

RHODES UNIVERSITY

Consuming Pasts: Imaging Food as Identity and (post)Memory in Post-apartheid South Africa

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Abstract

This mini-thesis interprets the convergence of food and memory and explores dialectical processes associating food, identity and (post)memory, particularly in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. Considering works by prominent South African Artists Berni Searle and Churchill Madikida as well as my own artistic practise and usage of food as conceptual medium, this study considers the converging effects of food, identity and memory, together with the materiality of food, from a fine arts perspective, as particularly rich and developing arena for memory work.

Declaration of originality

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete references. This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for Master of Fine Art at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another university.

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INTRODUCTION

I was raised an Afrikaner¹ and grew up living alongside my immediate family, which included my maternal grandmother, Ouma Baps². I wistfully remember her baking Klapperkoekies³ - an age-old Afrikaner family recipe. She would always set aside some dough for me to play with and make my own cookies. Ouma Baps died in 2008. The cookie jar stood empty. I inherited my Grandmother's recipe book, a collection of recipes which she gathered and inscribed. Here she recorded traditional Afrikaner recipes, including her mother's Klapperkoekie recipe, an heirloom of sorts passed down to me. Now I bake these cookies, affectionately known as Ouma Koekies⁴.

After her death her presence lingered still. Her things, affect-laden objects of a life once lived, signalled her having been there and carried within them the traces of her life once lived. Ouma Koekies, once a staple in our home, hardly ever in short supply, now seemed a thing of the past. I vaguely remember some leftover in the cookie jar after she had died, and hesitantly recall taking one last bite. Those leftover cookies, much like her things, exude a strange aura of her presence, willing me to consume what was left.

So, what was left of her? How is it that the seemingly insignificant, somewhat oversweet notion of my grandmothers cookies informs this inquiry? French novelist and critic Marcel Proust (1871-1922), reflects on how familiar foods, specifically their taste, may serve as catalyst for recollecting past events:

And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray ... when I went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea. (Proust 1992: 63).

A grownup Proust, by virtue of consuming the small and quintessentially French confection known as a madeleine, is remembering his childhood and consequently summons a series of stories, events and images, unlocking some thousand pages of recollection. Proust was stirred by some past event, making "attempts to rise, something that has been anchored at a great depth" (Proust 1992: 62). He describes his memory of some past event, "this old, dead moment" aroused by "the magnetism of an identical moment" (ibid.), namely the tasting of his tea-soaked madeleine.

Similarly evoking the past's lingering trace, my own nostalgic retracing of such familial foodstuffs involves a story of personal loss and introduces the idea that foods, particularly familiar traditional foodstuffs, serve as positive lived experience of the past as trace. For me Ouma Koekies, as well as other

¹ A white, Afrikaans speaking South African whose ancestral roots comprise Afrikaner nationalism. This does not discredit those non-white Afrikaans speaking individuals from identifying themselves as Afrikaner.

² Grandmother Baps

³ Coconut-cookies

⁴ Grandmother Cookies

traditional Afrikaner recipes and fares, manifest as consumed heirloom involving active participation in making and consuming the past.

The following mini-thesis comprises three chapters. The title 'Consuming Pasts...' encompasses the areas on which this study is focused on. They include food, identity formation and memory, as well as their converging effect. Chapter one situates this enquiry within post-apartheid South Africa, a setting still very much cognizant of the past. This study recognizes Afrikaner's role in apartheid and hones in on tainted complexities associating whiteness and Afrikaner identity politics in post-apartheid South Africa. Chapter one establishes some of these concerns by focusing on various theoretical frameworks relating to post-apartheid identity politics and memory. Key texts and theorists regarding Identity and memory in contemporary South Africa include Charles Villa-Vicencio's "Justice, Media, and Memory: The South African Transition" (2012); Cornel Verwey and Michael Quayle's article "Whiteness, Racism, and Afrikaner Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa" (2012); Samantha Vice's *How Do I Live in This Strange Place?* (2010); as well as relevant texts by cultural theorist Marianne Hirsch and French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Following these discussions Anthropologists David Sutton and Jon D. Holtzman's texts about food-and-memory are reflected upon. Here they examine food as cultural artefact informing identity and memory.

Chapter two, *Imaging Food as Identity and Memory in Post-apartheid South Africa*, further develops upon premises established in chapter one. Considering food and its materiality as particularly rich arena of conceptual interpretation, chapter two looks at how South African artists Berni Searle and Churchill Madikida employ food as conceptual medium.

Boerekos, chapter three, particularly focuses on Afrikaner foodstuffs and their use as a conceptual medium within this submissions practical component. In this section Ouma Koekies as well as other traditional Afrikaner foods are considered as conceptual mediums exploring Afrikaner identity and memory in post-apartheid South Africa. Here I explain my own symbolic use of food as identity and memory, including my interpretation of Afrikaner foodstuffs as postmemory.

CHAPTER ONE: Consuming Pasts

1.1 (Post)Memory/(Post-)Apartheid

Much has been said about South Africa's history of apartheid and the appalling atrocities carried out in the interest of Afrikaner⁵ minority rule – gross violations of human rights, immense economic disparities as well as the overall blatant disregard for non-white South African citizens. Apartheid's faulty regime eventually came crumbling down, beginning 1990; in its wake remains a “pile of fragments” (David Bunn in Law 2002: 4), a rotten past still lingering and present. How is it then that in the new South Africa, a nation still settling and unsettling amidst the fragments, we consider ourselves a post-apartheid society? Does the 'post' in 'post-apartheid', a prefix signalling the end of apartheid's posterity, perhaps also communicate something about its troubling continuity?

“Afrikaners cannot escape the fact that the apartheid system was put in place in their name” or that Afrikaner nationalism, Apartheid and Afrikaner identity were long considered inextricably fused (Verwey & Quayle 2012: 554). In “Who's Got the Map? The Negotiation of Afrikaner Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (2001) Mads Verstergaard states that Afrikaner nationalism “was based on values of God-fearing Calvinism ... the fundamental importance of ... heterosexuality, and, above all, the importance of whiteness”, not to mention black incompetence (Verstergaard 2001: 20-21). Such rigid and exclusive Afrikaner foundations are shameful reminders of a shocking past, one which many new generation Afrikaners and South Africans would rather forget. Some opting and/or struggling to distance themselves from remnants of Apartheid's past made present.

Samantha Vice's recent article, and subsequent seminar debate, entitled “How Do I Live in This Strange Place” (2010) confronts such complex and often evasive strategies. Vice asks “how white people can *be* and live well in such a land, with such a legacy. What is it like to live here as a white person? What is the morally appropriate reaction to one's situation of privilege?” (Vice 2010: 323). She focuses on the guilt and shame experienced by unwitting beneficiaries of Apartheid's regime and how such situation of white privilege persists, subsequently cloying the moral standings of fortuitous, well-intentioned beneficiaries. A Caucasian Vice, acknowledging her beneficial culpability and problematic status, admits that her non-Afrikaner status does afford her solace in having “escaped the taint *that identity* brings with it” (ibid.) (my italics).

So while whites did and continue to benefit as privileged beneficiaries of South Africa's past, with others still disproportionately suffering unfair disparities, their inadvertent response, if they accept their role as complicit or problematic at least, comprises guilt and shame. This, as Vice suggests, is particularly true for white Afrikaners. Such inevitable response

⁵ Here 'Afrikaner' refers to those individuals classified as such under Apartheid's Afrikaner nationalist rule. Afrikaner nationalists considered themselves an exclusive breed of society who insisted that its members were white *and* Afrikaans speaking (Verstergaard 2001: 20-21).

debilitates Afrikaners' sense of pride and brings into question their contributing towards a prosperous new South Africa. This effect signals what Vice identifies to be our "famous history of stupefying injustice and inhumanity" as "still with us", pressing "around us every day" (ibid.).

Vice argues that "[u]nder conditions of oppression, both the oppressed and the oppressors are morally damaged, although of course in different ways" (Vice 2010: 324). Considering our recent history of injustice, as opposed to other colonial legacies, its effects form "part of living memory, something whites benefit from in direct, unmediated ways – and therefore something that implicates each one's sense of self now" (Vice 2010: 337). Her focus about perpetrators and individuals privileged by a previous disposition by no means attempts to absolve those guilt-ridden and shamed by previous actions and/or present privilege, but rather sheds new light on such peculiar uncomfortable positioning in South Africa. Her sentiments regarding these complexities are aptly expressed as follows:

[T]he injustice and inhumanity of Apartheid is part of the experience and memory of most adults, rather than belonging to a distant past to which they are only symbolically related. The lives of most adults are embedded in Apartheid; their narrative is shaped by that legacy as much as nonwhites. *We*, not our parents, participated in injustice. (Vice 2010: 332) (Italics in original)

While arguing that "perhaps younger generations will (appropriately) escape the kind of perplexity" (ibid.) she is referring to, the memory of Apartheid's past is still very much a consuming force in contemporary South Africa, and profoundly impacts the experience of new generation South Africans. Although not directly complicit within Apartheid's regime, this study asserts the complacency and compliance, albeit unwittingly so, of many new generation South Africans⁶ within an inherited Apartheid's framework.

