

Negotiations of Difference and Transformative Practices
in the Contemporary South African Art World

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

In 2008 the South African government commissioned a Report on the art industry, and today it stands as one of the only available accounts of its kind. Using a Foucaultian analysis, I established that this Report produces a discourse on gender and race in the South African art world in which race and gender function only as quantitative and statistical categories in relation to an economic model for the art industry. This discourse results in the construction of four figures, which I have termed ‘avatars’, namely the white male, the white female, the black male and the black female. These figures also represent a hierarchy of professional and financial success with the ‘white man’ at the top and the ‘black woman’ at the bottom of this scale. Despite this, no remedy was recommended for the gendered-race imbalance clearly revealed in the Report. Gender was thus folded out of sight.

To counter this, I have used the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method to create an oral archive through which to explore articulations of the lived experience and self-understanding of the situation of artist-women, both ‘black’ and ‘white’, and some men in the South African art world. My large oral archive has been coded to reveal important findings, which I have situated in terms of the struggle for democracy in South Africa. Drawing on both Jacques Rancière and Hannah Arendt’s thinking for theories of political transformation and Arendt’s valuation of storytelling and the political, in particular, my thesis proposes a methodology and key findings that shift from the *what* created in the Report – avatars conceptualised according to gender and racial categories – to the *who* – agents who speak back to the struggle for democratization in the South African art world. My research thus seeks to reveal the complex entwining of gender and race in interviewees’ experience. I argue that an analysis that attends to the question of gender is necessary to fully understand the status quo and texture of lived experience of the South African art world, as it remains an invisible and unanalysed dimension as it is lived and understood in terms of artists’ strategies of resistance and transformation.

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness. It works with difference and sameness but also with their limits, their predicament, their moments of complication. It is a concept I find deeply suggestive for the kinds of arguments I want to make in relation to the post apartheid present, in particular its literary and cultural formations. So often the story of post apartheid has been told within the register of difference – frequently for good reason, but often, too, ignoring the intricate overlaps that mark the present and, at times, and in important ways, the past, as well.

Sarah Nuttall, 2009.¹

This thesis is an inquiry into the ‘entwining’ of race and gender in the art world of South Africa since the end of apartheid. Entwining is a term that emerged from my research in the field of art history. It clearly resonates with the larger framing provided in 2009 by cultural theorist Sarah Nuttall who defined several rubrics for her study of *entanglement* in literature and culture: *historical entanglement*, *the time or temporality of entanglement*, *entanglement as ‘seam’ and ‘complicity’*, and *entanglement of people and things*. She added a fifth rubric specifically relevant to my research because it concerns a challenge to the crude category of race:

While each of the four rubrics of entanglement explored above takes us a considerable way towards a critique of an over-emphasis on difference in much of the scholarship produced within African and postcolonial studies in recent decades, none of them considers the new frontier of DNA research. The fifth rubric worth consideration here has to do with the implications of the *DNA signature*. New attention has been paid globally and in post-apartheid South Africa to the fact that tracing the

¹ Sarah Nuttall, *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), p. 1.

‘maternal’ and ‘paternal’ genetic lines visible on each individual's X or Y chromosome allows scientists to generate ancestral maps charting the geographical location of ancestors closer to us in time. Identity suggested by ancestral DNA signatures undercut the rigid conceptions of racial identity in which both colonial rule and apartheid were based.²

Drawing on the thought of the Caribbean theorist and poet, Eduard Glissant (1928-2011) who originated the idea of entanglement as the ‘point of difficulty’ (*point d’intrication*) of creolising beginnings, Nuttall introduces the notion of *racial entanglement* as a way to escape what she considers the over-racialised legacies of fixed categories of difference in both colonial societies and even in the recent cultural studies that seek to counter colonial legacies.

The focus of my research is a specific entwining in the recent present of race and gender so that we can understand them in their specific interaction rather than as separated conditions of existence sometimes superimposing double burdens of either oppression or privilege. My field is art history and my topic is the entanglement or entwining of race and gender as double oppressions that are being contested, and gender and race as both being lived as resources for professional artistic activity and negotiation of career strategies. This doubling becomes significant in a historical-political context where gender has seemed less urgent a site of agonistic struggle than the contestation and transformation of colonial and apartheid racialisation.

My methodology involves textual analysis of published literature — a government report and two articles that generated an intense debate at two key points in South Africa specifically over the collision of gender hierarchies in a society struggling to emerge from its institutionally racist past. I also introduce into this study of the art world as a complex formation the qualitative research method, Constructive Grounded Theory. This involved creating an oral archive of repeated interviews with 15 participants where the transcribed texts were iteratively coded for units of meaning, building into larger codes that ultimately enabled me to derive two key concepts from this analysis of participants’ experiences and analyses of their own situations: negotiating obstacles and transformative strategising. This

² Nuttall, *Entanglement*, p. 8.

thesis addresses neither art practices in general nor or the politics of representation of race and gender within the visual arts, except in so far as they became the object of a critical debate in the texts or a specific account by a participant. The focus is on artists, writers, gallerists as participants and agents in what Howard Becker, a Chicago School symbolic interactionist sociologist, first termed an *art world*.³

I have, therefore, organised the introduction to this thesis in three parts. The first addresses the question: why study the art world in South Africa in relation to major issues in current debates about gender as well as race? This involves situating the thesis in the field of international feminisms and the post-colonial critique in order to lay out the argument for the complexity of the relays between race and gender in this particular historical and cultural situation. The second part offers a coded textual analysis of a government-sponsored report on the condition of the South African art world that represented the art world as a potentially significant area of the South African economy and stratifies race and gender differentiation accordingly. Using a Foucaultian model of analysis on the discourse of this official, quantitative research document, I was able to show that, while race and gender were used throughout as terms of classification of economic success in art, gender disappeared entirely from the recommendations. This prompted my investigation explained in the third part of the Introduction. I chose to introduce into art historical methodology the most widely used method of qualitative research in the social sciences, Constructive Grounded Theory. This procedure enabled me to produce and analyse a new archive through which the complex ‘entanglements’ could be explored that were grounded in the speech and action of the agents of the art world. Countering the effect of the government-sponsored report in which artists, Black and White, become mere statistical *avatars* of an abstracted, quantified, economic representation of art making and distribution, I have drawn into the existing debates in South African art history and cultural theory, and placed my own findings in relation to, two political-aesthetic theories of *agency* that I consider relevant to the South African situation. These include the anti-totalitarian, post-concentrationary writings of Hannah

³ Becker, Howard Saul, *Art Worlds* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1982).

Arendt who defines the political subject as an agent in the arena of speech and action, and the political theories of Jacques Rancière and his concepts of the unheard *demos* and the political re-distribution of the sensible.

Situating the Researcher

Given the political and theoretical complexity of any intervention in South African cultural politics and cultural analysis, I would like to start, however, with a brief account of how I came to this topic and chose the methods I have used to study it. By the time I had to choose a topic for my doctoral research, I was a few years into my secondment as the coordinator of the Institute for Gender Studies at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I had become acutely aware of the importance, and sensitivity, of asking ‘gender questions’ in any field of study. Wanting to pursue questions around the role of gender in the South African art world, I reviewed the existing literature available in the UNISA library. I first encountered Sue Williamson’s landmark, albeit sometimes criticised, publication *South African Art Now* appearing in 2009.⁴ This was in mid-2012 and at that stage it was one of the most recent major publications in the field of contemporary South African art. Published in 2011, *Visual Century. South African Art in Context. Volume 4: 1990 – 2007* edited by Themboinkosi Goniwe, Mario Pissarra and Mandisi Majavu was not yet available in the library I had access to in 2012 and thus escaped this preliminary search at the time.⁵

Reading Williamson’s *South African Art Now* I noticed its chapter called ‘Love and Gender in a Time of AIDS’ (presumably playing on the title of Colombian Nobel Laureate, Gabriel Garcia Márquez’s 1985 novel, *Love in the Time of Cholera*).⁶ I was struck by the fact that Williamson had lumped gender together with the whole question of HIV/AIDS. At that point in time, we regularly saw this tendency to pair gender issues up with other ‘problems areas’ in South Africa. The country’s then government Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities is perhaps the

⁴ Sue Williamson, *South African Art Now* (New York: Collins Design, HarperCollins, 2009).

⁵ Themboinkosi Goniwe, Mario Pissarra and Mandisi Majavu, eds, *Visual Century. South African Art in Context. Volume 4: 1990 – 2007* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011).

⁶ Williamson, *South African Art Now*, pp. 121-145.

strongest case in point. At UNISA there was also talk of merging the Institute for Gender Studies with the Tirisano Centre for the Study of HIV/AIDS under the argument that these two units could support each other's work (read: keep each other busy). With other colleagues involved with the IGS, I was wary of the effects of the creation of this kind of general 'problem' space to which both gender studies and HIV/AIDS studies could be relegated, undoubtedly in order to die a slow institutional death.

In this context, the central question of my thesis was formed, namely: where is gender in the field of South African art history and practice? How is it actually written about, spoken about and treated in contemporary South African art history given Williamson's conflation of gender with issues of sexuality and the tragic epidemic of HIV/AIDS? Does this evacuate feminism as a distinctive address to the larger problematic of gender beyond sexual violence and sexually transmitted infection?

In Williamson's defence it needs to be mentioned that there is also a chapter in *South African Art Now* entitled 'Searching for Identity: Imagining the New Society', where artists-women such as Berni Searle and Senzeni Marasela's work was discussed, offering a focus on gender/race difference. Looking at Williamson's text symptomatically at that point, with gender folded into this specific conjunction of sex, disease and death, I was trying to think through how to undertake a study of gender in art history at this point in South Africa's post-apartheid, post-colonial and decolonising history. What would be the politics of *focusing* on gender in relation to postapartheid South African art internally and internationally through a theoretical, but also qualitative feminist lens?

As in many other countries, gender is taught in South Africa as a type of perspective that may be considered in any given field. As a result, the specificity of gender an/or sexual difference, so complexly theorised by a mass of feminist literatures across the arts and humanities as well as the social sciences, often falls by the wayside as a niche area. In a broader sense, in the 'global' art world, there is also the additional question of the internationalisation of art and its role as part of the decolonising and postcolonial moment. In South Africa, because the burden of history has been the politics of race, what could be the place of a feminist gender analysis at this point in our history? This is, however, not only a question in

South Africa, but it is one that resonates with one of the big debates in the international world: where is gender in the art world and where are women in particular? I return to some very recent examples of these issues on an international front in the Conclusion to the thesis.

In its development, this thesis acquired a specific form that does not correspond entirely with either of its two main frames: art history and qualitative research methods. The following chapters offer a non-chronological reading of selective, indicative textual events and debates, the time-travelling having been prompted by the force of the memory and long-term effects of these debates revealed in the interviews I undertook in 2015. It is vital that I make clear, that the foundations of my research lie in the 940 pages of transcribed interviews which were contemporaneous with the project, and thus the perspective on the still aggravated debates and events is based in the accounts and thus the subjectivity of my interviewees. As a result of what emerged in coding the interviews I came to understand how critical it would be to introduce the texts some referred to as discrete components of the overall methodology of seeking to understand the specific incidents of ‘entanglement’ of race and gender through ‘coding’ in order to substantiate the concept articulated in 2009 with reference to its place in the contemporary consciousness of my interviewees in 2015.

South African scholarship in Visual Arts and Visual Culture has strong foundations in linguistic/semiotic-based developments in the tradition of de Saussure as well as Erwin Panofsky, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida. As such the study of visual representation has been robustly developed in South African academia, especially since the inception of ‘Visual Culture Studies’, which was locally (and perhaps elsewhere) seen to subsume the two previously separate disciplines of Visual Communication and Art History. The work of cultural analysts such as Nicholas Mirzoeff and Mieke Bal played an important role in this shift. It is a widely known fact, however, that Art History became the stepchild of this new field of Visual Culture Studies and students were in many cases discouraged, as indeed I was, from a focus on visual art that did not also connect with other representational practices such as in film, advertising and magazine culture.

Another effect of the semiotic/visual studies scholarly culture is that much of the academic work produced in both Visual Studies and Art History is centred on visual representation. Indeed many, if not most, publications on South African art focus on the reading of meaning in individual art practices. For instance, Williamson's *South African Art Now* includes two contextualising essays by Okwui Enwezor and herself, comprising the first 30 pages of this 319 page volume, while the rest of the book is dedicated to the discussion of the works and practices of selected artists. This trend is also clear and ever more converging if one compares Ashraf Jamal's 2005 work, *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa*, to his latest instalment in 2017 in the form of *In the World. Essays on Contemporary South African Art*.⁷ *Predicaments of Culture* comprises academic essays on general tenets in South African culture with discussions rooted in scenarios and events in the South African art world, such as Albie Sachs's article 'Preparing Ourselves for Freedom' (to which I return later in this Introduction) and some artistic practices of South African artists. The essays in *In the World*, however, are centred on individual artists' practices and all the chapters are also named accordingly, for example 'Ed Young. Fatally Prejudiced' and 'Mary Sibande. African Baroque'. This centering of individual artistic practices is a conceptual departure from his work in *Predicaments of Culture*. It might be fair enough to argue that *Predicaments of Culture* speaks to broader concerns in South African culture, but it is widely considered a keystone text in South African art scholarship, and as I mentioned, it does have a close relationship to certain events and texts in the art world.

Not surprisingly perhaps, in this joining of art history and visual culture, art practice has priority. It would need to be confirmed, perhaps quantitatively, by looking at the latest journal publications, but the ethos and structuring of the major books certainly confirm this. As an aside, *The Visual Century* (2011) is not structured according to individual practices in terms of its chapters, but these are still quite practice-centred. This volume does, however, offer more chapters towards a general contextualisation of the contemporary South African art world than *10 Years 100 Artists* (2004)

⁷ Ashraf Jamal, *Predicaments of Culture in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press and Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2005); Ashraf Jamal, *In the World. Essays on Contemporary South African Art* (Milan: Skira, 2017).

edited by Sophie Perryer, *The ID of South African Artists* (2004) based on an exhibition curated by David Koloane and Sharlene Khan, *Positions. Contemporary Artists in South Africa* (2010), *South African Art Now* (2009), and *In the World* (2017).⁸

Even as I was trying to find material that deals specifically with the South African *art world* as such, I found the emphasis was on the artworks. Mostly what is available that contextualises or maps the South African art worlds are introductory chapters in the types of major book publications as those I mention above. I have also come across very few articles that have any kind of focus on the South African art world as such, aside from brief sections that are needed to contextualise their own arguments. Further, as virtually the only material available on the art world (i.e. not focusing primarily on practice) these general contextualising introductory chapters represent the impressions and understandings of experts in the field, such as Jamal, Williamson, Perryer, Pissarra, Goniwe, etc. These impressions and understandings are gleaned from the experience of long careers in the field, and although invaluable, they seldom have an empirical basis and remain on a somewhat theoretical level. The HSRC/VANSA report (the ‘Report’), which forms a central departure point in this thesis, especially as explored in Chapter 1, is one of the only empirical documents on the composition and landscape of the contemporary South African art world.

When it was released, there was a general awareness of the VANSA/HSRC report amongst academics, artists and other actors in the art world. Yet it did not receive much feedback or critical scrutiny, although it was to some extent taken up and discussed within the visual arts community. As such the Department of Arts and Culture organised the Visual Arts Indaba (conference or discussion) on 25 and 26 October of 2012 to encourage more robust discussion of and inputs on the Report that had been produced. This call to discussion was, however, met with a counter call from certain segments of the visual arts community to boycott the Department of Visual Arts’ Indaba, due to the Department’s various

⁸ Sophie Perryer, ed., *10 Years 100 Artists: Art in a Democratic South Africa* (Cape Town: Bell Roberts Publishing and Struik, 2004); Sharlene Khan, ed., *The ID of South African Artists* (Amsterdam: Stitching Art and Theatre, 2004); Williamson, *South African Art Now*; Peter Anders and Matthew Krouse, eds, *Positions. Contemporary Artists in South Africa* (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media, 2010); Jamal, *In The World*.

oversights in the matter.⁹ I coincidentally received a forwarded open invitation to the Visual Arts Indaba from my subject specialist and librarian at UNISA, Mr Dawie Malan, but did not attend the event at the time. I do, however, recall looking into the Report again at this point and I was aware of it when I commenced my studies at the University of Leeds in September 2013. At that stage I was struggling, as I believe many did, with what to make of the Report. The product of this struggle is Chapter 1 of this thesis. At the point of completing this thesis, it is still the most current government Report with nothing similar to it appearing since its publication.

While considering this thesis a work in art history, I have, therefore, chosen not to focus on artistic representations. I did consider including a chapter on how artists were negotiating transition and transformation in relation to gender in their work. It soon became clear that untangling the implications of the Report as a major state discourse on race and gender in the art world through both theoretical analysis and primary research through interviews that generated a massively rich archive to code, would constitute a major research project with much to offer to a study of the conditions of artistic practice and the situation of the artists and their analysis of the art world. Informed by the discoveries of this research, a study of artmaking and transformation would have to be a separate, postdoctoral undertaking.

My work's contribution to the study of visual art practice and how it figures in the thesis is considered at various points. I want to clarify at this early point why I wanted to conduct my thesis in terms of the *art world*. I have touched on my impression of the texture of scholarship on South African art and I have also mentioned the favouring of Visual Studies over Art History and the dominant tradition of visual representation registers in the country. The nexus that I sought to explore in my work is that of the conditions of artistic production (*how is it* for artists and other actors in this landscape) instead of a strong focus on visual representation (what are the artworks doing, what meanings are made).¹⁰

⁹ For more details on this moment and what it entailed please see: Louise van der Bijl, 'Open Letter to the Visual Arts Community of South Africa' Assemblage (1 November 2012) <<https://assemblage.co.za/resources/press/press-release/open-letter-visual-arts-community-south-africa>> [accessed 22 May 2020].

¹⁰ TJ Clark, 'On the Social History of Art,' in *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 12-13.

My ambition was to offer an expanded sense of what Art History can be through an analysis of the 'art world' and its actors based on the generation of new material through analysed interviews. Once we introduce the interview, we encounter art history's conventional use of the method as a means of discovering and reporting verbatim the artist's own understanding and intentions, delivered directly through their often quoted words. I am one of a group of art historians beginning to use Grounded Theory as a qualitative method for analysing the situated social, affective and indeed political experience of participants in various situations or life-worlds that are inscribed into spoken language. Interviewing is, of course, not new to the field of Art History, but in most instances, the things that artists say are taken at face value or are quoted. Grounded Theory brings a new dimension to the long tradition of the use of interview material in the History of Art. I go into much more detail on these points and lay out my method in detail in Chapters 2 and 7.

Grounded Theory interviews are a source of meanings but not self-evidently to either speaker or researcher. Hence layers of coding are required of the transcribed text that proceeds by identifying units of meaning, specifically verbal gerundives that give access to acting, feeling, understanding, and perspectives on social processes and behaviours within them. Coding and recoding with attentiveness also to silence, laughter, hesitancy and all the signs of the embodied, social and psychological person speaking their experience leads to slow discerning of refined codes—termed axial codes—and ultimately to identifying concepts hitherto unknown and untheorised but grounded thus in lived experience while not available to each individual in themselves. This is a gruelling process of faithful distillation of new concepts and knowledge from the analysed speech of the participants as agents and actants in specific fields of social practice.

In 1997, the late cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, produced a graphic in the introduction to *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* consisting of various 'nodes' in what he refers to as the circuit of culture, which are representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation.¹¹ According to this schematic, these dimensions are all

¹¹ Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage publications and Open University, 1997).

interconnected and mutually constituting. This model represents the application of an existing sociological theory from Marx's *Grundrisse* to the social world.¹² Grounded Theory, however, seeks to generate new theory *grounded* in the speaking of lived experience of the entangled skeins of representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation. This does not replace the macro-theories but discovers the micro-enactment and negotiation by the people involved in these processes to generate new theories with potentially useful application.

Questions in art history have often centred on the context of the art as related to various historical and sometimes biographical events, and also aesthetic questions of the artwork. My focus in this thesis is not on artworks, but on the conditions of artistic practice for artists who are, in the case of the VANSAs/HSRC Report, calculated economically and governmentally in terms of how much money they make through demographic classifications that form a particular representation of the artist and the art world. As a response to this specific type of representation, what I have tried to work towards by conducting interviews, is to collect together statements that can be analysed in relation to how those people who are practitioners within these conditions of artistic practice reveal that they negotiate and transform the conditions practice by looking at what they encounter in the scene and how they respond to it. Through this method I tease out the texture of how the artists live and experience their conditions of practice. Not a history of the contemporary South African art world, I seek to examine the dynamics of experience and resistance in relation to gender and race as unevenly and differentially entwined in the working conditions and professional experience of artists, gallerists and critics.

In my analysis of the text of the VANSAs/HSRC Report I identify the production through quantitative analysis of four figures: 'white men', 'black men', 'white women', and 'black women' that I term 'avatars' because they function as the passive bearers or signifiers of statistical dispositions of types and numbers. Grounded Theory enabled me to collect evidence for how people understand and are acting in their own complex and varied situations as they speak of what they are doing and what they are

¹² Hall sets out his reading of Marx in this regard in a later article: Stuart Hall, 'Marx's Notes on Method: A "Reading" of the "1857 Introduction"', *Cultural Studies* 17.2 (2003), 113-149.

experiencing. In their speech, they may refer to themselves or others as White or Black, as women or men. In this situation, such terms cease to be quantitative markers and become experienced conditions of social processes inflected by the diversely and even agonistically experienced social process of a still racialising and gendering art world. In terms of Grounded Theory terminology, the static classification of economistic governmental discourse—the avatar—is replaced by the speaking social subject negotiating and attempting to transform the social situations in which they act as artists.

In work that claims an affinity with the postcolonial/decolonial feminist project, there is currently an imperative to name ourselves. I, therefore, have to situate my positionality within this web of race and gender in contemporary postapartheid work for transformation. I am White and a woman and an art historian and a gender studies scholar currently working in communication studies. I name myself so knowing full well the history of these classifying words as signifiers of categories. But I also do so in the belief that this type of recognition is precisely what makes it possible for us to begin to negotiate the transformation that is needed in contemporary South Africa. It thus makes certain demands of me as a researcher as well. I return to these issues at length towards the end of Chapter 7, as, in the South African context at present, there is a fine balance to be struck between naming persistent social issues through invoking identity categories in some necessary cases, and the undoing of the negative effects of these categories as products of traumatic histories. The ambition, of course, is not to ‘disappear’ difference; the ambition is not to be held hostage to it as it has been used to empower and disempower. A strong sense of Spivakian strategic essentialism is at work in the current workings through of the trauma of race/gender in South Africa.¹³ We name ourselves and are named for strategic purposes; sometimes this is transformative, and other times it can be regressive. Such strategic essentialist tactics will hopefully prove to be just a short-term tactic in the long-term strategy of transformation.

¹³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Larry Grossberg and Cary Nelson (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 66-111; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography’, in *The Spivak Reader*, ed. by Donna Landry and Gerald McLean (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 203-237.

In identifying myself in this way, I also bear in mind postcolonial theorist Chandra Mohanty's critique of the colonial gesture that is re-enacted when any author naturalises her/his author position and addresses others without such self-critical acknowledgment of the place of speaking.¹⁴ At the same time, however, identifying oneself in the context of a racially stratified society can be a self-limiting gesture. This act of naming is massively over-determined in South Africa. Nevertheless, we are at present obligated to confront the issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc. Collectively, as members of the communities that we live in on this planet together, we are obligated to confront these real hierarchies and asymmetries. We are also obligated, in doing so, to recognise the continuing effects of ignorance and privilege.

Having situated myself within this context of postapartheid South Africa, I want to also state how I see myself, and my work, fitting into this picture. As a scholar, I am asking the questions posed in this thesis because I argue for the need for feminist attention to the specificity of gender in post-apartheid South Africa as it deals with the deconstruction, reconstruction and renegotiation of its very social, economic and ideological fabrics which have not only been built on racialised hierarchy but various forms of patriarchal hierarchy. I am implicated on the shadow-side of this in ways that no one from my demographic is going to escape for many generations to come. I live this every day as I negotiate my position and my relation(s) to other people in various contexts and in different ways. In the face of the legacies we all hold, there is no White person in the world who is not living the benefits of colonisation and its resultant racialisation in forms of different kinds of extremity. As a White person, I seek to use my work to not contribute to the continuation of these legacies by indifference or ignorance.

Therefore, as a White South African woman with a particular history in South Africa, and coming from an Afrikaans community, while in my own work and within university communities having examined structures of both gender and race, I recognise that I am differently positioned from most

¹⁴ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes. Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. by Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 51-80.

of the people with whom I spoke during the course of my research. The experiment with these interviews was of itself fascinating in terms of the response to the invitation to take part. Some people said yes and some said no. Those who did accept were deeply interested to explore these issues with me and to be part of a practical contribution to understanding the still difficult conditions and the conditions for change. My methodology has provided a way of making clear that I take responsibility at one level as the analyst. I am the art historian who will write up my findings that are not exhaustive of the material generated. This is where the constructive element enters as an epistemological acknowledgement of the conditions of academic research. It is situated knowledge on which I hope to acquire an academic qualification. The epistemology of Grounded Theory rests not on interpretation but on clearly demonstrated processes of coding and arriving at an evidence-based proposition whose research value is premised not on a superior truth discovered by the researcher but on the production of knowledge that is, in Kathy Charmaz's fundamentally pragmatist definition, credible, original, resonant, and useful.¹⁵ This comes about through the status of the material that is coded as speech, as accounts, which are not interpreted by a pre-existing conceptual or theoretical key to which people's worlds are subjected, but by a traceable process of 'discovery' through the primary granting of agency, consciousness and analytical understanding of situations and life-worlds to the individuals whose words are being coded. It is in discovering patterns across the group of interviewees, however, that the researcher is enabled to propose new concepts that can then be situated in relation to their value for and contribution to the academic literature of the field in question. Kathy Charmaz explains the constructivist form of Grounded Theory, influenced by feminist epistemology amongst other factors:

Perhaps the major challenge to the early grounded theory works is the constructivist revision [...] that I first explicitly articulated in 2000. Constructivist grounded theory continues the iterative, comparative, emergent and open-ended approach of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original statement; adopts the pragmatist emphasis on language, meaning and action; counters mechanical

¹⁵ Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (London, Thousand Oaks, Calif. and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), pp. 182-3.

applications of the method; and answers criticisms about positivistic leanings in earlier versions of grounded theory. Constructivist grounded theory preserves the useful methodological strategies of grounded theory but places them on a relativist epistemological foundation and integrates methodological developments of the past five years (see Charmaz 2000, 2009, 2014). [...] Constructivists scrutinise the researcher's actions, examine the research situation, and locate the research process in the social historical and situational conditions of its production.¹⁶

In my preliminary literature review of art historical writings on South African art I discerned a tendency for gender to be caught up with, or folded into other dimensions of difference. If we do not address how they get caught up or entangled then we are not moving forward in any meaningful sort of way. Throughout this thesis I argue that continuing to think in terms of race *and* gender (which would be an intersectional argument), cannot fully grasp, as Nuttall suggests, the entanglement or an intertwining of these dimensions.

Although I analyse race and gender as they occur in speech and writing and sometimes use the words strategically, the aim of my research with the interviews was not sustain the categories, but to listen for the interweaving of art making, domesticity, private life, public space, outside views, inside views, money, professional encounters, career decisions, setbacks and strategic actions in order to produce an understanding of the fabric of negotiating all of these strands as they were encountered, experienced, thought about and responded to. These are lived variously by each person. In the research process, what matters is that they are articulated in the language in which people talk about what they do and what they experience and what they observe and contend with and, with all the written signs of the embodied speaker, these words generate a text that can be analysed comparatively and situated in the enlarged field of formal knowledge.

In this thesis I grapple with the question of to what extent the predominant issue of decolonisation and deracialisation has meant the

¹⁶ Kathy Charmaz's criteria for Grounded Theory Studies: Kathy Charmaz, 'Grounded Theory: Main Characteristics' in *Qualitative Analysis: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*, ed. by Margaretha Järvinen and Nana Mik-Meyer (London: Sage, 2020), pp. 195-222 (p. 199).

sidelining of gender. Throughout I, however, keep in play the idea that gender is never separable from the many dimensions of difference and that these dimensions are not simply intersecting, but specifically and situationally and differently entangled. Their threads run through one another and colour one another. Gender and sexuality is coloured, on the one hand, by race and decolonisation, but gender also runs through and takes its particular shape under patriarchal racialisation and colonisation. There is thus this double movement in which intertwining and entanglement play out at once where there is simultaneity even if the threads of difference work on different levels. While we can pose these entanglements theoretically as both or either enriching or devastating, in my research my aim was to discover the texture of lived encounters as delivered in accounts of participants' experiences and actions without assuming the transparency of language or the theoretical understanding of our own situations.

Given my background and position in the area of study in this thesis, I sought to be part of the transformation of South Africa. This is also why I argue that unless we learn the substance of lived experience we cannot understand how people are living (and surviving) post-apartheid South Africa. I aim to address the questions of racialised gender, and gendered race within the world(s) into which I was born and in which I live. So deep are the feelings of betrayal amongst Black artists in South Africa, that veteran late artist, David Koloane, has proposed that a Truth And Reconciliation Commission (TRC) should be held in the art world.¹⁷

I have drawn on Hannah Arendt's distinction between a 'what' and a 'who' as a theoretical and political tool with which to counter the effects of the Report as analysed in Chapter 1. Thus my term avatar signifies 'what' created by the governmental agency as it statistically calculated its types, while the term agent signifies in Arendt's terms a 'who', a subject who speaks not merely 'as a...', but who can 'speak to and of' their context and its issues. How we are formed by and negotiate the entanglements that shape us is as important for understanding formations of femininity and Whiteness *within* specific communities as it is between communities and

¹⁷ This sentiment is echoed by Thembinkosi Goniwe in the email exchange between himself, Sophie Perryer, Colin Richards, Virginia MacKenny, Khwezi Gule, Tumelo Mosaka, David Koloane, Siphoshe Manda, Emma Bedford, Moleleki Frank Ledimo, David Brodie and Sue Williamson that forms part of the introduction to the book *10 Years 100 Artists* (Perryer, p. 8).

transversally. The transformation of South Africa involves the acknowledgement of these sites of experience and self-understanding and self-investigation. I draw the vocabulary of Rancière into a South African context to effect a comparable loosening of the hold of 'what' thinking in which race and gender signifies people subjected to and victims of imposed social orders. Rancière's theses on the struggle for democracy involves the 'speaking' of a 'wrong' that is heard within the space of the political. I explore this fully later in this thesis.

I draw on writers, thinkers and theorists who are not only from/of South Africa, but also from/of other places on the planet. Towards theorising this, the work of both Hannah Arendt and Jacques Rancière has proven significant, because they provide me with a vocabulary not available in contemporary South African discourse, but which may well be significant for South African discourse as explored throughout this thesis. As such I have also drawn from the work of Michel Foucault. Where I introduce Foucault, Rancière and Arendt, I do so as part of a larger argument for their specific relevance in the South African context, because they enable me to see, through their theoretical lenses, the major trends in the material at hand, such as in the case of the Report, the 'folding away' of a government discourse that folds out of sight gender that is registered but not acknowledged as a problem that can be dealt with, and the 'policing' of Sharlene Khan's speech and the continuing 'agonism' of racial relations which point to a need for the 'redistribution of the sensible'.

This thesis is not a chronological study. The periods touched upon in the 'cases' in the course of this work are discontinuous. I wanted to highlight this aspect here and confirm that I have sought to identify and investigate moments of rupture. While there have been many major eruptions in the transformation landscape of the contemporary South African art world, I came to focus on three moving backwards in time: the VANS/HSRC Report (2008), and the articles by Sharlene Khan (2006 and 2011) and Okwui Enwezor (1997), linking them anachronistically as textual events that unlock what I see as some of the most prominent issues in the South African art world, namely, the continuation of identity categories based on demographics, the priority given to quantitative research for industry development, the prevalence of economic and monetary value

systems in art, the politics of transformation, the policing of speaking a wrong and the fear of speaking out, representation and a disregard for the contributions made by feminist theory. These ‘textual events’ as I have named them, are not presented as a sequence of unfolding issues. Not offering a periodised art historical reading, my aim has been to map a field of debate against which also to set the findings of my interviews with individuals for whom these debates are still resonating and charged issues. The issues of the precarious place of Black women and the continuing disproportionate privilege of White folk in the South African art world revealed by the VANSAs Report in 2008 was heralded by Sharlene Khan’s article in 2006, even as her intervention was brutally silenced within the same art world. Calling out issues of race privilege even within gender inclusiveness led to a gendered retaliation. Similarly, the issues of representation, albeit institutional, are heralded in the issues of visual representation in Okwui Enwezor’s article of 1997. Khan and Enwezor are linked because both invoke African American writer bell hooks’ declaration of White women ‘doing it for daddy’. The interviews that form the basis of the third part of the thesis were conducted from February to September 2015, right at the moment when the disillusionment of South African tertiary students reached an absolute melting point in the form of the Fees Must Fall movement. This thesis does not move through time, but rather traverses time in leaps and between moments to trace a continuing thread across diverse moments by which the plaiting of gender and race can be explored.

Three Decades of Democracy

While making clear that the structure of this thesis is analytical rather than chronological, I deem it necessary to draw a preliminary map of the dominant concerns and issues during the three decades of democracy in South Africa as articulated in the art historical and cultural literature. This overview constitutes a plotting out of some of these issues and events as a result of an engagement with the type of introductory, contextualising texts from major book publications as I mention above, as well as a special issue of *Third Text* on transformation in South African art. I also offer this contextualisation in order to situate the key events that I have selected to

analyse in this thesis in a larger historical framework. From my review of the introductory texts in major book publications, I have identified three major periods, which I have presented here as the three decades of democracy in South Africa. These three different time zones each contain key factors in terms of the art world and major events shaping and reshaping South Africa.¹⁸

First Decade of Democracy: 1990s – 2004

On 2 February 1990 FW de Klerk announced end of the ban on liberation movements, which ‘introduced a transitional period that was marked by both optimism and extreme violence’.¹⁹ Roughly two years later on 17 March 1992 South Africa held a referendum on whether to end apartheid or not, of which the outcome was a majority vote to end the regime. Around the same time, the end of the Cold War in 1991 heralded globalisation as the ‘new international political economy’.²⁰ This entailed a political-economic power shift, which meant that ‘through globalisation, global markers and big business have been able to reduce the power of the state, redistributing it among financial institutions’.²¹ Under globalism, the controlling force is the market and the adage is ‘the market dictates’.²²

For South Africa the arrival of globalisation coincided with the end of the boycott and the emergence of South African art onto the international scene.²³ South Africa’s first inclusion in the Venice Biennale occurred in 1993. Globalisation in the art world meant a ‘mushrooming of international biennales’, attracting tourists to art capitals over the world.²⁴ This period has

¹⁸ I want to make clear that the conditions under which I undertook some final research for this introduction included lockdown under the COVID-19 outbreak and obligatory shielding and isolation as a result of my own health conditions during a world pandemic crisis in 2020. Unable to access a full library, my review is as comprehensive as such conditions make possible.

¹⁹ Mandisi Majavu and Mario Pissarra, ‘Introduction: Charting Pathways in an Era of Posts’, in *Visual Century. South African Art in Context. Volume 4: 1990 – 2007*, ed. by Thembinkosi Goniwe, Mario Pissarra and Mandisi Majavu (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011), pp. 2-19 (p. 3).

²⁰ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 3.

²¹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 3.

²² Gavin Jantjes, ‘Great Expectations: A View from Europe’, in *Visual Century. South African Art in Context. Volume 4: 1990 – 2007*, ed. by Thembinkosi Goniwe, Mario Pissarra and Mandisi Majavu (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011), pp. 20-45 (p. 23).

²³ For a brief overview of the boycott as it impacted South African art, please see Jantjes, p. 31.

²⁴ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 3.

also entailed a massive increase in international exhibitions.²⁵ Art cities, like New York, Paris, London, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Zurich, Dusseldorf and Milan now dominate the international art world.²⁶ Gavin Jantjes also notes that these cities serve ‘to connect art to Western capital and international finance’.²⁷

In the art world, this entailed a turn to big corporations for funding for the arts, as opposed to public or government funding. A conflation of business and national interests is seen in South Africa in terms of awards and events through corporate sponsorships, such as the Standard Bank Young Artist Award, the Spier Contemporary and ABSA L’Atelier. According to Mandisi Majavu and Mario Pissarra, ‘[t]he art world, starved of support, has at times been opportunistic in its embrace of business interests’.²⁸ This type of reliance on corporate funding in the visual arts became an issue internationally with the global economic recession and collapse of markets in 2008.²⁹

The first decade of democracy in the South African art world also saw the appearance of two biennales. The first Johannesburg Biennale of 1995, entitled ‘Africus’, ‘was marked by the cultural politics of the 1980s. It championed inclusivity, democratic structures, art education and outreach’.³⁰ Majavu and Pissarra note that ‘many participating artists were black, self-taught or informally trained and from disadvantaged socio economic backgrounds’.³¹ While this constituted a break with ‘the traditionally white dominated art world’, Majavu and Pissarra also note David Koloane’s concerns that the biennale did not succeed in centering itself in Africa, saying that the axis of the biennale was outside of Africa and focused on non-African things.³² It was a transplant that did not take into account the lived reality of South Africans.³³ In terms of putting South

²⁵ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 3. See also Jantjes, p. 37.

²⁶ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 11.

²⁷ Jantjes, p. 23.

²⁸ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

²⁹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

³⁰ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

³¹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5. In this passage they are quoting from: Sabine Marshall, ‘The Impact of the Two Johannesburg Biennales (1995 and 1997) on the formation of a ‘New South African Art’’, *Social Dynamics*, 25.2 (1999), 119-137 (p. 120).

³² Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

³³ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5. Majavu and Pissarra refer in their discussion to David Koloane, ‘Africus, the Johannesburg Biennale: A Perspective’, *African Arts* 29.1 (1996): 50-56 (p. 56).

Africa on the international art world's map, Jantjes states that, the '[f]irst Johannesburg biennale received limited critical attention from the West, in terms of media coverage and interest by major museums'.³⁴ The biennale, nevertheless, brought various international art personnel to South Africa where 'previously no politically correct curator had dared to tread'.³⁵ The biennale also served to revitalise the local art scene, and gave rise to several initiatives, such as funding for projects and artist-run initiatives and spaces.³⁶ The Johannesburg Director of Culture at the time, and co-director of the biennale, Christopher Till, emphasises the biennale's catalytic effect, and believed that 'the dam wall broke' as a result of the 1995 biennale.³⁷

The second Johannesburg Biennale of 1997 entitled *Trade Routes: History and Geography* saw the appointment of Okwui Enwezor as director and subsequently expectations of what would be an 'African biennale' played out.³⁸ Rejecting nationalism and the idea of a pan-African exhibition, Enwezor and his team addressed globalisation through the show.³⁹ This was, however, aimed at an international and cosmopolitan art literate audience.⁴⁰ 'Trade Routes' was aiming to integrate South African art into the global context, but Majavu and Pissarra note that the exhibition did not resonate with most South Africans.⁴¹ Critics also noted that there was no input by a Black South African in the biennale.⁴² The Second Johannesburg Biennale remained, however, a highly regarded, though poorly attended exhibition.⁴³ Communication and leadership failure resulted in meagre attendance by local South Africans. The Biennale was closed by the city of Johannesburg before schedule to save running costs.⁴⁴ In many respects, the administrative and financial issues surfacing at the 1997 Johannesburg Biennale signposted many of the problems facing the South African art world in the present day, especially those regarding failures of leadership. Even though it is a

³⁴ Jantjes, p. 37.

³⁵ Sue Williamson, 'Introduction', in *Art in South Africa: The Future Present*, ed. by Sue Williamson and Ashraf Jamal (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1996), pp. 7-11 (p. 7).

³⁶ Williamson, 'Introduction', p. 9.

³⁷ Williamson, 'Introduction', p. 10.

³⁸ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

³⁹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

⁴¹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

⁴² Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

⁴³ Sue Williamson, 'Art and Life in South Africa 1968-2008', in *South African Art Now*, ed. by Sue Williamson (New York: Collins Design, HarperCollins, 2009), pp. 23-27 (p. 27).

⁴⁴ Williamson, 'Art and Life in South Africa', p. 27.

commercial event, the Johannesburg Art Fair, founded in 2008, has, to a certain extent, acted as a replacement for the Johannesburg Biennale as South Africa's premier art event, and has had a similar impact on the contemporary South African art world in the later 2010s.⁴⁵

Jantjes provides the following summary of the main issues with the Johannesburg Biennales.⁴⁶ Both biennales failed to attract local audiences, local artists felt estranged from the shows and funders were not convinced that it was a worthwhile expenditure. Due to these issues further proposals for biennales were not successful.⁴⁷ Crucially Jantjes points out that, 'the failure of the biennale highlighted the lack of commitment by the state and corporate sectors to the long-term improvement of South Africa's cultural relationship with the rest of Africa, and to the betterment of formerly disadvantaged black artists'.⁴⁸

South Africa is viewed by art writers as a complicated, shifting terrain that contains many contradictions. There is a feeling in the writing that seeks to position the South African art scene that: 'we are still trying to make sense of it'. Writers note the slowness of change, or the fact that not much has changed at all. In 2004 Moleleki Frank Ledimo notes that not a lot has changed both socio-politically but also socio-economically.⁴⁹ In this vein, Sophie Perryer states that: 'South Africa 10 years after the advent of democracy has barely begun to resolve the inequities of the legacies of apartheid. In many ways it is a mess, still wracked with pain and poverty – but equally bursting with potential'.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, many unresolved issues remain in the South African art world. Thembinkosi Goniwe recalls that David Koloane has proposed that a TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) should be conducted in the South African art world to understand the persistent problems and to evaluate the institutions and infrastructure that control the art field.⁵¹ For Koloane past discrepancies may be addressed by the sharing of resources, creation of dialogue and collaboration.⁵² Working with history and dealing

⁴⁵ Williamson, 'Art and Life in South Africa', p. 27.

⁴⁶ Jantjes, p. 37.

⁴⁷ Jantjes, p. 37.

⁴⁸ Jantjes, p. 39.

⁴⁹ Moleleki Frank Ledimo in Perryer, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Perryer, p. 5.

⁵¹ Thembinkosi Goniwe in Perryer, p. 8.

⁵² David Koloane in Perryer, p. 6.

with the past also forms a large part of the work of the post-apartheid South African art world.⁵³

During this period issues arose around presumed equality in the art world. For Jantjes:

[...] [the] early interpretation of globalism saw it as an undifferentiated zone of exchange: a form of level playing field, where all humans supposedly interacted as equals within a new market. It presumed that the physical distance between nations has collapsed and as a result of the contemporary technology of rapid information exchange that allowed communities and markets to interact in a new (virtual) space had no borders.⁵⁴

Similarly, Koloane points out that equality was not automatic with change in the following statement: 'The democratic order has also appeared to have brought about an unwillingness to acknowledge existing disparities under the glib pretext that automatic parity has come with change'.⁵⁵

Neither globalism nor the end of apartheid, therefore, meant automatic parity. Jantjes refers to this time where the end of apartheid intersects with the advent of globalism as 'the democratic moment in art', where optimism often eclipsed the need to realise the trauma and devastation of apartheid and colonialism.⁵⁶

Khwezi Gule questions what the standards are of gauging progress. Will this entail an ability to join the international art elite? Or should the focus be on the transformation of institutions, or on aesthetic transformation?⁵⁷ This brings us to the question of what happens to Black people in the White art system in South Africa? Tumelo Mosaka says that Goniwe talks of 'invisibility and inactiveness of black academics in fine art', but he points out that this goes for Black curators in institutions too, who are disempowered and sometimes relegated to educational or outreach roles, which reveals subtle racism.⁵⁸ Mosaka states that:

It is the responsibility of institutions to support curatorial projects that are in keeping with their mission, especially if they provide opportunities for new voices and audiences. To talk about transformation is one thing, and this is happening a lot, but to actually implement it is another [...] I still believe that

⁵³ Bedford in Perryer, p. 7.

⁵⁴ Jantjes, p. 21.

⁵⁵ David Koloane in Perryer, p. 6.

⁵⁶ Jantjes, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Khwezi Gule in Perryer, p. 6.

⁵⁸ Tumelo Mosaka in Perryer, p. 8.

within the cultural field, there is much to be gained as a community if more blacks are given the chance to redefine themselves without the pressure of being politically correct all the time.’⁵⁹

Race remains a central issue in the South African art world and Mosaka notes the persistence of ‘race thinking’ as well as the fact that knowledge production and dissemination remains White.⁶⁰ This is accompanied by a persistence of White privilege. White people have more access to resources, education and choice and this results in White domination of the art field – as Sharlene Khan notes, the circles in the art world are White.⁶¹ Majavu and Pissarra link this persistence of White domination to economics by stating: ‘Racial inequality, the legacy of apartheid still perpetuated by capitalist economic policies today, has meant that the post-apartheid art community is still largely a white world – as far as galleries, institutions and training are concerned’.⁶² There is also the related issue of discriminatory culture against Black artists under apartheid and the accompanying legacies of cultural devastation. In relation to this, Jantjes states: ‘The notions of culture of the colonial regime and the apartheid government valued neither South African art nor its artists. British colonial culture saw little value in anything other than its own reflection, and the apartheid regime excluded Black artists from any role in interpreting the nation’s art history’.⁶³

Aside from racial biases, the contemporary South African art world is seen as closed to new names, with a tendency of recycling ‘old names’.⁶⁴ During this time, and indeed in later years, the same names keep on appearing in especially international shows. Because of this, for Sipho Mdanda, the work needed to challenge the status quo is even harder.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Williamson believes that the South African art scene is vigorous and represents various generations of artists, including established

⁵⁹ Tumelo Mosaka in Perryer, p. 8.

⁶⁰ Tumelo Mosaka in Perryer, p. 6.

⁶¹ Sharlene Khan in Perryer, p. 8.

⁶² Majavu and Pissarra, p. 11. In this statement, they acknowledge Thembinkosi Goniwe who has also pointed this out. See: Thembinkosi Goniwe, ‘From My Sketch Pad: Notes of a Black South African Artist’, in *Co-existence: Contemporary Cultural Production in South Africa*, ed. by Lucy Flint-Gohlke. (Massachusetts: The Rose Art Museum, 2003).

⁶³ Jantjes, p. vi.

⁶⁴ Jantjes, p. 41.

⁶⁵ Sipho Mdanda in Perryer, p. 7.

artists, mid-career artists and emerging artists.⁶⁶ According to Williamson, the older generation is keeping the door open in international museum shows for South African art.⁶⁷

Many questions arise during this era about the prevalence of Eurocentricism and the glorification of Euro/American trends. Koloane points out that South African artists often first get recognised overseas before they are recognised locally.⁶⁸ Because of the establishment of dominant art centres as mentioned above, there is a constant battle for any sort of local recognition. Many international shows of South African art never make it to South Africa, with few exceptions, such as Simon Njami's *Africa Remix* that started in London in 2004 and ended in Johannesburg in 2007.⁶⁹

Jantjes notes the predominance of Eurocentric art history in the teaching and discourses of art within South Africa.⁷⁰ Jantjes also unpacks the finer implications of the weight and prevalence of European Expectations in his chapter in *Visual Century*, 'Great Expectations. A View from Europe', especially the critique of modernism and the inability of Western discourse to recognise the failures of terms like 'postmodernism' and 'globalism' to recognise difference.⁷¹ He further highlights the pretend inclusion of the art world, which 'adopted radical discourses of cultural inclusion and broader international participation in the art world without any alteration of the status quo'.⁷² This move also included wide-scale cultural appropriation.⁷³ Part of the inherent problem is that globalism remained centred in Western discourse and that Africa and other localities often had to articulate its ideas via Western nodes, such as making connections with other nations from the global south via European connections, like via Paris or London.⁷⁴ Globalism feigns equality, and this effect is felt especially in the art world. Economic globalism has entailed a belief that 'the market is free', and this sentiment trickled into the art world and manifested as a false

⁶⁶ Sue Williamson in Perryer, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Sue Williamson in Perryer, p. 7.

⁶⁸ David Koloane in Perryer, p. 6.

⁶⁹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 11.

⁷⁰ Jantjes, p. vii.

⁷¹ Jantjes, pp. 21-43. Jantjes also notes Africa's role in the development of European modernism.

⁷² Jantjes, p. 23.

⁷³ Jantjes, p. 23.

⁷⁴ Jantjes, p. 23.

sense that all artists and art world actors were now equal, because the market is free.

As Jantjes notes, many scholars have responded to the dominance of Western thinking in culture, by bringing different perspectives to cultural discourse. Jantjes notes initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s of scholars from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean ‘to insert their interpretations of globalism into mainstream Western debate’, such as the Centre for Advanced Creative Studies in London and publications like *Black Phoenix* by Rasheed Araeen that developed into the journal *Third Text*, the *Journal of Art & Ideas* co-founded by Geeta Kapur in New Delhi and *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* founded by Okwui Enwezor.⁷⁵ According to Jantjes these scholars,

[...] developed critical notions of globalism, with roots in anti-colonialist thinking and theories of new internationalism and trans-nationalism. Their research followed the established patterns of human behaviour that had, over centuries, shaped the foundations of societies and the uneven progress of culture. By interpreting globalism as a response to the pressures of migrations and the international demand for cultures to receive and exchange ideas as equals, the term signalled that cultural reciprocity as not for profit, but for human progress. [...] They argued for broader cultural interaction, as well as networks that recognised cultural differences and included art from all over the world.⁷⁶

In Africa the developing discourse during the first decade of democracy in the country was around post- and decolonisation. This developing discourse saw the appearance of Achille Mbembe’s keystone work in 2001, entitled, *On the Post-Colony*.⁷⁷

The first decade of democracy in the South African art world was also marked by what was referred to as ‘export shows’, which exhibited South African work in international shows. Although these shows created a large amount of international visibility for South African art, it was met with a local wariness of operating under European registers and within Euro/American contexts. The question of who determines the language and

⁷⁵ Jantjes, p. 25.

⁷⁶ Jantjes, p. 25.

⁷⁷ Achille Mbembe, *On The Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2001).

register of the art world was at the fore for local artists and cultural workers.

According to Koloane this entailed:

[...] [a] spate of goodwill export exhibitions under the 'free at last' rubric to different corners of the globe. Unfortunately, most of these [were] initiated by foreign curators. While external input is important towards our development on one hand, it is also important to define South African expression in local terms in order not to reduce our expression to a sycophantic echo of global expression, but as a unique contribution towards multiculturalism.⁷⁸

The sudden international interest in South African art was not only due to an immediate response to South African's post-apartheid status.⁷⁹ It was also, according to Williamson, the result of a gradual shift in the focus of the international art world in the 1990s with new trends emerging in international curating that focused on 'nomadism', 'bricolage' and the 'transcending of cultural boundaries', coinciding with a shifting gaze toward the periphery.⁸⁰ Williamson is, however, wary of the basis for these international tendencies, and states:

[...] one may ask if in some cases an old colonial agenda was not simply being revived, if third world countries were not becoming again of interest simply as curiosity cabinets, as cultural 'others', and whether the freshly heralded 'multiculturalism' was not in fact a revival of cultural imperialism.⁸¹

Jantjes notes how these exports exhibitions revealed how international enthusiasm for South African art stood in stark contrast with local lack of training and support for the arts.⁸² For Jantjes European and US interest in South African art 'was a result of two protracted struggles. The struggle against apartheid and for a culturally diverse South Africa and the struggle for an inclusive and truly international art'.⁸³ In order to grow engagement international institutions and projects asked African curators to direct shows.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ David Koloane in Perryer, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁹ Okwui Enwezor, "'Better Lives,'" *Marginal Selves: Framing the Current Reception of Contemporary South African Art*, in *South African Art Now*, ed. by Sue Williamson (New York: Collins Design, HarperCollins, 2009), pp. 15-21 (p. 16).

⁸⁰ Williamson, 'Introduction', p. 7.

⁸¹ Williamson, 'Introduction', p. 8.

⁸² Jantjes, p. 27.

⁸³ Jantjes, p. 33.

⁸⁴ Jantjes, p. 33.

The dominance of Western practices and paradigms also involved a struggle over aesthetics. According to Andries Oliphant:

With the intensification of intercultural exchange, it can be anticipated that the black and white aesthetic ghettos entrenched under apartheid will weaken. Western aesthetic traditions that took precedence over African modalities will be significantly modified. This will result in what Fanon described as the re-immersion of artists in the denigrated aesthetic traditions and modalities of making art.⁸⁵

Oliphant also later states that: 'The African agenda of post-apartheid South Africa will also require mainstreaming African aesthetic practices within a framework of diversity and transformation'.⁸⁶ He also notes that, '[a]s Uche Okeke points out, this will require extensive and sustained research in the history of African art, along with a commitment to keep abreast of global developments'.⁸⁷ This last statement brings us to the notion that in contemporary times, Africa's concerns are wider than itself. Africa is not only concerned with its own situation, but also with global concerns. Nor is Africa only concerned with *its* 'place' in the global arena, but also with what its contribution can be in terms of the knowledge economy. Here Oliphant quotes Steve Biko in saying: 'He envisioned that the contribution of Africa would make to the world would be to humanise it. This humanisation is conceived as the product of African culture, which accords intrinsic value to every human being. It remains a gift still to be bestowed on South Africa and the world'.⁸⁸

Out of this context arose many questions of globalisation and the place of South Africa in it. Connected to these concerns are also questions about whether Africa can set its own terms in this new world order. Majavu and Pissarra ask, where is Africa in globalisation?⁸⁹ They believe that,

⁸⁵ Andries Oliphant, 'Imagined Futures: Some New Trend in South African art', in in *Visual Century. South African Art in Context. Volume 4: 1990 – 2007*, ed. by Thembinkosi Goniwe, Mario Pissarra and Mandisi Majavu (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011), pp.177-189 (pp. 183 -184). In this passage Oliphant is referring to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 179.

⁸⁶ Oliphant, p. 187.

⁸⁷ Oliphant, p. 187. He is referring to Uche Okeke, 'Creating New Conditions for Creativity: Mario Pissarra in Conversation with Uche Okeke' (2008) <http://www.asai.co.za/forum.php?id=67>.

⁸⁸ Oliphant, p. 198. Oliphant is quoting from Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: Heinemann, 1979), pp. 40-47.

⁸⁹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

‘Africa has failed to integrate into the world economy’.⁹⁰ In the art world globalisation leaves existing structures and centres intact, such as US and Western European notions of art-making and exhibiting, and inclusivity is often based on quotas that do not change the discourse or the status quo of the art world.⁹¹ The 1980s and 1990s see poor integration of work by African artists into major international shows or the appearance of separate ‘African’ exhibitions as novelties.⁹² This changed somewhat in later years with the inclusion of more artists of/from Africa in the Documenta exhibitions, as Jantjes points out that Documenta IX to XII included South African artists.⁹³ The appointment of Okwui Enwezor as the director of Documenta X also made strides towards the recognition of art of/from the African continent in major international shows.

Although the legacies of resistance art remain prominent, there is a sense during this time of a shift from focus of resistance art to issues of globalisation and internationalisation. The legacies of resistance art have, however, made South Africans sceptical of globalisation.⁹⁴ Gule succinctly summarises the ethos of this time, pointing out that issues of race are still central, but other issues emerge as well:

Issues of race determine much of the discourse in South African art and rightfully so. But a situation is developing where other pertinent issues are left out of the debate. I would like to see a more robust engagement with the impact of globalisation, for instance. Is it possible for South Africans to negotiate its impact on our own terms or are we to be swept along by events beyond our control? What is the historical significance of the African Renaissance? Do the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (Nepad) and the African Union spell the beginning of a whole new society or is it just another grand deal that will lie in ruins like other ideologies before it? What do these institutions mean for artists? How have artists responded? When we apply for public funds do we do so in order to fulfil needs in society or do we do so to satisfy our narcissism and blind ambition? Can we develop a new critical vocabulary that will transcend the limitations of current dichotomies and one that allows a multitude of responses to emerge?⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

⁹¹ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 5.

⁹² Jantjes, p. 3.

⁹³ Jantjes, p. 37.

⁹⁴ Tamar Garb, Achille Mbembe, Sarah Nuttall, Raison Naidoo and Colin Richards, ‘Thinking from the South: Reflections on Image and Place’, in *Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography* by Tamar Garb (Göttingen, Germany: Seidl and V&A publishing, 2011), pp. 300-307.

⁹⁵ Khwezi Gule in Perryer, p. 8.

Gule's statement above solidifies the fact that under globalisation, South Africa is concerned with global trends, especially as these impact upon Africa. Some thinkers, like Oliphant, note the advances in art education that have been made since 1994, as art departments of previously White universities are now open to students of all demographics.⁹⁶ Others stress the remaining problems in art education. Khan refers to a continuing crisis in arts education, by stating:

We may seem to have achieved some successes with democracy, but the crisis in art education in schools and at tertiary level has not in any way improved with democracy. The closure of the arts departments of the previously black tertiary institutions in the late 1990s is a disaster that has slipped by quietly.⁹⁷

Khan further notes that lecturing positions only become available by death or retirement.⁹⁸ Oliphant highlights the fact that in townships and rural areas, children receive almost no art education, or when they do there is a lack of trained teachers and resources and materials.⁹⁹ He also sees the impact of the closure of community art centres as highly problematic.¹⁰⁰ Oliphant believes that owing to community art centres Black persons could emerge as image makers, but because graduates of these centres were cut off from tertiary education, Black actors were not prepared for other roles, such as education, research, curation and institutional management roles.¹⁰¹ There is thus a need for the expansion of skills and roles of Black artists in South Africa.¹⁰² Majavu and Pissarra note that many Black artists still find it impossible to access art education and they ascribe it to the failure of economic policies adapted in South Africa by the post-apartheid government, 'which have done little to change the structural inequalities of the distribution of wealth and resources'.¹⁰³

Raison Naidoo mentions the negative of the effects of the Bantu education system on the lack of understanding of art and the lack of gallery-

⁹⁶ Oliphant, p. 179.

⁹⁷ Sharlene Khan in Perryer, p. 8.

⁹⁸ Sharlene Khan in Perryer, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Oliphant, p. 179.

¹⁰⁰ Oliphant, p. 179.

¹⁰¹ Oliphant, p. 179.

¹⁰² Oliphant, p. 181.

¹⁰³ Majavu and Pissarra, pp. 7, 11.

going in the country.¹⁰⁴ According to Naidoo, ‘we are actually speaking an esoteric language that is outside of the reference of the majority’s education in this country’.¹⁰⁵ Regarding the lack of gallery-going in South Africa, Williamson notes the politics of space in that there are no art galleries in Soweto and also that very few local visitors actually go to existing galleries in city centres, as these are frequented by mostly international visitors.¹⁰⁶ Such spatial divisions reveal remaining disparities, not only in racial and economic terms, but also in the privileging of urban over rural areas with Johannesburg and Cape Town becoming the major art cities in South Africa. Scholars like Jantjes question where the township is in the contemporary South African art world, mentioning that townships are often overlooked as ‘sites for curatorial research’.¹⁰⁷ South Africa also enjoys very little local art collecting, with newfound wealth being spent on consumer goods and status symbols.¹⁰⁸ Jantjes also points out that for such consumer goods the ‘persuasive advertising campaigns are far more informative than anything said about the arts in national media’.¹⁰⁹ All of these factors, namely lack of arts education, poor gallery-going, low levels of local collecting and sparse media coverage of the arts add up to sorely lacking engagement with art in South Africa.

This era also contained a big debate on the question of ‘moving on from resistance art’ as can be seen in the introduction to *10 Years 100 Artists*, but also in Ashraf Jamal’s *Predicaments of Culture* of 2005.¹¹⁰ Responding to Albie Sachs’s paper of 1989 ‘Preparing Ourselves for Freedom’, is the departure point for Jamal’s work. Oliphant also briefly touches on what he calls a politicisation of political art at the transition as an aesthetic shift.¹¹¹ Mosaka stresses that the socio-political and economic situation remains a reality and art that speaks to these issues do not simply represent an ‘imperative to respond’ – it just is the reality for some artists.¹¹²

¹⁰⁴ Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 306.

¹⁰⁵ Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 306.

¹⁰⁶ Sue Williamson in Perryer, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ Jantjes, pp. 33-35.

¹⁰⁸ Jantjes, p. 41.

¹⁰⁹ Jantjes, p. 41.

¹¹⁰ Perryer, *10 Years 100 Artists*, and Jamal, *Predicaments of Culture*.

¹¹¹ Oliphant, p. 181.

¹¹² Tumelo Mosaka in Perryer, p. 6.

During and after the 1990s one of the first orders of business in contemporary South African artistic practice was to find and articulate ways in which to move on from a paradigm of resistance art. The imperative to do so grew from a sense that art needed ‘to move from deconstruction to reconstruction’.¹¹³ The need for this move was strongly introduced by former Constitutional Court Judge, Albie Sachs’s paper, ‘Preparing Ourselves for Freedom’ of 1989, on the African National Congress’ (ANC) position on culture.¹¹⁴ Enwezor highlights the importance of this provocative text when he recounts:

[...] Albie Sachs interrogated and offered a scathing critique of the prevailing type of political art nurtured under the ethos of resistance art. He ultimately argued that such art was disabling the true position of the artist in a mature democracy. He challenged artists, in preparing for the end of apartheid, to work on expanding the narrow horizon offered by resistance art, to go beyond using art as a tool for political discourse, and in a sense perform their duty by allowing the work of the imagination to be expressed in more complex ways.¹¹⁵

Williamson attests to the considerable internal and external pressure on South African artists at the dawn of a new democracy to reflect the miracle, ‘to put the past behind them’ and to ‘provide a cultural lodestar for the emerging nation’.¹¹⁶ In this sense, the end of apartheid came as a shock to many artists, according to Williamson, as the prevalent artistic mode of resistance was under threat of losing its currency.¹¹⁷ Albie Sachs’ article is emblematic of the highly politicised pressures on South African art in the years of transition from resistance to integration. As Sachs points out, so egregious were the issues that had to be opposed during apartheid that almost all artistic efforts had to be dedicated to the struggle. The move that Sachs suggests from resistance art to art that embodies ‘the work of the imagination’ presents a classic sense that art is either instrumental or free. Does this, however, mean that this new imagination is freed from all

¹¹³ Emma Bedford, ‘Introduction’, in *A Decade of Democracy: South African Art 1994-2004. From the Permanent Collection of Iziko: South African National Gallery*, ed. by Emma Bedford (Cape Town: Double Storey and Iziko Museums Cape Town, 2004), pp. 4-6 (p. 5).

¹¹⁴ Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 19. Sachs’ original article appeared as: Albie Sachs, ‘Preparing Ourselves for Freedom: Culture and the ANC Constitutional Guidelines’ *The Drama Review*, 35.1 (Spring 1991), 187-193.

¹¹⁵ Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 19.

¹¹⁶ Williamson, ‘Introduction’, p. 7.

¹¹⁷ Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 19.

politics? This cannot be the case, as there are other dimensions of struggle that become more visible after the resistance years, and that also need imaginative aesthetic articulation, such as work on gender in representation and the intricate relations between gender and racial differencing. There still are struggles, but these are of a different order, for example in the nature of the politics of representation and the politics of institutions. These are issues that I explore in Parts I and II of this thesis.

It is thus not simply a matter of over-politicised art that is trapped in a resistance paradigm versus art that is unshackled and free to be anything, because the people with whom I speak in this thesis, engage in practices that contest elements that were hidden away as a consequence of the egregiousness of the racialising framework. To push Sachs' formulation further, one might say that what must be noted, during this time, is the need to move beyond a Soviet-inherited notion of political art to a notion of contemporary art that is shaped by gender, race, sexuality, and colonial theory and that, in turn, shapes a different concept of the politics of representation on the international art scene. What space had there been for feminist or queer debates in a society that was locked into a fundamental struggle for democracy on grounds of race?¹¹⁸

A mature democracy does not simply enjoy free art. Issues of gender and sexuality may have been pushed into the background under the major demand of struggling against apartheid, but the struggle for gender equity and for recognition of sexual diversity remains. There are issues in the South African art world that are also areas of negotiation and transformation. What now needs to be considered are the elements and aspects of the South African art world that stand as the sites of renegotiation and transformation of these axes of power through critical artistic and other practices and the continuing institutional struggle for change and democratisation of the art world.

¹¹⁸ Recent years, especially, have seen the emergence of some feminist and queer debates in the South African art space, such as, for example, academic and curator Tamar Garb's exhibition of the photographic work of 17 South African artists, entitled, *Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography*. The exhibition catalogue is available as: Tamar Garb, *Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography* (Göttingen, Germany: Seidl and V&A publishing, 2011). I also refer in this thesis to the Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD) research unit at the University of Johannesburg, and also the *Innovative Women* exhibition curated by artist Bongzi Bengu.

Within local practices there is a perceived shift during the first decade of democracy from resistance art to questions of individual identity. According to Koloane, artists' work, although underpinned by socio-political concerns are now adopting 'universal themes of history, identity and gender'.¹¹⁹ Hand-in-hand with these new interests in identity during this era are also the prevalence of issues around the politics of representation. An instance of this debate will be considered as the basis for Chapter 4 with the publication of Okwui Enwezor's 1997 article, 'Reframing the Black Subject' and the subsequent responses to it in the form of a collection of essays by South African artists and thinkers called *Grey Areas*.¹²⁰

The establishment of various South African contemporary galleries also took place during this initial transitional period. The still-prominent Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg was established much earlier in 1966.¹²¹ Jantjes believes that Lisa Givon was a 'key intermediary between local artists and international collectors'.¹²² Galleries that were established during the first decade of democracy include Bell-Roberts Contemporary (existing between 2000 and 2009), Gallery MOMO in 2003 by Monna Mokoena and Warren Siebrits Gallery in 2004, which closed due to recession in 2009.¹²³ Stevenson was established in 2003 as Michael Stevenson Gallery and the Goodman Gallery opened a branch in Cape Town in 2007, early in the second decade of democracy.

The advent of globalism also entailed a change in the role of the gallery system, which in many ways has been taking over traditional institutional functions in the South African art world, as is also explored in the interview findings of this research. There was a misconception that South African galleries would act as a gateway to contemporary art of neighbouring countries, but Jantjes notes that initially this was not the case, as the South African art world had very little ties with the art worlds in other

¹¹⁹ David Koloane in Perryer, p. 6.

¹²⁰ Okwui Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject. Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Representation', *Third Text*, 40 (1997), 21-40; Brenda Atkinson and Candice Breitz, eds, *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill, 1999).

¹²¹ Uta Grosenick and Raimar Stange, *International art Galleries. Post-war to Post-millennium*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), p. 496.

¹²² Jantjes, p. 39.

¹²³ Jantjes, p. 39.

African countries.¹²⁴ This has shifted somewhat in recent years with galleries like Stevenson expanding its representation of artists from elsewhere in Africa, to represent artists like Portia Zvavahera and Odili Donald Odita.

The failure of government is a prominent theme that runs across the writing on the first decade of democracy in South Africa. Jantjes points out that new policies, like the White Paper on Arts and Culture, were not implemented sufficiently, and that this was devastating for arts infrastructure development.¹²⁵ After the first decade of democracy there was a great sense of disappointment due to the inaction of government to implement well-crafted and transformational policies.¹²⁶ For Jantjes, international applause of South African art was contrasted starkly with local neglect and disregard.¹²⁷ Oliphant also points out a gross lack of public funding.¹²⁸

Above I have touched on problems with media coverage of the arts in South Africa. This general lack of media engagement entailed poor coverage in the press and on television of contemporary artists' international success, and according to Jantjes, 'did little to inform South African citizens about their relevance'.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, various publications on South African art emerged during the first decade of democracy, including *ArtThrob* in 1997, *Chimurenga* in 2002 by Cameroonian thinker, Ntone Edjabe, *Art South Africa* by Brendon and Suzette Bell-Roberts in 2002, and the *Art South Africa Initiative* (ASAI) in 2005 by Mario Pissarra as an online resource on often neglected artists.¹³⁰ Jantjes notes that Stevenson and Warren Siebrits both publish small catalogues with exhibitions, which is another way in which commercial galleries are taking over institutional roles.¹³¹

Writing in 2013 towards the end of the second decade of democracy, Mukhubu and Simbao offer some reflections on this early period of

¹²⁴ Jantjes, p. 27.

¹²⁵ Jantjes, p. 29.

¹²⁶ Jantjes, p. 29.

¹²⁷ Jantjes, p. 29.

¹²⁸ Oliphant, p. 179.

¹²⁹ Jantjes, p. 41.

¹³⁰ Jantjes, p. 41.

¹³¹ Jantjes, p. 41.

transition in the South African art world.¹³² About this era, Makhubu and Simbao state: ‘Realising a non-racial, equitable South Africa involves the reparative task of re-historicization, desegregation and decolonization. The concerns of the first decade included re-figuring *who* [original emphasis] we are, but also how we redefine our future socio-spatial and political relations.’¹³³ Drawing from Lefebvre, the first decade is characterised by what Makhubu and Simbao term ‘representational redress’, which entails building new memorials and monuments and renaming historic sites, etc.¹³⁴ These authors stress however, that radical structural changes are still needed to give people a sense of a ‘common fate and purpose, and a shared concept of collective concerns’.¹³⁵

Makhubu and Simbao note various concerns around commercialisation. During this era, the commercial is taking over, especially in light of the closure of community based arts projects noted earlier.¹³⁶ Commercialisation has also led to the idolisation of selected artists and curators.¹³⁷ According to Makhubu and Simbao: ‘This phase can be characterised as one in which the political concerns of artists are not shared or common but personalized into individual identity issues that form currency in commercial and mostly white-owned galleries’.¹³⁸ The response to this has been ‘process-based work in artist-run spaces separate from established institutions’ as can be seen in the Bag Factory, for instance.¹³⁹

In the years after apartheid, South Africa embarked on a process of nation building, during which the country imagined itself as the rainbow nation – a multicultural and multiracial state. But Enwezor, like many others, remains cautious of discourses in exhibition practice resulting from the rainbow nation ethos after the end of apartheid that promoted a sense of unity and wholeness amongst once segregated cultures.¹⁴⁰ In the new century, disillusionment has inaugurated widespread uncertainty regarding

¹³² Nomusa Makhubu and Ruth Simbao, ‘The art of Change. Perspectives on Transformation in South Africa: Editorial’, *Third Text*, 27.3 (2013), 299-302.

¹³³ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹³⁴ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300. They are drawing from: Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

¹³⁵ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹³⁶ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹³⁷ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹³⁸ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹³⁹ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹⁴⁰ Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 16.

South Africa's future, and artistic practice has kept in step. Enwezor describes this movement as follows:

In the wake of the Johannesburg Biennales a new generation of contemporary South African artists has emerged, and many of these artists have shifted both their aesthetic criteria and artistic strategies from those prevalent during the early years of the post-apartheid system, when it seemed that the Mandela-inspired rainbow nation would become a bottomless mine from which to extract the ore that would ornament the various organs of multiracial and multicultural worlds of contemporary South African culture. Today, that model is in tatters, and the evident simplification that attended the reception of post-apartheid art has shifted to skepticism [*sic*] in the new century. Younger artists [...] are extracting a different sort of material from the debased mines that served to inoculate the mind with the empty pieties of the rainbow nation.¹⁴¹

Although I take Enwezor's point above about the failure of the rainbow nation as a metaphor or model for change, the implied remains of its 'empty pieties' cannot be left unexamined. If the pieties of the rainbow nation are indeed empty, then we have to take seriously the sites of the continued *wrongs* and understand the agonism of the transformation of South African society, as continuing issues of gender, race and all other differences are not simply constituencies of an 'empty piety'.

The first decade of democracy ends with South Africa winning the bid to host the FIFA World Cup football championships in 2010 in May of 2004. The winning of the bid was followed in subsequent years running up to 2010, by massive coordinated efforts by government and South Africans in general to prepare for this major event. In the art world, 2004 marks a year of great reflection on the first decade of democracy with various shows and publications dedicated to this moment of looking back at the first ten years. There were too many initiatives to recount here, but a few major shows and texts include the 2004 major exhibition at Iziko: South African National Gallery, entitled *A Decade of Democracy: South African Art 1994-2004*, which was also accompanied by a catalogue publication edited by the curator, Emma Bedford.¹⁴² A show curated by David Koloane and Sharlene Khan called *The ID of South African Artists* also happened in 2004 as well

¹⁴¹ Enwezor, "Better Lives," *Marginal Selves*, p. 18.

¹⁴² Emma Bedford, ed., *A Decade of Democracy: South African Art 1994-2004. From the Permanent Collection of Iziko: South African National Gallery* (Cape Town: Double Storey and Iziko Museums Cape Town, 2004).

as the *Africa Remix* exhibition curated by Simon Njami mentioned earlier. Some of the major publications marking this moment in 2004 included the *10 Years 100 Artists* edited by Sophie Perryer, the reissue of 1989 book *Resistance Art in South Africa* by Williamson, and *Johannesburg the Elusive Metropolis* edited by Mbembe and Nuttall.¹⁴³ Ashraf Jamal's major text *Predicaments of Culture* appeared in 2005 and offered critical essays on the major cultural concerns of the first decade of democracy.¹⁴⁴

The initial concerns that I have noted in this section originate in the first decade of democracy, but they also resonate into the further two decades of democracy. These first transitional years revealed many of the issues that will continue to play out in the South African art world over the following two decades and this earlier period remains the main point of reference for much of the contemporary writing on South African art. In the texts reviewed for the purposes of this overview, the authors also tend to concentrate heavily on this initial decade, regardless of the fact that they might be writing at a much later stage, such as in 2011 or 2013.¹⁴⁵

Second Decade of Democracy: 2005 – 2014

The second decade of democracy is characterised by the setting in of a reality of great disillusionment about the slowness of structural change, the continuing legacies of racism and the persistence of White domination, and also of government mismanagement and corruption. This overall feeling of disillusionment and frustration seeped into the art world as well, and in 2006 artist Sharlene Khan published an article entitled, 'A Luta Continua: Doing it for Daddy' in which she questions the dominance of Whiteness in the contemporary art field and took issue especially with White women in positions of institutional power who do not do enough to challenge the status quo.¹⁴⁶ In Chapter 3, I offer an in-depth reading of this controversial article and some of the fallout associated with it. The Doing it for Daddy art

¹⁴³ Perryer, *10 Years 100 Artists*; Sue Williamson, *Resistance Art in South Africa. Reissue of the Classic* (Cape Town: Double Storey Books, 2004); Nuttall, Sarah and Achille Mbembe, eds, *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ Jamal, *Predicaments of Culture*.

¹⁴⁵ For example, the authors in *Visual Century* of 2011, as well as Makhubu and Simbao in 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Sharlene Khan, 'A Luta Continua. Doing it for Daddy', *Art South Africa*, 4.3 (2006) <<http://www.sharlenekhan.co.za/articles/Publications/08.%202006%20Art%20South%20Africa.pdf>> [accessed 17 October 2015].

collective, who responded to Khan's article through their practice, won Spier Contemporary in 2007, which is another matter that will be considered in Chapter 3.

The deepening mistrust of public institutions to effect change also results during these years in the founding of anti-establishment art initiatives, such as the Gugulective collective in 2006 who made it their mission to show art in Soweto and other non-art spaces. The poor gallery-going and low levels of local interest in art was thrown in relief in 2006 when the *Picasso and Africa* exhibition drew record crowds to the Standard Bank Art Gallery in Johannesburg and Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town, while other local shows remained poorly attended.¹⁴⁷ This demonstrated a concerning trend that had become apparent, which is that South African audiences would attend a show of international art in their hundreds while barely ever setting foot in a local gallery or museum show.

Questions of globalisation and South African art's place in the international art world continue during these years. In the introduction to the *Visual Century* book project, Jantjes stresses that the work of the book was not only to resituate Black artists in the discourses of art history but to locate 'these in the context of South African social history and international art history'.¹⁴⁸ Questions of international relations and context are, therefore, still strong in 2011. Jantjes also believes that South Africa's visual art history must to be constantly reviewed.¹⁴⁹ Because of the revisionist nature of contemporary South African art history and the drive to expand the field to include erstwhile excluded artists, art historical writing takes on mostly individual art practices. This revisionist imperative also manifested in a drive to nuance the understanding of South African stories, as Sarat Maharaj states that, 'the hurly-burly of the South Africa story unfolds as an assemblage of motley soundings and dissonant voicings, which cut across and translate into one another, rather than as a monolithic,

¹⁴⁷ Julie McGee, 'Primitivism on Trial: The "Picasso and Africa" Exhibition in South Africa', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 52 (2007), 161-167.

¹⁴⁸ Jantjes, p. vii.

¹⁴⁹ Jantjes, p. ix.

triumphalist descant. It adds up to a more toned and tempered account, shot through with quavers, caveats and bittersweetness [*sic*]...'.¹⁵⁰

In Maharaj's writing in 2011 the question of 'South-Africa-in-the-world-to-come' is still central.¹⁵¹ Maharaj, nevertheless, registers a wariness of the idea of nation in saying that,

[...] in the name of "who belongs?" periodic drives to snuff out those who do not fit the bill have riddled our times. It is not easy to dissociate "nation construction" from bouts of exclusionary, territorialising force. Nor have matters improved with the dwindling of the nation-state in favour of emerging transnational links and global networks.¹⁵²

These statements are beginning to register the connections between nationalism, xenophobia and globalisation that haunt the second decade of democracy in South Africa. Paradoxically, in terms of the art world, this period also sees a deepening sense of need to establish links with other African countries.¹⁵³ This plays out in galleries including more artists from other African countries in their stables, as mentioned above.

On a political front, the second decade of democracy in South Africa was marked by tumultuous changes in leadership. Despite his philosophy of the African Renaissance, president Thabo Mbeki (Nelson Mandela's successor) was fired by ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), in 2008, which also stripped him of his presidency. He is replaced by Ghalema Mothlanthe briefly from 2008–2009, after which the ANC appoints Jacob Zuma as its present, and therefore also the nation's president, from 2009–2018. The latter years of second decade of democracy thus mark the height of Jacob Zuma's presidency. The Zuma presidency created a problematic political tone of corruption and a lack of leadership. Zuma was notoriously involved and charged in an arms deal case, as well as a rape case. To the public's amazement, he was acquitted of both of these, allowing a spirit of capitalist corruption, sexism and misogyny to reign. This spirit of greed, bullying and a disregard for women seeped into institutions and public administration. On a domestic front, violence against women and

¹⁵⁰ Sarat Maharaj, 'Foreword', in *Visual Century. South African Art in Context. Volume 4: 1990 – 2007*, ed. by Theminkosi Goniwe, Mario Pissarra and Mandisi Majavu (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011), pp.x-xii (p. x).

¹⁵¹ Maharaj, p. x.

¹⁵² Maharaj, p. xii.

¹⁵³ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 11.

children and LGBTQiA persons surged. Violent crime and a general sense of lack of safety was prevalent during this time.

The intensity and controversy of the Zuma presidency is perhaps best exemplified in the scandal that emanated from an artwork by Brett Murray created in 2010, called *The Spear* which portrayed Jacob Zuma in a parody of a poster of Lenin, with his genitals exposed. The work sparked a heavy controversy and was vandalised in an exhibition at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg in 2012. Makhubu and Simbao refer to the discourse around *The Spear* as ‘farcical’ and ‘baffling’.¹⁵⁴ It is quite telling of this time that one of the largest debates in the art world revolved around a painting showing the president’s penis.

The disenchantment with the lack of change and government inadequacies ran very deep during this period as can be seen in the following statement by Oliphant:

The democratisation of South Africa has [...] not inaugurated a post-colonial utopia; rather, it has lurched from apartheid to the brink of a fullblown [*sic*] dystopia. Haunted by violent crime, a health pandemic [HIV/Aids], unemployment, intolerance, xenophobia and a plethora of other social, economic and environmental ills...¹⁵⁵

In this statement, Oliphant is referring to the 2008 xenophobic attacks that occurred against African migrant workers in South African townships. Makhubu and Simbao believe that the xenophobic violence should rather be referred to as ‘Afro-phobia’.¹⁵⁶ These attacks happened in apartheid-created spaces of townships where working-class migrants share sparse resources with local communities in contrast to the lucrative economic developed that favours very few Black people.¹⁵⁷ According to Majavu and Pissarra:

Signs and precedents were there for all to see, but the scale of the 2008 backlash against ‘foreign’ Africans highlighted the fact that the government’s failure to address the aspirations of historically dispossessed black communities had created a new class of scapegoats, who bore the brunt of unrealised and frustrated hopes for transformation.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 301.

¹⁵⁵ Oliphant, p. 189.

¹⁵⁶ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 301.

¹⁵⁷ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 301.

¹⁵⁸ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 13.

For Tamar Garb, '[t]he foreigner has become the unsettling figure par excellence here in this fledgling democracy'.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, Nuttall believes that, '[w]e need the concept of the Afropolitan, and we need a conversation about desegregation, but each of these must be fundamentally alert to, and allow themselves to be shaped by the question of xenophobia as well. Xenophobia represents a place where a democratic project falls apart'.¹⁶⁰

The sentiments contained in the xenophobic attacks also manifested in what Majavu and Pissarra refer to as a 'new kind of resistance', namely service delivery protests, coinciding with the formation of community organisations referred to as 'new social movements'.¹⁶¹ The violence and frustration of the xenophobic attacks were thus carried over into widespread service delivery protests that reacted to poor public administration, especially in terms of the provision of basic infrastructure, like sanitation and power.¹⁶² All of these phenomena of discontent were a massive indictment of the failures of the post-apartheid government 'to implement its noble policies'.¹⁶³ This era of violence was unfortunately bookended by the Marikana massacre at the Lonmin mine on 16 August 2012, where an elite police squad shot at protesting mineworkers leading to 78 injuries and 17 fatalities in a horrendous display of capital force and a disregard for the life of the working-classes.

With an eye on the 2010 FIFA World cup, many arts initiatives were planned including various art exhibitions that sought to capitalise on the influx of international visitors. Andrew Lamprecht provides brief reviews of many of these smaller shows, which were centred on showcasing South African work.¹⁶⁴ Two major 2010 exhibitions included the *Innovative Women* exhibition curated by Bongzi Bengu, which will be looked at in more detail later, as well as the major show at the South African National Gallery (SANG) entitled *From Pierneef to Gugulective* curated by SANG's first ever Black director, Raison Naidoo. According to Oliphant, this era was

¹⁵⁹ Garb et al., p. 302.

¹⁶⁰ Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 302.

¹⁶¹ Majavu and Pissarra, pp. 11-13.

¹⁶² See also Makhubu and Simbao, p. 302.

¹⁶³ Majavu and Pissarra, p. 13.

