first occurrence of this is the space into which we enter. A chapel space is traditionally one of harmony, peace and quiet reflection. A theatre space is traditionally one of becoming invisible (as the audience member) and anticipating the show (or settling down for it) which soon starts on the stage. As we enter the chapel the work is already in progress. We are a small group of audience members (perhaps thirty) and we sit in the brightly lit chapel space in two rows facing each other about two metres apart. The work has no clear beginning. A man and a hooded figure sit far away facing away from us, a group of young people in rough tunics and bandages form and break lines that swiftly snake around us, seemingly indifferent to our presence. A young woman dressed as a Voortrekker Vrou speaks fragments of sentences. We have to pass her to

get to our seats. The atmosphere is tense and there is a feeling of being lost. Our expectations for either a traditional chapel space or a traditional theatre space are unfulfilled.

There are various instances in which words are set up to provide answers, but in fact further complicate the meaning making process. The man sitting at the back of the 'stage space' eventually comes forward and reads to us from a book as if giving a lecture. This man is older than the rest of the cast, perhaps forty years old. His age, the fact that he is reading from a book might lead the audience to attribute to him a certain authority. He also acts with authority as he opens the book and begins to read and this action, occurring towards the end of the work, suggests that an explanation of the events is coming. The text, however, is on the subject of gravity. Apart from the fact that this does not hold any immediately satisfying connection between the work and its meaning, very soon other performers speak and sing over his voice, effectively drowning him out in a cacophony of sound.

(Personally, this use of cacophony was only partially successful. It succeeded in making nonsensical the individually spoken words; however, as soon as it became obviously a cacophony, my desire to make meaning died, transporting what could be a powerful moment into the category of "oh that's the cacophony devise". I wished to hear more of the gravity lecture, so that my desire to make meaning could have been held for longer. In a sense, the lecture became a fluid meaning, whereas I feel it should have been a fixed [if questionable] point in a fluid context).

The intertextual play in the work also serves to pique and complicate our meaning making process. Several of the songs sung are recognizable. The familiarity of the Western songs is contrasted by the juxtaposition of the more alien Butoh-inspired aesthetic. This use of recognizable music was very successful in positioning the experience of the work somewhere between 'known' and 'other', keeping the audience in a constant state of meaning-making desire.

Having written about meaningless or meaning-compromised words, there are instances when words do seem to speak the truth. The chorus is mostly cold or indifferent towards each other (and to the audience). They seem unconscious of their feelings – longing, desire, pain, happiness, etc are not overtly expressed and yet we feel them to be present somehow (likely via the intense movement language or via the aspect of 'becoming within becoming' which I discuss below). When their activity develops into singing a haunting harmonized refrain of the words "I want to feel always better", the words ring true. This possibly startles the audience member. The simplicity and honesty of the words coming from bodies whose physical language is alien and does not draw one in, is clear, true meaning offered up without complication within a work that strongly complicates meaning. This instance presents us with the situation I mentioned in my introduction: the witness is both cognitively engaged in desiring meaning construction, and is caught up in an emotional acknowledgement of truth. This play between cognitive desire and transformation makes the work, to my mind, a powerful success.

I now move onto my second point: the device of 'becoming'.

The researcher locates a focal point of the investigation in identity as "a becoming – a process – which we move through and which is determined by desire". She identifies the need in *Villain* "to disturb desire through a careful investment in the physical presence of performing bodies". I feel that she has been successful. Smit's aesthetic is influenced by Butoh, for which

the notion of a fluid becoming has been relevant, especially in its early forms. In Butoh, the body is not presented as a reified object, but rather is in transition between states of being. Nonetheless, Butoh, now three of four generations on from its beginnings with Ohno and Hijikata, has developed into various degrees of codification. While I know that the Smit does not claim to use "pure" Butoh (which is in itself a controversial subject), *Villain* presents bodies in states of becoming by positioning young performers still in training juxtaposed with the incredibly challenging task of achieving a Butohesque becoming.