Memory, the "notion of experience or meaning in reference to the past" (Holtzman 2006: 363), with all of its complexity and overarching effects is "far from being merely a receptacle or storage system, an image bank of the past" (Samuel 2012: xxiii). Rather, memory is "dynamic", an active "shaping force ... changing colour and shape according to the emergencies of the moment" (ibid), as it were consuming the past and reconstituting it as memory. As opposed to history and its "critical dimension" of dealing with the past, memory involves imaginative processes of experience (Ricoeur 2006: 10). Memory's subjective dynamic stems from its "connection to the present and future" (ibid.). Ricoeur asserts that "speaking about memory necessarily means speaking about forgetting, because one cannot remember everything. A memory with no gaps would be an unbearable burden" (Ricoeur 2006: 16). Forgetting is essential for posterity, stripping away "the excess ... of the historical, which consists in a perversion of the relationship between past and future at the expense of the latter" (Ricoeur 2006: 17). This excess of the historical resonates within many contexts of

⁶ Individuals who identify with the ideals of a Post-apartheid South Africa and therefore abolish Afrikaner nationalists' ideology (viz. - white superiority, racial exclusivity, black inferiority, inequality, etc.)(Verwey & Quayle 2012: 554).

Post-apartheid South Africa, many still unpacking, deconstructing and reconstructing its stifling effect (Villa-Vicencio 2012: 86). The history of Apartheid is dense with atrocities, so much so that the moral obligation to remember is prohibitive in a quest for a natural cycle of catharsis in which the capacity to forget plays a part. This is not to suggest forgetting past injustices, or proposing any sort of solution, but rather highlights complexities associating South Africa's work of recollection. Littered with Apartheid's remnants, South African's collective and individual work of recollection reeks, its justified necessity to remember as opposed to forget constructs a scenario which can become stifling. This is not to say that South Africa's processes of remembering is beyond working through, but rather that it highlights memory and remembering as process, constantly renewed and recycled in the interest of posterity and the work of recollection.

Memory, along with other visible pressing effects around us every day, perhaps then signals the 'post' in Post-apartheid communicating its troubling continuity (Vice 2010: 323). This troubling continuity extends its effect in what Marianne Hirsch best describes as postmemory. Hirsch cautions that the “post prefix could carry the implication that we are beyond memory” (Hirsch 1993: 8), rather stating that in her reading postmemory “has certainly not taken us beyond memory, but is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection” (ibid). Postmemory is memory at second hand – a generation who remembers the previous generation’s memories but who has no direct first-hand experience of these. Describing postmemory's implication, Hirsch accounts the following:

To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation. It is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension. These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present. This is, I believe, the experience of postmemory and the process of its generation. (Hirsch 2008: 107)

Postmemory is not memory, but it is a lot like memory, approximating its affective force. Postmemory, like memory, is subjective; its time warp quality inherently revisionist yet received at second hand. The significance of postmemory, insofar as it concerns this study, resides in the odd notion of remembering a past that is not your own. Its perverse excess of the past begins to colour one’s own memories and experiences with such a strong tint that it inhibits the ability to see one’s own present. Such immersive trauma particularly relates to South Africans grappling apartheid's past-and-present. As such, postmemory negates the absolute “mineness of memories” and indefinitely extends “the idea that we collectively possess collective memories” (Riceour 2006: 11)

In short, postmemory, much like history, is the transmission of traumatic past events or memories by individuals, but unlike history postmemory is

very much subjective and relies on the “presence of embodied and affective experience in the process of transmission” (Hirsch 2012: 33). It becomes a way in which trauma is received and transmitted “through indirection and multiple mediation” (Hirsch 2012: 83). Postmemory relates how we, the generation after, are somehow implicated in the crimes of our familial predecessors. As such, perhaps in reference to Vice's notions of Apartheid's implicating effects, many new generation South Africans continue to comprise Apartheid's perplexity, failing to elude its stifling effects.

1.2 Food?

What is food? The absurdity of such seemingly fatuous question quickly dissolves upon inspection. “This is not a stupid question” and in realising this one need only be reminded “of the pervasive role of food in human life” (Holtzman 2006: 364). “Next to breathing, eating is perhaps the most essential of all human activities, and one with which much of social life is entwined” (Mintz & Du Bois 2002: 102). “Far from being merely a passive receptacle or storage system” but rather understood as “an active, shaping force” (Samuel 2012: xxiii) which extends its affective force beyond generations, memory finds ample means of expression through food.

Food is a basic necessity, “that stuff that we as organisms consume by virtue of requiring energy” (Holtzman 2006: 362), a substance nourishing and sustaining our bodies. Food feeds posterity, giving much needed sustenance within the present and in doing so propels us towards the future. In essence food is past intake shaping both present and future. Food is also rooted within the past, evidenced in the time and effort that goes into preparing a meal or the rich heritage of time-honoured recipes. Food and its omnipresence in daily life is particularly dense to think about, its ritualistic consumption and overarching significance so comprehensive it evades pinpoint analysis. When considering food-and-memory as tangent of food-centred discourse, the elusive quality of food's interpretation is well suited to this equation; considering food and memory as “something of a floating signifier” (ibid.), both essentially vague terms with complex signification.

Anthropologists David Sutton and Jon D. Holtzman are considered pioneers with regard to exploring the implications of food and memory. Both Sutton and Holtzman consider food as locus for historically constructed identities and nexus for history, memory, identity and the past. In “Food and Memory” (2006) Holtzman discusses “how varied notions of memory emerge within much of the burgeoning literature on food” and explains how “these works could provide some broader insights into more general approaches to memory” (Holtzman 2006: 362). Holtzman asks “[w]hat makes food such a powerful and diffuse locus of memory?”, citing the sensuality of food tastes and smells to be “powerful mnemonic cues” (Holtzman 2006: 373). He argues that researchers “tend to emphasize forms of bodily memory consonant with ... the pleasant smells and tastes of good food with far less attention to other types of sensualities, less epicurean, and sometimes less pleasant - whether fullness, energy, lethargy, hunger, sickness, or discomfort” (ibid.). In doing so Holtzman argues that despite prior analysis and research, food-and-memory as enquiry is still very much an underdeveloped yet potentially rich platform for memory studies. Consider

Holtzman's following conclusion of developing arena "Food and Memory" (2006):

One potential, though so far underdeveloped, theme that might illuminate some of these linkages is the extent to which food intrinsically traverses the public and the intimate. Although eating always has a deeply private component, unlike our other most private activities food is integrally constituted through its open sharing, whether in rituals, feasts, reciprocal exchange, or contexts in which it is bought and sold. One might consider then the significance of this rather unique movement between the most intimate and the most public in fostering food's symbolic power, in general, and in relation to memory, in particular... Food, thus, offers a potential window into forms of memory that are more heteroglossic, ambivalent, layered, and textured. I, thus, suggest that understandings of food and memory would benefit from studies that more deliberately aim to understand the interconnections among the varying aspects of food, the varying phenomena of memory, and their confluences- how these in some senses constitute a whole, albeit a messy and ambiguous one. (Holtzman 2006: 373-374)

What Holtzman is communicating does not suggest that memory is directly connected with food, or that food should always be thought of in relation to memory, but rather implies a peculiar collective dynamic. If one were to conscientiously consider memory and food as one it becomes apparent that this duo signals a peculiar dynamic and myriad signification. Holtzman equates food and memory's unique paired significance to the neck of a mythical creature, comprising the head and body of the same species, though not of the same creature (Holtzman 2006: 362). As such, Holtzman describes food and memory as "potently link" yet independently "shifting and indeterminate" components of the same whole, albeit complex and equivocal (ibid.).

Sutton similarly suggests "some of the ways that food and memory can be productively thought together" (Sutton 2008: 158) and explores "how food is implicated in very different types of memory, and how these different types of memory relate to each other" (Sutton 2008: 157). In "A Tale of Easter Ovens: Food and Collective Memory" (2008) Sutton particularly focuses on social or collective memory and asks "in what ways does food, ingested into individual bodies, feed social memory?" (ibid.) In response Sutton relates Maurice Halbwachs' concepts surrounding collective memory, proposing that all memory, whether personal or collective, is social and can only be sustained within a social context (Sutton 2008: 159). Sutton restates Halbwachs' claims in asserting "no memory is, then, asocial", adding that "we could also say that all memory is personal: organized through individuals with their own particular trajectories through the social landscape" (ibid). Sutton argues that "what makes food such a powerful site for exploring memory is the very fact that, unlike, say, public monuments, in producing, exchanging and consuming food we are continuously criss-crossing between the "'public' and the 'intimate', individual bodies and collective institutions" (Sutton 2008: 160). That there are social and individual aspects to all memories vastly influences his views regarding

food and memory (Sutton 2008: 161), with food of course also transversely hovering between collective as well as intimate domains. In his conclusion Sutton states the following:

The power of these memories is that they unite very different levels of experience, whether we think of them as mind and body or sensory and social, or something else; they move seamlessly between taste and social relationships, and this wholeness allows them to stand for and powerfully evoke entire periods of time - "the good old days," "childhood years" - and thus capture individual biographies and collective identities. To return to Holtzman's point, it is the fact that food "intrinsically traverses the public and the intimate" even in relatively disembodied context, that makes it such a powerful vehicle for studying memory. In other words, I am suggesting that it is at some level intrinsic to our experience with food that this should be so. (Sutton 2008: 178)

Sutton's rather open-ended concluding remark proclaims his sentiments regarding food's affiliation with memory, even gesturing towards it as essentiality "intrinsic" to experiences with food. Sutton sites a "wholeness" to our experience with food, how it can be thought to merge intimate and public domains, "individual biographies and collective identities". Whether or not one agrees with Sutton regarding the fundamental coinciding of food and memory, his views shed some interesting new light. Up until now, as demonstrated by Proust's recollection and the sensuality of food as powerful mnemonic cues, food and memory's relationship has demonstrated a definitive link to personal memory.