¹⁶⁴ Andrew Lamprecht, 'Cape Town 2010. Smashing Shopfronts', *African Arts*, 44.2 (2011), 32-41.

also marked by continuing transformation of galleries, who in the 1990s had 'no significant holdings by black artists' and corporate collections working to expand collections to be 'fully representative of the diverse visual art practices of South Africa'.¹⁶⁵ Naidoo's exhibition was a major attempt in this move to transform collections to be more representative of a diversity of artists and practices.

Naidoo was, however, unfortunately subjected to the disdain of the White art establishment for his decision to remove works from the Abe Bailey collection, with the permission of the Bailey Bequest, for the *From Pierneef to Gugulective* exhibition to present a more representative survey of the art of South Africa than what was usually on offer at SANG at the time. Naidoo was subsequently discredited in the media, especially in a very damning article by Lloyd Pollack.¹⁶⁶ This and other articles painted Naidoo 'as a "non-white" director whose appointment was "political... rather than on merit"'.¹⁶⁷ This whole saga reveals just how much power the White art establishment still yielded at the time.¹⁶⁸ As a result of this and other frictions with the establishment, Naidoo was eventually fired from his position in 2014.¹⁶⁹ Naidoo was the first director of colour of SANG and to be expelled from the institution in this way upset many who had hoped his directorship would inaugurate change in the institution. Regarding Naidoo's ousting, Makhubu states: 'He found, like a significant number of black people in positions of apparent power, that when he introduced change he risked castigation'.¹⁷⁰

The theme of anti-institutional work continues during the second decade of democracy with the forming of a number of artists' collectives in 2010 who refuse to participate in institutional politics and aim to create 'spaces that are not made up of buyers and sellers'.¹⁷¹ Such collectives included the NON-NON collective by Donna Kukama and Kemang We

¹⁶⁵ Oliphant, p. 179.

¹⁶⁶ Nomusa Makhubu, 'Open Debate. Ephemeral Democracies: Interrogating Commonality in South Africa', *Third Text*, 27.3 (2013), 415-418 (p. 415).

¹⁶⁷ Makhubu, p. 415.

¹⁶⁸ For more on the case of Raison Naidoo's directorship, see Marianne Thamm, 'Blood on the Walls: Fear and Loathing at the SA National Gallery', *Daily Maverick*, 14 May (2004) <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-05-15-blood-on-the-walls-fear-and-loathing-at-the-sa-national-art-gallery/>> [accessed 19 June 2020].

¹⁶⁹ Thamm, 'Blood on the Walls'.

¹⁷⁰ Makhubu, p. 415.

¹⁷¹ Makhubu, pp. 417, 418.

Lehulere, and the Centre for Historical Reenactments established by curator Gabi Ngcobo.¹⁷² As part of its anti-institutional drive, the Centre for Historical Reenactments committed a planned ‘institutional suicide’ in 2012, ending its existence.¹⁷³ In her discussion of the phenomenon of these types of collectives, Makhubu stresses that: ‘The significance of artist collectives, however, should not detract from the issue that spaces of power and institutions remain exclusive spaces – simply walking away from such spaces can only provide a temporary solution’.¹⁷⁴ Makhubu further questions whether such forms of engagement can alter the status quo and bring about the structural changes that are needed.¹⁷⁵

In reflecting back on the second decade of democracy, Makhubu and Simbao view the following as some of this era’s ‘generative aspects’: work around space, such as interrogating and reclaiming the city through public performances, although these performances have limited audiences.¹⁷⁶ Such works address spatial arrangements ‘along racial and economic boundaries’, movement, security and criminalisation, the movement of labour in and out of the country and ‘undermine historically repressive figurations’.¹⁷⁷

Towards the end of the second decade of democracy debates about south-south relations as opposed to north-south relations gain traction. As an accompaniment to the catalogue for the *Figures & Fictions* exhibition, Tamar Garb, Achille Mbembe, Sarah Nuttall, Raison Naidoo and Colin Richards offer a valuable exchange in a conversation entitled: ‘Thinking from the South: Reflections on Image and Place’.¹⁷⁸ This conversation constitute an important reflection on the second decade and a major attempt by scholars of/from (South) Africa to define their intellectual terrain in terms of both global forces and local concerns and circumstances.

The authors define ‘thinking from the south’ as involving both a location, a place, as well as a set of concerns that are ‘of this place’. Mbembe notes the dislocation of location under globalism and the fact that we inhabit multiple worlds.¹⁷⁹ Being in transition(s) is noted as a condition

¹⁷² For more discussion of these collectives, see Makhubu, p. 418.

¹⁷³ Makhubu, pp. 417, 418.

¹⁷⁴ Makhubu, p. 418.

¹⁷⁵ Makhubu, p. 418.

¹⁷⁶ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹⁷⁷ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

¹⁷⁸ Garb et al., pp. 300-307.

¹⁷⁹ Achille Mbembe in Garb et al., pp. 300-301.

of globalism in the forms of migration, migrant labour, etc.¹⁸⁰ For Garb there are different relations to ‘displacement and settlement’, as she points out that the migrant, refugee and exile are not the same.¹⁸¹

Nuttall notes that the way in which South Africa deals with issues of transformation is different than in other places, as she states: ‘White people in South Africa are a minority living under a black-led government so this means that we are engaging with black perspectives of place and politics, past and future each day, and confronting whiteness in a somewhat more demanding way than I think often happened in the cities of the north’.¹⁸² Nuttall also highlights the assertion of certain types of experience, as so far as these can enter our consciousness in productive ways to help think about situatedness.¹⁸³ In this conversation, Richards points out South Africa’s longstanding claims to exceptionalism and he states: ‘What is it to face perpetual contradiction in the proximities of your ordinary lived life at a level and on a scale that renders life palpable in extraordinary and sometimes anxious ways?’¹⁸⁴ Richards is here also referring to the specificity of daily encounters with violence.¹⁸⁵ Naidoo believes that this stems from a lack of catharsis and healing.¹⁸⁶ He sees the surges in violent crime as a process of transferring power and material goods.¹⁸⁷ Naidoo states that, ‘there’s a real connection between the excess of crime, necessitated by a desperate need for capital, and the absence of a revolution’.¹⁸⁸

The relation of the global south to the international (Western) art world remains a major concern during this time. Naidoo believes that the importance and value of art is still measured against Europe and through Western mediation.¹⁸⁹ For Naidoo the consistent definition of the south in relation of the north is problematic and he stresses that the south should not only be seen as the location of the previously dispossessed, but also ‘a space

¹⁸⁰ Achille Mbembe Garb et al., p. 302.

¹⁸¹ Garb et al., p. 302.

¹⁸² Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 300.

¹⁸³ Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 300.

¹⁸⁴ Colin Richards in Garb et al., p. 300.

¹⁸⁵ Colin Richards in Garb et al., p. 301.

¹⁸⁶ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 305.

¹⁸⁷ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 305.

¹⁸⁸ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 305.

¹⁸⁹ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 301.

from which to think about the possibilities for the future'.¹⁹⁰ Instead of the south seeking approval from the north, Naidoo stresses self-determination.¹⁹¹ In terms of the global south setting its own terms, Garb questions the simple inversion of models from the north, to which Nuttall responds that it is best to turn the axis sideways in order to ask new types of questions, i.e. 'shifting the axes, not reversing them'.¹⁹² Similarly, Mbembe warns about the dangers of inverting hierarchies.¹⁹³

The authors of this conversation note the specificity and peculiarity of living in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. Nuttall refers to this as 'living in the wreckage', which she describes as 'living in the aftermath of the many metanarratives that have shaped twentieth-century Africa – colonialism, independence, third-worldism, apartheid, post-apartheid, in the 'wreckages' of a set of utopias and dystopias. The idea that living in the wreckage, in the ruins, of these grand schemes, can constitute a productive place'.¹⁹⁴ Richards and Mbembe refer to this condition as 'inhabiting the interface' (between parochialism and globalism/internationalisation) as an uncomfortable position, but one that needs to be explored.¹⁹⁵ There is thus a sense amongst these authors, that thinking from post-apartheid South Africa may hold generative potential.

The politics of representation noted in the section covering the first decade of democracy still feature prominently during the second decade. In this conversation, Nuttall points out that 'white people continue to photograph black people and very few black people photograph white people'.¹⁹⁶ For Nuttall the hold of documentary framing of subjects 'has only rendered certain things visible'.¹⁹⁷ In South Africa, 'the history of blackness [...] is caught between invisibility and hyper-visibility or spectacle'.¹⁹⁸ This point is echoed in an article in the *Mail&Guardian* on the

¹⁹⁰ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 301.

¹⁹¹ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 301.

¹⁹² Garb et al., p. 301.

¹⁹³ Achille Mbembe in Garb et al., p. 301.

¹⁹⁴ Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 301.

¹⁹⁵ Colin Richards and Achille Mbembe in Garb et al., p. 302.

¹⁹⁶ Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 305.

¹⁹⁷ Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 306.

¹⁹⁸ Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 306.

hypervisibility of Black women in the art world.¹⁹⁹ Naidoo believes that the ethnographic gaze is still with us, especially in photographs intended for elite Western audience and in terms of the international consumption of images.²⁰⁰ Garb, nevertheless, notes that sexuality is an area in which something profound has shifted and ‘that there has been a real opening up of the possibility of photography as the space for articulating, shifting and shaping new subjectivities’.²⁰¹

Garb, Mbembe, Nuttall, Naidoo and Richards offer a few valuable insights in reflecting on the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which are worth considering here. For Nuttall the World Cup was a generative moment to ‘inhabit quite a complex sense of “South-Africaness” [...] There are moments of lucidity that do point to the possibility of a shared public understanding of ourselves. They often recede as quickly as they arise, but they do come, are there’.²⁰² Garb notes that the World Cup ‘confounded expectations’ and generated ‘new identifications and identities’.²⁰³ (There was a general sense at the time that South Africa would make a mess of the championships, due to poor government administration seen in other areas.) Naidoo, however, points out that the World Cup laid bare continuing class discrepancies, with its expensive tickets only becoming available on the internet that excluded Black working-class regular football supporters that had no internet access.²⁰⁴

The 2010 World Cup did not have a lasting effect and Naidoo describes it as ‘a fleeting moment’ and a ‘momentary dream’.²⁰⁵ There is, nevertheless, still a feeling that the event created an extraordinary energy, which for Richards was reminiscent of earlier liberation/change moments in the country.²⁰⁶ In this vein, Mbembe states: ‘[...] I would like to keep a memory of that moment, as a fragment of what this place is capable of. Its deep potentialities’.²⁰⁷ Nuttall expresses a wish to transpose the energy of

¹⁹⁹ Nadine Botha, ‘Where hypersensitivity meets true transformation’, *Mail&Guardian* (2015) <<http://mg.co.za/article/2015-03-05-where-hypervisibility-meets-true-transformation-in-the-arts>> [accessed 17 October 2015].

²⁰⁰ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 307.

²⁰¹ Garb et al., p. 307.

²⁰² Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 303.

²⁰³ Garb et al., p. 303.

²⁰⁴ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 303.

²⁰⁵ Raison Naidoo in Garb et al., p. 303.

²⁰⁶ Colin Richards in Garb et al., p. 303.

²⁰⁷ Achille Mbembe in Garb et al., p. 303.

the World Cup to other areas, as she states: ‘if we can do this for sport, we can do this for poverty’.²⁰⁸ Garb, however, warns that the machine the World Cup served was global capital.²⁰⁹

Issues of race remain in the fore of these authors’ minds. Richards believes that to salvage the idea of the human means ‘to take seriously the utopia of a world free of the burden of race’.²¹⁰ He further states: ‘What I find interesting about South Africa, and maybe that’s what it means to think from here, is that for the first time in the history of modern societies the project of building a society that is free from the burden of race is being experimented with’.²¹¹ Concurrently the authors also reflect on the implications of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Mbembe believes after the TRC and the ‘miracle’ that it entailed, South African society is facing a crisis of language, which he describes as follows: ‘There is a crisis of language in the sense that society has ended up repeating the trauma in the language in which it wants to talk about it [...]’.²¹² Mbembe stresses that there is a need to find a real voice that ‘speaks to this place beyond universalising generalisations [...] South Africa is trying to find a voice in the language of global capital’.²¹³ For Mbembe, we have moved from the ethics that was trying to be defined by the TRC to the realm of capital.²¹⁴

The end of the second decade of democracy in the South African art world did not herald such a wide-spread reflection as the first decade of democracy did. A few notable projects towards the end of this decade include the *Figures & Fictions* exhibition curated by Tamar Garb mentioned above as well as the inclusion of Zanele Muholi, William Kentridge and Kudzanai Chiurai in the Documenta 13 show of 2013, directed by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. Some of the major publications that saw the light during the second decade are *South African Art Now* by Sue Williamson in 2009 and four volumes of the major work, *Visual Century* covering South African art from 1907–2007.²¹⁵

²⁰⁸ Sarah Nuttall in Garb et al., p. 303.

²⁰⁹ Garb et al., p. 303.

²¹⁰ Colin Richards in Garb et al., p. 304.

²¹¹ Colin Richards in Garb et al., p. 304.

²¹² Achille Mbembe in Garb et al., p. 304.

²¹³ Achille Mbembe in Garb et al., p. 304.

²¹⁴ Achille Mbembe in Garb et al., p. 305.

²¹⁵ Williamson, *South African Art Now*; Goniwe, Pissarra and Majavu, *Visual Century*.

Third Decade of Democracy: 2015 – present

The third decade of democracy is marked by widespread student protests across South African universities. Starting in March 2015 with the Rhodes Must Fall protest at the University of Cape Town, the deep disillusionment of students with the continuation of apartheid legacies in education soon ignited protests at other campuses in South Africa. The slogan for the protest ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ turned into the slogan ‘Fees Must Fall’ in mid-October 2015 and centred on students’ lack of access to education and the exorbitant fees connected to it, which is unrealistic for most South African students, especially those from poorer and previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Fees Must Fall later had a moment of revival in August 2016. These movements raised awareness of the challenges facing students trying to attain a tertiary education, the most prominent of which were the continuing of colonial legacies and pedagogies, as well as economic restraints, which often see students admitted into universities without them later being able to make payments on their fees. As a result of these movements, as well as intellectual interventions in various areas, the term ‘decolonisation’ becomes a mainstream term in the country and an aspirational notion in South African academia.

On a political front, this era sees a continuation of the intensive service delivery protests seen in the second decade. During this time, the country also emerges from the Zuma years, with the appointment of Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018 to replace Jacob Zuma as president when Zuma was ordered to step down from the presidency by the African National Congress. Questions of continuing White privilege in the art world in South Africa continues during this era and 2015 sees a major retrospective of Penny Siopis’ work at Iziko: South African National Gallery running concurrently with a major show by William Kentridge. It is also within this decade that I conduct my research with actors in the South African art world.

At the turn of the second decade of democracy, Makhubu and Simbao note in 2013 that despite the nearly twenty years of South African democracy ‘rising anger and violent discontent lay bare continuing inequity’.²¹⁶ Simbao and Makhubu question how meaningful the transformation has really been, asking how ‘the inclination towards neo-

²¹⁶ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 299.

liberalism and capitalism in South Africa's post-Apartheid democracy allow real change?'²¹⁷ During this era the focus shifts slightly from questions of globalisation to questions of capitalism and neo-liberalism. Simbao and Makhubu note that market forces are reproducing spatial divisions and economic inequality.²¹⁸ They also believe that this has negative implications for the creation of 'inclusive and integrative spaces'.²¹⁹ Apartheid and colonial power relations remain, as Simbao and Makhubu state that: 'The rhetoric that characterized the first decade of democracy obscured the fact that material conditions created through Apartheid did not change significantly enough to produce a common fate and shared space for its diverse constituents'.²²⁰

The free imaginative space forecasted in Albie Sachs' paper lies in stark contrast with reality in South Africa for many artists. For Makhubu and Simbao the notion contained in Sachs' paper that artists were now free from the imperative to respond to the apartheid situation, and a subsequent turn to work around individual identity is a premature closure of the 'apartheid burden on the artist' is a 'setback when the caged life of the majority in black township spaces continues and remains a trope for inferiority'.²²¹ Townships remain on the peripheries of cities and art practices and spaces tend to be located in well-off neighbourhoods.²²²

In his most recent work of 2017, *In the World. Essays on Contemporary South African art*, Ashraf Jamal offers a number of reflections on the current state of play in the South African arts and cultural terrain. In his brief introduction to this collection of essays based on specific individual art practices, Jamal highlights the problematics of categorisations such as 'South African', 'contemporary' and the issues contained in what he refers to as 'the global moment of contemporary African art' as an 'expedient trope'.²²³ Earlier issues around notions of Euro-American dominance and its consumption of African art resound through Jamal's concerns, as well as the problematics of categorisations. Jamal reflects a

²¹⁷ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 299.

²¹⁸ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 299.

²¹⁹ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 299.

²²⁰ Makhubu and Simbao, p. 299.

²²¹ Makhubu and Simbao, pp. 299-300.

²²² Makhubu and Simbao, p. 300.

²²³ Jamal, *In the World*, p. 12.

bleak picture about the current state of South Africa and the rest of the world, as he states that:

[W]e are stuck with unfinished business which, in a panic-stricken reflux, has prompted a bloody-minded and ruthlessly divisive world ground down by populism, nativism, and the monstrous recalibration of systemic cruelty [...] I need not remind the reader of the frustrations, disappointments, confusions, hatreds which abound in South Africa and across the world today; of all the talk of bankrupted democracies, nascent revolutions, or darkly providential correctives to our psychic ills.²²⁴

Jamal also warns about a rise of nihilism and ‘dangerously exclusionary identity politics’ which resonates not only with the xenophobic attacks in South Africa’s second decade of democracy, but also with moves abroad to classify and expel ‘others’ who constitute an economic burden.²²⁵

Having provided this temporal map of the South African art world, I will be focusing on texts that occur in the first decade as well as in the second decade, and the interviews that I conduct fall in the third decade of democracy. Below I consider the question of why gender should be studied in the South African art world. From the overview above, it is evident that amongst all the questions that these scholars and commentators are thinking about, gender is barely there as an element to consider. Through this brief introduction to the background of the contemporary South African art world, I seek not only to provide a historical and contextual introduction to my research but also to give account for one of the basic *a priori* principles of my study. I aim to make a case for the investigation of the contemporary South African art world on the basis of its being more than a convenient geographic demarcation of my study. It is a specific geopolitical space that, owing to its history, opens up not only post-colonial challenges, but also opportunities. In this sense, I do not seek to participate in nationalising art historical narratives, which are visible today in the nation-state pavilion structure of major international biennales and exhibitions. I wish to produce a transversal analysis that complicates relations of gender and race across the institutional spaces of the South African art world, its practitioners, spaces and discourses.

²²⁴ Jamal, *In the World*, p. 13.

²²⁵ Jamal, *In the World*, p. 13.

In the following sections of this Introduction I deal with why South Africa is interesting as a case study, and why I study gender in the South African art world. As part of moving from an argument about macrosocial conditions to a microsocial level through a specific analysis of a text, I then offer a detailed analysis of certain sections of a government report in which the South African art world is reviewed in such a way that it enables me to show how gender is both identified and incompletely grasped. The analysis of this Report constitutes the first major textual analysis in this thesis. It serves as an extended introduction, as this analysis breaks open and exemplifies various issues and questions that inform the entire thesis. I also consider some of the different models through which the art world is conceptualised towards the end of the introductory parts to the thesis in Chapter 2.

South Africa as a Case

Despite various events and international tendencies that have placed South African contemporary art on the map, there is still the question of why South African art is held in such high esteem in the global art world. I believe that the answers to this question also make the contemporary South African art world an area that necessitates critical analysis.

I identify the following characteristics of contemporary artistic practice and the contemporary South African art world, which make the South African situation unique and worthy of further exploration. First, South African contemporary artistic practice may serve as a model for the social responsibility of artists, and indeed the art world. The resistance paradigm remains South African contemporary art's main inheritance. One positive legacy retained from this paradigm is an emphasis on the artist's responsibility to society, which was illustrated in various instances since the late 1970s.²²⁶ South African contemporary art has retained a particular directness from the resistance art model and this results in a willingness to face political, social and cultural issues head-on.²²⁷ According to Williamson, 'South African artists have continued to engage the interest of the world with work that never ceases to evolve and to question local and

²²⁶ Williamson, 'Art and Life in South Africa', p. 26.

²²⁷ Williamson, *Resistance Art*, p. 6.

global politics and society'.²²⁸ It is significant that South African art developed its resistance register while in isolation from the international art world: this indicates that it developed this practice in its own space and on its own terms, aside from links with the Europe through the education system.

Second, contemporary South African art deals pertinently with issues of transformation, or 'the mechanics of change' as Williamson describes it.²²⁹ Writer and former curator at Iziko South African National Gallery, Emma Bedford, believes that it can be argued in some cases 'that the language of art has opened up new meanings and new ways of understanding, often leading the debates around transformation'; and that South Africa, having 'sloughed off its pariah status [...] is providing leadership in the fight for a more just global order'.²³⁰ Transformation in the South African context does not only address matters of reconciliation, but also brings to bear the challenges and problems surrounding multi-racial and multi-cultural coexistence.

The central question in post-apartheid South Africa has been the reconstruction of equality for its previously racially segregated citizens. To this end, South Africa has drafted and adopted what is considered one of the most progressive and liberal constitutions in the world. Yet South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world: there are major discrepancies, resulting from historical oppression, in the quality of life and access to the freedoms and rights the country's progressive constitution promises, experienced between people and communities of different races, classes, ethnicities, geopolitical locations, sexes, genders and sexual orientations.

Nevertheless, the country's peaceful transition in the 1990s from the apartheid regime to a representative democracy surprised onlookers worldwide. The immediate period of transition was buffered by various integrative and conciliatory forces, such as rainbow nationalism, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and, indeed, a strong dose of Madiba Magic. As South Africa's adolescent democracy comes of age, celebration and reconciliation are replaced, however, by scepticism and

²²⁸ Williamson, 'Art and Life in South Africa', p. 27.

²²⁹ Williamson, *Resistance Art*, p. 6.

²³⁰ Bedford, p. 5.

caution. At stake in contemporary South Africa today are the unfinished business of decolonisation and the ongoing project of transformation on every level of society. Enwezor cautions against the empty pieties of the rainbow nation, believing that in the later post-apartheid years, 'South Africa is riven by an internal struggle against both an emerging totalising democracy and a debilitating amnesia that seeks to return the country back to the comforts of segregated lives'.²³¹

The South African post-colonial situation is unlike any other, as it is one of the only locations in the previously colonised world where the struggle for transformation is not related to racial minority politics. The United States of America, Canada and Australia have White racial majorities, but the 2011 South African census, which is the last held census in the country, determined that only 8.9% of the South African population is White.^{232, 233} It is important, however, to take into account that this group constitutes a peculiar minority, wielding considerable residual historic power and privilege and retaining much of the country's wealth.

The challenges and problems that post-apartheid South Africa faces regarding racial and cultural transformation are highly visible in the country's contemporary art. Enwezor registered these problems when considering early post-apartheid exhibitions of South African art that gleaned over differences in practice between Black and White artists, and ultimately, cultural, economic and educational differences.²³⁴ He referred his readers to an exhibition coupled by other cultural projects in Cape Town in 1996, directed by South African academic, writer and playwright, Jane Taylor, entitled *Fault Lines*, which 'questioned the very credibility of the idea of the rainbow nation as a useful reference for making art'.²³⁵ With reference to the 'raw seams of patched up culture', *Fault Lines* explored

²³¹ Enwezor, "'Better Lives,'" *Marginal Selves*, p. 18.

²³² Statistics South Africa, *Census 2011 Census in brief* (Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2012)
https://www.statssa.gov.za/Census2011/Products/Census_2011_Census_in_brief.pdf
 [accessed 9 April 2014] (p. 12).

²³³ In this thesis I capitalise White and Black in the case where the terms are used in a way that signifies a racial category. I also make use of the capital in these instances to draw attention to the constructedness of these categories. Where the terms black and white are used to signify political categories, i.e. blackness and whiteness, the terms are not presented in capitals. I acknowledge that practices around capitalisation or non-capitalisation of such racial and political terms are widely debated.

²³⁴ Enwezor, "'Better Lives,'" *Marginal Selves*, p. 16.

²³⁵ Enwezor, "'Better Lives,'" *Marginal Selves*, p. 17.

‘disparities and contradictions... gaps, elisions, cleavages, ruptures, and contingent spaces and forms that informed not only South African art, but the post-apartheid self at the time’.²³⁶

The issue of racial and cultural transformation also manifested in South African art writing and criticism in the form of a heated, though constructive, debate surrounding the politics of representation in post-apartheid South Africa. In 1997, Enwezor drafted an essay for the exhibition catalogue for *Contemporary Art from South Africa* by curator Martin Hope in Oslo, in which he addressed the ‘proper protocol of post-apartheid rainbow nation representation’.²³⁷ The essay, entitled ‘Reframing the Black Subject: Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Art’, addressed the manner in which Black figures were being represented by White artists and probed post-colonial questions regarding the right to appropriate others’ bodies in post-apartheid South Africa, and ‘whether such appropriations were not ideological abuse and ultimately a depoliticization of the differences between black and white representations’.²³⁸ The South African art community reacted with a formal response and interrogation of its own positions on the subject, which resulted in a publication, entitled *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art*.²³⁹ This volume included essays by leading South African cultural thinkers, and was co-edited by Candice Breitz, one of the artists whose appropriation of the Black figure was critiqued in Enwezor’s essay. This debate deserves more exploration, which I will devote to it in Chapters 4 and 5.

Related to the struggles of racial and cultural coexistence and transformation is the prevailing preoccupation with identity in South African art and daily life. Bedford writes that, ‘[a]ttempts to understand and come to terms with one’s position in a rapidly changing society pervade South African art’.²⁴⁰ Identity is a question in contemporary South Africa, not only because the once-neat lines of segregation between citizens are now blurred and in the process of erasure, but also because the right to self-

²³⁶ Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 17.

²³⁷ Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 17.

²³⁸ Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 17.

²³⁹ Brenda Atkinson and Candice Breitz, eds, *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill, 1999).

²⁴⁰ Bedford, p. 6.

identify is a new-found freedom in the post-apartheid years. Since early colonial times, people in South Africa had been classified and afforded rights according to their physical appearance and perceived racial background.²⁴¹ Under the apartheid government, these classifications were formalised and many South Africans were required to carry passbooks to testify to their classification.

Identity was, therefore, prescribed under apartheid and the emphasis on the enunciation of various identities today appears as a recuperative move. Academia has been engaged in creating the space for the articulation of multiple post-apartheid identities. This engagement is perhaps most visible in the University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture's unit, Research Centre: Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD), under the directorship of artist and professor, Leora Farber. VIAD is concerned with visual embodiment of identity and explores 'negotiated, performed, re-conceptualised and/or re-imagined visual identities from a primarily Pan-African, post-colonial perspective, whilst considering these as a part of a broader post-modern paradigm'.²⁴² The issue of identity and representation politics has widespread purchase in contemporary South Africa as more than a matter of satisfying quotas: rather, it is an integral part of transformation and the (re)constitution of the post-apartheid subject.

Why Study *Gender* in the South African Art World?

The gender struggle always unfolds in relationship to other concurrent and interconnected struggles: as Hélène Cixous noted pertinently in 1976:

Not that in order to be a woman-in-struggle(s) you have to leave the class struggle or repudiate it; but you have to split it open, spread it out, push it forward, fill it with the fundamental struggle so as to prevent the class struggle, or any other struggle for the liberation of a class or people, from operating as a form of repression, pretext for postponing the inevitable, the staggering alteration between power relations and in the production of individualities.²⁴³

²⁴¹ Williamson, 'Art and Life in South Africa', p. 25.

²⁴² Leora Farber, ed., *Imaging Ourselves: Visual Identities in Representation* (Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, 2009), pp. 10-11.

²⁴³ Hélène Cixous, 'Laugh of the Medusa', *Signs*, 1.4 (Summer 1976), 875-893 (pp. 882-883).

Feminist interventions do not exclude the axes of power and domination, such as class (articulated by Marx) or race (articulated, for example, by Senghor, Fanon, and Gandhi). Rather, by adding to these existing conceptualisations of agonistic social relations, the concept of gender to define both an axis of social power and a mode of symbolic representation of power, feminism socialised and politicised a set of relations that had remained untheorised and naturalised in ways that additionally collaborated with the imposition of compulsory heterosexuality. Considerable debate has developed within feminist theory around the concept of gender and what is often misperceived as its other, sexual difference (misread as the difference between two sexes). Feminism's recent adoption of the idea of intersectionality had tended to misrepresent feminism as exclusively concerned with gender, ignoring class and race. Instead of the current anxiety to maintain intersectionality against a supposed exclusivity of feminist theory and practice, we might need to insure that the specific and transversal dimensions of feminist theories of gender and sexuality are maintained.

A feminist approach can offer particular possibilities where the study of the South African art world is concerned. In an article accompanying the *Revisions* exhibition, drawn from the Campbell Smith Collection, art writer Mario Pissarra describes how South African art, and indeed its histories, have been 'Cast in Colour'.²⁴⁴ Pissarra discusses historic racial disparities in South African art, as well as their continuing legacies and the difficulties faced in dealing with these. One of the main questions guiding my research is whether, by shedding more light on the gender axis of domination in the South African art world, we can get 'unstuck' from this casting in colour, by engaging with work as hinted in Cixous's words above: can we split open the racial struggle, spread it out and push it forward?

The notion of gender was one of the core conceptual categories created by the feminism of the later twentieth century. In 1986 the historian Joan Wallach Scott clarified its feminist meaning by distinguishing it from

²⁴⁴ Mario Pissarra, 'Cast in Colour: Towards an Inclusive South African Art' (2005) <<http://www.revisions.co.za/articles/cast-in-colour-towards-an-inclusive-south-african-art/#.U4hVrV5a9g0>> [accessed 22 April 2014].

conventional notions of the designation of women or men and stating it was to be understood as an axis of power.²⁴⁵

The term gender is part of the attempt by contemporary feminists to stake claim to a certain definitional ground, to insist on the inadequacy of existing bodies of theory for explaining persistent inequalities between women and men. It seems to be significant that the use of the word gender has emerged at a moment of great epistemological turmoil that takes the form, in some cases, of a shift from scientific to literary paradigms among social scientists ... and, in other cases, the form of debates about theory between those who assert the transparency of facts and those who insist that all reality is construed or constructed, between those who defend and those who question the idea that “man” is the rational master of his own destiny. In the space opened in this debate ... feminists have not only begun to find a theoretical voice of their own but have found scholarly and political allies as well. It is within this space that we must articulate gender as an analytic category.²⁴⁶

Thus the word ‘gender’ cannot be taken for granted, as it was not always used, if at all, in the way in which it is understood today. It is a term that had to be politicised. The term ‘gender’ did not have a central position in 19th-century writings about women, where the struggle for women’s rights and the vote in the face of exclusion from political identity dominated. As a term, gender came into prominence slowly throughout the twentieth century, as feminist thinkers were formulating a new theoretical vocabulary. It is not used at all by Simone de Beauvoir in her classic texts in which ‘sex’ is the category. Indeed, in French *genre* means category (for instance in art or literature), or type, as in *le genre humain*, which we would translate as ‘the human species’.

In her foundational article, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, Scott provides a two-pronged definition of gender, as follows: ‘The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power’.²⁴⁷ Scott emphasises the usefulness of gender to analyse the relational dimensions of the distribution of power

²⁴⁵ Joan Wallach Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *The American Historical Review*, 91.1 (1986), 11053-1075 (p. 1067).

²⁴⁶ Scott, p.1066.

²⁴⁷ Scott, p. 1067.

between sexes but also contributes an understanding of how ‘[...] gender is a primary field within which, or by means of which power is articulated’.²⁴⁸

Drawing on the writing of Pierre Bourdieu, Scott states that:

Established as an objective set of references, concepts of gender structure perception and the concrete and symbolic organization of all social life. To the extent that these references establish distributions of power (differential control over or access to material and symbolic resources), gender becomes implicated in the conception and construction of power itself.²⁴⁹

If gender is then viewed as both an actual site of and a metaphor for domination, and if, as a social and historical process, it can be dislodged, then perhaps working against gender structures can interact with the dislodging of other forms of domination precisely insofar as elements of gender as a symbolic hierarchy imaginatively shape the framing and experiencing of other forms of social relations. This notion might have interesting application to the situation of the South African art world, especially in light of the colour casting Pissarra believes it to be in. To quote Scott once more:

Gender, then, provides a way to decode meaning and to understand the complex connections among various forms of human interaction. When historians look for ways in which the concept of gender legitimizes and constructs social relationships, they develop insight into the reciprocal nature of gender and society and into the particular and contextually specific ways in which politics constructs gender and gender constructs politics.²⁵⁰

Scott, therefore, theorises gender as a reflexive analytical tool to understand the complex interplay between society, gender and politics. When we explore foundational feminist writers such as Joan Scott, it is evident that gender is not developed as a concept ‘about women’. It focuses attention on the axes of power and the symbolic, imaginative representation of power. The concept of race can also be conceptualised in a similar way. Both gender and race are axes of power that diminish democracy – which is related to what I explore further in this thesis via the thinking of Rancière, Arendt and Guaraldo, whose work asks what is it to enact ‘the political’?

²⁴⁸ Scott, p. 1069.

²⁴⁹ Scott, p. 1069.

²⁵⁰ Scott, p. 1070.

Another key text in the genealogical development of the concept of gender as it is understood in 20th-century feminism is feminist science and technology theorist, Donna Haraway's 1987 text, "'Gender' for a Marxist Dictionary. The Sexual Politics of a Word".²⁵¹ In this text, Haraway reflects on her experience of being requested in 1983 to write an entry on gender for a new, revised version of a Marxist Dictionary. She starts the chapter by laying out the difficulties of doing so. The immediate obstacle is a question of translation since the word gender does not exist in all languages. Where it does exist in some form in German, French and Spanish, it does not have the same meaning as the feminist usage in English.²⁵² It came into prominence in English language at the point at which feminist writing uses it to refer to a different notion from sex.²⁵³

Haraway's chapter provides a genealogical study of the various contexts in which the feminist theorisation of gender had developed, with its own contradictions, up to 1987. The key points I wish to introduce here begin with this statement: 'Gender is a concept developed to contest the naturalisation of sexual difference in *multiple arenas of struggle*' (my emphasis).²⁵⁴ Haraway captures the productive paradox at the heart of feminism well when she writes: 'A feminist is one who fights for women as a class and for the disappearance of that class'.²⁵⁵ First she examines the usage of the term gender in relation to the category of identity. Then, noting that neither Marx nor Engels engages productively with gender as a social relation, Haraway introduces the anthropologist Gayle Rubin's intervention in both Marxism and anthropology and against identitarian understanding when she proposed the concept of a 'sex/gender system'.²⁵⁶ Haraway comments:

Rubin's 1975 theory of the sex/gender system explained the complementarity of the sexes (obligatory heterosexuality) and the oppression of women by men through the central premise of the exchange of women in the founding of culture through kinship. But what happens to this approach when women are not positioned in similar ways in the institution of kinship? In

²⁵¹ Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), "'Gender" for a Marxist Dictionary' appears in this text as Ch. 7, from pp. 127-148, but it was first published in German in 1987.

²⁵² Haraway, p. 128.

²⁵³ Haraway, p. 128.

²⁵⁴ Haraway, p. 131.

²⁵⁵ Haraway, p. 138.

²⁵⁶ Haraway, p. 128.

particular, what happens to the idea of gender if whole groups of women and men are positioned outside the institution of kinship altogether, but in relation to the kinship systems of another dominant group?²⁵⁷

By this Haraway is referring to colonialism and the enslavement of people of African descent and peoples of Latin America (or First Nations). Haraway's understanding of gender takes into account how the historical legacies of all systems that systematically deprive all people of a specific group of the status of the people in the dominant group introduces another axis of domination and oppression, which is race. Haraway refers to the work of key black feminist thinkers, namely Hazel Carby, Hortense Spillers and Aida Hurtado, who argue that the manner in which gender is formulated and lived is constantly inflected by specific historical and social structures that produced an internal differentiation within gender, race and class by each other element.²⁵⁸ In post-emancipation America, there are clear legacies of the way in which the specific smashing of even the patriarchal concepts of who a person is in the system (mother, father, man, woman), produces a level of psychological damage to gender precisely because of racialisation. In this regard, Haraway states:

The positionings of African-American women are not the same as other women of colour; each condition of oppression requires specific analysis that refuses the separations but insists on the non-identities of race, sex, and class. These matters make starkly clear why an adequate feminist theory of gender must *simultaneously* be a theory of racial difference in specific historical conditions of production and reproduction. They also make clear why a theory and practice of sisterhood cannot be grounded in shared positions in a system of sexual difference and the cross-cultural structural antagonism between coherent categories called women and men. Finally, they make clear why feminist theory produced by women of colour has constructed alternative discourses of womanhood that disrupt the humanisms of many Western discursive traditions.²⁵⁹

Clearly, for Haraway comments, gender is not independent of race and vice versa, as they intertwine in specific historical situations. Thus in

²⁵⁷ Haraway, pp. 144-145.

²⁵⁸ Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Hortense Spillers, 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book', *Diacritics*, 17.2 (1987), 65-81; Aida Hurtado, 'Relating to Privilege: Seduction and Rejection in the Subordination of White Women and Women of Color', *Signs*, 14.4 (1989), 833-855.

²⁵⁹ Haraway, pp. 146-147.

the case I am seeking to make here for thinking with gender in the South African situation, South Africa represents one historical specificity demanding that the nature of the entanglement of gender and race and their non-identity needs to be very carefully tracked. Through tracking the emergence of black feminism, Haraway argues that we cannot universalise the sex-gender system because it is lived and experienced in different ways in different historical moments. Haraway gives us a sense of complex figures that are hybrid in various ways, leaving us with the following thoughts:

The refusal to become or remain a 'gendered' man or woman, then, is an eminently political insistence on emerging from the nightmare of the all-too-real, imaginary narrative of sex and race. Finally and ironically, the political and explanatory power of the 'social' category of gender depends upon historicizing the categories of sex, flesh, body, biology, race, and nature in such a way that the binary universalising opposition that spawned the concept of the sex/gender system at a particular time and place in feminist theory implodes into articulated, differentiated, accountable, located, and consequential theories of embodiment, where nature is no longer imagined and enacted as a resource to culture or sex to gender.²⁶⁰

Whereas Scott's article argues on a general level – identifying gender as a category for historical analysis – Haraway is astutely concerned with the agonism *within* feminist theory. I will consider various dimensions of agonism throughout this thesis. Haraway continues: 'Here is my location for utopian intersection of heterogeneous, multi-cultural, 'Western' (coloured, white, European, American, Asian, African, Pacific) feminist theories of gender hatched in odd siblingship with contradictory, hostile, fruitful, inherited binary dualisms'.²⁶¹ This notion forms a crucial part of her cyborg theory: she maintains vigorously that dualisms are not simply to be denounced. They must be recognised without buying into the universalisation or stabilisation of any of their elements. When they are interrupted, they may become a kind of fertility, a fruitfulness. Instead, therefore, of attempting to resolve/dissolve race and gender, it is rather the dissolution of the fixity of categories in relation to the work of negotiation and the realisation that all situations are themselves hybrid. Haraway ends with the following:

²⁶⁰ Haraway, p. 148.

²⁶¹ Haraway, p. 148.

Phallogocentrism was the egg ovulated by the master subject, the brooding hen to the permanent chickens of history. But into the nest has been placed the germ of a phoenix that will speak in all the languages of a world turned upside down.²⁶²

Haraway's text thus serves to make 'gender' a more mobile term, placing it in a vibrant relationship with other texts and theories in the 1980s, by mapping out some of the major lines of initial feminist attempts to think it. Nevertheless, she mobilises the term at the end to introduce a qualification that comes precisely from black feminist writing, troubling what seems to be a fixed binary. At the same time, she does not disown the binary, but seeks to see it as constantly in motion.

In feminist theory 'gender' was created as a concept to deal with a form of oppression and experience that hitherto did not have a specific name. Drawing on the analysis of the different moments of feminist thought proposed by Julia Kristeva in 1979, we could argue that, as a political force and theoretical project, feminism summoned 'women' into being as a transversal, international political category.²⁶³ In the lived experience of any single woman, all of the dimensions of class, race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, poverty, location, etc., play a role. This thesis is concerned with the degree to which gender is allowed to be visible, neither as an identity nor as a category, but as an axis of power, an axis of exclusion and a critical aspect of lived social and historical experience.

As the reader will have noticed, I have opted to use the term, 'difference' in my title instead of naming two terms: 'gender and race'. I made this decision to allow room for the fact that, although difference often plays out in a negative sense, there is also a positive dimension to difference. Negative difference, for example, is when a person is diminished based on perceived gender or racial difference from the diminisher or dominant power. However, there is also positive difference, that represents singularity, specificity and struggle for a world that is different from the 'old' one (where discrimination reigned) in ways that need creative practice.

²⁶² Haraway, p. 148.

²⁶³ This has been argued for by Julia Kristeva and Griselda Pollock. See Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time', in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 187-213; Griselda Pollock, 'Is Feminism a Trauma, a Bad Memory, or a Virtual Future?', in *differences*, 27.2 (2016), 27-61. Pollock is referring to her reading of the performative effect of the banner under which American women marched in 1971: 'Women of the World Unite'.

The main question here is, under what project can we still consider people to be subjects/agents of difference? And not mere victims of difference? I will explore this issue more fully in relation to an Arendtian approach to singularity in Chapter 6.

This thesis raises the repressed issue of gender as an axis in the cultural practices of resistance and transformation in South Africa, touching on a critical and troubled dimension. According to Williamson, for South African artists ‘gender and identity are still contested arenas for negotiation’.²⁶⁴ The currency of this topic is evident in the appearance of a special issue of the academic journal *African Arts* on ‘gender and South African art’ in 2012, guest edited by Brenda Schmahmann and Kim Miller. In the editorial introduction to this issue, Lisa Aronson maintains that recent South African gender scholarship and artistic practice is playing its part in underscoring ‘the country’s racial divide’ and ‘the shifting dimensions of its landscape’.²⁶⁵ Such work acknowledges that the racial and gender dimensions of South African reality are undeniably entangled. Yet Aronson points out that there has been a tendency to side-line feminist concerns ‘in favor of activism against racially based injustices and discriminations’.²⁶⁶ Similarly, authors Bonnin, Deacon and Morrell point out that national and racial liberation movements in South Africa have eclipsed the gender liberation movement.²⁶⁷ A post-colonial feminist approach, which I adopt in my research, is wary of any move that prioritises issues of gender at the expense of those concerning race. I believe that a case may be made for the need to lend particular attention to gender analysis in the South African situation, but such an attentiveness to gender should acknowledge that in both social hierarchies race is always already interwoven with gender.

While much of my research points to some of the subtle ways in which these two systems work, there is no doubt that the post-apartheid era has aggravated the situation. The intensity of the contemporary gender struggle in South Africa is evident in severely high rates of gender-based violence, including violence against women, rape, hate crimes, corrective

²⁶⁴ Williamson, ‘Art and Life in South Africa’, p. 25.

²⁶⁵ Lisa Aronson, ‘First word’, *African Arts*, 45.4 (Winter 2012), 1-5 (p. 5).

²⁶⁶ Aronson, p. 4.

²⁶⁷ Debbie Bonnin, Roger Deacon and Robert Morrell, ‘Identity and the changing politics of gender in South Africa’, in *South Africa in transition. New Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. by DR Howarth and AJ Norval (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 111-131 (p. 114).

rape and other heinous acts of physical and psychological violence often directed at South Africa's non-male and non-heterosexual citizens. For many people in South Africa, the struggle for gender freedom is a matter of life and death. A report on violence against women and children completed by KPMG for the South African government in 2016, paints a bleak picture:

Violence against women and children (VAWC) is arguably one of the most critical challenges facing South African society today. In 2009, research undertaken by the Medical Research Council (MRC), in three provinces, related that 25% of women had experienced physical violence at some point in their lives. Other studies estimate that between 43% and 56% of women in South Africa have experienced intimate partner violence and 42% of men report perpetrating it. Police statistics reflect 45,230 contact crimes against children, including 22,781 sexual offenses reported to SAPS [South African Police Service] in 2013/2014. By their nature, the statistics on VAWC are believed to be gross underestimates of the true extent of VAWC in the country; it has been estimated that only one in nine women report incidences of sexual violence.²⁶⁸

Needless to say, there are high levels of social anxiety about gender-based violence in South Africa, and the figures presented above point to the extreme end of the lived experience of gender and race.

As is clear from the preceding discussion, as of the 1990s, but particularly as of 1994, South Africa became part of the international art world as a result of the end of apartheid, while, simultaneously, art is challenged to be part of the transformation of South Africa. The primary objectives are the undoing of the historical minoritarian/majoritarian hierarchy and the fostering of rich and participatory art cultures. If, however, in the struggle to undo the *racial wrong* – *wrong* understood in the Rancièrian sense, which I shall explore in more detail later as a critical conceptual resource for this thesis – we do not acknowledge that art worlds have a problematic of *gender* on an international scale, then transformation and decolonisation will remain incomplete and uneven, at best.²⁶⁹ I shall seek to show in what ways gender and race intertwine in the South African situation and how that entanglement is at the forefront of the question of transformation.

²⁶⁸ KPMG, *Report on Diagnostic Review of the State Response to Violence Against Women and Children* (2016) <<https://evaluations.dpme.gov.za/evaluations/2014-02>> [accessed 28 May 2019] (p. 4).

²⁶⁹ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. by Gabriel Rockhill (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 93.

Furthermore, the South African art world, as a micro problematic or a micro topic, intersects with major macro questions, which pertain to *all* art worlds, which include the notion of the international or global art world. Part of what the South African art world in transition has to do is to be part of the world – having been cut off from the world under the boycott – and to realise that South African artists are not merely ‘national’, but they are ‘international’, in the sense that they have careers that play out in the international/global art scene. One also needs to take into account the extent to which the project in South Africa falls into the decolonising and post-colonising debates, with the double relationship of an internal transformation and its relationship externally to a changed international scene.

The South African art world has all the possibilities that, starting in 1994, include being once again part of the international world and having its artists imagine themselves as players in this international scene. South African has particular histories, and on the table, however, are also the related issues of racialisation, colonisation, decolonisation and post-colonisation on a larger scale, and the question is: how are these transversal and international challenges in conversation with the South African situation? There is also, of course, the larger debate about feminism and the question of ‘women’ in the art world, which is not only international and multi-centred, but complex, internally differentiated and voiced in relation to difference, hierarchy and agonism in relation to class, sexualities, genders, ethnicity and race worldwide.

In the 1990s, South Africa was the pre-eminent society of transformation, and it was also re-entering into the world. It was also at this point that various international figures visited South Africa for the first time, including, for example, a leading post-colonial feminist, Gayatri Spivak. These scholars and thinkers came because the moment of the ending of apartheid had world significance. At the same time, it had its own national challenges. This moment coincided with the first and second Johannesburg Biennales, the second of which was curated by Okwui Enwezor and should be registered as an attempt to create a *post-colonial* space in South Africa.

In 1994, therefore, South Africa was being reconnected to an international art world, exposed to many hitherto unrecognised issues,

which include the internationalisation of art and the emergence of a critical category in art: 'the contemporary'. At the same time, its fundamental issue remains the transformation of its own society in the post-apartheid era. There is, however, evidence of an incomplete correlation between racial transformation and gender transformation.

In this thesis, therefore, I want to plot out the ways in which feminism and gender – both of which can easily fall under the radar of the major challenges of deracialisation as the basis of the new democracy – can be articulated together with race while revealing their specificity. South Africa immediately has to build its way into the international art world – to produce and sustain a presence in the world – while it also has to transform itself internally (with art playing a key role in that). The immediate engagements with the questions of the post-colonial, internationalisation, and the contemporary are evident in changes that occurred after 1994, but I contend that feminist questions and questions of gender have been developed in sustained and critical engagements across the challenges posed by the other three. My purpose is to show how significant gender is in both institutional and representational struggle and change.

Let us consider what happens when women's work is exhibited as such in the South African art world. The *Innovative Women* exhibition was curated by Bongki Bengu in 2010 at the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg. This exhibition made the headlines, because the then Minister of Art and Culture, Lulu Xingwana, left the exhibition before her scheduled opening, in shock at the images of nude lesbian couples in Zanele Muholi's section of the exhibit. There were major repercussions after Xingwana's departure. This case points starkly to a lack of understanding within the government of the range and forms of critical contemporary artistic practices not only in the country, but of artists who are women in particular.

Speaking Back was curated by Natasha Becker at the Goodman Gallery in Cape Town in 2015. The exhibition was a landmark show of work by artist-women in South Africa, paralleled perhaps only by the *Innovative Women* exhibition, but unfortunately, and incomprehensibly, the gallery decided not to publish a fully-fledged catalogue on this major

event.²⁷⁰ It rather settled for a pathetic A5 hand-out, printed on poor quality paper, the contents of which were, nevertheless, constructed with much care by the curator. For archival purposes, however, this mini quasi-catalogue hand-out will not do. Perhaps it was not a priority for the gallery to produce a full catalogue; yet one would hope that they could recognise the significance of the exhibition as an art historical event. It also raises the question as to why such an event took place at a *commercial* gallery in the first place, instead of a major institution, which might have made the resources for a full catalogue available. Indeed, in South Africa, it appears to be the galleries that are taking up the roles that institutions would have more regularly undertake due, in part to governmental mismanagement as I will later show. *Speaking Back* received very mixed reviews. In *ArtThrob*, Nkule Mabaso took particular issue with the execution of the exhibition, especially in relation to the fact that it was show featuring Black women exclusively.²⁷¹ This points to the minefield of the politics of representation that are still at stake in the South African art landscape today.

The question now arises: Is there an awareness of gender issues in the writing of an African Art History? It is notable that, even though the major curators on the continent are mostly women,²⁷² the major writers have been mostly men, with the work of Enwezor and Chicha Okeke Agulu – both privileged Nigerian men – featuring prominently in major publications that have redefined the field. Lone woman figures, such as the late Bisi Silva, are few and far in between. Is it, therefore, possible to speak back to

²⁷⁰ In this thesis I prefer the term ‘artist-women’, as opposed to ‘women artists’. I derive this usage from propositions by Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock in their book *Old Mistresses* where they question the qualifier ‘woman’ as disqualifying women from the generic category ‘artist’, which is by default White men. They argue that the term ‘artist’ does not signify women. In recent usage Griselda Pollock has proposed the terms ‘artist-men’ and ‘artist-women’. Previously, she has also used ‘artists who are women’ and ‘artists who are men’. This is part of the politics of language, that if we are serious about decolonising and de-masculinising the default terms, we may need to create unhappy neologisms to disrupt the status quo. See: Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses. Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Pandora, 1981).

²⁷¹ Nkule Mabaso, ‘Nothing Wrong with Speaking Back: Thoughts on an Exhibition’, *ArtThrob* (22 July 2015) <<https://artthrob.co.za/2015/07/22/nothing-wrong-with-speaking-back-thoughts-on-an-exhibition/>> [accessed 12 April 2019]. Her argument is more nuanced than what I relay here, but suffice to say, she does not believe that the show succeeded in what it set out to do.

²⁷² As is revealed by the recent report by Mary Corrigan and her associates: Corrigan & Co. *2018 Contemporary African Art Ecology. A Decade of Curating Curating* (Cape Town: Corrigan & Co., 2018), pp. 15-22.

masculine dominance in the field of histories of African art and African histories of art?²⁷³

South Africa is an interesting case with which to interrogate these questions. South Africa is in the process of trying to create democracy by concurrently dealing with the wounds and scars of the past and creating culture(s) that represent(s) itself. The particular nature of the post-colonial/decolonial in South Africa means that exploring South Africa as a case can offer contemporary discourse on art capable of producing the post-colonial/decolonial. South Africa is the quintessential society that is constructed in and dealing with complex layers of racialisation, de-racialisation and transformation.

If this is the case, where do gender and the art world enter into the 'new' South Africa, when one can study gender and the art world practically anywhere? Is South Africa significant only because it is an example of a transforming society? While transformation is, inevitably, heavily determined by race, it is not so completely. The question then arises: how do I justify attending to *gender* in *South Africa*, when the immediate and most pressing issue is race? How does it intertwine with the question of transformation and certain kinds of agonistic relations that need to be constantly worked through?²⁷⁴ As a result of its history and indeed its composition, South Africa is neither simply a colony decolonising, nor it is simply post-colonial in the way that other African nations are.

I aim to make the case that we should think about these big issues of 'gender' and 'race' and 'art worlds' *with* South Africa, not just *in* South Africa. By this I mean a thinking *with* it in order to turn to the wider questions of studying art worlds of international contemporary art in a particular way. What would it be to think some of the big issues that are on the global agenda *with* South Africa? How does studying gender in South Africa – in relation to its complex history of negotiating race – speak back in a double voice to a world that is concerned with equalising, inclusivity, post-coloniality and contemporaneity? In other words: How does the South African art world speak back to the international/global art world? What

²⁷³ My intension of presenting the above examples of the matter of gender in the African/South African art world is not to say that gender is 'still an issue'. Gender is structural matter. It has never not been an issue, and it is in general not considered an issue unless it is raised as such.

²⁷⁴ The nature of these 'agonistic' relations will be considered in detail in Chapter 3.

does it mean to think ‘art world’ *with* South Africa? And what does it mean to think ‘gender’ *with* South Africa?

We arrive then at the singularity of South Africa as a case in the international art world. To be sure, any study of a component of contemporary international art is also a study of the international art world, as it is within the international system. Then there are also national, or local art worlds, but rather than thinking of them in terms of ‘the nation’ (as the national pavilion layout of the Venice Biennale indeed does), could we rather think of them in terms of the issues raised by their singular histories?

The Contemporality of the Contemporary

The concept of ‘the contemporary’ is currently a much-debated question for art history.²⁷⁵ I want, however, to focus on the concept of ‘contemporality’, offered by Indian feminist art historian Geeta Kapur in her study of India and modernism.²⁷⁶ The notion of contemporality points to the fact that different societies are in different moments of their history. Kapur poses the question ‘when was modernism?’ in India in order to avoid the impression that Indian art arrived at modernism later than European art. She thus insists on the acknowledgement of the specificity of pre- and post-liberation India, with its distinctive political culture of socialism, shaped by the Indian Congress Party and its associated conditions and formations. She thus demonstrates that the historical trajectories of different countries, or nations, are not universal and identical and they comprise specific histories and historical moments. The contemporality of the contemporaneity in South Africa is ‘post-1994’ – which means that everything before 1994 is present in the current moment. The contemporalities in South Africa are thus: pre-

²⁷⁵ For brevity’s sake, I do not delve into this topic here, but key reference points include, amongst others the work of Terry Smith which sees the contemporary as a set of practices, as well as Alexander Alberro’s article which considers aspects associated with periodising contemporary art. See Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Terry Smith, ‘The State of Art History: The Contemporary’, *The Art Bulletin*, 49.4 (December 2010), 366-383; Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York, NY: Independent Curators International, 2012); Alexander Alberro, ‘Periodizing Contemporary Art’, in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence. Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art*, ed. by Jaynie Anderson (Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press: Imprint of Melbourne University Publishing, 2009), pp. 961-965. A major collection has also been edited by: Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel, eds, *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

²⁷⁶ Geeta Kapur, *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2000).

apartheid, apartheid, and post-apartheid. One, therefore, needs a *palimpsestic* view of any situated art world to take into account its historical specificity and its associated trajectories. For instance, the pre-1994 South African art world *was* an art world, but it was also a state. The issue of the state in the South African art world is still present, owing to the massive mismanagement of, especially, the visual arts in South Africa. Furthermore, the contemporality of South African history and experience is contemporaneous with a decolonising, post-colonial Africa, but also with Europe, with Asia, and with the USA: it is thus part of a much bigger landscape. The notion of contemporalities also helps us not to think, as is often done in the art world, in terms of ‘the nation’, but rather in terms of their singularities and the specificities of many, often intersecting but non-synchronous histories.

The idea of contemporality implied in a palimpsest reminds us that various kinds of layers exist in or at the same point in time and in the same space. South Africa does not simply represent gross decolonisation (although this is worked at very seriously at this time) – the legacies of the colonial remain in the future of the post-colonial. This is why we need a palimpsestic view of the, or any, art world.²⁷⁷ Furthermore, one must also bear in mind that any local art world consists of a set of interrelated operations, simultaneously functioning on a micro, local level, but also on the macro, global level of the international, post-colonising art world. These two levels are interpenetrated and it is across these fields that this thesis poses its questions.

To grasp fully the current situation of the South African art world, therefore, one needs to understand how and where it aligns itself. To whom is the South African art world talking? Is it New York? Kassel? Or perhaps Dakar? Or all of them? What the post-colonial critique of the international/global art world has brought to the fore is the fact that there is also a long history of what were known as the non-aligned nations, i.e. nations not aligned with either the West or the North in Cold War and

²⁷⁷ At various points in this thesis I refer to the VANSa Art Map and its usefulness for my research. It must however be noted, that the Art Map is not a palimpsest, in the sense that it is a map of the current South African visual art scene only. Historical aspects like formerly existing institutions, organisations, etc. are not included on the Art Map. See: Visual Arts Network of South Africa, ‘Art Map South Africa’, (2015) <<http://www.vansa.co.za/research>> [accessed 13 February 2015].

colonial terms. These nations formed their own political and cultural network during that period and in decolonising times, they advance a new array of alliances. This has been particularly argued for by Cuban art historian and curator Gerardo Mosquera, who writes from the alignment of the global South – which is largely a socialist coalition against the capitalist West – that is trying to create a counter-weight to the hegemony of North/West by relations and conversations between the regions hitherto marginalised by the North/West hegemony.²⁷⁸ South Africa was not part of the aligned/non-aligned nations in Mosquera's terms, because it was, for a very long time, not part of the decolonising countries in Africa and it also was not part of the socialist global South. It was in a way aligned with the West in the fight against communism.

South Africa, however, especially the South African art world, has always imagined itself, on the one hand, as being part of Europe (due to colonialism and the legacies of modernism in its art), and part of the West (through its anti-communist alliances) and on the other hand, as being part of Africa (although disconnected in a certain sense from and not subject to the same processes as Nigeria or Zimbabwe, for instance). In the international art world, Enwezor embodied the notion of *Africa talking to Africans*. He pointed out consistently that the world, especially Europe and the USA, does not sufficiently recognise the art of the African continent. In doing so, he addressed countries that have a relation to Africa through colonisation and enslavement. He spoke from a decolonised Nigerian position, and is recognised as one of the leading figures of the post-colonial in the art world. He has also spoken to South Africa in many instances (one instance of which, as I have indicated, will be considered later).

So while the international art world is struggling to deal with the post-colonial critique and becoming global, art in South Africa seeks to be part of it. Yet at the same time there are many elements that make South Africa interesting to study, which are specific to the singularities of its history with that history also being exceptional and paradigmatic of histories of the colonial modern. Thus, studying 'South Africa' and 'art' addresses specific issues that are not just about post-colonial relations. South Africa is

²⁷⁸ Gerardo Mosquera, 'The Marco Polo Syndrome. Some Problems Around Art and Eurocentrism', *Third Text*, 6 (1992), 35-41.

a case of the legacies of officially structured racism, which has had its effects and has *produced* its subjects. These subjects must work with/on the undoing of those effects. That is an important matter because of the ordering of South African society in terms of a racial consciousness. In the rush to accomplish all these things, do we lose the equally compelling international, contemporary and post-colonial challenges of gender? Furthermore, the matter of 'gender' is not going to be simple in the South African context, because it is divided by the question of race – but, equally, race is structured by gender. As mentioned above, the way they intertwine is crucial to my research.

Although, as art historian Lisa Aronson maintains, a strong feminist tradition exists in South African art and art scholarship, academe has been mostly preoccupied with representational tendencies and aesthetic practices and is yet to turn its well-developed feminist lens to matters of gender in various aspects of the South Africa art world, especially its constitution.²⁷⁹ A detailed picture of the South African art world and, especially, the people in it, can be found in a government-commissioned report published in 2008. This document is one of the primary texts for and incitement of my research. I shall devote the next chapter to a detailed analysis of its form, methods, conclusions and effects.

The introductory part of the thesis encompasses three chapters. The first has made the case for my study of the art world in South Africa in relation to major issues in current debates about race and gender, international feminisms and the post-colonial critique in order to lay out the argument for the complexity of the relays between race and gender in this particular historical and cultural situation. The second introductory chapter offers a detailed and coded analysis of a specific government-sponsored report on the condition of the South African art world. It thus explores the same issues as the first chapter, but from an institutional discourse. I explore the ways in which race and gender are articulated, or not, in this official study of the contemporary South African art world. The third introductory chapter elaborates the method and theoretical frameworks that I came to use as the thesis developed in its encounter with the materials I generated by the use of a specific method involving interviews.

²⁷⁹ Aronson, pp. 1-2.

CHAPTER 1

A Critical Reading of a Research Report on the South African Visual Arts Sector

Background and Purpose of the Report

In 2008 the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) in the South African government commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct the first major national study on the visual arts industry.¹ South Africa's primary visual arts development organisation, the Visual Arts Network of South Africa (VANSA), was the main organisation lobbying for the study and also participated in the research project.² A research report was completed in 2010 by the HSRC and its project partners in the form of a consultation draft, and it is from this draft that I make my reading, as no subsequent final document is available.³ This report, or consultation draft, is entitled: *Research Report. An Assessment of the Visual Arts in South Africa*, and is hereafter referred to simply as 'the Report' (capitalised to indicate it from here onwards).

The purpose of this study was to gather baseline data on the visual arts industry as a subset of the creative industries, following the earlier Gauteng Creative Mapping Project, which may inform the DAC's national engagement with the sector.⁴ One gathers from the Report that the objectives of the DAC's 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, are the ultimate motivation for the commissioning of this study, which 'sought to establish a framework within which the historical legacy of the

¹ Visual Arts Network of South Africa, 'Research' (2010) <<http://www.vansa.co.za/research>> [accessed 15 April 2014].

² Visual Arts Network of South Africa, 'Research'

³ Human Sciences Research Council, African Micro-Economic Research Umbrella, University of Witwatersrand and Thompson Research Services, *Research Report: An Assessment of the Visual Arts in South Africa* (2010) <<http://www.vansa.co.za/research/human-sciences-research-council-and-national-department-of-arts-and-culture-release-national-study-on-the-visual-arts-for-public-comment>> [accessed 3 August 2012]. Regarding my use of this version of the document, it should be noted that no final version of the document is available on either the DAC or the HSRC's websites. One was found on VANSA's website, which appeared to be the most complete and comprehensive version.

⁴ Human Sciences Research Council, pp. 20, 24.

impact of colonialism and apartheid on the arts industry could be addressed, and in which the arts and culture would be integrated into the overall social and economic development goals and planning frameworks for government'.⁵ The White Paper's review and consultation processes were taking place during 2008/2009, which was around the time the DAC commissioned this study.⁶

The commissioned study's primary purpose is set out in the Report as 'to present as accurate as possible a picture of the current position of the visual arts in South Africa, and to identify opportunities for growing the artistic, social and economic contribution of the visual arts in the society and economy'.⁷ The need for the study is clearly motivated: there is no baseline data available specifically on the visual arts in South Africa; although studies exist on this sector, they tend to place the visual arts in the wider framework of the creative industries; and very little government policy in South Africa is concerned with the visual arts in particular.⁸

Besides an executive summary and introduction, the Report consists of sections entitled: Industry Overview; Demand for the Visual Arts; The Organisational Landscape of the Visual Arts; The Positions of Artists; Education and Training in the Visual Arts; Funding and Sponsorship of the Visual Arts; and Recommendations. The Report is also accompanied by various appendices, some of which represent additional reports meant to supplement the information gathered by the main research instrument of the study, which is a quantitative survey administered on a sample of professional artists as well as businesses and organisations operating in the visual arts. I comment in more detail on the study's methodology in the subsequent section.

As an industry study, the Report is mainly concerned with problems regarding funding and growing the market for the visual arts in South Africa, as well as growing its consumer base and infrastructure. As is shown later in this chapter, these concerns are also what the recommendations stemming from the Report are centred on. Although I am adopting a critical position towards certain aspects of the Report, it should be recognised as

⁵ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 34.

⁶ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 35.

⁷ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 7.

⁸ Human Sciences Research Council, pp. 23, 26.

providing a snapshot of the South African art world and one of the only available contemporary accounts thereof.⁹ The Report presents a large amount of data regarding the visual arts industry in South Africa and the study represents an official attempt by the government to grasp the visual arts sector for further engagement. The Report also goes some way towards mapping the South African art world through its description of various entities, organisations and institutions. The study provides an estimate of the visual arts industry's contribution to the South African economy and affirms this contribution as a valuable and substantial one.¹⁰ It establishes the visual arts sector as an industry whose needs have to be taken seriously by the government.

Furthermore, the Report brings to light problems which are faced as everyday challenges by South African artists and participants in the visual arts industry, which include among others: the difficulties for South African artists, in general, to participate in international exhibitions, fairs and trade shows; the small acquisition budgets afforded to public art museums; the problem of the accessibility of museums by the general public; the large collections of art held in corporate possession and kept behind closed doors away from public access; and the manners in which the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund could overcome many of the funding issues in the visual arts and fails to do so on account of administrative difficulties. The Report also points to various avenues which need further research, for instance, that there is no profiling data available on South African art buyers.¹¹

Notes on the Report's Methodology

The study mainly consisted of a survey targeted at both professional artists and businesses or organisations functioning in the visual arts.¹² These findings were then supplemented with additional reports found in the appendices. The use of such a quantitative methodology seems to be in

⁹ Since the writing of this chapter, Marry Corrigan's company, Corrigan & Co., has released a report called the *2018 Contemporary African Art Ecology Report: A Decade of Curating*, which has a focus on the African continent as a whole. I referred to this report in the previous Chapter.

¹⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 64.

¹¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 81.

¹² Human Sciences Research Council, p. 24.

reaction to the fact that of the existing studies focusing on the arts, cultural and creative industries, lumped together as such, few present quantitative findings, and those that do have small samples. It appears that the study views this lack of quantitative data as a gap in available research that needs to be filled. The following is the formulation used in the Report:

The great majority of studies on different aspects of the arts, culture and creative industries in South Africa have [...] historically drawn on either qualitative data – anecdotal evidence, the perspectives of key informants, case studies, and desktop research – or very narrowly defined quantitative studies as a basis for generating particular arguments for intervention at the level of policy and strategy on the part of industry and/or government.¹³

It should be noted that the studies referred to in this quotation are not directly cited here and it remains unclear precisely which studies this statement refers to in particular. Nevertheless, the quotation perhaps reveals some measure of scepticism regarding the qualitative data available, especially regarding its usefulness in providing evidence for policy revision at governmental level. The study is thus setting itself up as providing a *more authoritative* account of the South African visual arts industry than those available. It is also positioning government and policy-makers as the readers of the Report and its findings. It is establishing its quantitative methodology as more appropriate in this context than that of the preceding qualitative reviews. It is establishing its *scientificity*. By doing this, the Report is seeking to secure itself as a credible and trustworthy account aimed at official government engagement. The Report is thus related to the associated field, in Foucaultian terms, of quantitative research in the social sciences.¹⁴

According to the Report, in addition to the survey, it is also ‘deploying more nuanced qualitative methods of data collection through case studies, desktop research, interviews with key informants and the like’.¹⁵ The findings of these more nuanced methods are, however, mostly confined to the additional reports found in the appendices. The bulk of the main research report is dominated by the findings from the quantitative

¹³ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 24.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 110.

¹⁵ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 24.

survey. When findings from the additional reports do make it into the body of the main report, one finds that it is mostly statistical information from the appendices that is cited. The precise qualitative methodology(/-ies) used in the additional reports remain unclear and most of the appendices present further quantitative findings. The role of qualitative data thus remains, at best, marginal in the Report. Although there may be some qualitative aspects in the study, they are, therefore, overshadowed by the *evidentiary force* and the sheer volume of quantitative data.

A few things need mentioning regarding the survey's sampling method as described in the Report. The quantitative survey was administered in two versions, one aimed at artists and the other aimed at businesses and organisations. The South African Art Information Directory was used as a primary source in establishing the population of artists and businesses and organisations for the survey. The project team contacted organisations in the South African Art Information Directory, including artists' associations, arts organisations and private and public galleries, in order to obtain contact details of visual artists. The population was estimated at 5469 artists, of whom 245 were sampled, giving a sample size of 4.5% of the population.¹⁶ The estimated population of business and organisation was 1001, of which 10% were sampled and 7.1% responded.¹⁷

Although sample sizes and response rates such as these may be considered sufficient in quantitative research, one wonders what exactly the findings of this survey represents, given the small size of the samples as well as the methods in determining the populations. This factor is not entirely lost on the writers of the Report, as limitations in the sampling are noted, especially the fact that the company that compiles the South African Art Information Directory, Global Art Information, is based in Cape Town, and the researchers suspected a skewing towards entities based in the Western Cape. It is also noted that many artists, especially those located in the Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, may not be included on the databases used for the survey.¹⁸

Ultimately, the people and entities represented through the survey's findings are mainly those who are listed in the South African Art

¹⁶ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 30.

¹⁷ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 29.

¹⁸ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 29.

Information Directory, or reachable through those who are. It should also be noted that the Report indicates that the institutional side of the South African art world, including public art museums and collections, art schools in tertiary institutions, corporate art collections, funding agencies, non-specialist private education institutions and artists' studio galleries are also excluded from the survey.¹⁹ The writers of the Report indicate that this exclusion was made to avoid double counting. Some of these entities are represented in the supplementary studies, as can be seen in, for example, 'Appendix F: Museums and Collections report', and 'Section 6: Education and Training in the Visual Arts', but the absence of the institutional side of the art world in the main data gathering instrument should be kept in mind while considering the findings produced and during my subsequent analysis of the Report.

Despite the study's rigorous sampling efforts, and its attempt to set itself up as a trustworthy account, a variety of voices might have been lost in this survey. One cannot expect any study to represent the South African art industry fully and completely, but the exclusions and limitations discussed above must be noted when one considers the type of picture such a study paints of the sector it aims to describe. Ultimately, the type of picture it paints is the product of the particular type of research design it uses. My suggestion is that there is much about the South African art world that is not captured by this Report and cannot be captured with this type of quantitative methodology, which I explore further throughout this chapter. It is with this question of what the Report can and cannot say, indeed what *is* and *is not* said, that I move on to a Foucaultian reading of the discourse that it both operates and operates in.

Reading the Report

The research report generated by this study of the South African visual arts industry is extensive. I am not concerned with providing a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the entire Report here. For the purposes of my research towards a feminist post-colonial exploration of gender in the South African art world, I am interested in bringing a second layer of analysis to the Report – one that specifically draws to the surface attention to gender as

¹⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 27.

it is entangled with race at the level of statements, tables, statistics and conclusions. My method will involve traversing the Report using a Foucaultian approach whereby I read the Report for its statements and discursive constructions regarding gender and race and their effects.²⁰

From a Foucaultian methodological perspective, I shall treat the Report as a *discursive event*.²¹ It offers a glimpse into the contemporary South African visual art industry while itself standing as a major piece of evidence for the study of its status quo. The art world, as a Foucaultian proposition, may be seen as consisting of institutions and experts, who produce a discourse that constitutes itself as expert knowledge. It is within such an epistemological framework that the research Report appears. The enunciative modality of the Report should be understood in terms of the following: the study was commissioned by the government department for arts and culture and produced by the foremost human sciences research institution in South Africa to produce 'knowledge' (*savoir*) for the use of the government and to the benefit of the South African arts industry.²² The institutional sites of the Report's production are thus both the governmental Department of Arts and Culture and the Human Sciences Research Council.²³

Mapping Statements

My first project is to establish the patterns of statements and discursive formations concerning gender in the Report. The statements traced below represent scattered instances where gender is mentioned in the Report's text. These mentions are usually coupled with a reference to race and, therefore, statements regarding gender are presented below as they are entangled with race in the text. Regarding my analysis of the statements I shall be mapping, it is important to note that although gender and race are not the focus of the study that the Department of Arts and Culture commissioned on the status of the visual arts industry in South Africa, statements pertaining to gender and race are found dispersed in the text, because these are employed as

²⁰ In this reading I draw from Michel Foucault's work, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

²¹ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 30.

²² See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 55-61.

²³ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 56.

quantitative stratification categories throughout the study, as will be commented on in more detail in a following section.

Nevertheless, the Report points to the fact that there *is* a discourse on gender and on race in the South African art world, but the critical issue I wish to bring out in my analysis is that these concepts, presented as being self-evident signifiers of ‘male’ and ‘female’ and ‘black’ and ‘white’ are classified as a quadruple structuring of possible identificatory markers for artists.²⁴ The Report’s use of the concepts of ‘gender’ and ‘race’ is not a subtle entanglement or recognition of intersectionality as black feminist theory has come to articulate legal and other relations of gender and race before the law.²⁵ They are crude categorical markers, stemming from the legacies of racism, that feminist theory is dedicated to rendering complex, historical and political. The Report’s concepts of gender and race are written in a vocabulary of social *identity* rather than understanding these terms as terms of social *relations*. They are thus used as terms to mark a social category as opposed to a social relation.

I need to stress that there is a difference between the administrative shorthand in the Report performed through these terms and the exploration of the meaning and transformative and subversive potential of these concepts I wish to undertake as part of my research. I, therefore, do not wish to be identified with the terminology that the Report uses in this regard. As explored in the previous chapter, I acknowledge that within feminist discourse gender is not an identitarian classification, it is not just a category, but it is a very complex notion. It is an axis of difference and it registers and operates in language and the representation of power. I will now offer a reading of this Report, to show what happens when gender and race are used in non-theoretical terms as categories, and I will draw this matter out in order to show that the issue of gender (and race) are both *there* and *not there*, or in other words, folded away.

²⁴ To show the difference between the Report’s use of the concepts of gender and race and how these terms are understood in feminism, critical race studies, post-colonialism, etc., I place the Report’s crude shorthand use of ‘gender’ and ‘race’ in quotation marks.

²⁵ See: Kimberlé Crenshaw, ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine’, *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140 (1989), 139-167.

The *Dispositif* and the ‘Fold’, or ‘How to Talk about what Statements Are and Do’

For Foucault, ‘[...] the analysis of discursive formations really is centred on a description of the statement in its specificity’.²⁶ The description of statements is thus an analysis of and through language. Foucault provides the following definition of statements and discursive formations:

In examining the statement what we have discovered is a function that has a bearing on groups of signs, which is identified neither with grammatical ‘acceptability’ nor with logical correctness, and which requires if it is to operate: a referential (which is not exactly a fact, a state of things, or even an object, but a principle of differentiation); a subject (not the speaking consciousness, not the author of the formulations, but a position that may be filled in certain conditions by various individuals); an associated field (which is not the real context of the formulation, the situation in which it was articulated, but a domain of coexistence for other statements); a materiality (which is not only the substance or support of the articulation, but a status, rules of transcription, possibilities of use and re-use). Now what has been described as discursive formations are, strictly speaking, groups of statements.²⁷

Art historian Jennifer Tennant Jackson expands on Foucaultian theory for art history, in particular as found in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in her treatment and development of the concepts of *énoncés*, performativity, the *dispositif*, efficacy and the ‘fold’ in metonymic interaction with concepts from quantum physics.²⁸ As a scholar previously involved with physics and its theorisations of matter, Tennant Jackson relates Foucault’s theory to physics insofar as it is possible to consider statements as functioning polysemically in the same way that atomic particles paradoxically behave as particles and sometimes as waves.²⁹ Physics shares an unsettling logic with post-structuralist attempts to grasp the productivity of language. She thus draws a parallel by arguing that statements are both objects and actions:

²⁶ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 128.

²⁷ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 129.

²⁸ Jennifer Tennant Jackson, ‘The Efficacy of Meta-Conceptual Performativity. Or, we just do not *know* what we are talking about’, in *Conceptual Odysseys. Passages to Cultural Analysis*, ed. by Griselda Pollock (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 153-171 (p. 162).

²⁹ Tennant Jackson, p. 160.

For Foucault, the discursive field is made up of groups of words, or statements: *énoncés*. A statement is formed and transformed, produced by and produces the ‘archive’ or discursive field. Close reading reveals the ‘statement’ to be both an object and an action in a discursive formation, which we can approach in the following way. When Foucault says ‘describe a statement’, we look for a thing, object, group of words, unit, and so on. Here the statement is a thing. When he says ‘describe the enunciative function’ of ‘which they are bearers’, we regard the statement as an action.³⁰

In order to hold the conceptual simultaneity of a statement as something that is *both being something and doing something*, Tennant Jackson prefers the use of the original French term, *énoncé* to the English term ‘statement’. She states that she does so in order to move away from the certainty and rigidity implied by the term ‘statement’, and to underscore her use of the term to denote both a thing and an action simultaneously, and to retain a measure of uncertainty.³¹ The emphasis here is rather on the action of statements in the discursive field than on the identification of statements as semantic units.³² Statements (*énoncés*) have ‘an energy that works to generate meaning within an active field of discourse’.³³

Tennant Jackson’s Foucaultian understanding of performativity (Foucault was clearly a key source for Judith Butler’s later focus on it) hinges on the idea that *énoncés* are themselves performative as they are *both* things *and* actions. She refers to these action-statement-things as ‘performative *énoncés* of knowledge’, by tapping into Foucault’s notion that statements are produced by and produces a discourse.³⁴ Her work in art historical analysis thus focuses on how evidence is produced by and accepted in and through art historical discourse, in which she shows how,

[...] art-historical fact is produced by means of a set of repeated statements that become the evidence supporting the ‘fact’ as its effect, while occluding—history in the fold—other potential suppressed or unacknowledged meanings. What becomes accepted, repeated and thus reinforced as the determinate fact—*énoncés*—that frame the interpretation of significant paintings is the *dispositif* that fixes the ways Courbet’s or Botticelli’s paintings are seen.³⁵

³⁰ Tennant Jackson, p. 160.

³¹ Tennant Jackson, p. 161.

³² Tennant Jackson, p. 159.

³³ Tennant Jackson, p. 160.

³⁴ Tennant Jackson, p. 158.

³⁵ Tennant Jackson, p. 159.

Énoncés are performative as they are produced and repeated, or taken up and recited, as in the later Butlerian conceptualisation of gender performativity.³⁶ This performativity of *énoncés*, the recitation and repetition of action-statement-things, is the creation of the *dispositif*. Tennant Jackson defines the *dispositif* in distinguishing it from the ‘episteme’:

An ‘episteme’ is a strategic apparatus “which permits of separating out from among all statements which are possible those that will be acceptable within ... a field of scientificity, and which it is possible to say are true or false”. A *dispositif* is a more generalized, heterogeneous collection of discursive and non-discursive elements, including a strategic element that was once called an episteme. Whereas an episteme distinctly is concerned with what may or may not be said, the *dispositif* is a later development [in Foucault’s work] and tends to be more general, but none the less powerful; an arrangement or apparatus of power/knowledge. *Dispositifs* disperse power as networks in the field of knowledge. In simplified terms, which may belie their complexity, we could say that they become what we can ‘know’. They are the rules of the discourse, constructions that frame discourses and practices.^{37, 38}

Dispositifs are the regular, or ‘flat’, knowledge surfaces created by the performativity of *énoncés* – statements produced and reproduced. The same movement – the action of statements – that create the *dispositif* also functions, however, to suppress something. Tennant Jackson provides the following useful spatial metaphor for understanding the relationship of the *dispositif* to the ‘fold’:

[...] the *dispositif* is the concrete effect produced by the process of forming apparatuses. Take a line and fold it, pleat it, concertina it up, and look at it from the side where the edges are pressed together. Like the fingertips of the hand, or the points of the villi that form a surface, it hides the depths to which the fold penetrates. The *dispositif* is the seen edge; the rest is hidden in the fold as a skein.³⁹

³⁶ Tennant Jackson, p. 168.

³⁷ Tennant Jackson, p. 163.

³⁸ Tennant Jackson quotes in the beginning of this extract from Michel Foucault, ‘The Confessions of the Flesh’, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), p. 197.

³⁹ Tennant Jackson, p. 164.

The suppressing action of the performativity of *énoncés* to create the *dispositif* is the concept that Tennant Jackson develops as efficacy, or the ‘efficacy of performativity’, and this is the unknowable action or energy that creates the ‘fold’.⁴⁰ Performativity and efficacy, may perhaps be viewed as two types of energy of the action-statement-thing. Tennant Jackson provides the further metaphor of peristalsis for thinking about the *dispositif* and the ‘fold’: ‘[*Énoncés*] constitute and activate the discourse. *Énoncés* are not to be regarded the mere performance of knowledge, but as dynamic performativity of knowledge, with multidimensional effects and actions, played out in peristalsis of *dispositif* and the “fold”’.⁴¹ Evoking the squeezing action of a muscle, like the oesophagus, one can picture the performative *énoncés* as having an upward-pushing effect, which creates the surface of the discourse, the *dispositif*, as well as a downward-pushing effect, the efficacy of performativity, which folds away that which ‘cannot’ be said, or ‘cannot’ be known in a discourse. Recited and repeated statements, therefore, function to occlude something that is neither disappeared nor absolutely suppressed.

With the idea that *énoncés* have energy, it is helpful to imagine that the action of the performativity of *énoncés* in creating the *dispositif* gives off another kind of energy, efficacy. Perhaps one may think of the performativity of *énoncés* as kinetic energy – that which shows up in discourse – and of the efficacy of performativity as potential energy – that which lies buzzing beneath the surface.

At this point, we must not lose sight of the fact that the *dispositif* and the fold are inextricably connected, as Tennant Jackson states: ‘The *dispositif* involves the notion of a discursive field produced by and producing *énoncés*. The *dispositif* occurs as the knowable measurable apparatus, always in conjunction with the unknowable efficacy that is “the fold”’.⁴² In fact, the fold sustains the discourse, as she goes on to say that:

[t]hat which is in the interstices also constructs the discourse, though it cannot be directly referred to and is (pre-) visible; it is the fold. It must still be present in order to make the discourse active. If the *dispositif* is the tangible spatial structure, it must also harbour the unspoken in the fold: *dispositif* and fold as the

⁴⁰ Tennant Jackson, p. 160, 167.

⁴¹ Tennant Jackson, p. 163.

⁴² Tennant Jackson, p. 163-164.

outside and the outside curved inside. The present is the *dispositif*, and the absent/present is the fold.’⁴³

In my analysis of the statements regarding gender and race produced by the Report on the South African visual arts industry, I trace the appearance of statements, *énoncés*, as they emerge in the text chronologically describing them in their specificity. In this first move, I am conducting a close textual reading and my main concern is the type of administrative language that is present in the statements, which constitute the terms in which gender and race manifest in the Report. I also problematise the use of statistics and statistical figures and reflect on the effect these figures and their numerical distribution of value have on producing constructed figures of identity. Finally I read the statements for their performativity, and the constitution of the *dispositif*, as well as for the efficacy of their performativity, the construction of ‘the fold’.