Smit achieved this, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the following ways (I refer to the chorus):

- Unlike in "traditional" Butoh, the bodies of the chorus are not covered in white paint. The signs of their 'real life' selves are displayed: one man has a tattooed arm, another has a fashionable haircut, some have piercings. These things are neither featured nor hidden, but nonetheless function as an alienating device reminding us that the performance is a construct, a technique, rather than a magical transformation, or an illusion to consume us.

- The chorus performers are mostly young, probably averaging 21 years of age. They have not been in Smit's Butoh-inspired training for very long. What became particularly interesting was to witness the partially-successful attempts from the chorus to achieve the performance task at hand. When the performer attempted to achieve the becoming (from Butoh and from Smit's own tradition), what we witnessed was a becoming *within* the becoming. The young, partially trained performers presented desire in striving to construct themselves within Smit's Butoh inspired aesthetic and within Butoh itself. We watch them not so much imparting meaning as grappling with the tools to construct it. I realize that this is a subtle reading, but sitting in such close proximity to the performers, I was overwhelmed with this very powerful and moving element in the work, which forwent Butohesque virtuosity in favour of an exquisite failing.[556] For me it presented one of the great successes of the work as a whole and significantly reinforced the complication of desire in the work, especially in light of the context reference of" disturb[ing] desire through a careful investment in the physical presence of performing bodies".

Another alienating devise is the use of lighting, which undermines the magic and transformation traditionally associated with theatre. While watching the work, I was aware that I felt that the lighting was too bright. It felt fluorescent, more suited to a workplace. It failed to sculpt the bodies or focus the gaze. However, on reflection, I feel that whether the lighting choices were conceptual or those of technical necessity (given the limited technical set-up on a festival platform), they assisted in making the work less reified, less consumerable. I was privy not to magic or make-believe, but to construct, which made the experience of striving (of 'becoming within becoming') all the more powerful.[557]

While I feel the discussion of props is most relevant to the discussion of whiteness, I do wish to discuss the iPods in the beginning of the work. As the audience enters, many of the chorus

[556] My position here seems to suggest that the Butohesque becoming is codified, which is my sentiment although I realize that it poses a contradiction and do not defend the notion here.

[557] Missing atmospheric lighting in *Villain* is similar to missing music in a dance that never had any – we miss what we have been accustomed to seeing, and not what is actually being presented. I do maintain, however, that had the lights been used more traditionally with more darkness in the space, the seduction of desire in meaning making may have been enhanced, especially for audience members not familiar with the style.

members are using (or just wearing?) iPods. It may be because I have seen Smit use the iPod as a tool to focus performers and in certain exercises (despite the surroundings, the performer can zone in on a particular exercise or task and avoid distraction) that I read the iPod not as a symbol (as with the rugby ball) but as a device to help the performer. Usually in the theatre, the performers and the audience hear the same sounds (whether the performers acknowledge it or not). In *Villain*, the iPod disconnect the performers from the audience. Thus the iPod can be seen not as a contextualizing or representational image but more as a performance tool laid bare for the audience to see.

How does *Villain* perform whiteness? As indifferent / as scapegoat / as invisible? It would be useful to have examples of how you experience this in the piece.

The study of whiteness, at least in the United States and United Kingdom, can loosely be described as the study of how a racial category affords overt and subtle privilege on its members to the disadvantage of non-members – the subtle, omnipresent power relations of the norm. *Villain* performs a specific whiteness that should perhaps rather be classified as post-1994 Afrikaner whiteness, for few of the traditional whiteness concerns (making privilege visible, self-deprecation involved in grappling with one's own privileged position, etc) are present, replaced by the experience of already been labelled as guilty, and of being cut loose from secure moorings.

Afrikanerdom surfaces in the work through the incongruous use of props. The environment is set up as mystical, even medieval, with cloaked figures and a chorus of what could be slaves in rough tunics and bandages. Chosen props are carried, almost as an afterthought: a TV remote control, a rugby ball, iPods, a glass of whiskey. Decontextualised as they are, the props are highlighted and point to their context. The Voortrekker Vrou clarifies the referred world as Afrikanerdom, with a bonnet and a little wagon. The sparseness and incongruity of these props serve to make Afrikanerdom visible in the work.