Individualised experiences of food and memory predominantly centre on individual tastes and personal experiences. Considering taste, Sutton communicates it as "both individuated and deeply socially shaped" (Sutton 2008: 161). The significance of this statement, as previously communicated in brief, resides in recognizing individual, social and other forms of memory as inextricable, neither perceived as separately identifiable objects (ibid.). This point, "that there are social and individual aspects to all memories" (ibid.), answers for considering broader contexts of food and memory. Just as food integrally transverses intimate and public domains; its intimate consumption so often constituted within settings of social sharing, its external content intimately consumed in the flesh; so too does memory's dynamic individually and socially take shape. Such interchangeable dynamic justifies further studies regarding broader contexts of food and memory.

There still exists limited theoretical discourse and as such an overall discussion of food and memory as cohesive whole leaves much to be desired. So as not to overstretch the signification of food and memory, this study now narrows its focus by considering such significations in relation to heritage foods, particularly traditional South African foods. As previously stated, food is a basic need and according to French theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes "food is ... the first need" (Barthes 2008: 29-30). Barthes asserts that "ever since man has ceased living off wild berries, this need has been highly structured" (Barthes 2008: 30), and that within

modern society food no longer simply addresses a need but also “sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies” (Barthes 2008: 29). He asserts “[s]ubstances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification; and as soon as this happens, we have communication by way of food” (Barthes 2008:30).

Tell me what you eat: I will tell you what you are. (Brillat-Savarin 2002: 3)

This well-known adage by French gastronome Charles Anthelme Brillat-Savarin restates food's inherent potential for signification, perhaps better understood as *You Are What You Eat*⁷. Such saying is indicative of food's significance regarding one's cultural identity, health and/or state of mind. In light of considering food and memory as a whole, perhaps then a far more nuanced, even literal understanding of food and its vestiges is possible. Regarding the significance of food and cultural identity, such extended influence resides not merely in food identifying one's past. Assuming someone who regularly enjoys Mrs Balls Chutney or Dröewors to be South African or that somebody who eats Black Pudding is either of British or Irish descent would not always be accurate. However, these products carry with them a cultural resonance and the choice to partake in their consumption presents this history in a current moment. Such oscillation of food, partaking processes past, present and future, extends food-and-memory discourse by figuring time as extending characteristic within this dynamic. Food's stakes as past, present and future, mimics memory's time warped dynamic, its processing the past as present and target posterity. As such, this study extends the peculiar dynamic food-and-memory to include considerations of time as both concepts seemingly merge experiences past, present and future. Both food⁸ and memory have stakes within the past, both experienced as present and inform identity, as well as targeting posterity and being towards the future.

Following such presumption let us once more reconsider the original cause for this study, namely Ouma Koekies. Following my grandmother's death these cookies consequently vanished, and so it remained for in excess of a year or so. However, as more and more time past, I increasingly began hungering for their taste. I remember baking my grandmother's cookies alone for the first time and how acutely aware I became of her absence. I recall thinking how sad it would be if my cookies didn't at least resemble those my grandmother used to make. Half expecting a disappointing effort, my Ouma Koekies came out just right. Before me there now stood a large display of piled cookies no different from the ones my grandmother would make – as if she in fact had made them herself. Fully aware of the fact that I baked these cookies, they are as much my grandmother's creation as they are mine. The same can be said for all cooking insofar as recipes have been tried and tested, every new creation and its surrounding practices absorbing and

⁷ The title of a book by Victor Hugo Landlahr published 1940.

⁸ Most notably traditional foodstuffs. The term 'traditional' embodies a set of complex discourse, and the significance of this expression has sparked numerous debate. However, due to the scope of this mini-thesis I have refrained from incorporating these discussions and only employ this term as rudimentary descriptive device. Therefore the 'traditional' is here considered synonymous with 'longstanding' or 'established'.

carrying traces of previous encounters (Baderoon 2002: 14). By tracing the origins of these various encounters one is likely to stumble across early ancestral heritage amidst its chronological framework. Such absorption and continuity of the past as trace illustrates Barthes statement that food permits a person to partake ones past (Barthes 2008: 32), particularly as is the case with traditional foodstuffs and recipes.

Memory and its vestiges greatly contribute towards contemporary South Africa's troubling continuity of Apartheid's consuming past. Memory, embodying history and the past's future as trace affecting posterity, and food, substances we consume that similarly feed posterity, are considered particularly illuminating when thought together, some considering their complex entanglement as constituting a unique and integral component of memory work. Food serves as powerful mnemonic cues for personal memory and as such the sensual experience of food momentarily transfixes an individual within a momentary lapse of time and space where the past becomes present and embodied within the self. The intimacy of foods relationship towards the self and its open sharing within social settings lends itself toward interpreting foods symbolic gesturing. The sociability of food takes shape within numerous contexts, from festive gatherings to the communality of recipes and traditional foods as tried and tested. As such, the vast majority of food is profoundly intimate and socially inscribed, and mimics processes of memory. It would be overstretched to say that food and memory are interchangeable, but the profound prolificacy of their converging effects does merit innate interconnectivity. While the sensuality of food proffers intimate experiences of personal memory, the symbolic and indirect processes of food justify it as a signifier of collective identity and memory, particularly concerning traditional foodstuffs with its longstanding interconnectivity with the past.

Insofar as it concerns this study, within the context of Post-apartheid South Africa, traditional foodstuffs signify communicating the past as present, consuming and consumed by, albeit it symbolically, the effects of a past littered with apartheid's spoils. As such, traditional foodstuffs constitute somewhat of a consuming heirloom - a bequeathed gift that obligates continuity with the past as memory, consumed and therefore actively partaking and reshaped by present agencies. In short, this study propels the pioneering discourse food-and-memory and its traversing public and private; and considers another shared interest of significance, namely the past, present and future, particularly in relation to traditional foodstuffs. The latter is perhaps best described in terms of food-and-memory's ancestral agenda.

CHAPTER TWO: Imaging Food as Identity and Memory in Post-apartheid South Africa

Having focused about food's significance in perpetuating identity and memory from an anthropological point of view, I will now shift focus and consider how prominent South African artists Berni Searle and Churchill Madikida have harnessed food's signifying potential as conceptual medium addressing memory and identity concerns.

Berni Searle's work addresses her "view of occupying multiple identities that are constantly changing" while simultaneously regarding her identity as already "made for me" (Bester 2003:10). Searle navigates such "multiplicity of identities" by exploring identity as having both reality and fantasy elements (Bester 2003:10). Her fantasy or imagined identity configurations tend to implode imposed, fixed or stereotypical identity stamps (ibid.).

Colour me (1998) (Fig. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 2), a multimedia series of work comprising spice as medium, challenges racial classification. Searle, variously covering her body in spices and visually representing such coverings along with their trace, experiments with colour and appearance (Van Der Watt 2004: 76). Spice, a preservative for embalming and substance historically connected to colonial slavery, signifies certain ethnic racial expectations (Bester 2003: 15), often stereotyping those identities as exotic other. Embalming Searle as product of imposed ancestral identity, her use of spice ambiguously fixes and loosens her identity. A condiment use in food, spice here also manifests itself as additive to Searle, transforming her naked self. Her alluring colours and textures saturating morphed identification, a fantastically coloured Searle refuses "to position the self in any conclusive way" (Van Der Watt 2004: 76). Saturating her face and body, the seductive beauty of vivid spice textures and colours betray the imminent dangers of burial or suffocation (Bester 2003: 18). Searle describes her works as combating "simplistic, stereotypical classification" (Bester 2003: 15), and as such employs and subverts food's identification as markers for ancestry by redefining its consumptive setting.

Traces (1998) (Fig. 2), a work within her series *Colour Me*, similarly identifies Searle as floating signifier. It confronts its audience by way of sophisticated mediation, effectively negotiating identity and its perpetual transformation. The work consists of six life size photographic printouts arranged as three pairs of two. Each pair is coupled one in front of the other by neatly configured symmetrical surface planes of corresponding spice. The three back images are photographic reproductions of Searle's naked body covered in spice, similarly revealing Searle's ancestral heritage as it relates to spice and concealing her individual naked body. Encapsulated by spice and made visible within its contours, Searle's androgynous body retains a sense of detachment as wholly contained yet feigning assimilation, managing to assert her subjective presence as definitive within this equation. The vulnerability of her naked body overpowered by spice, potentially staining or irritating her own skin, burning her eyes, blocking her airway passages, visually and experientially conveys the overwhelming presence of an imposed ancestral past identity. Simultaneous exotic

stereotype and Cape Malay ancestral influence, Searle is coloured by an evocative use of spice, overstating her identity as 'coloured' and exotic and understating individual agency. Searle indeed pictures herself coloured; she is bright yellow, deep red and richly brown, perhaps not quite herself amidst imposed identity, coloured within uncanny past signification. "[N]ever quite anywhere" Searle's compromised presence shifts dynamic, puncturing her trace in spice (Van Der Watt 2004: 76).

Searle's absent body now signals her effect for having been there as trace, her presence imprinted within past vestiges. As such, Searle recognises identity as process oscillating between past and present, simultaneously changing and already made for her (Bester 2003:10). Traces "literalizes the radical insufficiency of identity" as dynamically shifting between individual agency and past heritage; "by devising a practice that visualizes simultaneous presence and absence, visibility and invisibility, ... refuses to position the self in any conclusive way" (Van Der Watt 2004: 76).