The Appearance of Statements

For ease of reference and in order to aid my analysis, I have highlighted words that signify notions of gender and race in the statements extracted from the Report below in yellow. Key administrative or technical terms are presented in green. A concentration of statements regarding gender and race appear in Section 5 of the Report, ‘The Position of Artists’, with scattered instances of such statements in the sections running up to it. Below I thus first consider and analyse statements from the first part of the Report, from the Executive Summary to ‘Section 4: The Organisational Landscape of the Visual Arts’, and then move on to statements produced in ‘Section 5: The Position of Artists’.⁴⁴

The first mention of gender and race appears in two places in the Report’s Executive Summary under the heading ‘Industry Overview’:

⁴³ Tennant Jackson, p. 166.

⁴⁴ The Report’s Executive Summary up to Section 5 contains the bulk of statements on gender and race produced in the Report. Further instances where gender and race are mentioned appear sporadically in the subsequent sections and in certain appendices. In some cases the information in these mentions are already provided in the early sections of the Report. The analysis in this chapter of statements regarding gender and race thus encompasses the majority of such statements in the Report.

Extract 1:⁴⁵

The sector has a highly educated workforce, with 72% of artists and 48% of employees and contract workers in businesses and organisations having qualified with a tertiary degree or diploma. There is evidence of a changing demographic within the industry, which has traditionally been largely white and middle class in profile. Based on the survey results, just over 57% of the entire workforce is black and just over 50% comprised of women. It also has a comparatively young workforce, with approximately 53,4% of people working in the sector (including artists) falling into the under-35 age group. However, while women, youth and black people account for a substantial proportion of employment in the sector, the senior management and ownership of business, institutions and organisations continues [sic] to be largely vested in white people.⁴⁶

Extract 2:

The report proposes a set of key principles, or cross-cutting considerations, informing and shaping recommendations related to the development of the sector. Five overarching principles are proposed:
[...]

- A commitment to achieving greater equity in the sector with regard both to wider access to the enjoyment and benefits that flow from access to the visual arts for a more diverse cross-section of the population, as well as to achieving the greater empowerment of black and women artists, entrepreneurs and initiatives in the sector.⁴⁷

Also in the Executive Summary, the following statements appear under the heading ‘Position of Artists’:

Extract 3:

It is estimated that there are in the region of 5 500 artists in South Africa, mostly concentrated in three major metros – Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. While [...] there is evidence of substantial shifts in the overall demographics of the workforce for the visual arts, the majority (58%) of practicing [sic] artists are white, with a particularly poor representation of black women artists (comprising just 12% of the total population of artists based on the survey commissioned as part of this project).

Extract 4:

The study notes that the average income of practicing [sic] professional artists is in the region of R149 000 per annum,

⁴⁵ For clarity and readability’s sake, I have placed the extracts in a different font than the body of my own text.

⁴⁶ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 9.

with a marked income differential between black and white artists. Based on the survey sample, white male artists (the highest earners) earn on average R229 000 per annum and black female artists (the lowest earners) earning R67 000 per annum.⁴⁸

In the main body of the Report in ‘Section 1: Introduction’ the following is stated about the research methodology under the heading ‘Overall Survey Objectives and Approach’:

Extract 5:

The survey sought to generate data about these entities [artists and visual arts organisations and businesses] in each of the following areas:

- Basic demographics: Developing a profile of artists, businesses and organisations in relation to the age, gender, race and location of artists and workers in the industry, as well as the demographics of ownership and management.
[...]⁴⁹

Also regarding the research methodology the following statement is made about the sample of artists made for the administration of the survey:

Extract 6:

A first phase of sampling was conducted on a random basis, drawing on the database of over 6000 entries developed by the project. Artists who were not willing to participate were randomly substituted with other entries. A second wave of sampling sought then to address regional and gender skews in the first sampling (for example, a skew towards women artists, who were generally found to be more willing to participate in the survey than men, and in the Western Cape, a skew towards white and amateur artists).⁵⁰

In the second section of the Report ‘Section 2: An Overview of the Visual Arts Industry in South Africa’, some findings pertaining to race and gender from the survey on visual arts businesses and organisations are presented under the heading ‘Ownership and Governance Demographics’. (Some of the statements below are accompanied in the Report by a graphic, which may be seen as constituting visual *énoncés* in Foucaultian terms.)

⁴⁸ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 14.

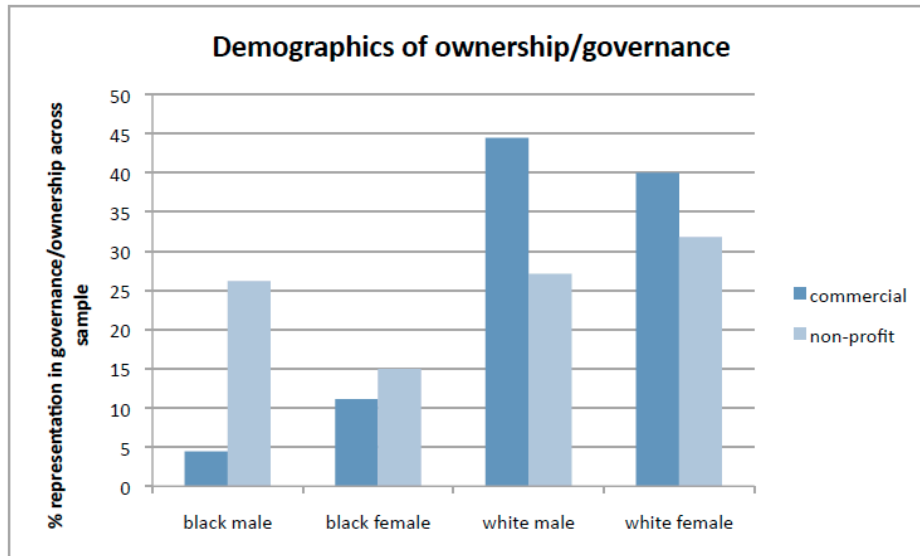
⁴⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 25.

⁵⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 29.

Extract 7:

While commercial entities are overwhelmingly owned by white South Africans (with a roughly equal gender split), more than 40% of the membership of boards of non-profit organisations of the sector are black South Africans. The sample also suggested that black women are more likely to own business entities than black men, and white men are marginally more likely to have ownership than white women. Black men have substantially greater representation on the boards of non-profit organisations than they have shareholding in business ventures.⁵¹

Figure 11: Demographics of ownership/governance



(Figures presented, such as the above, accompany the extract preceding them.)

Findings on race and gender in terms of demographic data are presented under section '2.7 Work and Employment in the Visual Arts'. The following statements appear under a heading titled 'Race/Gender':

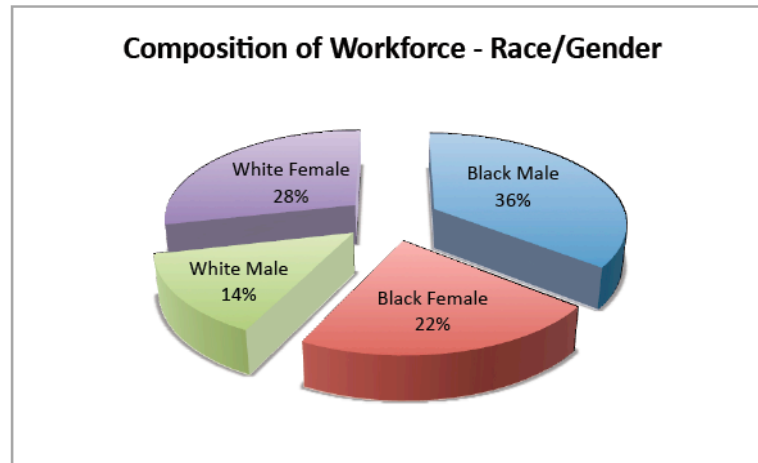
Extract 8:

58% of the total workforce is black, and the workforce is evenly split between men and women (49,7% and 50,3% respectively). These demographics are however differentiated quite dramatically across different sections of the workforce. The following chart shows the combined demographics of artists, freelance professionals, employees and short term contract workers in businesses and organisations.⁵²

⁵¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 52. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 52.

⁵² Human Sciences Research Council, p. 60. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 60.

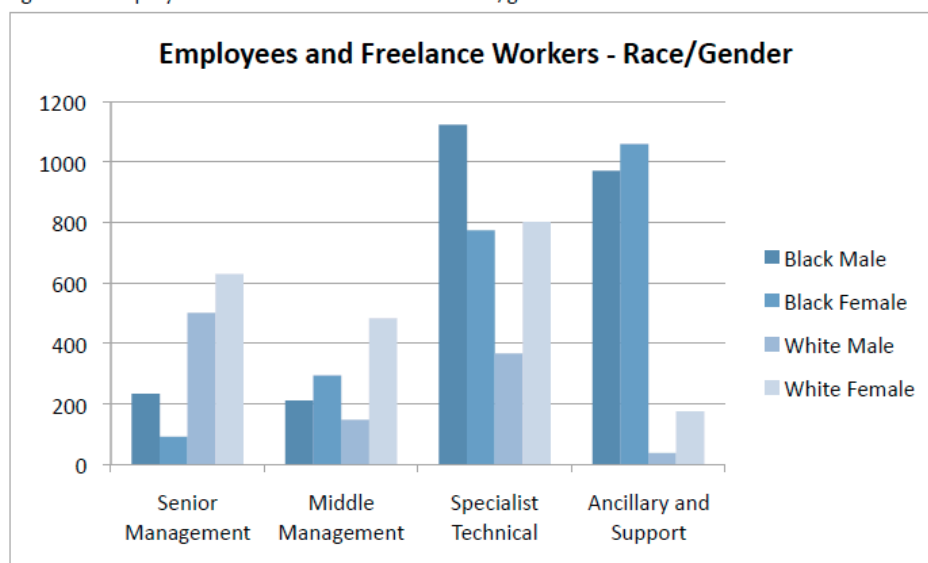
Figure 19: Composition of Workforce



Extract 9:

Among employees of organisations, businesses and institutions and freelance and contract workers, demographics are quite sharply differentiated across different roles, with the greatest proportions of white men and women in senior management positions and black men and women most prevalent in specialist/technical and ancillary and support roles within the industry.⁵³

Figure 21: Employees and Freelance Workers – Race/gender

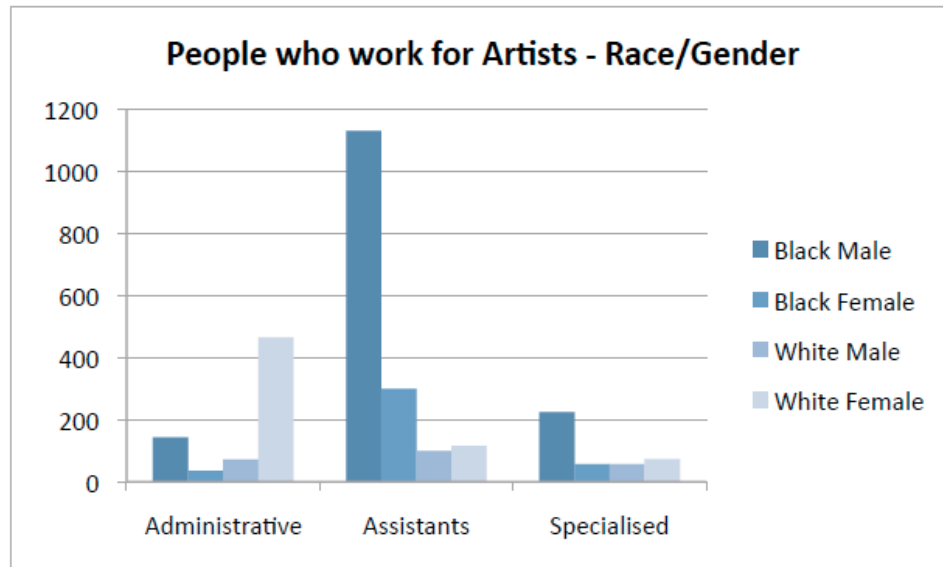


As previously noted, a significant proportion of the workforce in the sector is comprised of people that artists provide work for in a variety of roles. The following chart breaks down the composition of this group on the basis of race and gender.⁵⁴

⁵³ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 61. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 61.

⁵⁴ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 61. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 61.

Figure 22: People Who Work for Artists – Race/Gender



Mention is made of the entanglement of gender and race in both ‘Section 3: Demand for the Visual Arts’ and ‘Section 4: The Organisational Landscape for the Visual Arts’. Both of these statements are concerned with ownership and governance, and they are, respectively:

Extract 10:

Key general findings from the **survey** pertaining to galleries include:

- 34% (12/35) of **entities** involved in the primary and secondary markets are **owned/managed** by **women**; 91% (32/35) of **entities** are **owned** by **white people**. [...]⁵⁵

Extract 11:

While there has clearly been some change in the **demographic profile** of the **governance** and **management** of art museums and collections, there remain significant challenges in this area. From a **sample** of fifteen **institutions** (6 public, 5 university-based and 4 private) that were able to report on this issue, 35% of the people **represented** on the **governance structures** of **organisations** were **white women**, **31% black men**, **21% white men**, and **only 13% black women**. Based on responses from 13 institutions, the **senior management** of **institutions** reflect a substantially less transformed profile – **44% white women**, **25% white men**, **25% black male [sic]** and **6% black women**.⁵⁶

With these first eleven extracts, I would like to consider the terms in association with which the discourse on gender and race is forged in the

⁵⁵ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 87.

⁵⁶ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 108.

Report. The language used in the statements in the first eleven extracts is predominantly administrative and/or economic. Key words that appear in green the extracts above are, among others: ‘sector’, ‘industry’, ‘demographic’, ‘workforce’, ‘workers’, ‘employees’, ‘income’, ‘businesses’, ‘organisations’, ‘entities’, ‘senior management’, ‘governance’, ‘ownership’, ‘entrepreneurs’, ‘initiatives’, and ‘roles’. It is important to consider these words as they appear in the statements regarding gender and race in the Report, as they constitute the terms in which the Report gives an account of gender and race in the South African art world. It is noteworthy that one of the only accounts of the South African art world and the people who constitute it appear through a discourse steeped in industry-related terminology. (This tendency is, however, in line with widespread economic appropriation of art in the global art world.)

Through the administrative terms used in the extracts above, the South African art world is conceptualised in the Report as a ‘sector’, or an ‘industry’, comprising ‘businesses’, ‘organisations’ and a ‘workforce’ consisting of ‘employees’. Terms associated with the contemporary corporation appear, such as ‘entities’, ‘entrepreneurs’, ‘senior management’, ‘governance’, ‘ownership’, ‘boards’, ‘non-profit organisations’, ‘share holding’, and ‘business ventures’.

The discourse that the statements in the extracts above both operates and operates in is thus an economic discourse. They become performative *énoncés* of economic knowledge in the associated field of quantitative sociological research. Administrative terms, such as those highlighted above, are taken up and repeated, or performed, throughout the Report. It is in this performance that gender and race are ultimately caught up, but also produced in, through the Report. Gender and race appear in this study insofar as they perform the economic discourse constructed in quantitative and statistical terms; this allows their appearance in the ‘archive’.

Aside from the prevalence of administrative language in the extracts considered so far, one also notices the presence of technical research terminology, where gender and race appear in the Report (especially in Extract 6). Some of these terms include: ‘survey’, ‘results’, ‘population’, ‘demographic’, ‘sample’, and ‘data’. By bringing notions of ‘gender’ and ‘race’ in proximity with technical research terminology, ‘gender’ and ‘race’

are being established as stratification tools – *things to count with*, or *things with which to divide information*, as will be considered further below. This becomes the second basis on which their appearance in the ‘archive’ is possible.

In the first eleven extracts, the terms used in relation to gender, aside from the term ‘gender’ itself, are: ‘men’, ‘women’, ‘female’, and ‘male’. The prevalent use of ‘male’ and ‘female’ is a particularly crude biologically based way of using the notion of ‘gender’. Similarly, the terms used for race, ‘black’ and ‘white’, are also reductive, especially in the South African context. I give the Report’s specific employment of the concepts of ‘gender’ and ‘race’ further consideration in a subsequent section of this chapter where I focus on their use and effect as quantitative stratification categories.

A major conclusion from this initial study of the extracts above is that not only are gender and race used as unexamined categories in the Report, but they are combined in the statements above to produce, in their combination, the following four figures: ‘white male’, ‘white female’, ‘black male’, and ‘black female’. These constructions become apparent in the statements, but also quite visually so in the figures that accompany them in the extracts in the form of graphs and charts. Together with the administrative language that surrounds these four figures, as well as the numerical data presented, these four figures become *avatars* for the knowledge that the Report produces.⁵⁷ Throughout the Report, many of the findings presented are compared and contrasted at the hand of these four avatars, which almost act as imaginary corkboards onto which information is pinned. Furthermore, the findings in the Report and especially the numerical data and figures presented, line these four knowledge avatars up in a *hierarchy of lack* ranging, in most cases, from White men, which are least lacking, to Black women, which are most lacking.

This hierarchy of lack is established by statements such as those found in Extract 3, for example: ‘[...] the majority of practicing artists are white, with particularly poor representation of black women artists

⁵⁷ The prevalence of techno science culture now dictates our understanding of the concept of an avatar to be related to gaming or virtual reality. In my use of this term, I rather turn to a more basic definition of what an avatar is, which is simply something that ‘stands for something else’, or appears as the embodiment of something or someone else. For my purposes ‘avatar’ means a figure that is used to represent these different grouping of people. It is a figure that is constructed to stand in the place of these groupings.

(comprising just 12% of the total population of artists based on the survey commissioned as part of this project)’; as well as: ‘[...] white male artists (the highest earners) earn on average R229 000 per annum and black female artists (the lowest earners) earning R67 000 per annum.’⁵⁸ One also sees an instance of the avatars in a hierarchical line-up in Extract 11: ‘35% of the people represented on the governance structures of organisations were white women, 31% black men, 21% white men, and only 13% black women. Based on responses from 13 institutions, the senior management of institutions reflect a substantially less transformed profile – 44% white women, 25% white men, 25% black male [*sic*] and 6% black women.’⁵⁹ As will transpire throughout the statements discussed in this analysis, the hierarchy of lack is not always cut and dry. Sometimes the order changes, but mostly lack is established in the following order from most lacking to least lacking: ‘black female’ – ‘black male’ – ‘white female’ – ‘white male’.

As previously mentioned, the largest amount of statements regarding gender and race appear in ‘Section 5: Position of artists’. This is mainly because the artist survey results are reported on here. The following statement, under the heading ‘5.1 Artist Demographics’, explains the use of these categories in the survey:

Extract 12:

The survey considered the age, race, gender and location of artists. In the case of race, gender and location, these were also used as additional analytic lenses for other data, in order to establish the degree to which these factors impact on key indicators such as level of education, income and the types of obstacles experienced by artists in the development of their careers.⁶⁰

Various other statements and figures regarding artists’ demographics appear in this section:

Extract 13:

In contrast to the overall labour market – in which there is 56:44 split between men and women in both the formal and informal sectors [...] – the sample suggests that within the visual arts, there is a 50:50 split between men and women

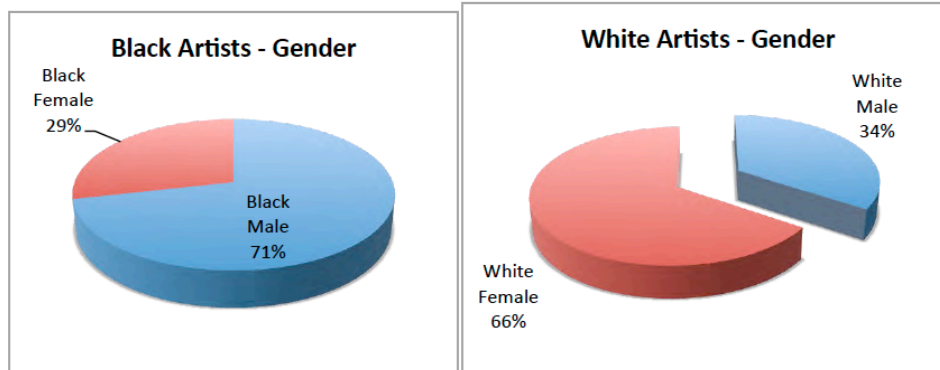
⁵⁸ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 108.

⁶⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 117.

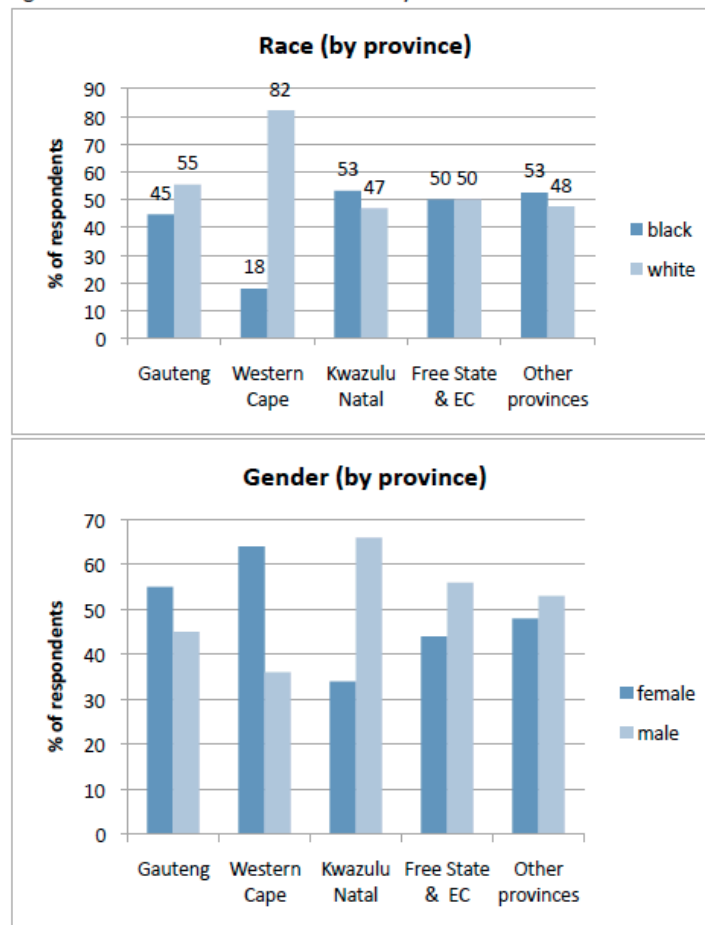
artists. This gender split however diverges dramatically when correlated against race.⁶¹

Figures 37 & 38: Gender: Black vs White Artists



Breakdown [sic] according to race at a provincial level (see chart below), shows a substantially greater proportion of white women artists in the Western Cape, and a large proportion of black male artists in KwaZulu Natal. As previously indicated, we believe that this represents a skew in the sampling [...].⁶²

Figure 39 & 40: Artists Race and Gender by Province



⁶¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 119. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 119.

⁶² Human Sciences Research Council, p. 120. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 120.

While care should be taken in **extrapolating** the overall **population**, there are a number of key points to be drawn from the **data**:

- Among **white** artists, most artists are **women** – this trend is consistent with similar **surveys** in Scotland and Australia, where there is a 60:40 split between women and men (it is likely that the actual split in the SA population is not as pronounced as appears here – as previously noted, **women** are generally more willing to **participate** in the **survey**)
- Among **black** artists, the reverse is true to an even greater degree. There are a variety of complex **sociological reasons** why this may be the case – see the ensuing **analysis** of subsequent issues related to **education** and **income**.⁶³

*Due to this important difference in the **gender** profile of **black** and **white** artists, the ensuing **analysis** avoids consideration of **gender** separate to **race** in the **presentation** and **interpretation** of **key indicators**. It should also be noted that questions relating to **race** in the **questionnaire** were treated with a degree of hostility by some **respondents**, and were occasionally a basis for artists refusing to **participate** in the **survey**. The subsequent **analysis** nevertheless demonstrates the importance of taking both **race and gender** into account in **interpreting key indicators**, and the issues that the **industry** faces in this regard.*⁶⁴

Concerning the location of artists, the following is mentioned:

Extract 14:

[...]

- A slightly larger population of **black** artists live in a CBD/suburban context (40%) than in a township context (35%). **Black male** artists (28%) are more likely to live and work in an urban township context than **black female** artists (19%).

[...] ⁶⁵

The survey gathered some information on the nature of the artistic practices that artists engage in. Main and subsidiary media used by artists were considered and related to gender and race under the heading ‘5.2 Nature of Practice’.

Extract 15:

Painting and drawing feature as the dominant media across all groups, most markedly so among **black male** artists, least

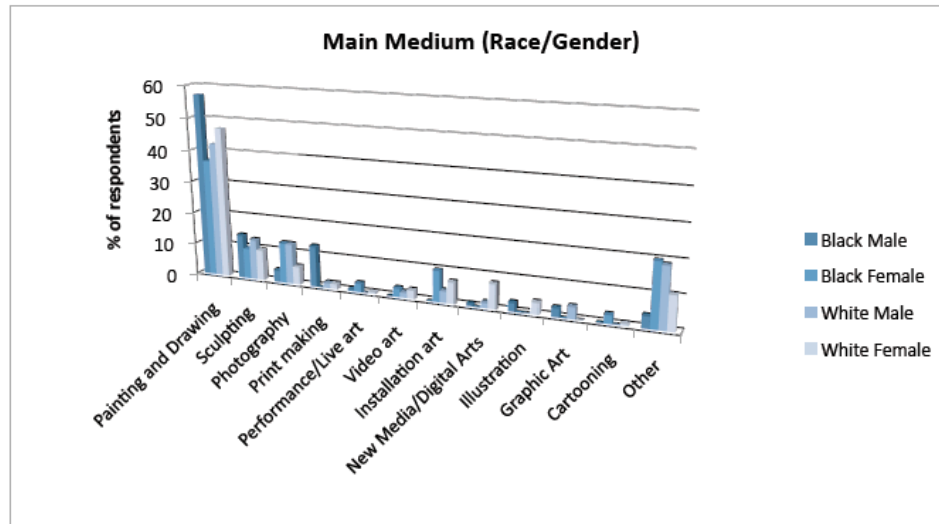
⁶³ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 120.

⁶⁴ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 121. The paragraph reproduced here appears in italics in the original text.

⁶⁵ Human Science Research Council, p. 121.

so among **black female** artists (37%). **Black women** artists are more likely than any other group to employ installation and performance art as a primary medium, **while black men** are more likely to employ printmaking as a primary medium – among all groups, **black men** favour more traditional media (painting, sculpture, printmaking), **black women** more contemporary media (video, performance, installation). **White women** are most likely to employ new media and digital arts as a primary medium. A significant group of **women** artists in the ‘other’ category employ a range of fine craft practices in their work, principally ceramics.⁶⁶

Figure 43: Artists Primary Medium vs Race/Gender



Related to artistic practice, the following statement is produced regarding artists’ area of practice:

Extract 16:

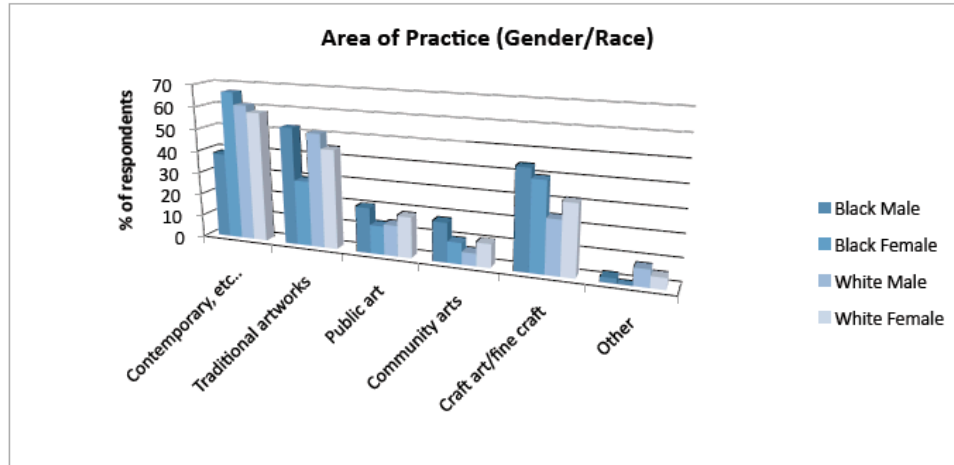
Reinforcing the findings related to primary and secondary media, **black women** artists registered the highest results related to contemporary practice, and the lowest relating to traditional practices, with **black male** artists indicating an inverse trend. The one area of consistency between **black men and women** respondents were in the area of craft art/fine craft, suggesting that there are two quite distinct sub-groups within the **black women** group – a (larger) group of black women artists who practice in primarily contemporary idiom and a smaller group which practice within the fine craft/craft art framework. Responses from **white male and white female** artists were broadly consistent.⁶⁷

[...]

⁶⁶ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 124. The figure below this statement appears directly below another figure on p. 124, ‘Figure 41: Artists Primary Medium’ which shows the primary medium for the entire artist population.

⁶⁷ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 126. The figure below this statement appears directly below another figure on p. 126, ‘Figure 46: Area of Practice’ which shows the area of practice for the entire artist population.

Figure 46: Area of Practice vs Race/Gender



In section ‘5.3 Career Development and Education’ the following statements appear, accompanied by a figure:

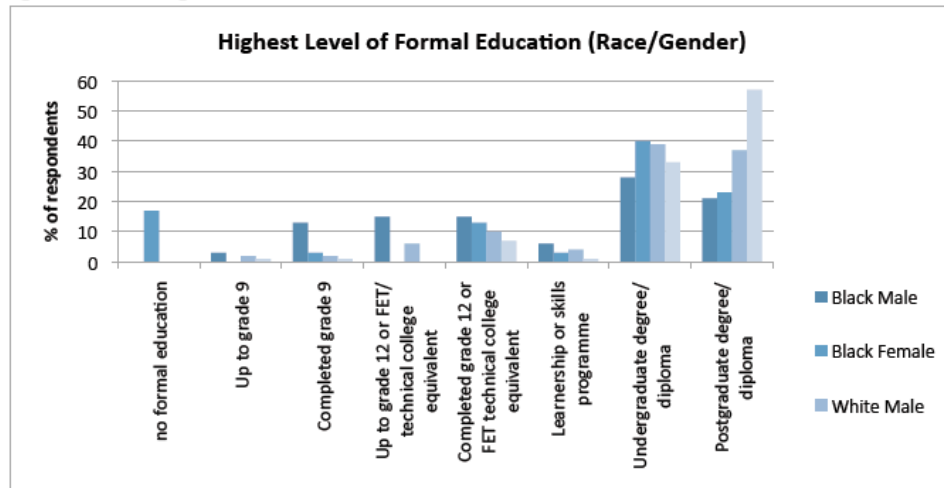
Extract 17:

Consistent with international trends in the developed world, South African artists are highly **educated**, a situation enabled through a substantial **infrastructure** of **tertiary institutions** offering **fine arts qualification** spread across the country. A majority of artists (79%) having completed a **university degree**, and a significant group (38%) having completed a **postgraduate degree**. [...] There is however some significant variation along lines of **race and gender** – **white artists** exceeded the international examples referenced (85% have **tertiary training**), only 53% of **black artists** have a **tertiary degree**, with significantly **more black women** than **black men** having come through **university training** (63% vs 49%). **Black male** artists demonstrate the greatest uptake in **training** through **SETA learnerships** or **skills programmes**, a historically recent **work-based training pathway** (6% uptake against 3% across all **respondents**). There are also a larger proportion of **black women** artists with no **formal training** at all, suggesting a position at both ends of the **professional development spectrum**.⁶⁸

[...]

⁶⁸ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 127. The figure below this statement appears directly below another figure on p. 128, ‘Figure 48: Highest Level of Formal Education’ which shows the highest level of formal education for the entire artist population.

Figure 49: Artists Highest Level of Formal Education vs Race/Gender



[...] Aside from affirming the significance of tertiary training, responses highlighted the importance of workshops and short courses for artists' professional development as well as mentorship and classes from participating professional artists. A significant proportion of (predominantly black male) respondents indicated that they 'have no formal training/are self-taught' (16%).⁶⁹

For artists, according to the Report, professional validation occurs mainly through the inclusion of their work in exhibitions. Information regarding artists' exhibition record over the past 5 years was obtained:

Extract 18:

Roughly 80% of respondents indicated that they had work publicly exhibited during this period, with relatively minor variations on the basis of race and gender (white artists more likely to have staged a solo exhibition, black artists more likely to have participated in group exhibitions).⁷⁰

In the Report the differences in responses between men and women regarding factors that enable their professional development and success are discussed in some detail:

Extract 19:

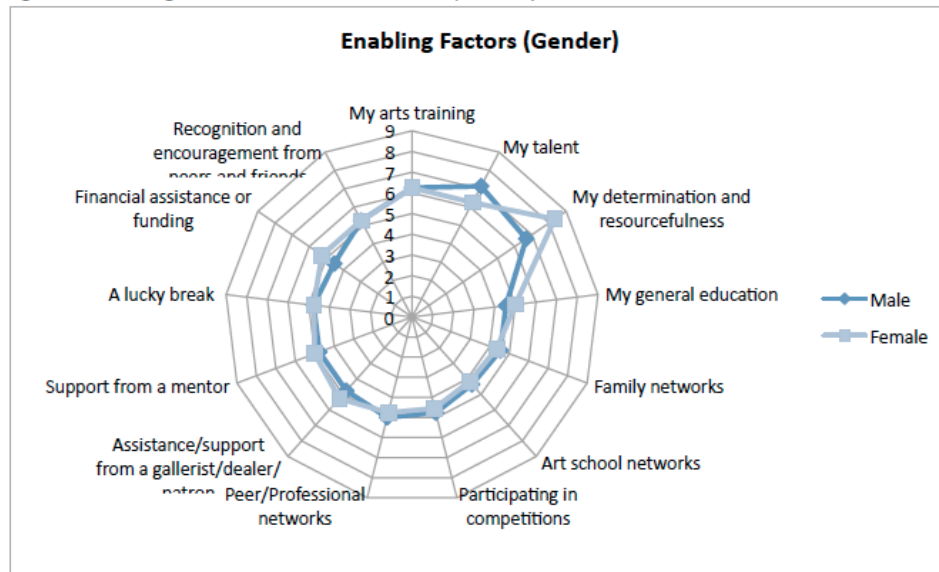
All artists identified internal capacities rather than external assistance, circumstances and opportunities as being the most significant. The responses were largely consistent across race, though some interesting disparities are evident in the responses based on gender. Male artists believe that their intrinsic talent is the most significant contributing factor,

⁶⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 128.

⁷⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 129.

whereas **women** attach substantially greater significance to 'determination and resourcefulness'.⁷¹
[...]

Figure 56: Enabling Factors for Professional Development by Gender



Statements of gender and race entanglement appear in section '5.4 Work Circumstances' where 'Division of Time' is considered:

Extract 20:

Artists were asked to indicate how they **divided their time** between **different activities**, and how this related to their **ability to sustain themselves**.

[...]

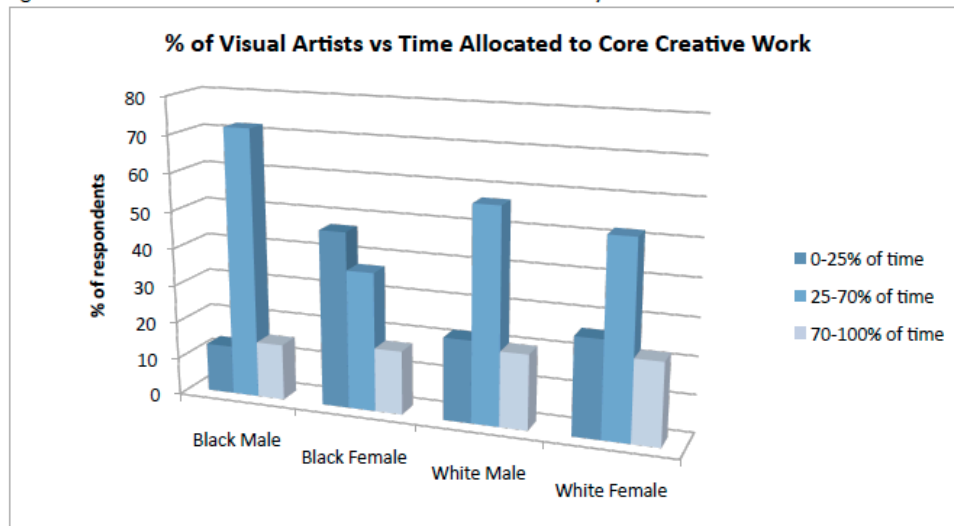
- **Male artists** are able to **spend** somewhat more **time** on their **core creative work** than **female artists** (48% of time vs 43% of time). A very large proportion of **black female artists** (47%) were only able to invest less than 25% of their **time** in their **core creative activity**.
- Artists who spent less than 50% of their **time** on their **core creative work** indicated that the main reason for not being able to **devote** more **time** was due to the need to **earn supplementary income**. The second most significant reason cited (more so for **women**) was **domestic/family responsibilities**.⁷²

[...]

⁷¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 133. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 133.

⁷² Human Sciences Research Council, p. 136. The figure below this statement appears directly below the bulleted list and another figure on p. 137, 'Figure 60: Artists Allocation of Time to Different Work Activities [%]' which show the percentage working time allocated to various activities for the entire artist population.

Figure 61: Artists Allocation of Time to Different Work Activities by Race



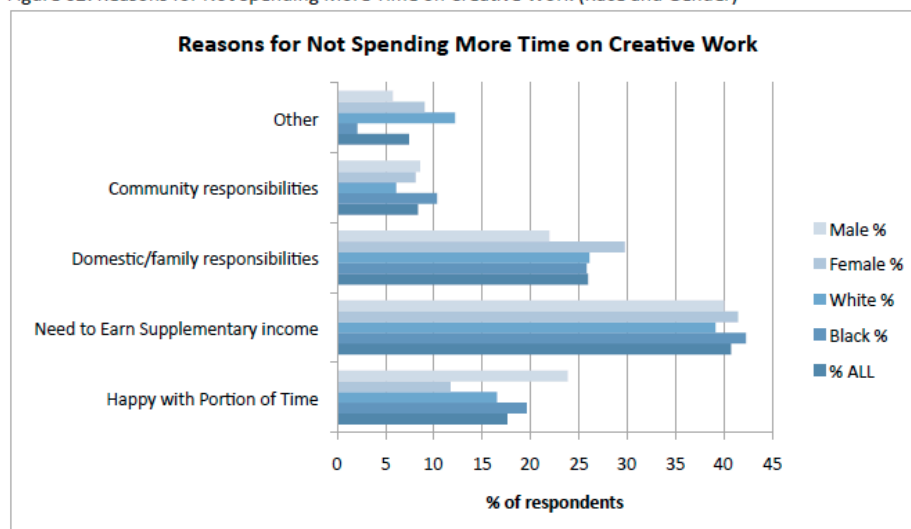
Two further figures are presented regarding the manner in which artists spend their time:

Table 27: Percentage of Time Spent on Different Activities Across Different Groups

Activity	Average Percentages				
	ALL %	Female %	Male %	Black %	White %
Producing own artwork and directly related activities	45	43	48	44	46
Networking	7	6	8	9	5
Other art-related work	12	13	11	12	11
Art-related Teaching	11	12	11	9	13
Voluntary work	3	2	3	4	2
Studying	6	7	6	9	5
Non arts related work	16	18	14	14	18
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100

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Figure 62: Reasons for Not Spending More Time on Creative Work (Race and Gender)



74

⁷³ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 137.

⁷⁴ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 138.

Findings regarding the impact of race, gender and location on artists' income are presented at length under section '5.6 Economic Position and Circumstances':

Extract 21:

This [income disparity] is partly attributable to the fairly dramatic **income disparity** on the basis of (particularly) **race** and (to a lesser degree) **gender** in the South African context, as indicated in the table below [...] Across **race** groups, **women** **earn** between 70% and 78% of what their **male** counterparts **earn**. A straight comparison on the basis of **gender** however shows **earnings** between **men and women** being equal – a function of a large group of **low-earning black male** artists moderating the **higher earnings** of **white male** artists (noting that the great majority of **black** artists are **men**). Among other things, this confirms the importance of considering the implications of *both* **race and gender** across all areas of the report.⁷⁵

Table 29: Artists Annual Income by Race and Gender – Mean, Median and Minimum/Maximum Values

	Black Male	Black Female	White Male	White Female	ALL
N	71	30	47	81	232
mean	95 876	67 669	229 870	180 007	149 809
p25	32 000	19 400	65 500	60 000	41 000
median	60 000	45 250	145 000	120 000	90 000
min	800	400	18 500	5 000	400
max	800 000	440 000	2 000 000	1 785 467	2 000 000
median as % of mean	63%	67%	63%	67%	60%

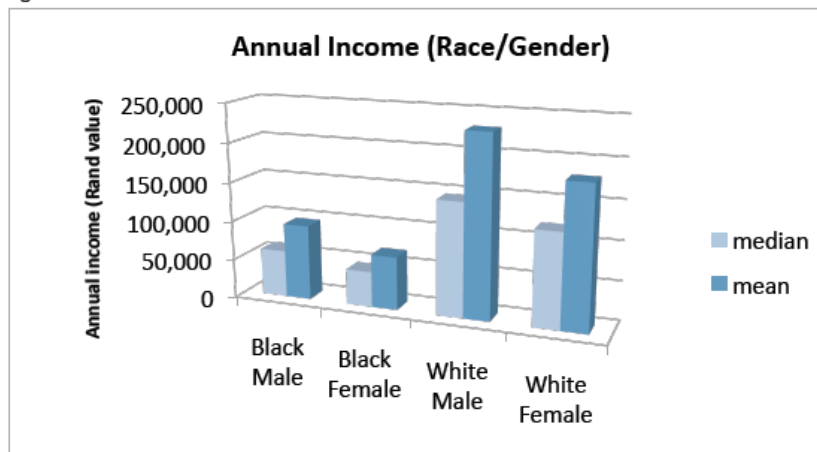
Extract 22:

[...] A comparison of the above two tables [the one represented above and another in the report regarding artists' income per province] demonstrates that **race** (and to a lesser degree, **gender**) are more powerful **determinants** of general **economic success** than location is for the majority of artists. [...] ⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 144. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 144.

⁷⁶ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 145. The figure below this statement appears directly below it after the completion of the paragraph on p. 145.

Figure 73: Annual Income: Race and Gender



Further statements regarding artists' worth and financial position are produced regarding artists' assets and periods of unemployment or inability to earn income:

Extract 23:

The **mean** and **median replacement value** of artists' **assets** is R170 000 and R50 000 respectively, even more sharply reflecting the overall **skew** apparent **income values**. **Disparities** according to **race** are more pronounced, and less pronounced on the basis of **gender**, as reflected in the tables below:⁷⁷

	ALL	Black	White	Male	Female
N	227	96	129	117	110
mean	169,771	52 391	256 656	171 897	167 510
p25	18,000	8 000	30 000	15 000	20 000
p50	50,000	20 000	100 000	48 000	62 500
min	200	200	4 000	500	200
max	3,000,000	500 000	3 000 000	3 000 000	2 000 000

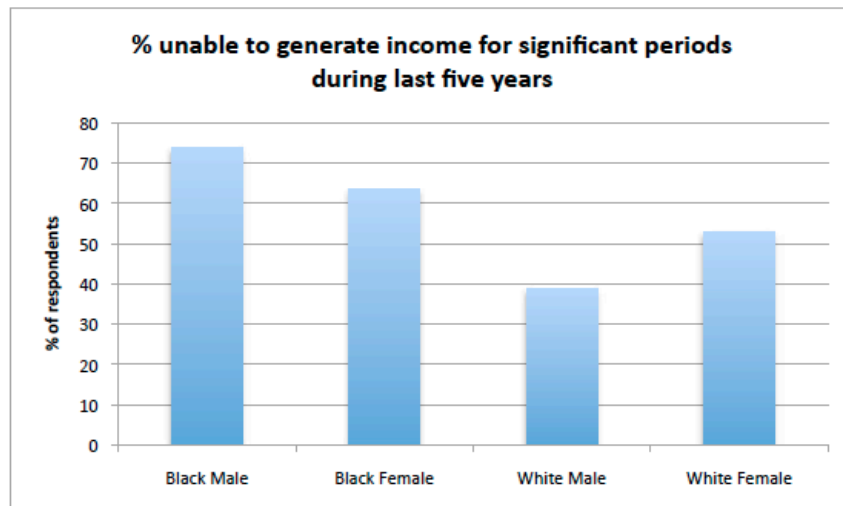
Extract 24:

57% of artists **surveyed** have experienced significant **periods** (of more than three months) during the course of the last five years when they have been **unable** to **generate** any **income**. This is true for 71% of **black** artists and 41% of **white** artists. [...]⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 151. The figure below this statement appears directly below it on p. 151.

⁷⁸ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 152. The figure below this statement appears directly below it after the completion of the paragraph on p. 152.

Figure 81: Percentage Artists Unable to Generate Income for Significant Periods During Last Five Years



A short statement regarding the demographics of artists' employees appears:

Extract 25:

The majority (65%) of administrative staff are women, and the majority of technical and specialist staff are men (63% and 55% respectively).⁷⁹

In the second section of extracts presented above (Extracts 12–25), the performance of an economic discourse continues through the *énoncés*. As the people in the South African art world are described as ‘employees’, terms associated with human resource management (already emerging in Extract 1) surface regarding education and training, such as ‘levels of education’, ‘tertiary institutions’, ‘fine arts qualification’, ‘university’ and ‘postgraduate’ ‘degrees’, ‘tertiary’ and ‘university’ ‘training’, and ‘professional development’. Attention to how artists (or ‘workers’ for that matter) spend their time, as is seen in Extract 20, is another example of human resource management thinking and terminology in the Report, with such terms appearing to indicate how ‘time’ is ‘divided’ or ‘spent’ on ‘core creative’ ‘work’ or ‘activity’. Ultimately, the abundance of administrative language in the Report does not only perform an economic discourse, but also assigns value to the raced and gendered knowledge avatars discussed earlier. In particular, financial terms used to describe the income or monetary worth of the people in the study, have this value-assigning effect. Financial terms used in the statements above include: ‘income’, ‘earnings’,

⁷⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 154.

‘high-earning’, ‘low-earning’, ‘economic success’, and ‘replacement value of assets’.

At this point, it is interesting to consider how the four avatars are taking shape and how they are continually organised in a hierarchy of lack. Statements contributing to this organisation are found in Extract 13, starting with the following fragment: ‘the sample suggests that within the visual arts, there is a 50:50 split between men and women artists. This gender split however diverges dramatically when correlated against race.’⁸⁰ This fragment’s accompanying graphics, Figures 37 and 38 in the Report, entitled ‘Gender: Black vs White Artists’ visually constructs the hierarchy of lack of the four avatars, as it indicates in the first graphic that 29% of Black artists are ‘Black Female’ and 71% are ‘Black Male’ and in the second graphic that 66% of White artists are ‘White Female’ and 34% are ‘White Male’.⁸¹ In this round it is the ‘White Female’ avatar that comes out on ‘top’, but the ‘Black Female’ avatar remains most lacking in the hierarchy. Another fragment in Extract 13 performs the hierarchy: ‘[...] Among white artists, most artists are women – this trend is consistent with similar surveys in Scotland and Australia, where there is a 60:40 split between women and men [...] Among black artists, the reverse is true to an even greater degree. There are a variety of complex sociological reasons why this may be the case – see the ensuing analysis of subsequent issues related to education and income’.⁸²

Indeed, education is then brought to bear on the hierarchy in Extract 17: ‘[...] white artists exceeded the international examples referenced (85% have tertiary training), only 53% of black artists have a tertiary degree, with significantly more black women than black men having come through university training (63% vs 49%) [...] There is also a larger proportion of black women artists with no formal training at all, suggesting a position at both ends of the professional development spectrum’.⁸³ The last sentence of this fragment is peculiar, given that the accompanying graphic in ‘Figure 49: Artists Highest Level of Formal Education vs Race/Gender’ does not indicate any proportion of Black artist-women with no formal training, let

⁸⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 119.

⁸¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 119.

⁸² Human Sciences Research Council, p. 120.

⁸³ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 127.

alone a large proportion. The only figure with no formal education according to this graphic is the 'Black Male' avatar. One thus wonders why the Report's text seeks to place the 'Black Female' avatar in the position of having no formal education without any apparent evidence. Perhaps it may be ascribed to the performativity of the hierarchy of lack – that the lack of the 'Black Female' avatar is taken up, repeated and recited in this case. Similarly, where time allocation to so-called 'core creative work' is concerned, it is the 'Black Female' avatar that is positioned as being least able to devote her time. See Extract 20: '[...] Male artists are able to spend somewhat more time on their core creative work than female artists (48% of time vs 43% of time). A very large proportion of black female artists (47%) were only able to invest less than 25% of their time on their core creative activity'.⁸⁴

Statements and graphics regarding income once again solidify the hierarchy of lack through numerical distribution of annual income in Extract 21 and Extract 22. 'Table 29: Artists Annual Income by Race and Gender – Mean, Median and Minimum/Maximum Values' shows again how the 'White Male' avatar earns the most per year with R229 870, followed by the 'White Female' avatar with R180 007, then by the 'Black Male' avatar with R95 876, and finally the 'Black Female' avatar with R67 669.⁸⁵ This line up of financial value is then further underlined by 'Figure 73: Annual Income: Race and Gender' (in Extract 22), which visually performs the 'White Male' to Black Female' hierarchy.⁸⁶

In describing the performativity of *énoncés*, I am not concerned with describing an underlying wholeness to which they bear reference.⁸⁷ I am concerned with describing their regularities as discursive formations and their central effect.⁸⁸ The statements regarding 'race' and 'gender' produced in the Report, cluster around the following aspects: the study's methodology ('race' and 'gender' as 'key indicators' in the production of demographics; sampling of artists, considering 'race' and 'gender' together in the analysis); demographic descriptions of workforces (artists, artists' employees and employees in the art industry; indications of how historic demographics

⁸⁴ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 136.

⁸⁵ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 144.

⁸⁶ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 145.

⁸⁷ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 23, 27

⁸⁸ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 41.

have shifted); the financial position of artists (income, assets, unemployment/inability to generate income); ownership, management and governance (of art businesses, organisations, museums and galleries); artists' professional development and success, as well as education and training; artistic production (allocation of time); and artistic practice (regarding medium and area of practice). These aspects are thus mainly orientated towards economic concerns. Although this comes as no surprise seeing that this Report represents an industry study, it must be kept in mind that as one of the only studies on the South African visual art world which gives an account of the people operating in this landscape, these constructions create a picture of people in predominantly economic terms. These constellations of statements centred on economic terms are what the appearance of the question of gender and race look like in the archive.

The archive, which this study of the South African visual arts industry forms part of, is constituted on various historical *a priori*, or as Foucault describes it, 'condition[s] of reality for statements'.⁸⁹ The methodological conventions of quantitative social sciences research are in themselves a form of *a priori*, which are employed in an industry appraisal of the South African visual art world. Two other connected *a priori* are the existence of the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) paradigm in South Africa and the related Human Resources-Managerial paradigm, which both work towards the, mainly racial, transformation of the South African employment sector through the application of quotas. These *a priori* make the clustering of statements regarding gender and race around economic concerns possible, as they are presented above.

What has been described so far in my analysis of the statements constitutes the *dispositif* of the discourse on gender and race in the Report – the regular, 'flat' knowledge surface, that which we can know. It has been shown that an economic, administrative and technical discourse is performed through the type of terms which are 'emitted' where 'gender' and 'race' appears.⁹⁰ Within these terms four avatars, or imagined subjects, emerge, onto which the knowledge produced by the Report regarding 'race' and 'gender' is projected. These projections of information and data,

⁸⁹ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 143.

⁹⁰ Tennant Jackson, p. 160.

including visual and statistical figures, function to organise the four knowledge avatars, 'White Male', 'White Female', 'Black Male', and 'Black Female', into a hierarchy that positions the 'Black Female' figure as *most not*, or most lacking. Below I spend another moment on the specific texture of the surface, the *dispositif*, of the discourse on 'gender' and 'race' as it is taking shape in the Report, before I consider what it *performs away*.

Production of Identity Categories in the Report: 'Gender' and 'Race'

I now need to consider how the production of *quantitative* stratification produces a discourse in the Report that upholds gendering and racialising binarisation. In Saussurean linguistics and language theory, language produces meaning by means of a binary opposition (0-1), which means that words acquire meaning only in a system and through negative relations, namely by not being something else rather than through naming actual things. C-a-t is not M-a-t (syntagmatically) but it is also not D-o-g (paradigmatically). Meaning is produced relationally and negatively. Meaning is the effect of this play of absence.⁹¹

In philosophy, however, there is a binary opposition that refers to a pair of related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning (life /death, nature/culture). This 'structure' moreover, creates a hierarchy between the terms of the pair. In feminist thinking, like that of Donna Haraway, the aim is not destruction of this structure, but the attempt to reveal its inherent instability by revealing the structural relation between the terms of the opposition and the 'politics' of domination at work in the opposition itself.⁹² Gender can be understood in terms of being a binary opposition in the asymmetrical pairing of the terms man/woman and race that of White/Black. Over a whole series of oppositional pairs, such as high/low, light/dark, good/bad, active/lazy, etc. chains of meaning are formed that consolidate a set of positivised and dominating attributes or meanings for the head opposition, while at the level of language, the other of this pair becomes a negative, an absence of the values acquired by the dominant term in the pair. Studying gender entails deconstructing the constant iteration of sequences of hierarchical pairings, in which the meaning of the favoured

⁹¹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *A Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Wade Baskin (New York, NY, Toronto and London: McGraw-Hill, 1959), pp. 22, 102, 107, 115-116, 119-121.

⁹² Haraway, p. 148.

term depends on the degrading of the second to its function as the negative support of dominion.

My point here is that in the everyday usage of terms that appear to describe categories of people, male and female, White and Black, gender and race pass as givens. Subjected to linguistic and philosophical deconstructions, they are produced effects of systems of meaning and power relations. Thus gender is used in the Report in the everyday sense of category, a division by sex, just as much as it naturalises divisions by colour as 'race'. Reading and coding the usage of such terms from a post-colonial feminist perspective informed by Saussure and Derrida, it is possible to discern the work that these apparently self-evident categories are doing as both iterations and obfuscations.

As is apparent in the preceding analysis of statements, in organising the presentation of its findings, the Report represents data for 'male' and 'female' respondents respectively. Where such data is shown, the Report uses the term 'gender' for what would appear to be a typically biologically-founded presentation of findings correlated to so-called male and female participants. A more accurate term for these categories would perhaps be 'sex', but 'gender' is nevertheless used in this dichotomising stratification practice, which it inherits from quantitative and statistical research norms. As mentioned earlier, 'gender' in the Report becomes something with which to compare and contrast findings, or something with which to divide information – a stratification tool.

Since sex is typically used on official forms, such as passports, as M/F (male or female) and since race in South Africa has come to mean Black/White not ethnicity, there is a sense in which the Report is incorporating a language registering feminism's focus on gender only to fall back on what is in effect categorisation by 'sex' (M/F) while its use of 'race' rehearses the apartheid classification that anyone who is not completely White is in effect 'Black'.

This problematic application of 'gender', and the conflation of gender with sex should, however, not go unnoticed. In her analysis of Simone de Beauvoir's classic study, philosopher Judith Butler notes the important role that the distinction between sex and gender has played in

feminism's effort to counter essentialist ideas that anatomy is destiny.⁹³ Butler argues that 'sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body, whereas *gender* is the cultural meaning and form that a body acquires, the variable modes of that body's acculturation'.⁹⁴ In discussing how children are assigned a gender once they are signified as either a boy or a girl, and referencing Gayle Rubin, queer film theorist Teresa de Lauretis points out that this happens because,

[...] the popular wisdom knows, then, that gender is not sex, a state of nature, but the representation of each individual in terms of a particular social relation which pre-exists the individual and is predicated on the *conceptual* and rigid (structural) opposition of two biological sexes. This conceptual structure is what feminist social scientists have designated 'the sex-gender system'.⁹⁵

The Report is thus actively *constructing* 'gender' as 'male' and 'female'. This elision of gender with sex categories (male and female) negates feminist efforts to maintain this distinction for strategic liberation purposes, and functions to polarise two sexes. This polarisation may also hold some traces of a compulsory binary system that implies compulsory heterosexuality. Strong opinions regarding the use of sex opposition exist in feminist scholarship⁹⁶. Accordingly, Monique Wittig, writing originally in 1981, calls for the breakdown of such taxonomies, and states that:

[a] new personal and subjective definition for all humankind can only be found beyond the categories of sex (woman and man) and that the advent of individual subjects demand first destroying the categories of sex, ending the use of them, and rejecting all sciences which still use these categories as their fundamentals (particularly all social sciences).⁹⁷

Regarding the Report's use of 'gender', it is interesting to note that a blank questionnaire included in Appendix C of the Report, shows that in question 1,7 where participants had to declare their 'gender', a blank space

⁹³ Judith Butler, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex', *Yale French Studies*, 70 (1986), 35-49 (p. 35).

⁹⁴ Butler, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex', p. 35.

⁹⁵ Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender. Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1987), p. 5.

⁹⁶ Butler, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex', p. 47.

⁹⁷ Monique Wittig, 'One is Not Born a Woman', in *Psychoanalysis and Woman: A Reader*, ed. by Shelly Sanguara (New York: New York University Press, 2000), pp. 282-289 (p. 288).

was left for the participants to complete. Because participants could write anything they wished in this space, it is doubtful that every single respondent selected to fill in either ‘male’ or ‘female’. It is thus curious that ‘Appendix A: Artist Survey Report’, shows respondents organised as either ‘male’ or ‘female’. The original completed questionnaires are, of course, confidential and, therefore, not included in the Report, but one wonders what exact responses were received for question ‘1,7 Gender’. ‘Gender’ in the Report thus stands as a social category that effaces issues of sexuality and of sexual identity.

Similar to question ‘1,7 Gender’, with question ‘1,8 Race’, the questionnaire offers the respondent an opportunity for self-identification. Here the categories used to organise the participants’ responses are noted in Appendix A as ‘Black’, ‘Coloured’, ‘Indian_Asian’ [*sic*], and ‘White’. The use of these categories are not surprising in light of South Africa’s policy on Black Economic Empowerment over the last two and a half decades, which has centred on a the redistribution of economic wealth and opportunity to defined ‘previously disadvantaged’ groups. The use of these categories is widespread in everyday life in contemporary South Africa and South Africans are often provided no choice but to declare their identities accordingly, especially in administrative settings. But these categories should not subsequently be viewed as only part of recuperative measures, as the inception of their production was in the apartheid government’s conceptualisation of White and non-White persons, graded on a colour scale from White, through Indian and Coloured, ending in Black. South Africa’s historical affliction is thus the production of these kinds of stratification categories. The history and continued use of these categories are well set out by Handri Walters, a Stellenbosch University postdoctoral fellow in Sociology and Social Anthropology, in a piece appearing in the *Daily Maverick*, where she examines the persistence of the legacies race-based research at Stellenbosch University.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Handri Walters, ‘Race Haunts the Halls of Stellenbosch University’, *Daily Maverick* (8 May 2019) <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2019-05-08-race-haunts-the-halls-of-stellenbosch-university/>> [accessed 14 May 2019]. Walters’ piece is reflection on the problematics of an article published by Stellenbosch researchers that mapped the problems in cognitive functioning of colored women. The article has since been retracted, but these are its details:
Sharné Nieuwoudt, Kasha Elizabeth Dickie, Carla Coetzee, Louise Engelbrecht and Elmarie Terblanche, ‘RETRACTED ARTICLE: Age- and education-related effects on

The contemporary use of these categories, stemming from deeply rooted apartheid colour politics, contributes to South Africans imagining themselves as stratified in this manner. But participants in this study of the South African art industry proved to be both aware and wary of apartheid racial identification legacies. At the end of Extract 13, the following appears in an italicised paragraph: *‘It should also be noted that questions relating to race in the questionnaire were treated with a degree of hostility by some respondents, and were occasionally a basis for artists refusing to participate in the survey.’*⁹⁹ It is truly telling that questions regarding race evoked such a strong negative response from the participants, resulting in non-participation in some. It is clear that some degree of resistance to forced racial identification is already at work in the South African art world, as is visible in the reaction of some respondents (or non-respondents) to this study.

More problematically, in most of its analysis, the Report lumps all non-White groups into the category ‘black’, and the following is offered as justification: ‘Because the sample sizes for Coloured and Indian artists are small, black African, Coloured and Indian artists have been conflated as a single category in the balance of the analysis’.¹⁰⁰ What is sacrificed in this move is an understanding of the diversity of backgrounds of the participants in the survey. The Report does present a graphic that contains some nuances about the cultural background of the respondents in the form of a pie chart showing language groups, entitled ‘Figure 41: Artists’ Home Language’. This chart shows English, Afrikaans, IsiZulu, SeSotho, IsiXhosa, Sepedi, SiSwati and ‘Other’ language groupings.¹⁰¹ These somewhat finer distinctions are, however, subsumed by the categories ‘black’ and ‘white’ for most of the Report.

The construction of this dichotomy reduces the heterogeneity of people living and functioning in the South African art world, and it paints a picture of a Black and White world. This conflation does hark back to

cognitive functioning in Colored South African women’, *Aging, Neuropsychology and Cognition* (2019) <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13825585.2019.1598538>> [accessed 14 May 2019].

⁹⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 121.

¹⁰⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 119.

¹⁰¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 121.

apartheid legacies of forced identification and the Report's production of racial categories in this manner thus needs to be viewed in light of colonial legacies. This cut and dry separation between stratification categories wipes out the possibility of seeing how the participants in this study might already be experiencing their world and social relations as more complex and multi-tonal than 'black' and 'white'.

The construction of 'race' as 'black' and 'white' repeats the brutality of the apartheid imaginary, in which diverse groups are set up as homogenous oppositions. Given South Africa's past of forced removals of 'non-White' persons, rezoning and racial separatism in every possible area of life, the violence of the production of these categories as a legacy of the apartheid apparatus should not go unnoticed. What was employed in the apartheid years to keep the racial divide between White and 'non-White' persons intact was the denial of humanity, loss of dignity and indeed physical and psychological suffering of the largest part of South Africa's people.

The following extract captures the Report's understanding and use of the concepts 'gender' and 'race':

*Due to this important difference in the gender profile of black and white artists, the ensuing analysis avoids consideration of gender separate to race in the presentation and interpretation of key factors. [...] The subsequent analysis nevertheless demonstrates the importance of taking both race and gender into account in interpreting key indicators, and the issues that the industry faces in this regard.*¹⁰²

The study thus acknowledges the need to recognise the entanglement of gender and race, but the ultimate effect of its production of stratification categories results in the creation of one-dimensional knowledge avatars. The epistemological violence of stratification in this case crystallises in the implications that the constructed avatars have on the understanding of agency in the South African art world. In this Report artists are relegated to figures of representation, as opposed to their position in the 'real' world, where they are figures of negotiation, who are subjects and who possess agency.

¹⁰² Human Sciences Research Council, p. 121. The passages quoted here appear in the Report in an italicised paragraph, and I have therefore reproduced it in its original, italicised form here.

The study's commitment to the easy categories of male/female and Black/White is problematic, particularly as they appear in this context as representational technologies.¹⁰³ Regarding the sex-gender system, De Lauretis states that it 'is both a sociological construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation which assigns meaning (identity, value, prestige, location in kinship, status in the social hierarchy, etc.) to individuals within the society'.¹⁰⁴ This seems highly applicable to the production and reproduction of gender and racial categories in case of the Report.

Finding and Un-finding Gender and Race: The Text Folds

It has been established that the Report is performing a racial and gendered discourse through economic and administrative terms. The statements, or *énoncés*, described above constitute what gender and race look like in the archive regarding the South African art world, as they are performed by and perform the discourse. Accordingly, Tennant Jackson states, as quoted earlier: '[a] statement is formed and transformed, produced by and produces the 'archive' or discursive field'.¹⁰⁵ This is the performativity of *énoncés*, their recitation and repetition, and this creates the *dispositif*, 'an arrangement or apparatus of power/knowledge', 'the rules of the discourse', and 'what we can "know"'.¹⁰⁶ To borrow Tennant Jackson's wording, that which 'becomes accepted, repeated and thus reinforced as the determinate fact—*énoncés*—that frame the interpretation [...] is the *dispositif* that fixes the ways' the South African art world is viewed or known. But, as Tennant Jackson demonstrates, repeated and recited statements function to occlude something. On the one hand the energy of the peristalsis has an upward-pushing effect, which is the performativity of *énoncés*; and on the other hand it has a downward pushing effect, which is the efficacy of performativity, the unknowable energy that creates the fold.¹⁰⁷ With Tennant Jackson's assertion that '[the] *dispositif* is the seen edge; the rest is

¹⁰³ De Lauretis, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ De Lauretis, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Tennant Jackson, p. 160.

¹⁰⁶ Tennant Jackson, p. 163.

¹⁰⁷ Tennant Jackson, p. 160, 167.

hidden in the fold as a skein', I proceed to consider what the South African art industry Report *folds away*.¹⁰⁸

In the Report's Executive Summary the following is declared as one of the key considerations in the formulation of recommendations aimed at developing the sector:

A commitment to achieving greater equity in the sector with regard both to wider access to the enjoyment and benefits that flow from access to the visual arts for a more diverse cross-section of the population, as well as to achieving the greater empowerment of black and women artists, entrepreneurs and initiatives in the sector.¹⁰⁹

This commitment appears to be supported in the body of the Report, especially as findings regarding the status of 'black and women artists', or 'race' and 'gender', are abundantly represented. This momentum is, however, not sustained towards the final formulation of recommendations.

The culmination of the Report is 'Section 8: Recommendations', where 24 carefully plotted recommendations are suggested. The process of arriving at these recommendations is unclear from the Report, but they are formulated for the government's attention. The prelude to the recommendations makes it clear that growing the market for the South African visual arts was regarded very important, as was considerations around the affordability of any proposed measure and the costs of the implementation of the recommendations and their potential impact in the sector.¹¹⁰ With regard to the intentions behind the recommendations the prelude also declares the following:

The report proposes a variety of recommendations for policy-driven intervention aimed at promoting the growth and *transformation* [my emphasis] of the visual arts sector, and a set of key framing objectives have been derived from the preceding analysis. These objectives are focused around six mutually reinforcing key areas of impact, defined as follows:

1. Stimulating domestic and international demand for the South African visual arts
2. Widening access to the experience of and participation in the visual arts
3. Strengthening the infrastructure that supports the visual arts
4. Enhancing the social and economic position of visual artists

¹⁰⁸ Tennant Jackson, p. 164.

¹⁰⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 207.

5. Attracting more investment and resources to the sector
6. Promoting greater coherence and cohesion in the sector¹¹¹

Given the commitment in the Executive Summary ‘to achieving the greater empowerment of black and women artists, entrepreneurs and initiatives in the sector’, also the fact that the Report mentions the importance of considering both gender and race when interpreting its findings, it is problematic that no mention of gender or ‘women artists’ makes it into a single one of the Report’s recommendations set out in this section, which are aimed at policy-creation that may grow and transform the visual art industry.¹¹² In fact, throughout the recommendations the entire notion of transformation takes a back seat to economic and organisational solutions. Only *Recommendation 20: Promote transformation and equity in the sector through targeted support for creative, leadership and management training* mentions the ‘problems associated with black people accessing the visual art sector’ and suggests the ‘inclusion of equity criteria in the process of appointment’.¹¹³ Thus while the study identifies various patterns and problems regarding ‘race’ and ‘gender’ in the body of the Report (albeit at the hand of the avatars), only oblique mention is made of race, in terms of Black people’s access to the visual art sector, in the recommendations, and none is made of gender. The study does, therefore, identify a problem, *but refuses to name it*. The absence of gender, and near-absence of race in the recommendations is thrown in relief by the ready and abundant presentations of findings related to ‘gender’ and ‘race’ in the body of the Report. While transformation may be implied in economic and industry-centred measures proposed by the recommendations, it is seriously doubtful that better organisation, and access to resources will undo the legacies of sexism and racism in South Africa so visible in the findings of this Report.

One needs to take a moment to fully realise the oddity of this disconnect – how the Report finds and *un-finds* gender and race. First, because of the study’s research instrument which uses (and reproduces) quantitative stratification through the categories of ‘gender’ and ‘race’, it

¹¹¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 208.

¹¹² Human Sciences Research Council, pp. 9, 121, 144.

¹¹³ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 219.

cannot but *find* and describe issues related to gender and race in the South African art world. However problematically, it does produce a discourse on gender and race. Second, two paradigms are prevalent in South Africa at the moment, which make issues around gender and racial discrepancies particularly *knowable* or *sayable* at the time of the Report's appearance, namely Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which provide a particular focus on gender. In light of this, one may then ask: Why are gender and race virtually disappeared in the recommendations? And what makes this disappearance possible?

Tennant Jackson's thoughts on the performativity of *énoncés*, the *dispositif*, the efficacy of performativity and the 'fold' provide some explanation. The performativity of the discourse creates the *dispositif*, which in the Report surfaces as the knowledge avatars and the performance of an economic discourse. The efficacy of this performativity, creates 'the fold', in this case it is ultimately the performativity of the economic discourse that *performs* gender and race *away* and establishes itself as the self-evident answer to the improvement of the status of the South African art world. Tennant Jackson recounts what Foucault states about the *dispositif* in the following – she is quoting Foucault: 'it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent'.¹¹⁴ With the Report's recommendations, gender and race are delivered to the downward squeezing energy of the peristalsis and are folded away from the surface. Tennant Jackson writes how, '[the] text folds. The painting folds, not in the rhetoric of metaphors of art-historical writings, not in the actual depiction of the folds, but in the inference, the action, the (in)visibility, the wave/particle in the sense of space-time dimensions within dimensions'.¹¹⁵

The 'Potential in the Fold' and the Need for Different Approaches

Although gender and race are folded away, one should remember that the fold sustains the discourse. To repeat Tennant Jackson's earlier words, that 'which is in the interstices also constructs the discourse, though it cannot be directly referred to and is (pre-) visible; it is the fold. It must still be present

¹¹⁴ Tennant Jackson, p. 164. She is quoting from Michel Foucault, 'The Confessions of the Flesh', pp. 194-196.

¹¹⁵ Tennant Jackson, p. 166.

in order to make the discourse active.’¹¹⁶ The efficacy of performativity – the potential energy in the fold – lies always already pressing beneath the surface. Tennant Jackson also states, that ‘[t]he rules of discourse, as *dispositif*, structure how we see the world, and ourselves, in relation to knowledge and power. The power of the *dispositif* is its efficacy: that which sustains it is the ‘fold’. The ‘fold’ is the effect of the unthought on the thought, the affect.’¹¹⁷ In the Report, gender and race are already *inside the visible*, to make reference to Catherine de Zegher’s curatorial exploration of difference.¹¹⁸

Reading and analysing the Report on the South African art industry has served as a route into my questions regarding the complexities of both the used/reduced concepts gender and race in relation to the social subjects and life-worlds which they evoke in a post-colonial feminist discourse in the South African art world. It has also become a means by which to articulate ways to research the South African art world through a post-colonial feminist lens. My exploration in this sense is based on the one hand on textual analysis, and on the other hand, on the generation of an oral archive to unfold the silenced and invisibilised spaces beneath the Report’s discursive lid. Through my work with the Report, it has become apparent that, to counter the effects of its methodology and approach, the Report necessitates a different model by which to investigate the South African art world and the people who form and practice within it. Reviewing the factors that lead to this conclusion here, I shall now establish some of the central questions for my research.

I started my reading of the Report with some thoughts on its methodology and mentioned that because of the sampling methods employed, many *voices* may have been lost in the research that was conducted. Adding to this is perhaps also the effect of the closed questions we find in the survey. The need for a different approach to researching the South African art world is heralded in this first instance, but the necessity for a different model goes much deeper. Through a Foucaultian analysis of the Report, as elaborated for art history by Jennifer Tennant Jackson’s

¹¹⁶ Tennant Jackson, p. 166.

¹¹⁷ Tennant Jackson, p. 165.

¹¹⁸ M. Catherine de Zegher, ed., *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art, in, of and from the Feminine* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996).

thinking, I have shown how the Report performs an economic discourse that constitutes the terms (and also language) in which gender and race appear in the archive. Through the use of quantitative stratification, the Report constructs sexed and raced knowledge avatars, which are consistently organised in a hierarchy of lack. Ultimately, with the study's climax – the formulation of recommendations for the government – practically the entire matter of gender and race is performed away.

In light of these discoveries made through reading and analysing the Report, the following questions guide my research into the South African art world: With what language and methodologies can we investigate the South African art world that acknowledges its diversity and complexity? How can we think about people in the art world as more than a human resource that may be better applied and more effectively managed in governmental planning? How can we recognise how gender is entangled with race, and vice versa, in ways that do not perform the avatars and sustain the historic brutalities with which they are associated? How can gender and race become more than stratification tools, more than key indicators with which to interpret data? How can transformation be thought about beyond the application of quotas or brute categories? Can we in the Humanities also generate data for qualitative and theoretically sensitised research analysis?

What the reproduction of stratification categories in the Report cannot capture and excludes from the presentation of its findings as such, is the manner in which dualisms, dichotomies and boundaries are already being transgressed in the South African art world while also being sustained under the appearance of change. It does not and cannot represent the possibility of transformation of these categories, which it participates in upholding. The Report's easy, shorthand use of the knowledge avatars comes at a price: it produces continuous disadvantage and affliction. The technology of South African culture has been to produce exclusion along racial lines. Through the Report, categories become attributes, and race/gender becomes a model for the distribution of people in power. The avatars are created to bear the mark of South Africa's racist and sexist wound(s), but with the Report's lack of nuancing and contextualisation, the avatars are left as discovered fact, with their injuries unattended. The information that is knowable about gender and race in the South African art

world is pinned onto them as though they were corkboards. But when it is time for recommending actions to be taken in the South African art world, the curtain is drawn, and they are performed away, while an economic discourse walks out and takes centre stage for the final announcements. Without belabouring this point too much, I want to stress that the framing and approach of the Report precludes a counter-discourse. What is, therefore, needed is, as Teresa De Lauretis proposes, to seek a *view from elsewhere*, ‘the elsewhere of discourse here and now, the blind spots, or the space-off, of its representations [...] spaces in the margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and in the chinks and cracks of the power-knowledge apparatus’.¹¹⁹ Exploring how to obtain this view from elsewhere is the focus of the rest of this thesis.

¹¹⁹ De Lauretis, p. 25.

CHAPTER 2

What a feminist analysis can offer

Towards a Feminist post-colonial Approach

It was mentioned earlier in this thesis that national and racial liberation movements have eclipsed the gender struggle in South Africa.¹ I also stated that feminism has a legacy of being side-lined ‘in favor of activism against racially based injustices and discriminations’.² Notwithstanding these factors, I believe that a gender analysis or rather an extended post-colonial feminist approach, could open up other dimensions for research into the South African art world both, as I have suggested, as a historico-geographically significant case study and for its own future as one of many art worlds intersecting in international contemporary art.

The study of gender has subversive potential. Filmmaker and literary theorist, Trinh T. Minh-ha states: ‘With such a definition in mind the concept of gender may be said to be alive, open enough to deal with both differences between and differences within entities, while the concept of sex reduces the interactions between men and women to an even exchange or a mere opposition of identities’.³ In light of this, I am ultimately interested in ways in which different kinds of knowledge can be accessed, obtained or produced than that provided by the Report on the South African art industry. In which ways can transformative knowledge, which reduces oppression, be produced about the South African art world? Towards this objective, I seek to employ theoretical and methodological approaches that avoid the effects produced by the Report, namely: stratification, or re-sectioning, which performs the avatars and their afflictions; human resource managerial paradigms; and cultural industries approaches which focus on national and economic value, by which matters of gender, race and difference are folded away.

¹ Bonnin, Deacon and Morrell, p. 114.

² Aronson, p. 4.

³ Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other. Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 106.

I will seek to explore how a post-colonial feminist approach can be applied in my research as a framework that can hold the complexity of the intricate entanglement of gender and race in the South African art world. In this light, the description of post-colonial feminism as offered by Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park appears appropriate:

Postcolonial feminism cannot be regarded simply as a subset of postcolonial studies, or, alternatively, as another variety of feminism. Rather it is an intervention that is changing the configurations of both postcolonial and feminist studies. Postcolonial feminism is an exploration of and at the intersections of colonialism and neo-colonialism with gender, nation, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of women's lives, their subjectivities, work, sexuality, and rights.⁴

I also find post-colonial feminism highly relevant to the work I am undertaking as it stands as a field that has held feminism accountable in the areas in which it has 'failed to take race into account'.⁵ Sunder Rajan and Park believe that:

Overall, postcolonial feminisms have established a discursive space where constructive critiques and dialogue are being made possible. Rather than blindly embrace or reject Western theories, postcolonial feminists in their best moments have successfully anchored these theories in historically and geographically specific social realities. In postcolonial space, where political and economic contradictions are less skilfully disguised than in the First World, postcolonial feminists have had opportunities to 'try out' the theories for fit – and in some cases they have significantly and even fundamentally revised the theories themselves.⁶

A feminist post-colonial framework can also offer much by way of thinking about the manner in which persons in the South African art world negotiate their own position and understand their situation and themselves in it. In this vein, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's work has contributed a wealth of thinking on matters of agency.⁷ Furthermore, Sunder Rajan and Park assert that some of the major theoretical preoccupations of 'metropolitan postcolonial feminism' have been the issues of representation

⁴ Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park, 'Postcolonial Feminism/ Postcolonialism and Feminism', in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. by Henry Schwartz and Sangeeta Ray (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 53-71 (p. 53).

⁵ Sunder Rajan and Park, p. 59.

⁶ Sunder Rajan and Park, p. 66.

⁷ See, for example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern speak?' in *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1994), pp. 66-111.

and location, stating that, '[t]he interrogative, interventionary thrust, and the reflexive bias that these enterprises display, have made them vastly influential works for both feminist theory and post-colonial studies.'⁸

Gender, feminism and post-colonialism in their various conjunctions and configurations provide ways of thinking about asymmetrical and hierarchical power relationships, and how epistemic violence is perpetrated through the production of knowledge through discourses that perform colonial legacies.⁹ Robert Young summarises this tendency succinctly: 'Above all, postcolonialism seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the West as well as the non-west'.¹⁰ Feminist post-colonial theory, and post-colonial theory in general, also demonstrate ways in which to view identity as something that is not as stable and fixed as the Report's production of the avatars suggests.¹¹ The work of Butler similarly offers manners in which to view identity as radically unstable, and to view gender as a subversive concept.¹²

Countering the Report: The Constructivist Grounded Theory Method

To counter the abstraction and avatarisation of the Report, I spent 6 months in South Africa in 2015 interviewing 15 people who are practicing/working in the South African art world, each on two occasions. Through these repeated encounters/conversations, and the recordings thereof, I generated 940 pages of transcript, which took about 388 hours to complete. My analysis and coding of this rich oral archive will be studied in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. Here I want to introduce an overview of the participants from the South African art world with whom I spoke as well as the material generated in terms of audio recording and transcription:

⁸ Sunder Rajan and Park, p. 54.

⁹ Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 19.

¹⁰ Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 7.

¹¹ For example in the writing of Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities. Old and New Ethnicities', in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, ed. by Les Black and John Solomos (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 144-153.

¹² For example, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 1990).

List of interviews
Round One

Date	Person	Interview length (Recording)	Time to transcribe (approx.)¹³	Length of transcript
18 February 2015	Senzeni Marasela	1:31:50	13 hours	26 pages
3 March 2015	Amita Makan	1:16:32	11 hours	17 pages
11 March 2015	Bettina Malcomess	1:06:16	9 hours	17 pages
13 March 2015	Usha Seejarim	1:08:14	10 hours	23 pages
14 March 2015	Thenjiwe Nkosi	1:10:44	10 hours	23 pages
16 March 2015	Jean Brundrit	1:33:29	13 hours	34 pages
18 March 2015	Mario Pissarra	2:03:51	18 hours	49 pages
19 March 2015	Joost Bosland	61:25	9 hours	18 pages
20 March 2015	Sue Williamson	55:28	8 hours	21 pages
30 March 2015	Lerato Shadi	1:24:38	13 hours	28 pages
20 April 2015	Blessing Ngobeni	1:27:36	13 hours	29 pages
20 April 2015	Leora Faber	1:44:23	15 hours	52 pages
24 April 2015	Bongi Bengu	51:26	7 hours	25 pages
14 October 2015	Sharlene Khan	1:55:26	16 hours	48 pages
13 June 2016	Penny Siopis	1:37:15	14 hours	40 pages
		Total:	179 hours	425 pages

Round Two

Date	Person	Interview length (Recording)	Time to transcribe (approx.)	Length of transcript
21 May 2015	Usha Seejarim	1:25:26	12 hours	43 pages
26 May 2015	Joost Bosland	1:44:28	15 hours	38 pages
29 May 2015	Mario Pissarra	1:40:22	14 hours	39 pages
30 May 2015	Jean Brundrit	1:42:46	15 hours	48 pages
1 June 2015	Amita Makan	1:42:31	15 hours	34 pages
3 June 2015	Sue Williamson	1:17:29	11 hours	36 pages
10 June 2015	Senzeni Marasela	1:40:49	14 hours	49 pages
10 June 2015	Leora Farber	1:48:39	16 hours	64 pages
11 June 2015	Bettina Malcomess	1:11:11	10 hours	34 pages
12 June 2015	Blessing Ngobeni	59:27	8 hours	18 pages
17 June 2015	Bongi Bengu	38:35	6 hours	22 pages
17 June 2015	Thenjiwe Nkosi	1:39:06	14 hours	43 pages
20 November 2015	Sharlene Khan	2:15:13	19 hours	55 pages
29 July 2016	Lerato Shadi	1:18:58	11 hours	28 pages
16 September 2016	Penny Siopis [1]	1:09:44	10 hours	31 pages

¹³ I transcribed at a rate of about 7 minutes of audio per hour.