The Cloaked Woman, at first mystical, is revealed as a drunk couch potato. Distressed and self-loathing, she is a scapegoat of her own making. Despite her self-loathing, she is rewarded ritualistically when the chorus strings their iPods around her neck. Still powerful, she is still the centre of the world, despite herself-imposed impotence.

The sense of dis-ease, lostness and impotence in both the figures of the Vrou and the Cloaked Woman hint at Peggy MacIntosh's discussion of the unconscious and uninterrupted experience of privilege as inhibiting the subject's personal development.[558] What we witness in *Villain* is the aftermath of that process, when the privileged, underdeveloped subject is removed from the centre and placed in the position of the scapegoat.

The Vrou references the Voortrekker era of Afrikaans whiteness. Instead of being brave, practical and pioneering (as we may imagine the Voortrekkers to have been), she is in fact senseless, directionless and disabled (without the use of her legs). She progresses slowly, crawling and lying, from the 'back' of the 'auditorium' to the main part of the stage. The position of clarity and self-knowledge characterized and enjoyed by Afrikaner pioneers is presented as unstable in this feeble character. Whether this is a comment on the position of

[558] "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies", 1988 (working paper).

Afrikaner culture in present-day South Africa or whether it is a comment on the Voortrekker culture itself is open to interpretation.

Appendix B: Joni Barnard

August 2012

Practice – led research.

Peer Review of *Villain.*

Submitted by Joni Barnard.

Two central questions have been identified for the reviewing of *Villain*:

1. How would you as an audience member describe/process the complication of desire in *Villain*?

2. How does *Villain* perform whiteness? As indifferent / as a scapegoat / as invisible? It would be useful to have examples of how you experience this in the piece.

The researcher frames desire as a complex and complicated notion. Firstly, desire relating specifically to identity: identity is seen as fluid, in a constant process of becoming and desire as the means to produce, to create the world around us and ourselves within the world. Secondly, desire relating to the possession or commodification of desire: that in contemporary society, the subject's desire is regulated by capitalist, profit-orientated systems. The capitalist system perpetuates the culture of commodification, which is directly related to whiteness and 'white culture'. The commodification of desire is "the colonization of one's subjectivity and the need to question" (Smit, 2012). The result is apathy and indifference, a mere acceptance of the dominant systems and structures of the world as they are presented to us. Subsequently, the complication of desire is explored with particular reference to whiteness and to the position of white subjectivity in South Africa.

Smit states that *Villain* is an atypical look at the notion of 'the villain' as something or someone that is neither good nor evil, but indifferent. That villainy is apathy: to not follow through on one's desires is villainous. Here an additional complexity of desire is highlighted: if desire is commodified, then to follow through with this desire would be harmful as we are conditioned to desire that which oppresses us. Simultaneously, to not follow through on one's desires is villainous. This complexity results in the researcher's interest in the decentring and disturbance of desire: if our central desire is structured by a capitalist principle, that is so far

removed from instinct and need, then the decentring of desire is an attempt to return to an understanding of what it means to be human[559] so that we can progress and improve our empathy with and understanding of each other. The decentring of desire is evident in both the form and content of *Villain.*

Having studied with and performed for the choreographer and researcher, Sonja Smit, what I find most striking in *Villain* is the development of a particular choreographic style and approach to performance, which is most evidently inspired by Butoh[560]. Butoh, as a form, relates to the body in a specific manner. It challenges traditional Western notions of performance, presentation, the moving body and physical aesthetics. The form revels in the experience and presence of the performer and almost advocates 'task-based' performance. The task for the performer is to evade the 'social self', evade the 'social body' and focus heavily on internal stimuli. It is a 'non-performative' style that removes "the body from a clearly defined representational performance experience" (Smit, 2012) and looks at the body outside of the 'social self'. The form lends itself to Guattari's notion of crushing the dominant semiotics of the body and stripping the body of any social signs (Guattari, 1996: 4). The audience is presented with bodies that offer no clear or codified signs of information, no overt drive or desire, "a body that revolts against conventional semiotic codes" (Smit, 2012). The performer is disengaged from the idea of presentation and we, as audience, as spectators, are not presented with a product, but are witness to the process of a performer's internal experience. It is slightly awkward, strange and difficult to watch - that's the point, it's unsettling and disturbing.