Similarly attesting to foods symbolic powers, *Snow white* (2001) (Fig. 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3), a video projection piece developing towards Searle kneading dough, clearly evolved *Colour Me's* conceptual terrain "in its intent to unfix the self through strategies of appearance and disappearance" (Van Der Watt 2004: 77). The piece starts with Searle kneeling on a dark surface, her body indistinctly lit amidst its dark background, becoming more defined as white flour, much like snow, falls onto her skin. Such quiet disposition of Searle's naked body becoming visible in white sharply contrasts her actions reclaiming its imposed substance. Searle wipes the flour off her skin and onto the floor "then starts noisily, ritualistically, to make a dough from the flour, now wet with water that we hear dripping from above" (ibid.). A work that speaks about reclaimed agency amidst imposed identity, Liese Van Der Watt states that an obvious reading of this work is that it challenges imposed 'white' normative conventions (ibid.). She goes on to suggest that deeper understandings of the work speaks "about the movement from object to subject, from being passive to being active, and about claiming agency and self-definition" (ibid.). The way "the flour marks her body" also makes reference to "colonialism's civilizing mission" (Bester 2003: 31), a peculiar white-out essentially wiping out indigenous influences and population.

Relating to these concerns Searle deliberately references *Snow White*⁹, an epic fairy tale centred about the beautiful and fair princess Snow White. Unlike Snow White, Searle's imposed fair skin does not paint a pretty picture but rather registers as monstrosity, her fantasy existence here transposed onto the very real surfaces of Searle's skin. Such monstrous reconfiguration of Snow White, her pale skin now staining Searle's darker complexion, signals a transitive reconfiguration of Snow White's perfect whiteness, now lacklustre and dull. Snow White's previous subjection to others, having been cast upon a wicked witch's spell and subsequently saved by her prince charming, is renounced by Searle's propensity toward individual agency as she renounces her objectified existence by dusting herself off and reshaping such imposed identity. As such Searle actively partakes in her identity formation by reshaping those aspects of imposed

⁹ A original and famous story by the Brothers Grimm first published in 1812.

identity which she regards as already “made for me” (Bester 2003:10). In this instance as well as in her *Colour Me* series Searle likens such imposed identities; comprising exotic stereotyping, normative whiteness and perhaps even gender typecasting; to consumed substance, spice and white flour respectively. Searle’s subversive use of these consumed substances, consuming her body within its signification, attests to her acknowledging food's signifying potential.

Searle particularly exploits food's capacity for identity configuration, harnessing its ancestral agenda¹⁰ in shaping the present. *Colour Me*'s intricate use of spice, in light of such symbolic referencing of spice, subverts the normative quantities for spice use. Incorporated as accompaniment within a dish, spice use in unassuming quantities compliments a dish, accentuating its unique properties with spice distinguished as afterthought. Spice can also potentially overpower a particular dish's innate characteristics and therefore be perceived as overwhelming sensation. Spice's potential as positive influence is equally pitted against potential revolt. A delicate balance needs to be achieved in order for the spice to take effect without overtly calling attention to itself. Searle's *Colour me* series wilfully exploits spice's overpowering potential, strangely animated by what can only be described as spice/food's ancestral agenda. This equally figures in *Snow White*'s use of flour, channelling Apartheids oppressive past. Searle indeed recognizes food's symbolic potential - citing its transversal of public and private (Holtzman 2006: 373), its signifying communication (Barthes 2008:30), as well as its identifying the amalgamation of past, present and future as ancestral agent (Van Der Watt 2004: 77).

Seizing upon Hirsch's notions as partial premise of this study, appropriating what she has to say about a somewhat similar artistic rendering of “identification and affiliation”, “[t]he present self, the artist who constructs the work, encounters in the image the past self and the other selves [...] that define that past self, shaping her imagination and constituting her memories” (Hirsch 2012:159). The “other selves” that Hirsch is referring to relates to a far more literal depiction of multiple subject identities, whereas Searle's nuanced depictions of the self as other, consumed/alterd by cultural “identification and affiliation”, articulates her “other selves” or those imposed cultural identities compounding supposed individual agency. As such, Searle's work recognises identity, the simultaneity of self and other, as inextricable devoured substance “shaping her imagination and constituting her memories”. What's more is that both Hirsch and Searle identifies an ancestral agency, some past presence being towards the future and shaping the present self. Such ancestral agency Searle implicitly relays as spice – that consumed food substance she identifies as traditional foodstuff.

Although Searle's above mentioned works intent on critiquing identity's multiplicity make no explicit mention of memory as interpretive concept, identity inextricably denotes memory as defining characteristic. Consider

¹⁰ [A]ncestral agenda' here denotes food's signifying potential and personifies its purpose by suggesting it embodies motive/instruction – namely traditional fares continuance of past customs and/or recipes.

Searle's conception of identity's myriad influences, comprising such imposed identities rooted within ancestral pasts. The past as present is none other than memory taking effect, be it personal, collective or post. As such, Searle's signification of food as identity undoubtedly includes memory in all its complexity, implicitly referencing food-and-memory's peculiar dynamic.

Unpacking such implicit insights, consider first *Traces*' carefully weighted piles of spice, a dispersal of spice sporadically reconvened in scales. One possible reading of these neat piles would be to suggest that they signify Searle's claim to her ancestral heritage. Scooped up within greater piles of ancestral spice, these heaps embody what cultural heritage Searle has laid claim to and as such potentially means to pass onto future generations. Further attesting to such interpretation, the agency of this spice as generationally bequeathed cultural heritage once more reconfigures as surface planes of actual spice, no longer distanced by photographic display but tangibly evident as fragrant spice. Filling the surrounding space with its enticing smells, luring the generation after towards its affective presence, consumed, consuming and inevitable passed on, such process attesting to spice's ancestral economy echoes memory and postmemory's "inter- and trans-generational inheritance" (Hirsch 2008: 111). Such argument for memory's ancestral economy as spice does not exclude Searle's explicit signifying spice as token for early colonialism and the spice trade, but rather extends its significance as such by suggesting colonialism and its vestiges continuation as memory. Admittedly projected, such interpretative claim seems justified amidst this study's food-and-memory trajectory discourse.

Snow White similarly echoes this peculiar dynamic, particularly in relation to postmemory. Explicitly referencing apartheid's white-out tendencies, those traumatic identity ruptures induced by Apartheid notions of white Afrikaner supremacy, Searle's work gestures toward Apartheid's troubling continuity and influence. The flour, a symbolic reconfiguration of memory, transforms into dough as Searle kneads and prepares its substance. Potentially intent on feeding others, this dough symbolically feeds future generations with reconfigured memory's substance, and in so doing constitutes a second-hand memory substrate. Such bequeathed substance of traumatic past memory translates into postmemory.

Perhaps most striking is *Snow White*'s pounding and reshaping flour as dough. In this picturing of dough, in reference to its pale biscuit colour and surface textures recalling white skin, its pummelled surfaces relay imposed whiteness and Apartheid legacy's disfiguring potential. Reclaiming individual agency by ridding herself of Apartheid's imposed white agency, Searle forcefully reconstitutes such white powder as dough – a thick, malleable substance that visually manifests itself as marred, actively shaped and displaced white skin. Once a part of Searle's identity formation, now discarded reconfigures as tumorous waste. Once a stain on Searle's darker skin, such whiteness now reconvenes as cancerous growth still very much aimed at consumption and influencing effect. As dough, postmemory here develops from traumatic memories and identities stifling effects, the flour engulfing Searle's body referencing Apartheid and colonialism's inflicting

influence.

Similarly interrogating identity concerns is South African artist Churchill Madikida, focusing on his “history as an individual” (Madikida 2003: para. 1) by relating how he deals with his Xhosa heritage and mixed ancestry. Madikida explains his methodology:

I choose to reclaim the past, to explore my history and to work as a storyteller about our past and present. Through making images I connect the past to the present. (ibid)

As such, Madikida's works function as a form of memory work in its continuation of the past made present. His exhibition entitled *Liminal States* (2001), specifically representative of Xhosa circumcision rituals and rites of passage as well as moralistic ethics relating to such practice's representation, facilitates a platform for ongoing debates “on matters of identity reconstruction” (Madikida n.d.: 9). Madikida, much like Searle, perceives identity as both individually constructed and subject to fixed ancestry. Realising his identity through what he considers “‘negotiated consciousness’, or perhaps more accurately the ‘negotiated truths’ of self-identity within a diverse society” (ibid.), Madikida acknowledges active participation in identity formation as he negotiates its myriad signification.

Such active negotiation of the self reconfigures in *Struggles of the Heart* (2001) (Fig. 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3), a video and stills that form part of his *Liminal States* exhibition, depicting Madikida's “white masked face ingesting and regurgitating pap (maize meal)” (Madikida n.d.: 7). While this exhibition, as well as many of his other representations surrounding liminal states of identification, does carry circumcision as its nexus concern, its focus by no means inhibits its broader signification. Critiquing stigmatization and censorship issues pertaining to circumcision rituals, as rites of passage and important identity formation rituals he himself attests to, these impeding convictions were greatly conceived within westernized discourse¹¹. Such westernized discourse developed toward Apartheid's colonial discourse and still, perhaps to a lesser extent, figures within today's Post-apartheid society

Madikida rejects focusing on Apartheid's “one-sided version of our South African history” (Madikida n.d.: 6) as it excludes his ancestry, and as such Madikida rejects such history precisely because of its white-out effect, annihilating much of his indigenous heritage or reducing it within stereotyped versions. Madikida Describes the underlying concept of this work as a reflection “on the consumption of stereotypical images of black cultures” as well as “an attempt to demonstrate the need for cultures, traditions and religions to adapt and transform for their own survival” (Madikida n.d.: 7).