23 September 2016	Penny Siopis [2]	2:16:19	19 hours	53 pages
			Total: 209	515 pages

Total for both rounds: 388 hours, 940 pages

I have thus created my own oral/aural archive of the accounts of people in the South African art world. I generated it, because I wanted to undertake original and qualitative research into people's experiences and to generate their own accounts of their experiences as participants in the art world in South Africa. The method I used to gather and analyse the 'data' I had assembled is drawn from Constructed Grounded Theory Methodology (CGTM or GTM), a well-established qualitative research method in the social sciences that in its Constructed form, as developed by Kathy Charmaz and Antony Bryant, takes into account many of the criticisms addressed to its original articulation by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser. I am one of the early adopters amongst art historians introducing this method into contemporary art history at the intersection with feminist studies.¹⁴

Interviews have been widely used as a tool of art historical research in order to collect the thoughts and words of artists or other people involved in artistic production, distribution and curation. The key difference from such gathering and editing of statements lies in CGTM as a qualitative research method (taken up from the humanist social sciences) that is based on the coding and analysis of the language and the specific phrasings in which the people being interviewed articulate their experience and their sense of acting/action in the world, in my case, artists in this art world. Since the method involves close coding of transcribed interviews as texts, it has also been possible, as I have demonstrated, to code the published text of the Report by looking specifically at how gender and race terms appear in the text (male, female, men, women, etc.) and under which conditions or related to which terms (economic, managerial and administrative). The specific manner in which I have read and coded the interviews is introduced and explained in Chapters 6 and 7.

¹⁴ Some PhD studies from the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds have been conducted using GTM, or aspects thereof, in the last few years, a recent example being the work of: Gillian Park, 'The Pavilion Women's Photography Center 1983–1993: Deciphering an 'incomplete' [feminist] project' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2018).

It is important to note that the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) does not have the same information-seeking ethos as does most conventional forms of interview research.¹⁵ Grounded Theory is a qualitative method that aims to develop critical conceptual understanding of lived and social experience through attention to the words used by participants. It becomes a method for developing an analytical understanding of what people experience – whatever it is that they are experiencing – that constitutes the crucial social dimension of lives, when it is articulated in language. This does not allow language to be transparent as a vehicle for the expression of experience. The opposite is the case. Since experience is mediated by language, it is also discernable (although never completely accessed) in a textual reading of spoken, recorded and transcribed words. The analyst of the words is also situated and critically part of the production of knowledge through the interviewing and coding processes. The aim of the latter is to identify new concepts from the created texts, thus grounding theoretical innovation in the substance of accounts solicited from participants in specific areas of experience. Instead of applying a framework from existing theory to understand participants' experiences, the aim is to produce new theories, yet in CGTM, there is also a critical awareness of the existing theoretical paradigms and the situatedness of the partners in the dialogic process of building up the oral archive.

Grounded Theory originates from the Chicago School of sociology. There is, therefore, an interesting link between the symbolic interactionism of Howard Becker – who went on to write one of the definitive sociological works on the art world – and the pragmatism of the Chicago School and certain aspects of Grounded Theory.¹⁶ Notably, Chicago sociologists were trying to get closer to experience especially as it is relayed through language. Michael Carter and Celene Fuller, sociologists from California State University, provide a succinct definition of symbolic interactionism, as well as how language can be a conduit to experience:

¹⁵ I use CGTM (Constructivist Grounded Theory Method) and GTM (Grounded Theory Method) interchangeably to distinguish it from 'classic' Grounded Theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss.

¹⁶ Howard Saul Becker, *Art Worlds* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1982).

Central to symbolic interactionist thought is the idea that individuals use language and significant symbols in their communication with others. Rather than addressing how common social institutions define and impact individuals, symbolic interactionists shift their attention to the interpretation of subjective viewpoints and how individuals make sense of their world from their unique perspective. Symbolic interactionists are often less concerned with objective structure than with subjective meaning – how repeated, meaningful interactions among individuals come to define the makeup of ‘society.’¹⁷

Similarly, Grounded Theory is related to the notion that people are not only doing things, but they are also trying to understand their world as they do it, and they *produce the terms* by which we can get hold of certain aspects of their understanding and experiences. If we analyse the terms they provide, we get closer to action, experience and meaning. I use this method, precisely because I do not want to produce research that reproduces ‘race’ and ‘gender’ as *uninhabited categories*. They are *inhabited categories* – inhabited by people with unique and singular experiences.

Methodology: Grounded Theory Interviewing

In basic terms, a Grounded Theory Method strategy is described as: ‘Seek data, describe observed events, answer fundamental questions about what is happening, then develop theoretical categories to understand it.’¹⁸ GTM emphasises process, actions and actors in the studied area, and works towards theory construction that is grounded in data, as opposed to the testing of hypotheses deduced from existing theories.¹⁹ Grounded Theory focuses on analytic aspects, while recognising the need for ‘a solid foundation in data’.²⁰ Founders of the Grounded Theory approach to qualitative analysis, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, describe the defining components of Grounded Theory practice as follows:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses

¹⁷ Michael J. Carter and Celene Fuller, ‘Symbolic Interactionism’, *Sociopedia.isa* (2015) <<http://www.sagepub.net/isa/resources/pdf/symbolic%20interactionism.pdf>> [accessed 16 May 2019].

¹⁸ Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (London, Thousand Oaks, Calif. and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 25.

¹⁹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 4.

²⁰ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. xii.

- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed towards theory construction, not for population representatives
- Constructing the literature review *after* developing an independent analysis.²¹

Various points of critique have been levelled at Glaser and Strauss' approach to Grounded Theory, such as their blind spot in terms of the role of the researcher in the process, which has led Charmaz, as I consider below, to her notion that Grounded Theories are constructed by the researcher and that they do not simply 'emerge' from the data. The intervention that Charmaz and then Charmaz and Bryant have made is to stress that this premise is wrong. Glaser and Strauss came up with the idea that the data will generate the theory, and that you do not look at the literature/theory in the earlier stages, but you come to it later. The Constructivist intervention is to say, epistemologically, we do not accept that notion of how knowledge is produced. It is always constructed and that you have to be, therefore, reflexive. Doing Grounded Theory (as Glaser and Strauss have claimed it) is not a kind of 'purity' by which you disown everything you know, just get your data, code it, and then deal with 'literature' and theory.

Nevertheless, the above listed components are considered to be the founding principles of Grounded Theory. I would like to diverge here for a moment to stress that in this study, I am not seeking to follow Grounded Theory absolutely as it is set out in the components Glaser and Strauss provide above, nor am I seeking to follow Charmaz's exact steps and processes – although she would stress that these are, at the heart,

²¹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 5-6. In this summary, Charmaz is drawing from: Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The discovery of grounded theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967); Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical sensitivity* (Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press, 1978); and Anselm L. Strauss, *Qualitative analysis for social scientists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

guidelines.²² I am rather using certain aspects of Grounded Theory in a modified Charmazian/Bryantian approach.

Before I proceed I would like to clarify my relation to the last bullet in the list of Grounded Theory components above. By conducting the ‘literature review’ only after developing an independent analysis in CGTM does not mean that nothing is read in relation to conceptualising the study and that no theoretical framings are offered. In CGTM the point at which ‘the literature’ is reviewed after the analysis has been developed independently, is the point at which one’s findings from the Grounded Theory coding process is compared to existing formulations on the topic under investigation, i.e. how do my findings confirm, contradict or nuance the existing accounts, in my case, of the South African art world? The notion of a ‘literature review’ is thus used in a slightly different sense from the commonplace use of it in research terminology.

Charmaz, one of the major developers of the constructivist approach to using Grounded Theory, encourages researchers to: ‘Aim to create or adopt methods that hold a promise of advancing your emerging ideas’.²³ What Grounded Theory offers towards in-depth interviewing is what attracted me to this particular method. In pursuit of a more nuanced understanding of the South African art world, Grounded Theory offers ways in which to access information that is close to people’s own actions, experiences and views through its development of ethnographic observation as well as intensive interviewing, which, in its qualitative form, ‘provides an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight’.²⁴ This ties in well with a feminist post-colonial framework that takes people’s own voice and negotiation of their position and agency seriously. Below I explore a few features of Grounded Theory that makes it particularly suitable to my aim of countering the effects of the Report.

1) The most attractive aspect of Grounded Theory Methodology in my quest to explore a more nuanced understanding of the South African art world is its emphasis on the collection of rich data, which are defined as the following: ‘Rich data are detailed, focused, and full. They reveal

²² Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. xi.

²³ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 16.

²⁴ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 29.

participants' views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives. Obtaining rich data means seeking 'thick' description [...]'²⁵

2) Charmaz's constructivist approach, which emphasises that research is conducted by, and theory is constructed by, the researcher, offers awareness of the issues related to the situatedness of both the researcher and participants and allows for reflexivity. This method also encourages researchers to be aware of their own positions and situatedness in research.

Consider Charmaz's statements in this regard:

Grounded Theory serves as a way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing theories about them. In the classic grounded theory works, Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer. Unlike their position, I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices.²⁶
[...]

We are not scientific observers who can dismiss scrutiny of our own values by claiming scientific neutrality and authority. Neither observer nor observed come to a scene untouched by the world. Researchers and research participants make assumptions about what is real, possess stocks of knowledge, occupy social statuses, and pursue purposes that influence their respective views and actions in the presence of each other. Nevertheless, researchers, not participants, are obligated to be reflexive about what we bring to the scene, what we see, and how we see it.²⁷

Grounded Theory, especially in its constructivist form, thus encourages self-reflexivity in researchers on two fronts. Firstly, as is seen from the above, it has an awareness that researchers are part of and construct the research that they conduct. Secondly, as is also considered below, it is aware of how differences in the interview space come into play, and what researchers' positions are in terms of those differences.

3) Contributing to this reflexivity and sensitivity in interviewing is the method's tendency to guard pertinently against forcing preconceived

²⁵ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 14. Charmaz is referencing Clifford Geertz's notion of 'thick description' as developed in: Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973).

²⁶ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 10.

²⁷ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 15.

ideas and theories onto data.²⁸ Charmaz also provides some discussion of how ‘differences between interviewer and research respondent in race, class, gender, age and ideologies may affect what happens during the interview’.²⁹ Charmaz proposes dealing with differences (or mismatches) between interviewers on the level of questioning: ‘Questions must explore the interviewer’s topic and fit the participant’s experience.’³⁰ She also exhibits awareness of the difficulty involved in this: ‘Interviewing challenges us to create a balance between asking significant questions and forcing responses—more so than other forms of qualitative data collection.’³¹

4) Grounded Theory offers an answer to the question of how a different kind of knowledge can be produced than that in the Report, with its practice of theoretical sampling. In contrast to the problems identified with quantitative stratification in the Report, theoretical sampling focuses on sampling for theory construction, not on sampling for ‘population representatives’ as indicated above. Although this analytically incisive method emphasises selective sampling, it also provides guidelines on how to avoid ‘skimpy data’ as Charmaz puts it.³² Aside from offering some alternatives to the type of stratification and re-sectioning I wish to avoid in my research, the practice of theoretical sampling can also aid in limiting the scope of my research, precisely because sampling for theory construction does not have the same objectives as sampling for stratification and representivity.

The wide range of possibilities and flexible guidelines of Grounded Theory allow me to view my research in its terms. My initial collection of the Report on the South African art industry as ‘data’, followed by early analysis of data, and moving into further data collection to follow up on hunches and to explore issues revealed in the Report, fit well with the method’s components and steps. In addition, Grounded Theory’s eclecticism can accommodate the Foucaultian analysis I have made of the Report on the South African art industry, as Charmaz asserts that, ‘Grounded theory methods can complement other approaches to qualitative

²⁸ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 17.

²⁹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 28.

³⁰ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 29.

³¹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 32.

³² Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 18.

data analysis, rather than stand in opposition to them'.³³ Textual analysis of extant texts is one aspect of collecting rich data that Charmaz explores.³⁴ Charmaz makes a distinction between extant texts and elicited texts, with extant texts being texts where 'the researcher does not affect their construction'.³⁵ The level of scepticism of the extent to which extant texts may be viewed as mirrors of reality, which Charmaz highlights, resonates with my own treatment of the Report on the South African art industry. Charmaz explains how extant texts may be viewed and utilised: 'Rather than assuming such texts are objective sources of data, uncontaminated by the researcher, you can treat them analytically as another source of data. These texts may also spark your ideas and provide evidence for your hunches.'³⁶

In balancing my interests, various perspectives and approaches as well as my awareness of the challenges posed by my research, I find Charmaz's metaphor instructive: 'Like a camera with many lenses, first you view a broad sweep of the landscape. Subsequently, you change your lens several times to bring scenes closer and closer into view.' I thus view Grounded Theory as particularly suitable to my research as it can allow me to *toggle lenses* to accommodate the complexities of the research area.

The approaches described above can function as means by which to not only produce different knowledge about the South African art world, but also to access an account of the transformation already at work in the South African art world, as well as to work towards the undoing of the problematically stratified knowledge avatars, as they are produced in the Report. In practical terms, within a Grounded Theory Methodology framework I could proceed with a feminist post-colonial exploration of the complex and interwoven ways in which hierarchies and experiences of gendered and racial differences in post-apartheid South Africa shape practices of those involved in the collective activities of art-making, art distribution and art writing. Repeated interviews and conversations with various people who are already involved with feminist post-colonial or transformative interventions in their contexts were conducted and analysed

³³ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 9.

³⁴ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, pp. 37-40.

³⁵ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 37.

³⁶ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 38.

in order to bring to the surface, or ‘un-fold’, matters of gender and race at the level of the voiced experience as well as implicit knowledge of the participants, who are involved with various institutions and practices in the South African art world. In contrast to the Report’s approach, the Grounded Theory Method can aid in setting up a feminist post-colonial dialogical space.

The manner in which I went about the interviews on a practical level will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7, but I will highlight a couple of pertinent points here. For the purposes of my selection of participants and practices to engage with in my further research, I was looking for what constitutes the feminist post-colonial in the field and how I may get hold of it. I am, therefore, in no way attempting to embark on a survey of the South African art-scape, as attempted in the Report, or to produce an overall history of the contemporary South African art world with an awareness of gender and race. I am rather employing a strategic approach to case studies, which may allow me to tease out a reading which is not exemplary of the South African art world in its totality, but which allows the South African art world to be represented otherwise.

Constructing a Counter-model

My selection of participants and practices does thus not aim to be exhaustive like the Report’s attempt at quantitative stratification and representivity. Rather, my selection aims to be indicative of instances of transformation in the South African art world, where the active deconstruction of apartheid legacies of race and gender occur. This approach may be viewed as in keeping with Foucault’s notion of a general history, in opposition to a total history. Foucault outlines one of the consequences of his approach:

[T]he theme and the possibility of a *total history* begin to disappear, and we see the emergence of something very different that might be called a *general history*. The project of a total history is one that seeks to reconstitute the overall form of a civilization, the principle – material or spiritual – of a society, the significance common to all the phenomenon of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion – what is called metaphorically the ‘face’ of a period.³⁷

³⁷ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 11.

Such notions of constructing a total history are challenged by the idea of a general history, or a ‘new history’ as Foucault also refers to it, ‘when it [a general history] speaks of series, divisions, limits, differences of level, shifts, chronological specificities, particular forms of rehandling, possible types of relations’.³⁸ Indeed the notion of a general history can allow one to describe the ruptures, events, experiences and practices that constitute a counter discourse to the total history. Foucault states that, ‘[a] total description draws all phenomena around a single centre – a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape; a general history, on the contrary, would employ the space of dispersion’.³⁹

From looking at the life experiences of the people who are participants in the art world, by considering their accounts of their experiences in a CGTM approach, my view is that the interviews are reflections on people’s situations within it. There is no unmediated ‘access’ to experience in research. People articulate their experiences through language. What we can get hold of are their words. I am, however, not suggesting that through interviews we can access participants’ life experiences (reality), nor are their accounts mere representations of that experience. It is neither experience nor representation as opposites. Rather, in working with GTM, I take the view that language is the medium of experience and of self-representation. It is precisely because experience is mediated by the language in which it is accounted for, that it is possible to code ‘the words’ spoken by participants in this framework. This is why language is coded in Grounded Theory as units of meaning, as will be considered further in Chapter 7.

My interviewing and my interpretation of the interviews are, however, informed by and situated in relation to a number of other existing models for the analysis of the art world, which present further areas of cultural theory. Since it has been established in this chapter, that South Africa is both *an* art world and *in* the international art world, I will now consider what current theories think the art world is. A prominent work in this regard has been produced by Hans Van Maanen, a professor in art and society at the University of Groningen, in 2009 entitled, *How To Study Art*

³⁸ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 11.

³⁹ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 11.

Worlds. On the Societal Functioning of Aesthetic Values.⁴⁰ Van Maanen's book is a major work that identifies various different models and different structures according to which the concept of the 'art world' is commonly understood, ranging from Arthur Danto, who coined the term in the 1960s, to George Dickie, Howard Becker, Pierre Bourdieu, Bruno Latour and Niklas Luhmann. Van Maanen plots the theoretical conceptualisation of the notion of the art world in terms of the models put forth by these thinkers, for example, the institutional theory of Dickie, the symbolic interactionism of Howard Becker, habitus and the field as developed by Bourdieu and actor network theory by Latour. There is, therefore, in his work already a survey of the existing frameworks for thinking about the art world. Van Maanen has also identified and assessed these models, provided conceptualisations thereof and comparisons between them. His aim, however, is to describe how the organisation of the art world serves the *functioning of the arts in society* – that is, therefore, the main purpose of his work. For my purposes here, because this major work exists, and goes into detail on each of these thinkers and their theories, I am not going to plot out all these models in depth here, as a definitive summary already exists. I will, however, highlight the starting point in the genealogical development of the term 'art world'.

Van Maanen traces the inception of the term to Arthur Danto who introduces 'art world' as a term in 1964 in his article, 'The Art World'.⁴¹ Danto's concept emerges to make sense of 'new forms of art' that do not *look like art*. As these new forms of the time were rather conceptual and propositional, there is a different framework in which it becomes intelligible. Van Maanen establishes the following as Danto's founding statement on the art world: 'To see something as art requires something that the eye cannot descry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an art world.'⁴² Danto's inception of the term thus recognises that there is a world of thought and history around an artwork, which constitutes it as such. Many of the theorists after him will, however, contend that there is a social system around the work of art – an idea that is indeed at

⁴⁰ Hans Van Maanen, *How To Study Art Worlds. On the Societal Functioning of Aesthetic Values* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

⁴¹ Van Maanen, p. 18. The original article by Danto is: Arthur Danto, 'The Art World', *Journal of Philosophy*, 61.19 (1964), 571-584.

⁴² Van Maanen, p. 19. The original quotation is from Danto, p. 580.

the core of the thinking of practically all the other theorists Van Maanen explores. Van Maanen himself sees the art world, in its functioning, as *a system* and most of the theories he puts into play in this survey present systemic models for understanding the art world.⁴³

It is interesting that Foucault's thinking is not drawn in as one of the models that Van Maanen considers. Foucault is referred to very briefly only once in his text, together with Althusser and Lacan, in relation to how: 'People, not being part of the system, but participating in it, can be considered to fit their communications into the system according to the rules of the system'⁴⁴. Foucault has more potential for the conceptualisation of the art world than this quotation relays, as I have already mentioned briefly in the beginning of my analysis of the Report. In Foucaultian terms, the art world has its institutions, which produces its discourses and experts, etc. I have also explored, by way of my reading of the Report, in what way a Foucaultian analysis can help us to understand gender as it is intertwined with race in the South African art world.

Aside from the mostly systemic models that Van Maanen explores, there are two other types of models for conceptualising the art world prevalent today, namely the economic model and the ecological model. As the Report stands as an exemplification of the economic model *par excellence*, and as the issues of the effects associated with this type of model have been described at length, I will not go into it in further detail here. In summary, the hallmarks of the economic approach to the art world are the notion of the so-called 'cultural industries' and its resultant reframing of the arts on a broad front, as well as associated human resource and managerial discourses.

The ecology model is another prevailing conceptualisation of the art world, which has recently shown up in the title of a report by Corrigan & Co. – the company of South African art critic, consultant and writer, Mary Corrigan. This report is entitled: *2018 Contemporary African Art Ecology. A Decade of Curating*.⁴⁵ The methodology for the ecology approach exists in other parts of the world as well. In 2015 John Holden, the former Head of Culture and associate of the Demos think tank, wrote a report entitled, *The*

⁴³ Van Maanen, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Van Maanen, p. 140.

⁴⁵ Corrigan & Co., *2018 Contemporary African Art Ecology*.

Ecology of Culture, for the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK based on the idea of thinking of art systems as an ecology.⁴⁶ This report was commissioned as part of the council's cultural value project. To think of the art world as an ecology entails borrowing from the models of the zoological and biological sciences which consider 'how things live in their environment'. The following from the summary of Holden's report captures the spirit of this model:

The use of ecological metaphors, such as regeneration, symbiosis, fragility, positive and negative feedback loops, and mutual dependence creates a rich way of discussing culture. Different perspectives then emerge, helping to develop new taxonomies, new visualisations, and fresh ways of thinking about how culture operates.⁴⁷

Importantly, the ecology model sets itself apart from economic models, as Holden relates:

Culture is often discussed as an economy, but it is better to see it as an ecology, because this viewpoint offers a richer and more complete understanding of the subject. Seeing culture as an ecology is congruent with cultural value approaches that take into account a wide range of non-monetary values.⁴⁸

This turn to the ecological is heralded by an earlier moment in the 1980s when the UK Arts Council espoused the idea that art is a garden with many flowers.⁴⁹ We, therefore, have metaphors like these that are being used, which are drawn from non-social systemic models. These models do, however, tend to ignore some of the social and political issues that are registered in the more traditional sociological models.

The intervention that I seek to make by using Grounded Theory is precisely not to come at a conception of the art world with a pre-existing framework, such as an ecology or economy, etc.⁵⁰ I am rather trying to explore the art world in a way that prioritises issues of *agency*, *action* and

⁴⁶ John Holden, *The Ecology of Culture. A Report Commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project* (Arts and Humanities Research Council: Swindon, 2015). A report by Calvin Taylor appears in the same year as part of the Cultural Values Project: Calvin Taylor, *Cultural Value: A Perspective from Cultural Economy* (Arts and Humanities Research Council: Swindon, 2015).

⁴⁷ Holden, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Holden, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Glory of the Garden: The Development of the Arts in England. A Strategy for a Decade* (London: Arts Council, 1984).

⁵⁰ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, pp. 5-6. See also p. 7.

practice. Many of the models referred to so far represent a view from above where thinkers, are looking at the art world as *a system*, which considers, in some cases, institutions, processes, etc. Systemic overviews are, therefore, prevalent when it comes to conceptualising the art world, and they concern different kinds of ways of understanding the network of relations, practices, institutions and organisational levels of the art world that gives a sense that there *is* something called ‘the art world’. The question that I seek to pose to this is: *what is it to act in the art world?* What is it to act in a sphere of action whose multiple actions constitute the changing environment for action and response? If one adopts a Latourian sense that the art world is already a space of multiple actions, each of which is constituting the changing environment, it becomes clear that the art world is not *fixed*. What is it to act in an art world, where any of the actions are constituting what it is? The art world is, in fact, a specific *situation*. Everyone and everything in it are situated in particular ways, and act in particular ways in those contexts.

Structure of the Thesis

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 I make a reading of two textual events, namely an article by Sharlene Khan and one by Okwui Enwezor, that punctuate the agonism (in Chantal Mouffe’s sense) and the *wrong* (in Rancière’s sense) of the on-going struggle for the change of the South African art world. I code and analyse these textual events in the form of Khan and Enwezor’s articles as ‘extant’ texts as described above. My analysis of the Report in Chapter 2 is viewed in a similar way as an extant text. Mouffe and Rancière’s thinking are used as theoretical framings of the analyses of these extant texts (as Foucault’s thinking was with my analysis of the Report). I want to make it clear that although all existing texts of which the researcher did not influence the production can be considered extant texts in Charmaz’s definition, where I have made use of the writings of Mouffe and Rancière, these were not coded and analysed as extant texts, like I did with the Report and Khan and Enwezor’s articles. Mouffe and Rancière (and later Hannah Arendt and other thinkers) are used as theoretical framing for my readings and conceptualisations that I derive from the analytic processes of coding and reading. For the purposes of my study, extant texts are those texts that I

have analysed and I distinguish these from writings that I use to frame these analyses.

In Chapters 6 – 7, I explore in-depth Grounded Theory Method interviewing with people in the art world asking: how do they live it? How do they engage with it? How do they negotiate it? Grounded Theory takes a view *from the ground*, so to speak. At this point in the thesis, I address the existing ways of understanding the art world, as a result of my findings, but I did not shape my interviews in terms of existing concepts from ‘the literature’, i.e. existing accounts of the South African art world. I was not seeking to confirm existing knowledge, but rather to adopt an explorative approach. As Bryant and Charmaz would stress: ‘an open mind does not imply and empty head’.⁵¹

This thesis, therefore, explores the ‘textual’ and ‘experiential’ as opposed to the systemic, the institutional, and the economic – which constitute the dominant views of the art world. Insofar as ‘the art world’ begins to be theorised as a subject, it has tended to be at that macro level where it is looked at as a system. I have also shown how from a perspective from this level, the people who are the artists and the people who are living in the art world *become avatars of the typologies* – whether it is in terms of race, gender or class – in an economic model of the art world in particular. In order to get past that tendency I have selected to look at the art world from the level of the experience of the people in it. Models that take a view from above on the art world keep us at the level of the systemic sociological and the institutional. My contention is that there are certain things that are not acknowledged, or given space for, on this level. If we stay on the level of institutions, social systems and organisations, do we *lose the particular articulations of it around the located, textured nature of the individual’s experience*? Models that function on these levels do not get us beyond some of the issues that that they produce.

The work that I present here goes down to the level of the text, and down to the level of the story and articulations of experience through Grounded Theory to discover what is happening as it is lived through the

⁵¹ Anthony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz, ‘Introduction. Grounded Theory Research: Methods and Practices’, in *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*, ed. by Anthony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC: Sage Publications, 2007), pp. 1-28 (p. 20).

agents in the art world. It provides a way to recognise the speech of participants as a method of doing research that pays attention to the obstructions, negotiations and transformations at work in the South African art world.

In making use of Arendt's thinking, as will be explored in Chapter 6: the subject has to speak *and* be heard. The polis is the site of speech and recognition, and indeed the Rancièrian thinking, as is considered in Chapters 3 – 5, is about the distribution of the sensible, speaking and being heard, the audible and the visible. The demos are those whose voices have been considered merely noise, those who appear not to have speech. Speech is not simply the physical act of forming words and saying them, it is when speech is heard as a speaking *of* and *to*. I am not simply 'listening to voices', as has been problematised in feminist thinking. By introducing Rancière and Arendt, I identify that it is an under-theorised notion that it is to speak and to be recognised for having spoken that our words have meaning that both produces you as a subject and is revelatory of the situation. I am listening to speech, I am listening to what people say, and I am soliciting words of subjects that speak *from* and *to*. In a Rancièrian sense, this notion enters into the political as something to give the speaker a space. In Arendt's framework, it is the *speech of the who*. In this context, we understand the political as the plurality of singularities.

The question is, what does the kind of close analysis that researchers in the arts and humanities do on the textures of statements and forms give us insight into and make us see? And how is that different from analyses that focus on social systems? The art world *is* a system. It has its parts, players, hierarchies and processes – and these are things that the participants in this study recognise in terms of what they have to negotiate in an art world, ridden with issues of class, gender and race. Participants are not merely telling me about their experiences, they are themselves in a process of analysing it. I am not trying to oppose 'system' to 'experience' – in the arts this is mediated by the notion that there is language, there are forms, there is interpretation and there is a much more complicated sense than such an opposition could hold, i.e. the system is part of the experience. In this research, drawing from feminist theory, I attend to the fact that there are people who have not been granted the recognition as capital 's' Subject, i.e.

‘the one’, ‘the subject’, or the subject who speaks and who is heard. I am trying to expand the range of understanding to include textured, situated and articulated experience of specific dimensions of social experience. The Grounded Theory Method is a way of trying to understand processes and practices – not just structures or systems – *grounded in* the accounts that people give. It is about lived, situated, and articulated experience of being positioned in some of these structures and interacting with them.

The minute we capture people for our classification, they remain imprisoned in those classifications (as avatars), whereas what I want to come out of the conversations that I had with people in the South African art world is an Arendtian sense of the political potential of storytelling – this will be elaborated on a theoretical level in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, where I give an account of these conversations, I am listening to different participants for the accounts of their experience. By doing this, I explore how Grounded Theory offers a model that interrupts the self-evidence of the Report by generating concepts for understanding the art world from practice. The major conclusion of my work with GTM is that these two terms, *negotiation* and *transformation* emerged (through my coding) from various disparate little transactions and conversations. One of the primary practices of Grounded Theory is to immerse yourself in the data that you collect, to listen, then to begin to code lightly and to begin to see how the codes coalesce. ‘Transformation’ and ‘negotiation’ have emerged from countless hours of reading and preliminary coding as axial codes of major significance. Through this process, I began to see what people are saying as falling across these two axes. There are, of course, other concepts that could emerge from reading the material that I have generated. My reading is not exhaustive and it does not aim to be. This is, however, my conclusion from applying this method: that the terms of ‘negotiation’ and ‘transformation’ are concepts for what people are doing in the South African art world and how they are living it. This is what I have discovered. The major strength of Grounded Theory is that it generates terms and concepts.

Changing Direction

I mentioned above that using the Grounded Theory Method has sensitised my other research. A major instance of this was a change of direction in the

thesis after my initial encounter with Sharlene Khan. The writing of Chapters 3, 4 and 5 were not part of the working plan for the thesis. In my first conversation with the artist, Khan described to me the extreme backlash she endured for publishing an article that called out people in institutional settings in the South African art world for occupying positions without using those positions to make a contribution to transformational change. This conversation, effectively, changed the direction of my thesis. New material had emerged from this conversation that had to be studied closely. I took up this particular case described by Khan, and proceeded to review the article that she published (which can be seen as a form of theoretical sampling in Grounded Theory terms) and ended up undertaking a close reading of this text, in a manner similar to the reading I made of the Report.

By applying my method to the article, it opened up the next big theoretical conversation that I introduce: Jacques Rancière's notion of *the aesthetics of politics*. (This is also the reason why my discussion of the overarching findings of the interviews stands over, at this stage, until Chapter 7.) *Because of doing* the interviews, I had to first look into Khan's article and its effects. Using the Grounded Theory Method produced this further dimension of the analysis of the agonistic struggle in South Africa and the need for an additional theoretical framework within which to situate what I had so far discovered in my interviews. Having made a reading of Khan and Enwezor's texts, I turned to Rancière (and Mouffe) and later Arendt's thinking. I did not start out with these frameworks, although in the chronology of the thesis they will appear 'before' I present my ultimate findings from the interviews. Using Rancière and Arendt as the theoretical conversations in the thesis are the result of what may be called the 'initial coding' of the interviews – it was because of Sharlene Khan's interview that I turned to these theoretical frameworks. They are my initial response to the interviews. There is thus a difference between the structure of the thesis and the process I followed. Rancière and Arendt's thinking did not inform the interviews when they were conceptualised and conducted, but they come into the reading of the interviews.

Having done the interviews and having begun to code them initially *necessitated* an engagement with the identification of the *wrong*, a term that I took from Jacques Rancière's analysis of the struggle for democracy, as

well as drawing on his concept of *dissensus* and the modes of challenge to democracy. These aspects are enacted in two texts (amongst others), namely Sharlene Khan's article 'Doing it for Daddy' and a second text, by Okwui Enwezor 'Reframing the Black Subject'. Both constitute 'textual events' as they both sent shockwaves through the South African art-scape at the time of their publishing, as major moments in the transformation debate. I coded both of these articles and this process took me towards understanding these instances in terms of one of the contemporary debates about democracy by further introducing Rancière's concept of *distribution of the sensible*, the *wrong*, and the *agonistic* for which I also draw on Chantal Mouffe's writing.

Through my work with Rancière in coding Khan and Enwezor's articles by thinking through his concepts of *democracy*, the *distribution of the sensible* and the *demos* – the people who cannot speak/cannot be heard, (the French word *sensible* holding both the aesthetics of audibility and visibility and the question of intelligibility: sense as in meaning) – the question of voice and the story comes into play, for which I found a vital theoretical resource in Olivia Guaraldo's *Storylines. Politics, History and Narrative from an Arendtian Perspective*. Guaraldo develops Hannah Arendt's linking of storytelling, the human condition and the polis.⁵² For Arendt, the human condition is constituted through spontaneous speech and action, in relation to other, plural but singular speaking and acting subjects. We tell our story to a subject, a singular person, a *who*, not a *what*. Arendt's critical distinction between 'who' we are from 'what' we may be seen as contributes another layer to the role of inciting speech, i.e. generating the interviews, but also coding them in a self-reflexive and politically conscious act of listening and hearing this new distribution of meaning and experience.

Using Grounded Theory in my study was not an end in itself. It has been a means of catching/touching the agonism of a wounded society that is not spontaneously transforming as we can see in these two case studies of Khan and Enwezor's articles and their repercussions. With the notion of agonism we come to understand that in the process of attempted transformation we encounter not only the unfinished business of dissolving apartheid and racialisation, but also dynamic and contemporary struggles for

⁵² Olivia Guaraldo, *Storylines. Politics, History and Narrative from an Arendtian Perspective* (Jyväskylä, Finland: SoPhi 63, University of Jyväskylä, 2001).

the *democratisation*. Within the agonism of a wounded society, transformation is painfully difficult as the layers of the *wrong* are peeled back and democracy is forged through a constant *working through*. It is ultimately the voice that raises the *wrong*, and the working through that happens in conversation, in dialogue. My work has been to solicit these voices and to create a context in which this working through is enacted.

This is what an Arendtian approach can contribute to this situation – that people can be seen as speaking/acting subjects, as *whos*, who contribute to the making of democracy through negotiations and transformations in their practices – not as avatars, static *whats*. Indeed, one of the first things I noticed when reading the interview material was that people were giving me their stories, or scenarios, of certain situations in which they have found themselves having to negotiate difference, or bring about a transformation. The link between Rancièrian agonism and Arendtian storytelling is the question of what *the political* actually is. For Rancière it is the *demos* raising a *wrong*, making it *sensible*, and for Arendt it is the subject constituted as such by speaking and acting and being recognised as doing so by other subjects. I put these two frameworks in conversation, which have two very different conceptions of ‘the political’, but both are concerned with, on a basic level, voices, discourses and hearing. Through working with Rancière and Arendt’s thinking, I conceptualise the art world as a space of *the political*.

I have thus taken my point of view in this thesis from looking at *enunciation and agency* and I make four major theoretical moves and interventions in this regard. The first is the Foucaultian analysis of the Report presented in Chapter 1. My second move is the use of the Grounded Theory Method to conceptualise, construct and read an oral archive to speak back to the avatar-ish effects of the Report. My third intervention is to ask what happens if one thinks about the art world through the Rancièrian conception, not as discrete, but as an instance of the sites of negotiation and transformation that are about struggling against a composite interlaced *wrong*. This Rancièrian theoretical exploration, in turn, leads me to the Arendtian notion of storytelling, my fourth theoretical move, to attend to the aesthetics of recounted spaces of lived encounters, which is followed by a discussion of the coding and overarching findings from the interviews.

Through these moves I have aimed to build up an understanding of the politics of transformation.

In my work, I establish a play between the collection of materials to read and the use of theoretical frameworks in reading them, as I have pointed out above. This practice is not entirely true to the Grounded Theory Method, which staves off the use of frameworks until a much later stage in order to allow for the development of theories grounded in the data that are not informed by a pre-existing framework. I am thus using the Grounded Theory Method in a very specific, modified way in this sense. Furthermore, I have used Grounded Theory in the context of an analysis of the structure of culture and its institutions, but also in relation to the notion of democracy. I have also taken Grounded Theory into the realm of art analysis, not just at the level of conducting Grounded Theory interviews, but also through practices of theoretical sampling and coding.

As I mentioned above, I use a modified version of GTM. I do so as an experimental way of working within art history. In a ‘commonplace use’ sense, I have conducted a literature review – I have established the terms of the field. I am, however, doing my readings of the interviews within and as a result of using GTM. Rancière and Arendt’s notions are not key theories in the field of the study of race/class/gender in the art world. What I have done is to confront what is essentially an art historical question, i.e. what are the inequalities that persist in the South African art world? Why and how do they persist? To what extent do those inequalities intertwine race and gender, not privileging either dimension. I went about approaching this question by using a number of different methods and drawing on a number of theoretical resources. With Grounded Theory as one of the methods I am using, I am introducing into art history a modified use of the two key elements of GTM, which is a way to use interviews with participants, but also to recognise that these conversations need to be coded. In order to access what people are experiencing in the South African art world, in relation to race and gender, I wanted to pursue interviews, because this would help to undo the effects of the Report. In addition to a well-developed and practical approach to interviewing, GTM also offers a systematic way of making meaning out of these conversations, namely coding in various stages.

Once I started working with GTM, I found it can be used on existing texts as well. Throughout this thesis, I show how coding becomes a particular form of analysing spoken ‘texts’ and written ‘texts’. You can code existing *or* generated text. I have done this without too tight a relationship to the formal Grounded Theory Method. I am freely drawing on the methodologies of GTM, but this is not a ‘pure’ Grounded Theory thesis, because I am trying to incorporate elements of the benefits of this method into an art historical analysis of the persisting inequalities around race and gender in the South African art world. I have referred to what I am introducing as a modified form of GTM. My thesis is, however, not exclusively concerned with GTM, but I am borrowing from it certain methods of coding, and a particular approach to conducting interviews.

I, therefore, explore how a method from outside art history can help us deal with the fact that in contemporary art history, some knowledge is lodged with participants. It has to be solicited, coded and analysed. Only in analysing across the patterns of speech do we get a sense of the main themes and concepts, as well as the texture of experience. Coding is by no means exclusive to Grounded Theory. Coding simply means drawing attention to certain patterns. My major argument about the Report, having identified certain operations in it, is that a Foucaultian reading of the fold reveals how gender and race is performed away. I have used GTM to ask: how can we get into the fold? I have, by virtue of punctuating my analysis of so-called data with different theoretical models, wound Grounded Theory into a form of art history.

In the course of this thesis, I thus draw on both feminist theories and non-feminist theories to explore the question of democracy. I offer, on the basis of using the Report as the monument that needed to be deconstructed, a set of textual readings. The methodology for the thesis is in its essence close readings of texts, consistently offering textual analysis and a form of coding, starting from a Foucaultian frame to read the Report and leading me to further stages of theoretical expansion in terms of using Rancière to read Khan and Enwezor’s articles and also Arendt/Guaraldo to read the interviews. In the last chapters of the thesis, I present the findings from the coding of my own generated text. By going through these movements, I

was, therefore, *reading for the fold, reading for the wrong and reading for the voice*.

Notes on the Title

Before ending this extended, three-chapter introduction, I would like to clarify the components of the title of the thesis. ‘Negotiation’ and ‘transformation’ have been referred to above as the key concepts emerging from the use of the Grounded Theory Method during the interview phase of this research. I have also mentioned why I have opted to use the term ‘difference’ instead of simply ‘race’ and ‘gender’, which is to keep the term open to accommodate all aspects of difference (class, age, location, ability, etc.) as well as the fact that difference can be both negative and positive/generative. The term ‘transformative practices’, in the context of this thesis, does not necessarily refer to artistic practices. I use the term ‘practice’ in the larger sense of the word, i.e. to mean *things that people do*. By relating, later in the thesis, the practices of negotiation and transformation, it is evident that these encompass social practices, cultural practices, practices of daily living and working, etc. As far as artistic practice is concerned, the people whom I interviewed I selected on the basis of their being engaged in a range of transformative practices. As I proceeded in the research, I also came to recognise the transformativity of practices of writing, of reading, of representation and the practices of storytelling embedded in and often sites of vivid experience that emerged during the conversations and encounters the interview process set in motion.

PART II

CHAPTER 3

An Analysis of Sharlene Khan's Article, 'Doing it for Daddy'

As a first step towards unfolding the fold as analysed in Chapter 1, i.e. the performativity of the official discourse on transformation in the South African art world that 'performs away' matters of gender and race, I would like to add to the archive on the question of transformation in the art world two 'textual events' in this discourse.¹ The two textual events flow from two moments in the history of the struggle for transformation, and they come from different voices in the South African art world that are concerned with transformation. The first textual event is the subject of the current chapter, and the second is the subject of the following chapter

Reading 'Doing it for Daddy'

The first such textual event that I will consider here appears in 2006 as an article in *Art South Africa*, one of the country's foremost visual art publications, by artist and academic, Sharlene Khan, entitled, 'A Luta Continua: Doing it for Daddy'.² The article resulted in major controversy ranging from support to outright condemnation. Rather than its polemic effect, I am interested in the article *as a text* and what it is calling for as such. The article appears on the discursive landscape as a complete opposite of a cool, economic government document. It stands out as an impassioned, direct speech from somebody who represents, according to the

¹ I use the concept of a 'textual event' in descriptive manner and not as a theoretical concept. By 'textual event' I do not mean a discursive versus a revolutionary event in Foucault's sense. I also do not mean it in Alain Badiou's terms of the fidelity to the event. I use it to indicate that the writing of a certain text had massive and real effects and repercussions that exceeded the normal circulation of critical writing and, therefore, have to be examined.

² Sharlene Khan, 'A Luta Continua. Doing it for Daddy', *Art South Africa*, 4.3 (2006) <<http://www.sharlenekhan.co.za/articles/Publications/08.%202006%20Art%20South%20Africa.pdf>> [accessed 17 October 2015]. Please note that this article is not available on *Art South Africa*'s (now *Art Africa*) website, and can only be retrieved from Sharlene Khan's website.

Report's discursive formations, the figure whose position is most challenged, and who bears the double burden of both race and gender. The article represents an instance of a Black woman who dared to speak out and say something about the inadequate rate and uneven nature of transformation in the South African art world. The article's by-line, introduces this:

The ongoing privilege of white artists is supported by an elaborate industry founded on the seemingly unshakable hegemony of whiteness, argues Sharlene Khan. The outcome is the perpetuation of a warped system that continues to disadvantage the majority of this country's citizens.³

In the first paragraph, the following anecdote is offered, which for Khan, at that point, had spoken to the nature of change. Khan had attended the South African Architecture and Art Historian (SAAAH) conference in Grahamstown in the previous year and recounts a discussion on the shifting power dynamics in the South African visual art world:⁴

In his presentation, artist, curator and academic Thembinkosi Goniwe explained how a patronizing white mommy has displaced the art world's patriarchal apartheid white daddy. It was refreshing to hear Goniwe articulate this, a fact black academics, writers, curators and artists have long been bemoaning.

[Second paragraph] White domination of the visual arts industry is overwhelming, the dominance of white females especially glaring. This statement can easily be gauged by a simple census.⁵

The article is trying to point out that the transformation that has occurred, has not managed to open up the art world sufficiently, and then finds therein an unexpected configuration where whiteness and gender become a new axis of continuing the hegemony of whiteness. As opposed to the enfolded place of gender and race in the final recommendations of the government Report, in the case of this article, something has erupted from the fold, and the issue of gender and race becomes *say-able*. Aside from unfolding gender and race, the article also brings an important challenge to *where* transformation needs to happen, namely, at an institutional level, and

³ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

⁴ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

⁵ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

it shows how racial privilege can reinsert itself, even in an era during which, as Khan puts it, ‘the constitutional emphasis has been on redressing gender and racial inequality, particularly at institutional level’.⁶ In this sense, paragraph 5 of the article is particularly poignant:

There is growing dissatisfaction with the white domination of the visual arts industry. This should not be surprising. The ascendancy of white women into positions of power suggests a glaring lack of faith in black cultural workers and intellectuals. When asked why there are so few black writers, curators and academics staffing key institutions and projects, the rote answer is that there are no ‘qualified’ black incumbents, or simply too few. This attitude has successfully thwarted substantive racial redress in the visual arts, and has also been used as a ploy to promote ‘yes baas’ [yes boss] blacks.⁷

This paragraph shows how in the climate of post-apartheid South Africa, it has been possible to change the gender of people occupying such positions, but not the race. Khan’s article appears as an event on the transformation discursive landscape, because hers is one of the sharpest, most insistent forms articulated by a ‘Black woman’, asking for the following two things. Firstly, for institutional change, and secondly, for the recognition that institutional change is part of cultural change and transformation – both of these notions fall within a type of representation model. Therefore, the article puts forth, between this double structure of institutional change and cultural change that, the art world, as it is organised and as its positions are occupied, matters. Related to this is the underlying notion that the art world as such is a certain type of stage, amongst many, on which the transformation of wider South African society is enacted and played out.

It appears Khan had said something in this article, which by virtue of being said, had breached a certain kind of illusion under which everybody was operating and once that had happened, people had trouble deciding how to move forward. What the article is pointing to is an incomplete process of transformation, because there is a necessity to keep gender and race entangled, i.e. just because one is transformed, it does not mean that the other is. The article thus raises a red flag and alerts us to the fact that, just because more women are now represented in positions of power in the art

⁶ Khan, ‘Doing it for Daddy’.

⁷ Khan, ‘Doing it for Daddy’.

world, it does not mean that transformation has been achieved. But I believe the entanglement of race and gender figures in a particular manner in Khan's article that needs further analysis, and it is at the level of language that I wish to provide a reading of the article.

As may be already evident from the extracts I present above, the position of the figure of the 'White woman' is acutely under scrutiny in Khan's account of on-going white privilege and hegemony in the South African art world. Here I use the same technique as in Chapter 1, which is to make use of colour to highlight how terms regarding gender and race appear in the text. In the first extract that I quote from the article above, the interplay of racial and gendered terms are interesting, as reference is made to a 'patronizing white mommy', which 'has displaced the art world's patriarchal apartheid white daddy'.⁸ A thick knot of gendered and racial terms is thus evoked. Also consider the following from the third paragraph:

In a paper titled 'Take Me to the Centre', artist Mgcineni Sobopha identified a glaring quirk of this redress [of gender and racial inequality on institutional level post-1994]. According to Sobopha, it has resulted in a 'white-female-only ascendancy' into positions of power formerly occupied by white males. Both Sobopha and Goniwe were sceptical of this new power broker in the South African art world, and shared the view that these white women are, to quote US writer bell hooks, merely 'doing it for daddy'.⁹

Khan's article appears two years before the government commissioned the HSRC to conduct the study on the status quo of the art industry, and four years before the resulting Report appears. With the evidence from the Report, there is no denying that South African art institutions and galleries are still predominantly White, and therefore, that the system in operation still privileges whiteness. Here it is instructive to note that this notion is confirmed by the statistics presented in the HSRC Report, the research for which was initiated in 2008, only two years after Khan's article, 'Doing it for Daddy' appeared. In 'Section 2: An Overview of the Visual Arts Industry in South Africa', the Report reveals that, [t]he ownership and management of businesses and organisations in the sector is overwhelmingly white', and that '89% of all entities reported their top

⁸ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

⁹ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

manager or principal owner as being white [...]’¹⁰. Extract 11 which I made from the Report in Chapter One, particularly supports Khan’s argument, and I believe that it is worthwhile to reproduce it here:

While there has clearly been some change in the demographic profile of the governance and management of art museums and collections, there remain significant challenges in this area. From a sample of fifteen institutions (6 public, 5 university-based and 4 private) that were able to report on this issue, 35% of the people represented on the governance structures of organisations were white women, 31% black men, 21% white men, and only 13% black women. Based on responses from 13 institutions, the senior management of institutions reflect a substantially less transformed profile – 44% white women, 25% white men, 25% black male [*sic*] and 6% black women.¹¹

While Khan’s article is indeed cutting through these issues, it also raises the question of how to make a systemic analysis. While it is purposeful to ask: ‘What is the role of women in maintaining the system?’ and: ‘Are they merely ‘doing it for daddy?’’, of which both are questions posed in various forms and instances in feminist discourse, setting up ‘white women’, as the agents of whiteness in any particular moment is problematic. If the article is calling for, on a very basic level, a change of personnel, does it make any difference whether White men or White women are in positions of power, if whiteness still dominates the art world? Or is the article actually saying something about these White women who are ‘doing it for daddy’ and enforcing the notion that they are themselves the patriarchal element that is not being displaced? Indeed increasing numbers of women now occupy positions at the highest levels of dealing in art and curating, which were once male dominated. Therefore, although a worldwide shift in the position of women in the art world is noticeable, to a certain extent, when that phenomenon takes place in South Africa, owing to the deep historic entanglement of gender and race, it has different implications, i.e. that racial privilege continues to reproduce itself. Khan’s article makes visible that gender has changed, but that white domination has not. I will return to these issues and questions at various junctures throughout this section of this chapter.

¹⁰ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 52.

¹¹ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 108.

The article's focus on White women, however, begs the question: to what extent does the article at once present an opposition to continuing white hegemony in the art world, while articulating this through a type of gendered language? This transpires especially in this sentence from the second paragraph: 'White domination of the visual arts industry is overwhelming, the dominance of white females especially glaring.'¹² Given that Khan's is an article that concerns race and power in the South African art world, one cannot help but notice that the opposing poles created in the article are not, as one might expect, given South Africa's racialised history, between 'Black' and 'White', but between 'Black' persons and 'White women'. This becomes evident on closer inspection of paragraph 5:

There is growing dissatisfaction with the white domination of the visual arts industry. [...] The ascendancy of white women into positions of power suggests a glaring lack of faith in black cultural workers and intellectuals. When asked why there are so few black writers, curators and academics staffing key institutions and projects, the rote answer is that there are no "qualified" black incumbents, or simply too few. This attitude has successfully thwarted substantive racial redress in the visual arts, and also been used as a ploy to promote 'yes baas' [yes boss] blacks.¹³

Our White female avatar of earlier is thus here called onto the stage and made a target for the critique of white hegemony in the South African art world. While White women might be in the majority where management positions are concerned, as is indeed revealed in the Report, while this might be 'true', the terms in which this issue is raised do not easily allow for an account of how individual White women position themselves in the art system in South Africa, and how those positions are negotiated. Here I have to note, however, that Khan later clearly states that: 'Nothing that I have said so far seeks to disavow the individual achievements of white women in this country. I am also not claiming that every white woman is racist and has been of no benefit to the visual art scene.'¹⁴ She then continues to name two White women who, according to her have made contributions to transformation in the visual art scene, namely Fieke Ainslie and Estelle

¹² Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

¹³ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

¹⁴ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

Jacobs.¹⁵ But she then finishes the paragraph (paragraph 6) by adding:
‘However, I am daily privy to unheard complaints against white female
“dictators” (the Durban Art Gallery and the South African National Gallery
are examples of this).’¹⁶

This last sentence has been taken up as that Khan had, in a more or less indirect manner, *named people*, and for this reason the article has been widely misunderstood as a finger-pointing exercise. One might suggest, that underneath the issues raised by Khan’s article is the question about who, in the deconstruction of white hegemony and a reconstruction of contemporary South African art history and visual culture, would be the people who could set the agenda for transformation? At the beginning of paragraph 6, the following is stated: ‘As it stands, the ascendancy of white women into positions of power has seen little in the way of the implementation of new techniques, concepts or strategies in cultural policies.’¹⁷ The article finishes with the following:

The challenge for South Africa’s white female captains is clear. They must challenge and actively fight for institutional reform, otherwise they will simply perpetuate a warped system that continues to disadvantage the majority of this country’s citizens.¹⁸

One might say that this is a reasonable notion for any person in a position of power or influence in post-apartheid, decolonising South Africa, but in the context of the article, the call falls on ‘white women’, because they are the ones occupying those positions.

Furthermore, one also notices the terms used to qualify the ‘white women’ in question in the article. Phrases such as ‘white female dictators’, ‘ascendency of white women into positions of power’, and reference to ‘white female captains’ who must ‘challenge’ and ‘fight’ for institutional change. There thus seems to be a mobilisation of quasi-military and political language in relation to these ‘white women’, who are, through this mobilisation, constructed as ominous figures. White women being thus produced in the text, as dictators and captains of the art world – even though Khan does tip her hat to White women who do not fall under these banners

¹⁵ Khan, ‘Doing it for Daddy’.

¹⁶ Khan, ‘Doing it for Daddy’.

¹⁷ Khan, ‘Doing it for Daddy’.

¹⁸ Khan, ‘Doing it for Daddy’.

in paragraph 6 – one might ask whether such an identification does not run the risk of collectivising White women as an effect of the text?

Responding to ‘Doing it for Daddy’

The problematic terms of the article’s articulation registered especially with a group of artists and academics from the University of Cape Town, who, in response to the article, formed the Doing it for Daddy art collective. The collective was made up of three women, namely Linda Stupart, Renée Holleman and Bettina Malcomess. These three artists/thinkers took particular issue with the notion in Khan’s article that White women in the South African art world are ‘doing it for daddy’. Linda Stupart states the following about the formation of the group in an interview with her, Holleman and Malcomess that was originally published in *Boot Print*:

We read an article in Art South Africa called Doing it for Daddy (which is a bell hooks quotation) by Sharlene Kahn [*sic*], which implied that there are these evil white women that were continuing the hegemony of white maleness in the South African art world and they [*sic*] named all these people. Some of whom we really like. And it seemed a bit ridiculous and very confrontational. And quite offensive. [...] And a little simplistic. [...]¹⁹

Stupart’s statement reveals some of the outrage and controversy that surrounded the article, but I believe the following statement, added later by Holleman, gets to the core of how White women felt they were being boxed in:

I think the important thing is we didn’t feel what was being said was overtly incorrect, but the way it was being articulated was overly simplistic. Essentially it was setting up a whole load of stereotypes around this idea of what white South African women were doing in the art world, as artists and as curators and in various different positions. It was representing a set of stereotypes.²⁰

It is indeed the terms of the article’s articulation that are at stake, as well as the effect of these terms. These consist of setting up an avatar in gendered and racially binary terms, virtually identical to the effect of the

¹⁹ Robert Sloan, “‘Doing It For Daddy’”, interview with Linda Stupart, Renee Holleman and Bettina Malcomess’, *Art Heat* (2009) <<http://artheat.net/2009/09/doing-it-for-daddy.html>> [accessed 26 November 2015].

²⁰ Sloan, ‘Doing It For Daddy’.

Report – which is to maintain structural fixities – and to establish it (‘her’) as the figure to which criticism of dissent and dissatisfaction with the continuation of white hegemony and the uneven progress of transformation in the South African art world are to be directed. The White female avatar thus becomes the bearer of a *wrong* in Rancièrian terms, an exploration of which will follow later in this chapter.²¹

Various questions spring to mind around the issue of the position of White women in the South African art world, for instance, how well *are* White artist-women taken up into the system? And are there perhaps gendered sociological reasons why women, especially in gallery and museum management, are placed in positions of service, upholding a male art world? Such matters are clearly not accounted for in brute demographic terms, let alone polarised ones. It is interesting to note that there is a discursive correlation between the setting up of the White female avatar as bearing the *wrong* of the occurrence of warped transformation (as is revealed in the article) and the setting up of the Black female avatar as the most lacking and bearing the deepest wounds of the legacies of apartheid in the South African art world (as it appears in the Report), i.e. *the wronged*. Somehow, what emerges discursively, in these two texts, is a polarisation of *women*. This creates a sense that the struggle for transformation in the contemporary South African art world thus plays off between *discursively constructed groups of women*.

Where the terms and effects of the article’s articulation, as well as those of the Report, are concerned, what is ultimately at stake is the establishing of a framework which is not caught up in the fixity of apartheid language and binary categorisations, but will enable us to see what kind of difficulties exist in the process of transformation and in the making of democracy. Such a framework might enable us to understand why the article was both true *and* wounding. It is true because a large percentage of the people owning and managing galleries and museums *are* in fact White and female, but it is also wounding, because it keeps us stuck in a language comprising an arresting set of terms that we cannot get beyond, and from which there is no escape. We, therefore, need to question the persistence of polarising categories, in whatever form they appear, and highlight the need

²¹ Jacques Rancièrè, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 93.

to bring in nuances of various positionalities people may occupy, while at the same time being careful of not ‘nuancing the problem away’ – because these *is* a problem, transformation *is* incomplete and whiteness continues to dominate. This all points to the necessity and the challenge involved in holding a vast amount of complexity in our thinking around contemporary post-apartheid.

Nevertheless, the article has pointed out something crucial, however crude its critics make it out to be. Ultimately, it is indicating that there is work that needs to be done. This is echoed in the first part of the title of the article, which evokes the Mozambican slogan employed in the struggle against colonialism: *a luta continua*, namely, ‘the struggle continues’. In this sense, Khan’s contribution to the debate, and her courage in voicing this, needs to be recognised. But after the analysis of the Report in the Chapter 1, I wish to pose the question: How can one reconfigure the discourse around transformation so that it does not replicate the production of the four avatars and their organisation into a hierarchy of lack and value? How can we move away from structures of language that replicate the sense that, in loose terms, White men are ‘higher’ or ‘better off’ than everyone, that White women are ‘higher’ than certain people, that Black men are ‘higher’ than Black women, and that Black women are ‘at the bottom’? The recognition of these discursive effects are crucial in any view on transformation that seeks to move away from the apartheid tendency to categorise and value people according to the degrees of melanin in their skin, towards the articulation of meaning and experience that arise out of the sense of an expanded South African experience and multifarious nature of different kinds of experiences. Another question at stake is how to deconstruct a hegemony without simply instating another. Being able to do this becomes less likely if the available terms are those that resulted in oppression in the first place. The consistency and persistence of racialised and gendered thinking has to be recognised as the legacy of apartheid. If we are to remain attentive to the entanglement of gender and race, then we cannot have them as different tracks in our thinking about substantive change. This would be at the risk of subordinating the one to the other.

In relation to Khan’s call for change, the following questions arise: what are people in the art world holding up and why? What is needed to

bring change? How do people getting into positions of power lead to maintaining a hierarchy? What elements of whiteness make real change unlikely? When does this become political rather than typological? How does this political unconscious of racial suprematism inflect active promotion of art and artists? Might not Black persons serve White ‘daddies’ unless they too had a sense of what the structural change needs to be? At the heart of these issues is the central question of what would be change rather than what are given identities. There is, therefore, a need to interrogate, firstly, whiteness and what it cannot imagine, and secondly, why whiteness equals ‘daddy’, i.e. a patriarchal racial system, in the context of this article.

I would like to open up a little space here at this stage, because, there is a point at which you can say that people have the limitations of a white consciousness, which cannot recognise the boundaries of white privilege and *performatively* iterates itself, *as opposed to* those who are specifically acting to maintain that privilege. There is an ambiguity contained in Khan’s article: it is one thing to say, we have not actually shifted, in terms of racial dominance, the continued dominance of a white minority over the art world in South Africa, but who is this white minority? So, rather than talk about ‘white’ or ‘black’, naming them specifically may already contribute to the nuancing of this picture. For example, is it only English women that are in question? To what extent is it also Afrikaner women in the art world? Or is the art world still to a certain degree connected with a sense of America or Europe as *the* art world and these women become the representatives?

I will briefly consider some of the points raised by art historian and managing director of the Africa South Art Initiative, Mario Pissarra. I will consider some observations made by Pissarra via extracts from a comment he posted online in response to Khan’s second, follow-up article, ‘But What’s All Dis Here Talkin’ ‘Bout’.²² Pissarra states:

The point that I really want to respond to is Khan’s perception that her “[sic] cardinal sin” was that she had “unforgivably, named names”. It is instructive to go back to her original piece, and to recognise that comparatively few individuals were named at all. Her infamous list was rather, as she puts it: “a quick census of institutions/projects headed by white women”.

²² This response was made online as a comment to the article, but it is also available as: Mario Pissarra, ‘Booing It, Badly: A Response to Sharlene Khan’, *World View* (15 April 2011) <<http://asai.co.za/booing-it-badly-a-response-to-sharlene-khan/#more-614>> [accessed 20 June 2016].

It is thus instructive that Khan did not, in most cases name individuals, but that the simple identification of institutions headed by (unnamed) white women was enough to cast her as a “pariah”. This is an indictment of the dangers involved in even coming close to naming real people, but that is not my main point. My main point is that Khan let her own argument down by not going far enough. If her hypothesis was, as stated in her latest piece, that “white women [were] replacing white men in many key positions in institutions and projects” then one would surely need to begin by naming both individuals and institutions.²³

For Pissarra, Khan had not *gone all the way* in terms of naming the specific individuals and institutions that were problematically upholding a racial system in the art world. Pissarra then poses a useful set of questions:

Then one would need to address a series of questions to test this hypothesis. Obvious questions to ask include: How many of the white women in leadership replaced white men? How many of these women were appointed into their current posts, or ones of equivalent authority, in the post apartheid period, or were they already in such positions? Who are the white men who were deposed in the post-apartheid era? Who took their places? What patterns can be observed, and do they play out consistently across the country, or do regional dynamics come into play?²⁴

Crucially, Pissarra points out:

One also has to make provision for personal agency: race, class, gender et al are important but people cannot simply be reduced to these categories. One should also ask of persons in leadership or positions of influence: have they done anything that warrants them being in these positions? Like Khan, I suspect that affirmative action has sometimes been cynically used. I suspect that, in some cases, it has contributed to the furtherance of some careers of [white women] of questionable quality. But the way to make this point would be to make a convincing argument backed up by details, including names.²⁵

Pissarra concluded his observations by stating that:

Had Khan worked through such questions she may well have come up with some important observations that anyone interested in transformation would have to take seriously. Instead, by adopting the one label suits all approach she

²³ Pissarra, ‘Booing It, Badly: A Response to Sharlene Khan’.

²⁴ Pissarra, ‘Booing It, Badly: A Response to Sharlene Khan’.

²⁵ Pissarra, ‘Booing It, Badly: A Response to Sharlene Khan’.

probably alienated many potential allies, and it is this lack of differentiation, I suspect, that was her “cardinal sin”.²⁶

To return to the previous discussion, what is happening as an effect of ‘Doing it for Daddy’ as a text, is a collapse of whiteness into support for the patriarchy – because that is what ‘doing it for daddy’ is. I would like to delve further into the issue of identification with power. On the one hand, one is reminded in this sense, of feminist thinker, Julia Kristeva’s concept of the apparatchick. In her essay, ‘Women’s Time’, Kristeva considers, in the context of a discussion on women and terrorism, how a woman ‘may, by counter-investing in the violence she has endured, make herself a “possessed” agent of this violence in order to combat what was experienced as frustration’.²⁷ The ‘woman terrorist’, has thus internalised the violence against her to the extent that she performatively acts it out. Art historian, Griselda Pollock provides an interesting discussion of Kristeva’s ideas, and she states:

In a section called “The Terror of Power, and the Power of Terrorism”, Julia Kristeva notes the contradictory responses of modern Western women to their historical exclusion from power within the nation state: counter-power and counter-society.’²⁸ In the case of counter-power, ‘formerly excluded women become over-identified with power systems in the existing white patriarchy now that it has allowed them honorary ‘male’ status within it. They embrace its rules and systems and make themselves its ardent defenders and executives: corporate women and bureaucratic apparatchiks.’²⁹

The apparatchick is thus a woman who identifies with power, patriarchy, or the totalitarian system in Kristeva’s terms, and actually becomes its most sufficient operator. It, therefore, needs to be recognised that the victim *and* the perpetrator is within each woman, and that women are all distributed to be victim and/or perpetrator interchangeably in different situations. Kristeva’s model shows how women can identify with power and then become its most urgent allies, whereas one would imagine, within people who are in positions of power in the institutional art world, while there are some who are absolutely ‘little generals’, that there are also

²⁶ Pissarra, ‘Booing It, Badly: A Response to Sharlene Khan’.

²⁷ Kristeva, ‘Women’s Time’, p. 203.

²⁸ Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art’s Histories* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), p. 192.

²⁹ Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, p. 192.

others who are passionate believers in the development of greater equality and who do not identify with a white supremacist patriarchy. The apparatchick is an example of how women can identify and actively work to maintain a system of power, which is also the case in the South African art world, as the article implies, but sometimes upholding a system is not achieved through direct, conscious action, but through *the failure to act*, or to effect change, and the *failure to recognise fully* the limits of your authorial or agency position, which can effect exclusions, even if that is not actively intended. US author Jane Flax makes the following astute observation: ‘The enjoyment of unearned privilege enables the dominant to organize themselves and the ways we live unjustly. Thus, any diminishing of dominance potentially enlarges the space for better practices that can generate more freedom and justice’.³⁰

There is an awareness of how privilege can maintain the power structure in the article. Where Khan indicates that, ‘the ascendancy of white women into positions of power has seen very little in the way of the implementation of new techniques, concepts or strategies in cultural policies...’, the following is also provided:

Viewed cynically, the rise of white women into exclusivist structures, many of them dating back to the apartheid era, bears out theorist Geeta Kapur’s insight that the periphery (read white women) will infiltrate the centre (read male world) not to effect change but to maintain power. Implicit in this action is the replication of systems of privilege (read whiteness) at the expense of the periphery (read black people).³¹

There is, therefore, a need to clarify different types of relation to exclusion where ‘the role of women’ in the South African art world is concerned. *Do* women uphold a white hegemony? Or, while some women clearly do, others fail in a sense, to keep working at the undoing of exclusion. We thus need to be wary of a textual effect that implies that *everybody* in this group is upholding a system of dominance by ‘doing it for daddy’, due to the fact that they are White women in the art world. What we possibly need is the notion of a spectrum in which people are themselves positioned and in which they would position themselves, in terms of what

³⁰ Jane Flax, *Resonances of Slavery in Race/Gender Relations. Shadow at the Heart of American Politics* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p. 4.

³¹ Khan, ‘Doing it for Daddy’.

they think their project is. I believe that making some distinctions clear in this regard is crucial, because of the risk of collectivising White women.

It is, however, important to understand that, the level at which Khan is making her analysis is *not* merely at the levels of people who are unconsciously authoritarian managers of big institutions and those who have some sense that there is a project of transformation and they absolutely aligned with it – she is identifying a structural continuity, which itself has to be *named*. Race discourse *names* the question of supremacy and suprematism, which is indifferent to whether or not one is a racist/not a racist, a feminist/not a feminist, left or right. People can do a certain amount of work in an institution that has real effects, but nonetheless, because White managers occupy certain positions, others do not. There are levels at which White people do not recognise the work of ideological normalisation.

Perhaps the trickiest aspect about thinking through these issues is the need to keep the notion of ‘whiteness’ as an axis of social privilege and power, not as an epidermal schema – social power as opposed to skin colour. Racial difference is not ‘natural’, it needs to be produced and that production needs to be systematically maintained. In this regard I am interested in how the four avatars are produced and under which terms people *do* get reduced to White/Black and male/female. I am, however, also interested in how the avatars unravel and how they are undone.

In her simultaneous call for institutional and cultural transformation (which is, in this case, implicated in institutional transformation) what Khan is calling for is substantive space for art to develop and the need for change, not only on the level of personnel, but of *the system*. But if in the course of this call, White women are defined by whiteness, then it appears as though there is a tendency for it to become a racial term rather than a term indicative of politico-cultural alignment with hegemonic power. It is thus not about *being White*, it is about identifying that there are different levels of whiteness and a spectrum of positions according to which people relate to exclusion. One is where you are specifically endorsing or identifying with a certain privileging, the other is where you are doing so maybe not in an overtly racist way, but effectively maintaining a notion of the right of certain people of European descent to be in charge. Here there is the need for whiteness to recognise what the post-colonial critique offers, which is,

that unless whiteness constantly and actively deconstructs its privilege, it does not see the boundaries of its privilege.

Degrees of Privilege

I would like to introduce an artwork by the artist Lubaina Himid, which can serve to visually open up several of the issues I discuss above. In 1986, Himid produced a work entitled *A Fashionable Marriage* (Figure 1), in which she re-worked a painting by William Hogarth, in the series *Marriage A-La-Mode* entitled, *The Toilette* (Figure 2). I present both works below for ease of reference. The version of Himid's work that I use here is a re-made version of the original 1986 work for a show at the Tate Liverpool in 2014.



Figure 1: Lubaina Himid ([1986] 2014), *A Fashionable Marriage*. Mixed media installation. Tate Liverpool, United Kingdom.³²



Figure 2: William Hogarth (ca. 1744), *Marriage A-la-Mode: 4, the Toilette*. Oil on canvas. 70.5 x 90.8 cm. The National Gallery, London, United Kingdom.³³

³² Lubaina Himid, *A Fashionable Marriage* ([1986] 2014)
<<http://lubainahimid.uk/portfolio/a-fashionable-marriage/>> [accessed 3 September 2016].

In the scene in Hogarth's *Marriage A-La-Mode*, the Countess (in the yellow dress) is entertaining her lover, the lawyer, Silvertongue,³⁴ (to her left) in her bedroom. They have various other people pontificating around them. On the left side of the painting there is a female figure in a white dress, which is leaning over to the group of male figures on her right. Pollock refers to this figure as the 'the eager listener'.³⁵ In *A Fashionable Marriage*, Himid transposed this scene into a satirical take on the 1980s art world in London. In her version, the eager listener, the young woman in white, is eagerly listening to a group of great artistic figures, and she reads as the White artist-woman keen to get into the art world. In this blond, pearl-wearing figure, one sees reference to the work of Judy Chicago, Susan Hiller and May Kelly.

Hogarth's pontificating man, the figure on the far left, in Himid's work now becomes the United Kingdom's (UK) art establishment – therefore representing the art world – as is evident through the mastheads of prominent UK art magazines pasted onto his body. The Countess is presented as Margaret Thatcher, shown again in a yellow dress, and identified as the former UK prime minister by various photographs of Thatcher pasted onto the larger, yellow figure's face. The Thatcher-figure is holding out her outstretched arm to her lover, now Ronald Reagan, to her left, who is inviting her to the Third World War. In *A Fashionable Marriage*, the Black servant in Hogarth's work serving chocolates to the guests, is now the Black artist-woman.

The reason I find Himid's painting relevant to my discussion of Khan's article, 'Doing it for Daddy', is because the work helps us to make some distinctions between positions that people may occupy at the hand of the two White female figures in the installation, namely the Margaret Thatcher figure and the eager listener/White artist-woman figure. Similar to Kristeva's notion of the apparatchick, the Thatcher figure in Himid's work also represents the capacity of White women to identify with power in the extreme sense, as Thatcher and Ronald Reagan are planning carnage in this

³³ The National Gallery, *Marriage A-la-Mode: 4, the Toilette* (ca. 1974) <<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/william-hogarth-marriage-a-la-mode-4-the-toilette>> [accessed 3 September 2016].

³⁴ The National Gallery, *Marriage A-la-Mode*.

³⁵ Griselda Pollock, *Looking Back to the Future. Essays on Art, Life and Death* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), p. 365.

scene. Contrasted to her is the eager listener, who is not overtly 'joining forces' with a powerful male figure, but who in a ploy to earn a place in the art world, is aligning herself, visually in this work, with white masculine power, represented by the various figures on the left who stand for the 'official art world'. Nevertheless, this scene of alignment is happening in front of what was the Black servant figure in *Marriage A-La-Mode*, now the Black artist-woman, who is rendered invisible in the background, despite her towering scale.

This image of Himid's installation aids us in trying to figure this set of complex relations of really identifying with the kind of militaristic white supremacist patriarchy that is figured on the right side of the painting by the lovers, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan – compared to this doubling position of the Black artist-woman and the White artist-woman. The Black artist-woman is placed behind the White artist-woman and becomes unseen, but is also refusing her position in service to the White artist-woman, who themselves, as Himid is suggesting, is treacherously seeking inclusion in an exclusive system. And this is what Himid is implying: that White women don't *see* that this is happening, because they are focused on 'getting the exhibitions' and gaining visibility.

Therefore, as an artwork, *A Fashionable Marriage* helps distinguish between the women who are 'doing it for daddy' because they are in effect the instrument of the continuation of a particular, capitalist, Western, neoliberal white supremacist regime (Margaret Thatcher), and the women who within the art world are themselves seeking places under the sun and may well be radical in all sorts of ways. Nevertheless, the effect of the unthinking nature of this continual structural racism is the exclusion of the Black woman. This effect of invisibility is shown in Himid's work by the Black artist figure which is not caught up in the central conversations between the two figures in front of her, across which money and recognition plays.

Another reason why Himid's *A Fashionable Marriage* is relevant to a discussion on Khan's article, 'Doing it for Daddy', is because of the response the artwork received at the time. When *A Fashionable Marriage* was made, Mary Kelly and Susan Hiller were, allegedly, furious, because they felt it was a kind of personal assault, which goes to show that in terms

of this type of critique, if people take it personally, they feel their own political credentials have been challenged. As a result, Himid experienced an ostracisation from the UK art establishment, similar to that experienced by Khan from the South African art establishment, as I will consider later in this chapter.

A Fashionable Marriage thus offers the case of an episode in the 1980s, re-created in 2014, that visually opens out two issues for the purposes of my discussion: one is the figure of the White woman, who is the pillar of the existing fascist patriarchal element, and the other is where the specificity of this issue of structural privilege operates to produce and exclusion or a minoritisation. Himid's piece opens up space for the interrogation of the entanglement of these axes of power distribution. Similar to Khan's article, Himid's piece is an instance of speaking a *wrong*, articulated by a Black woman, which allows the artistic practices of Chicago, Hiller and Kelly, who are precisely articulating what is absent in dominant discourse about the feminine/female sexuality and which need to inscribe itself and its experiences into culture. Nonetheless, there is the argument that as a White woman, at least one gets to be in the circle with whoever represents the art world. It was a harsh criticism, and was very difficult for those artists – Hiller, Kelly and Chicago – as feminists, to accept, but it reminds us that unless we try to keep these things in play, which is challenging for various reasons, the status quo will remain, because whiteness does not see its own privilege. Nevertheless, it is important to be able to recognise that there is a difference between aiming for one's own advancement under one hierarchy, i.e. gender, on the basis of an unaltered privilege, race, and actively seeking to maintain its dominance through actions that will 'please the father', i.e. doing it for daddy. So, if you are trying to advance 'as a woman', but you have not simultaneously altered the other privilege of your whiteness, can that be equated to identifying with and being the agent of a specifically white supremacist or phallogentric patriarchal system?

Intersectionality, which I consider further below, includes the idea, 'that women experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying

degrees of intensity'.³⁶ It then follows that women also experience *privilege* in varying configurations and degrees of intensity. Are women in positions of authority instruments of the father-system, or do their practices and sometimes their own political agenda make a difference? But 'Doing It for Daddy' goes further. It is suggesting that White women in the South African art world are upholding whiteness as 'daddy'. From the point of view of structural ideological analysis, from a purely statistical position, if most galleries are still White – male and female – things have not changed. But it cannot be said that White women as such are necessarily *actively* choosing upholding the system. What can be said, is that the system is upheld when whoever is in a position to effect change fails to act, and in the case of whiteness, that the failure to act maintains an unaltered privilege. It is, therefore, not a matter of whether people are or are not actively working to maintain the system, because it needs nothing *done* to remain in place, aside from its reproduction. Within the notion of the performative, one can say that it is not the fact of white skin that produces exclusion, but an iteratively produced normalisation, namely whiteness, which entails a certain kind of mode of being a subject in the world, which is related to a certain privilege and a certain point of view.

What I am challenging in my reading of 'Doing it for Daddy', is not the critique of whiteness, but the sense that all White women are 'doing it for daddy', i.e. upholding a white supremacist patriarchy. I do so by introducing the notion that people locate themselves in various ways on the spectrum of possible positionalities. This notion allows for a slightly more complex picture, which, simultaneously, has to be acknowledged in terms of the process of uneven change, uneven access *plus* identifying a certain boundary within which the legacies of race may *keep* the people who benefit from the history of white supremacy in positions of privilege and power, and what kind of work is to be done to remedy it.

³⁶ Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Gillian Niebrugge, 'Contemporary Feminist Theories', in *Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots. The Basics. Fourth Edition*, by George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky (New York, NY McGraw-Hill, 2013), pp. 195-230 (p. 204). Please note that this is not an edited volume of collected essays. Ritzer and Stepnisky are the authors of this text, but it appears that Lengermann and Niebrugge were invited to write this particular chapter.

The Agonistics of Race and Gender

The response to the article, 'Doing it for Daddy', had real effects on Khan's personal experiences and subsequent career. In 2011, Khan wrote a follow-up article with the aim of clearing up some of the misunderstanding and misinterpretation that attended the first article. Aside from such clarifications, Khan offered some insight into the impact that writing the article had on her life. In 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?' Khan states the following:

The reaction to the article was beyond anything I could have imagined. Overnight I went from being an upcoming visual artist to a pariah. I experienced first-hand the power relations that I had written about when the White vanguard closed ranks, and projects, jobs, scholarships, reviews and even listings of my exhibitions became impossible. Too many incidents occurred to mention here, but the question to be asked is why did this article merit this kind of strong reaction? I certainly wasn't the first to critique the issue (the likes of Thembinkosi Goniwe, Rhoda Elgar, Gabi Ngcobo and Pro Sobopha have also presented criticisms of the White-dominated system).³⁷

Early in 2015 Khan was interviewed by Nadine Botha for an article in the *Mail&Guardian* newspaper's online platform. About Khan's experience of the aftermath of the 'Doing it for Daddy' article, Botha writes:

Speaking out against institutionalised whiteness in the South African art system came at a huge cost to Sharlene Khan. She received hate mail, her employer received defamatory letters urging her to fire Khan, gallerist Monna Mokoena was told not to exhibit her work, she was humiliated in scholarship interviews, newspapers did not print her exhibition listings and, with two master's degrees to her name, she was unable to find a lecturing position for four years. Her crime? The "Doing it for daddy" article in Art South Africa magazine in 2006.³⁸

Indeed Khan has gained notoriety for the article, especially in the South African art world, and a tongue-in-cheek biography on the website of the Dead Revolutionaries Club, a five-person collective which Khan is part

³⁷ Sharlene Khan, 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?', *Artthrob* (2011) <http://www.artthrob.co.za/Reviews/But-Whats-All-Dis-Here-Talking-About.aspx> [accessed 17 October 2015]. Please note that this article is not available on *Artthrob*'s website, and can only be retrieved from Sharlene Khan's website.

³⁸ Nadine Botha, 'Where hypersensitivity meets true transformation', *Mail&Guardian* (2015) <<http://mg.co.za/article/2015-03-05-where-hypervisibility-meets-true-transformation-in-the-arts>> [accessed 17 October 2015].

of, refers to her as ‘the girl who cried race’.³⁹ But ‘crying race’ had come at a great personal price. Khan had dared to articulate something that, in her experience, was known and spoken about in the communities in which she was functioning. Her act of speaking out against institutional racism and ongoing white privilege in the South African art world entered into the public arena and became part of the debate, but only to find that the arena could not tolerate *the speaking* of this at that point, to the extent that she experienced herself being punished for this act on various institutional and professional fronts.

Khan’s article, ‘Doing it for daddy’, and the resulting situation, brings into play notions around both ‘the entanglement of race and gender’ and ‘agonism’. By reading the article as I read the Report in the previous chapter, i.e. by considering the terms and ways in which ‘gender’ and ‘race’ appear in the article, I aim to point out the dangers of having ‘gender’ and ‘race’ as different pathways in conceptualising transformation in the analysis. Here the inherent danger is that the one will take priority over the other.

In considering the entanglement of gender and race, I need to give credit to the contribution that intersectionality has made to thinking in this area. The term ‘intersectionality’ was coined by Distinguished Professor of Law at UCLA, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and it was initiated by an African-American intervention in a debate that arose from the situation in the United States in the 1980s.⁴⁰ The term now enjoys widespread use and is taken up in various fields. Intersectionality is a serious attempt to avoid the sectioning off of gender, race and class as separate categories, by suggesting, in simple terms, that they ‘intersect’. Intersectionality also established that the subject is constituted in these intersecting dimensions of difference, and it is about understanding any individual in their complexity.

In my understanding of the entanglement of race and gender, as I call it in this thesis, I seek to push the implications of intersectionality slightly further. In the next chapter I explain how I draw on Jane Flax’s thinking, but for now I want to clarify that in my view, I see ‘gender’, ‘race’

³⁹ The Dead Revolutionaries Club comprises Khan, Kwezi Gule, Bandile Gumbi, Fouad Asfour and Kenmang Wa Lehulere. Please see Khan’s profile at: ‘Sharlene Khan’, Dead Revolutionaries Club, (2008?) <<http://www.deadrevolutionariesclub.co.za/node/15>> [accessed 29 November 2015].

⁴⁰ Crenshaw, ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex’.

and ‘class’, and other axes of power distribution, not as separate categories, boxes or tracks, but as strands of an intricate and complicated plait that not merely intersect, but that are intertwined. When one tries to separate one of these strands and smooth it out, one loses sight of the messiness of the entanglement of the axes of ‘gender’, ‘race’ and ‘class’. Trying to separate out and smooth over these strands results in them becoming blockages to a nuanced understanding of specificity of situatedness and experience. Therefore, embedded in the question of transformation is a need to grasp the complexity of how the axes of gender, race and class are negotiated in their intricacy and continually transformed. I will return to this type of entanglement of these axes of power distribution at various points in this chapter and this thesis.

The theory of agonism, or agonistics is associated with different schools from Political Science, but in particular with the work of political theorists, Chantal Mouffe and Bonnie Honig.⁴¹ Agonism considers the political collectivity and its diversity, but even beyond its diversity, that components of the political collectivity are in potentially conflictual and agonistic (but not necessarily antagonistic) relationships. The various responses to the article, some further examples of which I briefly consider later, as well as Khan’s experiences of these responses reveal a level of agony or conflict that underpins the situation exposed by the article, ‘Doing it for Daddy’. The theory of agonism, or agonistics, offers a different view of conflict, in proposing that in any given society, there is not only negative conflict, which should be avoided at all costs, but that there are certain kinds of conflict that are constructive. Proponents of agonistics, such as Mouffe, would argue that the negotiations of these constructive kinds of conflict are actually the dynamics of developing democracy.⁴² Agonistics thus holds the idea that a certain kind of conflictual process is constitutive of democracy, because democracy is always in the process of being produced. An agonistic view of the entanglement of dimensions of difference as it appears in ‘Doing it for Daddy’, opens up the possibility of acknowledging that

⁴¹ Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics. Thinking the World Politically* (London and New York: Verso, 2013); and Bonnie Honig, ‘The Politics of Agonism: A Critical Response to “Beyond Good and Evil and the Aestheticization of Political Action” by Dada R. Villa’, *Political Theory*, 21.3 (1993), 528-533. Both of these texts are mere points of reference to the work of Mouffe and Honig, as they have both produced prolific bodies of literature.

⁴² Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics*, p.7.