Eleven performers/villains engaging with the Butoh form create an unusual chorus. Their slow meditative and repetitive movements transform them into these strange creatures. As the show starts, the chorus forms a line and, in formation, circumnavigates audience. They repeat this motion throughout the piece and thus their action works to surround the audience, enclosing them. The space in which *Villain* is performed also works to unsettle the audience, more obviously by the choice to make the work site specific. The Nunnery is cold and slightly medieval and holds historical and religious resonances. It was a space for Nuns to worship, people who had to conduct themselves under strict codes and rules of religion, masking, denying or modifying their own desires for that of the Church. The Church is a Western concept of reign and control and Nuns are people who must conduct themselves and center their desires to fit this specific system. Thus the space of the Nunnery houses and represents a space of regulated desire.

[559]The text in *Villain* that accentuates this point is "dis lekker om te kak as jy geëet het": everybody needs to eat, everybody needs to shit.

[560]A detailed description of Butoh is not within the scope of this review. I provide an understanding of Butoh from my own engagement with the form to highlight, in this context, the relationship between the form and the content.Butoh is widely known as the "dance of darkness". Here the form relates to the notion of whiteness and particularly white Afrikaner identity as an identity that perceived to be dying.

Site-specific work challenges the traditional audience/spectator relationship. The proximity between spectator and performer becomes far more intimate: the spectator cannot sit passively and watch the action from a distance, but is immersed in the action that takes place all around and up close. In this case we have Butoh creatures crawling over our feet and moving behind us. The setup of the audience in two rows facing each other also unsettles the spectators' relationship with each other: you watch the action taking place around you and witness another person watching that same action. The status of performer and spectator is made equal. Site-specific work necessitates participation on the part of the audience and in so doing challenges and initiates them to self reflect, in this case, on what it means to be white – in a more tangible way than traditional theatre spaces would. My desire as an audience member is to be moved, in some way, by the performance that I am watching and I welcome challenging performances that push, prod and place me outside of my comfort zones. This is obviously not every audience member's desire and becomes apparent in watching other spectator's reactions to the performance taking place – in some instances, the spectator's reaction to the performers is more interesting than the performance itself. Near the end of the piece, a 'so called' audience member stands up and becomes part of the action, ending the piece with her monologue. This adds to the notion of the audience being immersed within the action, as part of the process of the performance.

The use of irony and humour play a significant role in *Villain.* This becomes a device to disarm the audience – an image is presented to us that is simultaneously unsettling and humorous and thus easier to digest. Hannah Lax, holds a wooden mask and attempts to imitate the facial expression of the mask. Her face contorts uncomfortably and her breathing is heavy and forced. This action has many connotations: the idea of masking, of attempting to imitate something else, of assuming another role, an alternative identity, of covering, hiding, being ashamed – an attempt to make oneself invisible, of assuming a desire that is not ones own. The other performer watches her and says, "genuine" – ironic because the attempted imitation is so far removed from anything authentic. He says this word with an Afrikaans accent. As he says this, another performer answers, "absoluut" and a second says, "dis hoe ons moet voel, eight days a week". Here the invisibility of whiteness is emphasized, as well as the relationship between desire and identity. To mask desire is to mask identity. This masking relates specifically to that of white Afrikaner identity. Historically the white Afrikaner is the boer, holding power, wealth and privilege; the orchestrator of Apartheid and oppression. In post Apartheid South Africa, the white Afrikaner is ridden with responsibility, shame and guilt. In order to take responsibility you have to act. However, this masking assumes a given stereotypical identity and evades self-reflection. This evasion results in the Afrikaner assuming an apathetic position, unable to act because their desire is not their own.