Both Searle and Madikida reconfigure their identities amidst imposed white surfacing of the skin. Although Madikida's 'white' skin intricately relates

¹¹ Westernized discourse originated beyond its African counterpart and was introduced to the continent by colonial settlers.

his Xhosa heritage and ritual associations, here, within the context of discussions relating to South African identities and its associations within the past, such 'white' skin indelibly evokes Apartheids imposed and traumatic past. Searle and Madikida rejects Apartheid's stereotypical and reductive labelling of their identities, overshadowed within its consuming past. Cannibalising upon their identities, both artists set out transforming imposed identities signalling their intentions by capitalising on foodstuff's transformative potential.

In *Struggles of The Heart*, Madikida extends food's symbolic potential by figuring its consumption as signifying process. Here he symbolically transposes food's inherent capacity for absorption, digestion and discharge. The piece shows him ingesting large amounts of pap and even after his body is completely satiated he continues to force feed himself (O'Toole 2004: para. 29). Not only does Madikida ingest his pap but also regurgitates it so as to relieve himself the discomfort and potentially harmful effects of over sated intake, perhaps illustrating a need for cultures to rid themselves of elements that could jeopardise ancestral continuity (Madikida n.d.: 7). Force fed such "one-sided version of our South African history" (Madikida n.d.: 6) excluding his ancestry and dominated by Apartheid's narrative, Madikida actively negotiates these seeming truths, ridding himself of its unwanted excess as he struggles to negotiate his own individually mediated identity.

The substance consumed, pap¹², is significant. As with Searle's use of spice and roti dough, Madikida's use of pap signals what once again is best described as a unique ancestral agenda. Such traditional food substance embodies a cultural artefact of Xhosa ancestry and traditional practises, now feeding and sustaining his existence as substance of cultural continuity. I would argue pap as cultural substance to be particularly complex. Not only signifying Xhosa heritage, pap is a staple South African food substance. Projecting my own Afrikaner reception, pap similarly signifies my own identity as cultural artefact. Therefore, such force fed consumption and regurgitation could perhaps then also, as by-product of Madikida's signification, be interpreted as imposed Afrikaner ideologies.

Both Searle and Madikida manifest the indelible interconnectivity of memory and identity formation. By exploring their own unique identity and cultural heritage, food signals connecting the past within the present and is experienced as memory – that active "shaping force ... changing colour and shape according to the emergencies of the moment" (Samuel 2012: xxiii), signifying processes of reconfiguring identity. Considering food's potent significance in relation to memory and how recipes/familial foods, as tried and tested, retain the trace of previous encounters, the use of such foods as pap and roti embody such agency. What's more, Searle and Madkida's works about bequeathed identities image food-and-memory as identity formation. Rooted within Apartheid's past, such generationally displaced postmemories feed into the present and future by way of food's ancestral economy. As such, food similarly manifests memory and postmemory's peculiar tendencies and is imaged as such - not only by these artists but perhaps also as innate characteristic of traditional South African and other nationalities' foodstuffs.

¹² Maize porridge.

CHAPTER THREE: Boerekos

In *The Nourishing Arts* (2008) Michel De Certeau and Luce Giard refer to food and its various processes of cooking and preparation as the art of nourishment - a process “of manipulating raw material, of organizing, combining, modifying, and inventing” often “with attention given to the bodies of others” (De Certeau & Giard 2008: 69). For them “doing-cooking is the medium for a ... persistent practice that is repeated in time and space, rooted in the fabric of relationships to others and to one's self, marked by the 'family saga' and the history of each, bound to childhood memory just like rhythms and seasons” (De Certeau & Giard 2008: 71). For all its creation and being towards others and the future, food and “doing cooking” remains necessarily tied to memories and time gone by. Such repetition “in time and space” as well as its establishing relationships to oneself and others aptly describes this study's food-and-memory discourse interests - namely, cultural identity and memory transmission through space and time by what has been described as foods ancestral agenda, as well as foods innate transversal of public and private.

As part of this masters submission Boerekos¹³ will be critiqued as conceptual medium and showcased within a contemporary exhibition space. The purpose of this study as critiquing food's potential signification of memory, and perhaps more relative to South Africa's apartheid past, postmemory now culminates in considering Afrikaner foodstuffs embodying such processes. This chapter dedicates itself towards addressing these concerns as well as its significance with regard to my own artistic practice and concurrent themes.

Honing in on the significance of Afrikaner foods, such peculiarity should not be confused as disregard for other cultural foodstuffs. The vastness of culinary traditions, ranging from global to culturally specific, and the complexities associating each overwhelms. So as not to generalise cultural identities and effects, this chapter exclusively considers Afrikaner foodstuffs, particularly in relation to food-and-memory.

Like Proust's vast recollections set forth in consuming a quintessentially French confection, archetypal Afrikaner food's similarly archive potentially vast tales of nostalgic remembrance. Consider, the iconic koeksister, a sweet, syrupy dough confection innate to Afrikaner heritage; biltong, dehydrated preserved red meat seasoned and spiced with undertones of coriander; and boerewors, traditionally spiced cured sausage often grilled using traditional braai¹⁴ methods. These foods, well known and loved by many South Africans, similarly stimulate arousal by “the magnetism of an identical moment” (Proust 1992: 62). Like Proust's recollecting the past, these traditional familial South African foods similarly incarnate past experiences. Absorbed within these foods resides an ancestral agency of sorts, seemingly connecting past and present through ritualistic consumption in space and time, transposing one's experience within previous encounters while simultaneously shaping the present, feeding posterity as it were.

¹³ Afrikaner-food.

¹⁴ Open fire barbecue.

Traditional foodstuffs such as koeksisters, pannekoek, malvapoeding and the like, foster a sense of reconnecting Afrikaner past heritage. This is potentially true for all traditional foodstuffs. These foods, typically consumed within enjoyment settings and not simply fulfilling ones basic needs, signify (Barthes 2008: 29)); perhaps more concise would be to say that it signifies the past's influence as ancestral trace. Considering Afrikaner foodstuffs, enjoyed and positively received within the present, how then does this reconfigure within debates questioning the justification of Afrikaners celebrating “their claimed identity, given their association with the tainted history of apartheid”? (van der Waal & Robins 2011: 771)

I am not proposing that consuming Afrikaner foods always set forth intense lived experiences of memory. This study puts forth that food's powerful signification as cultural artefact as well as its innate capabilities with regard to memory powerfully sets it up for allegorical interpretation as memory. Coupled with Afrikanerdom's taint, its vestiges of exploitation and racism in perpetrating Apartheid's ideologies, Afrikaner foodstuffs allegorically reconfigure and sublimate such past ancestral trace. As markers of Afrikaner heritage these foods manifest as trace of Apartheid's rule. Savoured and celebrated by many, Afrikaner foods embody Apartheid's perpetrating ancestral trace and functions as ambiguous ciphers of such dubious ancestral past.

Not all South African's are familiar or identify with Afrikaner foodstuffs, perhaps even more so than those that do. To say that those who identify with such foodstuffs accept it as signifying Apartheid's brutality is also very improbable. However, if only within a dis-embedded context and/or symbolic level, Afrikaner foods signify processes of the past still present, its ancestral trace literally and figuratively still feeding posterity. Not all South African's can be said to have personal or collective memory's from within Apartheid's rule, most notable the generation after; but very few can say they do not having memories of Apartheid at all, comprising those memories Hirsch describes as having a 'post' prefix. Perhaps this phenomena of memory work attests to Afrikaner foodstuffs' peculiar processes of signification; its allegorical interpretation of memory as the past consumed and reconstituted within the self and its uncanny, dis-embedded context for Apartheid's experience attesting to its sublimated process for mediated consumption of past traumatic occurrences at a generational divide. Postmemory, as opposed to memory, is not mediated by recall as it affects the generation after traumatic events, those who did not witness the trauma first-hand but still negotiate its ramifications as peculiar affiliated 'memory'. Rather, postmemory is mediated by “imaginative investment, projection, and creation” (Hirsch 2008: 107). Traditional foodstuffs; perpetually created within space and time, imaginatively altered by each attempt to create and projected by younger generations, ensuring its continued cultural significance; particularly Afrikaner foodstuffs embody past traumatic ancestry as trace. Food-and-memory's established discourse is then extended here by including the “intra-, inter- and trans-generational” (Hirsch 2008: 111) pull of (Afrikaner) postmemory.

For many years “Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid, and Afrikaner identity were” regarded as “practically inseparable”, resulting in intense crisis for

Post-apartheid Afrikaner identity formation (Verwey & Quayle 2012: 556-557). Melissa Steyn's *Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be* (2001) extensively recounts such ambiguous identity reception. She speaks of white South African's postmodern displacement (Steyn 2001: 155) and asserts such position recounting losses: loss of home (Steyn 2001: 156), loss of relevance and legitimacy (Steyn 2001: 159) and loss of honour (Steyn 2001: 160) amongst others. Citing numerous respondents views on South Africa's transition from Apartheid, comprising spectrums ranging from outright racism to positive reform, Steyn's exposé recognises feelings of disorientation, nostalgia, vertigo and grief as “part of the experience of being white in South Africa” (Steyn 2001: 161). White and Afrikaner, I identify as such and find it hard to fully grasp my heritage. In many ways I am ashamed of my Afrikaner ancestry, ashamed to be the product of Apartheid's ancestry of perpetrators. At the same time I am pleased with my Afrikaner upbringing and have fond memories growing up amongst Afrikaner folk. The guilt and shame I feel regarding my Afrikaner heritage, justified by atrocities committed by Apartheid forefathers, manifests as birthmark – an undying inherited mark. Just as I am unable to deny my proud Afrikaner identification, so too am I unable to separate myself from the shame of imposed atrocities committed in my name. Forced into shame I partake such stigmatized identity of Afrikaner wrong doing. Like the many white South African respondents in Steyn's discourse, each possessing their own agendas about race and reconciliation in South Africa, I too figure as compromised and confused.