‘gender’, ‘race’ and ‘class’ are not *antagonistic* categories as such, but that they are in an *agonistic*, or some kind of conflictual relationship to each other. While there is a possibility that this conflict can be negative or destructive, it can be viewed as a potentially dynamic conflict, which is part of the democratic process. Agonistics alert us to the fact that democracy has to be built constantly, and that the agonistic, conflictual process through which it is built will keep generating new lines of what Rancière calls *dissensus*.⁴³

In a Rancièrian framework of agonistics, every time a democratic gesture is attempted, or exercised, in order to include more people as the subjects of democracy, a new exclusion may transpire that will become the new irritant to the process of the creation of democracy. An ongoing struggle over inclusion and exclusion in the *distribution of the sensible*, which I consider below, is thus at stake. This is rooted in the agonistic sense that no ultimate consensus can ever be reached.⁴⁴ Democracy is in the state of perpetual conflict and *disagreement*. The underlying principle of this agonistic sense of democracy is that democracy cannot simply be installed once and for all. Almost a textbook example of this notion than the gap between the ‘installation’ of South Africa’s new constitution and the ongoing difficulty in making its stipulations the everyday experience of the majority of South Africans. Nevertheless, rather than a hopeless surrender to the fate of perpetual agonising conflict, agonistics helps us to understand that democracy needs to be *made*, in particular through a process of dynamic conflict. Transformation, therefore, does not come easily, and sometimes, literally needs to be *fought for*.

Here the idea of the entanglement of race and gender allows us to begin to think how whiteness can interface with gender in such a way that it can produce this critique. The question of how solidarity or struggle as women can be claimed also comes into play. The exchange recounted in ‘Doing it for Daddy’ between Khan and Anitra Nettleton is interesting. Khan writes:

⁴³ Gabriel Rockhill, trans., ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, in *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*, by Jacques Rancière (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 80-93 (p. 85).

⁴⁴ Mouffe, *Agonistics*, p. xi.

Responding to Goniwe and Sobopha's argument at the SAAAH conference, art historian Anitra Nettleton pointed out that white women have 'worked hard' to get into their positions. Am I to interpret this to mean that black people have not also worked as hard? Working hard ultimately means nothing in a system that continues to privilege, reward and support achievements based on race.⁴⁵

Khan is touching on the fact that, because White women, such as Nettleton, are imagining themselves 'as women', and struggling in that sense, they are not aware of their whiteness. One can say that 'Doing it for Daddy' effectively *whitens* White women, i.e. outing them as *White*, who wittingly, or unwittingly perform to maintain a structure. There is an agonism in this exchange as well, in terms of what solidarity can be claimed under the banner of 'women' in post-apartheid South Africa. Khan's response is thus to hear Nettleton privileging the gender struggle over the racial struggle, and that happens when you place race and gender as parallel tracks, not entangled and dynamic. The effect of Nettleton's comment is that it is speaking in the name of *women* – that women have to struggle for a place in the world, i.e. it articulates a feminist politics against a hegemonic masculinism, or patriarchy. What the idea that gender and race is entangled (drawing from and developing intersectionality) points to, is that what all of this throws up is the need to be able to theorise gender and race in a constantly dynamic relation, which is not just race/class/gender, but actually how they blend into one another.

This, again, ties into what Himid is trying to stage through *A Fashionable Marriage* – she is staging the art world and staging the political field. In doing this she is also staging the sense that in being a woman, you are not necessarily in a feminist position, and even if you *are* in a feminist position, you may not see dimensions of your own position. This highlights the fact that there needs to be a certain kind of agonistic interrogation if we are going to produce democratic change together. As Khan's reaction to Nettleton's comment illustrates, we cannot then fall back on a certain notion of, 'women are oppressed too!', even though women are, in the art world in particular, competing and struggling with an institution that does not structurally accept them 'as women'.

⁴⁵ Khan, 'Doing it for Daddy'.

The Distribution of the Sensible

To return to what Rancière's thinking can contribute to this discussion, Rancière develops his framework on the aesthetics of politics around the core concept of the *distribution of the sensible*. He mobilises the different meanings connected to the word *sensible* in French, which plays on the meaning of 'sense' or 'the sensible', on the one hand in terms of what is knowable, that of what we can make sense, or establishes some kind of intelligibility or meaning; and on the other hand in terms of what is aesthetically knowable, imagined, felt, experienced and affected. According to Rancière:

[...] the distribution of the sensible is the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts.⁴⁶

The *distribution of the sensible* thus simultaneously defines who, or what, is in *and* out. The original French title, *Le Partage du sensible*, although translated as *The distribution of the sensible*, could also be translated as 'the sharing' or 'the partition' of the sensible. In this sense the idea of who, or what, has a *part* of the *distribution of the sensible* comes into play. Rancière believes that:

This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution. Aristotle states that a citizen is someone who *has a part* [original emphasis] in the act of governing and being governed. However, another form of distribution precedes this act of partaking in government: the distribution that determines those who have a part in the community of citizens.⁴⁷

In Rancière's view the citizens who have a part in the community of citizens, are those who have a part, or share in the *distribution of the sensible*. Rancière's contribution has centred on a unique view of how the

⁴⁶ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 12.

⁴⁷ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 12.

aesthetics of politics, or the aesthetic terms in which politics play out. He states that:

[...] aesthetics can be understood [...] as the system of a priori forms determining what presents itself to sense experience. It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience. Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time.⁴⁸

The concept of ‘the distribution of the sensible’ thus becomes a way of understanding the politics of who can speak or who does not get spoken, or who is visible or invisible at the hand of aesthetic predetermined possibilities, forms or registers of sense perception. It thus relocates the political as always already having an aesthetic dimension. In his review of Rancière’s book, *Politics of Aesthetics*, Ben Davis explains that for Rancière, ‘...politics is the struggle of an unrecognized party for equal recognition in the established order. Esthetics [*sic*] is bound up in this battle, [...] because the battle takes place over the image of society – what is permissible to say or show.’⁴⁹ If, therefore, the struggle for politics is for a wider and more inclusive distribution of who can be seen, who can be known, and what can be represented, then the aesthetic and the political are always in some kind of conversation, firstly, because the aesthetics of politics touches on this ‘sensibly’, in terms of the forms in which politics operate, and secondly, because the politics of aesthetics concerns how we make, or struggle for, meaning.

In his model, Rancière connects particular meaning to commonplace terms such as the *police*, *the law*, *democracy*, and *politics*, and it is worthwhile to examine his precise use of these terms.⁵⁰ The translator of *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Gabriel Rockhill, has done a great amount of work towards mapping Rancière’s dense and complicated vocabulary as developed over approximately two decades of this writing, distilling

⁴⁸ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 13.

⁴⁹ Ben Davis, ‘Rancière, for Dummies’, *Artnet Books* (2006) <<http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/books/davis/davis8-17-06.asp>> [accessed 15 February 2016].

⁵⁰ Because the meaning that Rancière attaches to such commonplace terms differs from their regular use, I present these terms as italicized in order to avoid confusion, and to signify where I am indeed using Rancière’s specific terminology.

definitions and interactions of Rancière's terms from a variety of works into a *Glossary of Technical Terms*, which can be found at the end of the English edition, as well as in his introduction to the edition, entitled: *Translator's Introduction. Jacques Rancière's Politics of Perception*.⁵¹

In terms of what Rancière has elaborated as 'a politics of democratic emancipation', Rockhill explains that the *police* 'is defined as an organizational system of coordinates that establishes a distribution of the sensible or a law that divides the community into groups, social positions and functions'.⁵² He continues to explain that this *law*, or this *distribution of the sensible*, 'implicitly separates those who take part from those who are excluded, and it, therefore, presupposes a prior aesthetic division between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the sayable, and the unsayable'.⁵³ The idea of the *police*, or the *police order*, conjures the idea of an intangible force, policing the boundaries of the distribution of the sensible. It may then be said, that things 'outside' are produced by virtue of this boundary, and each time something breaks in and finds a place in the distribution of the sensible, yet another level of exclusion will reveal itself. In this sense, the advent of a democratic South Africa was a gross re-*distribution of the sensible*, but this reconfiguration of the *distribution of the sensible* has generated its own set of inclusions and exclusions, or suppressions. Consider the following statement by David Hill in his review of Rancière's book, *Dissensus*:

[...] democracy is made up of not only the members of a given community but by those that it excludes also, making democracy 'the count of the uncounted' [...]. As such, a distinction is made between politics (which includes the excluded) and what Rancière calls 'the police' (a community of division and exclusion). The two are opposed, such that where there is exclusion there is not politics, properly conceived. As such, the role of politics is to create a space in which the two worlds – of the included and of the excluded – become one.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Rockhill, 'Glossary of Technical Terms'; and: Gabriel Rockhill, trans., 'Translator's Introduction. Jacques Rancière's Politics of Perception', in *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*, by Jacques Rancière (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 1-6.

⁵² Rockhill, 'Translator's Introduction', p. 3.

⁵³ Rockhill, 'Translator's Introduction', p. 3.

⁵⁴ David W. Hill, 'Jacques Rancière Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics', *Marx & Philosophy Review of Books* (2010) <<http://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviewofbooks/reviews/2010/173>> [accessed 16 February 2016].

The *police* in Rancière's terms should thus not be understood as 'the police' in lay terms, entailing police stations, officers and patrol vehicles, etc., as for Rancière the *police* is not a group of people, it 'is first and foremost an organization of "bodies" based on a communal distribution of the sensible, i.e. a system of coordinates defining modes of being, doing, making, and communicating that establishes the borders between the visible and the invisible, the sayable and the unsayable'.⁵⁵ The *police* can thus be understood as the dominant structure, or apparatus of sense.

Dissensus stands as the central concept in Rancière's notion of *politics*. Again there is a play on the term 'sense' in *dis*-sensus, which may be understood as that which is not, or cannot, be 'sensed', as in perceived cognitively or affectively. Rockhill states the following:

The essence of politics consists in interrupting the distribution of the sensible by supplementing it with those who have no part in the perceptual coordinates of the community, thereby modifying the very aesthetic-political field. It is partially for this reason that Rancière defines the political as relational in nature, founded on the intervention of politics in the police order rather than on the establishment of a particular governmental regime.⁵⁶

Dissensus is thus not a mere difference of opinion, 'a quarrel over personal interests',⁵⁷ or a discord between parties. It is rather 'a political process that resists juridical litigation and creates a fissure in the sensible order by confronting the established framework of perception, thought and action with the "inadmissible", i.e. a political subject.'⁵⁸ *Dissensus* thus causes a fissure confronting the whole framework of thought and action with the inadmissible, the *not* of sense and perception. It is a set of moves that make visible various levels of *wrongs*.

As opposed to the generative concept of *dissensus*, *consensus* stands as a problematic term that hinders the workings of democracy. *Consensus* is defined as 'a specific regime of the sensible',⁵⁹ and as anti-political, for example as Rockhill clarifies:

[...] consensus is the presupposition according to which every part of the population, along with all of its specific problems,

⁵⁵ Rockhill, 'Glossary of Technical Terms', p. 89.

⁵⁶ Rockhill, 'Translator's Introduction', p. 3.

⁵⁷ Rockhill, 'Glossary of Technical Terms', p. 85.

⁵⁸ Rockhill, 'Glossary of Technical Terms', p. 85.

⁵⁹ Rockhill, 'Glossary of Technical Terms', p. 83.

can be incorporated into a political order and taken into account. By abolishing dissensus and placing a ban on political subjectivization, consensus reduces politics to the police.⁶⁰

The term *disagreement* is connected to *dissensus* and like *dissensus*, *disagreement* (*la mésentente*) is not mere misunderstanding (*la malentendu*), or mere lack of comprehension (*la méconnaissance*); *disagreement* ‘is a conflict over what is meant by “to speak” and “to understand” as well as over the horizons of perception [...]’.⁶¹ Rockhill explains that, ‘[a] case of disagreement arises when the perennial persistence of a wrong enters into conflict with the established police order [...]’.⁶² A *wrong*, in turn, is defined as ‘a specific form of equality that establishes the “only universal of politics” [that all are equal] as a polemical point of struggle by relating the manifestation of political subjects to the police order.’⁶³ It can thus be said, that a *wrong* is an instance of inequality that is persistent; that it emerges into the sensible and clashes with ‘the order of things’ or ‘the way things are’.

The definition of a *political subject*, in Rancière’s framework, is somewhat counterintuitive, in the sense that it is not an individual or a group of people who seek adequate representation for their ideas and interests, but ‘an empty operator that produces political dispute’, by introducing *dissensus*, splitting the shared world in two and ‘by challenging the established framework of identification and classification’.⁶⁴ The only sentient beings in Rancière’s framework are *the people*, or *the demos* – those who are excluded due to a *wrong*, and ‘who have no share in the communal distribution of the sensible’.⁶⁵ Rockhill describes *the people*, or *the demos*, as ‘the only possible subject of politics’, and as the supplementary account of the population.⁶⁶ The *people/demos* are:

Those who have no name, who remain invisible and inaudible, can only penetrate the police order via a mode of *subjectivization* [original emphasis] that transforms the aesthetic coordinates of the community by implementing the universal presupposition of politics: we are all equal.

⁶⁰ Rockhill, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, p. 83.

⁶¹ Rockhill, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, p. 84.

⁶² Rockhill, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, p. 84.

⁶³ Rockhill, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, p. 93.

⁶⁴ Rockhill, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, pp. 85, 90.

⁶⁵ Rockhill, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, p. 84.

⁶⁶ Rockhill, ‘Translator’s Introduction’, p. 3.

Democracy [original emphasis] itself is defined by these intermittent acts of political subjectivization that reconfigure the communal distribution of the sensible.⁶⁷

When there is a *wrong*, i.e. a persistent structural exclusion of certain potential members of the political community on certain grounds, *the people/dèmos* come into conflict with the *police order* as the system that is trying to maintain the status quo.

The notions of equality and democracy also figure in a particular way in Rancière's framework. In this model, equality is not conceived as a goal to be reached, but a point of departure, 'a presupposition in need of constant verification'.⁶⁸ Democracy is less a matter of social organisation, or a style of government, but according to Rockhill, 'democratic emancipation is a random process that redistributes the system of sensible coordinates without being able to guarantee the absolute elimination of the social inequalities inherent in the police order'.⁶⁹ Perpetual *dissensus* and *disagreement* through the appearance of *wrongs* and inequality are thus at the heart of Rancière's view of the continuing fluctuation of the *distribution of the sensible*. An agonistic view, however, proposes not trying to stop conflicts. *Wrongs* will keep on coming up, but they are creative, and constitutive of democratic politics.

I think it is worthwhile to take a moment to clarify the proximity of agonistics and Rancière's thinking in this chapter. By referring to agonistics in relation to Rancière's model, I, by no means, intend to equate Rancière's framework with, what I will refer to as 'classic' agonistics arising from political theory. In this 'classical' model of agonistics, such as in the work of Mouffe and Honig, because they are political theorists, their field is 'the political' in the commonplace sense, and this also constitutes the stage on which democracy plays out. The theatre of democracy is acted out on the political stage of parliamentary elections, political parties, and the questions of 'who is in power?', 'who is not?', 'who can participate?', and 'who cannot participate?'. Therefore, in this model, you have parties to the political stage, and certain kinds of potential conflicts. In the field of political theory, agonism stands out particularly against other political

⁶⁷ Rockhill, 'Translator's Introduction', p. 3.

⁶⁸ Rockhill, 'Translator's Introduction', p. 3.

⁶⁹ Rockhill, 'Translator's Introduction', p. 3.

theories that maintain that the good functioning of a democracy is without conflict, or that arising conflicts need to be managed by the reaching of a consensus. In an agonistic view, conflict is a dynamic, inherent, and constituting part of constantly transforming and developing democracy, i.e. it is part of the process.

Rancière arrives at his model as a philosopher, not a political theorist, and he, therefore, produces certain concepts with which to think ‘the political’, but the intervention he makes is on the level of the aesthetic – what people say, do, feel and make – and this is the stage on which *democracy* plays out in his framework. His theories are thus of particular relevance to the field of study which this thesis is involved in. From the political stage, to the aesthetic stage, one can see how Rancière’s theories involve a highly specific configuration of this stage as a space around who can speak, who cannot speak, who can be heard, what cannot be heard, who is visible, and who is invisible, i.e. at the level of the aesthetic which is a dimension that cannot be conceptualised purely in terms of ‘the political stage’.

Some scholars do, however, view Rancière’s theory as falling under the greater banner of agonistics. This is a wide-spread tendency in political scholarship, but a point of reference is Andrew Schaap’s introduction to *Law and Agonistic Politics* that positions Rancière as an agonist under this umbrella.⁷⁰ I tend to agree that Rancière’s model can be said to fall under the greater banner of agonism – in my view, mostly owing to the implications of the concept of *disagreement* – but I remain cautious of easy conflation of theories of agonism, as they often arise from very different fields. This is certainly the case when one considers the difference between Mouffe’s ideas on agonistics, arising out of Marxism and Arendtian theory, and the specific trajectory and specialist vocabulary of Rancière’s ideas, which can be said to have roots in Foucault’s thinking. In Rancière’s framework political participation is predicated on the concept of the *distribution of the sensible*, which is a distribution of and in aesthetic forms. Therefore, underlying the very possibility of ‘classic’ agonism, which focuses on the specificity of political discourse, there is another

⁷⁰ Andrew Schaap, ‘Introduction’, in *Law and Agonistic Politics*, ed. by Andrew Schaap (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), pp. 1-14 (pp. 1-2).

development, namely, the aesthetics of politics – what people say, feel, do and make – and touches on language and intelligibility, and on access to speech and non-access to speech.

Rancière provides a theory of the democratic polity in such terms, and the implications of his theories for the notion of democratic subjects are interesting and relevant in the South African context, if what we are trying to produce is a democratic polity in which the other is safe, and is not going to be constantly excluded or side-lined, or not recognised or rendered invisible. Rancière's model aids our thinking about what a view of that would entail. Furthermore, the *distribution of the sensible*, and the notion that it may need re-configuration at certain points, help us to understand the incomplete state of transformation in post-apartheid South Africa, where you ostensibly have a constitution and legal framework that allows for equal rights and inclusion. In this case, it is not just about political participation in the traditional sense, there is *an* agonistic which calls for the *re-distribution of the sensible*.

The Policing of the Speaking of a *Wrong*

Reading Khan's article, 'Doing it for Daddy', in context of the response to it, and her experiences of the situation, through the lens of Rancière's framework can contribute towards restoring this textual event as not just a *cause celebre*, as it can be understood as an instance when someone had ventured to make an observation that is identifying partly what my analysis of the Report identified, which is that there exists a double hierarchy in the contemporary South African art world of gender and race.

Rancière's theories can be brought to bear on thinking about the new democratic South Africa, which is trying to configure the production of its own democratic polity in terms of redistributing visibility and invisibility, being heard, or not being heard, being considered or not, and considering who are summoned to be citizens, and what kind of pre-existing system, or continuously existing mechanisms of exclusion from that, are being enacted. As the art world may be seen as one of the theatres for political and public transformation, or creation of a democratic polity in South Africa, in which sense there is a kind of a staging of the political in this sphere, what is, therefore, also involved, is the creation of a sense of

who is invisible and visible, who speaks, who is not spoken, and who is party to the sensible. Playing out on this stage is not only some of South Africa's general political struggles, but also political struggles specific to the art world.

Sharlene Khan's article, 'Doing it for Daddy', brings to light the asymmetrical *distribution of the sensible* in the South African art world. The article is articulating a *wrong*, a *wrong* that at its core points to inequality, which entails the role of women in upholding a hegemony of a white privileging order, even as they broke through the gender barrier, reflecting, performatively, the lowest status onto Black women. Drawing from Rancière's framework, we see the appearance of a *political subject*, not the person of Sharlene Khan, but the sense that there is inadequate and unequal transformation in the South African art world. This *wrong* touches profoundly on the question of how a democratic polity is to be constituted. It mirrors back through all of its institutional practices to itself the ways in which these vicious agonistic lines of incomplete *distribution of the sensible*, which renders so many people invisible, un-articulated, un-heard and un-present, are still matters of great concern.

For Rancière, *politics* come about when something completely outside and excluded from the *distribution of the sensible*, comes to recognise itself as potentially the subject of history and politics through a process of what he calls *subjectivization*. The fact that the article, 'Doing it for Daddy', voices a *wrong*, causes a *dissensus*, and splits the shared world in two – Khan's article creates a sense of who has and does not have a place in the South African institutional art world. The persistence of the *wrong* that the article manifests leads to *disagreement*, i.e. the included and the excluded disagree over what is meant to speak, or to understand, and over the horizons of perception. The Doing it for Daddy art collective's response can perhaps also be seen in this light.

Dissensus and *disagreement* is then compounded by the aggravation of the *police order*. In her follow up article, as quoted above, Khan rightly asks: why did this article merit this kind of reaction?⁷¹ Because Rancière's model is not concerned with individuals or groups beyond *the people*, it does not account for the type of personalised fallout Khan experienced. It is

⁷¹ Khan, 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?'.

here that I believe the general notion of agonism can contribute something to our understanding, because Rancière's theorisation around the *distribution of the sensible* does not enable a recognition of the *agony* that can be involved in the process of *re-distributing the sensible*.

The intensity of the aftermath experienced and reported by Khan, as seen from her follow-up article and interview with Nadine Botha especially, is paradoxically underscored by the fact that it is difficult to find evidence of the responses to this article, and even of the article itself. In the second article, 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?', Khan mentions a particularly damning letter from Professor Pattabi Raman to *Art South Africa*, who allegedly condemned Khan's writing as xenophobic, unethical, vulgar, shameful and undignified.⁷² There is also evidence of an article written by Professor Ruth Simbao a few years later in support of Khan's arguments, asking how far have we come since Khan wrote her article.⁷³ Simbao's article is no longer available where it was originally published online, but art historian Porcia Malatjie makes reference to the article in her Masters dissertation. She states:

[...] Rhodes University Professor, Ruth Simbao, made a response to Sharlene Khan's (2006) article. Simbao (2010) questions why the problem of the dominance of white art historians has not yet been rectified. She (2010, p. np) asks, 'So where do we stand now five years [after Khan's article]? ... To what degree have the visual arts in South Africa transformed?' Her answer 'would be that we have achieved very little...'⁷⁴

It was not until I started trying to find concrete evidence of the responses to Khan's article, that I realised not only were these nearly impossible to find, but Khan's two articles themselves were no longer available on the online platforms of both *ArtThrob* and *Art South Africa* (now *Art Africa*) where they originally appeared. I find this curious, to say the least. In fact, the only place where the articles are still available is on Khan's website, because she has made pdf-versions in 2011, it seems, and

⁷² Khan, 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?'.
⁷³ Ruth Simbao, 'Doing it for Comfort', *Artthrob* (2010)

<<http://www.artthrob.co.za/Reviews/Doing-it-for-Comfort.aspx>> [accessed 20 June 2016].

⁷⁴ Lorraine Porcia Malatjie, 'Framing the Artwork of Tracey Rose and Berni Searle through Black Feminism' (unpublished masters thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2011), p. 78.

made them available there.⁷⁵ Speaking from my personal recollection of the article(s), I have a memory of reading ‘Doing it for Daddy’ years ago, as there was a high awareness of the article in the South African art world, as well as among academics. I find it very interesting that this was such a difficult and notorious moment in the South African art world, but that there is now so very little evidence left of it.

I did not originally intend to write about ‘Doing it for Daddy’ at length, but I was interested in including Khan as a participant in this study for the purposes of the interview phase, because of the fact that she had spoken to transformation in the art world in the past. Because my focus here is on the *text* of the article, I decided not to include the material from the two interviews that I have conducted with her in the context of this chapter. What I will say at this point, is that, to be honest, I was quite moved to learn what effects the article *continues* to have on her career, even more than a decade after its first publication. After I had spoken with her, I found it necessary to look into ‘Doing it for Daddy’ more closely.

‘Doing it for Daddy’ was thus a textual event that had enormous implications in terms of sparking a controversy. It manifested in a systematic persecution of the young Black woman who said this, and at the same time we have the erasure of it from the existing archive. Against this, the living memory of the article also needs to be taken into account. Two other participants I interviewed in this study specifically pointed out Khan’s article, although I did not introduce it into the conversation. Furthermore, anecdotally, I can offer the following: I attended a symposium in Leeds in November 2015, entitled: ‘Photographies, Practices and Positionalities’. The symposium was organised jointly by the Research Centre for Visual Identities in Arts and Design (VIAD), based at the University of Johannesburg, and the White Spaces? Network through the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (CERS), based at the University of Leeds. The symposium attracted quite a number of South African art historians and writers who live in the United Kingdom. During a break, I was sitting around a table with some of these scholars, drinking coffee and talking

⁷⁵ A response from Mario Pissarra is also included in the version on Khan’s website. It can also be found on Africa South Art Initiative’s website: Mario Pissarra, ‘Booing It, Badly: A Response to Sharlene Khan’, *World View* (15 April 2011) <<http://asai.co.za/booing-it-badly-a-response-to-sharlene-khan/#more-614>> [accessed 20 June 2016].

about the work we were currently involved in. I mentioned that I had just interviewed Sharlene Khan, and the way the group responded pointed to the extent of the living memory of the article. Everybody there could remember it vividly, and some still hold strong opinions about it. I found it fascinating that, in 2015, sitting around a table with expatriate South African scholars, that they know *exactly* what I was taking about when Sharlene Khan's name was used. 'Sharlene Khan' equals, 'that article'. There is, therefore, a strong cultural memory of the article, but when you try to find evidence of this whole textual event, it is like grains of sand, just falling through your fingers.

Nevertheless, the following three things are thus at play: Firstly, from interviewing Khan and from Khan's second article, as well as the piece by Botha, we have the impact on Khan, namely that she was scapegoated, isolated and in some sense exiled from the art world. Secondly, the evidence disappears, as by some manner it is withdrawn or effaced from the official archive. Thirdly, we have anecdotal evidence of the article, that it remains a living wound in the cultural memory of the South African art world. My question then is, how can this be explained?

Perhaps this can be explained in terms of Rancière's concept of the *police order*, by which it can be said that, the art world has its own system of coordinates and 'bodies', a *police order* or *law* that is keeping the order of things, and determining the *distribution of the sensible* in the art world – who/what has a part in/of the sensible. This *police order* is also dividing the community into groups of who are included and who are excluded, who/what is say-able, and who/what is knowable. The fact that neither of the responding texts, nor Khan's two articles can no longer be found in their online places of publication – where they were available before – is symptomatic of the *police order* reasserting itself. It is almost as though the South African art world has had a bad dream that it is trying to pretend never happened.

There is, however, no particular individual or group of individuals to blame. Rancière's model is helpful here in understanding the *police order* as a system of coordinates, instead of a collective of people. Khan's account of how the art world rejected her on various fronts also points to a certain policing of a boundary. However disembodied this determining system of

coordinates may be, Khan's clash with the *police order*, nevertheless, was real, but because of the difficulty it presented, it is repressed, and therefore, there is a necessity for it to be re-examined beyond the terms in which it was received, which lead to polarisation, repression and prosecution.

But the sense of a *police order* patrolling the boundaries of the *distribution of the sensible* in the South African art world is perhaps most acutely registered in Khan's accounts of how she felt that she was being personally silenced. If we return to the passages I cited at the opening of this section, we can perhaps see them as evidence of the *police order*. To recount, she experienced how scholarships, jobs, listings of her exhibitions, reviews and projects became impossible.⁷⁶ She mentions how 'the reaction to the article was beyond anything she could have imagined'.⁷⁷ To Botha she confesses that too many incidents happen to mention in an the interview, but she does reveal how she was humiliated in scholarship interviews, how her employer at the time was urged, through defamatory letters, to fire her, how she has been struggling to get a job despite having two Masters degrees under her belt.⁷⁸ Some terms revealing of a *police order* surface in these accounts. Khan felt that 'the White vanguard was closing ranks',⁷⁹ and even Botha picks up on it inadvertently when she refers to the 'Doing it for Daddy' article as Khan's *crime*.⁸⁰ A crime has been committed against the *police order*, disrupting the *distribution of the sensible* in the South African art world. In terms of the *police order*, Khan needs to be recognised not as the perpetrator of a *wrong*, but the article, as well as its aftermath, should be recognised as the site of the articulation of a *wrong*. The manner in which the boundary to the sensible was *policed*, and how she was punished in a certain sense, is symptomatic of how unmanaged this type of speaking of a *wrong* was at time in the South African art world.

Ultimately, Khan's article poses a deep dilemma: we cannot have a situation where the speaking of a *wrong* leads to silencing and scapegoating the messenger, but we also cannot simply say: 'just sack all the white women', because in their own terms, the struggle for women to get a place

⁷⁶ Khan, 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?'.
⁷⁷ Khan, 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?'.
⁷⁸ Botha, 'Where hypersensitivity meets true transformation'.
⁷⁹ Khan, 'But What's All Dis Here Talkin' 'Bout?'.
⁸⁰ Botha, 'Where hypersensitivity meets true transformation'.

in the shaping of the art world has its own dynamic. The question is then, 'how does a democracy progress rather than polarise?' 'Doing it for Daddy' raises a variety of questions around what it would entail to produce a political subjectivity that is no longer silo-ed into gender/race/class, and that does not result in a defensive aggression against a revelation of a structural *wrong*.

CHAPTER 4

An Analysis of Okwui Enwezor's Article, 'Reframing the Black Subject'

Reading 'Reframing the Black Subject'

I would like to consider a second example of a textual event in the contemporary South African art world, which is an article by international curator, Okwui Enwezor, entitled, 'Reframing the Black Subject. Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Representation'. The article originally appeared as an essay accompanying the exhibition *Contemporary Art from South Africa* in Norway, curated by Marith Hope.¹ The article subsequently appeared in a slightly altered version in the journal *Third Text*, and it is from this version that I make my reading of this text.² Enwezor's article, 'Reframing the Black Subject', takes us back to a slightly earlier moment in South Africa's history, specifically into the transition years from apartheid to democracy during the mid-1990s. Enwezor indicates in the text that the time of writing of the article is late 1996.³ Unlike Sharlene Khan, an insider artist, Okwui Enwezor is a curator from outside the South African art world. At the same time he is deeply involved in the decolonisation of the art world, as is evident in his curatorial project for the exhibition, *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994* in Berlin, Chicago and New York from 2001 to 2002. This project went a long way towards making visible these struggles and liberations in Africa, by making visible the visual artefacts that were produced in their course.⁴

Enwezor's article offers a particular set of issues to the transformation debate. Whereas Khan's article indexes the institutional level

¹ Marith Hope, ed., *Contemporary Art from South Africa* (Oslo: Riksstutstillinger, 1997).

² Enwezor, Okwui, 'Reframing the Black Subject. Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Representation', *Third Text*, 40 (1997), 21-40.

³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 22.

⁴ Okwui Enwezor, ed., *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994* (Munich, London and New York, NY: Prestel, 2001).

as a front on which transformation needs to occur, Enwezor's argument brings the question of transformation to the level of representation, and indeed the politics of representation and artistic practice. 'Reframing the Black Subject' stands as a discourse on the question of to what extent the black body is available to be subjected in representation. Owing to its various discursive formations around matters of gender and race, 'Reframing the Black Subject' is thus another textual event with which to compare the Report discussed in Chapter 1, and to interrogate the formation of the four avatars I identified through my analysis. Gender and race run as double threads throughout the text, but in this case also become the topic of it.

Enwezor's text also moves us to a different area, which is the question of conflict. The somewhat harsh formulations found in 'Reframing the Black Subject' elicited a fiery debate amongst the South African arts community, which played out in the South African mainstream media.⁵ The response from the South African art world resulted in the publication of a collection of essays by various artists and thinkers in the forms of *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art* in 1999, which is perhaps one of the most consolidated and robust efforts in recent history to air issues of the politics of representation in 'the new' South Africa.⁶

The reason why 'Reframing the Black Subject' provoked the response it did, is mostly owing to the difficult and challenging stance of the article. Indeed certain passages in the article are provocative and quite shocking, to a white readership in particular, as the following quotations from the text illustrate:

From Part VIII:

While such a critique may be the primary intension of the works [that employ images of the black figure in ethnic dress], the irony is that most of them uncritically end up seduced by their fascination for the abject figure and docile bodies of African men, women and children.⁷

⁵ For the most comprehensive account of this debate, please see: Brenda Atkinson, 'Introduction', in *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art*, ed. by Brenda Atkinson and Candice Breitz (Johannesburg: Chalkham Hill, 1999), pp. 13-29.

⁶ Atkinson and Breitz, *Grey Areas*.

⁷ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

From Part IX:

[...] under apartheid, white women fought against African women [...].⁸

[...] white women metaphorically sodomised and pornographicised [*sic*] black women by using their bodies as functional objects of labour, as domestic workers, as maids and nannies and wet nurses.⁹

As some of the challenging statements do appear in passages I refer to in my discussion below, I am not presenting each instance of the text's contentiousness at this point. It is safe to assume that the hard-hitting nature of Enwezor's article is deliberate, and that the demanding and unforgiving aspects of this piece of writing are intended to challenge the status quo of the South African art world at this specific point of transition. This powerful piece thus appears as a significant intervention at this point, while at the same time, it contains various difficulties, that once again seem to set racial agonism between 'black' and 'white' in the forefront.

My aim in providing a reading of 'Reframing the Black Subject' is to offer a more sophisticated analysis of it beyond the oppositions of race and gender that appear through the formulations of this article. I seek to offer a reading akin to that which I made of Sharlene Khan's article in the previous chapter. I am, therefore, concerned with this controversial piece of writing as a *text*, and I ask: What exactly is it calling for in terms of transformation? How do questions of gender come into play during this call? There are vital dimensions to be grasped in Enwezor's piece, which are at risk of getting lost as a result of its contentious nature. But for all the difficulty 'Reframing the Black Subject' contains, in a Rancièrian frame, this article is also speaking *a wrong*. Through this act, it is calling the potential democracy of the art world to engage meaningfully with extraordinarily difficult elements of transformation that are specific to the South African situation.

Due to the article's dense and complicated nature, and indeed its various controversial moments, I have opted for a type of analysis that can avoid the pitfalls of getting drawn into its lengthy ruminations. I conducted a systematic analysis that moved through each of the ten parts of the article,

⁸ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 36.

⁹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 36.

by which I attempted to grasp the major tenets of Enwezor's argument. Through this analysis, certain 'building blocks', as I will refer to them, of his argument became apparent. He develops these building blocks gradually and extensively throughout the first seven sections of the article into notions that run like golden threads through the entire text, but then also function, quite importantly, as the foundation of his critique of the work of certain artists in the final three sections. For the purposes of the 'architectural' or 'structural' reading I offer here, I am trying to discern the conceptual elements of his argument, i.e. how he mounts his critique, in order to establish the nature of its field of play. The building blocks of Enwezor's argument are revealed in layers, as he begins with general elements, which grow into specific notions.

Enwezor opens the article in Part I with an anecdote of his Afrikaner neighbour, in a suburb in Johannesburg where Enwezor lived at the time, who had the habit of flying the old South African flag over weekends and during public holidays.¹⁰ For Enwezor, his neighbour's gesture reveals 'anxieties around the transition from apartheid to a representative, tolerant liberal democracy', and he likens this display to an 'almost fatalistic clinging to a relic of racism'.¹¹ This figure of Enwezor's flag-flying Afrikaner neighbour – untouched by the radical alteration that has occurred in South Africa, stubborn to change, and longing for 'the old nation' to return – stays with the reader as a haunting anti-transformational figure throughout the article, as it is ultimately resistance to change and sedimented practices that are the subject of Enwezor's critique.¹²

Thus in the very beginning of the article, Enwezor, through the figure of his flag-flying neighbour, sets up his first major conceptual building block, that of nostalgia, with connected notions of a refusal to change and a desire for the past to return. These notions are also present in his discussion of a conference in Stellenbosch, which was held around the time of the writing of the article by 'Afrikaner intellectuals', 'in a bid to form an organisation that will promote Afrikaans language and culture'.¹³ The conference, rather troublingly, took place during the time of the Truth

¹⁰ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 21.

¹¹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 21.

¹² Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 21.

¹³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 26.

and Reconciliation hearings and came across, for Enwezor at least, as insensitive and amnesic.¹⁴ I will return to the significance of the Stellenbosch Afrikaans conference in Enwezor's argument later on in this discussion. Nostalgia, a refusal for change and a yearning for the past to return are, in the text, dialectically opposed to the newness of post-apartheid South Africa and the promises and possibilities of change. In this regard, Enwezor states:

However hopeful one may sound in articulating the novelty and newness of South Africa, we must constantly remind ourselves that, while nations may disappear, the ideologies which feed and sustain them, and which form the foundational basis of their creation, are more difficult to eradicate. For they are imaginatively reconstituted by using the surplus resources of their enduring myths as banners to rally adherents.¹⁵

The second major building block, which Enwezor lays down, is whiteness, which he explores through notions of 'white identity', 'the primacy of the white subject', 'white supremacy', 'colonialism' and 'racism'. In Enwezor's text, whiteness stands as the subject of the nation, as 'blackness' functions 'as anathema to the discourse of whiteness', and whiteness exists 'as a resource out of which the trope of the nation, nationality and citizenship is constructed, and everything else that is prior is negated, defaced, marginalised and colonised'.¹⁶

Whiteness is also connected to nostalgia, and this connection is particularly anchored in the way in which Enwezor sets up the article by using his Afrikaner neighbour waving the old South African flag in the opening paragraphs. This move implies that, even though South Africa is moving forward, there is a nostalgia for a lost nation, and the loss of the possibilities thereof. In a certain type of framework, especially that applied by Nelson Mandela in considering the fate and place of the Afrikaner community after apartheid, there is a necessity to recognise this level of cultural or ethnic investment, especially if one is seeking that people invest, in turn, in a new nation. What Enwezor recognises is quite different from what Mandela recognised in terms of the Afrikaner. In Enwezor's reading of the actions of his Afrikaner White neighbour, it registers as an attachment to

¹⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

¹⁵ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 22.

¹⁶ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 22.

something that has become equivalent to a nostalgia for white supremacy. While it is vital to acknowledge the difference between whiteness and white supremacy, Enwezor's article alerts us to the importance of recognising the point at which that what might be a justifiable nostalgia for a cultural or ethnic history and identity – which is at risk in the transition from the apartheid state to the democratic state – contains and repeats white supremacy (not whiteness as such), and it is, therefore, *an ideological investment*.

The third building block that is established is the question of representation, which involves the archive, or 'image bank' of both apartheid and ethnography, or the nation's iconographical text, as Enwezor refers to it.¹⁷ The questions of what is in this 'image bank', what its history is, how it is being appropriated, and particularly who has control over its appropriation, underlie the critique that Enwezor mounts throughout this piece of writing. In the article, the realisation of South Africans, in the immediate post-apartheid years, of exactly how different they really are, should call 'into question what images in decolonising South Africa should look like, and who has the right to use which images, and what the authorising narrative ought to be'.¹⁸ Enwezor also states that he is examining 'issues of representation in a culture which has lived for generations with racist stereotypes as one of the most prevailing attitudes amongst members of its social polity'.¹⁹ The first two building blocks of nostalgia and whiteness anchor the third building block of representation. This is evident in the final sentence of Part I, which states:

Thus to examine the charged descriptive detail and what strikes at the mortal heart of the 'New South Africa' — multilingual, and hopefully, multivocal — is to keen one's ears to the new uses and revindication of whiteness (in very subdued and barely registered forms) as an idiom of cultural identity, that is, as a renewed and authoritative presence in the country's iconographical text.²⁰

The three major building blocks of nostalgia, whiteness and representation lay the foundation for two central themes that run as the golden threads through the article, namely the notions of white

¹⁷ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 22.

¹⁸ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 26.

¹⁹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 22.

²⁰ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 22.

representation and the black body, which often feature in conjunction as 'white representation of the black body'. From these two central themes, there further emerge the twin figures of the 'white interlocutor' and the 'black subject'.

Enwezor connects various aspects to white representation and the white interlocutor, most notably the right *to speak on behalf of*, which the following passage demonstrates:

But since the pragmatic value of everything that defines the sense of the old South Africa derived from the interregnum of white nationalism and black resistance, both in images, popular iconography, literature, language and religion, it goes without saying that, to speak authentically about the nation, to render the exactitude of its character, to probe its borders and alleviate its insecurity, to draw it into light through all kinds of signifying devices, the birthright [*sic*] of such utterance (which included speaking on behalf of the 'native') ultimately belonged to the white interlocutor.²¹

In light of the fact of this white interlocutor that speaks for the nation, and speaks on behalf of its others, Enwezor's article aims, 'to make a commentary on the fascinating usage, in post-apartheid representation, of the African body as a subject and prop in both the political and cultural expressions of the "New South Africa"'.²²

Various disturbing practices of white representation of the black body are evoked in the article under the notion of abjection, which is introduced in Part III. The figures of the 'Hottentot Venus' and the Black man on the slave auction block are presented to 'signal a kind of black genitalia abjection', which is the product 'of white masochist enjoyment, of black sexuality in its most debased form'.²³ Arguably, this is also one of the more contentious statements in the article, but it is important to note that such statements, in my view, attempt to underline the violence that has historically been done to the Black/African form. Through enlisting the images of the 'Hottentot Venus' and the Black man on the slave block, it is as though the text is saying: we need to remember the history of this, and it is horrific. The statement about 'white masochist enjoyment' of debased

²¹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 23.

²² Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 22.

²³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 23.

black sexuality is followed by a paragraph on the prevalence of the figures of the black criminal and the black prostitute in texts of popular culture.²⁴

Noticeably, between nostalgia and white representation there lies a connection in the text to a white/colonial desire/gaze, which contains 'ideological fantasies of blackness' and 'ideals of ethnicity'.²⁵ Enwezor is concerned about various practices in the new South Africa that contains such ideals of ethnicity and fantasies of blackness, and he states:

[...] this fantasy again images the black subject in the old and warped frame of the apartheid era as lack, representing him at the liminal point of his defeat. That is, his story as spoken through the transitional identity of post-apartheid contemporary representations, is narrated in the past tense, as if the narrators want to stop history; as if everything of the black subject resides only in his pre-linguistic period, in the residue of his diminished state as subject, prior to his act of speech, fixed in eternal silence.²⁶

In this light, Enwezor is particularly suspicious of practices, especially in the South African tourist industry at the time, that serve 'up African culture as spectacle and source of reassuring, harmless entertainment'.²⁷ He cites The Lesedi Cultural Village in Gauteng, where Zulu dancing and 'authentic Xhosa, Pedi or Sotho domestic' scenes may be sampled.²⁸ For Enwezor, '[i]t seems that in this retrieval of African customs from a besmirched ethnographic cupboard, only those aspects of African culture which entertain are presented', and he laments, that '[s]uch are the images that are beginning to enter the archival bank of the new South African nation'.²⁹

The question of where such practices leave the Black African subject is at stake. Enwezor writes the following regarding the black subject, or 'colonised man': '[...] he wants to write his own history, to retrieve his own body from the distortive proclivities of white representation.'³⁰ The relationship between the representational practices of the white interlocutor

²⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 23.

²⁵ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 25.

²⁶ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

²⁷ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

²⁸ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

²⁹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

³⁰ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 25.

and the black subject, also ‘settler’ and ‘native’ in the article’s formulations, is a tense one, as the following passage illustrates:

For in their historic relationship, the settler always feigns to know his native better than the native knows himself. It is this crucial position that the white South African, who has always been in control of how the eyes see and perceive the African, is not yet ready to give up. Hence in recent South African representation, the ideological battle seems to be over the control of the black body, its frame of analysis, the projection site in which its image is refreshed with the new insight of a suddenly untroubled social relation.³¹

The tension between white representational practices and the black subject are also bound up in the question around the archive. Consider the following statement:

This is the crucial point where African subjectivity and white interests seem to intersect in the contest of meaning of identity in post-apartheid South Africa. It appears that the struggle for this meaning hinges on who controls the representational intentionality of the body politic, especially its archive of images: symbolic and literal.³²

The space created between the two themes of white representation and the black body, the white interlocutor (who represents) and the black subject (who is represented) is a troubling space, and it is a *white space*, in the article’s account.³³ The themes of white representation and the black body thus converge in the text in the notion of abjection – perpetrated by the white interlocutor and endured by the black subject – coupled with notions of arrogance and ignorance embedded in white representational practices.

These conceptual elements, or building blocks, discussed above, function as the foundation for the critique that Enwezor levels at the work of White artists, primarily artist-women, in parts VII to X. Part VIII, especially, marks a turn to this type of critique, which then becomes the subject of the remaining three sections of the article. At this point, before I turn to a reading of Enwezor’s critique of the work by certain White artist-women, it is interesting to note the degree to which the avatars come into play again, in this text. Through a coded reading, which relates to my reading of the Report in Chapter 1, i.e. how terms associated with gender

³¹ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 25.

³² Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, pp. 24-25.

³³ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 35.

and race appear in the text, I offer a brief discussion of some of the ways the avatars are conjured in 'Reframing the Black Subject'.

In many instances in the article, the use of the male figure, and indeed the male pronoun, to represent the universal black subject, alerts one to the specific constructions of gender and race that are in operation in the text. Two of the passages that contain this use have been quoted in part already, but I will present them again briefly, along with other selected passages that illustrate this point:

From Part III:

Is then how **the Other** is invented and assigned **his** place on the margins of the nation [...].³⁴

[...] **the Negro** [...] There is both a demand for **his** presence and **his** objectification [...] the divide that separates **his** polluting presence from the stable environment of **whiteness** [...].³⁵

From Part IV:

Surely the **black South African** is envious of the position of the **white South African**, who has always deigned [...] to speak on **his** behalf [...] Surely the **colonised man** is an envious **man** [...] For **he** wants to write **his** own history, to retrieve **his** own body [...] to tell **his** story.³⁶

From Part VI:

[...] this fantasy [...] images **the black subject** [...] representing **him** at the liminal point of **his** defeat. That is, **his** story as spoken through [...] as if everything of **the black subject** resides only in **his** pre-linguistic period, in the residue of **his** diminished state as subject [...].³⁷

From Part VII:

[...] still noble **African**. Since **he** can't speak for **himself**, **he** is spoken for.³⁸

From Part VIII:

[...] situates the **black body** in the realm of **his** political struggle and social resistance.³⁹

³⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 30.

³⁵ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 24.

³⁶ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 25. In this passage Enwezor is drawing on a quotation he provides from Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (Grove Press, New York, 1963), p. 39. This quotation reads: 'The colonized man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, 'They want to take our place'. It is true, for there is no native, who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settlers' place.'

³⁷ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

³⁸ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

³⁹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 31.

[...] to represent the **black subject** [...] in the violent midst of **his** struggle for emancipation from servitude and denigration [...] which is **his** enduring image [...].⁴⁰

For the sake of brevity, I have kept these quotations above short and somewhat fragmented, but found it crucial to present them here in light of the fate that befalls the Black female avatar in Enwezor's text, which I will discuss in a moment. Other than this appearance of the Black male as the universal black subject, the Black male avatar appears in a couple of other ways in the text as well: as an enslaved person, or 'the black man on the auction block'; in the figures of Frantz Fanon, Stuart Hall, and the poet Aimé Césaire, whom Enwezor enlists in mounting his argument; also as Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu; in the figure of dancing Zulu men and the performing Bushman man at yet another cultural village; and as the artist, Santu Mofokeng, whose work Enwezor holds up in Part VIII as exemplary in terms of avoiding the problems of representation with which he takes issue.⁴¹

The White male avatar, as already related, appears in the opening of the text as the central figure of Enwezor's Afrikaner flag-waving neighbour. Notably, the White male avatar also stands in the text as the universal white subject:

From Part III:

[...] the profitable position of the **settler** [...] interests and benefits that accrue from **his** superiority, that is to say, **his** race, his language, culture, history, knowledge, etc, the authority with which **he** narrates history, in short, **whiteness**.⁴²

The universality of the male subject of both white and black subjects converge in the following passage: 'For in their historical relationship, the **settler** always feigns to know **his native** better than the **native** knows **himself**'.⁴³ Other than its function as universal white subject, the White male avatar appears in a limited amount of ways in the text: as Afrikaans writer, Breyten Breytenbach – who participated in the Stellenbosch Afrikaans conference; and in the figure of the artist, Willie Bester – whose work

⁴⁰ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 31.

⁴¹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', pp. 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 35.

⁴² Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 24.

⁴³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 25.

receives a mixed review.⁴⁴ Oblique mention is also made of the work of Wayne Barker, Piet Pienaar and Gunther Herbst.⁴⁵

The White female avatar is constructed in a multitude of ways in the text. The first appearance this avatar makes is in the figure of Claire Kahane, whom Enwezor enlists for a brief discussion of her object relations theory.⁴⁶ Julia Kristeva is also evoked for her definition of 'the abject'.⁴⁷ Similarly, Susan Vogel is mentioned for her 'intimate outsider' concept.⁴⁸ The White female avatar is the avatar that appears most frequently in the text. Through my coded reading I notice a complete shift from Part VIII in the article onwards, by which the White female avatar becomes the primary subject of the remainder of the article, and indeed of Enwezor's critique of the practices of white representation. Enwezor especially focuses on the work by Pippa Skotnes, Penny Siopis, and Candice Breitz, and makes a brief mention of work by Lien Botha.

The Black female avatar features in limited and particular ways in the text. Similar to the scholars cited from the other three avatar categories, the Black female avatar appears, notably, as Toni Morrison, and bell hooks – both African American figures.⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier, the universal subject position of the male Black avatar in Enwezor's text is intriguing in relation to the manner in which the Black female avatar is constructed. There appears to be a degree of victimisation of the Black (African) female figure in this article, and her first appearance as the brutalised 'Hottentot Venus' signals this notion.⁵⁰ The appearance of the Black female avatar as the victim of the portrayal of the black form in white representation, throughout Parts VIII to X firmly solidifies this avatar's position as most diminished in the text. Although this avatar appears as Enwezor's friend in the text, attending an exhibition with him, it is striking to note, that of all the avatars, the Black female avatar is the only one in the text that does not appear as an artist. This is rather concerning in light of her appearance as the

⁴⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', pp. 26, 31.

⁴⁵ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 29.

⁴⁶ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 23.

⁴⁷ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 24.

⁴⁸ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 31.

⁴⁹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', pp. 33, 36-37.

⁵⁰ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 23.

object of troubling white representation, but never as the representing subject herself.

The manner in which the article constructs the four avatars is telling, and it does set up various configurations of oppositions composed of the elements of race and gender – ‘black’ and ‘white’/‘male’ and ‘female’. A crude reading may even suggest that the article represents an instance where a Black male, in the form of Enwezor himself, is targeting the work of White females, in the form of Skotnes, Siopis and Breitz, as indeed the White female avatar appears to be set up as the culprit where problematic white representation is concerned.⁵¹ Furthermore, because of the number of harsh, and even scathing, statements that are present, it becomes even more difficult not to view the article in this way. I argue, however, that it is not sufficient to read ‘Reframing the Black Subject’ as such, and that such a rough oppositional reading needs to be resisted, for if it is not, one runs the risk of missing the contribution of Enwezor’s article. Even though this contribution comes about with various difficulties attached to it, it is one we need to heed, nevertheless. Therefore, instead of setting the article up as a ‘black man’ accusing ‘white women’ of misuse of the black female body, I seek to read Enwezor’s article as presenting an important argument about the treacherous field in which representation operates in ‘the new’ South Africa.

(Mis)representation and (Mis)recognition

The structural analysis of the building blocks, or conceptual elements, offered above, reveals that Enwezor’s concern is in relation to specific practices of representation. I will now turn to his critique of the practices of white representation in South Africa, and his views on the work of Skotnes, Siopis and Breitz in this regard. But first, one needs to understand the function of the anchoring figures of the neighbour and his flag, and the Stellenbosch Afrikaans conference in relation to practices of white representation. One might say, that even in the opening anecdote of the

⁵¹ Here it is also important to recognise that when Enwezor’s wrote ‘Reframing the Black Subject’ in 1996, it was before he directed the Second Johannesburg Biennale, and therefore, before his international career took off. Enwezor was thus not, at the time, the successful international curator that he is today, and, therefore, the authority that contemporary readers might associate with his voice is not applicable in the context of this article.

article, what Enwezor is trying to do, is to show that by living next to this person, this person's flag defines the space he has to negotiate. The white space that is created between white representation and the black subject that I discussed above, is at stake here. The nature of the voice Enwezor is claiming for himself – while it does include 'speaking for' various people in a certain sense – is to displace and decentre whiteness from its subject position and call it into account, especially where the practices of representation are concerned. With regards to the Stellenbosch Afrikaans conference, the question is not about whether Afrikaans-speakers are *allowed* to have this conference, but it is about whether the having of such a conference, especially at that point in time, continues to allow whiteness to function hegemonically and dominantly. That is the question, because it is not about the right of individual groups to their own culture, but the issue of whether a group's practices continue to function performativity as dominant and hegemonic.

This resistance to change and an attachment to an ideological investment on the part of whiteness are crucial in understanding Enwezor's critique of white practices of representation. The following accusation is levelled:

And nowhere has this recent resistance been more fierce than in a representational terrain still dominated by highly literate, but nonetheless unreflexive white cultural practitioners unblinkingly intent on representing black subjectivity at the margins of cultural and aesthetic discourse.⁵²

Enwezor launches this critique on white representational practices with a discussion of the problems related to the use of ethnographic and sentimentalised images of the African subject. In the beginning of Part VII, he states:

Perhaps there is a difference between what the [Stellenbosch Afrikaans] colloquium staged, and what the artist attempts in employing the image of the African subject to come to terms with what South Africa was, what it is today, and what it could become. But why am I unconvinced by the remonstrative gestures of those artists who sentimentalise African images, who persist with those images that are devoid of conflict, of the quietly suffering but still noble African? [...] I want to believe

⁵² Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 26.

in the sincerity of these gestures, to think that the whiteness of the artists is beside the point.⁵³

In Part VIII, the use of such images is problematised, as it is stated that, '[e]ven after the fall of apartheid, the temptation to retrieve the 'native' in his full ethnic regalia remains in representations which attempt to address the notion of difference and otherness as forms of critique of those images.'⁵⁴ Therefore, in the context of this article, showing such images at all, comes dangerously close to repeating the racial violence of their inception. Enwezor is particularly concerned with 'the almost obsessive usage of old photographic images of Africans', or 'the ethnographic, tourist postcards depicting near-naked African women in a state of colonial arrest'.⁵⁵ Enwezor expands his concern with the use of such images, as 'redolent of the time past' that has not quite vanished. He further states:

But it is the over-familiarity and brazen usage of the photographs, many of which were undoubtedly found in curio shops [...] The subjects, it seems, are attractive because of their anonymity and existence at the margins of history. They have no names, thus they pose the least emotional or ethical threat, and the distance between them and the artists offers a gratifying contextual licence to do with the images as one chooses.⁵⁶

This problematic practice is then identified in two works by Penny Siopis which contain 'old photographic images of Africans' and, or 'ethnographic, tourist postcards', namely *Boy with Ostrich Egg*, and *South African Postcard 2*.⁵⁷ The fact that Siopis, in *Boy with Ostrich Egg*, uses the 'turn-of-the century photograph of the doleful looking boy in a suit and hat carrying an ostrich egg' is problematised.⁵⁸ Enwezor remarks that, the image of the boy 'has been recoloured blue and decorated with vertical borders of baby shoes. It is pure visual candy'.⁵⁹ Regarding *South African Postcard 2*, the way in which Siopis turns a 'ubiquitous ethnographic postcard' of a 'native' woman into a large Cibachrome print, which she 'paints over', and 'drapes with assorted paraphernalia, syringes, medical

⁵³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 27.

⁵⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

⁵⁵ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

⁵⁶ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

⁵⁷ Although Enwezor is not naming the work he is discussing in this section as *South African Postcard 2*, the reader finds a matching of his discussion in this artwork as presented in Part IX.

⁵⁸ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

⁵⁹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

catheters, etc.’ is questioned.⁶⁰ Enwezor takes issue with how the surface of the image has been worked on for effect, by covering, erasing and scarring. This passage summarises Enwezor’s reading of her use of these images: ‘By sentimentalising her images, Siopis turns them into over-aestheticised vessels for pleasurable consumption. The images are just rendered as banal texts, as objective in their depictions as their usage as sources of art.’⁶¹



Figure 3: Okwui Enwezor, Penny Siopis *Boy with Ostrich Egg*.⁶²

A second concern that is raised regarding these two works, using *Boy with Ostrich Egg* (Figure 3) as example, is that the work(s) present an aesthetic, ‘which reveals a curious ambivalence towards its subject as a social being and the historical impediments that frame his inception within the strategic restaging of African identity through the ghostly outline of its faded form’.⁶³ Against the problematic representational practices of effacing the image’s surface, and presenting a nameless black subject, Enwezor places work by Santu Mofokeng in a project called *Black Photo Album/Look at Me: 1890-1950*, in which Mofokeng makes a ‘sensitive recovery of the private history of black families from the colonial period and leading up to the early stages of apartheid’.⁶⁴ Enwezor stresses that,

⁶⁰ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 28.

⁶¹ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 28.

⁶² Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 29. As will be touched upon later, this image does not stand as a lone image in Siopis’ work, but rather forms part of a series. It is unclear where Enwezor obtained this image from.

⁶³ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 28.

⁶⁴ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 30.

instead of making ‘aesthetic interventions on the images to prove a point as author, he [Mofokeng] has instead, except for restoring the images, left the photographs as they are.’⁶⁵

The specific type of images that Mofokeng uses is also important. Instead of ‘nameless’ or ‘ethnic’ figures, the photographs in the series shows figures representing an emerging black middle-class, or perhaps even bourgeoisie – well-dressed and turned out. These turn-of-the-century portraits, the ones shown in the article at least, also represent a time before the devastating effects of the Natives Land Act of 1913 robbed Black persons of their right to means and property. Mofokeng is thus purposefully working in this field of a pre-apartheid moment of photography. Enwezor lauds Mofokeng for ‘deploying the archival images of black identity for the recovery of historical identity’.⁶⁶ Mofokeng has emphasised ‘the historicity of the subjects that occupy’ his study, and ‘has painstakingly searched out the often elusive biographies of the sitters and their families’.⁶⁷ For Enwezor, ‘[t]heir names form part of the larger task in what these images suggest for future usage.’⁶⁸

Enwezor’s point about Mofokeng’s work is illuminated, when one considers the captions included with the images from *Black Photo Album/Look at Me: 1890-1950* that Enwezor includes in his text. In these captions Mofokeng takes pains to try and say who these people are, and where they are from in order to present his subjects as people with a history and a family, and coming from a certain place. Enwezor highlights Mofokeng’s ‘intension and insistence that the black subject be seen as a person possessing a history, identity and desire’, and he states that, ‘it must be understood that far from drawing a positivist sketch of noble Africans, Mofokeng is attempting to tease out an often elusive sense of black complexity in racialised discourse’, and that, ‘his project provides us with an ethical sense of African agency.’⁶⁹

The article places the celebrated example of Mofokeng’s work in opposition to what Enwezor maintains Siopis is doing, which is to merely appropriate images of the black figure, as his critique is that she is merely

⁶⁵ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 30.

⁶⁶ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 30.

⁶⁷ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 30.

⁶⁸ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 30.

⁶⁹ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 31.

over-sentimentalising and over-aestheticising the images that she employs. What is not recognised in the article's treatment of Siopis' work, is the question of what exactly her move was in using these images; and how this move relates to her use of the black body in the history of her work on a larger scale – even though Enwezor very briefly mentions that they fit into her 'larger repertoire' of 'fairly extensive incursions into the arena of racialized representation'.⁷⁰

Enwezor's further concern regarding white representation is signposted at the end of Part VIII, where he refers to a particular 'mode of discourse, which seeks the normalisation of the power role of whiteness, as capable of historicising black desire, which the White artists today assign themselves'.⁷¹ He then continues, in the first half of Part IX, to discuss an exhibition curated by the artist, Pippa Skotnes at the South African National Gallery, entitled *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen*, which in Enwezor's view 'was mounted to reveal the horrors which the 'Bushman' had suffered in southern Africa at the hands of White settlers and Africans alike'.⁷² Much of the initial discussion centres on the manner in which Skotnes, through her curation and self-appointed status as custodian of Bushman history, was speaking on behalf of Bushmen.⁷³ But more importantly, Enwezor provides an account of the horrors of the exhibition itself: 'Skotness [*sic*] had ransacked various ethnographic storerooms', and had come up with 'bits of ethnic paraphernalia', as well as 'anthropological documents' and 'dissecting instruments in lit glass cabinets', and presented 'moulds of decapitated body parts of the "Bushman" cast in wax and placed on pedestals'.⁷⁴ Skotnes had commissioned a 'linoleum carpet embossed with photographic likenesses of' the Bushman, which had invited, and acquiesced, viewers 'to walk or trample upon the abject figure of the "Bushman"'.⁷⁵ As a result, Enwezor questions: 'What was the exhibition actually saying, and to whom was it addressing its message? Certainly not

⁷⁰ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

⁷¹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 31.

⁷² Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 32.

⁷³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 32.

⁷⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 33.

⁷⁵ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 33.

to the “Bushman” who, to the surprise of the curator and the institution upset the cart by rejecting the message of the exhibition’.⁷⁶

It is along these lines that Enwezor develops the most valuable aspect of this critique of white representation, which is the question of the position of the Black spectator. Precisely the ‘failure to contain the gaze of the “Bushman”’, was according to Enwezor, the biggest problem with Skotnes’s exhibition.⁷⁷ He formulates his position on the black spectator convincingly in the following passages, and I believe it is worthwhile to reproduce them here:

It would seem that Skotness [*sic*], as often is the case with white representations of African history, has assumed that as spectators, we all see the same thing, and thus believe that our gazes are constituted and therefore affirmed and defined by the same regime of looking. Such an assumption is not only simplistic, but reductive as well [...] under such a position ‘the dominant reading compels the Black spectator to identify with racist inscription of Black character’. However, difficulty and anxiety arises when the gaze of the black spectator is accounted for, and ends up challenging representations which the white community might have deemed irrefutably conclusive. Therefore, when looking at white representations of African identity, we must allow that positions of spectatorship be recognised, particular in a racist society, as always conditioned by the economy of racialised interpretation, as well as desire.⁷⁸

The position of the black spectator is Enwezor’s primary concern as he turns to the work of Candice Breitz and states that: ‘It is the lack, therefore, and non-recognition of the place of the black spectator as an affirmed and enabled participant in the act of looking that burdens the work of the young artist Candice Breitz’.⁷⁹ It is particularly her work for the *Rainbow Series*, the *Ghost Series* and the *Whiteface Series* that Enwezor finds troubling, and he spends the largest part of the remainder of the article discussing these works. Enwezor highlights her hybrid technique of collaging together body parts, by the cutting and ripping of images of White women from pornographic magazines and stereotypical images of Black

⁷⁶ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 33.

⁷⁷ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, pp. 33-34.

⁷⁸ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 34. In this passage Enwezor is quoting from Manthia Diawara, ‘Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance’, in *Black American Cinema*, ed. by Manthia Diawara (Routledge, London and New York, 1993), pp. 211-220 (p. 213).

⁷⁹ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 34.

women 'bare-breasted and barefooted', in "'ethnic" garb' taken from tourist postcards.⁸⁰ Enwezor is wary of the images produced by these 'obliterative' acts, as he states:⁸¹

These crude joinings, some of which conflate the bodies of prepubescent black children with those of leering and sexually exposed white women are meant to enact an analogy of equal relationship and compatibility at the site of representation. The analogy being the equation of colonial ethnographic capture of the black body as the same as pornographic capture of white women.

[...]

And what is it that Breitz is saying here that is of real interest to the African woman? Is she saying that this woman lives in the same temporal zone as the white woman? That they are both on the same level, as naive victims of masculine violence?⁸²

If Breitz's work is attempting to suggest some kind of a collision, overlaying, or interconnection of these two kinds of regimes of representation of the feminine body, then one also needs to allow for the question of *what she thinks she is doing*. Perhaps she is suggesting that there are contiguities between certain modes by which the objectification of women occurs, which penetrates both the ethnographic and the pornographic. This proposition would be a feminist position, but one which, nevertheless, simply explodes in the face of the freight that is attached to *the* black body. Enwezor picks up on this by stating that, Breitz missed 'the fact that, not even gender could so suddenly bind together Black and White women's bodies as equal partners against patriarchy in post-apartheid South Africa. For white women must first recognise their own complicity in constructing the African subject as such'.⁸³ The question of the black spectator is then emphasised through Enwezor's recounting of how his Black South African female friend responded to Breitz's exhibition. She told him, 'how ashamed she was of her body. After seeing it depicted as it was she commented rather ruefully, "is this the way *they* still see us"'.⁸⁴

Although one cannot gainsay any person's reaction to art in their encounter with it, one response to this in relation to Breitz's work may be, that this is not a representation of how somebody *sees* a Black person, but it

⁸⁰ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 35.

⁸¹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 36.

⁸² Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 35.

⁸³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', pp. 35-36.

⁸⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 36.

is rather an investigation of the codes of the representation of Black *and* White femininities. By no means do I intend to ‘defend’ Breitz and Siopis’ work, and I certainly take Enwezor’s point on the denial of the black spectator position, but it seems that in Enwezor’s problematisation of both Siopis’ and Breitz’s work, he is making a critique of their work without acknowledging either the feminist trajectories of these works, or the history of their practices.

In the text Breitz and Siopis, and other White artist-women, stand accused of ‘unreflexivity’, which as I will argue below, is unlikely to be the case.⁸⁵ They may, perhaps, stand accused of misjudgement, for underestimating the degree of difficulty associated with these issues, i.e. the trickiness of representing the black form, and that this might end up having a negative effect, especially for the black spectator. It may be a matter of them having failed to ask: how does the other see me? (in a Spivakian sense) and therefore also: how would the Black woman spectator see these works? Enwezor is indeed picking up on a vital issue here, but we, nevertheless, need to extend our understanding of these works to the idea that they are of a moment in South Africa’s history where the exploration of the archive – that by necessity carries the constructions of gender and race, and the colonial and racist aspects of it – is being done for the purpose of a certain kind of exposure. The question is then, as indirectly posed through Enwezor’s text: *does that work when someone in a black subject position sees it?* How these issues play out in South Africa particularly, is an important factor.

Enwezor writes this article in 1996 (it is published in 1997) during the first decade of democracy and about two years after the official end of apartheid. During this time there was an intense anxiety about a politics of representation. This was also the year before Enwezor was brought in as the director of the second Johannesburg Biennale. It was also during this time that South Africa held its Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings.

Feminist Reflexive Practices

It is useful to consider the case of Penny Siopis’ work in terms of Enwezor’s critique, as the use of the black form figures in a particular kind of way in

⁸⁵ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 26.

her practice. From the mid-1980s to the 1990s, i.e. in the beginnings of the aftermath of the end of apartheid, Siopis undertakes a series of large-scale works that she calls History Paintings, in which she starts to use figures in a particular way. In looking at the history of her work, one notices a point in the 1980s, when she progresses from her 'Cake Paintings' to her 'History Paintings', which are a type of development of the 'Cake Paintings', and the amount of figures used was multiplied significantly. In the 'History Paintings', Siopis also starts to use figures other than cakes and fruits, and starts including the human form. This period culminates in her painting *Patience on a Monument – 'A History Painting'* (1988), which depicts a Black woman, peeling a piece of fruit, sitting on a pile of objects, with thousands of small human figures in the background (Figure 4). Siopis' work represents this notion of the canvas of history, across which various different figures appear.



Figure 4: Penny Siopis (1988), *Patience on a Monument: 'A History Painting'*. Oil and collage on board. 180 x 200 cm. William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberly, South Africa.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Penny Siopis, *Patience on a Monument: 'A History Painting'* (1988) <<https://pennysiopis.com/selected-works/patience-on-a-monument-a-history-painting/>> [accessed 1 July 2020].

In *Terra Incognita* (1991), meaning unknown or unexplored territory, Siopis makes similar use of multiple figures and also includes the figure of a monumental Black woman crawling across a 'historic' landscape on her hands and knees (Figure 5).⁸⁷ The figure of the woman's body is in turn made up of various smaller elements, and her skin is plastered and covered by collage, completely reconfiguring the surface of her body. Through the title of the work, Siopis is referencing a sense of exploration presumably of the African landscape as a *terra incognita* for settlers and migrants. The figure of the woman's body presents a further unexplored territory. Through this work Siopis is raising questions about the position of Black women in the grander schemes of colonialism and history. In this light it is also significant that the Black female figure in this work is crawling across the landscape – a gesture that points to the subjugated position of Black women in the narratives of conquest and nation.

In this series the woman's body is composed of a collage of many others thus not exposing her nakedly but making her skin a surface overprinted with 'history' in the form of a piling up of images. She is also crawling across the landscape full of activities that look like mines and oil rigs and other excavations of the earth. Siopis' work at that time was influenced by Walter Benjamin's thinking and the idea of history as catastrophe building up layer by layer. Instead of a stunned angel of history looking back at the past while being blown into the future with the rubble of history piling up at his/her feet, as is the case in Paul Klee's monoprint of 1920 *Angelus Novus*, the woman in *Terra Incognita* looks back, remade by the imprinting of claims on the land and her body, but also looking at the viewer as she is in the process of moving across this busy landscape itself being convulsed with usage. Is this woman overwritten with images as the landscape is overwritten with colonial and original workings?

In this work, Siopis is using a Black woman, not just a Black person as though the Black man is the whole totality of Blackness, but the figure of a woman is employed to represent a sense of the double burden, picking up on both race and gender. The angel of history in Klee's monoprint is a figure standing, but being driven back by the wind of change with its back

⁸⁷ Both *Patience on a Monument* and *Terra Incognita* are part of a sequence of 'history paintings', during the 1980s and 1990s.

towards the future looking at the catastrophe piling up at its feet. There is something specific about what Siopis is doing at this point, because the figure of a Black woman is not merely appropriated, but it is rather constructed and built up by other figures. Rather than being blown backwards, she is struggling across this landscape of the devastation of the country.

In an essay accompanying the catalogue for Siopis' major retrospective exhibition, *Time and Again*, art historian Jennifer Law writes the following about Siopis' practice during this time:

From the History Paintings, photomontages and collages of the 80s and 90s to her more recent object-based installations, Siopis represents history itself as exquisite corpse. The primal image of the pile recurs throughout her work: for over three decades, the fragmented bodies, heirlooms, kitsch, object-ruins have continued to amass. [...] The artist explained that she wished to produce work 'emblematic of the catastrophe that is our history. The idea of trauma is fundamental to this emblem'.⁸⁸

This brings us closer to what Siopis thought she was doing at the time with these catastrophic landscapes in which the central figure is a Black woman, which serves to install the Black woman as the figure of history, not merely the object of history. In conversation with Gerrit Olivier, Siopis says the following about this period in her work:

That was when I started thinking about 'history painting' and history in South Africa, and how collage can interfere with direct depiction. Sometimes it's the medium that produces resistance to directness. So when I came back to South Africa, I continued with collage. Not long afterwards I started working on *Patience on a Monument*. I did an enormous amount of research and looked at every history book that I could find that had depictions of types – colonizers and colonized. I was looking at the conventions of representation of colonial history in the making, images that South Africans – black and white – of my milieu were brought up on. What effect did they have in shaping our consciousness?⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Jennifer Law, 'Historical Delicacies' in *Penny Siopis. Time and Again*, ed. by Gerrit Olivier (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014), pp. 69-108 (p. 75).

⁸⁹ Gerrit Olivier, 'Cake Paintings, History Paintings. Penny Siopis in Conversations with Gerrit Olivier', in *Penny Siopis. Time and Again* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014), pp. 53-67 (p. 63).



Figure 5: Penny Siopis, *Terra Incognita* (1991). Oil and collage on board. 180 x 200 cm. Johannesburg Art Gallery, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.⁹⁰

Siopis' work elicited various readings, and she was particularly under scrutiny for a piece of video work, entitled, *Per Kind Permission (Fieldwork)* (1994), which appeared during the same year as the end of apartheid (Figure 6), where the figure of a black face is drawn on white paint on her back, then scraped off, followed by her face being drawn on her back and scraped off yet again, after which she ends up with a violently affected back. The issue of this work is not a mere appropriation of an image, but a performance that involves a physical affliction of her body as these images in black and white are inscribed and scrubbed offer her tormented skin.



⁹⁰ Penny Siopis, *Terra Incognita* (1997) <<https://pennysiopis.com/selected-works/terra-incognita-new-from-alex-copy-2/>> [accessed 1 July 2020].



Figure 6: Still images from Penny Siopis, (1994), *Per Kind Permission (Fieldwork)*. Video. 17 min.⁹¹

Through *Patience on a Monument* and *Terra Incognita*, Siopis develops a sense of the ruin and catastrophe of history, but also of how these legacies of colonial images form us all, Black and White. In this work, *Per Kind Permission*, she then uses her own body as the site of a kind of ritual bearing these faces. The specificity of her work is always to play on the edges – this is where elements of surrealism comes into her work, between the Benjaminian sense of history as catastrophe, the power of the image, the angel of history and the pile of rubbish that history is. The questions that are raised by these types of work include: what do we do with history in terms of the image, and who is the figure that bears it? Siopis then uses her own body as the site of this excruciating ritual, which is part and parcel of how she takes us into these questions.

Siopis' thinking around this work, and other works related to it, is relevant to consider in terms of the critique that Enwezor is making. Below is a discussion she has with Gerrit Olivier in an interview for the book that was published to coincide with her major retrospective at the South African National Gallery (Iziko), and the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 2015, entitled *Time and Again*:

[Gerrit Olivier:] This shows a complex relationship to 'the other'. Let's move to 1994, when you had a show called *Private Views* at the Standard Bank Gallery. In the catalogue, Colin Richards speaks about your treatment of 'the other': '...stitched into this corpus is the desire not to turn away from "the other". This takes courage. For surely given the dynamic of regarding

⁹¹ Penny Siopis, *Per Kind Permission (Fieldwork)* (1994) <<https://pennysiopis.com/per-kind-permission-fieldwork/>> [accessed 1 July 2020].

“the other” historically, especially in Western colonial discourse, such a desire, such a refusal, courts exactly that which it otherwise seeks to evade. Representing, articulating, figuring “the other” risks reducing “the other” to an opportunity for invigorating the imperial (for want of a better word) self.’ How does one avoid that ever-present risk?

[Penny Siopis:] One can’t avoid the risk. The way you work might lessen the risk – but even that can be interpreted differently. I signify white, the colonial. You can’t extricate yourself from your social world and the conventions and values that are part of it. But you can’t turn away from that world either – at least I can’t. It’s part of me and part of my consciousness. It’s complicated with gender too. I remember giving a paper on *Per Kind Permission (Fieldwork)* at the Women in the Arts conference in Pietermaritzburg in 1995. I was asked how could I ‘objectify’ myself (my body is the subject of the video) to the male gaze and about the physical injury I obviously experience in the video when the crusted white paint on my back is rubbed away. It’s a tainted archive for some, and therefore a no-go area. For me, it’s a place of vulnerability, a place where I can confront my own complicity. The difficulty with gender and race politics is that they must necessarily be reductive about matters that are much more complex psychically – and aesthetically too. The real question is: how can one work with images that are deemed stereotypical? It’s the process and the way you work materially that might help produce other sorts of relations in recognizing the particular human being.

[Gerrit Olivier:] Some might regard certain visual material too compromised to be used. You reject such views.

[Penny Siopis:] Yes. The only way to deal with the stereotype in this context is to expose it. To reveal that it’s a problem. Then *do* something with the problem, if it is something you feel connected to. Otherwise it stays like a ghost. You can’t really free yourself from restrictions of signification that we’ve come to accept as a norm or a truth unless you are prepared to take a risk and break them open and see what might happen. There is a violence to this.⁹²

⁹² Gerrit Olivier, ‘Cake Paintings, History Paintings. Penny Siopis in Conversations with Gerrit Olivier’, in *Penny Siopis. Time and Again* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014), pp. 53-67 (pp. 66-67). ‘When this work was shown in Penny Siopis’ presentation at the Feminist Arts and Histories Conference at the University of Leeds in 1995, in the presence of African American artist Rita Keegan who had just visited South Africa for the first time, Penny Siopis was asked about the politics of this work by a German feminist art historian in very stark terms. ‘How could she write a black woman’s face onto her white body?’ Penny Siopis remarked that, unlike the situation in Europe or the States where black and white people rarely meet, mingle or touch because of effective racial segregation, the situation in South Africa during the struggle against Apartheid specifically and in daily life in general meant that black and white bodies do meet, touch, work and struggle together. She spoke of being part of ANC rallies with her son carried on the shoulders of black South African comrades. As an outsider, Rita Keegan also affirmed this unique South African

In these passages Siopis reveals a high degree of reflexivity and self-consciousness regarding her use of problematic images from the ‘tainted archive’. It is also interesting to note that *Boy with Ostrich Egg* is an image that forms part of a work containing six Cibachrome prints, called *Comrade Mother: Mother, Child, Womb, Brain, Breast, Lover* as can be seen below in Figure 7. Enwezor has thus isolated this image from this work containing multiple images, also, notably, parts of Siopis’ own, naked body.⁹³



Figure 7: Penny Siopis (1994), *Comrade Mother: Mother, Child, Womb, Brain, Breast, Lover*. Set of 6 C-prints. 30 x 20 cm each.⁹⁴

In *Comrade Mother* Siopis is positioning herself in relation to the discourses she invokes in this work, namely colonialism, natural sciences and medical sciences (through presenting images such as dissecting,

situation because it was so different from the separation of black and white people she experienced in the United States. The colonial model and indeed the Apartheid model is distinct in this way. Thus, the German art historian asking the question had never grasped the kinds of intimacy through domestic service and through political struggle that are distinctive of South African experience.’ Personal communication from Griselda Pollock, Organizer of the Feminist Arts and Histories Conference, University of Leeds, when this exchange took place.

⁹³ Olivier, *Penny Siopis. Time and Again*, p. 104.

⁹⁴ Penny Siopis *Comrade Mother: Mother, Child, Womb, Brain, Breast, Lover* (1994), <<https://pennysiopis.com/comrade-mother-mother-child-womb-brain-breast-lover/>> [accessed 1 July 2020].

autopsy, a bottled spider and unborn animals). Siopis is thus not simply appropriating images from the besmirched ethnographic cupboard – to borrow Enwezor’s phrasing – she is inserting her own body, and that of her son (in left-hand top image) into that cupboard and her nakedness is indicative of the degree of vulnerability with which she does this. By doing so Siopis is raising feminist questions about women’s bodies in relation to regimes of display as well as in relation to comradeship – what happens to women in political struggle? What are the connections between ethnographic displays, natural science displays and the display of women’s bodies in visual culture?

In Siopis’ work, there is a strong sense of the feeling of the first decade of democracy where the enormity of the legacy of colonisation and segregation has to be dealt with in a form of historical paintings. Here she forges a link with Walter Benjamin (and Klee’s) angel of history, to make the Black woman precisely the figure who is the bearer of the disaster of history, but not in an abjected way.

Both Siopis’ and Breitz’s work can both be understood as particular types of engagements with and negotiations of the archive. Enwezor sets Mofokeng’s work against theirs as more acceptable as a methodology for achieving certain aims thus opposing his project to those of Siopis and Breitz. The latter artists have distinct and diverse aims in their use of the body. The direct opposition does not open up the space for the feminist intervention they were creating.

In ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, Enwezor takes particular issue with works from Breitz’s *Ghost Face Series* and *Rainbow Series*. The two works that he reproduced by way of illustration in his article are included below for reference as Figures 8 and 9. In the *Ghost Face Series* as well the *Rainbow Series* Breitz is intervening in found materials that themselves are the product of the ethnographic and colonial gaze in order to work with this legacy and power of representation. In an artist’s bio in 1998, ArtThrob writes the following about Candice Breitz’s work:

Exploding the terrain of representation, Candice Breitz employs a variety of darkly humorous and often disturbing tactics to strike out at stereotypes and visual conventions as presented and accepted in the media and popular culture. Working from such diverse sources as National Geographic, Penthouse and the National Inquirer, Breitz appropriates photographs and visual

fragments and recontextualises these in bold, sometimes tasteless-seeming images, which, while jarring and discomforting for the viewer, radically challenge conventional wisdom and question currently accepted assumptions.⁹⁵

The author of this passage aptly identifies Breitz's terrain as the terrain of representation. Breitz's intervention and subversion is in and of the representational realm. What I am arguing is that Siopis and Breitz are not only White women using Black women's bodies. They are using found and hence freighted visual materials and reconfiguring images through a variety of techniques to engage with questions of subjectivity, representation, the body and the colonial from both an artistically critical and a historically-implicated position that Enwezor does not recognise because he does not acknowledge the feminist legacy from which they came. That legacy recognises difference but also perceives the commonality of 'being imaged' in ways that are compromised by history and notably colonisation and its racist structure across which gender plays unevenly.



Figure 8: Candice Breitz (1994-1996), from the *Ghost Series*. Rephotographed tourist postcard with white-out. 40 x 27 inches.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ 'Artbio Candice Breitz', *ArtThrob* (October, 1998) <<https://artthrob.co.za/oct98/artbio.htm>> [accessed 1 July 2020].

⁹⁶ 'Artbio Candice Breitz'.



Figure 9: Candice Breitz (1996), *Rainbow Series #10*. Cibachrome photograph. 152,5 x 101,5 cm.⁹⁷

African American curator Zoe Whitley has written the following about the *Ghost Series* on the Tate's website: 'In South Africa, *Ghost Series* received an initially hostile reaction, in particular from black women artists who felt the work merely replicated unjust power dynamics where cultural erasure could be enacted upon the black (female) body'.⁹⁸ Despite this initially hostile response, as is reflected in Enwezor's critique of the work in 'Reframing the Black Subject', Whitley then notes a change in its reading even citing Enwezor's revaluation of her project:

The work has since been reassessed and is understood as being important for its engagement with the often assumed invisibility – and hence predominance – of whiteness. Curator and cultural critic Okwui Enwezor has written that the artist's intervention into the postcards 'engineers its own obliteration of recognition, whereby recognisability, a key feature of portraiture, remains manifest only in the emptiness and blank appearance of whiteness'.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ James McArdle, 'Suffer Breitz's Children' *James McArdle: Camera/Eye* (13 February 2013) <<https://drjamesmcardle.com/2013/02/13/suffer-breitz-children/>> [accessed on 1 July 2020].

⁹⁸ Zoe Whitley, 'Candice Breitz Ghost Series #10 1994-6', *Tate Modern* <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/breitz-ghost-series-10-t15153> [accessed 2 July 2020].

⁹⁹ Zoe Whitley, 'Candice Breitz Ghost Series'. Whitley is referring in this quotation to: Okwui Enwezor, 'The Idolatry of False Portraiture and Mass Consciousness', in *Candice Breitz: The Scripted Life*, ed. by Edgar Schmitz (Köln: Buchhandlung Walter König, 2010), pp. 33-40 (p. 36).