The text of the song that follows this scene drives the notion of desire further: “I want to have snow in the summer, I want to have warmth in the winter, I want to feel always better” underlining basic principles of desire – that of warmth and comfort. When another performer immerges holding a rugby ball with the word “genuine’ branded on it, the chorus begin to play a brief game of rugby, tossing the ball to each other. The result is hysterical. In South Africa, rugby is associated with Afrikaans culture and here we are presented with a troop of strange creatures playing an awkward game of rugby. The scene seems to simultaneously empathise with and mock Afrikaans culture.

The goat is a prominent image in the work. Goat’s are known to be destructive animals, consuming and destroying everything in their path. The image of a goat is also related to Satan: they have cloven hooves and the angle of their horns, ears and beard create a pentagram. Two chorus members, Thalia and Hannah, perform a goat duel, charging at each other and beating their chests together before they get stuck in a headlock. They exhaust themselves and then fall asleep on top of each other, cuddled and comforted – their action depicting conflict and resolution.

I found Jessica’s character represented a crippled white identity. The bandage[561] on her head symbolizing the wounded and the cart/small wooden carriage she carried symbolizing a journey. The immediate image that came to mind was that of the voortrekker and subsequently a journey – a vehicle for transporting us, the audience, on the strange journey that is *Villain*. She also carries a sewing machine, symbolizing her role as the ‘mother’, attempting to fix and hold things together. As the audience enters she recites text, almost mournfully, “This is how the lucky feel, how the blessed men think.” This reiterates the notion of whiteness as privilege and power, of those who are lucky, of whiteness as something to aspire to and yet we are greeted by a docile wounded looking woman who seems to be in a state of mourning. It is slightly ironic and humorous. As *Villain* begins, this character’s legs become immobile and she becomes the cripple, disappearing on the floor and occupying a space behind the audience and out of the audience’s eye-line: invisible, if not for the moments when she speaks. She speaks English as well as Xhosa and Afrikaans. Her accent is harsh and unfamiliar and so obviously displaced, so obviously highlighting her inability to fit in. Near the end of the piece her journey has taken her to one of the pillars in the space. We watch as she attempts to climb the pillar, knowing that she will succeed. Her journey is symbolic of the Afrikaner journey, constantly travelling and attempting to establish a home, but never settling or finding it.

Jen’s character was more complex, but primarily represented the apathetic father, consumed by alcohol and television, a tumbler and DSTV remote in hand: alcohol and television as

[561]The bandages or rags were a motif throughout the costuming and symbolized, what I thought an injury, a wound, something that needed to be covered up or healed.

direct products of a consumer society. This character is pained, he pours a drink and sings through tears, “Blue moon, you saw me standing alone, without a dream in my heart, without a love of my own” – highlighting his own isolation and loneliness before he trips and falls. His fall cue’s the approach of Anton’s character. Anton represents the white intellectual male, sitting almost invisibly in the corner for the first twenty minutes of the show, his back turned to the audience. He speaks about the law of gravity while Thalia and Hannah have their goat dual. His words are almost drowned out by the noise of the action around him. The only words that I could really hear him repeating were ‘the law’. Thus I associated him with ‘the law of the father’, not necessarily actively present, but always in the background, lingering and dominating from a distant. Jen then sits on a chair between the two pillars and becomes the ‘spectator’ of the action. The chorus dote on him, bringing him gifts, surrounding him and representing his psyche and eventually crowning him – the monarch, the king, the patriarch – destined and exalted, yet meek and pained. Here the text, “this is how we are supposed to feel” is repeated and echoed by the cast, reiterating the regulation of desire. When the father meets the mother they play a game of ‘chicken’ – a children’s game. They repeat, “I want. I want. I want” as they smack each other’s hands, reprimanding each, denying each other’s desires.

Appendix C: Villain Script

A. Preset

Jess is in the centre doing the Amorphis song lyrics

This is how the lucky feel

the blessed men think

like a daybreak in spring

The sun on a spring morning

Like the flat brink of a cloud

Like a dark night in autumn

A black winter's day

Not darker than that

Gloomier than an autumn night

A black winter's day

I'm a little peacock

Short and round

Here is my

Jess goes down

Jenn is facing the wall

***Darkness Production line**: Cast is in various spaces doing darkness/smelling and line clump*

Can be and is: even paced, with speed (for those who can), strings: backwards or forwards, complete stillness. The task is to stay listen to each other…awareness…breathe together…to find unity....