A recent study conducted within suburban Bloemfontein, where I grew up and stayed until just recently in 2013, explores the struggles of Afrikaner identity and how such identities are becoming redefined. Cornel Verwey and Michael Quayle's article “Whiteness, Racism, and Afrikaner Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (2012), as its title suggests, argues the simultaneous rejection and recycling of “key discourses underlying apartheid ideology, particularly discourses of black incompetence and whites under threat” (Verwey & Quayle 2012: abstract). They distinguish between public and private Afrikaner identity “as strictly separate enterprises” and state that “a key part of contemporary Afrikaner identity is” managing such overlapping identity (Verwey & Quayle 2012: 574). It therefore stems as no surprise that I too struggle to identify my Afrikaner identity amidst such duelling polarities – past and present, public and private, proud and abominable.

Unable to wholly cleanse myself of such unsavoury Afrikaner racism, I would like to clarify my perceived role as complicit. I wholeheartedly detest Apartheid's regime and like to think myself immune to perpetrating such despicable acts. But I am still very much complicit. Having grown up and spent most my life an Afrikaner middle-class resident of suburban Bloemfontein, I admit there does indeed exist disparities with regard to public and private conceptions of Afrikaner identities¹⁵. Although this is a relevant and true scenario, it reinforces Afrikaner racist stereotyping at the

¹⁵ Verwey and Quayle suggest that Afrikaner identity is more censored in public settings than in private, and argue that Afrikaner's disproportionately recycle racist/derogatory Apartheid ideologies in private settings reserved for fellow Afrikaners/whites.

expense of reformed non-racist Afrikaner identification. My perceived complacency resides not only in acknowledging my privileged beneficiary stance within historical white power dynamics (Garner 2007: 6) but also in admitting my passive, non-confrontational role as bystander within isolated instances of racist backstage talks. White Afrikaners therefore are still perceived as perpetrators, both willingly and unwillingly as suggested by Vice and Garner, and embody an uneasy cultural identity as such.

Verwey and Quayle further asserts that such private, as opposed to public, constructions of Afrikaner Identity are often heard around the braaivleis fire, as secluded spaces “usually reserved for fellow whites or Afrikaners only” (Verwey and Quayle 2012: 552). Their article explores Afrikaner “identity talk” in private, backstage contexts of “social events hosted at participants homes” (Verwey and Quayle 2012: 557). They argue that “[p]articipants constructed sanitizes versions of Afrikaner identity” so as not to tie themselves to Apartheid's “accountable past” (Verwey and Quayle 2012: 573). Since these aspects “would anchor their own identities as Afrikaners in the past”, and “increase the accountability of present-day Afrikaners for the sins of their predecessors” they are “therefore discarded as identity liabilities in post-apartheid South Africa” (ibid.). “[R]ejecting apartheid” while simultaneously recycling some of its key discourses, Verwey and Quayle state that participants within their survey manifest “an Afrikaner identity based on racial exclusivity, racist notions of inherent black inferiority, and out-group threat” (Verwey and Quayle 2012: 552-553).

I agree with Verwey and Quayle with regard to their perception of public and private constructions of Afrikaner identity and admit that Afrikaner culture and ancestral heritage is still fraught with racist discrepancies. Having spent my entire childhood and most of my adulthood up until now in Bloemfontein I have indeed encountered such backstage racist talks, and while they most certainly do take place and merit disapproval my experiences are far more isolated.

Verwey and Quayle, in connecting conceptions of Afrikaner identity within traditional South African braaivleis settings, seem also to be connecting food and identity formation. My fondest memories as a child, baking klapperkoekies¹⁶ with my grandmother, similarly connecting memories of braaivleis, koeksisters, malvapudding, boerewors, etc... all inform my identity though memories of openly sharing these foods. Ouma Koekies, in signifying a situation (Barthes 2008: 29), signify fond memories of time spent as a child with my grandmother, a positive affirmation of Afrikaner identity. As such Ouma Koekies, as it is used for consumption as well as artistic medium, positively reincarnate my Afrikaner identity.

The practical component for this masters submission entitled *My eie Resepte*¹⁷, intended as participatory performance piece, visually and experientially chronicles a personal convergence of Afrikaner food, memory and postmemory. The symbolic resonances inherent to this exhibition is set as polarities and as such chronicles my ambiguous and conflicting Afrikaner

¹⁶ Also referred to as Ouma Koekies.

¹⁷ Trans.: *My own Recipes*.

identity and memory. Ouma Koekies, in many ways inspiring this exhibition, figures throughout, as does traditional Boerekos. These cookies familiarise audience members with the original cause of this study, its predominant presence by no means limited to pleasant and saccharine signification. Visually depicted as process, gradually developing from raw dough, these cookies eventually become scorched and deformed – signalling its complacency and assimilation within broader, often unsavoury, Afrikaner identification. Such broader Afrikaner identification convenes, amongst other things, as Boerekos. In developing such themes as Afrikaner identity and memory, most notably envisaged through food, *My eie Resepte* concludes as it chronicles Afrikaner postmemory's allegorical signification within these components; both explicitly within the work and implicitly within Afrikaner foodstuffs.

The site specificity of this exhibition also manifests as defining characteristic. Set in a garage, a repository space housing unused and/or discarded objects, located within the threshold connecting public and private property, here becomes activated and actively consumed as amalgamated setting. Such amalgamated effect simultaneously figures in considering this setting as part of my family home, my own private space now exhibited and laid bare, attesting to the work's autobiographical nature. Not limited to autobiographical content, the work's participatory element, involving participants consuming various Afrikaner foodstuffs, necessitates participant's own unique agendas, likes and dislikes, all of which form part of this exhibition's conceptual makeup.

The following subheadings set up implicit symbolic resonances within the work. Each subheading comprises duelling polarities, setting up the work's intention for ambiguous Afrikanerdom reception.

Inside/Outside

Set inside my family garage, equally situated between the public exterior of our neighbourhood setting and the private interior of our familial home, *My eie Resepte* interrogates the incompatible polarities of public and private Afrikaner identity conceptions. Comprising Ouma Koekies stacked against the walls, building blocks as it were, and gradually developing as it incorporates Boerekos, set out for participant's active consumption; such building blocks of private nostalgic remembrance and positive Afrikaner identification gradually becomes part of broader Afrikaner signification. Seemingly out of place, some scorched and/or becoming soggy and spoilt amongst other signifying substances; identifying past Afrikaner cultural heritage, comprising racism and elitist historical tendencies allegorically signified as traditional Afrikaner food substance; these nostalgic mementos similarly manifest as cloying vestiges amidst incompatible broader Afrikaner signification.

Participants, outsiders symbolically affected as consumed substance, so too figure as integral components within this consuming space. Such signification process attest to Afrikaner receptions far reaching implications, not limited to the private perceptions of Afrikaner people but

forming part of broader public opinions with widespread societal ramifications. This defining characteristic of the work is also identified within the exhibition title - the 'eie'¹⁸ in 'My eie Resepte' typed in lowercase, signalling my own narrative and agenda as only one aspect within broader Afrikaner scenarios.

Past/Present

Consumed within the present, these familial and traditional foods, as public and private ciphers of Afrikaner identification, embodies what this study perceives to be traditional foodstuffs' ancestral agenda. Embodying past instruction these tried and tested recipe foodstuffs, invested with unique cultural significance rooted in the past, actively inform and partake present agendas. As historical Afrikaner substances actively partaking the present, this setting disrupts food's unassuming materiality by investing it with agency that seemingly escapes normative human consumption, communicating a sympathetic magic of sorts.

A consumed heirloom communicating past agency, these historical substances fetishize the presence of previous reception encounters. Jennifer Law explains this notion of the heirloom and its extending "life beyond death" as memory:

An object of memory, the heirloom is a special kind of gift – one which aims to extend a life beyond death through processes of projected possession, habitation and renaissance. Its referencing is not straight forward, but scatters in different directions. It tears apart. It is hysterical. (Law 2002: 8)

In reference to Marcel Mauss' *The Gift* (1954), Law similarly suggests that the heirloom is a special kind of gift that seeks to extend relationships beyond generational time and space (Law 2002: 6). The following statement provides a particularly befitting explanation of the heirloom's dynamic:

Here, the bonds that tie us to one another in life are maintained after death through material reminders, the life of the thing inherited fetishizing the life of its (original) possessor. For the beneficiary, the heirloom makes a present of an absence. For the benefactor, the return on the heirloom is the promise (however illusory) of immortality. The gift for both, is memory. (ibid.)

My eie Resepte doubly features the heirloom, most notably as consumed substance, and as such extends its significance as memory. Capitalising on the garage's repository objective, the roof houses numerous bequeathed heirlooms and historical affect laden objects. These include my grandmother's furniture, grandfather's gun and whip, father's army and fishing gear, mother's childhood dolls and baby bath; along with numerous other miscellaneous objects such as an ironing and boogie board, kitsch African drums, an organ and dilapidated upholstered cushions. Figuratively

¹⁸ Trans.: own.

transposed within the 'heavens' above, these historical objects cast over the exhibition scene manifest ancestral agencies informing the works conceptual framework.

One such historical heirloom object stands out above, or shall we say below, the rest. Mounted up against the wall rests my grandmother's pendulum clock. Its incessant ticking strokes amplified within the space constantly attune participants to the works time narrative structure. Depicting real time, the clock also intends transposing participants within perceptions of times past. With its historical mechanisms resonating bygones, participants are instructed by its time keeping strokes. Each chiming interval signals participants next participatory phase within the exhibition. As such, participants are not only informed using present time, but also by peculiar past vestige mechanisms, namely my grandmother's clock. This object, which I acutely invest with my grandmother's agency, recalling her ritualistic winding of its mechanisms in keeping time, simultaneously registers real and past time. As such, my grandmothers clock symbolically conducts participants using past and present agencies, supplementing the foods effective time warped agency.