By 2010, it is also clear that Enwezor further revised his earlier reading of Breitz's work. In a catalogue essay accompanying a major exhibition of Breitz's work at Kunsthau Bregenz in 2010, Enwezor wrote:

[...] the *Rainbow Series*, in its forthright rearticulation of the violence of the cut, the sampling and the hybridisation of pictorial formats, the mixing of incongruous image ecologies (all common features of photomontage), not only announces Breitz's artistic debt to the historical avant-garde's reflections on forms of mass media through the montage form; but also endeavours to address the discourse of postmodernism and its deracination of the structural unity of aesthetic forms and the hierarchy of historical identities.¹⁰⁰

About this work, Breitz confirms that her work is an exploration of the insidious nature of whiteness. She states that:

The idea was to remove certain elements and reconfigure what was left so as to create a new visual grammar through which previously invisible content might emerge from familiar images. After the process of deletion, I re-photographed the works in order to eliminate the fetishistic presence of the source image [...] I am aware of the invisible power and privilege that come with being white. The *Ghost Series* was precisely about the violence that can be performed by whiteness.¹⁰¹

Not only has Enwezor chosen to see these works differently, but they have acquired a different kind of resonance where they are recognised for contributing to the defamiliarisation of whiteness. Enwezor thus comes to realise that there *is* an artistic logic to her practice. It is not an erasure, it is to make visible the whiteness that is implicit in ethnographic representation.

In terms of the question of who has the right to use another's body in representation, the feminist point of view would be that as women's bodies are used in representation by the colonial patriarchy, we may have to also represent the body in our critical resistance to this tendency. Enwezor, on the other hand, challenged that position by arguing for respect for the traumatized body of the living at the same time as challenging the

¹⁰⁰ Okwui Enwezor, 'The Idolatry of False Portraiture', p. 37.

¹⁰¹ Louise Neri, ed., *Candice Breitz* (London: White Cube, [Jay Jopling/White Cube](#), [Francesca Kaufmann and Sonnabend Gallery](#), 2005), p. 4. This quotation is also reproduced by Zoe Whitley in *Candice Breitz Ghost Series*.

dehumanisation of the Black subject in colonial and racist imagery. In the beginning of Part X, he states that:

Despite the sincerity of the artists who have so far brazenly maintained a relationship in their work with the black body, there is a certain over-determination that accompanies their gestures. They seem to neglect the fact that the black form is as much a grotesque bearer of traumatised experiences as it is the abject vessel of race as a point of differentiation. [...] The problem with this kind of work is that it is so fixed on the body, that it neglects to account for the more crucial psychic split which positions black and white bodies in polarities of worth and value.¹⁰²

Thus, even though Breitz and Siopis' art form part of larger bodies of work that are produced through critical practices and methodologies, Enwezor was arguing that the effects of their works within the context of South Africa are problematic, especially because in their thinking the artists appear not to have taken on board the major positions he is advocating as being necessary: the black spectator and the black subject. Furthermore, through the way in which he is setting up the earlier building block of whiteness, he is suggesting that the nostalgia for the lost condition of white supremacy, therefore, was not avoided in these practices. While artists such as Siopis and Breitz seem to remain unaware of the problems associated with the type of imagery they are employing, there is, at the same time, another level of difficulty to consider, on which Enwezor is laying his finger.

If a certain spectator is offended by an image, there is no gainsaying this experience, but this happens in the realm of encountering representation. The making of art does not, however, merely add to the sum total of representations – white representations, as is the case in what Enwezor is suggesting. There may be critical, deconstructive strategies and intentions involved, including, as discussed above, strategies of questioning the dominant modes of representation in order to enact resistance to their unquestioned normativity, as well as what is involved in the materials, the procedures and the traditions with which these particular artworks are made, for instance, collage montage, legacies from Dada and surrealism. So, while the Bushmen visitors to Skotnes' exhibition are completely justified in their

¹⁰² Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 37.

outrage, feeling that nothing that is presented mirrors their life and world back to them, there is the 'frame' of a critical artistic practice based in a specific art history that might engender a different question; *what the art is doing* in its historical context? This, of course, raises the question of general spectatorship for art and the spectator imagined by the artist in making art for the art world. Perhaps this is where a critique of these two artists for their work gives way to a larger issue of democratisation of the entire sphere of representation.

Here a Rancièrian reading again proves useful. Once we can acknowledge both that Breitz and Siopis are challenging the archive by appropriating and reworking it and understand Enwezor's critique of their practice in the context of black subjectivity and spectatorial positions in post-apartheid South Africa still heavy with 'un-worked-through' trauma, then one can begin to see that as a text, his article itself produces a Rancièrian figuration of the difficulty and the agonism involved in working through different positions and histories both in the country and in the sphere of art. Although the work of Siopis and Breitz is legible from a feminist and artistic point of view, Enwezor's decolonising argument about anticipating the subject positions and gazes is also vital. In the Rancièrian framework, that is precisely what the process of agonism is: to work through the difficulty for political debate while also expanding the 'distribution of the sensible'.

A Rancièrian reading then also moves us away from the imperative to find a definitive final answer to the constellation of questions posed by Enwezor's article: Who can represent whom in art? Can one group with a racialising and colonising history represent another, their other? What can be done with a traumatic archive? What are the politics of working it through both in terms of image and spectatorial gaze? There is no resolution to these issues, but it is the fact that this agonistic debate has to occur that is important. This becomes *the* conversation because it is in that conversation that the drag of unacknowledged white supremacism might be more than identified, but deconstructed through the acknowledgement of the unexpected ways that encounters with the image may inflict again its harm.

Unacknowledged Feminist Thinking and Practices

To take further the questions posed by Enwezor's article, I want to introduce an international feminist debate about the politics of representation and the regime of representation. These issues also relate to a key moment in feminist debate in the 1970s, which centred on the use of the body in certain types of women's art. Very early on, artists and critics became acutely aware of problems with certain types of use of the body. Employing the body in art for the purposes of a critique of patriarchal, or phallogentric representational tendencies, that critique of what is being done to women's bodies can come dangerously close to re-enacting the violence of that which it is aiming to expose. Lucy Lippard stated this clearly, writing of Hannah Wilke's use of her own naked body: 'it is a narrow abyss that separates men's use of women for sexual titillation from women's use of women to expose that insult'.¹⁰³ At this point, therefore, feminists were already aware that this is treacherous, but that many felt it was a necessary if still dangerous exploration because of the power of images in the construction of women's sense of self.

I would like to spend a moment considering the collision of positions of gender and race that emerge though Enwezor's article to stress again that it is not simply a matter of a 'Black man' opposing 'White women'. What the article exposes, in a manner similar to what Khan's article reveals, is that these two dimensions of 'gender' and 'race' are not only in an agonistic relationship to each other. They are also deeply entangled and thus, one cannot be wrapped inside the other. The collision of positions in Enwezor's article, however, goes deeper than this. It is not so much that the gender of the artists is under scrutiny as that the specific feminist engagements with the politics of representation are not fully acknowledged in their own reflexivity. Furthermore, the set of political ethics of representation that his article proposes will have particular implications for those who work with a feminist framework, because feminist interrogation of representation and self-implication enables a more complex negotiation of found and indeed compromised imagery that Enwezor is able to allow. Therefore, while a feminist critique of the regimes

¹⁰³ Lucy Lippard, 'The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth. European and American Women's Body Art', *Art in America*, 64.3 (May-June 1976), 125.

of power and the decolonising argument appear to be in agonistic conflict, I am arguing that they are not irredeemably so, once the feminist legacy is made part of the analysis of the work these artworks are doing.

What I am, therefore, identifying in Enwezor's treatment of these issues is the absence of acknowledgement of the specificity of feminist theory and practice in relation to the problematic of images. By identifying Siopis and Breitz on the side of 'whiteness', i.e. as 'White women', with the nature of their intentions curiously equated with the Afrikaner flag-waver, instead of as 'white *feminist* artists', Enwezor is making the problematic 'white representational tendencies' that he discusses attributable to these women, and obscures what the potential deflection by means of a feminist inflection of their practice introduces into the potential readings of their works. By the same move Enwezor is also not acknowledging the important ways in which feminist critique intersects with that of decolonisation. Indeed, some of the terms that inform the critique he is making about spectatorship and the power relations of viewers and the viewed cannot be untangled from feminist aesthetic politics that underpins the very notion of the ways in which we have to understand the relays between spectatorship, representation and the body. These issues are part of, and blended with, the concerns of decolonisation where the place of the female body, Black and White, in its representational politics forms a critical arena. This obscuring of feminism on Enwezor's part is also seen in the manner in which he refers to prominent feminist thinkers, such as Julia Kristeva, Toni Morrison and bell hooks, in his text without identifying them as thinkers who work to create a black feminist project while also engaging with issues of race and gender.¹⁰⁴

To come back to Breitz's work: what ultimately trumps her attempt to expose the intimacy of the ethnographic gaze and the pornographic gaze – and, therefore, that both of these types of images are from highly sexualised and sexually differentiating regimes – is the trauma of race in which a different kind of politics has to be observed; and the fact that the feminist position and the decolonial position are in an agonistic relationship that has not been disclosed. It is also not helpful to leave Enwezor's article seeming to have the effect that a powerful Black male voice is critiquing

¹⁰⁴ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', pp. 24, 33, 36-37.

White women for their ‘sodomizing’ and ‘pornographicizing’ of Black women through their practices. It is an issue that has to be out in the open and debated, because if the goal is transformation, and if one takes a Rancièrian line, then this is a *wrong* that is coming to the surface. The article causes the surfacing of something that will not only need its own transformation, but will generate yet another level of difficulty or *wrong*, because *wrongs* are continuously being unfolded. Even as these artists of the 90s think they are undoing a *wrong*, they have to bear the reading that Enwezor makes of a kind of *wrong* that they inflict even in their critical practice. Part of the agonism of race and gender is that these artists have to stand thus accused. What can then be taken away from Enwezor’s article as its contribution, is the shift from ‘him accusing the women’ or ‘who has the right to represent whom?’, to the sense of this agonistic space, which brings us back to the struggle for transformation.

With reference to the agonistic relationship between the feminist position and the decolonial position present in ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, I would like to stress that by pointing this out, I do not intend for feminism to be identified on the side of ‘whiteness’, and decolonisation on the side of ‘blackness’. I wish to expand on what I mean by this, by considering that what seems unperceived in Enwezor’s text is not feminism as such, but certain aspects of the theoretical contributions that feminist critical theory and artistic practice have made to the issues of power, representation and the image.

I would like to think through these matters by considering Enwezor’s invocation of the notion of ‘doing it for daddy’, in a passage that he quotes from bell hooks’ original essay in Part IX of the article. Here, again, I look at these passages textually, attempting to read these paragraphs for what they *do*, and considering how the argument is constructed. Enwezor states:

[...] one must allow that the subjectivity and desire of white women is much attached and closer to white patriarchy and its desubjectivisation of both black men and women. Even in her submissive position, the white woman still does those colonial errands which denigrate black men and women, partly as a member of the tribe, partly to make the white fathers of the *Broederbond* happy.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 36.

Enwezor then brings bell hooks onto the stage by introducing the scenario that she provides in the development of her concept, 'doing it for daddy'. In her original essay, hooks comments on an article that had appeared in *USA Today* where a vote had been passed by the Jefferson County Commission not to remove a mural in the County's courthouse, still present today in fact, 'of a white female plantation owner, looming over black men picking cotton'.¹⁰⁶ Enwezor provides the following commentary on this scenario:

She notes that the subject of the mural relates to how white femininity performs within white patriarchy to further marginalise the black subject, in an act of incestuous impulse, that she calls 'Doing it for Daddy'. Writes hooks in her critique of the mural, 'No doubt the white woman is also doing it for daddy; performing an act of domination [of the black body] [*Enwezor's insertion*] that she hopes will win his approval and love.'

Enwezor continues by relating hooks' concept of 'doing it for daddy' to the work of Candice Breitz:

This act of doing it for daddy, which hooks also refers to as the search by white women within patriarchy 'to find ultimate pleasure, satisfaction and fulfilment in the act of performance and submission', is one crucial disjunctive element not at all accounted for in Breitz's work.¹⁰⁷

Enwezor then seeks to 'confront the two worlds out of which feminine subjectivity projects in South Africa', through the questions posed by Freud and Fanon:

Read in the shadow of this discourse, Freud's question, 'What does woman want?', and Fanon's archly patriarchal counter, 'What does the black man want?' loom quite large. For in each instance of the questions, it is the black woman that is disavowed, lodged in the lowest register of articulation.¹⁰⁸

I shall unpack the above passages throughout this section. First, however, I have to raise a series of questions related to the notions of, firstly, the engagements with feminism on the African continent, and, secondly, the specificity of the practices of these two artist women in

¹⁰⁶ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 37. Enwezor is quoting from bell hooks' original text, which is: bell hooks, 'Doing it for Daddy', in *Constructing Masculinity*, ed. by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 98-106.

¹⁰⁷ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 37.

Enwezor's article, which are founded on certain feminist visual and cultural theories of the image and representation. Both of these notions underlie the critique that I make, which is that Enwezor's article does not take on board feminism in its breadth and complexity.

I have previously mentioned that Enwezor enlists feminist scholars without identifying them as such, and that the position of the 'black female' figure in the text overall is problematic. In this regard it is interesting to note that the feminists that he does include in the article, by directly identifying them as such or not, are either White (Kristeva, Kahane and Breitz) or African-American (hooks). The text thus appears to identify feminism with White women or women of Colour outside the African continent, thus foreclosing the history and presence of post-colonial and African feminisms. I will expand on this below, but for instance, feminists on the African continent would also include some of the women who are involved in the struggle for decolonisation.

If, as I am suggesting, Enwezor's text has the effect of aligning feminism with whiteness to a certain extent, and blackness with decolonisation, the limited sense found in the text of post-colonial and African feminisms, does not make allowance for there to be a feminism in South Africa that is already itself negotiating issues of post-colonial and post-apartheid reality. This would allow some more room for the work of Breitz and Siopis to constitute something of the complexity of feminism in South Africa, in particular. Therefore, the tensions as well as solidarities between White and Black women as well as the specific African inflection of feminist issues are not present in 'Reframing the Black Subject'.

In this regard, I propose that there is a need for an awareness of certain elements to be brought to bear in the reading of this text. One such element is the contribution made by post-colonial feminist critique to disturb a normalisation of feminism as white. Both Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak are key figures in this area who have devised very specific ways of identifying another site of agonistic work in feminism around what Mohanty calls the normalisation of a certain subject position and the non-awareness that there are indeed other ones. The power of post-colonial critique is to interrupt this non-recognition, to call attention to it, and to examine these asymmetries within feminist

scholarship. Both Mohanty and Spivak have produced prolific bodies of work, but here I would like to refer to a prominent point of reference provided by Mohanty. In an essay entitled, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', Mohanty provides an analysis of the failure of writers about women of the so-called 'third world' to imagine any kind of agency, or any sense for that matter, which could constitute them as subjects of struggle.¹⁰⁹ In this type of writing, non-European women become merely representatives of their own silencing.

Another element that I propose we need to be aware of is the complexity and specificity of feminist engagements and theorisations coming out of different situations and contexts in and of Africa. Susan Arndt, a scholar in English, American and African Literatures, has provided an attempt to formulate what constitutes 'a feminism' for the African continent, especially in its literatures.¹¹⁰ Arndt offers the following:

Gender debates influenced by post-structuralism have given rise to an understanding of the dynamics, complexity and diversity of feminism, which make it necessary to speak of feminisms rather than feminism. This plurality emerges from a wide range of coordinates, with regional differences playing an important role. Partly in protest against the White history of and the White domination within feminism, but also due to the necessity of taking into account the material circumstances and cultural histories of African societies, African feminism has formed.¹¹¹

Further on, she continues:

The Nigerian feminist scholar, activist and writer Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, and many others speak of African feminism in order to express the ambivalence of being located within the network of a global feminism, and focuses and concepts emerging from the concrete social and cultural constellations of African societies [...].¹¹²

Arndt's work comprises an extensive survey and an effort to establish a set of criteria according to which, 'an author or a text [from the

¹⁰⁹ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 17-42.

¹¹⁰ Susan Arndt, 'Perspectives on African Feminism: Defining and Classifying African-Feminist Literatures', *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 54 (2002), pp. 31-44, and: Susan Arndt, *The Dynamics of African Feminism: Defining and Classifying African-feminist Literatures* (Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2002).

¹¹¹ Arndt, 'Perspectives on African Feminism', p. 31.

¹¹² Arndt, 'Perspectives on African Feminism', p. 32.

African continent] can be classified as “feminist”.¹¹³ Through the broad sweeps of her work, she also provides vital reference points and a plotting of the landscape of not only literature from Africa that can be classified as ‘feminist’, in her terms, but also of bodies of feminist theorisations emanating from Africa. Arndt states that, ‘[t]he African discourse on feminism is manifested in part in the theorisation of alternative concepts to feminism’.¹¹⁴ She cites the following authors and concepts, ‘Chikwenye Ogunyemi’s concept of African womanism’ (which she stresses was developed independently from Alice Walker’s concept of womanism); ‘Mary Kolawole’s womanism’; ‘Molara Ogundipe-Leslie’s stiwanism (acronym of: Social Transformations Including Women in Africa)’ as well as ‘Nnaemeka’s negofeminism’, which refers to ‘feminism of negotiation’.¹¹⁵

I would like to turn, briefly, to the work of Nigerian poet, writer and scholar, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, in an essay, entitled: ‘Stiwanism: Feminism in an African Context’, which contributes a great deal to the understanding of the complexity and specificity of feminism in and of the African continent, as well as the resistances to it.¹¹⁶ Scholars working in the domain of African feminisms have pointed out that not only are there feminisms across the African continent, but that feminism also manifests in particular ways in specific regions of Africa, with differences existing between North Africa under the influence of Arab and Muslim cultures, and the specific contexts of central, East and West Africa, as well as sub-Saharan and Southern Africa. Ogundipe-Leslie provides a discussion of what is meant by evoking the African continent as context, which complexifies a view of the African continent beyond the general regions I have pointed to above. Ogundipe-Leslie states:

We must all avoid simplistic statements about Africa’s reality, in particular the reality of her political and social complexity. Therefore, when we speak of an ‘African context’, do we mean all the countries of the geographical continent of Africa? This is

¹¹³ Arndt, ‘Perspectives on African Feminism’, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ Arndt, ‘Perspectives on African Feminism’, p. 32.

¹¹⁵ Arndt, ‘Perspectives on African Feminism’, p. 32.

¹¹⁶ This essay is part of a volume of essays authored by Ogundipe-Leslie in: Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, *Re-creating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press Incorporated, 1994).

what I like to mean when I use the term 'Africa'. This is a large piece to take on one's analytical plate.¹¹⁷

She expands on this even further:

[...] we cannot generalize Africa. Do we mean a Christian or a Muslim Africa; Africa with indigenous religions; the Lusophone African countries which underwent liberation struggles; South Africa still under siege [the essay was written in 1994]; independent African countries; Arab Africans, Black or White South Africans; the right-wing Inkatha elements, or white liberals; are the white leftists in the South African Communist Party included; Africans who adhere to pre-colonial values; or westernized Africans, by which we mean Africans with syncretized values?¹¹⁸

It then follows that feminism from the African continent is at least as diverse and plural as the peoples who inhabit it. Accordingly, Ogundipe-Leslie stresses that feminism on the African continent should be identified in a plural form in order to demonstrate its multifaceted nature. She states:

So what kind of feminism exists in an African context? [...] in view of what I have argued as well as the realities of Africa, we should more correctly say: What *feminisms* exists in Africa? Indeed there are many feminisms, depending on the centre from which one is speaking or theorizing around the junctures of race, class, caste and gender; nation, culture and ethnicity; age, status, role and sexual orientation.¹¹⁹

In this essay, Ogundipe-Leslie provides a discussion of the realities for women on the African continent, and makes a powerful case for why treatment of the issues that feminism raises is needed. She also points to the misrecognitions and misunderstandings around feminism that exist in Africa. Importantly, she speaks powerfully to men in the decolonisation struggle who are not allowing room for the issues of women and gender to assume importance. Her taking to task of fellow Africans are interwoven throughout her text. Ogundipe-Leslie's text helps us to understand that African women are struggling with the reassertion of unquestioned masculinisation in all its forms, and that feminism is having as much of a struggle to take hold on the African continent and have its deep effects as anywhere in the world. There is thus a sense in which one could say that

¹¹⁷ Ogundipe-Leslie, *Re-creating Ourselves*, p. 216.

¹¹⁸ Ogundipe-Leslie, *Re-creating Ourselves*, p. 216.

¹¹⁹ Ogundipe-Leslie, *Re-creating Ourselves*, p. 223.

these traces of antagonism to feminism from the African continent appears in 'Reframing the Black Subject' in the form of the effect of the text of attributing it to White women, or women outside of Africa.

A final matter that I believe also needs our awareness, is that feminist scholarship in Africa also seeks to distinguish itself not only from white, European feminist thinking, but also from African-American feminist thinking.¹²⁰ There are specific conversations and indeed dissent between African-American women and women from Africa about a certain specificity of African reality and the resultant texture of experiences, and what exactly can or cannot be claimed under the banner of being a 'person of Colour'. What is at stake in such conversations are not just the issues of race, but also the issues of 'African-ness'. Some of the key things to keep in mind in African contexts is that: African women are in the majority; they have experienced colonial domination, but also local patriarchies; and they have joined in and played pivotal roles in liberation struggles, but also found therein gender issues. The central issue is thus the question of how gender issues arise between colonial domination and local patriarchies. Whereas with African-American women in the United States, what is at stake is a post-enslavement minority experiencing systemic racism enfolded into the identity of America. African and African-American contexts thus represent very different situations.

What I have tried to achieve by naming the elements above, is to create the sense that, in relation to what I suggest Enwezor's text is doing – to align feminism with whiteness, and not to acknowledge post-colonial and feminist engagements in Africa – that there are bodies of theory, as well as debates, conversations and indeed tensions between feminist proponents from not only Africa, but different parts of the world. By not allowing these elements to come onto the scene, the text is not allowing a space for these types of pluralities and complexities to do their work.

As mentioned above, the second series of questions I would like to raise is regarding the specificity of the practices of these two artist-women, Breitz and Siopis. These involve the question of: where do their practices

¹²⁰ See for example, Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju, 'Aesthetic (Dis)Continuities in the African Gendered Space. The Example of Younger Nigerian Women's Writing', in *Shared Waters: Soundings in Postcolonial Literatures*, ed. by Stella Borg Barthet (Amsterdam and New York, NY: Editions Rodopi, B.V., 2009), pp. 133-150 (p. 136).

come from in terms of understanding what happens in the image? In other words, how might we read their work for the specificity of certain kinds of conceptual feminist practices in relation to the idea that critical work on images intervene in a field, or sphere, of representations. Furthermore, beyond the politics of representation, feminist theory and practice also alert us to the psycho-dynamics of the relations between image and spectator that operate in the realm of sexual difference and fantasy, while touching on other affects, which can include violence, abjection and melancholia. I shall consider these aspects further later by referring to the analysis of race/gender offered by feminist political philosopher, Jane Flax.

Models of Representation: Different Ways of Reading the Image

Regarding the specificity of the feminist practices in which the artists in Enwezor's text are engaged, the blockage appears to be, in part, owing to the model of representation by which Enwezor is reading the works made by Siopis and Breitz, and this model is hinted at where he raises the issue of the fixity of the (racial) stereotype.¹²¹ In a certain sense this model involves a specific way of reading 'the image' or 'representation' which does not take into account the contributions that feminist engagements in the field of the study of images and representations have made. The manner in which Breitz's work is critiqued in 'Reframing the Black Subject' appears to be at the level of the argument that it is a negative portrayal and use of *images of black women's bodies*. But critical practices cannot be understood to simply add to the sum of representations, because they propose a critique at the level of representation. Identifying the recurring tropes that congeal into stereotypes that circulate as norms was an early strategy undertaken by all who contested dominant regimes of representation. Feminist theory and practice proceeded beyond the idea of 'images of...' in order to argue for more complex processes involved in both the signification processes within representations and the ways in which meanings are produced both textually within the image and in the conditions of spectatorship. I shall argue that the model of reading Breitz and Siopis' work in Enwezor's text, does not take into account some of the models for reading the image produced by feminist

¹²¹ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 28.

engagements in this area, that consider the making and viewing of images at the level of subjectivity as a process.

The field of feminist practice, which deals in both representation and difference, exposes some of the mechanisms of domination, which concern both the social and the psychic. As established previously, Enwezor does not pay attention to what Siopis and Breitz's works are doing *as artworks*. He reads them at the level of only what they appear to be as images – an effect of the realist frame, which I briefly consider later – and thus he reads them as 'representing their whiteness', in other words, the whiteness of Breitz and Siopis. The feminist tradition, on the other hand, has contributed an interruption of the notion of merely *images and representation*, and a subsequent move to *processes*, which is what feminism has exposed, i.e. the underlying fantasies, and the psychic processes involved. This underpins the feminist intervention in the reading of images.

I shall digress here for a moment to consider some of the moves and implications of feminist inflections of visual and cultural theory around the matter of 'the image' and 'representation'. My main challenge in doing this, is that not only is there no definitive text on this matter, but that a large and diverse body of work on this topic has been elaborated since the 1970s. Thus, by no means, do I aim to offer an exhaustive account. My strategy is to centre my discussion on a few moments and aspects that are most pertinent to my analysis of the reading of Breitz and Siopis' work in Enwezor's text.

An early intervention into the reading of images was the analysis of 'woman as sign' versus the notion of the 'image of woman', and this intervention has a specific trajectory through semiotics. In 1977 in an article entitled, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?', the author, Griselda Pollock, engaged with the ongoing debate on the image during a historic moment of the semiotic interruption of the commonplace reading of the image. In this particular text she responds specifically to a widespread tendency at the time, of labelling the study of images depicting woman figures as 'Images of Women', especially in educational establishments.¹²²

¹²² Griselda Pollock, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?', *Screen Education*, 24 (1977), 25-33.

Particularly interesting is Pollock's discussion about the problems of the popular *images of* model at the time. For Pollock the term 'Images of Women', 'implies a juxtaposition of two separable elements – women as a gender or social group versus representations of women, or a real entity, women, opposed to falsified, distorted or male views of women'.¹²³

Pollock's article coincides with some of the first interventions into a mere positivist reading of images. She states, that, '[i]t is a common misconception to see images as merely a reflection, good or bad, and compare 'bad' images of women (glossy magazine photographs, fashion advertisements etc.) to 'good' images of women ('realist' photographs, of women working, housewives, older women etc.)'.¹²⁴ Crucially, Pollock suggests that:

This conception represented by the title 'Images of Women' needs to be challenged and replaced by the notion of woman as signifier in an ideological discourse in which one can identify the meanings that are attached to woman in different images and how the meanings are constructed in relation to other signifiers in that discourse.¹²⁵

Pollock's text thus attests to the feminist engagement with semiotic and Foucaultian theories at the time, as applicable to the study of images. In her text we find the idea that signs and codes are generating the terms in which woman is signified, because of the Saussurean notion that meaning is differential. During this moment, feminist engagements in visual theory identified that there is a politics to the image. This awareness is articulated in the editorial introduction to *Screen Education* number 36 of 1980, a slightly later issue of the journal in which the article, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?' was published originally. In this introduction, editor at the time, James Donald, states:

Why a politics of representation rather than a theory? [...] 'Representation' isn't a free-floating semiotic mechanism: it is one of the principal means through which the cultural and political configurations of a social formation are historically constructed. If culture is thus defined as the complex unity of practices and institutions that produce *sense* [my emphasis] – if 'experience' is always experienced, organized and expressed through linguistic and other semiotic representations – there is a clear political significance to struggles around the hierarchies of

¹²³ Pollock, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?', p. 26.

¹²⁴ Pollock, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?', p. 26.

¹²⁵ Pollock, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?', p. 26.

institutions in which representation are produced, articulated, regulated and have their effects.¹²⁶

Therefore, a further move from the term ‘images’ to ‘representations’ also made it possible to identify that there are conversations between certain kinds of images that constitute a sphere of representation, which also involves systems of representation. This type of analysis also relates, on a foundational level, to the analysis of ideology. Pollock argues that the separation between the signifier and signified of ‘woman’, as implied in the ‘Images of Women’ model, is a false separation, ‘which cannot be maintained if we are to expose the roles of the signifier woman within ideological representations’.¹²⁷ The separation can also not ‘be maintained between various manifestations of these signifying practices’, i.e. the systems of representations.¹²⁸ In concluding her article, Pollock, therefore, states the following: ‘[...] in order to make any intervention in theory or practice, we require a soundly based historical analysis of the workings of ideology and codes of representation in their historical specificity and through the interrelated systems by which ideology is maintained and produced’.¹²⁹

I have delved headlong into the question of the reading of images, but I will briefly pause to clarify that for the purposes of my problematisation of the reading of images in ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, I would like to distinguish three major moves in the genealogy of an expended sense of the image, which took off particularly since the 1970s. The first step is the semiotic reading of the image, which I discuss above. The second move is that the image is taken in relation to a notion of discourse, which draws from Foucaultian discourse analysis, and was particularly taken up by photography theory. This involves the notion of a representational system, or signifying system, which is more than merely semiotic, as it is more ideological and ultimately productive of a certain systematicity – what we call the regimes of representation, as I consider below, whereby we view representations as not *of* something, but that they produce us by virtue of the way we engage with them. Finally, the third

¹²⁶ James Donald, ‘Editorial’, *Screen Education*, 36 (1980), 1-4.

¹²⁷ Pollock, ‘What’s wrong with “Images of Women”?’’, p. 33.

¹²⁸ Pollock, ‘What’s wrong with “Images of Women”?’’, p. 33.

¹²⁹ Pollock, ‘What’s wrong with “Images of Women”?’’, p. 33.

move is the introduction of psychoanalytical readings of the field of vision, which posit that this field is deeply structured by unconscious desire, fantasy, *jouissance* etc., which are already at work visually in simultaneously the psyche and the image.

In addition to what was made possible by semiotic theories of the image and representation, the first step in the genealogy, the work of Foucault made it possible to see how certain signifying practices in the sphere of representations can have the effect of a consolidation of power through various visual discourses. Through this view on the image, accepting that images are productive of effects and that they are not caused by anything that is given, then one turns one's attention to the sites of the production of the effects, and woman is, therefore, a kind of effect of the image.¹³⁰ Foucault's work provides a sense that such practices contain elements that congeal, hold together and keep things in place. The sphere of representation is, therefore, analysed largely ideologically for how it constantly produces and reproduces and performatively installs certain regularities or fixities, which may be referred to as systems of representation.

Pollock's book *Vision and Difference. Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art* represents one of the next major developments in this area.¹³¹ What is significant in this text, amongst multiple other things, is that Pollock begins to articulate a further element within systems of representation. She states the following:

'Woman' was central to mid-nineteenth-century visual representation. So powerful has this regime been in its various manifestations that we no longer recognize it as representation at all. The ideological construction of an absolute category woman has been effaced and this regime of representation has naturalized woman as image, beautiful to look at, defined by her 'looks'. This is best exemplified in those twentieth-century photographic images manufactured to sell the commodities, cosmetics, by which the supposed nature of our sex can be attained by donning the 'mask of beauty' [...].¹³²

¹³⁰ Pollock provides a discussion of this notion of 'woman as image' within a semiotic framework in: Pollock, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?'

¹³¹ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference. Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1988).

¹³² Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, p. 121.

What Pollock is articulating is that there is something systemic in the system of representation, which is not the *representation of*, and which produced certain fixities or naturalisations. It can be referred to as the regimes of representations and we find ourselves within them, i.e. we are subjected by the images we are subjected to. A further development in feminist engagements with visual theory was the possibilities brought via psychoanalytical theory of understanding how we are subjected to and subjectivised by images and their spheres and systems of representation, because we recognise ourselves in them, i.e. there is identification.¹³³

In order to further unpack the contribution of feminist inflections of visual theory I would like to consider the structuring of one of the founding texts in this area, namely, *Looking On. Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media*, edited by Rosemary Betterton, published in 1987.¹³⁴ The headings of the parts into which this collection is structured are revealing, and they are as follows: Introduction: feminism, femininity and representation; Section One: Advertising femininity: theoretical perspectives; Section Two: Changing stereotypes? Women and sexuality; Section Three: Pornography and representation; and Section Four: New images for old: the iconography of the body. What we can glean from this moment in 1987 is a reference to the systems of representation, which were already receiving theoretical attention at the time. Looking at *Looking On*, with a text like this already in circulation which deals with advertising, pornography, the iconography of the body, women and sexuality – one could say that the practices of Breitz and Siopis in the 1990s appear to be absolutely classically formulated by this. You may wish to critique such practices, as Enwezor has done, but you cannot ignore that it has generated a body of research and certain kinds of practices that are attempting intervention in the systems of representation, or ‘cultural sniping’ – a term

¹³³ An important point of reference in terms of the feminist engagement with psychoanalysis and the image is provided by Pollock. Please see: Griselda Pollock, *Psychoanalysis and the Image: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Subjectivity, Sexual Difference and Aesthetics in Cultural Analysis, Theory and History* (Leeds: CentreCATH Documents, 2006).

¹³⁴ Rosemary Betterton, ed., *Looking On. Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media* (London and New York: Pandora, 1987).

introduced by Jo Spence, which pertains specifically to ‘feminist work on the image’, which constitute a ‘critique of representation’.¹³⁵

This early identification of the systems of representation is slightly different from what feminist theory has contributed to art, art history, and film studies and visual culture. In an attempt to map this expansive field, Pollock wrote an essay, entitled ‘The Visual’ published in 2003 as part of the collection, *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*.¹³⁶ Pollock spells out the set of terms which the feminist inflection of visual theory has contributed to the field, namely, “‘image”, “representation”, “the gaze”, “identification”, [and] “spectatorship””.¹³⁷ She adds that, ‘psychoanalytical theory has added [furthermore] terms like “voyeurism”, “fetishism” and “scopophilia”’.¹³⁸ Pollock further sums up some of the contributions in this field, by stating:

In anguished interaction with theorists of class and race, feminist theory has forged terms that enable us to see ‘the power of the image’ (Kuhn 1985) and to acknowledge ‘the power of discourse to “do violence” to people, a violence that is material and physical, although produced by abstract and scientific discourses as well as discourses of the mass media’ (de Lauretis 1987).¹³⁹

Through the manner in which Pollock structures her essay, we can see how the legacy of feminist engagements with the image are continued and expanded. She structures her essay into the following sections: ‘Cultural sniping’, ‘Looking and Being Looked At’, ‘The Phallocentric Order: Feminism and Psychoanalysis’, ‘Feminist Theory and the Cinematic Spectator’, ‘Spectatorship’, ‘The Eye of Power’ (Foucault’s notion of the gaze), ‘Hysteria and the Visual Image’, and ‘Feminist Theory and Painting’. Pollock’s essay goes a long way towards developing our understanding of the depth and breadth of feminist theorisations of the image and critical practices based on the image. We can see the elaboration of this continuing

¹³⁵ Griselda Pollock, ‘The Visual’, in *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, ed. by Mary Eagleton (Malden, MA, Oxford, Melbourne and Berlin: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2003).

¹³⁶ Griselda Pollock, ‘The Visual’. (See previous footnote.)

¹³⁷ Pollock, ‘The Visual’, p. 173.

¹³⁸ Pollock, ‘The Visual’, p. 173.

¹³⁹ Pollock, ‘The Visual’, p. 173.

legacy in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Amelia Jones, now in its second edition.¹⁴⁰

As a present-day scholar, I need to acknowledge that through these texts and instances, I am looking back on the historical formation of certain debates. Also, by referring to certain moves and developments in such a brief exposition, there is the risk of losing the sense that these moves and developments were in fact major shifts and interventions during their time. This is not my intention. In relation to my discussion above of Pollock's article, 'What's wrong with "Images of Women"?', it must be noted that Pollock was attempting to understand the pervasive notion at the time, that there were photographs, pictures, paintings, etc., and that they were *of* something. The major interruption of this view from semiotics through the legacies of Saussure needs to be stressed. Saussure's development of *langue* – the system that makes possible for meaning to be produced by signs, was greatly influential in this field. Similarly, Saussure's notion of *parole* – the utterance through language, or the use of language – is also significant, because once you can see the system, you can work out what the *parole*, the speech, is doing, which is to both instate *and* undo the system. This is where art coincides with these developments on the image, as art, especially through critical, conceptual practices that do not simply participate in, or reproduce this system. Aesthetic practice is very self-consciously aware of the attempt to interrogate, transform and destabilise the operations of representation. In this genealogy of an expanded analysis of the image, what is at stake is thus a series of interruptions of the notion of 'the image', the proposition of 'representation', the proposition of 'discourse', and the 'systems' that produce meaning. The oddity of this moment, when an extraordinary set of strands came together and resulted in Visual Culture Studies, Art History and Film Studies adopting, initially semiotic, and later Foucaultian theories, needs to be kept in mind.

Without getting side-tracked too much, I wish to point out that there is a complex field of feminist work on the image, and there are some guides to it that indicate an enormous amount of work that has been done alongside other critical engagements with the image, the sphere of representation and

¹⁴⁰ Amelia Jones, ed., *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader. Second Edition* (London and New York, NY, Routledge, 2010).

how they form regimes. Therefore, to return to the problematics around the reading of Breitz and Siopis' work in 'Reframing the Black Subject', I am suggesting that this reading only engages with these artworks in a type of 'images of...' model – which is also symptomatic of the realist mode of the production of images – that does not take into account the contributions of feminist thinking on the image as I have briefly indexed above. There are also no allowances made for the type of interventionist work that is part and parcel of feminist practice.

Perhaps the most telling unawareness where the reading of especially Breitz's work is concerned, is the feminist engagement with the image through psychoanalytical theory. With the cinematic and the psychoanalytical being brought to bear, through the work of Laura Mulvey for instance, the question of fantasy comes in, which is much more mobile, labile, and uncertain.¹⁴¹ In this framework of the image, we identify certain dimensions of the sexualisation of the image, such as voyeurism and fetishism as mentioned before, and it is within this framework that Breitz is precisely exaggerating the violence of fetishism of such distortions, i.e. the violence of representation.

Therefore, what appears to be invisible in both Enwezor's critique of Breitz and Siopis' work, and his use of the bell hooks' notion of 'doing it for daddy', are feminist theories of the image, of systems of representation and of the psycho-dynamic structures that produce sexually differentiated subjectivities via the field of vision. Such theories identify a system referred to as phallogentrism that implies a formative connection between the image, language and the production of sexual difference. Drawing on semiotics, structural anthropology and crossed with psychoanalysis, the introduction of the term phallogentrism results in a shift from understanding gender subordination as the result of patriarchy as a system of power to the notion that all human beings are implicated in the psychic formations that underpin phallogentrism. Certain aspects of feminist visual and cultural theory thus bring an awareness of the psycho-dynamic process in which we are all caught up. In this regard, there are two aspects, one of which is the psycho-dynamic processes, and the other is the role of the image in that psychic formation and its iteration. hooks is after all – to go

¹⁴¹ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

back to Enwezor's use of her concept and the scenario of the Jefferson County courthouse mural – analysing *the power of an image*.

What feminist theorisations on the image offer, specifically, is to ask about the psycho-dynamics of sexual difference and its effects, of which something, as is picked up by Breitz, is both visible in the image, and the image also does something to consolidate and produce it. What feminist thought and practice furthermore contribute to an enlarged analysis of the social, is to identify that gender, alongside race and class, are all in play as systems of power. For the purposes of my reading, and from my discussion above of feminist visual theory, it is vital to point out that the three major moves I describe above where the development of an expanded notion of the reading of images are concerned, also correspond to different levels on which images may be read, which I am thus trying to separate through my discussion. For example, one is the level of the psycho-dynamic reading of the image, which leads to an analysis of the dynamics of desire and the associated categories of fetishism, etc. Another level that I distinguish here, links the image to systems of domination. I view this level as the largely political, socially or ideologically analysed notion of representations which leads to the critique of 'images of...', i.e. 'what is represented?' Questions functioning on this level would be along the lines of: How are Black people represented? How are White people representing black bodies? And on this level an encounter with the image may result in such questions as: Do I recognise myself in them? Are these good for us? Are they *like* me? Are they politically correct? And these are legitimate questions. On this level we also consider the systems, or indeed regimes of representation where performative aspects iteratively produce certain fixings of things into typologies, creating notions around what *all* White people, *all* Black people, *all* men etc., are, do, look like, have and will become.

However, when this additional notion of the psychoanalytical level of the image is brought to bear, the image becomes a field of fantasy, which relates to the formations and the negotiations of our constitution as subjects. This would be the level on which the references to Freud and Fanon's questions operate in Enwezor's article, although not acknowledged as such, because there are terms and ideas activated around fantasy, identification, anxiety, abjection, which concern a series of operations that are not at the

level of social types – stereotypes and iconography – they are actual processes that happen within and between the images and the spectators in relation to being constituted as subjects.

Once we have this distinction in place between these different ways of reading the image, one can acknowledge that there is thus a difference between a ‘Bushman’ visitor, as Enwezor recounts, coming into the exhibition and saying: ‘I don’t see myself like that, this is not a positive image of how we understand ourselves and we don’t like this representation of us’; and somebody saying, like Breitz is through her work, that there is an underlying kind of economy in the ways in which the negative sexual difference of the feminine is constituted in the visual field, which involves fragmentation, fetishisation, voyeurism etc. – because they are actually *on different levels*. One is the position of the social subject, who asks: ‘Do I see myself in what is presented as a picture of a social subject?’ The other is the position of the critical practitioner who asks: ‘What are the mechanisms that operate in the field of the image?’ Different levels of reading the image are thus at stake.

Furthermore, without that distinction, it does not make any sense for an artist to produce work that ostensibly shows a certain kind of distortion, brutalisation, abjection and pornographisation, because this cannot be explained in terms of the question: ‘is this how they are representing women?’ But rather, it is a question of critically analysing a system of representation for which one needs a vocabulary to say: this fetishises, this abjects, this fragments the body, and this is a kind of violence in the image. It is, therefore, not only a matter of reading the images on a semiotic level, i.e. how its elements produce meaning, but also at the same time to draw on the psychoanalytical theories around the ways that images, particularly to do with the body and sexuality, are engaged in issues of fetishism, voyeurism, anxiety and affect. The way in which Enwezor’s text is indifferent to feminist theory and practice, is that it can recognise race and gender on the one level of reading that I mention before, to do with systems of power, which is that these are systems of representation that collaborate with and secure power effects of colonial domination and racialisation. But what cannot be recognised in the text, is the body of work related to the psycho-dynamic reading of the image.

I would like to turn briefly to a statement made by Molar Ogundipe-Leslie in the chapter of her book to which I refer earlier, that I believe casts a different light on the current discussion. In the essay, ‘Stiwanism: Feminism in an African Context’, Ogundipe-Leslie discusses how, on the African continent, the female body is sacred.¹⁴² She describes the following: ‘People still regard the woman’s body as sacred. She can even use it for political action. She can threaten to curse while touching her breasts or reproductive parts. If she threatens to strip and go naked, even government will back down’.¹⁴³ Further on, she continues: ‘The enjoyment of pornography is mostly a newly acquired taste in Africa. The mutilation of women, as on American TV, is not yet a cultural pleasure’.¹⁴⁴ These statements of Ogundipe-Leslie’s make one wonder what Candice Breitz’s *Rainbow Series* and *Whiteface Series* must have *looked like* to a fellow (former) Nigerian, such as Enwezor.

It is significant to the discussion at hand, that Ogundipe-Leslie contrasts the notion of the sacredness of the female body in African culture and thought – the idea that the *sight* of the unclothed mature woman is charged with power – with a Western tradition, which we can call the abusive sexualisation of women, which has its own visual forms, referred to as pornography. There are two ways to consider what these statements put on the table. The first would be the Africanist position, by which it would be maintained that people in Africa have a different system than the West, as they consider the female body as sacred, and therefore, the work of Breitz would be a terrible affront. The second way to consider this, would be an African feminist position, where there is an awareness, as Ogundipe-Leslie demonstrates in her text, of what the struggle for women in different societies is with regard to these representations, i.e. that women are going to be struggling in different ways with what is invested in the female body.

An interesting case to consider at this point, is the events around a protest by women in Dobsonville, Soweto, and the resulting film. Annie Coombes gives the following account of this: ‘In 1990, after a desperate and protracted fight to procure decent housing, a group of women stripped naked in the face of police and municipal officials who had moved in with

¹⁴² Ogundipe-Leslie, *Re-creating Ourselves*, p. 212.

¹⁴³ Ogundipe-Leslie, *Re-creating Ourselves*, p. 212.

¹⁴⁴ Ogundipe-Leslie, *Re-creating Ourselves*, pp. 212-213.

dogs and bulldozers to dismantle the shacks of the informal settlement that was their only shelter'.¹⁴⁵ A film crew was there to capture the event, and a documentary was produced by the directors, Heather Thompson, Sheila Meintjies and Jacqueline Maingard, entitled, *Uku Hamba 'ze – To Walk Naked*.¹⁴⁶ The fact that the film was produced raised the question as to whether the women who had performed this gesture in Dobsonville, within that specific context – to mobilise the power associated with exposed mature women's bodies to stop the men from breaking down their homes – had expected to find themselves exposed in terms of a film. The case of this gesture and its capture on film raises the issue of how the body does something in a particular space and context, and raises the question of whether it still does that when it is recorded. With a film the nakedness of these women appear to change, and a different series of questions come into play, unrelated to their decision to strip for political reasons, such as: what is the effect of this on film? Who will be seeing what? The most important question that this case raises is: what traps a gesture when it is in a system of representation?

This example above, of the film, *Uku Hamba 'ze – To Walk Naked*, relate precisely to the question raised by Breitz's work: what is the violence of pornography? It also reminds us that the colonial encounter involved, in particular in photography, a trapping of African women in a particular kind of construct of clothed and unclothed-ness. Therefore, Enwezor's notion of 'we do not break up women's bodies in images', is countered by the fact that African women's bodies were clearly appropriated in the colonial photographic tradition. I add these examples and issues into the mix, to underline that the situation presented by Enwezor's article, and my critique thereof, is not merely a matter of defending certain artists, but an attempt to understand the nature and complexity of the misrecognition that appears through 'Reframing the Black Subject'.

I believe that this misrecognition is also in part owing to aspects of surrealism in Breitz's work, and Enwezor's own trajectory through documentary photography, which involves issues around the implications of

¹⁴⁵ Annie E. Coombes, *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 245. The details of the film are: *Uku Hamba 'ze – To Walk Naked*, dir. by Heather Thompson, Sheila Meintjies and Jacqueline Maingard (Independent production, 1995) [on digital DVD].

¹⁴⁶ Coombes, *History After Apartheid*, p. 254.

the critique of realism. I wonder whether Enwezor's encounter of Breitz's work might not have been influenced by his own investment in documentary photography and its accompanying realist frames. One of Enwezor's first major curatorial projects was indeed the exhibition, *The Short Century. Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994*.¹⁴⁷ Throughout the exhibition catalogue the importance of the role of documentary photography in liberation struggles on the African continent in the twentieth-century is highlighted. How this investment encounters the certain level of surrealism in the work is a question on the table. Breitz's artistic practice shows a relationship to the work of Hannah Höch and the tradition of photomontage, which produces disturbing juxtapositions through the cutting and montaging of bodies in particular. It is understandable, also from my discussion above, that such practices are alien and problematic in terms of documentary style. Nevertheless, while the question of 'who represents whom and how?' is relevant, Breitz's work presents practices that draw in surrealist photo-montage traditions, and they, therefore, do not produce a sense of African women as the African woman might want herself to be seen. Here Tracey Rose's work also comes to mind, when she imagines herself as Sarah Baartman in *Venus Baartman* (2010), and uses her own body in very complex ways. One wonders what the 'Bushman' visitors in Enwezor's text would think of her work.

I would like to turn briefly to certain aspects around the critique of realism that Pollock articulates in *Vision and Difference*. Pollock quotes the following passage from John Tagg's article, 'Power and Photography':

The dominant form of signification in bourgeois society is the *realist* mode, which is fixed and curtailed, which is complicit with the dominant sociolects and repeated across the dominant ideological forms. Realism offers a fixity in which the signifier is treated as if it were identical with a pre-existent signified and in which the reader's role is purely that of consumer. ... [original omission] In realism, the process of production of a signifier through the action of a signifying chain is not seen. It is the product that is stressed, and the production that is repressed.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Enwezor, *The Short Century*.

¹⁴⁸ Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, p. 123. Pollock is quoting from: John Tagg, 'Power and photography – A means of surveillance: The photograph as evidence in law', *Screen Education*, 36 (1980), pp. 17 – 55 (p. 53).

Pollock's discussion on realism illustrates how realism itself is a system of representation. It is important to bear in mind the challenges of the realist effect in terms of understanding Enwezor's reading of the artworks that are discussed in 'Reframing the Black Subject', because he comes to what he is doing from his preoccupations with photography and particularly documentary photography, and the particular kind of political role of photography in the liberation struggles in Africa and the implications that documentation has for the making visible of a whole series of issues.

Pollock continues her discussion with the following:

Realism as a mode of signification (not a matter of style or manner) became increasingly dominant in bourgeois culture – in literature as well, and more so with the establishment of photographic practices. Photographs offer particular pleasures and sustain specific illusions. A sense of actuality – someone like this was here, once – combines with and plays against the freedom of fantasy for the only actual presence, *now*, is the viewer's. Fantasy can be satisfied by realist means which secure the credibility of the imaginary scene [...] The realist mode of signification disguises the fact of production beneath its veneer of appearance. It can work therefore just as powerfully in its satisfaction of fantasy by means of its management of specifically visual pleasures for a viewer who is protectively placed as privileged voyeur.¹⁴⁹

Pollock's discussion not only lays bare the construction of the realist effect, but it also illustrates how difficult it is to make clear a separation between the different levels on which the image can be read, because these levels play out *simultaneously* within the image. To take Breitz's work as an example, within a single image, particularly where a photographic image is involved, you may be reading the image in a realist mode, but then what you see is not an image of a given social subject, because there is the semiotic production through signifiers. But then any one signifier-signified relationship, as we know from the Barthesian move from the denotation to the connotational, then moves into some kind of cultural sphere – myth in Barthes' terms. Furthermore, via Foucault's contributions, it transpires that within these semiotic representations and representational systems is contained a type of anti-naturalist notion that, it is not that there is a representation *of* something, but that representation is the sphere in which

¹⁴⁹ Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, p. 124.

meanings are produced, and in which, at the same time, subjects are produced.

Crucially what Pollock's work in the various texts that I have discussed so far in this section has shown is that feminist interventions in the reading of the images are not 'separate from' but included in every step in this expanded notion of the image and representation. The following extract from *Vision and Difference* aids in holding together some of the complexity of the various moves around an expanded notion of the image, and the corresponding different readings of the image. This extract follows from a discussion of Foucault's work on sexuality. Pollock states that:

[...] through psychoanalytical theory we can recognize the specificity of visual performance and address. The construction of sexuality and its underpinning sexual difference is profoundly implicated in looking and the 'scopic field'. Visual representation is a privileged site (forgive the Freudian pun.) [...] Woman is the visual sign, but not a straightforward signifier. If Marxist cultural studies rightly privilege ideology, feminist analyses focus on pleasure, on the mechanisms and managements of sexualized pleasures, which the major ideological apparatuses organize, none more potently than those involved with visual representation. [...] The term 'regime of representation' is coined to describe the formation of visual codes and their institutional circulation [...]¹⁵⁰

This extract illustrates the various moves on the image from the semiotic, which then lead to the analysis of a variety of visual texts, such as advertising, etc., but then there is a sense of a system of representation, which implies that at a certain moment there is a systematic formation of things together, a system of representation, which may involve the fixing into a regime of representation. This moves even further away from the notion that, 'here is the real' and 'here is an image of it'. There is also the psychoanalytical reading where ideas around a field of play and the spectator come into question.

Another element at play where the work of Siopis and Breitz (and Skotnes to a certain extent) are concerned, is the fact that there are also some aspects of the legacy of conceptual art that need to be kept in mind. Loosely understood, in the modernist era painting, sculpture and photography existed as mediums with which artists worked. In conceptual

¹⁵⁰ Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, p. 14.

art arrived the sense of a critical practice with regard to ‘representation’, which can include a variety of things, such as the cinematic, advertising, the family album, the media or the existing repertoire of art. Conceptual art, therefore, does not ‘use’ these mediums, because it concerns a critical reading of the operations of representation. It is this question of ‘the image’ and that of ‘woman’ that feminist psychoanalytical, conceptual art practices address through the legacies of conceptual art which poses art as a critique of and investigation into the ideological spectacle of visual culture. Flowing from the developments of conceptual art, art is now seen as a critical practice, and indeed a self-critical one, in many cases.

What I wish to offer in terms of my reading of Enwezor’s text, is the idea that there is something going on in the work of Siopis and Breitz in terms of representations playing in the field of race and gender and conceptual, critical art practices, which are operating in relation to a particular idea of the psychic economy involved in the image and spectatorship, which also plays into a certain notion of the regimes of representation, i.e. patterns and habits that are performatively produced. The different levels in question are, firstly, the level of social production of power differentials – what we call gender and race – through representation, and secondly, the psycho-dynamic process involved in the image, through the regimes of representation. What psychoanalysis offers is a theory of the psycho-dynamic formation of the subject – i.e. that we are constantly formed in relation to others, who may or may not be there. They may be fantasies, or they may be signs.

Therefore, what I believe is creating the gulf between Enwezor’s analysis and these artworks, is in part due to a kind of non-psychoanalytical reading of certain representations of black and white bodies in terms of the psycho-dynamic processes involved in the images, coupled with the nature of conceptual artistic practices that engage with this psycho-dynamic aspect of what happens in images and spectatorship. In this sense, Enwezor’s critique, by using concepts like ‘black subjectivity’, ‘the black spectator’, and ‘the black body’, *depends* on feminist theory, and yet at the same time forecloses the fact that these artists are working in these frameworks. As I have stated before, my intention is not to close off Enwezor’s argument, but I am raising the question: what happens if feminist frameworks are

disappeared out of sight? To draw in the notion of *the fold* from Chapter 1 once more, one could say that this constitutes another type of folding, because ‘Reframing the Black Subject’ involves a discourse that folds these frameworks out of sight. Thus even though their presence is shaping what Enwezor offers on the ‘black subject’ and ‘black spectatorship’, the discourse of the article makes certain elements of the work that the artists are doing invisible and unspeakable, by performing their foundations away. Paradoxically, therefore, the same discourse that supports Enwezor’s argument – which is folded away to a certain degree – supports the kind of work that Breitz and Siopis are doing.

But is Everyone ‘Doing it for Daddy’ in the Same Way?

To return to some of the opening quotations of this chapter, I would like to focus on what the passages from the article offer as the ‘subjectivity and desire of white women’.¹⁵¹ Enwezor offers the following: ‘Even in her submissive position the white woman still does these colonial errands which denigrate Black men and women, partly as a member of the tribe, partly to make the white fathers of the *Broederbond* happy.’¹⁵² A variety of things are in play in this sentence, especially through the use of words such as ‘*Broederbond*’ and ‘tribe’. The proximity of this sentence to the subsequent account of bell hooks’ scenario of the mural is also interesting, albeit problematic, as perhaps one could link the *Broederbond* with the plantation owners up to a point, but it seems that this passage has slipped from having any space in which there are different kinds of ways in which white subjects in South Africa live privilege.

In these paragraphs certain positions are aligned and fixed in particular ways. Enwezor invokes bell hooks, a Black woman’s voice to speak to this, and then the other two figures, Freud and Fanon, in particular for the questions that they have posed. Firstly Freud, who asks: what does a woman want? i.e. is there a subjectivity and desire for woman? And then Fanon who asks: what does the Black man want? i.e. is there a subjectivity/desire for the Black man? What happens in these passages, if one imagines a kind of triangle shape, is that, bell hooks thus stands at the

¹⁵¹ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 36.

¹⁵² Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 36.

top of this triangle, conceptually, for the 'black woman', to negotiate both Freud (standing for the 'white man'), and Fanon's (standing for the 'black man') questions who stand on either side at the bottom ends of this triangle. What the logic of this conceptual figuration is doing, is that it is placing the desire and subjectivity of White women firmly locked in the middle of this triangle, locked in on all sides, and suggests that the only place for the 'White woman' is that she wants patriarchy, as appears in the text: '[...] the subjectivity and desire of white women is much attached and closer to patriarchy [...]'¹⁵³

Two things are noticeably foreclosed in this effect of the text, which is that all White women could want is patriarchy. Firstly, it is making invisible what a concept such as 'African feminisms' offers, which is what feminism in a post-apartheid situation might be doing according to a certain set of artistic practices. Secondly, there is no position in this model for the potential alignment *of women*. Here what springs to mind, is the collaboration and exchange between bell hooks, a working class Southern African-American woman, and Mary Childers, a working class White American woman, which details the convergences and differences in their experiences of working at an American university.¹⁵⁴

For some time it perplexed me that Malcomess, Holleman and Stupart had formed the 'Doing it for Daddy' collective as an *art* collective in reaction to Khan's article, which was a critique of White women in institutional positions. Some of them were connected to the University of Cape Town at the time, either as lecturers or students, and in that sense, I believed, they may have felt the article was directed at them somehow. But it is then interesting that they responded to Khan's article by *making art*. In the light of what transpires through my reading of Enwezor's text, it now appears to me that the only way the collective had to respond to something that had the effect of locking down the desire of all White women as patriarchy, was to respond with a critical, feminist art practice. They were rebelling against a sense that there is no space outside of 'wanting white patriarchy'.

¹⁵³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 36.

¹⁵⁴ See: Mary Childers and bell hooks, 'A Conversation about Race and Class', in *Conflicts in Feminism*, ed. by Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 60-81.

I would also like to consider two things that are equated under the concept of ‘doing it for daddy’ in Enwezor’s text. Paragraph 17 of Part IX of the article ends with the White women in their submissive position running the colonial errands that will make the White fathers happy. Paragraph 18 ends with the White female plantation owner ‘performing an act of domination [of the black body] [according to Enwezor] that she hopes will win his approval and love.’¹⁵⁵ Regarding this structural equation, the question is whether making the White fathers (of the *Broederbond*) happy is the same as winning the approval and love of the father by performing an act of domination? Which performance of an act of domination is specific to the image of the mural that bell hooks conjures?



Figure 10: John W. Norton (1931-1932), Mural in Jefferson County Courthouse in Birmingham, Alabama. Photo by Frank Couch.¹⁵⁶

In the mural in bell hooks’ text, seen in Figure 10, the White female plantation owner is in a dominating position, as she is shown as a large figure, towering over smaller figures of Black workers. Everything about her is lightened and whitened, from her clothes to her eerily pale skin, which exhibits no signs of the colourations of actual skin. The Black men in the image are bending over and are smaller. There is a whole set of internal structures contained in the image. There is a slightly more complicated

¹⁵⁵ Enwezor, ‘Reframing the Black Subject’, p. 37.

¹⁵⁶ Barnett Wright, ‘Slave murals could soon fade from view’, *The Birmingham Times* (18 February 2016) <http://www.birminghamtimes.com/2016/02/slave-murals-could-soon-fade-from-view/> [accessed 27 May 2016].

dimension to her size, which is not only related to her 'white power', but to the question of, under which circumstances could a White woman be in a painting of any kind with Black men (at the time), given all the notions of the phobia regarding his 'black sexuality'? This dimension figures in her monumental stature. Therefore, in this particular visual text of the mural, the White woman is *produced* as 'White' and 'woman' in specific relationship to the Black men, who are rendered, not only as the enslaved workers, but as the people who 'must not touch her'.

Even though she is simultaneously produced as the woman for the White man and the woman who supports that White man's dominance, without going into too much detail about this image, I want to point out that there are things in play in terms of the structure of the visual text, which are operating beyond a mere a representational sense to suggest: here she is standing in for the White male slave-owner with his whip. While there is a sense of domination of the White female figure, there is also the psychic life of this woman, and the question of, why does she do it? Perhaps it is reasonable to say that in this scene she dominates in the place of the father, but when it comes to the artists in Enwezor's text, is it sufficient to imply that the artist-women are standing and acting in the name of a desire for patriarchy?

In a feminist reading, the difficulties presented by Enwezor's article then come down to the question of whether it is actually possible to imply that these artist-women, Breitz and Siopis, are 'doing it for daddy', in the sense that they are *identified with the father*, when 'he' is obviously the object of their critique? When bell hooks coins the phrase 'doing it for daddy' in relation to the dominating figure of the woman plantation owner in the mural, she is suggesting a kind of psychic investment of the White woman in patriarchy, i.e. that she does it for the father. It is, therefore, important to understand what feminism *is* in relation to the critical practices that these artists are engaged with: It is a critique of patriarchy – which must be a self-examination of the feminine subject created by patriarchy – to try and undo that formation. It is thus a critical practice at the level of the image and also at the levels of fantasy and the subject position. The question therefore is: are these artists in the same position as the White women in Khan's article, who are populating institutional positions and perhaps

propping up a system of racial privilege in the South African art world? Are they ‘doing it for daddy’ in the same way? Because the artists are practicing within a critical discourse that critiques patriarchy’s regimes of representation, this equation is difficult to maintain.

Within the broader context of this thesis, I am concerned with the question of: How can gender be spoken in the context of post-apartheid South Africa? Therefore, in my readings of these two texts in this chapter and the previous one I am concerned with how I can offer a feminist reading of the South African archive with which I am working, where it is clear that the overpowering issue of transformation is that of ‘race’. I aim to explore how a feminist reading can be a tool to probe the various levels of complexities and agonisms contained in this question.

The Race/Gender Bind and the Spiral of Difference

At this point, I would like to explore some terms that are useful in understanding a feminist analysis of the gender-race bind. Firstly, I would like to consider psychotherapist and professor of Social Science, Jane Flax’s thinking around race and gender constructions, in particular her use of the formulation race/gender, as well as its accompanying concept of race/gender melancholia. Flax is attempting to make sense of her own environment in the US, but I believe that her thinking is transposable to the South African situation.

In the introduction to her book, *Resonances of Slavery in Race/Gender Relations. Shadow at the Heart of American Politics*, Flax considers a speech by the presidential candidate Barack Obama, where he refers to slavery as the ‘original sin’ within American society.¹⁵⁷ It is around this original sin that Flax develops her ideas, as she finds slavery and its implications to be the shadow at the heart (drawing from Toni Morrison) of the American dream and the promise of freedom for all.¹⁵⁸ This central aspect in Flax’s theorisations of an original, historical ‘racial’ sin, is the first way in which I believe her ideas are relevant to South Africa, which itself had committed the racial ‘sin’ of apartheid, that continues to shape and

¹⁵⁷ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 3.

define contemporary South African society in a myriad of visible and invisible, conscious and unconscious ways.

The second aspect that I find useful is that she stresses the need to think both gender *and* race together, by throughout her text meticulously referring to ‘race/gender’, only departing from this formulation where absolutely necessary. Flax states that she often refers ‘to gender/race rather than simply race, because in the United States, the “social construction of race is dependent on gender categorization and the social construction of gender is dependent on racial categorization.”’¹⁵⁹ She continues:

[...] rather than try to isolate what is race and what is gender and then to see how they intersect, or interact, I think it is more useful to assume that race/gender are invariably “interwoven or intermeshed or enmeshed.” The interesting and productive question is how race/gender is constituted and enacted in specific contexts.¹⁶⁰

Underlying such ideas are also the notion that within extreme racialised contexts, such as the US and South Africa, issues of race and gender are often separated, and gender often overlooked in the attempt to address what is perceived to be ‘the even bigger issue’ of race.

Flax’s thinking is useful in terms of my critique of Enwezor’s reading, by which I suggest that what is not registered in the text, is what feminist practice on the image is doing, i.e. what Breitz and Siopis’ works are doing *qua* artworks. Furthermore, what is also happening in the text, regarding the notions of ‘the black body’, ‘the black spectator’ and ‘the white woman’, is that these are not constructed dynamically and transformatively. Flax offers some resources to mediate this tendency, which pushes our thinking beyond what is offered by intersectionality.

With her concept of race/gender Flax provides a notion of ‘gender’ and ‘race’ by which they are constantly produced and inflected by each other. Through also stressing the importance of the affective and psychic dimensions involved in race/gender formations, she offers a way to understand how we can hold these two together, ‘gender’ and ‘race’, without ending up with: the Black man/ the White woman/ the Black woman/ the White man – the four avatars.

¹⁵⁹ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 26.

¹⁶⁰ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 26.

I also find Flax's idea of what a post-racial/gender society would be, applicable in the South African context. In this regard, she states:

What would be sufficient evidence that America has shifted into a postracial [elsewhere referred to as post-racial/gender] state? [...] making such a case requires evidence that it is reasonable to anticipate that a person's life chances in areas deemed of value by that subject or their society will not be significantly affected by their race/gender location.¹⁶¹

The evidence required to prove a post-racial/gendered state is similar in contemporary South Africa. Also applicable is the problematics of the slowness of change and the threat of the reversal of change. Flax states: 'I am certainly not claiming that, especially since the civil rights movement and legislation of the 1960s, no positive changes have occurred in our race/gender arrangements'.¹⁶² Flax then continues to list a number of these positive changes, but proceeds to point out the following: '[...] assuming that we have attained a 'postracial' nirvana is mistaken. It is reasonable to worry about the permanence of any improvement. There is little evidence for believing that history is linear and only moves in a progressive direction'.¹⁶³ Therefore in both the US and South African context, change has occurred, although at an insufficient rate, and various issues and structural resistances to change pose the threat that it can become undone.

I am making a point of highlighting the applicability of Flax's thinking to South Africa, because I believe it is crucial to bear in mind that she develops her theories in very specific relation to the US context. I acknowledge that one cannot simply assume theories originating from the situation in the US for African-American people would be applicable to South Africa per se – as indeed African feminism seeks to establish, but I find there are various concepts that Flax offers that can be put to use in thinking about the race/gender dimensions and challenges facing contemporary South African society. In this vein, I would like to point out a way in which I do not think the US situation corresponds to the South African one, as Flax describes it, which related to the US relation to the past. According to Flax, 'the typically American fantasy about the past, that it disappears without a trace and that therefore we can always start over

¹⁶¹ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶² Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 4.

¹⁶³ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 4.

again from scratch, has particularly pernicious effects on our ability to understand race/gender and its various dynamics and processes'.¹⁶⁴ I would tend to argue that 'forgetting the past' is not a particularly 'South African problem', especially not in the way that Flax describes it in terms of the US context, but rather an inability to forget the past, or to escape from its haunting, but I will not digress into this issue here. Likewise, I do not believe that what Flax describes as the problems caused by individualism in the US can be said to be a wide-spread issue in South Africa, although I think this might be worth exploring in terms of neo-liberalism, and within class structures, but not necessarily along racial and gendered lines.¹⁶⁵ I make this distinction, because a knee-jerk reaction might be to say that individualism is more characteristic of the White communities in South Africa, as opposed to the African communities, but I do remain cautious of implying this.

I would like to look into Flax's concept of race/gender melancholia more closely. For Flax processes such as 'denial, devaluation and projection' are intrinsic to race/gender melancholia.¹⁶⁶ She provides the following definition:

Melancholia is a pathological response to loss. Rather than acknowledge the loss of a valued object (relationship, dream, etc.) the loss is either denied or the object is devalued so that the impact of its loss is minimized. Melancholic subjects are gripped by sometimes paralyzing wishes to magically erase the living past rather than engage in the arduous processes of realistically facing its effects and constructing practices to ameliorate them. I argue that as a society, America has never properly mourned the losses that would follow a serious grappling with the centrality of slavery in the development of our polity.¹⁶⁷

Here, again, I believe that the situation in the US is not completely transposable to South Africa, as there has been a structured, public attempt to mourn the losses suffered as a result of apartheid through the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I would argue, however, that because the devastation caused by apartheid was so great, and the change that has been effected since the regime's fall so little, the present

¹⁶⁴ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 3.

circumstances for most South Africans itself pose a type of loss in need of mourning. Indeed South Africa does display the grieving of contemporary circumstances, often in connection with public outcry of gross injustices, and was seen especially around extremely violent and tragic events such as the police shootings at the Marikana mine in 2012, and again in 2015 and 2016 with the national student protests in the form of the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall campaigns on various campuses across the country.

Central to Flax's concept of race/gendered melancholia, is her notion of the political unconscious. She provides the following summary of her project in *Resonances of Slavery*:

[...] in regard to race/gender the effects of the past are indeed not the past; instead its traces shape the distribution of valued goods, American political institutions, patterns of social relations, and what I call the political unconscious—powerful, culturally infused dynamics of fantasy and denial that structure American subjects.¹⁶⁸

Flax notes that, within the '[m]any insightful works on race/gender dynamics within American politics' that are available, 'most lack consideration of the psychic processes – melancholia, fantasy, projection, identification, abjection [...]'.¹⁶⁹ Flax states that she is 'confident that the problem of race/gender domination persists and that part of the reason for this lies in the powerful effects of mostly unconscious processes, including race/gender melancholia [...]'.¹⁷⁰ Flax believes that:

Despite the important work it does in American life, the operations and effects of the political unconscious are rarely explored. I hope one of the major contributions of this book [*Resonances of Slavery*] will be to highlight and address this malignant absence. [...] failure to attend to unconscious processes and material is especially unfortunate in that it blinds us to many of the ways race/gender melancholia shapes our practices of subjectivity, citizenship, politics, and the distribution of valued resources.¹⁷¹

Flax distinguishes her concept of the political unconscious as functioning 'in and as that strange field that anthropologists call the liminal'.¹⁷² She further states:

¹⁶⁸ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁰ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 12.

¹⁷¹ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 5.

¹⁷² Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 5.

In contemporary American culture, the political unconscious [as a liminal phenomenon] transgresses boundaries of categories often treated as radically separate and distinct. These categories include psychic, material, personal, political, power, individual, social, thought, and feeling.¹⁷³

Flax makes some crucial and nuanced observations about the relation between the personal and the collective in terms of the political unconscious. She continues by stating:

The political unconscious is simultaneously idiosyncratic and widely shared. It is constituted through, as well as shapes and reflect, power relations, cultural and political practices, and affective states. It makes use of culturally available material to manage uniquely felt subjective dilemmas and so is deployed, experienced, and expressed differently by each subject. However, it also helps each subject carry out cultural demands (e.g., to locate oneself in particular race/gender grids) and in doing so makes use of widely available cultural and political information. Its processes are both limited and empowered by what is available for its use in any particular context, but it can remake practices of subjectivity and power relations in unpredictable and unexpected ways.¹⁷⁴

By developing the twin concepts of race/gender melancholia and the political unconscious – of which fantasy is ‘one of its most important modes’ – Flax is implying that one cannot grasp race/gender domination without understanding the psychic processes at work.¹⁷⁵ To return to my reading of Enwezor’s text, considering that the text uses the language of fantasy, abjection, pornographisation and sodomisation, we cannot then fall back into a model that does not accept or grasp the sense of the formations of subjectivity and the role of images in the production of this. If we do not have a concept of psychoanalysis, which includes, inter alia, fear and anxiety, and if we do not address the issue of race and gender at the level of the affective and how it plays out as an element in the field of visual representations and our experience of them, then we diminish the complexity and layered aspects of the race/gender bind. If we maintain ‘race’ and ‘gender’ as if they are these two monoliths, we miss what happens when feminism introduces sexual difference. This has been Flax’s contribution: to see what happens if a sexual difference approach is used to

¹⁷³ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁵ Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 6.

rethink 'race'. Even though she is using the formation of race/gender what underlies these concepts is the psycho-dynamic dimension, which is the field of sexual difference. Therefore, when Flax talks about race/gender, it is infusing the sense of how the asymmetrical hierarchy of the racialised subject and the sexualised subject.

This idea of the interwoven, inter- and enmeshed nature of race/gender is useful in an attempt to hold the complexity of the entanglement of race and gender, and I will consider a second concept that aids the analysis of the race/gender bind. In an article entitled, 'The Other Question...', post-colonial critical theorist, Homi K. Bhabha offers the concept of a spiral of sexual and racial difference.¹⁷⁶ Bhabha's case study is the Hollywood film *Touch of Evil*, a film in which the issues of race and sexual difference are staged by a narrative of a couple, a Mexican man and an American woman – effectively a Black man and a White woman – and the US/Mexican border.¹⁷⁷ By the time Bhabha wrote his article, Stephen Heath had offered a reading of the film using psychoanalysis and focused on sexual difference as the key axis of the film's narrative unfolding. Heath's reading reminds us that the film is performing something at the level of the psycho-dynamic production of sexual difference. Bhabha, however, critiques Heath for privileging a sexual difference reading, and points out that the relationship between the production of sexual difference *and* racial difference are intertwined, that both are in existence and they work together. Bhabha suggests the image of a spiral to imagine how racial and sexual difference constantly move between and around each other.

Early in the essay Bhabha states that his focus is on colonial discourse, of which he subsequently states the following:

The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference – racial and sexual. Such an articulation becomes crucial if it is held that the body is always simultaneously inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power.¹⁷⁸

Shortly after this statement, Bhabha continues with the following:

¹⁷⁶ Homi K Bhabha, 'The Other Question...', *Screen*, 24.6 (1983), 18-36 (p. 21).

¹⁷⁷ *Touch of Evil*, dir. by Orson Welles (Universal-International, 1958) [on DVD].

¹⁷⁸ Bhabha, 'The Other Question...', p. 19.

[...] it follows that the epithets of racial or sexual come to be seen as modes of differentiation, realised as multiple, crosscutting determinations, polymorphous and perverse, always demanding specific and strategic calculation of their effects.¹⁷⁹

Bhabha clarifies that his main critique of Heath's analysis of the film is that, 'the problem of the Mexico/USA border is read too singularly, too exclusively under the sign of sexuality'.¹⁸⁰ The following passage brings us to the crux of Bhabha's argument, as well as to the inception of a concept of a spiral of difference:

To identify the 'play' on the border as purity and mixture and to see it as an allegory of Law and desire reduces the articulation of racial and sexual difference to what is dangerously close to becoming a circle rather than a spiral of *différance* [from Lacan, i.e. to both differ *and* to defer] [*my insertion*]. On that basis, it is not possible to construct the polymorphous and perverse collusion between sexism and racism as a mixed economy [...].¹⁸¹

A spiral of race and gender gives the sense of a constant imbrication and deferral of race and gender – that the one is always present in the other, because they are psychically infused systems, as well as socially and economically produced. Gender and race are part of a process within any given situation and there is a perpetual conversation between the two. The notion of mutual entanglement of gender and race assists in moving away from the danger of creating gender and race as separate entities and fixities. As an effect of the Report that can only typologise people (discussed in Chapter 1), the figures of the avatars, in their binary configurations, maintain the fixity, to borrow from Flax, of 'this is gender' and 'this is race'. But if one has a concept of race/gender that is constantly imbricated and intertwining, then race/gender figures not in a fixed position, but is constituted differently and specifically in different contexts and in terms of different relations. This is evident in the different configurations that race/gender figures assume in Khan's article, 'Doing it for Daddy' and Enwezor's article, 'Reframing the Black subject'. As I quote Flax above: 'The interesting and productive question is how race/gender is constituted

¹⁷⁹ Bhabha, 'The Other Question...', p. 19.

¹⁸⁰ Bhabha, 'The Other Question...', p. 21.

¹⁸¹ Bhabha, 'The Other Question...', p. 21.

and enacted in specific contexts'.¹⁸² Race/gender figures, therefore, play differently through both institutions and the sphere of representations. What is implied in both Bhabha and Flax's thinking, is that we are involved in a field of social processes, but also intra- inter-subjective processes that play out across the screens of and encounters with representation.

Enwezor's text leaves us with *the* black subject, that runs the risk of appearing to be the self-possessed, the agent, the person in the world, untroubled by an unconscious. His concept of the subject appears to be one that does not take full account of *subjectivity*. Therefore, in terms of Enwezor's contribution of *the* black subject and *the* black spectator, the definition of this subject cannot be within a normalised, *indifferent*, or by default masculine notion of black subjectivity, especially in light of the closing thoughts of the article with the suggestion of 'an enunciatory proposition of heterogeneity' *vis-à-vis* fantasies of blackness.¹⁸³ Neither can the black subject be a purely conscious, self-possessed subject, as by taking up psychoanalysis, the legacy of feminism has been to show that we are not possessors of our own subjectivity, and that, as Flax indicates, there are both intra- and inter-subjective elements at work, i.e. there are things going on both between subjects and within subjects.¹⁸⁴ One of the ways of critiquing patriarchy and the race/gender structure as it is imbricated that has come out of feminism, and from scholars in feminism working in terms of race structure, is its subjectivity.

In this chapter I offered a textual reading of Enwezor's article and also, to a certain extent, the artworks and images which it enlists. While I acknowledge that my reading may appear to constitute a defence of the artists whom he critiques, this is not the purpose of my reading. What I have tried to arrive at through my reading here and of Khan's text, is the complexity in the field of both the *institutional* power and the placement of people in institutional relations, which can maintain a hierarchy, and the *representational* level, where there is clearly a very charged debate regarding the politics of representation. These matters are not resolvable in terms of seeking to establish who is right and who is wrong. I have, rather,

¹⁸² Flax, *Resonances of Slavery*, p. 26.

¹⁸³ Enwezor, 'Reframing the Black Subject', p. 39.

¹⁸⁴ Jane Flax, 'Shadow at the Heart: Race/Gender Domination and the Melancholy of American Politics' (unpublished lecture, CentreCATH, University of Leeds, 9 June 2008), p. 1.

attempted to expose the enormous complexity at hand, and show that the sites that are indicated through the texts, the institutional and the representational, are the sites of agonism, i.e. the sites of work that needs to be done. Thus for the purpose of this thesis, it is not a matter of adopting a psychoanalytical reading of the image against the force of the decolonising critique presented by Khan and Enwezor's articles. It is a matter of trying to understand how the agonism and *disagreement*, in Rancière's terms (which I expand upon below), might continuously work at the process of democratisation, which must be both at the social level of the institution, and at the level of the representational. Furthermore, there needs to be an understanding of the role of the mechanisms of the image in the production of racial and sexual power differentials, and, therefore, the critique of the regimes of representation as attempted by critical cultural and art practices.

Two questions around the work of Breitz and Siopis (and Skotnes, to a certain extent) remain at play, which are, firstly, what have these artists put on the table as *feminists*? And secondly, at what point are they ontologically 'white feminists'? Or should we rather ask where does their whiteness get performed in a practice of representation that refers to existing systems of representation that are also the locus of social performativity that their work may also be interrogation and 'sniping'? It may get performed in a sense that they cannot see or feel the potential that the contemporary 'Bushman' visitor, for argument's sake, might see in entering an exhibition where the method of reading the image would not be the same as the method that produced the image. That is indeed a difficulty, but it is not because the artists are uncritical White women. It is partly because the nature of a certain kind of conceptual feminist art practice is not spontaneously legible in those terms – which may be problem, or not. What is necessary to consider is that these issues are not resolvable, they are in an agonistic relationship. The logic of declaring: 'these images should not be there', or 'these people should not make this type of art', or 'we must imagine all the art for something called *the* undifferentiated black spectator' does not hold. Contemporary cultural practices operate from the basis that bodies are being produced all the time by the systems of representation and we recognise ourselves, or do not recognise ourselves, in them. We are caught up in the nexus of the relations we have to these images. In an

attempt to interrupt the regimes of representation, critical cultural and artistic practices may appropriate, mimic, reference or critique these regimes, but the politics of their effects are not at the level of the identities of the subjects who make these critiques. I continue in the following chapter by exploring the possibilities if we approach this question of the complexity and the intensity of this set of conflictual situations under the rubric of agonism and the re-distribution of the sensible.

CHAPTER 5

The Redistribution of the Sensible: Avatars, Difficulties and Disagreement

Towards Unfixing the Figures

Before I conclude this part of the thesis, I would like to address two matters. The first is the fact of the occurrence of the avatars in these two texts, and the second is the difficulties and challenges presented by the texts. These two matters appear to be interconnected, as is explored below. To what extent is it possible to argue that the articles by Khan and Enwezor repeat or remain structured by a model of binary notions of gender and race – Black/White, male/female – which produces the four avatars in a particular way? Or, does this give rise to a constitution of the avatars, which is more complex than that found in the Report, as examined in Chapter 1?

In 2003 Vuyile Vuyiya and Julie McGee directed a documentary film entitled, *The Luggage is Still Labelled: Blackness in South African Art*.¹ This film examines some of the frustrations that South African artists experience in relation to transformation, and it may itself be seen as a type of a textual event worth exploring, but for the purposes of containing the scope of this thesis, I have selected not to do so.² Although I am not engaging with the film fully here, its title does offer a useful concept in terms of understanding the situation around the still present use of certain types of binary identity categories in the South African art world. The title phrase, ‘the luggage is still labelled’ provides an indication of how a deeply apartheid mentality, i.e. something which marks the world in terms of these categories, is still part and parcel of the structure, the vocabulary and the experiences in this context. Indeed in some situations it appears as though there is a turn to figurations of Black and White, and male and female, as

¹ *The Luggage is Still Labelled: Blackness in South African Art*, dir. by Vuyile C Vuyiya and Julie L McGee (Vuyile C Vuyiya and Julie L McGee, 2003) [on video cassette and DVD].

² Mario Pissarra has provided a useful reading of the film. In this regard, please see: Mario Pissarra, ‘The Luggage is Still Labelled’, *Third Text*, 18.2 (2004), 183-191.

opposed to terms and concepts which may hold and demonstrate the complex fabric of post-apartheid, democratic South Africa.

In my analysis of the Report, I identified the repeated creation of avatars, and that although they are produced by a certain quantitative model by which to register 'gender' and 'race', they are kept in place and become a way of not thinking gender and race, as they get folded into the indifference of the economic discourse. This discourse cannot deal with either gender or race in any significant manner, it can only point out, as I have described in Chapter 1, that after all the data produced which is organised according to gender and race in the main body of the Report, only a single mention of race is made in the Report's recommendations and none is made of gender.

As is evident in the previous two chapters, Khan and Enwezor's articles are not produced under the same kind of statistical model of reckoning as the Report, as one gets the sense of the level of actual institutions in the South African art world, and how they work, and the level of the politics of representation. Thus, whereas an analysis of the Report has alerted us to the production of the avatars, a reading of Khan and Enwezor's texts reveals that the avatars, although they are also produced in these texts, have taken another form, and have assumed different dimensions. It must be borne in mind that both Khan and Enwezor are deeply engaged and thoughtful representatives of the art world, both involved in the struggle for transformation in their own right. In light of this, I am thus interested in the fact that 'Doing it for Daddy' and 'Reframing the Black Subject' also produce the avatars, which are clearly not the simplified, statistical beings of the Report, but how such texts that function transformatively, i.e. contesting the structures of racism and patriarchy, exhibit a tendency to return to certain identity positions.

I say this, therefore, with profound acknowledgement of the fact that Khan and Enwezor are both seeking to contribute transformative work, but my reading has revealed how both articles, in their contestation of colonial and apartheid race thinking, paradoxically reiterate the kind of binary thinking about race, which is structural to both, even while the texts are, at the same time, effectively identifying the two levels on which transformation still needs to happen – the institutional and the representational.