Dumisa up in the window sill cat (must just check with Jaques if this might not be a light's stand)

Matthew(right) and KG (left) up on the pillars

Michelle H on the wood right

Michele E on the wood right

Magda facing the wall head on wall

Gerhard is facing wall diagonally

Michele E is going from corner to the pillar

Aaron is on wood left

Maps on wood left

Hannah and Thalia close to the armchair on the left

With line metal pipe clump

Line clump must be complete by the time the audience has been seated with earphones on Dumi, Aaron, Michelle, Michele, Kg, Maps

----------End of Preset

1. ***1st Mystical kings and iguanas***

Cue for Jenn's turnaround is the metal clump

*Jenn performs the **1st Mystical kings and iguanas** song*

The group goes from line clump into a darkness clump (just producing) in the right corner

Jess is asleep

Jenn: I have flown to star-stained heights

On bent and battered wings

In search of mythical kings.

Mythical kings

Sure that everything of worth

is in the sky and not the earth

And I never learn

To make my way

Down, down, down

Where the iguana's play

I have ridden comet tails

In search of magic rings

To conjure mythical kings

Mythical kings

Singing scraps of angel song

High is right and low is wrong

And I never taught myself to give

Down, down, down Jess wakes up again

Where the iguanas live

2. ***Metal clump*** forms again out of the darkness clump….walks out into a metal pipe X1

Af: Your cemented pock marks carry history. Long slim things with horizontal lines are beautiful. You hold stories in your cemented form.

The Name Section

Af: Each of your bricks has a name.

Descartes

Darwin Jenn is busy taking Cloak and Fur off

Kant

Newton

John Locke

3. ***Metal clump*** drops Hannah and Gerhard off

Af: You are brave and you carry me. I could not carry you. You smell like polish and mahogany. You are so hard. I am not used to such hardness.

Metal pipe x 3

Aaron and Dumi go out

3 cycles/circles

1x- just even metal pipe

Speed X2 Michele, Kg, Dumi and Maps

Everybody does Strings except

Kg, Michelle H, Magdalena, Aaron lie down

Gerhard: Genuine

Jenn: Absoluut

Gerhard: dit is hoe ons moet voel

8 days a week

Everyone sings

I want to have snow in the summer

I want to feel warmth in the winter

I want to feel always better

4. *Sleep/Dream of Reason Clump*

Jenn is asleep

Kg leads group into clump

Jess: Wall understands. All…your form was founded long ago. I wish I could join you, but my spine cannot do that. You are kind. You could easily crush my fleshy form. Instead you keep me in and out. But I see you have made some exceptions, for the vine and the spiders. The fox stalks at midnight Perilous perilous perilous perilous

To refuse the universal alibi.

(vine cue for jenn to wake up)

group moves backward into Rugby

5. *Rugby 1#*

Rugby game Ball is passed to Aaron…then to Dumi back to clump

Jenn's judgements and observations

Dumi (stalking), Michele E (caves), Maps (water), Matthew (evilrugby)

Jenn:

Dumi: A cat stalking

Michele: The Cango Caves

Maps: The slimey waters of the fish river

Matt: Evil child with ball

Group scatters to the left into a dynamic stillness (no one must have their body positioned towards Jenn)

6. *Drunk Man*

Jenn gets a drink falls down

Group back together into metal clump after Jenn is seated

7. *Lecture machine*

Anton comes up after been gestured by Jenn

Anton's text

Jess cue Anton's "was it decided: Mahogany…I wish I too could be cement and brick. To see what you have seen. Wagon climbs the wall. We are a little family. The sky is blue like my eyes of grey. First came my wings and then came the egg. First came my wings and then came the angel. And never mind those who believe that it is the sort of idea to be found. (into the Blue moons)

Neck:

Thalia and Hannah retreat for their duet material

Arms:

8. *Blue Moons*

Aaron's solo/ duet with Jenn

"My Heart Will Go On" By Celine Dion

Every night in my dreams

I see you, I feel you

That is how I know you go on

Far across the distance

And spaces between us

You have come to show you go on

Near, far, wherever you are

I believe that the heart does go on

Once more you'll open the door

And you're here in my heart

And my heart will go on and on

Thalia and Hannah can move but can't be too busy/noisy here

Rotations: Michele e, Michelle H, Kg,

Aaron ends

9. ***Texty section***

Fragmentation and mumbling

Song: I want to feel….group lying down

10. ***Rugby goats 2#***

Michele E, Aaron, KG, Michelle H, Maipelo, Dumisa travel to Jenn for the

11. ***Witches Sabbath***

Everybody else in strings and back into metal pipe

aerial, earphones, mobile phone, flashstick,

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12. ***2nd Texty section***

“Dis lekker om te kak as jy geeet het”

“This is how we need to feel”

Jenn, Jess, Anton (in cut) Haecceity

Jess at the right pillar

Climate, wind, season, hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them. This should be read without a pause: the animal-stalks-at-five-o'clock. The becoming-evening, becoming-night of an animal, blood nuptials. Five o'clock is this animal! This animal is this place! "The thin dog is running in the road, this dog is the road," cries Virginia Woolf. That is how we need to feel. (Deleuze and Guattari)

Cued from when Jenn sees Dumisa and Aaron lift Howarth

(Anton disappears back to his seat)

Thalia and Hannah back phrasing during which they put on blindfolds

(Jenn starts walking away) or levitates during haecceity

13. ***The siblings***

Thalia and Hannah close by

Blue Moon head to head

Jess: Little brother

Jenn: Glad

14. ***Landscape***

Jess Landscape by the pillar on the right

Jess:

Maps - Wagon climbs the hill. Onward, onward, over the hill. Wagon crosses the bridge

Aaron -. Wagon traverses the empty, uninhabited, barren terrain.

Michele – and off you go

Jess starts crawling after wagon

Bodies remain on the floor

Matthew, Whitney, Gerhard also lie down

Song: I twan ot av wons ni he remmus Rachael gets up and walks forward

15. *The Carrots*

The “planted audience member” Rachael

And the angel of the lord came unto me, snatching me up from my place of slumber. And took me on high, and higher still until we moved to the spaces betwixt the air itself. And he brought me into a vast farmlands of our own midwest. And as we descended, cries of impending doom rose from the soil. One thousand, nay a million voices full of fear. And terror possesed me then. And I begged, "Angel of the Lord, what are these tortured screams?" And the angel said unto me, "These are the cries of the carrots, the cries of the carrots! You see, Reverend Maynard, tomorrow is harvest day and to them it is the holocaust." And I sprang from my slumber drenched in sweat like the tears of one million terrified brothers and roared, "Hear me now, I have seen the light! They have a consciousness, they have a life, they have a soul! Damn you! Let the rabbits wear glasses!

This is necessary. (x2)

Life feeds on life feeds on life feeds on life feeds on....

History is now and South Africa

On South Africa: cue

Bodies need to be out of the space Jess inhabits…they have to find their way back to their preset positions and lie down

16. ***Pillar Love Waltz***

Af (Jess) by pillar

The pastor on chair

Satan (Cloaked figure) far upstage

Jess: Daai dag op die plot was warm en die vliee het rond gevlieg en haar of sy hart was seer

Hart harde harte is hard vanseer van geeseer gal

Gal gal gal gal

Ek is geel van gal

Wat is gal? ek het geen idée

Magdalena and the balloons

17. ***2nd Iguana song***

Curse the mind that mounts the clouds

In search of mythical kings

And only mystical things

Mystical things (group gets up and comes together must fetch

Cry for the soul that will not face Thalia and Hannah)

The body as an equal place

And I never learnt to touch for real

Or feel the things iguanas feel

Down, down, down

Where they play

Rachael brings Jenn the cloak and fur and they exit while Jenn sings the song

Bye Bye

Metal clump does another rotation

Exits with speed real speed

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