Mounted and scattered within the space are several unique containment vessels - constructed second hand crockery agglomerations. These vessels comprise used and discarded food containers that have been collected from various second hand stores and auctions; as well as some clear, disposable containers. Each participant is allotted their own containment vessel, all varying in proportion and intended for plating consumed foodstuffs at the exhibition. These affect laden and discarded objects similarly manifest the past as trace. Most surfaces are scratched, albeit some in unassuming ways, others visibly eroded with rusted surfaces. Signifying broader past South African contexts, the vessels include such agencies within the exhibition's conceptual framework. Beautifully decorative, as if to gloss ever implicit complexities associating these discarded objects, each vessel ambiguously figures as tragic, discarded remnant and festive, useful structure. These salvaged objects also house reflective mirror, absorbing participants within its past signification narrative, as does their performance of eating foodstuffs placed within its surfaces. Participant's handling of these vessels signal their taking up the past's lot, each receiving their own proportioned parcel of past load. Filling their load with individually selected Afrikaner foodstuffs, subject to his/her own particular sensibilities, participants enact their role as complicit within such broader cultural scenarios.

Once they have finished consuming these Afrikaner foodstuffs, participants mount their containment vessels onto an exterior wall section of the garage comprising face brick, a typical modern home setting in suburban South Africa. Having taken up their lot and experienced such excessive past intake participants unload, the vessels now displayed amidst a projected image of my grandmothers recipe book cover inscribed with "My eie Resepte". Reused and dirty with present agencies, the ensuing foulness of smears affectively replicate negative perceptions of Afrikaner identity - a grotesque stain contrasting idyllic notions of Afrikaner identity and the affinity I once shared with my grandmother. This scenario culminates the exhibition's processing memory, here manifesting postmemory's inheritance scenario. A

peculiar by-product of memory, distinguished by “generational distance” and “personal connection” (Hirsch 1993: 8), postmemory's capacity for shaping individuals by traumatic events that “defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension” (Hirsch 2008:107) here pictures as traditional substance and vestiges of consumption. This scenario literalizes Post-apartheid's lingering past investment, with Apartheid's racist vestiges and white, Afrikaner elitist smears, scattered amidst personal, positive affirmations of Afrikaner heritage, manifesting postmemory's continuance of South African and Afrikaner traumatic pasts. Within this framework of display, postmemory's complicated process of generation and regeneration as time warped process becomes exhibited.

Lack/Excess

In this setting of excessive consumption, lack persists; perhaps referencing Steyn's perceptions of white South Africans recounting loss (Steyn 2001: 156). Not limited as such, loss similarly relates to memory's necessary incompleteness, involving forgetting as necessary component (Ricoeur 2006: 17), at times tragically so. At first brimming with fullness, the building blocks eventually come crumbling down. Participants, instructed to tear down and consume Ouma Koekies displayed and set out, visually manifest memory's corrosive nature. The participants' stares seem equally corrosive (Elkins 1996: 45). James Elkins appropriates looking its own agency and disrupts the seemingly one-way dichotomy of seeing by suggesting all seeing as “heated” (Elkins 1996:21). Elkins explains the gaze:

Looking is possessing or the desire to possess – we eat food, we own objects, and we ‘possess’ bodies - and there is no looking without thoughts of using, possessing, repossessing, owning, fixing, appropriating, keeping, remembering and commemorating, cherishing, borrowing, and stealing. I cannot look at *anything* – any object, any person – without the shadow of the thought of possessing that thing. Those appetites don't just accompany looking: they are looking itself. (Elkins 1996: 22) (Italics in original)

Such “appetite” of looking and heated gaze literally manifests within this exhibition. Affecting its target, the gaze renders Ouma Koekies in becoming scorched, altered by exterior motifs and broader public opinions. The excess of looking and attention renders spoils, altering the lifecycle of these consumed memories. Scorched into flaw they ambiguously manifest a broken and sentimental substance. Developing from raw cookie dough gradually becoming baked and scorched, these substances similarly manifest memory's altering dynamic within in space and time, constantly changing shape and form.

The obtrusive use of colour, evident throughout the exhibition space, visually demonstrate South Africa's conception as the 'Rainbow Nation', seemingly glossing over flawed complexities. Such excessive colour usage exhibits disorientating effects, its sugary sweet substance icing sugar perhaps gilding the lily with cloying sentiment. Preserving the past within

sugary substrate, it also overpowers and renders its substances obsolete, manifesting a loss and/or dysmorphia of historical content.

Food, particularly fanciful foods like cookies, signifies privilege; with many less fortunate suffering amidst global food shortage. Coupled with food's discussed allegorical impulse as memory and its significance as heritage, Afrikaner foodstuffs, particularly their excessive use as part of this exhibition component, figure as potent signifiers for Afrikanerdom's ambiguous signification – celebrated and enjoyed yet perpetuating privilege, consumed within the present yet embodying apartheid's abominable ancestral trace.

Visibility/Invisibility

Interrogating visibility/invisibility as symbolic metaphor, such concern attaches itself to all three above mentioned symbolic resonances. Most notably branded within this exhibition's use of light source, its symbolic implications extend itself to notions of public/private, past/present as well as lack/excess.

Comprising old light fixture frameworks, stripped of their plush coverings, naked they display skeletal structures – white, unprotected and exposed. Feigning absolute exposure they manifest token ornamentation. These roughed up structures, showing signs of distress in being exposed, in turn are exposer. Illuminating present scenarios, and in so doing casting cage-like structures, these objects of history project their skeletal shadows on the present. Comprising varying degrees of illumination, some sections remain darkened, others more pronounced. Making use of electrical light sources as well as candlelight, the latter displaying flickering as well as past sources of illumination, such sporadic visibility chronicles memory's intermitted recollection. Specifically intent on Afrikaner memory and its vestiges, these lights and their intangible omnipresent caging effect, signals Afrikaner narratives chronic entrapment within Apartheid's deadening snares. Similarly housing Afrikaner foodstuff's and its illuminating content, participants feast upon newly laid substances, manoeuvring these enjoyable substances from within past cage structures.

Another illuminating element to this exhibition is a projection of recipes inscribed by my grandmother. Depicting her Ouma Koekies recipe, this projection perpetually juxtaposes absence and presence, visibility and invisibility. Fluctuating legibility with sections sporadically made visible within varying degrees of illumination and spontaneous combustion of flame; projected onto raw, gradually becoming baked cut-out cookie dough, the recipe escapes its mediated surface. The projection and cookie scenario ambiguously manifest – past as recipe, present and cookies; private as my own familial Afrikaner family recipe, public as now consumed by participant outsiders; lacking in its perpetual invisibility and fragmentary makeup, excessive in its copious production of Ouma Koekies. This section sets up the works polar intentionality and also amplifies visibility and invisibility by virtue of its illuminating content and light source.

The invisibility of labour associating such feast, not to mention the copious quantity of Ouma Koekies and time spent creating these foods, invest these substances with time as narrative. Many of these foodstuffs, including all Ouma Koekies, were made inside my family home, having exclusively baked these cookies myself. These substances are made within the past, consumed within the present and feed posterity in sustaining participants' biological makeup. Lit from within, blinds and curtains drawn, participant access is limited exterior to familial space, albeit at the threshold. As such, these foodstuffs transpose private familial agendas, metaphorically illuminating exterior space with private interior agendas.

Experientially informing and visualising food-and-memory as conceptual framework, *My eie Resepte* extends such considerations by taking into account postmemory's stakes as such, insisting on foodstuffs' transversal of public and private, as well as its ancestral agenda invested with time narrative's sequence.

CONCLUSION

Brought about by nostalgic memories baking with my grandmother and the realization that much about my positive association toward Afrikaner identity and heritage originated within such encounter, this study set out considering discrepant polarities about Afrikaner perception. I find myself at times fiercely protective towards my own Afrikaner identity, perhaps to a fault. There are also times that I find myself condemning it, and rightly so; so much so that I start to feel ashamed and loathsome towards it, displacing and equally condemning those tender moments and positive Afrikaner associations. Ambiguously disowning Afrikaner identity and insistent upon its beautiful signification, my personal identification with Afrikanerdom is liminal, neither here nor there. My naive preconceived notion about being an innocent generation after quickly dissolved upon inspection. This study has left me feeling much to be desired. Once non-racist, I now perceive myself not overtly-racist, still complicit and 'superior' as historically privileged and perpetuating such privileged inheritance.

My problematic status as white Afrikaner female, historically privileged by injustices committed in my name, is very much visible within social disparities of Post-apartheid South Africa (Vice 2010: 323). There is still much to be said and done, much to be understood. As 'privileged' I cannot in good conscious then argue myself a victim, but I am damaged, perhaps conflicted is a more appropriate verdict, and as such I also experience Apartheid's stain.