If, for instance, as the articles establish up to a certain point, one posits whiteness and white hegemony, and White *people* as its agents, the assumption, which is justifiable to a certain degree, is that whiteness stands for a certain political alignment with domination and oppression. Although what Khan says is true, wounding and calls for serious consideration, to some extent the text is not necessarily capable, in the language of its articulation, of offering anything other than the diagnosis of the situation. If, therefore, 'whiteness' and 'blackness' become a language of racial characterisation as opposed to 'whiteness' and 'blackness' representing a certain kind of maintaining or challenging of the normativity of the cultural representation and orientation, this runs the risk of locking down the alignment with this challenge or maintenance of the status quo of individual subjects. It also forecloses what is involved in making possible and visible the complexity and diversity which is involved in negotiating differences and enacting transformative practices at both institutional and representational levels. Here the question at stake is: 'What would give generative and productive space as opposed to 'fixed' space to the differences?

I am concerned with the effects of the fixity of language in these texts, which are often found in discourse produced in the post-apartheid context. I am also interested in how a feminist reading can be a tool, and how feminist and post-colonial discourse and practice offer theoretical resources that help to avoid getting caught up in the production of the binary poles of Black and White, and male and female, and that are able to open these categories up. This is where I believe the terms and concepts offered by Flax and Bhabha as discussed in the previous chapter are crucial, which, by indicating that race/gender are bound together and that they are constantly spiralling around each other, works against any kind of fixing, including, in the texts I read in the previous chapter, 'the black subject' or 'the White woman'.

Nevertheless, in attempting to understand the occurrence of the avatars in these texts, I am not calling for their complete undoing, as their appearance is registering, in the language of Rancière, a *wrong*. Rancière's thinking can help us to understand the presence of the avatars and the constant agonistic that their manifestation registers. Rancière's concept of

the *distribution of the sensible* also provides a sense of where lie the transformational elements and possibilities. A sense of agonistics in Rancièrian terms gives one a vocabulary for the work towards democratisation. Below I explore how even in the making of democracy, through *disagreement* and *politics* in Rancièrè's terms, there can be a certain kind of re-fixing of subjects in language, which does not necessarily aid transformation, as it leaves subjects in a state of arrest. This is also why I believe we need to move beyond this tendency with different models. What I am trying to grapple with, poses a deep paradox – that the avatars will appear as such for understandable political reasons, to articulate a *wrong*, but that their fixing effect of subject positions needs un-fixing.

I want to return briefly to what I view as the major distinction between agonistics as developed by Mouffe and the type of agonism involved in Rancièrè's concept of the *distribution of the sensible*. To take the situation around Khan's article as an example: What we are talking about is not simply putting something right, filling positions with different subjects, but the notion that the democratisation of South Africa, the production of social justice, involves a certain type of work that has to confront both that *this is agonising*, and that there is an agonistic between various positions. And therefore, the response to Khan, to shut her down, to not allow her 'to speak' and be heard, is a failure to accept that what she is pointing out is painful and represents real rifts not only in the South African art world, but in South African society at large. It is here that Rancièrè's thinking offers something that is not offered in 'classic' agonism. Agonism as developed by political theory, leaves one with a sense that to have perpetual dynamic conflict is not only inevitable, but also desirable. *Antagonism* (including violence), in Mouffe's thinking, may be avoided if a chain of equivalences between political identifications is established.³ The question however is, whether, especially in a context such as South Africa, this is actually possible. Can all parties to the political in fact participate equally and fully in this dynamic conflict? Where is the stage of this conflict, and who is visible and audible on it? Here it is important to consider that not everybody shows up on the stage in the same way – there is no level playing field for that conflict to happen. Therefore, in the South

³ Mouffe, *Agonistics*, p.14.

African situation, without a *redistribution* of the sensible, an agonistic view alone leaves us somewhat stranded. Understanding conflict and why it happens alone is not enough. We need to envisage transformative possibilities and highlight practices and negotiations already in place.

Disagreement: The Police, the Demos and Politics

In Rancière's notion of the very possibility of participation as a subject in our society, we have to think about the *distribution of the sensible*, as for Rancière the stage of democracy is on the level of the aesthetic.

Disagreement, or *mésentente* occurs between the *police* and the *demos*.

Picking up from the two cases in the previous two chapters, there is a clear sense in which the transformation of South Africa is incomplete and Khan and Enwezor's texts are throwing up various *wrongs*, or difficulties. It is, therefore, in its own agonistic phase, which is about the incomplete state of change.

For the purposes of this discussion, certain developments that Rancière provides of the concepts of the *demos*, the *police* and *politics* in an article entitled, 'Introducing Disagreement', are useful.⁴ His expansion of what is meant under *the police* is beneficial for understanding the occurrence of the avatars, and similarly his development of what is meant by *politics* helps to understand the difficulty and agonism presented by the texts. For Rancière, the *police* and *politics* are two forms of symbolising the common.⁵ The notion of the *common* plays a significant role in Rancière's extensions to the ideas connected to the *distribution of the sensible*.

Consider the following:

In order to understand what the plebeians said, then, it had first to be admitted that they spoke. And this required a novel perceptual universe, one where – contrary to all perceptible evidence – those who worked for a living had affairs in common with free men and a voice to designate and argue these common affairs.⁶

Central to his concept of *disagreement*, is not only the question of 'who has things in common', but also 'what the common is', that is at stake:

⁴ Jacques Rancière, 'Introducing Disagreement', trans. by Steven Corcoran, *Angelaki*, 9.3 (2004), 3-9.

⁵ Rancière, 'Introducing Disagreement', p. 5.

⁶ Rancière, 'Introducing Disagreement', p. 5.

This is what ‘disagreement [*mésentente*]’ means. It cannot be deduced from the anthropological fact of language. Nothing can be deduced from some anthropological property common to humanity in general, because the ‘common’ is always contested at the most immediate level: the fact of living in the same world, with the same senses [*sens*], and the same powers of holding something in common. Deducing the existence of a common political world from the comprehension of language can never be natural when that world presupposes a quarrel over what is common.⁷

I return to the notion of the *common* more fully below when I discuss the relevance of Rancière’s expanded notion of *politics* to the difficulties presented by Enwezor and Khan’s texts, but first I consider how the concept of the *police* explains the persistent presence of the avatars.

The Police Order

According to Rancière, the *police* ‘symbolises the community as an ensemble of well-defined parts, places and functions [...] all of which presumes a fixed distribution of things into common and private – a distinction which itself depends on an ordered distribution of the visible and the invisible, noise and speech etc.’⁸ He continues:

This type of distribution [...] stretches from the patricians’ not hearing the plebeians speak to modern statistics, where opinions are distributed as functions of parts of the population, such as socio-economic or age groups. Archaic or modern [two periods, connected to ‘regimes’ that inform Rancière’s thinking], the way of counting parts, places and functions remains the same.’⁹

One cannot help but be reminded in these passages of the effects of the statistical model of the Report and how it counts persons, functions, parts and places these according to a fixed sense of the distribution of gender and race into male and female, and Black and White. As a form of symbolising the common, the *police order* is ‘the principle of distribution and completeness that leaves no space for a supplement [...]’.¹⁰

With that in mind, if one were to venture a brief framing of the model of the Report in Rancièrian terms, it stands as representing an attempt by the *police order* to imagine one could legalistically, by managing

⁷ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 5.

⁸ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 6.

⁹ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 6.

¹⁰ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 6.

the economy, make it better for certain people in the South Africa art world. The question is, however, by doing this through the model of the Report – this account of the art world in terms of ‘how many Black women/ White women/ Black men/ White men’ – would that actually bring about transformation? Or is the question of transformation centred on a different kind of production of the democratic polity? Who will be the inhabitants of this different world who will share in the *distribution of the sensible*? It is not a matter of simply bringing the representatives of an identity group up on the stage, because the *wrong* and difficulty is going to be instantiated in different forms. Flax also offers the following:

In my view subject-centred politics – whether of abstract or concrete identities – are deeply flawed, and as can all too readily be seen in the contemporary world, extremely dangerous. Resisting domination or inventing more just political practices cannot remain contingent on identity, that is, on the subject finding its Truth and seeking to bring itself and the world into conformity with it. This applies equally to subjects in subordinate or dominant positions.¹¹

In a Rancièrian sense, the fixed nature of the language of the Report is thus a type of *police order*, or a kind of *distribution of the sensible* that leaves no space for difference. The *police order*, therefore, produces the avatars, which becomes a type of sensible order. Therefore, even though Khan and Enwezor’s texts make a *wrong* sensible, they are still susceptible to the ‘common sense’ of this order, and this order has certain implications for the possibilities of subjectivities within them, as we have seen with the example above how in ‘Reframing the Black Subject’ this rigid structure of identity positions and their alignments locks ‘White women’ into ‘wanting patriarchy’. There are also other structures in which the avatars are trapped. For example, as we have seen, the Report arranges the avatars into a hierarchy of lack; Khan’s article holds up ‘White women’ as the target of critique; and Enwezor’s article creates hierarchy of blame or complicity, which is related to the hierarchy of lack in the Report. I have not explored this fully, but through the manner in which representatives of the four avatars are employed in Enwezor’s text, the following sense is created: 1)

¹¹ Jane Flax, ‘Therapy?: Foucault’s Late Essays, Subjectivity and “Care of the Self” as Ethical and Political Practices’ (unpublished lecture, CentreCATH, University of Leeds, 9 June 2008), p. 24.

That ‘White women’ are ‘really getting it wrong’, or are most to blame and complicit with white patriarchy, as is the effect of the critique of Skotnes, Siopis and Breitz’s work. 2) That ‘White men’ are also not getting it completely right – in the form of the discussion of Willie Bester’s work – but what he is doing is not as bad as what the ‘White women’ are doing. 3) That ‘Black men’ are getting it right, as the only artist in the text whose work is held up as an example of ‘how to do it’, is that of Santu Mofokeng. 4) That ‘Black women’ are ultimately the ones who are wronged in this, because they are the victims of these problematic representations, and this is enforced by the fact that the figure of the ‘Black woman’ does not appear in Enwezor’s text as an artist. The avatars are thus produced in the Report, as well as in Khan and Enwezor’s texts, because of the *police order* – this available register – which is a certain *fixed distribution of the sensible* that, even when a *wrong* is voiced and disagreement arises, can still be susceptible to the *police order* language.

Where the issue of transformation is concerned, as is evident from the case of Khan’s article, if the *police order* is persistently presenting as either Black or White, and a *wrong* is articulated in those terms, i.e. there are too many White women in institutional positions, addressing this *wrong* in the terms of the *police order*, i.e. getting rid of the White women, is not going to transform South Africa into a democratic polity. Khan has put a finger on something, but it cannot be resolved in terms of blaming women, because the *wrong* is not at the level of White women, being simply the instruments of whiteness. In this vein, Rancière’s model makes it possible to move away from assigning blame. This is because Rancière does not see conflict, or *disagreement*, as something that happens between groups or individuals. It happens between the *police* (the sensible order, or a ‘set of coordinates’) and the *demos* (that which cannot be sensed).¹² It then is not possible to assign blame to groups or individuals, not only because the *wrong* in Khan’s article cannot be put right by the same *police order* that caused it, but also because Rancière does not view political subjects as individuals or groups, but as ‘empty operators’.¹³ He states that ‘[p]olitical subjects are, thus, not representatives of parts of the population but

¹² Rockhill, ‘Translator’s Introduction’, p. 3.

¹³ Rockhill, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, p. 90.

processes of subjectivation [*sic*] which introduce a disagreement, a dissensus'.¹⁴ In this model, *wrongs* are thus a result of a *police order* which excludes something from the *distribution of the sensible*, not a responsible individual or groups of persons, who *do* wrong, i.e. 'White women'. The political or democratic struggle in Rancière's view is thus not a struggle between groups or individual people, but rather a struggle for articulation in an aesthico-political regime, as well as a struggle for the delineation of the limits of that regime.

We can also begin to see that addressing the *wrong* that is voiced in Khan's article would be a matter of a completely different politicising of the South African community. People have to become different kinds of subjects, who negotiate their situations in a multiplicity of ways. There needs to be a reconfiguration – the *distribution of the sensible* cannot be left in place, because, at the same time, the *wrong* of racism is not put right by the *police order* in any automatic way. There needs to be a continuing process of *disagreement*.

Politics

In 'Introducing Disagreement', Rancière expands on the manner in which the *demos* are *sensible*. On the matter of who and what is heard, Rancière states the following: 'Traditionally, it had been enough not to hear what came out of the mouths of the majority of human beings – slaves, women, workers, colonised peoples, etc. – as language, and instead to hear only cries of hunger, rage, or hysteria, in order to deny them the quality of being political animals.'¹⁵ But the *demos* do in fact *speak*, whether they are supposed to or not. Consider the following account which Rancière provides: 'The first significant occurrences of the term 'demos' are to be found in Homer and always appear in speech situations. Greek and Trojan leaders alike denounced the same scandal: that men of the *demos* – men who were part of the indistinct collection of people 'beyond count' – took the liberty of speaking.'¹⁶

¹⁴ Rancière, 'Introducing Disagreement', p. 6.

¹⁵ Rancière, 'Introducing Disagreement', p. 5.

¹⁶ Rancière, 'Introducing Disagreement', p. 5.

As opposed to the *police order*, the fixed *distribution of the sensible*, Rancière defines *politics*, the second broad form of symbolising the common, as:

[...] one which calls into question the divisions of common and private, visible and invisible, audible and inaudible. This calling into question presupposes the action of supplementary subjects, subjects that are not reducible to social groups or identities but are, rather, collectives of enunciation and demonstration surplus to the count of social groups.¹⁷

Considering the texts examined thus far in this thesis, if it can be said that the Report establishes people according to social groups and identities and then calculates them, the texts in the previous two chapters are about *speaking*, especially about people speaking outside of their allocated spaces. This is a specific kind of speaking, which does not constitute a *speaking as*, because neither Khan nor Enwezor are speaking as representatives of their identity groups, i.e. as a Black South African artist-woman of Indian descent, or as a Black international male curator from Nigeria. What these texts rather constitute is a form of speaking to the common, that articulates a disagreement, a *mésentente*, within this field of the sphere of culture and the art world. Khan is *speaking to* the inadequate and uneven rate of transformation on an institutional level in the art world; Enwezor is *speaking to* the persistence of legacies of whiteness as an attachment to domination on the representational level in art.

This is a useful deepening of how to read these two texts and not deem them ‘shocking’ for their challenging formations, but to understand both as a challenge to an order of language by the very fact of articulating something in a space where they expect to be heard as *saying something/speaking to*, which is different from complaining, or bearing witness, or being aggrieved. So it is a case of something that throws up the *wrong*, or the difficulty, on the level of hearing and understanding. Indeed, for Rancière, ‘[d]emocracy meant the power of the people with nothing, the speech of those who should not be speaking, those who were not really speaking beings’.¹⁸

¹⁷ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 5.

¹⁸ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 5.

Disagreement, or *mésentente*, returns us to the idea of a ‘quarrel over what is common’.¹⁹ Rancière states:

Mésentente – a term untranslatable into English – indicates this node in between two things. It means both ‘the fact of not hearing, of not understanding’ and ‘quarrel, disagreement.’ Combining both meanings yields only this: the fact of hearing and understanding language does not in itself produce any of the effects of an egalitarian community. Egalitarian effects occur only through a forcing, that is, the instituting of a quarrel that challenges the incorporated, perceptible evidence of an unequalitarian logic. This quarrel is politics.²⁰

By *speaking to*, one might say, Khan and Enwezor’s texts are *engineering the quarrel*, because it is important that these issues are discussed, debated and confronted. It is thus not about *speaking as* and *laying blame* – although blame may be one of the by-products of the effect of the texts – but about trying to create the space for the debate. This has implications for transformation on a larger scale, if Khan and Enwezor’s texts are taken as the voices of transformation, speaking the unspoken that needs to be spoken if the transformation for all is to occur. Out of this agonism and *mésentente*, the articles are challenging the fact of not hearing and not understanding, the discontent within it, caused by still present untransformed elements. The disagreement, or *mésentente*, is produced because the struggle concerns the position of the avatars, of which the transformation is incomplete. The texts are picking a quarrel for the purpose, not of getting the ‘White women out of their jobs’, but for the sake of the necessity to say these things, in order that something transformative can happen, to make a space for *politics* and change.

A consideration of what Rancière offers regarding the *police* and *politics* has introduced various notions for understanding both the appearance of the avatars and the difficulties presented by ‘Doing it for Daddy’ and ‘Reframing the Black Subject’. In the Report, the terms of the avatars produce statistically identified social groups where the issues of the relations of race and gender are reduced to statistical fixities, whereas in Khan and Enwezor’s texts, because we are dealing with historically inherited structures and relations, the avatars are evoked in the political

¹⁹ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 5.

²⁰ Rancière, ‘Introducing Disagreement’, p. 5.

protest at the failure and absence of transformation. In my reading of these texts, I find that where the avatars are manifested in the name of political contestation, one finds certain re-fixings, and a return to type of binary language. Two possibilities for understanding this emerge from engaging with Rancière's model. Firstly, one might say that there is a return to the fixed figures of the avatars because they remain untransformed, and are, therefore, still indicative of the deeply structuring aspects of race/gender power relations. Secondly, it may be that owing to the *police order*, these texts cannot but think in Black/White and male/female, because these are the legacies of apartheid thinking, and as discourses in post-apartheid South Africa, they are susceptible to their own modes of enunciation.

Our understanding of the production of the avatars thus shifts from the Report to what is produced through Khan and Enwezor's texts. The Report is producing these figures of identity, produced by a certain type of *police order* – a *distribution of the sensible* that is perceptible and countable in statistical research. Whereas what 'Doing it for Daddy' and 'Reframing the Black Subject' are doing, is not producing identities, but rather indicating *positions* that point to something outside of the field of perception of the Report.

An important legacy of Rancière is, that someone is speaking that is normally not deemed to speak to the common. And that is part of the 'shock', or difficulty of the articles – this *speaking to*, without trying to keep a white readership comfortable. In this regard certain comments from US writer Ta'Neahsi Coates are interesting.²¹ In an interview, Felice León describes how Coates distinguished himself from other African-American writers. León quotes Coates as saying: 'I felt like many of the people that I was reading in the '90s, when I was in college, were very much burdened by the need to explain to white people [...] And that has an effect on your language'.²² León continues:

These scholars took on the daunting task of explaining the ills and intricacies of a centuries-old system that has oppressed and exploited black people, and still exists in America. Whether or not it was intentional, the previous message became diluted to

²¹ Felice León, 'Ta-Nehisi Coates on Why Whites Like His writing', *The Daily Beast* (25 October 2015) < <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/10/25/why-do-white-people-love-ta-nehisi-coates-work.html> > [accessed 29 May 2016].

²² León, 'Ta-Nehisi Coates on Why Whites Like His writing'.

soften the blow for white audiences. Coates didn't want to carry this burden—it alienated him. And so he writes with a tone that is blunt, authoritative, and unapologetic.²³

The reason why Khan and Enwezor's texts speak a language that is extremely difficult for white readers to hear, is in part because they are taking up a position from which *to speak to*, and therefore have to be heard. This raises the question of, what happens when people claim a position from which to speak?

From an agonistic perspective, these texts indicate the sites and types of work that still needs to be done for transformation to be effected: the unfinished work at the levels of intuitions and representations. In working through the challenges presented by these texts, my aim was not to mount a defence in any party's name, but rather to gain an understanding of the specificity of the *distribution of the sensible* that they both produce *and* contest, as well as the nature of the *disagreement*. The tension is thus not at the level of what we may be left with, which is *identities* and categories, but at the level of the intelligibility, visibility, recognition of *positions*, which is foreclosed if we apply an identitarian structure across the board. The model that needs to be undone, is one in which people are caught up in a structure, without a sense of what the mechanisms for transformation would be, and without any space for negotiations of difference and transformative possibilities. In the following part of the thesis, I look at what happens if one sees the avatars in the full spectrum of the possibilities of agency, as negotiated singularities where the legacies and structures of gender difference and racial difference continue to be at play.

Chapter Epilogue

Having laid out various aspects around Khan and Enwezor's articles, in concluding this chapter, I would like to ask how we can make sense of the very different effects that the writing of these articles had on the careers of Khan and Enwezor respectively. To, firstly, consider the effect it had on Enwezor's career, there were certain things that gave it public visibility. I have mentioned the collection of essays that were published in response to Enwezor's article in Chapter 4, and how this collection, *Grey Areas*, was

²³ León, 'Ta-Nehisi Coates on Why Whites Like His writing'.

perhaps one of the most vigorous attempts in recent years to air the issues of the politics of representation. The production of this collection of essays also represents an agonistic moment in the South African cultural landscape, and it produced a generative conflictual discourse around the issues raised by Enwezor's article. Brenda Atkinson describes in her introduction to *Grey Areas*, that it was an article by Kendel Geers in the popular South African press that brought Enwezor's article, which was published in an exhibition catalogue for a show that happened in Oslo, to the South African art world's attention.²⁴ What followed was a heated debate and a response from Candice Breitz in an open letter, which was also published, although in abridged form, in the South African popular press.²⁵ The textual event of 'Reframing the Black Subject' and also *Grey Areas* later, is also important as an example of an agonistic that happens where a *wrong* is voiced and there was an agonism 'over it'. Democracy is, in a sense, made through that. This event did not represent an impasse, because it had an agonistic playing out in discourse, which moved the issues forward in a certain way.

Enwezor has enjoyed an illustrious career after 'Reframing the Black Subject'. His article was written in 1996 and came out in 1997, at more or less the same time that he went on to curate the second Johannesburg Biennale (also in 1997). From his prestigious projects after, or in spite of, the publishing of 'Reframing the Black Subject', which includes those highest accolades of curating both the Documenta XI exhibition in Kassel (2002), and the Venice Biennale in 2015, it appears as though the article did not hurt Enwezor's career *at all*.

The contrast is stark when one considers the way in which the discourse around 'Doing it for Daddy', and the impact it had on Khan's career, played out. No collection of essays was published after the event of 'Doing it for Daddy', and it is also becoming increasingly difficult to trace the aftermath of responses to the article, to the extent that one might say an empty circle has formed around the article. Of course, we have to account for the number of possible explanations that would result in such different outcomes. By the time he wrote 'Reframing the Black Subject', Enwezor already had an established position internationally, therefore, the attention

²⁴ Atkinson, 'Introduction', p. 17.

²⁵ Atkinson, 'Introduction', p. 19, 28.

that would be paid to him would be per se more significant to someone who was an artist and still, to a certain extent, within the frame of her own art studies. He was thus speaking on an international stage, whereas she was speaking on a specific, local one.

It is reasonable to argue that Enwezor's article was published on somewhat more formal platforms, firstly in an exhibition catalogue, and secondly, in a peer-reviewed academic journal, and this might have warranted a more formal response. Where 'Doing it for Daddy' is concerned, it did not appear on the same kind of platforms as 'Reframing the Black Subject', but *Art South Africa* is one of the foremost arts publications in South Africa. So why did people not engage with this article in a way that corresponds with its inherent level of local visibility? What *did* happen was that Khan's career was subsequently threatened as a result, as I discussed before, and some of the responses were damming and silencing.

It is also telling that the art collective that formed as a response to Khan's article received more acclaim and recognition than the article itself. Here I am, of course, referring to the 'Doing it for Daddy' collective winning the 2007 Spier Contemporary Art Prize. Of course one may say that the work of this collective did indeed move the discourse forward in a certain way, but one may question whether this group's practice did, in the end, leave space for the critique that Khan was making. So, although there was an agonism of some kind, I am not entirely convinced that *the sensible* was, in fact, *redistributed*.

In the end, the manner in which Khan's article, and she herself to a certain degree, was shut down through mainly institutional channels, unfortunately confirms everything that she is saying – she became her own case in point. I am not implying that the writing of these two articles would necessarily result in Khan and Enwezor having the same level of success or failure in their careers, but the difference between the respective aftermaths of these articles are, however, rather striking. Might a gendered dynamics to critique be at stake? Might it be that Enwezor's critique was sustained by the fact that he is a man, who can then go on and have a prestigious career, and that Khan's critique was silenced to some extent because she is a Black woman addressing the institutions of the art world? I will not attempt to answer these questions, but I think they ought to be raised. The point I am

trying to argue is that gender *does* play a part is this, because there is a perceived authority to a certain kind of speaking, and if that authority is not ‘White over Black’, then it can become ‘man over woman’. What transpires through the case of comparing Khan to Enwezor is that there is a hearing and a recognition of Enwezor’s words, but a personal punishment and silencing as a result of Khan’s words. My question is, what are the implications of this difference in terms of a Rancièrian *policing* of the boundaries of *the sensible*? I am, therefore not implying that she is the victimised woman, and he the celebrated man, but that there might be a gendered dimension to the *policing* of the *distribution of the sensible*, because the *extent* of the silencing of Khan is excessive in relation to her ‘common sense’ difference from Enwezor. This indicates that in ‘speaking race’ gender matters, but when you *speak to* race, it matters even more.

Furthermore, we may need to ask: what is the gender of curation art history from Africa? More analysis is needed, but the fact that Enwezor and the key players representing curators and art historians from Africa are mostly men can perhaps be pointed out here. There is indeed a new generation of women curators from Africa on the rise, with the late Bisi Silva and Gabisile Ngcobo being two examples.²⁶ Although the Corrigan & Co. report of 2019 show that the new generation of curators from the African continent comprise mostly women, curator-men have significantly more influence.²⁷ The field does, therefore, remain dominated by men. The same is the case for the art histories being written from various places on the African continent, which feature a prominence of Nigerian men from backgrounds of high levels of access to education, Chika Okeke Agula, aside from Enwezor himself, being a case in point. One might also mention that both Enwezor and Agula, later in their careers, no longer reside on the African continent. There are, therefore, various kinds of questions of privilege that facilitate this.

Then there is also the matter of what space the work of women, or their issues, find in these configurations from Africa. To use another, final example from Enwezor’s work, his position on gender in the Documenta XI exhibition came under question, as only about a quarter of the artists he

²⁶ Corrigan & Co., *The Top 50 Artists and the Top 20 Curators*, pp. 15-22.

²⁷ Corrigan & Co., *The Top 50 Artists and the Top 20 Curators*, pp. 56.

exhibited in the show were women.²⁸ Further analysis of the general situation around gender in African curation and art history is certainly needed, but perhaps this serves to suggest that there is an element of male domination in the field. Nevertheless, comparing Khan and Enwezor's situations around their articles becomes an example of how the spiral of racial and gender difference plays out in various irresolvable, different ways.

Having earlier in the chapter raised a question about whether feminism *qua* feminism offers a position from which to ask these questions, especially in the South African context, what I am asking here in this epilogue regarding Khan and Enwezor is: Is there an extent to which, within the kind of overpowering force of this discourse on race, and the need to counter it as an unfinished business, that while we are talking about 'men' and 'women', 'Black' and 'White', we have missed the politics of feminism? And that the politics of feminism may be carried in different subjects, and they are themselves distributed in it, so it is not a case of black feminism/ African feminism/ white feminism etc., but there *is* a point of critiquing a consolidation of power in the name of men, which we call patriarchy, which can emerge in different kinds of places. It is, therefore, a feminist question.

As mentioned earlier, in this thesis I am engaged not only in these questions of transformation, but also in a feminist analysis of transformation. Therefore, as a result of my analyses in this section of the thesis, I am interested in the question of, 'what constitutes a space for women to speak a *wrong*?' Firstly, Khan's discourse was *policed*, by a *police order* one may argue, in a way that Enwezor's was not. Secondly, as I explored earlier, certain elements of feminist thinking are folded away in Enwezor's text, which point to a certain indifference to difference. There is a risk that Enwezor's text is not creating the position, except protectively, for the kind of speech of Sharlene Khan. I believe that these two factors indicate a level of irresolution of the space of politics in regard to women,

²⁸ Griselda Pollock and Alison Rowley have published a significant dialogue between themselves as a critical response to Documenta XI. See: Griselda Pollock and Alison Rowley, *Now and Then: Feminism: Art and History. A Critical Response to Documenta XI* (Leeds: CentreCATH Documents, 2006).

i.e. a political space of speaking. How to research this is the topic of the next part of the thesis.

For challenging something very profoundly, Enwezor had a position from which to continue to challenge the issues of race and representations in various ways internationally. What Enwezor is asking for through 'Reframing the Black Subject', is an awareness of the profound and complicated aspects of the politics of representation in the 'new' South Africa. Whereas what Khan is asking for through 'Doing it for Daddy', is an institutional degree of self-consciousness and more proactive willingness to open up the access to art institutions to communities and individuals who will enable the redistributions of visibility. What Khan is asking for is a far more difficult matter than the misrecognition, and perhaps misappropriation, that is at stake in 'Reframing the Black Subject', as her article implies that people who are leading the art institutions, whether they are helping to render the South African art world more egalitarian or not, are still susceptible to the critique that they are allowing a systems to remain in place.

Therefore, what Enwezor speaks to is the politics of representation within the *systems of representation*, as described earlier, not to the institutional side. It can be said that Khan is aggravating a much different, equally complex dimension, but one that holds people more to the politics of their practices, as what she raises touches not only on the positions that people occupy in an abstract sense, but ultimately also on issues around employment that may effect people's livelihood. This might be another contributing factor to the differences between the effects of Khan and Enwezor's texts.

Throughout this part of the thesis, I have held onto these 'textual events' (i.e. reading the articles textually), and the idea that they are *distributions of the sensible* themselves, and that figurations and positionalities come into play through them. Having seen the effect on that score, we can see that this domain of the political in the struggle for transformation is in itself still skewed in silencing. In this light, I have produced an oral archive of speech, which is the subject of analysis in the following part of the thesis.

PART III

CHAPTER 6

Storytelling: Readings in the Archive

Verticality and Horizontality

In this part of the thesis, I provide a theoretical conceptualisation and reading of the interviews that I conducted, as introduced in Chapter 2. In initially examining the interviews, I wanted to see how terms connoting gender and race appeared in the conversations. I followed a technique similar to that which I used in Chapter 1 and 3 – 5, in which gender and race terms are highlighted in colours to see how the language around difference surfaces. From such initial exercises of applying a kind of ‘coding’ to the interviews, I noted that what I found was remarkably different from the ways in which gender (and race) figure in the other texts analysed in this thesis. To illustrate this point, I will briefly present here extracts from some of the interviews. The bulk of my reading of the conversations conducted will, however, appear in Chapter 7.

Extracts from first conversation with Senzeni Marasela

Extract from p. 1 of the transcript:

SM: Ok, I’m, I’m working on a **lived performance**, you know. If I can call it that. Um, ‘Cause in 2003... No, 2000 and... Ok, let me start at 2, 2003, because it gives it a bit of a context. I did a, um, work called, body of work called Theodora Comes to Jo’burg. So I put on **my mother’s dress**, so **she** gave it to me, a yellow dress. Then I went around Jo’burg looking at all these **sites of trauma**, trying to retrace my **mother’s footsteps** and memories that **she** has in Jo’burg. But, then at the time I didn’t make my face available for the audience, ‘cause they are all shot at the back as I am looking in, into the scenes, you know... ‘Because I kind of read that as, as representing so many stories of **Black women** who would come in and left Jo’burg and traumatised Jo’burg, ‘cause, **she**’s certainly not the only one, you know, I’ve got **aunts, great-aunts** and other relatives, you know, who went, who were in Jo’burg in the **fifties** and the **sixties**, you know, with what South Africa was at the time, you know, **felt immensely dehumanised**,

um [clears throat] you know, and then of course all the **transgressions, you know, that happened on their o.., on their bodies...**

Extract from p. 6 of the transcript:

SM: [...] The kind of **stereotypes that they have about**, and// I can **image what these women go through, that come from the rural areas**. And they should try and negotiate this space, to... While I remember once in **Woolworths Hyde Park**, I'd my **daughter** there, you, **she** was in another place in Hyde Park. So, **she** was **hungry**. So I was trying to get **cranberries** for **her**, you know, uh, 'cause she likes those things, and get grapes and...

Extracts from second conversation with Amita Makan:

Extract from p. 3 of the transcript:

AM: Um, and uh... ja, so, **my entry into the art world, as I said, and then, you know, it was also linked my experience with**, you know...

LKV: Hmm.

AM: ...this, **the fact that my mom...**

LKV: With your mom. Ja.

AM: ...**was sick for, you know with the Alzheimer's** and um, my **husband** was travelling, **he** was doing, you know, trade negotiations, having to travel all the time and uh, I often, so I was often alone and then I also wanted to, you know, spend time, I was kind of, you know **I had this longing to be with my mother**.

[...]

AM: Um, and then I, you know so, I'd// given, I quit the University and then, you know, during the time when my **husband** was travelling then **I'd often go and spend time with my mother**.

Extracts from first conversation with Penny Siopis

Extract from p. 1 of the transcript:

PS: [...] and the story that I'm working on now, which takes me to Greece [laughs]...

LKV: [Laughs]

PS: ...to Greece [smiles], is **the story of my father**.

LKV: Okay.

PS: So, it's um, it's not, it doesn't fit quite like way I do the research for the, or have one for the previous films...

LKV: Um-hmm.

PS: ...where I've gone into archives, looked at newspapers, looked at court proceedings, cou[rt], you know court transcripts, um, um, read way around the topics, because that's much more distant history, what I've done here in Greece, /for the film on my **father**, is I started off being, **just wanting to know more about him and his history**, 'cause his history intersects, **obviously a larger politics, which is increasingly interesting today...**

LKV: Um-hmm.

PS: ...**not least because of Greece's position...**

LKV: Um-hmm. Um-hmm.

PS: ...but **generally the challenges to the West, Western powers**, um...

LKV: Um-hmm.

PS: ...and the notion of the West, actually, um, um... and... so, I started off **going to, to Greece, going to my father's family**, asking them about **him**, what do they remember of **him**, and, because he went back to live in Greece, um, much later in his life, but, um, really **I was trying to find out something about his biography that I didn't know...**

LKV: Um-hmm.

PS: ...and **from that position kind of moved out to read more about the// history of that moment in Greece...**

I present these extracts here to start unpacking the difference between how gender and race figure in the conversations I had with the people in the South African art world and how these terms figure, especially in the Report, but also in Khan and Enwezor's texts, to a certain extent. It is immediately apparent that the terms for gender and race that appear in the conversations are often relational and familial, with participants speaking about 'their mothers', 'their daughters', 'their husbands' and 'their fathers' etc. This forms a stark contrast to the Report's configurations. In the conversations, it seems that terms indicating gender and race are not made into categories or constructs, as is the case with the Report. Rather, the terms often position the participant in relation to other people in their lives, resulting in a kind of situatedness being spoken and articulated by participants, almost through the kinds of stories that they were telling me. The extracts from Senzeni Marasela's first interview above are a case in point. The abstract categories of Black male, Black female, White male and White female, are disrupted by the relational and familial narrativising of the gender/race situatedness of participants in the conversations conducted.

After this discovery, I was interested in a model that could explain this difference between how gender and race terms appear in the conversations, and how they are categorised and constructed in the Report. I was also interested in what a narrative framework could offer in terms of reading the archive that has been generated. The framework offered by Olivia Guaraldo in her book *Storylines. Politics, History and Narrative from an Arendtian Perspective*, offered a route into these kinds of questions. I will be making extensive use of Guaraldo's thinking throughout this

chapter, but in order to address what I noticed early in dealing with the interview transcripts, I would like to start by looking into Guaraldo's distinction between verticality and horizontality. In simple terms, what Guaraldo means by verticality is the 'upward' movement of theoretical abstraction, which leads to concepts that are solidified in much of theoretical and philosophical knowledge. By horizontality she means that which can displace, supplement or augment the concepts of theoretical abstraction. In her model, specifically, this, she argues, is offered by the Arendtian notion of the story and its telling. Even at an early stage of engagement with this theory, it is apparent to me that the abstraction of gender and race which is so common in the Report's formulations, are displaced and augmented by the narrative accounts that are provided by participants in the conversations conducted in this part of the research. Early in her book, Guaraldo describes the 'spirit' of her work as,

[...] an attempt to question the linearity and verticality of philosophic metaphors and proposed horizontal and intertwined paths of stories as precious means of signification within a political context. In other words, stories as multiple and horizontal, metaphorized as a web of intertwined and interdependent 'ways through' serve here to question, displace and mobilize the vertical (or often simply linear) paths of philosophic imagination, considered to be inadequate – because they are detached, abstract, manipulative and violent – to understand the political realm, or, reality from a political perspective.¹

By now a great amount of attention has been given to the question of the avatars and their effects, but their occurrence as category concepts resulting from vertical abstraction in Guaraldo's sense should be noted as this point. Their undoing or displacement by the horizontal stories and storylines presented in the conversations in the interviews will be the underlying current in this chapter and the next. As Guaraldo states: 'following Arendt, we can find an interesting and explorable path that goes in the direction of storytelling, of dramatic imitation of the *narrative disruption* [original emphasis] of the abstract unity of concepts'.² The following by Guaraldo is quite revealing in this sense:

¹ Guaraldo, p. 21.

² Guaraldo, p. 215.

[...] to abstract from stories to build definitory knowledge conceals the contingent nature of conceptual thinking as such. Definitions (conceptually constructed) need to be constantly reformulated because their inclusive practice can never be fully exhaustive. Concepts are constantly recited, re-performed in order to produce the reality that they name and (wish to) control. In this perspective *can stories be 'disruptive' to the conceptual* [my emphasis], can they re-cite the conceptual by displacing it, namely by differently disposing of its spatiality?³

What Guaraldo is referring to here is *making horizontal*, through narrative supplementation and displacement, *vertically abstracted conceptual knowledge*. Guaraldo is thus offering a spatial metaphor. She continues:

What I am arguing is that perhaps stories can be seen as 'displaced' concepts namely as 'horizontalized concepts,' or as concepts cited horizontally, disloyally. By [...] applying the 'freezing' metaphor, perhaps we can turn to stories to 'unfreeze' concepts and displace their supposed universality. The project of liberating stories from within concepts should not be a mere intellectual task, but should also become a useful means of critique. We should attempt to displace concepts as boundaries and norms, in order for unpredictability, newness and future to emerge in the light of publicity.⁴

The question then arises: to what extent do the 'stories' of peoples' experiences in and of the South Africa art world *unfreeze* the *frozen* hierarchical categorisations of gender/race found in the Report? Guaraldo also states that her 'aim is to "mobilize" concepts, to displace the conceptual mastery of the tradition of political thought by questioning its verticality and abstractness'.⁵ In this vein, Guaraldo also refers to Arendt's model as 'counter-factual'.⁶

I am not only interested in Guaraldo's framework in reading the conversations that I have generated because of its implications for the abstractions of gender and race, which have been revealed and analysed in this thesis. I am also interested in this framework especially because of the vocabulary it offers for dealing with the political dimensions of situatedness within narrative practice. As Guaraldo states: 'we can never conceptually

³ Guaraldo, p. 210.

⁴ Guaraldo, p. 210.

⁵ Guaraldo, p. 25.

⁶ Guaraldo, p. 55.

possess a political reality, or phenomenon, we can only tell its story'.⁷ She expands upon her distinction between horizontality and verticality in the following:

By opposing a horizontal narrative practice to a vertical speculative one, this work will mobilize the foundations of the conceptual (phal)logocentric tradition in a way that allows resistance to that tradition. Moreover, the politicization of the philosophical implications of theory has the potential to offer plausibility to the dimension of narrative relations and understanding, where what is at stake is not the "what-ness" of being but the "who-ness" of doing, not the constative dimension of the "what?" (qualities, talents, features of the subject) but the performative dimension of the "who" (doer of unpredictable deeds).⁸

Guaraldo's work embodies a particular vocabulary, which she derives from Hannah Arendt's thinking about storytelling. Below I plot some of the major concepts in Guaraldo's Arendtian model, including '*who-ness*' and '*what-ness*' (referred to in the quotation above), *disclosure* of the '*who*', *speech* and *action*, *plurality* and *nativity*, *uniqueness* and *distinction*.

From 'Whats' to 'Whos'

First, I will consider Guaraldo's Arendtian notions of the 'who' and the 'what', which she defines as follows: "'What" somebody is involves qualities, talents and inclinations that can also be common to others, that can be accounted for as typical or psychological features. "Who" somebody is escapes these definitions. "Who" somebody is, is the distinctive uniqueness, the 'not-yet' appeared, seen or heard."⁹ I think one could argue within the scope of this definition that presenting people in simplified terms as Black male/Black female, White male/White female, reduces human beings to '*whats*', to abstractions, down to the features that they have in common with others.

The 'who' is an important figure in the Arendtian political realm, as Guaraldo states: 'Politics is, in Arendt's terms, primarily the dimension of living and acting together, as well as where the disclosure of the "who" is vital to it. In other words, politics is a stage on which each singularity gets

⁷ Guaraldo, p. 212.

⁸ Guaraldo, p. 27.

⁹ Guaraldo, p. 36.

the chance to expose her/his “who”, or her/his own uniqueness to the other actors’.¹⁰ The ‘who’, in her/his uniqueness is thus disclosed in a public sphere or ‘stage’. This *disclose* happens, in Arendtian terms, through *speech* and *action* to *others* – through speaking and doing in front of other human beings.¹¹ This ‘space’ where the ‘*who*’ is disclosed to others through speech and action is referred to as the ‘realm of human affairs’, or the ‘web of human relationships’.¹² Guaraldo describes this sphere as follows: ‘The realm of human affairs, the space that men and women establish between themselves when appearing to each other, is an immaterial medium which Arendt refers to as the *in-between* “...which consists of deeds and words and owes its origins exclusively to men’s [*sic*] acting and speaking directly to one another”’.¹³ This space is also the political sphere in the Arendtian framework.

It is, however, important to note that the disclosure of the ‘who’ is not something the actor has control over: as Guaraldo states, the ““who” reveals to him or herself to others through speech and action almost unwillingly from the actor’s side. [...] when acting the ‘protagonist’ of her/his uniqueness shows who she/he is independently from the intensions that could have brought her/him to act’.¹⁴ She also states:

The actor enters the public scene with speech and actions, but the reality of who the actor is becomes clear only to others, or, put in another way, no matter who I think I am, my identity becomes clear only to my spectators. “This disclosure of ‘who’ in contradistinction to ‘what’ somebody is... is implicit in everything somebody says and does. It can be hidden only in complete silence and perfect passivity, but its disclosure can almost never be achieved as a wilful purpose, as though one possessed and could dispose of this ‘who’ in the same manner he has and can dispose of his qualities”’.¹⁵

The above references to uniqueness and singularity also bring us to another constellation of terms that are important in the Guaraldian-Arendtian universe. As opposed to basing her thinking on the ‘human condition’ of mortality, as is common in philosophical discourse, Arendt

¹⁰ Guaraldo, p. 31.

¹¹ Guaraldo, p. 32, 43.

¹² Guaraldo, p. 37-38.

¹³ Guaraldo, p. 37. In this passage Guaraldo is quoting from: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), p. 183.

¹⁴ Guaraldo, p. 36.

¹⁵ Guaraldo, pp. 36-37. In this passage Guaraldo is quoting from Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 179.

finds the foundation of her ideas in the ‘human condition’ of natality, i.e. birth.¹⁶ Guaraldo states:

Human beings are from birth ‘new beginnings’, ‘*initium*’, that is, their status as creatures, gives them impulse to begin, to start, to set something in motion. Birth entails the element of a new beginning, but it is only through action and speech – a sort of second birth – that the novelty of our being – our uniqueness – enters the world and therefore becomes real.¹⁷

For Arendt, ‘birth is the beginning – it is the opening of a life-span horizon in which each human being can leave a trace, can do and say something that has never been said and done before’.¹⁸ Guaraldo believes that reality is ‘constituted by infinitely improbable ‘appearances’: “The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes, amounts to certainty; the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle”’.¹⁹ The human capacity for spontaneity or for doing or saying the unforeseen is thus also related to natality. It is from our birth as a multitude of new beginnings that human plurality emerges as another ‘human condition’:

“Human plurality... has the two-fold character of equality and distinction.” [...] Human beings are equal inasmuch they have the capacity to understand each other, but in their distinctness performs this equality in the most infinite way. In other words, human beings have the constitutive opportunity to understand each other through speech... [...] It is through action and speech that human beings actualize this possibility.²⁰

Action and speech in front of fellow human beings is linked to uniqueness, as Guaraldo states that speech and action ‘presupposes an audience, and human beings disclose their uniqueness by acting and speaking in front of (or among) other people’.²¹ The vital dimension of the political common sphere of speech and action comes into play in this disclosure of uniqueness: ‘It is thanks to this public shared dimension that single unique beings can ‘appear’ to each other in their distinct

¹⁶ Guaraldo, p. 35.

¹⁷ Guaraldo, p. 33.

¹⁸ Guaraldo, p. 36.

¹⁹ Guaraldo, p. 35. In this passage Guaraldo is quoting from Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 178.

²⁰ Guaraldo, p. 32. In this passage Guaraldo is quoting from Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 175-176.

²¹ Guaraldo, p. 32.

uniqueness’.²² Also related to this disclose of the singular unique ‘who’ is the matter of distinction. Guaraldo states:

The possibility to distinguish oneself from others is, according to Arendt, not eventual, but vital to our existence as human. “Speech and action reveal this unique distinctness. Through them, men distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men... it is an initiative from which no human being can refrain and still be human. This is true of no other activity in the *vita activa* [the active life]. The uniqueness of each human being becomes visible and audible – and therefore real – when it is ‘enacted’ in the presence of other people. “A life without speech and without action... is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life, because it is no longer lived among men”.²³

To return to reading the conversations through a Guaraldian-Arendtian frame, one can say that in a narrative analysis (and I include the Grounded Theory Method as a form of narrative analysis) – as opposed to the sociological model of the Report, which produces its ‘data’ – the very nature of the political cannot be in the form of the abstracted and governmental discourse. This becomes clear in Guaraldo’s distinction between vertical abstraction and the horizontal storylines, and the freezing and unfreezing of concepts.

This narrative model also offers a view of a different range of people than we have in the Report, where everybody is a ‘what’ – what I call ‘the avatars’. Using Guaraldo’s Arendtian thinking, I can now translate this into the realisation that in the Report, people are captured in ‘whatness’, because they share their blackness/whiteness/maleness/femaleness, statistically, with many other people. By contrast, in a narrative model of storytelling, each person has to be the protagonist of her/his own story, which is soliciting something, through the conversations, of responding to someone, which is ‘anti-avatarish’ – I am not listening to somebody in terms of their ‘whatness’ as a Black man, a Black woman, a White man or a White woman. This mode of listening is crucial for de-racialising society without losing the fact that each person is going to tell a story of which the elements are situated in the conditions of race/class/gender/language

²² Guaraldo, p. 32.

²³ Guaraldo, p. 32. In this passage Guaraldo is quoting from Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 176.

group/geography and so forth. The challenge at the core of my thesis is, in the light of the fact that *difference* has been so palpably, and grotesquely, laid out in the available accounts of the South African art world – Black/White/man/woman – the question is: where does difference surface in its complexity and how can we get hold of it? Where does the complexity, knotted in the cloth of multiple dimensions of social/personal/sexual situatedness, surface? My aim is to listen and read for this complexity, and it is here that the Arendtian Storytelling framework offered by Guaraldo opens up possibilities.

With my initial exercise of looking at how the gender/race terms come up in my interviews and, therefore, at the terms that surface being terms such as *my* mother, *my* father, *my* daughter could it be that participants are already disclosing something about themselves, or telling me stories that reveal their ‘who’ in terms of familial and relational ties? It would seem that way. From these initial extracts, it also seems that the silo, the category, and the avatar are absolutely external to the ‘whos’ disclosed in the conversations.

In addition, it is necessary to bear in mind the ‘act’ of conducting the conversations. I undertook to work through one-to-one conversations, where I placed myself in a relational mode to somebody, inviting them to participate in a conversation, to ‘speak to me’. These conversations may be viewed in an Arendtian framework, as a type of political gathering – a call to speech and action in a public sphere. Out of that encounter I generated ‘words’. The conversations are, therefore, already complicated relationships between specific subjects – what Arendt would call singularities, distinct beings, who are at the same time in a shared situation. These are not simply the differences between ‘structures’ and ‘categories’ on the one hand, and individuals on the other: what is, rather, at stake is *situated subjects* that catch what is most obliterated in the ‘what-ness’ of the Report. You are a sister, you are a daughter, you are son, or a father and so forth: these are all terms that point to relational situated subjects. In reading the conversations I want to hear something that forces the reader, as they read, to be unable to place absolute categories onto something – the categories or siloes of gender/race/class.

The model offered by Arendtian Storytelling gives space to the notion of the conversations conducted as living archive of situated subjects' experiences containing their words negotiating differences and enacting transformative practices. Guaraldo's model thus offers insight into the question: How do we get beyond the 'whatness', which represents totalitarian thinking, in which people are confined to a category and a species, in order to articulate 'whoness' in a way that is not the individual outside of the social, but it is a complex, singular weaving together of 'whos', which can articulate themselves as stories? How do we move from constantly creating these categories of fixity to beginning to see the complexity of people's negotiations of difference and their engagement in practices?

This model of reading offers a model that aids in exploring the 'enunciative proposition of heterogeneity' as Enwezor calls us to reflect on as considered in Chapter 4. This involves the possibilities of complexity being spoken as opposed to labelling and making people representative of something. For the avatars to speak, they first need to become human beings: there needs to be a move from 'what' people are to 'who' they are.

Guaraldo's Arendtian model of Storytelling offers various possibilities for speaking human complexity. As Guaraldo puts it at the end of her book:

A story can be seen as a disloyally cited concept, or perhaps as an always disloyal way of faithfully preserving the memory of those who do not have a name in the realm of theory. Can we think of narrative identities as an infinite number of unabstracted particulars, which move freely on the horizontal surface of this world?²⁴

Stories do not aim at comprehensiveness, but constitute 'narrative identities as an infinite number of unabstracted particulars, which move freely on the horizontal surface of the world'.²⁵ Guaraldo attempts 'to oppose the vertical gaze (glance, *régard*) which discovers and produces boundaries to a horizontal one, which does not seek boundaries but simply follows the *unfolding* [my emphasis] of many different paths, which meet and depart from each other. These paths are boundless, insofar as they are

²⁴ Guaraldo, p. 227.

²⁵ Guaraldo, p. 227.

not limited by a vertical perspective [...].²⁶ According to Guaraldo, a ‘narrative and horizontally situated perspective’ can ‘allow a plural version of truth and reality’ as opposed to ‘the modern notion of history’ which ‘implies a sort of “eye of God” perspective which is not able to account fairly for the political dimension of plurality’.²⁷ In Guaraldo’s Arendtian model of Storytelling, ‘[t]he political realm’ is seen ‘as a realm that is linked to neither nation nor race, and is characterized by a plurality of “incoherent” political actors that “produce” innumerable stories’, which ‘are the result of actions’.²⁸ As Guaraldo states, human plurality ‘resists all conceptual representations and exceeds all definitions’.²⁹ The following quotation draws together what reading the generated conversations through a Guaraldian-Arendtian frame can offer in the context of the thesis:

Storytelling and the corresponding notion of the Arendtian “who” as protagonist of an always re-tellable story qualifies the political space of representation neither as a realm of ever-repeatable “whats”, nor as the realm of exceptional, authoritative and metaphysical female [*sic*] subjects. The political space that is enlarged and constantly amended by stories and narrative practices qualifies itself, once again, not as a contained or excluding space, but as an infinite web of relations the essence of which resides simply in the capacity to expand and connect stories and “whos”.³⁰

The ‘who’ is also intangible and volatile, because ‘[t]he moment we want to say who somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is; we get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him; we begin to describe a type or a ‘character’ ... with the result that his specific uniqueness escapes us.’³¹ The ‘who’, therefore, *needs storytelling for its disclosure*.

The Grounded Theory Method in a Storytelling Frame

At this point, I will briefly turn to some of the insights that were offered by conducting the conversations through a Constructivist Grounded Theory Method frame, and the reasons why I have moved to a reading of the

²⁶ Guaraldo, p. 233.

²⁷ Guaraldo, p. 2.

²⁸ Guaraldo, pp. 3, 39.

²⁹ Guaraldo, p. 2.

³⁰ Guaraldo, p. 24.

³¹ Guaraldo, p. 37. In this passage Guaraldo is quoting from Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 181.

conversations through a Guaraldian-Arendtian model of Storytelling. First, I note that the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method offered much by way of generating the conversations. By making use of the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method's open and explorative model of conducting, not a single interview per participant, but a series of conversations, one could say that the way in which I did the interviews was, in a sense, soliciting stories. Although I undertook the interviews in a loosely structured form, which involved asking the participants questions to get the conversation going, by virtue of using the Grounded Theory to say, this allowed us to talk, as it were, 'generally'. It initiated certain kinds of conversation prompted by questions around the notion of transformation. I was not asking questions to elicit answers that would conform to a sociological model, where the researcher has assumptions that need to be tested. By drawing from the Grounded Theory Method in conducting the conversations, I was prompting people to talk, inviting them to speech, to disclose themselves, to disclose 'who' they are in the Arendtian sense. I tested this out as a way of hearing how the speech of various participants can become intelligible given that I was specifically talking to people who have different situations in the art world. They are not merely the bearers of statistical differentiation, as there are a number of *different* speakers: I put myself in the position of hearing *in relation to them*.

In addition, it was not a matter of simply getting together all these different kinds of interviews or 'stories'. What I derived from this exercise of interviewing in a Grounded Theory Method frame was an archive of the experiences and views of situated subjects. I have their words of negotiating differences and engaging in transformative practices in the South African art world. Through Grounded Theory Method interviews, I arrived at a kind of 'storytelling', which interacts with the description of different kinds of practices and how these are transformative, not of the race/gender categories of the speakers, which keeps us trapped and repeating them. If we are working towards transformation, we require imaginative practices that avoid the typological thinking that landed South African society in trouble relating to categories.

I will now consider some of the characteristics of Grounded Theory coding as well as my approach to analysing the interviews. Grounded

Theory coding involves rigorous coding: some forms use line-by-line open coding, which later moves onto selective coding.³² As it turns out, the amount of material that has been produced from the interviews (approximately 940 pages of interview transcript) clearly does not lend itself to this type of fine coding. The scope of the archive I have created thus poses a methodological challenge in terms of finding a way to read it. My exposure to Grounded Theory Method coding is useful for its practice of gerundive ‘-ing’ coding, which focuses our attention onto what people are do ‘-ing’, and therefore, on processes and actions.³³ I applied Grounded Theory Method coding, to a certain degree, to some of the first round of interview transcripts in preparation for the second round, in order to discern what themes and topics were important in the first round of conversations. As I progressed with transcription work once the second round was completed, I came to realise that the nature of fine line-by-line Grounded Theory coding was not suitable for the amount of material I had generated. I acknowledge that the material could be read selectively through this type of coding lens. This might direct my future research, but it is not the path that I pursue for the remainder of the thesis. I discuss how I coded my interviews in detail in the next chapter.

Once I started engaging with Guaraldo’s writing, a second feature of Grounded Theory coding caught my attention as an important aspect of a Storytelling reading of the archive I have created, and this has to do with the element of abstraction in the Grounded Theory coding frame. Grounded Theory ‘data’ is initially coded, followed by selective or focused coding, which takes the analysis to a higher level of abstraction and contributes to initial conceptualisation.³⁴ It has to be noted at this point that unlike the type of philosophical or theoretical abstraction that Guaraldo refers to, Grounded Theory Method codes can categories are not abstracted beyond the material that they are ‘grounded in’. Grounded Theory also applies mechanisms for checking that this is the case, which may include further theoretical sampling, or taking the selective codes to participants in order to see if they

³² Antony Bryant’s discussion of Grounded Theory Method coding is very useful. Please see: Antony Bryant, ‘The Grounded Theory Method’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by Patricia Leavy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 116-136 (pp. 127-131).

³³ Bryant, ‘The Grounded Theory Method’, p. 130.

³⁴ Bryant, ‘The Grounded Theory Method’, pp. 102, 130-131.

‘work’ in the context from which they were taken. I emphasise that the type of abstraction that happens through Grounded Theory coding is not precisely the same as Guaraldo’s philosophical or theoretical abstractions, but an element of abstraction does exist in Grounded Theory coding.

Guaraldo is working towards ‘a form of representation that renounces theoretical abstraction’.³⁵ She states:

What is decisive for our analysis is the fact that there is another way of attributing meaning to events, a way that must not necessarily rely upon a general, abstract meaning, but can attain meaningfulness in itself. The importance of a narrative account (recount) becomes visible when what is at stake is not only human immortality or glory but also a form of representation that renounces theoretical abstraction. What is here at stake is a way of understanding the realm of human affairs that refrains from abstracting particulars from the context in which actions, events take place.³⁶

Guaraldo’s Arendtian Storytelling frame allows us to view the interviews and conversations as a type of narrative practice. The concept of ‘narrative’ in Guaraldo’s framework, for our purposes, amounts to somebody ‘narrating’ something about themselves, or ‘telling’ you something about the ways they understand the lives they lead. Guaraldo sees ‘Arendt’s idea of storytelling as a way of representing political reality by preserving the contingency and the freedom that characterize the realm of the *vita activa*’ [the political life of action and speech], and her work proposes that ‘storytelling or narrative practices guarantee a better understanding of politics and political realities in their manifold aspects’.³⁷ Thinking about the conversations through Guaraldo’s frame, I wanted to produce a kind of political reality, of the realm of speech and action, which is not contained by the political unconscious of the apartheid mentality – those categorising structures of power that are so deeply entrenched that they repeat themselves until it seems that there is no possibility of being outside of them.³⁸

³⁵ Guaraldo, p. 56.

³⁶ Guaraldo, p. 56.

³⁷ Guaraldo, p. 3.

³⁸ I refer here to the political unconscious as developed by Fredric Jameson, in Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).

There is a difference between the model of interviewing I followed and the classic model of interviewing, where the interviewer would ask a question, which elicits a specific kind of response or a comment about a subject. In the loose, flowing conversations that we had as part of this research, people were partly in charge of what they were telling me and they were disclosing something. As we have seen above, the disclosure of the ‘who’ is not a wilful act on the side of the speaker or doer. From this model, I see it as my role not to analysing these disclosures formally, by example via rigorous line-by-line coding as in certain types of Grounded Theory coding. Rather, I seek to provide a sense of the disclosures made to me by following a methodology of reading that allows a kind of saying that is not funnelled through the investigator. A Grounded Theory analysis ultimately aims at coming up with a ‘concept’ of what is happening in a specific context, through which one would make sense of a whole series of actions and behaviours. But what I am aiming to build from these conversations, read through a Storytelling frame, is a sense of an imagined community of my interviewees as a kind of Arendtian *vita activa* forum: a place. It is not merely a network; it is not just one-to-one conversations; but something that constitutes an imaginary conversation when they speak. My interviewees have to deal with various situations in the South African art world and I did not interview them only to find out what they think about it. They are involved in the system that the Report reduces to this abstraction of what I have called ‘the avatars’.

Guaraldo’s framework posits storytelling as the moment of disclosure of the politics of a common world, and of sharing (in) a common world. Therefore I do not frame the conversations I have had as ‘data’ or amassed information, but as various kinds of texts, which can be read through various kinds of frames. Reading through a Storytelling frame also deconstructs the sociological terms of the ‘interview’ and ‘data’, preferring terms like ‘conversations’, ‘storytelling’, ‘stories’ and ‘storylines’, as will be explored further in this chapter.

I am thus working against a merely ‘informational’ sense of the material that these conversations produced. Since I am using a Guaraldian-Arendtian frame in connection with some aspects of the Grounded Theory Method, I have the sense that what has been generated is not *information* –

this is, to some extent, *to be analysed*. Therefore, I am analysing more than the *content* of what people tell me. Storytelling offers us *an analysis of the saying*.

This type of analysis is also important because of the particular mode I put myself in as a researcher, drawing from Charmazian Constructivist Grounded Theory. this alerts me to the fact that I am implicated in the conversation, I am a situated researcher, and this was a relational exercise. People agreed to speak to me and the material is the product of an interaction between me and these *people*. In this light, I am not going to revert to sociological and art historical analyses, which reduce people's words to information that I will merely interpret. The *analysis of the saying* goes beyond this informational reading.

I am going to demonstrate, in the rest of this thesis, a new process of engaging with what are effectively stories and texts of various kinds of narratives that people have shared with me about doing and transforming. I am trying to see the dynamic of the energy, the initiatives and the work that people are doing, as well as the things that they encounter as constraints, inhibitions, and limitations.

If the problem of the Report is an abstracted, quantified version of reality, which forms typologies, it is obvious that the counter-procedure must be qualitative research. The particular counter-procedure that I have followed has generated a different range of material that needs to find a form. This material encompasses ways in which people are disclosing themselves by telling me stories about experiences that they had. Furthermore, in this procedure, the interviews do not stand as only 'interviews' in the classic qualitative sense. They are 'generated conversations', which have been recorded, transcribed and which constitute a rich archive of experiences and 'stories' that lends itself to various types of analyses. The terms 'data', 'coding' and 'sampling' in the Grounded Theory Method provide a rigorous structure for conducting interviews and analysing them, but the post-colonial methodology necessitated by the situation in South Africa leads me to think differently about what the exchange was and what I have now began to read in the 'texts' resulting from these encounters. I need a model of reading that is adequate for the sensitive, complicated and complex South African situation, because the

question arises: what would make my having ‘collected data’ through interviews any different from the Report having collected its ‘data’? What are the conditions for the material I have collected becoming a form of knowledge that is transformative? The crux lies in the fact that the Report classifies its ‘data’ and I do not.

I am, through moving between Constructivist Grounded Theory and Storytelling, setting up a conversation between these two frameworks, and there are some notable touch points between the two. Through using both GTM and Arendtian Storytelling (via Guaraldo), I have generated a sense of narrative from each. Grounded Theory and Storytelling are both narrative analyses, which proceed through language as mediating experience. Therefore, Grounded Theory and Storytelling are not entirely separate elements: rather, they are different approaches to the question of the role of speech and action in self-disclosure through narrative.

This disclosure of the self through speech and action to others, in a political, common sphere – the disclosure of ‘who’ not ‘what’ in Arendtian terms – moves us away from the production of ‘whats’ in the South African art world, which operates through typologising practises of organising people according to categories and hierarchies. Both Grounded Theory and Storytelling offer vocabularies that counter this problematic statistical and economic modelling of people.

By moving from conducting Grounded Theory-type conversations to theorising them through a Guaraldian-Arendtian Storytelling frame, I attempt to mobilise these different concepts of action, speech, the space and the story, which are offered by this narrative approach. One of the most vital aspects of this approach is the political sphere (the place of speech and action) and it is in speech and action that we can disclose ourselves in our singularity, rather than our typology, to others. For our purposes, we can think of it as a sphere of conversation, or a sphere of action, which appears through and in the conversations. I have not only created a collection of interviews: I have generated a rich archive, that forms both a testimony and analysis that produces a kind of knowledge. But to produce knowledge, I need to read across the ‘text’ that has been generated. Nevertheless, as stated above, the stories or the examples from these conversations do not stand for something in an *informational* sense: they are prompts to enable

me to keep showing how complicated this is for individuals to negotiate. Through my exploration of these methods, I am suggesting how it *can* be done, precisely because of not seeing the material in terms of avatars and categories, but of situations that need strategic change and specific actions. By having created a completely different archive from the statistical one of the Report, I can begin to understand the living, active processes which highlight the ways specifically in which the asymmetries of racialised and gendered difference are being negotiated through reading for people's attention to these aspects.

‘Speaking To’ versus ‘Speaking As A’: The Plurality of Singularity

I now return briefly to the feminist post-colonial method that I am seeking to develop in response to the South African context and the material that has been generated. I initiated, conducted and read the conversations in the way that I describe above, because of the question of how to frame a ‘White woman’ going to interview a number of people in order to produce language that can be read in terms of what is disclosed. I would now like to touch on what the methods I have described offer towards constructing a feminist post-colonial methodology. First, I was seeking a methodology that would counter the effects that I have identified in the Report, which mutes and abstracts the voices of those it represents. As a counterpoint to statistical, quantitative analysis, I opted for qualitative and reflexive methods of gathering material and reading it by drawing on a combination of the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method and Arendtian-Guaraldian narrative analysis. Through these methods, I seek a sense of the complex and interwoven ways in which people experience the work that they do and that lives that they lead. This sense of the interweaving of complex situations and experiences is precisely what one finds when talking *with* people, because they are living across situations and their experiences are not broken into these discrete units of identity categories. My use of the Grounded Theory Method and Guaraldian-Arendtian narrative analysis also touches on a larger issue of what constitutes a post-colonial feminist methodology. The creation of an archive of accounts that can ‘speak back’ to the hierarchical statistical modelling of the Report is a very important

element of this post-colonialist feminist methodology. There is also the aspect of my non-classificatory reading of my material.

Second, there is the matter of the power relations in the interviews. There are different power relations in every interview, and it must be noted that almost everyone I talked is a professional creative person who has visibility in the South African art world already. I was sensitive to the power relations in terms of how the interviews were structured – not in terms of a rigid question and answer format or in terms of hierarchy, but as flowing and co-created conversations. I also encouraged participants to raise issues that they felt were important, even though I might not be touching on them in my prompting questions directly. I did not arrive as a knowledgeable interviewer who sought to have my views confirmed by the people I was interviewing. I came to the conversations wanting to find out how the people I was speaking with experienced their contexts.

Arendt's thinking centres the principle of plurality – arising from the fact that individuals do the unexpected, because they are new individuals – and the way this produces, not a set of categories of 'whats', but 'whos'. This is, however not the same as 'individualism', because those 'whos' are negotiating very powerful structures and obstacles and embedded disagreement (to bring in Rancière). In an Arendtian framework, the reason why people are unique beings is that each is born with the potential to do something that is unforeseen by everyone else, because each is a new event. By contrast, if a person is described as White/Black, male/female, there is the expectation that you are *speaking as a...* rather than *speaking to* the issues – which artists, in particular, are often trying to do. To speak to the world in this way, one has to have a space where that speaking can happen, where the singularity of each person can be disclosed – an unforeseen element, which artists bring to the world, because they are the creators. In terms of an Arendtian 'conversation', the notion of the construction of a certain kind of political subjectivity is not bounded by this sense that one *speaks as a...*, which is either a claim to complete ontological identity with oneself, or as somebody, depending on how one has been labelled, even though in certain circumstances, people self-identify and self-name.

I would now like to turn briefly to some of the implications of the anti-totalitarian aspects of Arendt's thinking. By analysing concentration

camps in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt realises that what the concentration camp and the accompanying totalitarian system actually does is to dehumanise people. Through a process of deprivation, reducing individuals to starving bodies that are struggling to stay alive, people were also deprived of spontaneity, because under such conditions, human existence is reduced to the body's instinctive attempts to obtain food and water. She states:

The camps are meant not only to exterminate people and degrade human beings, but also serve the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself as an expression of human behavior and of transforming the human personality into a mere thing, into something that even animals are not; for Pavlov's dog, which, as we know, was trained to eat not when it was hungry but when a bell rang, was a perverted animal.³⁹

Plurality is also under threat in totalitarian thinking, and Arendt states the following:

Total domination, which strives to organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual, is possible only if each and every person can be reduced to a never-changing identity of reactions, so that each of these bundles of reactions can be exchanged at random for any other.⁴⁰

In the camps, people were deprived of the effects of natality, that which is singularly human, namely plurality and spontaneity. Through natality, each new human birth is a promise of a beginning for the whole of humanity, because we are not merely copies of each other. This results in the conditions of plurality and spontaneity: the capacity to do something new and unforeseen. But in totalitarian systems like the camps or apartheid, people are placed in situations where the struggle for life overrides the capacity for action. They are just labouring, or just working, which means that there is no chance for them to act, to come up with something new outside of the repetition for survival. *Action*, for Arendt, is set apart from *labour* and *work*. *Labour* is what we need to do to stay alive, to survive day-to-day, and *work* is the social organisation of our productivity. Arendt bases her distinction on a phrase by Locke, which reads: 'The labour of our bodies

³⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 565.

⁴⁰ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 565.

and the work of our hands'.⁴¹ Action, on the other hand, is the realm of the political, where human beings come together disclose themselves through speech and action.

The human condition as plural is important for anti-racialised thinking, because humanity is not merely diverse, it is plural: in other words, there is difference, not merely diversity. Plurality is related to spontaneity – we can do the unexpected, we can invent, we can imagine, we can change – which is, therefore, action. I am trying to imagine how to create a space for this activity of the 'whos', which have these two-fold characteristics of equality and distinction, because they are part of human plurality.⁴² Ultimately, we are plural because of *natality* because each new human being, as a singularity, is an unpredictable contribution to the whole of humanity. The Report commits the crime of dehumanising the people it represents in its statistical presentations, by not allowing for the plurality, spontaneity and unpredictability of their lived experiences.

In this chapter, the categorical presentations of the Report are set against the lived relations of kinship and social relations to which the interviews give rise to, so that we have a sense of lived relations versus abstract categories. I am introducing the concept of storytelling, which also entails a dynamic that is opposed to the categories and the fixedness of the Report, which has no sense of the dynamics of how one would make change or bring about transformation. Narrativity and storytelling does not only help us understand *where* people position themselves in relation to their family member and communities, but it alerts us to the fact that people are agents in dynamic processes of negotiations of difference and transformative practices.

In the Arendtian framework plurality stands as a key aspect, because if we think in terms of the deep problematic of difference, on the vast collective scale of class, race and gender, those can be monumentalised as single but all-consuming lines of difference. By contrast, within and behind each of these categories lies an infinite plurality of singularities: people are not just atomised individuals, they are singular beings, carrying the potential for doing something new for everybody. When we come together on a

⁴¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 79.

⁴² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 175.

political stage to disclose and learn of what we are, we are not Cartesian self-possessed individuals. Difference is redefined through the Guaraldian/Arendtian model as singularities in which all of the factors of race/class/gender (along with others) add up to one particular instance of a human life.

I am, therefore, not abolishing the issues of gender/race/class in favour of a certain kind of individuality. The Arendtian model is different precisely because the potential for plurality requires the political scene of the sphere where we come together, not in the sociological model of collectivities or in categories, which would be the Guaraldo's vertical abstraction. On the horizontal plane, natality produces the condition of plurality, but also produces the condition under which – going back to Rancière's question of how we come into politics, of how we modify our bureaucratic subjectivity – the political is constituted and enacted.

The political sphere of speech and action is where people 'distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct', because being distinct is the categorical and the vertical.⁴³ But when people distinguish themselves it is an act of perpetually producing their singularity in the presence of others who will *recognise* them in that activity as one of the speaking and acting community. This also touches on the question of what the interviews in this part of my study are performing. There is an aspect of mutual work in the conversations created of this act of disclosure in dialogical interaction. I am employing Arendt to see how one can draw on this specific political theory of storytelling and the exchange that also has implications for thinking about the transformative effect of the act of doing this kind of research.

On a practical level, I ask people questions about how transformation can be brought about, or has been brought about, in the South African art world. But, on the other hand, the conversations enact disclosure and distinguishing oneself. We appeared to one another as people, in an event where relational and situated singularities were being produced. It is this production of humanness that is the most effective force against the avatar and against a racist/sexist structure.

⁴³ Guaraldo, p. 32. In this passage Guaraldo is quoting from Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 176.

Distinguishing and recognition, therefore, become vital elements in the interviews. There is a sense of mutual recognition in the Arendtian model, because of the importance of creating a space for politics, which is for Arendt the space in which each one distinguishes her- or himself in the presence of others and in a relay of looking, hearing and acts of recognition. The act of sexist/racist bureaucratic looking dehumanises people, because it deprives them of the possibility of being recognised themselves as human by this relay or recognition.

There are four aspects regarding the interviews and their reading that I wish to highlight in this chapter. The first aspect is that earlier in the chapter I talk about feminist methodologies, which are concerned with potential power imbalances in the process of the interviewer appropriating information from the interviewees. These issues touch on the ethical question of how to approach interviews. The second aspect is that the material that I discover in the interviews is framed in terms of the Guaraldian/Arendtian understanding of narrative – inviting people to tell stories, which I then read through the Guaraldian/Arendtian notion of storytelling. The interviews are seen as a certain kind of disclosure of speech and action, which becomes a means by which people are becoming themselves – they are representing themselves as a ‘who’ not as a ‘what’.

The third aspect is that this type of reading is a profound disruption of the model by means of which someone is denied their humanity, which is precisely the non-recognition that somebody’s speech and action constitutes a human speech and action that is disclosed to somebody who receives it as part of a constantly moving mutual process of becoming human. I become human in the act of recognising another human, and the other human is human because I recognise them. In the structure of apartheid specifically and bureaucracy in general, a person is just a ‘what’, an item and there is so many of x. The mutual recognition of ‘whos’ is thus a disruption of that.

The fourth aspect is the micro situation of my research and my careful considerations about how to read the transcripts that I have, is itself bringing into being this kind of political sphere. I am mindful of feminist questions of power relations etc., and of the performative activity of these interviews; I take responsibility for the interviews; but the analysis I am going to produce is one which, I argue, is central for the transformation of

South Africa, which is ‘who can be together with whom?’ In a Storytelling framework, we are all *whos* together: there is a process by which human beings appear to each other ‘not as physical objects’, but as human beings.⁴⁴ As Arendt states, ‘it is an initiative from which no human can refrain and still be human’.⁴⁵ It is, therefore, a question of *producing humanness*, and having to produce a world in which humanness is the acting, speaking and disclosing of each singularity.

This is where plurality is important, because Arendt’s definition of humanness is intrinsically plural; there are no categorical differences or ‘diversity’; there is a richness of infinite singularities that can include the recognition of common problematics and common experiences. In the field of art, there is a way in which the artists choose to realise the potential for infinite natality, i.e. something new, something unforeseen, something transformative is enacted.

In the Arendtian/Guaraldian framework, I perceive elements that can foster the processes of transformation, rather than just being able to identify the tensions. If we are left with agonism, we know that there is agonistic struggle and there is *disagreement* and *dissensus* and this is dynamic, because it is actually agonising for individuals. The individuals in the interviews confirm that it is agonising, but the process of conducting the interviews is the active speaking and acting contribution to the transformation. The speaking is, therefore, not only about content, but also, crucially, about what is happening – there is a certain performativity in the research itself.

⁴⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 176.

⁴⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 176.

CHAPTER 7

The Avatars Speak Back: Speech, Agency and Recognition

Undoing the Avatars and Unfolding the Fold

As a counter-point to what was revealed in my Foucaultian analysis and coding of the Government commissioned Report in Chapter 1, I undertook research with a range of active participants in the South African art world by means of interviews. This generated an archive of statements which were analysed by coding with a view to develop theoretical concepts. It was my intention to displace the crude avatars, Black and White, male and female, who figure in the Report as the passive bearers of race and gender difference, with agential, speaking subjects who articulate their practices and analyse their working situations in the current conditions of art making, showing and art writing in South Africa. Creating an oral archive that is then coded to discover in recorded speech major ‘units of meaning’ by using an established qualitative research method (GTM), I would be able to avoid any simplistic opposition of ‘experience’ to the tabulated findings of quantitative data. At the same time, by soliciting the reported experiences and analyses of artists, curators, writers, I could research the dynamics of their interactions with institutions and individuals. The research method I have chosen enables the participants and agents in specific situations or practices (the art world) to give reflective accounts of those situations and practices in a form that does not privilege the speaking subject (voice) as a source of direct, unmediated knowledge. The method produced results from the way I have worked with the created texts. In light of the objectification created by the Report, it has been important to explore *with* the participants in the art world their perspectives and their analyses on the differentials and complexities that the Report presented in and reduced to categorical and quantitative graphs.

I would like to stress, as I did in Chapter 2, that when I refer to ‘experience’, I do not mean that words spoken in interviews can access participants’ social experience directly. What the interviews solicited are participants’ *accounts* of their experience that is articulated though language and mediated, in this sense, via language as not merely words, but texts. The interviews produce texts that need critical and situated analysis. This is what GTM analyses. Statements are coded as units of meaning which are then coded into larger groupings from which conceptual and theoretical terms emerge. While deploying the Grounded Theory Method, I am framing the findings in relation to existing theories of the political as a scene of speaking, acting and being heard. I have not just worked with ‘people telling me their stories’ – stories are told all the time without the speaking, acting subject being recognised. Through close reading and coding, this research recognises speech in the form of lived, situated, and articulated experience. Feminist historian Joan Scott has examined a range of theories and uses of experience in historical studies, concluding:

Experience is not a word we can do without, although, given its usage to essentialize identity and reify the subject, it is tempting to abandon it altogether. But *experience* is so much a part of everyday language, so imbricated in our narratives that it seems futile to argue for its expulsion. It serves as a way of talking about what happened, of establishing difference and similarity, of claiming knowledge that is “unassailable.” Given the ubiquity of the term, it seems to me more useful to work with it, to analyze its operations and to redefine its meaning. This entails focussing on processes of identity production, insisting on the discursive nature of “experience” and on the politics of its construction. Experience is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted. What counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, and always therefore political.¹

The interviews produced an ‘oral archive’ that I transcribed, coded, memo-ed, and analysed to develop concepts using a widely used method of qualitative analysis. Yet, the ‘qualities’ of voice, story, thought, criticism, analysis, understanding and affect created in the interview process and the methods of analysis replace abstracted graphs and figures with politically

¹ Joan Wallach Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience’, *Critical Inquiry*, 17.4 (1991), 773-797 (p. 797).

astute, strategically critical and embodied representations of the complex intertwinings of issues facing artists, mostly women, both Black and White, in the incomplete transformations of artistic practice and artist visibility and professional sustainability in South Africa as of 2015.

My analysis revealed that the official Report produced an abundance of graphs and figures that construct, visually and discursively, both 'gender' and 'race' as binary concepts. These are regularly divided into the categories/oppositions of male/female and Black/White. My discursive analysis of the Report exposed the consequences of such categorisations for the process of transformation in this area, as it not only creates abstract entities according to binary notions of 'gender' and 'race'. More importantly, it organises these constructions hierarchically. I also noted and critiqued the unexpected congruence of this practice with apartheid representational tendencies. The Report's problematic application of the concepts of 'gender' and 'race' appears to be a result of the reliance on quantitative stratification practices. The Report also prioritised economic concerns over processes of transformation, especially 'racial' and 'gender' dimensions, to such an extent that transformational strategies find virtually no place in the Report's final recommendations to the South African government which focus on accounting for the economic and human resources of this sector. I argued that the Report muted various voices and actors in the South African art world. I also argue that this manner of representing an art world obscured the work done by the protagonists themselves, namely the artists, gallerists and critics. In the Report's mode of accounting, artists, curators, museum directors and all those involved in the art world appear as nothing more than figures of demographic representation. I named them avatars for the actual agents of creative arts. One of my key discoveries from the coding and analysis of this Report lay in its conclusions and recommendations. There, I identified the paradox of the absence of any discussion of, or strategic recommendations about gender imbalances despite gender forming one of the axes (White Men, White Women, Black Men, Black Women) in the hierarchies established by the Report. I argued that gender was, in effect, folded out of sight.

Having thus identified the enfolded place of gender, noted but rendered effectively invisible in national and economic discourses, I sought to construct a feminist post-colonial method for exploring not merely the missing question of gender, but rather the complex and interwoven ways in which hierarchies and experiences of gendered and racial or racialised gender and gendered racial differences in post-apartheid South Africa shape practices of those involved in the collective activities of art-making, art distribution and art writing.

The research method I then adopted – interviews and qualitative coding – was thus a reaction against the effects of the Report, where subjects appear only as bearers of statistical data. The aim of the interview phase in my research pivots on the notion of viewing individual participants in the South African art world as knowledge-bearing subjects, as opposed to objects of knowledge. Not just statistical figures of representation, they can be heard as agents of negotiation of race and gender hierarchy and oppression, and indeed as agonistic subjects involved in the often painful and conflicting struggle for democracy.

As I moved into the next phase of my research, the overarching questions in my research were:

- How can transformative knowledge be produced about the contemporary South African art world that:
 - 1) does *not* reproduce the problematic use of ‘gender’ and ‘race’ as binary stratification and classification categories,
 - 2) does *not* organise configurations of these binary classifications into a hierarchy, and,
 - 3) does *not* prioritise the economic dimensions of the visual art world at the expense of institutional or aesthetic *transformation* of hierarchical or exclusionary racialised and gendered categorisations and the resulting social and personal experiences?
- How can the agents in the South African art world be afforded the opportunity to give an account of their experiences of how difference is lived and how the obstructions of the hierarchies of race and gender are negotiated in their everyday lives and cultural and/or aesthetic practices?

I conducted the interviews in 2015/2016 and transcribed the 940 pages of text in 2016/2017. Out of the first reading of one particular interview, with Sharlene Khan, I undertook the next stage of the GTM, which involves situating the major issues that emerge from the interviews in a theoretical conversation. The outcome of this work precedes the current chapter on the key codes that emerged from the interviews and form the basis of Chapters 3–5. It is important to stress the dynamic relay between carrying in my head the spoken words and affective charge of the interviews and my revisiting the event of each interview in transcription and the frameworks of analysis that I have then developed drawing on several and very different theorists of the interplay of the ‘political’ and the ‘aesthetic’ in relation to the democratic: Jacques Rancière and Hannah Arendt. Neither are key figures in feminist theory (although there are feminist reclamations of Arendt and Rancière that have been taken up by feminist writers). It is my contention that they offer important resources for reading my ‘archive’ and for the key work of transformation.

Chapters 3–5 introduced the concepts of agonism and the distribution of the sensible – this enables a move from the categories and the avatars of the Report to the Rancièrian question of ‘who/what is sensible?’ and how is the sensible (what is said or heard) distributed? In Chapters 3–5, however, the voices of the subjects who are doing the speaking, namely Sharlene Khan and Okwui Enwezor, not only enunciate their position. They *speak back to*. Within the Rancièrian question of the distribution of the sensible, therefore, the *demos*: *those whose words are not considered speech*, not only speak and are heard, but what they need to speak back to power becomes speakable. The question of the aesthetics of politics emerges in terms of ‘the distribution of the sensible’.

In Chapter 3, I showed that Khan’s *mésentente*, her quarrel, is on the level of the institutional replication of certain inequalities and inclusions and exclusions not at the level of anybody *intending* them. Nevertheless, they have to be addressed. The *wrong* that Enwezor’s article tries to articulate occurs at the level of the politics of representation. He introduces two key elements within this politics where gender and race agonistically emerged: the image and the spectator. The challenge then becomes to see these as

particular kinds of practices that are continuing to ‘race’ and ‘gender’ subjects, and that the subjectivities produced within them are, therefore, raced and gendered. Both these texts revealed the intensity of the agonism of race and gender in post-apartheid South Africa, and indeed the real effects, for instance on one artist’s career, for having spoken out. I also drew out a suppressed issue of feminist politics of aesthetics in relation to Enwezor’s otherwise important but gender-indifferent demand for consideration of ‘the black spectator’ as part of any consideration of the field of visual representation.