However disillusioned, Afrikaner identity is still very much in process and actively being redefined, as envisioned by Steyn's numerous samples of white Afrikaner identity claims. Food comparably signifies such Afrikaner renaissance process, envisioned by its transformative potential as consumed, digested, discharged and subject to continual reinterpretation as recipes reconfigured within space and time.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig.1.1. Berni Searle, *Untitled* from the *Colour Me* series (1998), handprinted colour photograph. 42 x 50 cm. (Source taken from: <http://stevenson.info/exhibitions/searle/works/item14.htm>)



Fig.1.2. Berni Searle, *Untitled* from the *Colour Me* series (1998), handprinted colour photograph. 42 x 50 cm. (Source taken from: <http://stevenson.info/exhibitions/searle/works/item14.htm>)



Fig.1.3. Berni Searle, *Untitled* from the *Colour Me* series (1998), handprinted colour photograph. 42 x 50 cm. (Source taken from: <http://stevenson.info/exhibitions/searle/works/item14.htm>)



Fig.2. Berni Searle, *Traces* from the *Colour Me* series (1999), 6 digital prints on architect's tracing paper and spices. 300 x 91 cm. (Source taken from: <http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/searle/works/item5.htm>)

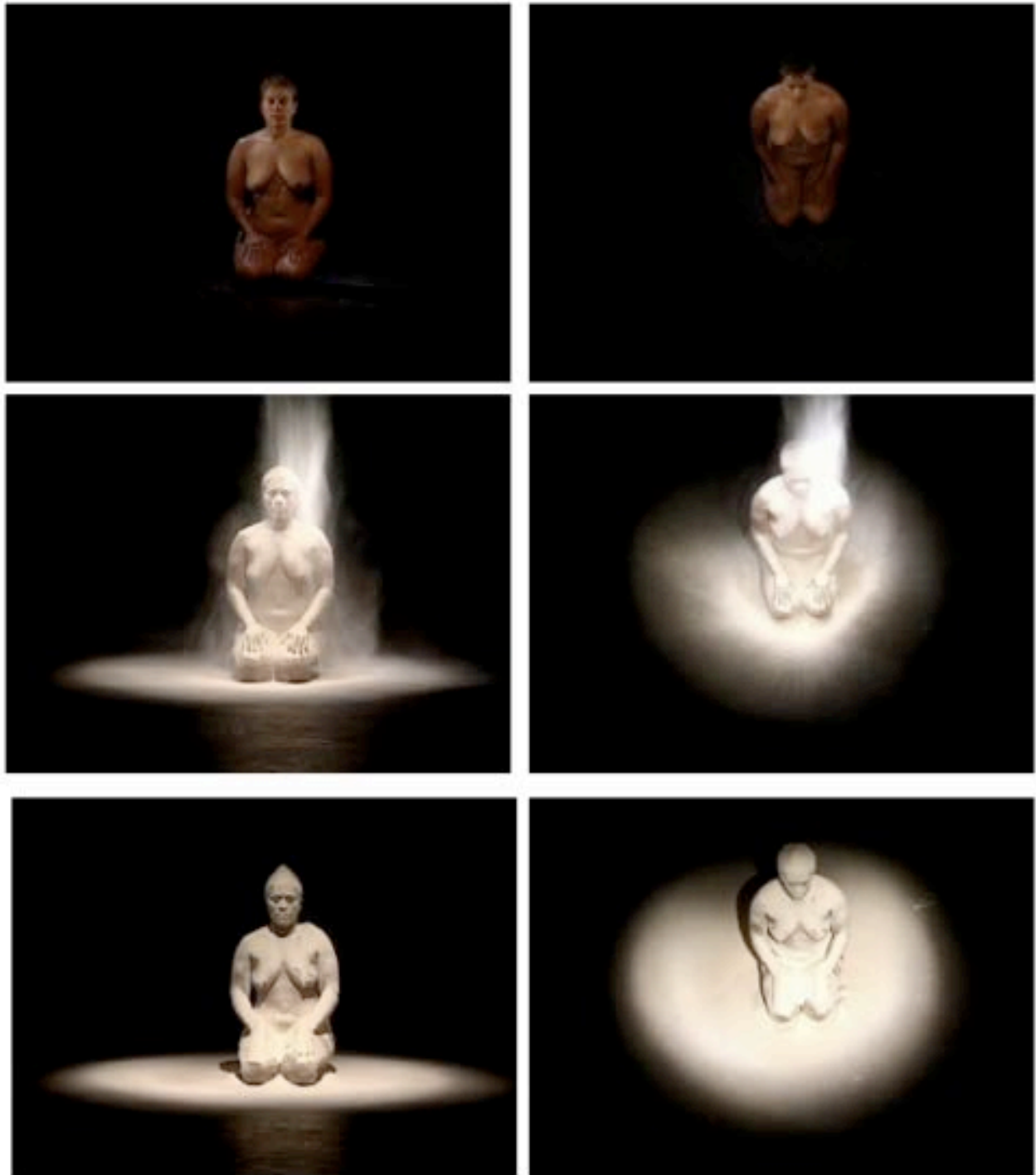


Fig.3.1. Berni Searle, *Snow White* (2001) video stills. (Source taken from: <http://lxsmuchxs.wordpress.com/author/susetsanchez/>)

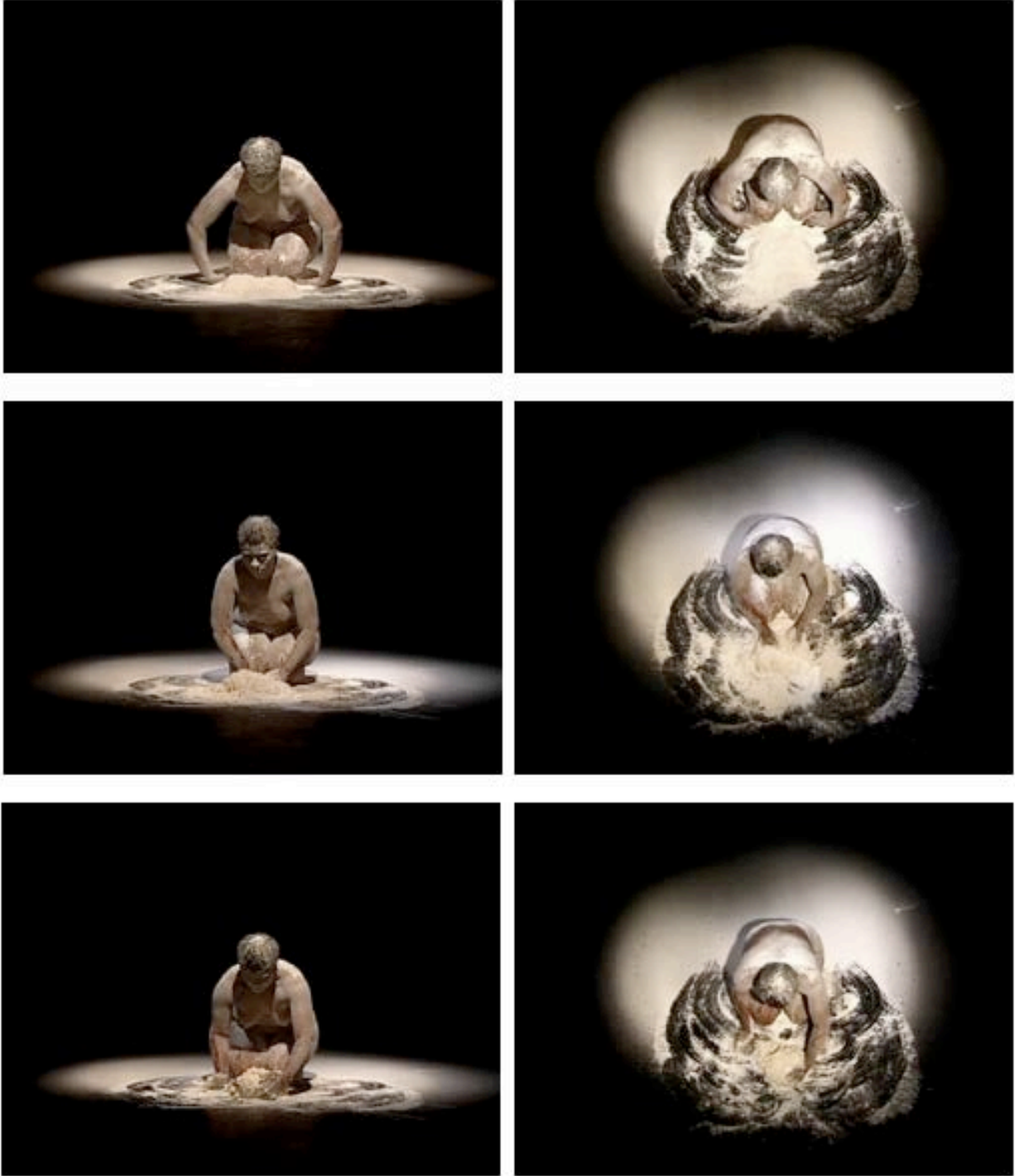


Fig.3.2. Berni Searle, *Snow White* (2001) video stills. (Source taken from: <http://lxsmuchxs.wordpress.com/2012/02/27/identidadesimpuestas/imagen-2/>)



Fig.3.3. Berni Searle, *Snow White* (2001) video stills. (Source taken from: <http://lxsmuchxs.wordpress.com/author/susetsanchez/>)



Fig.4.1. Churchill Madikida, *Struggles of the Heart I*, video stills from *Struggles of the Heart*, archival pigment ink print. 100 x 100 cm. (Source taken from: <http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/churchill/item6.htm>)



Fig.4.2. Churchill Madikida, *Struggles of the Heart II*, video stills from *Struggles of the Heart*, archival pigment ink print. 100 x 100 cm. (Source taken from: <http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/churchill/item7.htm>)



Fig.4.3. Churchill Madikida, *Struggles of the Heart III*, video stills from *Struggles of the Heart*, archival pigment ink print. 100 x 100 cm. (Source taken from: <http://www.stevenson.info/exhibitions/churchill/item8.htm>)