It is in the name of speaking the hitherto unspoken *mésentente* that I have placed my analysis of Khan and Enwezor’s texts before the presentation of my major discoveries in coding the interviews. This is why I want to conclude with the very issue of many voices speaking. My thesis will conclude with the subjects who *speak*, who *speak to* various issues around what hinders them in making their art and their approach overcoming these issues. In the interviews, the participants *speak of* their own actual negotiation of these formations of gender and race, and the historical contingent practices, which continuously capture them in racialising and gendering disadvantages, inequalities and processes. These are dynamic, creative elements. We are not, therefore, trapped in categories. It is not deterministic. The sense of what the artists, critics, and gallery curators are doing as the potential participants and agents in the art world becomes potentially innovative. It might help us to get unstuck from the silos, the categories and the conflicts presented by the contemporary South Africa situation. Out of the agonism that is so powerfully at work in the case studies of Sharlene Khan and Okwui Enwezor, we begin to get a sense of how we would speak outside of abstractions of the governmental that we see in the Report. Going out and interviewing the participants, therefore, extends the *partage du sensible*, the sharing in/of the sensible.

In the final part of the thesis, I move from the impassioned, situated critique offered by Khan and Enwezor, and create a texture of different accounts, where I explore the question of transformation as of 2015, and how the experience thereof is articulated in the art world. I view this as my contribution to discerning the entanglement of race and gender as the

wrong, the wounding and the dissensus – by discovering its *working-through* in the work of the agents in the art world.

During the interview phase of my research, and as touched on in Chapters 2 and 6, I drew on certain aspects of the Constructionist Grounded Theory Method. This is a critical development of the original Method that replaces certain assumptions of the founding sociological thinkers with self-reflexive notions of situated research, taking into account the position of the researcher who is not neutrally reading pure data, but engaged in critical reflection on the research process in a manner concordant with feminist epistemologies such as those of Donna Haraway. I worked closely with the ideas of two leading GTM specialists, Kathy Charmaz and Antony Bryant, using Charmaz's *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, as well as *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory* edited by Charmaz and Bryant.²

Owing to its development through ethnography and intensive interviewing, the Constructionist Grounded Theory Method offers various aspects and practices that I found instructive during the interview phase of the research. Interviewing in the Grounded Theory Method framework, which is known for seeking 'rich data', operates as a means by which to access information and knowledge that gives the researcher access through their speech to people's own accounts of their experiences and understandings of their lives and practices.³ Particularly useful is the Grounded Theory Method's emphasis on simultaneous data collection and analysis, as is explored further in this chapter and which may allow for repeated interviews with participants to take place.⁴ In order to open up a feminist dialogical space, iterative interviews may be used to grow and sustain *a conversation* with knowledge subjects over time.

By introducing this method into art history, I generated and then analysed interview material from a range of participants in the South

² Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*; Kathy Charmaz and Antony Bryant, eds, *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory* (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC: Sage Publications, 2007); Anthony Bryant, *Grounded Theory and Grounded Theorizing: Pragmatism in Research Practice* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

³ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 24.

⁴ Antony Bryant, 'The Grounded Theory Method', in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by Patricia Leavy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 116-136 (p. 120).

African art world. In this context, I wanted to be able to make a reading from people's accounts of their awareness of gender and race in the South African art world in order to 'unfold the fold' and to bring to the surface what is performed away by the discourse of the economistic Report on the South African art industry. I wanted to see what emerged from an enquiry of a different order.

In transcribing and coding the interview texts, I was specifically listening for the speakers' awareness of how binary hierarchies of gender and race are lived and encountered, are maintained or modified, upheld or undone, in their everyday lives and work in the art world. I viewed the possibilities that interviewing in a Grounded Theory Method frame offered as a move towards accessing a discourse of a different order, by evolving a discourse that is centred in critically articulated experience. The interviewees knew of my key areas of interest, of the issues of both gender and race, and were thus responding to informal opening questions that enabled their discourse to unfold. They were not answering my questions, but leading the discussion into areas that indicated their concerns, experiences and understanding of obstacles to and modes of change. A guiding notion during this phase was the question: What would it be like to understand the processes described in the Report through the accounts of participants who 'work' in and work on this field?

The Interview

The art historical interview has, however, not appeared to be without its own *a priori* and biases. Two examples offer a case in point. The now famous interviews conducted by art critic David Sylvester with American artists in the 1960s, stand as a monument to the marginalisation of women in the art historical canon. The interviews occurred not only in the context of male homosociality, but also of art world exclusivity, as Sylvester admits that he never requested interviews with artists that he 'didn't already happen to know'.⁵ Regardless of its feminist angle, Cindy Nemser's project of interviewing 12 artist-women in the 1970s collected in her benchmark book *Art Talk: Conversations with 12 women artists* also raises issues of what is being heard or framed by the interviewer as questioner and editor of the

⁵ David Sylvester, *Interviews with American Artists* (London: Chatto and Windus), p. IX.

text.⁶ Nemser's interviews occurred at a time when the art world's continued failure to inscribe women into its discourses required feminist intervention. What feminist art historians have shown, however, is that Nemser's editing of the material shaped the meaning of the interviews in accordance with her project to reveal discrimination and difficulty on the basis of gender. (See Vanessa Corby's analysis of Nemser's lack of interest in Eva Hesse's experience as a Jewish Holocaust child survivor.)⁷ Here is an example from Nemser's interview with British sculptor Barbara Hepworth and French Russian artist Sonia Delaunay, both from a pre-1968-feminist generation. We see so clearly Nemser's assumptions about difficulties and her feminist consciousness encountering the older artists' modernist and indifferent ways of thinking:

CINDY NEMSER You were married for thirty-three years and had four children. I find it astonishing that you could have done so much having such a large family to take care of and having so many financial difficulties.

BARBARA HEPWORTH I found it was a great inspiration to me. I have loved the family and everything to do with them. I loved the environment and the cooking. I used to cook and go in my studio. [...] I enjoyed it, you see; it was part of me.

C.N. For myself I find it very hard to work if I have my little daughter around. I usually get someone to watch her. Did your husband help? He was an artist too.

B.H. I had two husbands. Did they help? Well, of course, because they were fond of children. But we lived a life of work and the children were brought up in it, in the middle of the dust and the dirt and the paint and everything. They were just part of it. [...]

[...]

B.H. Well you need to know what you want and discipline yourself. I mean my home came first but my work was there always.

C.N. Don't you think it would have been easier for you if it hadn't been that way?

B.H. No. No, I was made that way—to incorporate family, children, and everything. I hadn't much patience with women artists trying to be women artists. At no point do I wish to be in conflict with a man or masculine thought. It doesn't enter my

⁶ Cindy Nemser, *Art Talk: Conversations with 12 Women Artists* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1975).

⁷ Vanessa Corby, *Eva Hesse: Longing, Belonging and Displacement* (London, I B Tauris, 2010).

consciousness. I think art is anonymous. It's not competitive with men. It's a complementary contribution. I've said that and I do believe it, that one does contribute to art and that's nothing to do with being male or female.⁸

CINDY NEMSER When I look in the art history books—those written up until now— I find there is very little written about women artists. Do you think that this is unfortunate?

SONIA DELAUNAY I'm against women's work being seen apart. I think I work like a man.

C.N. Do you mean that if people know you are a woman artist they tend to say of your work, "it's delicate, it's weak"—things that are not complimentary— whereas if people look at a man's work they say, "it's strong and intellectual"?

S.D. I think it's always people who say stupid things that say this. I don't believe in it and I don't think of it.

C.N. Yet respected critics have said that women are not original or innovative. I think at this point it is important for the world to know that there have been women artists who were innovators. For instance, you as much as your husband Robert Delaunay are the originator of an important art movement—Orphism.

S.D. Yes, but when we first were together I wanted to work quietly because he was very nervous. All my work was done at the same time and independently, but I didn't speak of it because I didn't take it so seriously—though it was quite serious.

C.N. In other words you didn't promote yourself. You didn't tell people what you were doing and therefore they didn't know about your accomplishments.

S.D. Yes, I didn't show—only in a very few exhibitions. Robert began the first. It was quite novel.⁹

Although Nemser may be lauded for the conversational approach she took to these interviews, in the extracts above she appears to be pushing certain issues when the responses she received did not match her expectations. Sylvester was aware of this possibility of mismatch between the interviewer and interviewee and for this reason he simply steered clear of certain interviews. He offers the following explanation for interviewing some artists and not others (besides not knowing them already): '[...] there have been artists whom I have known well and whose work I have greatly

⁸ Nemser, Cindy, *Art Talk: Conversations with 15 Women Artists. Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996) pp. 14-15.

⁹ Nemser, *Art Talk: Conversations with 15 Women Artists*, p. 31.

admired but about whom I had a feeling that my questions and their answers wouldn't connect'.¹⁰ Both the cases of Sylvester and Nemser's interviews illustrate that issues with the classic question and answer interview format arise often from the motivations and preoccupations of the interviewer. A study of the interviews conducted by Sylvester and Nemser thus reveals how potentially limiting the edited interview can be. I was, therefore, wary of the pitfalls associated with the conventional notion of qualitative interviewing, especially in an art historical context.

Another danger of employing interviews in research is that it may seem that participants will be doing all the work, as the traditional 'Question and Answer' approach often seeks to accumulate quotable statements from interviewees. Feminist sociologist, Ann Oakley has taken particular issue with certain aspects of interviewing, which she has situated as problematic in a feminist frame.¹¹ She identifies how the 'fact finding' ethos of interviewing can objectify participants and create an illusionary distance between interviewers and participants. In contrast to this, in the approach to interviewing conceptualised in my research, the *conversations* that take place between interviewer and interviewee may be seen as *co-emerging*. Interviews were planned not to occur as once-off encounters, but rather as sustained engagements that sought to build relationships, based on slight prompts, and then reflections on the first round that enabled a return to certain issues that then became important through this initial reading of the material generated. Rather than functioning as a sole editor of the resulting texts, the role of the researcher in the Grounded Theory Method coincides with the reflexivity of feminist epistemology.

The constructivist approach to Grounded Theory, as advanced by Charmaz and Bryant, places particular emphasis on how research accounts are constructed by both the researcher and the participant. Charmaz provides the following to distinguish the Constructed Grounded Theory Method from the classic Grounded Theory approach:

In the classic grounded theory works, Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering theory as emerging from data as separate from the scientific observer. Unlike their position, I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of

¹⁰ Sylvester, p. IX.

¹¹ Ann Oakley, *The Ann Oakley Reader. Gender, Women and Social Science* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2005), pp. 217-218.

the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices.¹²

In the same vein, Oakley states that,

[...] all research involves the political considerations which flow from the researcher's own identity. A feminist methodology of social science requires abandoning the mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production. Personal involvement is more than dangerous bias: it is the condition under which people come to know each other and admit others into their lives.¹³

Similarly, a feminist method of interviewing '[...] encourages and promotes a more reflexive and reciprocal approach and seeks to neutralise the hierarchical, exploitative power relations that were claimed to be inherent in the more traditional interview structure.'¹⁴ The feminist issue is thus the politics of power in the interviewer-interviewee relation.

The Constructivist Grounded Theory Method offers something in particular with regards to the situatedness of the researcher. Bryant and Charmaz are suggesting that the situatedness of the interviewer is part of the process of producing knowledge and thus must be self-reflexive. The investigator is situated and rooted. The investigator does not start with a hypothesis, but with a set of questions or interests with the aim of discovering something that can only emerge in a flow of words attended to both subjectively and by means of the process of coding which is also reflected upon. Constructivist Grounded Theory draws our attention to the fact that what we study comprises living processes in which we are all involved – myself included as the situated, embedded analyst. Because I am part of the culture in South Africa, I, as the investigator, am as much a part of the issues that I study as any participant whom I interview. I am situated and I have my own experiences of and reflections on the process. My use of a declared qualitative method tempers unacknowledged situatedness while

¹² Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 10.

¹³ Oakley, pp. 230-231.

¹⁴ UK Data Service, *Feminist interviews*. "Challenging gender inequalities in social research" (2014) <<http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/teaching-resources/interview/feminist.aspx>> [accessed 11 December 2014].

embedding the social relations within which both interviewer and interviewee live in the conversation and the analysis.

Another prominent benefit of drawing on the Grounded Theory Method for my purposes of this phase of my research touches on the matter of how participants are to be sampled. A central notion in the Grounded Theory Method's framework is its development of the notion of theoretical sampling, as I briefly mention in Chapter 2. Theoretical sampling offers a particularly relevant function with regards to undoing the effects of the Report, as it offers an approach to sampling that is, according to Charmaz, aimed more at theory construction than at achieving population representivity.¹⁵ In examining the principles of sampling for qualitative enquiry, anthropologist and nursing science specialist, Janice M. Morse gives a useful description of selecting 'an excellent participant', which she defines as follows:

An excellent participant for grounded theory is one who has been through, or observed, the experience under investigation. Participants must therefore be experts in the experience or the phenomena under investigation; they must be willing to participate, and have the time to share the necessary information; and they must be reflective, willing, and able to speak articulately about the experience.¹⁶

Instead of aiming at the objective of sampling for population controls in the research, participants for the interviews in this phase of my study were sampled not for *what they represent*, but *for what they do*. There is, therefore, a purposeful difference between the manner in which I selected participants for the interviews and the manner in which the Report achieved its sampling. Morse describes this difference succinctly:

One of the problems in qualitative inquiry is that researchers often hold *quantitative* assumptions in relation to sampling [...] Unfortunately, review boards and granting agencies sometimes expect the qualitative sample to be representative of the population using demographic quantitative criteria, such as ethnicity, gender, age, economic status, and so forth, rather than obtaining a sample with characteristics necessary for qualitative inquiry (i.e. representative of the experience). In other words, the qualitative researcher must select participants to observe or

¹⁵ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶ Janice M. Morse, 'Sampling in Grounded Theory', in *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*, ed. by Kathy Charmaz and Anthony Bryant (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore & Washington, DC: Sage, 2007), pp. 229-244 (p. 231).

interview who know the information (or have had or are having the experience) in which you are interested. This is a crucial difference. In quantitative research, the assumption is that all potential subjects in the population will know about, or have an opinion about, the research topic, and therefore a sample selected randomly will provide excellent data from a sample that is representative of the general population. When this quantitative perspective is used with a qualitative sample, researchers erroneously select their sample according to demographic criteria, rather than the conceptual/informational needs of the study.¹⁷

Having followed theoretical sampling, I spoke with people who are best able to report to me something of these experiences of gender and race. Because I am interested in these dimensions, the sample comprised mostly women and also mostly women of Colour. The oral archive I generated through interviews has been transcribed to form documents of approximately 940 pages of transcript. This scope in itself has posed some analytical challenges, to which I give some attention below.

Creating an Archive

In conducting the interviews I was testing out Constructivist Grounded Theory for its usefulness in unfolding the quantitative ‘fold’ by accessing thoughtful accounts of the experience of participants of the relations of race and gender in the South African art world. The interviews were conducted with artists, gallerists, curators and writers. A purposeful selection was thus made of participants who are functioning in the South African art world and who have demonstrated commitment, through their work and creative practices, in challenging the issues of race and gender inequality and invisibility in contemporary South Africa and specifically its art and art world.

To identify and contact potential interviewees I used the VANSAs Art Map as a point of departure.¹⁸ This resource provides information about artists, curators, museums, galleries, art schools, etc., according to a geographical map of South Africa. This resource also often contains contact information, or reference to institutional contact details of the people and

¹⁷ Morse, ‘Sampling in Grounded Theory’, pp. 231-232.

¹⁸ Visual Arts Network of South Africa, ‘Art Map South Africa’, (2015) <<http://www.vansa.co.za/research>> [accessed 13 February 2015].

entities it represents, therefore placing this information in the public domain, and making it accessible and attainable for the purposes of research. These are the participants that took part in the study:

Thenjiwe Nkosi – visual artist and curator
 Senzeni Marasela – visual artist
 Leora Farber – visual artist and academic
 Mario Pissarra – director of Africa South Art Initiative, art writer
 Lerato Shadi – performance artist
 Sharlene Khan – visual artist, art writer and academic
 Joost Bosland – co-director of Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town
 Blessing Ngobeni – visual artist
 Jean Brundrit – visual artist and academic
 Bongzi Bengu – visual artist and curator
 Penny Siopis – visual artist and academic
 Bettina Malcomess – performance artist, writer and academic
 Amita Makan – visual artist
 Sue Williamson – visual artist and writer, founder of *ArtThrob*
 online art publication
 Usha Seejarim – visual artist

I had two lengthy conversations with each participant of about one to two hours each. Below is a list of dates of the two rounds of conversations we had in chronological order per round. A full table with all interview and transcript information is included in Chapter 2, but I repeat some of this information here for ease of reference.

Round One		Round Two	
18 February 2015	Senzeni Marasela	21 May 2015	Usha Seejarim
3 March 2015	Amita Makan	26 May 2015	Joost Bosland
11 March 2015	Bettina Malcomess	29 May 2015	Mario Pissarra
13 March 2015	Usha Seejarim	30 May 2015	Jean Brundrit
14 March 2015	Thenjiwe Nkosi	1 June 2015	Amita Makan

16 March 2015	Jean Brundrit	3 June 2015	Sue Williamson
18 March 2015	Mario Pissarra	10 June 2015	Senzeni Marasela
19 March 2015	Joost Bosland	10 June 2015	Leora Farber
20 March 2015	Sue Williamson	11 June 2015	Bettina Malcomess
30 March 2015	Lerato Shadi	12 June 2015	Blessing Ngobeni
20 April 2015	Blessing Ngobeni	17 June 2015	Bongi Bengu
20 April 2015	Leora Farber	17 June 2015	Thenjiwe Nkosi
24 April 2015	Bongi Bengu	20 November 2015	Sharlene Khan
14 October 2015	Sharlene Khan	29 July 2016	Lerato Shadi
13 June 2015	Penny Siopis	16 and 23 September 2016	Penny Siopis

To put the period or ‘time’ of the interviews in perspective in relation to other material in this thesis, they took place between February 2015 and September 2016, with the bulk of them having been completed in early to mid 2015. Enwezor and Khan’s texts are both from the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the Report was published in 2010, almost a decade after Khan and Enwezor’s texts. My interviews are thus positioned as providing material in this period of 2015, half a decade after the Report came out, and almost 20 years after the appearance of Enwezor’s text.

My priorities were to explore participants’ experiences of race and gender in the South African art world. At the same time, the method for GTM interviews is not directive. Simple and open questions aim to start conversations. In Constructivist Grounded Theory Method, it is imperative to allow participants to articulate their own accounts in their own language or terms.¹⁹ I had some prompts following on a general explanation of my interest.

¹⁹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 14.

Two interviews per participant were conducted in order to allow for a sustained dialogical conversation. Initial interviews revolved around fairly general questions and sought to create the space in which participants could articulate their experiences and practices in their own way. Although I was interested in the participants' awareness of gender and race in their experiences and practices, I did not focus on direct questions about these matters in the initial interviews, but rather tried to see what surfaced from a participant's own account of their experiences, work and practices. Questions, or 'conversation-starters', during initial interviews are included as Appendix A. The interviews were quite open-ended, allowing for themes and issues to emerge. I saw my role in the interviews more as reflexive, sensitive, responsive and explorative, rather than directive. The discussions started off by asking the participants to undertake a general reflection on their work, activities and practices as well as on their thinking and experiences around these. Participants were asked to raise issues that are important to them – even if I was not asking about them directly.

As data collection and analysis happens simultaneously and iteratively in the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method approach, after the initial interviews took place, I started to transcribe the recordings and applied some general, or 'initial' open-coding to the transcripts to discern themes and topics which came out of the first conversation, which appeared pertinent and could be explored further in the second interview. The questions asked during the second round of interviews related to these emerging codes and themes that had arisen from the first round of interviews. The aim of this round was to delve deeper into the participants' awareness of what was emerging via initial coding as the major issues in the South African art world. At this stage of the interviews, I started asking more targeted questions, as is reflected in the question guide for the second round of interviews included as Appendix B. Again, the aim was to facilitate a conversation and not to be overly directive. I then transcribed these second interviews. This is a substantial work which involves close listening, transcribing not only words but some of the affective dimensions that are heard in the voice, in pauses, in changes of energy. These were noted and I wrote memos in response to what I have heard using another Grounded Theory Method – memo-writing.

There is, thus, an aesthetic dimension in the transcription of the interviews because of the nature of the difference between the text of the transcript created and the actual conversation. In the process of transcribing the interviews' audio recordings, I found that this process of turning a conversation with its rhythms and moments into words on paper almost flattened the living meanings out. The pace and emphases get lost. So even though the act of transcription aids the analysis of the interviews, one has to recognise that the transcripts are not identical or equal to the actual interviews in every sense. There was a possibility of 'listening to and coding' the interviews, which is an acceptable method in Grounded Theory coding where full transcripts are not produced. However, in trying out this method, I felt that something was lost when the complete transcript was not available. I did not want to lose the opportunity to have a 'text' and I, therefore, decided to *create texts*, in order to be able to *see the words*. The audio recordings are used to supplement the transcripts where my memory alerts me that there was something more going on in certain moments than what the transcript can reveal.

Having listened and transcribed, there is a third element: memo writing, as mentioned above, which is an initial activity on the part of the researcher in tracking impressions and early ideas. Kathy Charmaz provides the following description of memo-writing: 'Our journey through the research process takes an analytic break at this point as we stop and write informal analytic notes, commonly called memos. Memos chart, record and detail a major analytic phase of the journey'.²⁰ She continues by saying that, '[m]emo-writing is the pivotal intermediate step between data collection and drafts of papers. [...] Memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue'.²¹ Most of my work after the completion of the interviews was thus centred on generating 'text' in two forms, namely transcripts and memos.

Towards Reading the Material

As with other qualitative methods that draw on spoken interviews, Constructivist Grounded Theory works on the basis that language gives us

²⁰ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 72.

²¹ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 72.

some access to experience. The resulting ‘text’ that emerges from the transcription of the interviews is then amenable to an analysis at the level of discourse.²² Through a method of reading the transcribed oral texts, known as ‘coding’, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the researcher pays deep attention to the meaning of what people are saying that is not based on an assumption of the transparency of language, but of the textuality itself that requires a form of textual analysis of the units of meaning that are being produced. Thus recording, listening and transcribing sensitise the interviewer to the language and terms that the participants use in their accounts of what they are doing and how they understand their activities. This might be said to produce a *discourse of experience*. I have used this method of coding written texts, to a certain extent, in Chapters 1, 3 and 4.

There is, however, a significant difference between published written texts and the ‘texts’ emerging from the interviews. This difference pivots on the fact that I am implicated in these ‘texts’; I was part of the conversation. The transcripts are not authored extant texts as part of discourse in the world out there in the Foucaultian sense. What makes the ‘text’ that is generated through drawing on Constructivist Grounded Theory different from the kind of texts analysed in a Foucaultian frame, is the acknowledgement of my active role in soliciting the spoken texts and analysing them. I too am positioned in these ‘texts’ in the South African art world in terms of race and gender, and I take responsibility as a co-producer of these ‘texts’, and as such, they reverberate through me.

I also view listening as an important part of the methodology I followed in conducting the conversations. In the context of the thesis, I view this as moving from a certain kind of feminist *reading* of these texts, to a kind of feminist *listening*, which I understand in an Arendtian sense to mean that the subject is constituted by speech and action, and that this is recognised by other speaking, acting subjects. This also touches on my thinking around my position as a researcher, which is to take, in doing the interviews, a listening position. The question of the position of listening also comes out strongly in Chapters 3 and 4, where I was trying to listen to Khan

²² I am presenting ‘text’ in inverted commas to indicate the difference between the texts of the Report and of Khan and Enwezor’s articles, and the ‘text’ generated from the conversations I had, which are produced as a result of that encounter, and not structured for and presented as publication, or to form part of formal discourse in the South African art world.

and Enwezor's texts in order to say: what can we take from them? What I was thus doing with both Khan and Enwezor's texts was, more importantly, putting myself in this position of *having to listen* – to listen and to centralise the accounts that are speaking out from the legacies of the history of South Africa. This is also why one of my main strategies in the conversations was to *set up a conversation*, rather than to push an agenda. 'Listening' in the context of my research means recognising the speech in Arendtian terms. And it is not just to listen, it is to *hear* – coding becomes a way of 'hearing'.

The avatars are the abstracted, the categorised, arranged in the hierarchy and they have all this information 'pinned onto' them. The people that the avatars represent do speak – it is whether it is recognised and heard. I am moving from the avatarisation to the creation of subjects, displacing the *what* by hearing the *who*, by analysing an oral archive of participants in the South African art world. The avatars speak back.

In contrast to the abstract avatars of economically driven quantitative research such as we find in the government Report, qualitative research based on language and conversation make it possible to 'document' the subjectivity of participants. This is not a psychological or psychoanalytical sense of subjectivity, but more in keeping with Rancière, Arendt and Guaraldo's different concepts of political subjectivity. This will involve positioned and individual accounts of encountering race and gender as obstacles and seeking to transform the negative force of race and gender and find forms of creative inscription of dimensions of subjectivity that involve specificity and difference. In addition to the art historical methods that I have discussed before, which are institutional criticism, and a critique of representation – we *do* need some other sense of how agency is experienced and practised, which is something that the Constructivist Grounded Theory Method can assist us in discovering. I wanted to speak *with* people, not to interview them in terms of a hierarchy. The Grounded Theory Method offered me a way of creating the space for the participants to speak, while its concurrent process of coding allowed for the emergence of an understanding of their speech in Arendtian terms of speech and recognition. It is in this combination of two frames of a politics of aesthetics (Rancière and Arendt/Guaraldo) with a reflexive constructivist qualitative research method that I intend to make a critical contribution to art historical

methodology and to a critically feminist, post-colonial art historical practice. What people are dealing with in the South African art world is not mere dissensus and aggravation. It is about the constant work of producing the political, of *working through* in and towards the transformational democratic project.

I am thus using the Grounded Theory Method in an art historical study. I use it with historical and theoretical material as well as interpretation. GTM has proven politically necessary as a result of what I found by undertaking the analysis of the Report. I am suggesting that contemporary art history – art historical studies of the contemporary that involve working with material derived from participants in spoken form or written text – can benefit from working with this qualitative research methodology precisely in areas where we are dealing with the day-to-day processes of making art and living as an artist in a society that is incomplete in its transformation toward democracy.

Coding

Although a part of my theoretical frame is rooted in Arendt's conception of the political role of storytelling, I want to stress that my work with the interviews is not a matter of 'people having told me their stories' as this would not be sufficient to provide an analytic basis for arriving at concepts that helps us understand 'what is going on' in the South African art world. The interview process does result in statements alone. The coding process shapes those statements into ways in which the statements made in the interview process become audible as 'meaning' and their connected issues become visible. The accumulation of units of meaning and their cross-referencing to become the Code Tree (which is discussed further below and is included as Appendix C) constitutes a contribution to changing the distribution of the sensible. The 'raw' interview introduces potential concepts within a single person's narrative and responses. Once cross-coded what emerges is the pattern of significance attributed individually by each speaker now building to deliver an evidence-based analysis of the larger structures that constitute the 'South African art world' as its creative participants account how they navigate its landscape. GTM does not

produce a summary of statements but an analytical framework for *the relations between statements that reveal deeper patterns*.

By introducing the idea of coding – arguably, the heart of the Grounded Theory Method – one recognises that as people speak, they are generating self-understandings and analytic understandings; they are not necessarily, or in all instances, articulating them as such.²³ Coding is a way of reading across the accounts of these experiences in this rich resource containing levels of self-awareness or situation-awareness. It is, therefore, not a matter of people giving me their opinion, but it is by putting all this material, all these accounts, together that I can discern these patterns where something insists or repeats. By this procedure we can, across all sorts of elements of diversity, begin to identify the tension points and the major elements that comprise the landscape of participants' experiences. It is only once you put all the codes together that you realise that this variety of very different people are exhibiting similar thinking and/or behaviours.

Part and parcel of the decision to employ this method have been the questions: What if the avatars spoke back? What would it be to recognise that speech? The combination of the Guaraldian notion of storytelling – rooted in Arendtian singularity, where people are called to speech and action and are recognised by others who hear their story and return it to the speaker in that hearing – and Grounded Theory Method coding enables us to draw out meaning in the patterns of diverse and singular utterances. These patterns are, however, spoken in the first person with the sense of someone's lived life. The combination of these two frameworks does not, however, entail that the speakers are merely sharing their personal experience. GTM provides a formal methodology for finding the insistent beat of meanings that emerge in their urgency and intensity, and this is what the codes in this type of research represent: they are ways of finding these repeating units of meaning that cluster in different places.

I spend some time in later sections discussing the categories and their codes aiming to show how these comprise, flesh out and substantiate the themes or concepts. Before I move on to those discussions, I want to

²³ There are, however, what is referred to as *invivo codes* in Grounded Theory, where a participant has articulated the code that the researcher will use. For example, Usha Seejarim originally brought up the idea of 'playing the game', which I later adopted as a code. (See also Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 55–57.)

stress that, although in using the Grounded Theory Method we might not be surprised by any of the things that people say as such, it is only by doing the coding consistently across the conversations that I came to realise that the clustering and densities that I was finding are not just numerically significant. They are, I want to argue, politically significant. These concentrations reveal some of the real challenges in art making in South Africa, because the recurrence across their diversity revealed by coding raises them to a level of both significance and potential action.

My purpose has been to shift, challenge or transform the effects I identified in the Report. In order to present my findings, I have spent the few preceding chapters theorising democracy as the purpose of this transformation. This theorisation has involved understanding the Rancièrian concept of the agonistic, dissensus and the *wrong*, but also the Arendtian concept of the polis as the place of speech and recognition, which involves what might be called the personal narrative: created here by interviews. My exploration of Guaraldo's work with Arendt's thinking in the previous chapter has made it clear why it is necessary that the accounts and narratives of the actors in the South African art world should be heard.

I have repeatedly mentioned coding. This involves taking each unit of meaning in the spoken, transcribed texts and giving it a 'name', a shorthand that captures the activity: the *-ing*, gerundive words that reveal what people think, feel, do, understand, get anxious about, get angry with etc. If this thesis were only a work of qualitative social science, the interviews and their coding would constitute the entire project. Since I am evolving a critical relation between a feminist post-colonial art historical method and GTM, I have used the initial light coding to identify key 'units of meaning' that become core concepts. These have then been tested in depth against the archive. As a result, I have not focused on a complete and exhaustive coding of the massive archive in the form of fine, line-by-line coding.²⁴ Two major concepts have emerged with which the many smaller

²⁴ There are coding practices in Grounded Theory that take material line-by-line or sentence-by-sentence and code those smaller units as is demonstrated in Bryant's chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* of 2014 (Bryant, p. 130) and also in a 2008 chapter by Charmaz (Kathy Charmaz, 'Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method' in *Handbook of Emergent Methods* ed. by S.N Hesse-Bieber & P Leavy (New York: The Guilford Press, 2008) pp. 155-172 (p. 165). The sheer volume of my material has not leaned itself to this type of coding and I have rather worked with larger extracts in order to be able to traverse the expanse of the material.

codes align. They are Negotiating (what the participants identified as what they are up against: having to negotiate – the obstacles and obstructions) and Transforming (strategies for change that may involve resistance as much as positive intervention).

Interview Findings: What did I Discover?

I found that the two central issues around which the material gathered via the interviews revolved are: 1) that there are obstacles that have to be negotiated all the time, and 2) that there are actions the interviewees think would be transformative of the conditions they encounter and report in (1). Regarding ‘negotiating’, I discovered a recurring sense of what obstructs their work and change, what they have to tackle or constantly negotiate, what silences or excludes them – the things that make it difficult for them to be the kind of artists they want to be. Regarding ‘transforming’, I discovered what they think could change and what to do, even negatively, to insist on change in what they so continually have to negotiate. My key findings from this process, ‘what is going on’ in Grounded Theory Method terms, are thus, that there are obstacles that have to be negotiated (and that they are constant and varied) and that people are acting and making decisions about what it would be to transform the situation that they have to constantly negotiate.²⁵ These two key concepts – negotiation and transformation – are the distillation of a many smaller ones.

Coding in Grounded Theory does not happen at only one point in the research trajectory. Kathy Charmaz describes initial stages of coding followed by later focused coding as well as the development of concepts/themes.²⁶ Layers and stages of codes are thus at stake. Analysis and data collection also happen in interaction in this method and I have employed this notion by doing the first round of interviews and then ‘coding’ them generally for issues to explore further in the second round of interviews. Once I completed the bulk of the transcription, I continued with further initial coding from which I arrived at the concepts of *Negotiation* and *Transformation* with related categories that comprise the two larger concepts or themes. I then undertook preliminary coding to see if these

²⁵ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 80.

²⁶ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, pp. 47-48, 57-63.

concepts were indeed a fit to the material, and found, through various coding attempts, that they were. From here, I embarked on a focused coding project of the entire expanse of the 940 pages of interview material, which took roughly nine weeks to complete. During this time, I set out to group extracts from the interviews under categories with an attached code, which is a summary of the extract in the context of the category. The process I followed during this stage can also be referred to as axial coding, where one codes around a major axis – in my case the two axes of *Negotiation* and *Transformation*.²⁷ The result of this exercise is what I refer to as a Framework of Evidence, submitted as supplementary material to this thesis, and a Code Tree (Appendix C). The Framework of Evidence organised the interview extracts according to categories and codes. The Code Tree is a summary of the Framework of Evidence showing the hierarchy from codes to categories to, ultimately, themes/concepts.²⁸

The term ‘code tree’ is not something that appears in the Grounded Theory literature.²⁹ It is my way of representing the relations between the discovered concepts and the codes from which they have been distilled. The Code Tree is my intervention to make visible what the variety of conversations that were conducted amount to. It is the product of an intensely focused process of coding the transcribed interviews, by which codes name units of meaning discerned from spoken and transcribed

²⁷ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 60.

²⁸ I would like to mention a few aspects of the project’s ethics at this point. This project followed regular informed consent procedures but gave participants the option of anonymising any response at any point if they wanted their identity revealed in the study otherwise. There was also an option to be entirely anonymous in the study, but none of the participants selected this option. Part of the consent agreement was that participants would have the opportunity to review all direct quotations that will be used in the thesis. The Framework of Evidence was sent to participants for their review and final consent and they were asked, 1) if they are comfortable to be identified as the speaker of the extracts and 2) if there was any material that they wanted removed absolutely. This process was followed in the context of a decolonising South Africa and in the spirit of co-knowledge production. I am aware of my own situatedness as a ‘White’ woman in this context and the historical legacies and epistemic violences of knowledge production by White people ‘about’ people of Colour. I have aimed to rather produce knowledge *with* my participants, giving them control over the statements with which they would be associated and a chance to see how the material is shaped in the analysis. I have also tried to do this with the style of interviewing employed, which was not a fact-finding mission as discussed above, but a series of conversations that sought to open a dialogue, but also to build relationships over time. Some of the responses of participants to the interview process can be seen in the Code Tree (Appendix C) under ‘Responses to the Interview’. These make it clear that the conversations and our interactions were themselves negotiated and co-emerging.

²⁹ It does, however, correspond in some ways to what is referred to as a codebook in qualitative research – see Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London: SAGE, 2009), p. 12.

statements. The structure/appearance of this tree and the major discoveries made through the process are discussed below.

Key Findings

There is a discovery in the coding process as a methodology – people do not necessarily know that what they are experiencing individually is actually happening structurally across a range of people’s experiences. What I present here goes beyond the question of who said what (x said this, y said that, etc.). I want to bring out the larger issues that are made up of these smaller, individual statements and will look below at how the bigger concepts of *Negotiating* and *Transforming* are constituted. The Code Tree shows in detail how I arrived at the categories and which codes comprise these categories. What I now want to bring out from having this big picture are the things I believe are the most important to register.³⁰

There is a difference between quantitative research that creates categories – simple, crude oppositions – and qualitative research which discerns meaning from texts and from speech that it generated. Participants did not simply ‘tell’ me what was wrong. I aggregated my analysis from various statements as people responded to general conversation, made observations, told me stories, or gave me accounts of incidents. I am not attempting to set up as the difference between quantitative and qualitative research that the Report talked about people and me presenting them talking about themselves. Such a distinction would assume that people ‘know what they are saying’. What I present below is thus not simply that participants ‘told me there are obstacles’. I discovered in what they say by coding the units of meaning in the conversations that amount to ‘obstructions’.

Charmaz provides the following summary:

Grounded theory is introduced as an inductive, comparative methodology that provides systematic guidelines for gathering, synthesizing, analyzing, and conceptualizing qualitative data for the purpose of theory construction. [...]

³⁰ I do have to note that my analysis is just that: my reading of the material and it represents a reading amongst many possible others. Working in a Constructivist Grounded Theory Method framework, I acknowledge that someone else might look at the same material and come up with a slightly different, or completely different, reading. I have also seen that, even as I have been working on this material, I have found myself seeing more dimensions and revising certain things, but at this point, as one single reading of this archive, what I deal with here are my major conclusions and the concepts that I believe need to be put into the dialogue in the South African art world.

Objectivist grounded theory [as is seen in the work of Glaser and Strauss] assumes the reality of an external world, takes for granted a neutral observer, views categories as derived from data, and sees representation of data and subjects as non-problematic. Constructivist grounded theory places priority on the studied phenomenon over the methods of studying it, uses grounded theory strategies as tools, not as prescriptions, and acknowledges the researcher's role in interpreting data and creating categories. Techniques involved in three major grounded theory strategies are described: coding, memomaking, and theoretical sampling.³¹

In Grounded Theory Method coding and their resulting categories and themes/concept, the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning is crucial. Charmaz distinguishes between the two as follows. She defines deduction as 'a type of reasoning that starts with the general or abstract concept and reasons to specific instances'.³² In contrast, she defines induction as 'a type of reasoning that begins with the study of a range of individual cases and extrapolates patterns from them to form a conceptual category'.³³ GTM makes use of this inductive type of reasoning in coding and the creation of categories and themes/concepts. In creating theoretical concepts, namely negotiation of obstacles and strategies of transformation, I am not merely reporting what participants have told me. They did not have the concepts, but they had the details.

The matters I discuss here are what I have discovered the real issues are, whether it concerns day-to-day matters, government support, interactions with galleries, or in the expectations of the rest of the world – these constitute the detail of what it means to be an artist on the ground in contemporary South Africa. My conclusions are thus what I speak back to the Report, but they also reveal what people who are involved in the art world need to think about, which are: what participants in the art world have identified they constantly have to deal with and what they think are the strategies by which they can change or mitigate those factors.

At this point, having completed the interviews, their transcription and coding, I can situate my findings in relation to the South African art

³¹ Kathy Charmaz, 'Grounded Theory: Methodology and Theory Construction' *Science Direct and International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (2001) <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B0080430767007750?via%3Dihub> > [accessed 20 September 2019] (pp. 6396-6399).

³² Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 187.

³³ Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, p. 188.

world. On the one hand, there is the idea that there has been progress in democratising and deracialising the art world. On the other hand, there is a sense that there has not been enough progress. The Report indicates that, if we take a snapshot, the least successful in this model is the 'Black female' artist. Then there is also the notion we get from Sharlene Khan's article and the resulting fallout: if you speak up about deracialisation being incomplete, the still very White, but perhaps less exclusively masculine, institution of the art world will close its doors on you. In his article, Enwezor implies that there are still arguments about what people should or should not represent in terms of White artists and black bodies in relation to which he raises the question of: where is the black spectator – a default masculine position or one at least not nuanced by gender and sexuality.

Beyond the case of Sharlene Khan that I have picked up, and beyond Enwezor's arguments in 'Reframing the Black Subject' about the quite specific ways in which the failure of transformation has occurred, I have identified the Rancièrian *wrongs* in the South African art world that are, furthermore, represented in what participants say they have to negotiate all the time. Now that I have followed this intensive process of coding, I can take the understanding of the *wrongs* to the absolute detail of identifying the articulated experience of the artists and those around them in the art world of South Africa in relation to this sense that, it is the 'Black female' artists who are perpetually at the bottom of the hierarchy – it is the point at which gender and race come together.

One of my main research questions for this thesis has been what the place of a gender analysis is in deracialising democracy in South Africa. The Report identifies race as an axis of success or lack of success, or visibility or lack of visibility amongst its artists. It also identifies gender, but it says nothing about its transformation in its recommendations for action. Yet the Report did in its awkward way make visible the double burden of race and gender in the case of the most disadvantaged avatar: the artist who is both Black and a woman. Without unfolding the term gender into its concrete experiences and structural situations, and without seeing its intertwining with racialised disadvantage, we will not transcend the Black woman as an avatar, i.e. merely one of the categories. Being a Black African

woman, or a woman of Colour and an artist involves a very particular experiential world.

Gender clearly plays its role in Sharlene Khan's critique of White women in galleries and institutions in the art world for not having made sufficient space for Black artists and notably Black artist-women. Gender plays a role when Okwui Enwezor says that he is concerned with White women using Black women's bodies. His arguments notwithstanding, I have argued that there was at that time also a feminist discourse in which the White women he critiques were participating. I have considered these instances to underline the importance of including both gender as an axis of disadvantage and feminist theory as a critique of representation in the democratic debate in art and its institutions. The unanalysed dimension of the state of the South African art world as is evident in the Report and these instances is gender. It is named; yet it remains the *a priori* – it is the unconsidered.

I am not, however, extracting gender from race, as I argue below that they are inextricably intertwined and entangled dimensions. This is what my research has substantiated without the use of classifiers. My focus in the interviews and the coding of the texts has demonstrated the experience of participants, particularly of the Black artist-woman, but not exclusively. Much of what there is in my Code Tree is precisely where these two facets of experience in South Africa can be given experiential and complex dimensions. There is a question then: to what extent, in terms of the people I interviewed, can I argue that any of the issues that came up between the women that I interviewed implicitly require to be identified as gendered? I say gender and race are intertwined, but in what ways are these categories that I discovered indicative of racialised gender and gendered racialised experience? In terms of a once racialised and still majoritarian divided society, what comes across in what I have shown in my coding is what it is to be an artist in the art world, what it is that artists negotiate, what obstructs them as artists. Having spoken to mostly women, for reasons explained above about theoretical sampling, my interviews also show that race and gender are not just intersecting. They intertwine in such a way that artists who are women are reporting experiencing more disrespect, invalidation

and tokenisation and have to do more of the compensatory practices, and have to draw more on non-institutional forms of support for their practice.

Race and gender can be shown to be intertwined. They present obstacles. Negotiating refers to identifying what these obstacles are, the negative factors that impede work and visibility. Within this, difference and the legacies of racialisation still play a critical part, while gender is an important and determining factor. Then there are the strategies of how participants transform these factors, how they do something in those circumstances. Transforming, therefore, represents strategies for resistance or change and these are sometimes positive and sometimes negative. These are the dense and experiential accounts of how race and gender operate in the South African art world.

My overarching conclusion is that the difficulties that participants encounter are almost overwhelming. These factors appear to impact more on Black women than on White women. I was particularly interested in the ways in which women's experiences are accounted for and how that was differentiated. Overwhelmingly, interviewees have reported exclusions, expectations about their work, invisibility, lack of formal support, gallery expectations, etc. There are also various ways that the people who are using strategic resistance are largely Black women: refusing to be tokenised, for example, even at the expense of missing out on shows or platforms. Strategies of resistance are very much to do with where race is impeding them as women in a doubled sense. Strategies of resistance and change are, therefore, defiant, but they are also defensive, even sometimes to participants' disadvantage, because they have to counter, particularly, racial and gendered tokenisation as Black women. However, another one of my conclusions is that there is a defiant desire, and compulsion even, to continue to work as creative artists despite all these issues. This is my discovery: what I mean by negotiations are the obstacles, the limitations, the constant battles, what I mean by transformation is strategies, some of resistance, some of transformation some of defiance. At the heart of this coded archive is a sense that despite all, the artists feel they have to make art, they want to make art and they will continue to make art. My research makes audible and visible their sense of a real lack of formal support and the negative operation of exclusion, tokenism, disrespect, non-validation,

lack of critical writing on their work, and limited commercial avenues. These are multiply disastrous for Black artist-women.

Although *Negotiation* and *Transformation* are my big concepts, with them and their constituting codes and categories, race and gender are perpetually present, both separately and independently, and they are distributed across all these categories, but also in a category in which the participants are specifically identifying issues that relate to race and gender that are not related to other categories. I seek to show not only *that* race and gender are an issue, but also *how* this comes out across these conversations. The issue of race is omnipresent in the complaints about tokenisation and representativeness. (I was talking largely with Black artist-women, but also a number of White artist-women and some men.) Yet all groups experience this differently. *Negotiation* and *Transformation* are inflected by race and gender in ways that indicate how structurally racialised and gendered the art world in South Africa still is. Those who experience invisibilisation, disrespect, lack of support, lack of recognition, and specific gender issues in their lives are women.

The Conclusions: The Code Tree

Here is a list of each concept with its related categories, which also represents a summary of the Code Tree.³⁴

NEGOTIATING

EXPECTATIONS

MAKING WORK IN RESPONSE

EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

BEING USED/ TOKENISED

REPRESENTATION

AWARENESS OF RACE/GENDER ENTANGLEMENT

³⁴ The Code Tree is organized according to the sequence in which the interviews took place, i.e. the codes appear in the order in which they were said within each category – this is also the case with the Framework of Evidence. Having established the Code Tree and the Framework of Evidence, I now work through the material, from the point of view of what would constitute an art historically significant analysis, highlighting the things need to be drawn out. This discussion takes a slightly different form and codes and categories are not represented in a sequential or chronological way, as is the case in the Code Tree and the Framework of Evidence. Some of the categories listed above are quite dense and contain subcategories and these will be covered in my discussion below. For an explanation of the hierarchy of codes, sub categories, categories and concepts, see Saldaña, p. 12. This shows how, as one constantly works with one's material, one gains another level of analysis. The Framework of Evidence and the Code Tree thus stand as the proof of a certain set of interviews and a process – it is the evidence of using a methodology that is verifiable.

LACK OF REPRESENTATIVENESS
DISRESPECT
LACK OF FORMAL SUPPORT
LACK OF ADMINISTRATIVE/ LOGISTICAL SUPPORT
LACK OF COMPENSATION
LACK OF CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT
ISSUES WITH AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT
NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION OF ART EDUCATION
NEEDING TO GENERATE AN INCOME
NEEDING TIME AND SPACE
NOT LEARNING ABOUT THE BUSINESS SIDE OF ART IN TRAINING
GALLERY/ COMMERCIAL DYNAMICS
PLAYING THE GAME
NOT HAVING ‘MADE IT’ YET
GENERATION

TRANSFORMING

SAYING NO/ STRATEGIC REFUSAL
STRATEGIC INCLUSION
SETTING THE TERMS
INFORMAL SUPPORT
CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL NORMS AND FORMS OF THE ART
WORLD
WALKING/ BEING IN SPACE
MAKING SPACE / MAKING VISIBLE
WORKING THROUGH, REPETITION, ACCUMULATION
WORKING WITH HISTORY
MAKING WORK REGARDLESS
COMPELLED TO MAKE WORK
CREATIVE FREEDOM / IMAGINATION
PLAYING /EXPERIMENTING

GENERAL CODES

HAVING A WORK ETHIC/ WORKING CONSISTENTLY
WORKING AT A UNIVERSITY
ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
REPOSSES TO THE INTERVIEW

I now want to go back from the larger categories to the kinds of experiences to which these refer. I have narrativised some of the statements to substantiate the major concepts of the constant battles to exist as artists and the kinds of strategies that notably Black artist-women have adopted in the face of these battles.

Negotiating Obstacles: Persistent Obstructions

As mentioned above, the theme of Negotiation represents obstacles and obstruction and it is the testimony of the participants to the negative space that the Black artist-woman, especially, as avatar occupies. These are factors that silence, exclude, devalue and sabotage interviewees' careers and they point to the incomplete democratisation in the South African art world, and perhaps in the country on a larger scale in some instances. What is presented here gives the real texture and colour to the absolute reasons for why Black artist-women are so underrepresented. This is the fleshed-out substance of what appears simply as a kind of negativity in the Report, where this cannot be spoken, because the Report does not actually go down to this level of specificity. Compared to where we were at the beginning of the thesis with the Report, which indicates that Black artist-women are the poorest, the least represented, etc., I now present concrete evidence of what it is that obstructs them insofar as they are women and Black women. I have discovered how this is actually experienced in the words of Black and White women, so that there is a way in which, by virtue of interviewing both Black and White women, you can see where gender intertwine with race in such a way they are not separated out. Conceptually, this becomes important for thinking about the South African art world, because gender then becomes a way of identifying these bigger issues as they play through various situations. Compared to Transformation and some General Codes, the concept/theme of Negotiating is by far the largest concept in this material.

Expectations

Participants identify as one of the obstacles that they experience expectations about the work they do, which are pre-imposed notions of African art and the expectation to create work according to one's identity. Expectations about African art come mostly from external sources and entail European/American expectations about what art from Africa should be or look like – an external notion of Africanness that has to be conformed to. Outsiders predetermine the expectation of Africanness. Where the question of identity comes in, is that participants are expected to produce art as South Africans and as Black South Africans. Artist-women say that they get comments about the type of work they 'should' be making, especially

according to their perceived racial/gendered identity and/or politics. This expectation affects the Black artist-women in this study in particular.

There are various levels of expectations registered. Firstly, there is an assumption about what African art should look like and be like and participants are expected to conform to it on the basis of 'Africanness'. Secondly, there is a subset of expectations regarding South Africanness, i.e. that you have to show some reflection on the history and conditions of South Africa – these are also expectations from outside. Thirdly, there are expectations, which include the previous expectations but go beyond them. These are expectations about what participants should be making as African artist-women or artist-women of Colour. Fourthly, and finally, is that work engaging with feminist issues are seen to be less relevant than work engaged with post-colonial issues – which relates to my reading Okwui Enwezor's article.

That these expectations are registered mean that participants have to deal with the fact that there are pre-judgements or presumptions about what they should be doing. The weight of these expectations thus have a negative effect, because not only do they enter the equation when artists make work, but they also continue to label and categorise artists and their artistic production. Highly problematic is the idea that work that portrays a Black artist-woman's identity sells well, which infringes upon creative freedom on a larger scale.

This leads me into what I am seeking to explore in this thesis regarding the relation between gender and race. What I am talking about is not 'classic' intersectionality – that gender and race are two separate dimensions of discrimination that compound as they intersect. I rather propose the terms intertwining and entangling to argue that gender and race are inextricably intertwined, interweaved, enmeshed – threads that can be drawn out, but ultimately not separated. It is precisely in the South African art world that these things become densely entangled. Whether you are a White artist or a Black artist in this context, this issue of external expectation, or external assumptions as to what you should be doing impacts what you should do as an African artist, as an African 'woman artist', as a South African artist, etc. and places questions that are specifically to do with women's subjectivity as under the rubric that it is less relevant than

questions of the post-colonial. It is entangled. The White women are told that they must not produce feminist work; Black women are told that they must explore their identity in their work.

Therefore, as there are expectations about what African art should be, what an African woman/woman of Colour artist's art should be, and what artists should be doing because they are South African, this means that engaging with intertwined racial/gender dimensions fall prey to particular kinds of expectations and also judgements. Furthermore, certain kinds of questions that are exploring aspects of gender are seen to be less urgent than exploring critical race issues. Does feminism, therefore, get disqualified? Is it that artists are feeling policed? If you are a White woman, you should only deal with the post-colonial and not feminist issues, and yet it is the feminist issues that enable Black artists to deal with forms of women's subjectivity and sexuality that are highly contested from within some of the dominant Africanist discourses.

Making Work in Response

Connected to the expectations about the work artists are 'supposed to' make is the matter of having to respond. This is a smaller category, but here interviewees share how they are compelled to respond to things happening around them. This can be a creative force, as some mention that they produce work using anger as a motivation. But interviewees also say that the burden of having to respond can lead them in unplanned directions or even take them away from the work they really want to be doing, because they feel obligated to respond especially to issues of white domination and racism/sexism.

Exclusionary Practices

Many artists also registered various practices and processes that continue to exclude especially Black African artists and artists of Colour. This is contrary to what might be expected in contemporary South Africa, where the major drive in at least the last two decades has been to include/prioritise artists of Colour and to thereby address the racial imbalances of the past. The participants who are Black artist-women, share how *Black artist-women are often invisibilised* (rendered invisible), excluded from shows and

projects as though they do not even exist. Participants also report that *Black artists are undermined and disrespected* in general, and also that White artists continue to be privileged. On a general scale interviewees say that the *art world itself is closed off* and also that there remain *economic factors that are excluding*. One participant, who is a Black artist-woman, also reported a fear of being ‘punished’ for speaking out against these exclusionary practices.

Being Used/Tokenised

A significant category related to exclusionary practices is being used/tokenised. Black artist-women say that they are tokenised or used in various situations or projects to compensate for the otherwise unrepresentative make-up of the participating group. One participant shared that she became acutely aware of this when she received a late invitation to a project, noticing that the other participants are mostly White. Black women in this study speak out against being instrumentalised and participants often say no to this practice as will be explored later.

Representation

Representation is also one of the largest categories under the theme of Negotiation and it involves representation in terms of depiction or portrayal, i.e. in images and artworks. What came out here particularly is the anxiety or difficulty in representing people ‘who are not like you’. The density of this category shows how the issues raised by Enwezor in ‘Reframing the Black Subject’ remain contentious even today. Given the history of the discourse, which situates especially White artist-women in a contested position in ‘representing others’, it is significant that not only White participants report anxiety in the representation of others, but also almost all Black artist-women in this study are reporting a cautiousness in this regard. The problems of representing any group of which one is not a part, therefore, appears to be a widespread issue across a diversity of artists in the South African art world.

Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement

The above category identifies specific ways in which, unevenly, race and gender constitute obstacles for the participants. The largest single category I have been able to identify, even after having specified exclusion and tokenisation etc., is an insistent, if not at all unexpected, 'awareness' of race and gender entanglement which is seen in the imbalances in the South African art world.³⁵ Regarding an awareness of racial imbalance, many instances of persistence of white domination in the art world are reported and, in some cases, the role of White women in particular as upholding this structural imbalance is noted. Participants are, on the other hand, generally aware of specific issues that affect women in particular, for example issues facing artist-women who have children, having responsibilities 'as a woman', having to take care of others, or safety concerns for women related to being in unsafe places for art-making, such as photography.³⁶

It needs to be noted, however, that mostly Black women participants, but also White women, stress that race and gender are fundamentally intertwined and that these issues cannot be separated out. Participants insisted that experiences of race and gender are complicated and irreducible. There is thus a general resistance to a crude categorisation of race and gender. I have derived from this substantial category the concept of the intertwining of race and gender, which goes beyond the intersectional model as I touched on above. While Kimberlé Crenshaw's valuable work addresses political and social discrimination and demands simultaneous attention to the doubled effects of race and gender before the law and social practices, intertwining captures the particular awareness of the experience of difference in incompletely democratic societies struggling with transformation on several and even internally agonistic fronts.

Intersectionality identifies race and gender as two axes. Crenshaw indicates in her foundational article that there is legislation for sex discrimination and legislation for racial discrimination, but there is no specific legislation in the United States of America for discrimination on the

³⁵ Using the term 'awareness' is a very key Grounded Theory move, with *Awareness of Dying* being considered the founding text of Grounded Theory. See Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *Awareness of Dying* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965).

³⁶ Participants do, however, also report instances where positive change is happening especially to promote and prioritise people of colour, especial black African artists.

grounds of the point at which race and gender discrimination intersect.³⁷ A person is discriminated against as a woman and discriminated against as a Black person and these have a double effect. What I have discovered by doing this research – which is also my argument for why gender needs to be attended to – is not to bring gender in as a separate category. One of the legacies of black feminist thinking, in Britain in particular, is artist Maude Salter's concept of the 'blackwoman' used as one word.³⁸

Therefore, the reason I am using the terms 'intertwining' of 'entangling' rather than 'intersecting', is because the idea of intersectionality holds onto the categorisation that you are a woman, or you are Black, and then if you are a Black woman you get an intersection of the forces of gender and race discrimination. The term has widespread use and it was added to The Merriam-Webster dictionary in 2017, which defines intersectionality as 'the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect'.³⁹ I argue that race and gender are intertwined and entangled, not overlapping forms of political and social identity discrimination. My research shows how the figure of the Black artist-woman is being testified to in a particular way, which is not merely an overlap, or a sum of gendered and racial factors.

The Lack Cluster

I have discovered, across a number of the conversations, that participants identify major failures of the South African art world. My conclusion is that these are the lacks that the interviewees are experiencing. Participants are reporting, across the board, that certain things are absent, that these are persistent lacks and these, therefore, indicate quite clearly deficiencies in the contemporary South African art world. I refer to these categories as the lack cluster of categories, and they include Lack of Representativeness, Disrespect, Lack of Formal Support, Lack of Administrative/Logistical Support, Lack of Compensation and Lack of Critical Engagement.

³⁷ Crenshaw, pp. 141 – 145.

³⁸ Maude Salter, *Passion: Discourses on blackwomen's creativity* (Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, Urban Fox Press, 1990).

³⁹ Merriam Webster, 'Words we are watching: Intersectionality', (2017) <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/intersectionality-meaning>> [accessed 6 September 2019].

Lack of Representativeness

Participants in this study consistently reported and insisted on the need for representativeness, i.e. that shows and projects, etc. need to be representative of the demographic makeup of the South African population. The registration of this need relates to the problems of tokenism discussed above, where participants say that inclusion is based on token representation, not consistent and overall inclusion. Although the lack of representativeness is an obstacle, the fact that participants stress the need for it, counters the tendencies of tokenism. Participants are aware that more inclusion is needed. From the sheer density of this category, I would argue that representativeness is the primary notion that constitutes transformation in the minds of the participants in this study. Practically all participants indicated this desire for representativeness. There is also an awareness of the specific need for gender representativeness, but this is intertwined with the need for racial representativeness.

Disrespect

Disrespect is a category that intersects with many other categories and subcategories, for example the exclusionary practices discussed above are, on the whole, disrespectful – invisibilising Black artist-women, undermining Black artists and privileging White artists. Lack of compensation, which is discussed below, can also be said to be disrespectful at its core. Under Disrespect in the Framework of Evidence and the Code Tree, I have included instances of disrespect that do not fit into other existing categories. These can roughly be summarised under the subcategories of being ignored, being patronised and not being taken seriously. I view *Disrespect* as a larger underlying theme that runs through various categories and codes in this study – it is mostly reported by Black artist-women, but also by White artist-women.

Lack of Formal Support⁴⁰

The lack of formal support is a major issue in the South African art world. Interviewees across the board report a wide range of issues under Lack of Formal support of which one of the main features is government ignorance and mismanagement. The interviews took place before the Venice Biennial of 2015 and the government had announced the artists included in the South African pavilion very late. There were, naturally, many comments from participants about the Department of Arts and Culture's continuing Venice blunders, particularly excluding Black artist-women and always waking up at the eleventh hour.

Other issues with Lack of Formal Support that were mentioned included the dire state of South African institutions, particularly museums and the major national galleries. Artists also noted that they are now expected to put up shows themselves in lieu of institutional funding. Various issues with funders were also noted, including misadministration and unhelpful funding cycles. Participants also recognised issues with the prioritising of external validation, for example that it is difficult to show overseas without gallery support or while on residency, and also that more galleries and museums are needed locally so that artists and curators can be validated on home soil.

Another significant factor I discovered in this category is that galleries now, in lieu of formal and institutional support, are taking on what would be institutional roles. For example, the Stevenson gallery holding the follow-up show for the 2nd Johannesburg biennial, called 'Trade Routes Revisited'. Galleries are stepping in where the government and institutions fall short. This phenomenon is also connected to a Lack of Critical Engagement, which is discussed below.

⁴⁰ An example of how this method of Grounded Theory coding produces a discovery by making densities visible that are contrary to our expectations or preconceptions is the category of Lack of Formal Support. During the interviews I was aware that people were mentioning issues about the government, but my feeling was that they were 'just complaining about the government'. It was only through the coding process of going through each interview carefully with a set of developing codes and categories at hand that it became clear what a major factor the lack of government and institutional support really is to people. This category has grown into something much bigger than I imagined when I was having the conversations. Here, I want to return to my previous point that the interview itself does not give one a full sense of the landscape. It is through the coding process and seeing how codes grow and become denser that this picture forms. Even in preliminary coding, I only had a few codes under Lack of Formal Support, but the systematic analysis of the material has revealed that this is one of the densest categories under Negotiation.

Participants who are Black artist-women identify succinctly the effects of this general lack of formal support. One artist notes that people struggle and have to hustle, which affects the type of work they produce, and that it also makes people competitive. Another artist said that the lack of support overall stifles transformation. A further artist also notes the unchanged capitalist basis of the art field and given this, stresses the need for more public funding for the arts.

It is significant that while the Report, which is aimed at government and industry, interviewees highlight an overwhelming sense that there is a lack of government support, to the extent that participants see it as mismanagement. Two participants referred to the Department of Arts and Culture as a non-functioning entity. What has become of this government Report that identified the issues and was seeking to make recommendations about what should be done?

Lack of Administrative/Logistical Support⁴¹

Although this is a smaller category, interviewees report that administration sometimes takes over their art-making time. I believe this is because participants simply cannot afford to employ people to help with administration and they, therefore, end up having to do it themselves. Joost Bosland also reported major issues with logistical support for Stevenson gallery, with local service providers simply not being able to perform to the high international standard according to which Stevenson needs to operate.

Lack of Compensation

This matter has been referred to briefly above as a form of Disrespect. This is also a smaller category, but Black artist-women in this study say that they are not being compensated for the work that they do – for example, having a show and noticing that everyone has been paid except them – or that they are expected to work for free, or for ‘exposure’. It is significant that this is not reported by White artist-women or the men in this study. This does, therefore, correspond to the Report identifying Black artist-women as earning the least in relation to other groups.

⁴¹ My initial expectation was that this would be a bigger category, but it was far overshadowed by Lack of Formal Support.

Lack of Critical Engagement

This category was something I picked up in the first round of interviews and explored further with participants in the second round. It is one of the major categories of Negotiation and contains a number of subcategories. The research reveals that there is a lack of general engagement or feedback on work, and this includes everything from comments at shows to getting feedback from peers or other artists. There is also a sense that there is a lack of criticality overall because the South African art world is small (people know one another and there is self-congratulation happening), also because other structural problems overwhelm cultural politics and also because of South Africa's long-term isolation under apartheid. Problems with dialogue and misunderstanding and misrecognition are also reported by one participant.

Interviewees mention various issues with critical engagement specifically related to writing and publications. Artists say that they are not getting reviews or responses to their work, and participants note that simply not enough writing is happening and that there are too few writers and platforms. This often means that the onus for writing – about a show or one's work – falls on artists or the organisers of events themselves. This is also something that takes participants away from other things they would rather be doing. Interviewees believe that someone else should be doing the writing, but because they are not, participants are doing it themselves.

Participants also note that the writing sector is on the whole unsupported in South Africa. That writers do not make a lot of money (with there being few options to publish), as well as the related risk of offending people in art criticism, are factors that make writing unattractive as a career or a role to take up. This widespread Lack of Critical Engagement results in a gross lack of validation for South African artists. Furthermore, one artist crisply formulated the long-term effects of a lack of critical writing: that even artists who are very active during their time can fall through the cracks eventually, and she noted that Black artists, especially, are affected by this.

Issues with Audience Engagement

Problems with Audience Engagement is a smaller category, but these issues are also, to an extent, related to the general Lack of Critical Engagement considered above. Participants note issues with trying to engage an audience that does not have an art background – an issue that is related to a general lack of arts education in South Africa both under apartheid, but also in the post-1994 years. There is also a lack of a gallery/museum-going culture in South Africa.

Need for Transformation of Art Education

Under this category, which is also related to the above-noted Lack of Critical Engagement and Issues with Audience Engagement, interviewees report a general lack of art education and some also mentioned that due to this they want to be more involved in teaching. Very little art is taught in the basic/primary and secondary education system in South Africa. Art education mostly happens at university level, but here participants note the urgent need for the transformation and decolonisation of arts curricula.

Needing to Generate an Income

Interviewees report the need to have money to survive and to generate work. This need is most acute under Black artist-women, but is reported by other participants to some extent as well. A significant issue in this category is that artists often need to take on other work to supplement their income from art-making. This factor is also briefly noted by the Report as I consider below.⁴² This supplementary work also takes them away from their art practice and is, therefore, problematic in many cases. Some artists do, however, believe that their ‘day job’, like teaching at high school or university, supports their art-making and alleviates the pressure of having to make work that will sell. This category is also related to a Lack of Formal Support and to the various issues around Gallery and Commercial Dynamics described below. Because there is little governmental and institutional support and because the commercial world is difficult to negotiate, artists are, in some cases, forced to take on other work.

⁴² Human Sciences Research Council, p. 136.

Needing Time and Space

This category speaks to the issue that participants do not have enough time and/or space to make their work. I initially listed this category as a General category, i.e. being neither particularly a factor to negotiate nor a strategy to transform. As my analysis developed I saw connections between this reported lack of time/space and the Lack of Formal Support and Needing to Generate an Income considered above. These are all factors that leave artists having to fend for themselves, so to speak, and that steal away from art-making. Although the need for time and space can perhaps be considered a general issue for artists working anywhere in the world, this issue plays out in a specific way in the South African art world, given the general lack of support.

Not Learning About the Business Side of Art in Training

A crucial matter related to the above category of 'Needing to Generate an Income' is the fact that artists do not learn about the business side of art in their training. Two artists note that there is a need for training and professional practice and that this can take more prominence in the way in which artists are trained, as this will help artists to better survive. It is significant that this is stressed by artist-women of Colour.

Gallery/Commercial Dynamics⁴³

The research revealed that there are very strong expectations on the type of work that will be successful commercially. Artists are expected to work to some level of these expectations and the gallery influences the work artists make and this has real effects on the development of younger artists who are working towards establishing their own voice in their work. Artists report a lack of gallery space and that it is difficult to get into a gallery. Women, but mostly Black artist-women, account for how they continue to function without galleries and how, on the positive side, working without a gallery means their work is not influenced by the gallery and they remain

⁴³ This category is also one that I had as a general category in the beginning of my analysis. Again, as with the category of Lack of Formal Support, I was surprised by how densely this category developed as the coding process proceeded. This led me to see this category as part of the larger theme of Negotiation.

independent. It also has its drawbacks, like, for example, not being known and your work not being trusted by buyers if you are not connected to a gallery.

I have noted above how galleries are now taking on what would have been institutional roles in the South African art world. One of the participants who are represented by a gallery says that the gallery is very supportive and often goes the extra mile for their artists. This is another way in which galleries are assuming additional roles.

Playing the Game

Connected to the issues of Gallery and Commercial Dynamics above, is the idea that one needs to ‘play the game’. The game in this sense means ‘the art world’s game’, which is mostly a commercial game. Some of the things discussed under Expectations above also form part of this game – like the pressure to make work that explores your identity, because of the perception that this is more popular or sells better. Playing the game also has to do with making moves that support your career in the long term and allows you to be a player in the field. What I found striking about this category is that although there is a strong sense that there is a game, and that it needs to be played to an extent, many of the codes in this category speak to resisting the more unsavoury aspects of the game. These resistances include issues of playing with integrity or by one’s own rules or being strategic where one does participate in the game.

This notion of resistance also leads us into the matter of what participants think they can do to work at transformation of the art world – there is a resistance here. Having to play the game is a factor to be negotiated, but participants also transform this by subverting the game. Resistance is a major factor in the concept of Transformation, and it is considered in more detail below under the category of ‘Saying No/Strategic Refusal’. How interviewees challenge the art world is also considered under the ‘Transforming’ category below.

Not Having ‘Made It’ Yet

This is a category that surprised me from an early stage in the interviews. The people I invited to participate in the study are, to some extent, already established artists who have a profile in the South African art world. I mentioned before that I sampled participants based on their practices and not their demographic characteristics. This also meant that I targeted artists with more ‘known’ practices rather than emerging artists necessarily. I was astonished to sit across from an artist of the calibre of Senzeni Marasela and to hear her say her time is still to come – and to then hear other artists saying similar things.

Some of this sentiment can be attributed to a sense that their work is still developing and evolving, but some of it I attribute to a true struggle with validation for South African artists, to which many factors contribute. There is a lack of institutional support, so artists are not being validated by being taken up in museums. There is lack of gallery space, therefore, many artists have to work without galleries for long periods in their careers (some are never represented by galleries) – gallery representation remains one of the major hallmarks of success. Artists often need to generate an income, which is not related to their art-making, meaning that they are not fully engaged in their practices. There is a lack of critical engagement, so that when work does go out into the world, nothing is answering back. Furthermore, international validation is often prioritised, which involves showing overseas, which is very difficult for most South African artists to do. It is significant that it is overwhelmingly women who registered a sense that they have not made it yet.

Generation

One of the discoveries is a sense that different generations have different access. Participants report that there are different opportunities or rules for different generations of artists. Artists who have been in the field for longer say that the art world has opened up, in the sense that there are more platforms and opportunities, and that it is now easier to establish a career than in previous years. This is also a smaller category, but it resonates with a sense of the experiences of change across artists in different stages of their careers.

‘Transforming’ the Situation: Strategies for Change

The categories that follow are the most prominent ways in which the interviewees are working at transformation in the South African art world. These are strategies of resistance and change that indicate: what interviewees actually *do* in this situation and where their agency is enacted. These are things that participants are actually doing, or not doing as we shall see – as well as the ways in which participants think about bringing about change and the ways in which they carry on making their work in spite of a variety of challenges.

Saying No/Strategic Refusal

An example of a type of strategic refusal was discussed above in terms of artists resisting ‘playing the game’ according to standards they disagree with. The matter of saying no is one of the major transformative strategies in the study. Interviewees report saying no to being exploited financially, to being appropriated in any way, and especially to be instrumentalised racially, and when the circumstances or situation compromises their integrity – these are usually ethical reasons. Artists resist by saying no to situations that compromise them. The strategy of strategic refusal acts as a counterbalance to, especially, the kind of tokenisation as was discussed above. Women of Colour, particularly, refuse to be part of projects if such projects are not representative, and especially if it is clear that they are the only person of Colour included in the project.

I found it interesting that certain White women participants employ a specific brand of strategic refusal, which can be described as *stepping back*. This is when interviewees note that they say no to opportunities in order not to take up the space as a White person, or in the process of questioning their own position in the field and, therefore, the relevance of their output.

Strategic Inclusion

A strategy that is closely related to strategic refusal – refusing to be appropriated – is the practice of strategic inclusion. Under this category some interviewees share how they purposefully include people in projects to which they are invited, especially to remedy poor representativeness of the project. It is significant that interviewees are sharing space with others to be

more inclusive. One artist used the phrase ‘radical sharing’ and I think that aptly describes this practice. This category is also related to the subcategory of mentorship, which is discussed below.

Setting the Terms

By determining the terms of their engagement and participation with certain things, interviewees are taking back control in a complicated landscape. This category is, therefore, connected in this sense to Saying No and it works against exploitation and appropriation.

Informal Support

At the point where I realised what a major category the Lack of Formal Support was, I also realised that this is counterbalanced by an immense amount of informal support that participants in this study receive from partners, families, friends as well as teachers and lecturers. This appears as a kind of compensatory force in lieu of formal support, but also owing to the lack of gallery representation. The type of informal support that interviewees report act as an invisible, unpaid affective labour force in the South African art world, to make up for the failures of formal and economic structures.

Challenging the Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World

Interviewees in this study are challenging what I refer to as the traditional norms and forms of the art world in various ways. They are seeking different forms of showing work that are not traditionally exhibition-based, which is also related to reaching different audiences. They are also finding ways of challenging the economic model of the art world. Some artists say that their mere functioning in the art world is setting an example for other artists – showing that it *is* possible to be an artist. Artists of Colour employ collaboration and sharing the credit as a way to subvert the competitive nature of the art world that seeks a single art star. Some of these acts of challenging the art world amount to subverting the problematic racial norms of the art world, especially those that exclude Black artist-women. This includes showcasing the work of Black artist-women and claiming the white gallery space as a Black artist-woman.

Walking/Being in Space

A few interviewees share that they often go for walks, walk the same route daily as part of art practice or use walking as part of a ritual for making work. Although this is a minor category, it has resonance because it involves (re)claiming, using and occupying space and particularly the city. Insofar as it is reported by artists, who are using it as a dimension of their practices, 'walking' relates symbolically to claiming of space in the art world as discussed above.

Making Space/Making Visible

As was briefly mentioned above, interviewees find ways of sharing their space or collaborating. I have also mentioned that mentorship is related to Strategic Inclusion. Artists in this study report making themselves available as mentors to younger or emerging artists. This could also be seen as a type of Informal Support that is common in the South African art world. As is expected from a transformative practice, some interviewees are working to make certain things visible that are invisible otherwise – to bring certain issues to light. I found it interesting that under the category of 'Making Space/Making Visible' some artists are also making space for the viewer's own reading or interpretation of their artwork.

Working Through, Repetition, Accumulation

Women in this study report revisiting the same sites or spaces, and accumulating large quantities of specific materials for work. For me this repetition and accumulation represents a 'working-through' through the process of art making – an understanding of something that is built up over time and through amassing objects.

Working with History

This is a well-known characteristic of transformative practices in the contemporary art world: attending the wound, re-writing, or re-imagining history. History is one of the main issues that are being worked-through. Under this category participants report a sense of having to recover lost history, or re-inscribe history and also indeed re-write history. There is a sense that participants are trying to work out 'their part in all of this' with

attention being paid particularly to family history. White interviewees are also questioning their position in South African history as White people.

Making Work Regardless

The overall Lack of Formal Support and limited commercial avenues leave South African artists with few options. It also results in having to take on extra work to generate an income and not having time/space. It is, however, remarkable that given the weight of these issues, artists are *Making their Work Regardless*. I have already mentioned that some artists proceed without gallery representation, and under this category there are multiple examples of how interviewees who are women have simply ‘pushed through’. One artist noted that there is so little support that it is miraculous that anyone manages to stay in the field, also noting that this lack of support stifles creativity. In contrast to this, another artist reports that the lack of formal support results in resilience and independence – artists make what they like.

The Inner Drive Cluster

What follows below is a cluster of categories that speak to *how* interviewees continue to make their work against the odds: being Compelled to Make Work, Creative Freedom/Imagination and Playing/Experimenting. I originally classed these codes as General Codes, but taking into account the enormous challenges that participants report facing, I believe these inner drives and compulsions should be included as transformative practices. Aside from their strategies of resisting and the support they get from the people around them, there is something inside the interviewees that makes them still do this, and that strikes me as significant.

The inner drive cluster is where the Guaraldian/Arendtian notion of the plurality of singularities comes in. It speaks back to the expectations. The expectation of Africanness, for example, imposed from outside and even in a nationalist sense from inside, forms limits to the exploration of subjectivities that are complexly formed in race, gender and sexuality. The inner drive cluster is important, because it is the point at which, as artists, participants claim the right to the creative, the imaginative and the singular.

This is the production of the plurality of the singular in contrast to all these aspects accounted for here that are regulatory.

Compelled to Make Work

The inner drive to make work that artists report is remarkable. Some report getting immense joy from work, and some being almost ‘compelled to make art’. A few artists even shared that something is not right or missing when they are not making work – some even saying they feel physically not well when they are not making art. This inner compulsion stands in the face of great challenges as have been considered so far, and results in artists continuing their work in spite and regardless of challenges – because they just *have to* make art.

Creative Freedom/Imagination

It is significant that given the freight of the Expectations and constraints experienced by South African artists, interviewees in this study place high value on creative freedom and imagination. These are some of the subcategories I discerned in this category: freedom, creativity, seeing possibilities, imagination, self-expression (following own interests) and the freedom to work in different mediums or different visual languages.

Playing/Experimenting

The final category in this ‘inner drive cluster’ speaks to the importance of playing and experimenting in one’s art practice. Interviewees highlight trying things out, exploring and a sense of openness in the creative process. It is the single most important element of artistic practice that is most threatened by the economic and industrial model. It signifies the battle against the increasing regulation of the arts. In one sense this is the critical dimension of transformation, despite all these things that participants have to negotiate, all these obstacles and all the things that are lacking to support their work, the determined resilience in being creative is clear. It is the claim for everything that is not prescriptive. It answers back to being expected to make art of a certain kind and being made to be representative. It also speaks to the whole ethos of the Report that considers: why should we support the arts and its industry, why should we invest in it, and what the

government should do to make it internationally competitive and recognised. All this instrumentalisation of art does not cherish that, at the centre of making art, what makes any of it possible, is freedom of creativity.

The Intertwining of the Threads of Difference

South Africa, as a majoritarian African society *continues* to contain wrongs, wounds and *mésentente*. If in the Rancièrian sense the unspoken speaks, then at that point you have all these new possibilities. Nevertheless, even if we have a world in which the majority of artists should be free to do what they want to do as artists, there are expectations that they have to *be* ‘African’ or that they have to represent something. The democratic struggle plays out in individuals who tell their stories – the Arendtian sense of a plurality of singularities. So it has to be spoken that this is agonistic, but it is also by naming these things that we begin to understand what the transformations are. This is about the production of a democratic South Africa. Artists speak back to the persistent fixities. Zanele Muholi, for example, represents a certain kind of African femininity – a lesbian and trans-femininity – that is completely disowned by the vast majority of Black Africans.

In the beginning of the thesis I reveal the categorisation of race and gender as the production of the avatars by the Report. Intersectionality stands as an originally legal and now socio-economic and political analysis of undoing the *wrong* of where race and gender intersect. What I have discovered by my use of the Grounded Theory Method and the interviews is that a different concept, the intertwining of gender and race, has to be grasped as it plays out in specific instances. A major discovery that came across from reading my material is that the interviewees have pointed to precise examples of how the experience of the intertwining of gender and race is articulated. It is when you get a late invitation; it is when you are told that using your identity in your work will help it to sell, etc. This is really giving us the bones. I answered the Report by indicating: this is what was invisible; this is *why* Black women are ‘at the bottom’. The overall impression is that the obstacles are more overwhelming than the possibilities of transformation, and the transformation is also in some sense defensive, and even in some cases to their disadvantage.

Therefore, rather than a sociological concept of the art world, composed of all these different elements interacting (e.g. Becker's symbolic interactionism), lived experience is in rounded relation to what it is to have an artistic practice. It is the texture of people's experience that remains vivid. Race and gender are inseparable, but they are not identical. I have unfolded the fold, but I have not in turn re-imposed classification.

Before I move on to the concluding part of this chapter, I want to note that there is, of course, much more in the 940 pages of interview transcript to be analysed than what I have done here. This has been a preliminary report. There is more to be done to explore this archive and perhaps also an option of doing more extensive interviews as a methodology. The question towards the end of this chapter is how has what I have done contributed to the feminist post-colonial project that I mention in Chapter 2? Is the feminist post-colonial approach exactly to do with the language we use not to get stuck in race and gender as categories? I have discovered that participants are acutely aware of the intertwining of these aspects of situatedness and disadvantage. The feminist project involves women claiming the right to explore who and what they are in their own terms – playing and experimenting, saying what they want. At the same time the obstruction, the blindness, the invisibilisation, the non-recognition all need to be overcome. Transformation cannot be attained – as indeed it has not – in the terms the Report suggests: that there needs to be more Black artist-women and they need to earn more money. Transformation will come about when the culture itself is internally transformed by the plurality of singularity, so that people get to speak and be heard in their own lives. Transformation is not about artists in their identity as Black women, or White women, or Black men, or White men – being trapped in those nominations and categories. It is that as *artists* they wish to speak with and from the complexity of their experience, which is historical, personal and creative.

I would like to take a moment to relate some of my findings to those of the Report. Extract 19, as it appears in Chapter 1, includes a graph titled: 'Enabling Factors (Gender)'.⁴⁴ Here the Report highlights the fact that men said that their talent is the main enabling factor in their careers, whereas

⁴⁴ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 133.

women said that their determination and resourcefulness is the most determining factor. This relates to what I have found in terms of the Inner Drive Cluster above. In the beginning, my general interpretation of the Report was that it creates the avatars, but behind it in the detail of certain aspects of the Report there are statements about how people understand their situation that have sharp gendered differentials. The questionnaire did ask participants for opinions about their situation. These types of statements were, however, not collected qualitatively. These were predetermined options on the questionnaire that participants could select. It is important that the Report did try to capture some of these aspects. Even though gender was a sharp differential with regard to 'Enabling Factors', they made very little of the different ways in which men and women experience the art world. In the conclusion of Chapter 1, I point out that gender is not taken up whatsoever in the Report's recommendations even though it is present in the data that people are dealing with the world differently.

The amount of time that people can spend on their art practice is the subject of Extract 20 under 'Division of Time'.⁴⁵ Women in general in the study spend 43% of their time on their practice, slightly less than men who spend 48% of their time on their practice. This is not a large difference, but the Report then indicates that 47% of Black women said that they could only spend 25% of their time on their practice. The Report cites the need to earn a supplementary income and domestic responsibilities (for women especially) as the main reasons why artists who spend less than 50% of their time on their core creative work cannot devote more of their time to their practice. There is a clear correlation here between these findings and my findings in the categories of 'Needing Time and Space' and 'Needing to Generate an Income'. The Report can, therefore, provide this information, but it cannot say *why* artists experience this, except in very basic terms, like that women have more domestic responsibilities. My research has made it clear that the matter is much more complex than this.

Going back to the example of 'Enabling Factors' above, I want to highlight the limitations of the Report's text. On the questionnaire, artists were asked to rate given enabling factors from most important to least important, for example: training, talent, determination, education, etc. These

⁴⁵ Human Sciences Research Council, p. 136.

options were, although relevant, predetermined. They were not open and the questionnaire, therefore, does not discover something from participants' own accounts of experiences of these factors. What the questionnaire gathered is then also analysed quantitatively, giving percentages and figures, etc.

Where the Report may *touch* on certain issues, my methodology has shown that the information provided by the Report is developed and modified qualitatively with a range of participants' own accounts. This is the difference between arriving at percentages of people who think one factor is more important than another, and deriving an understanding of the situation of artistic practice in South Africa from a certain density that comes from spontaneous and undetermined repetition by the participants themselves across various conversations and statements. That is the difference between quantitative and qualitative enquiry in the context of my research. In one sense we would be surprised if the interviews had not also discovered some of the things found in the Report. The difference lies in the contrast of percentages calculated from the number of responses to predetermined questions, to an open solicitation of accounts in which knowledge is derived in a more Arendtian way. The coding allows me to produce a density that is not numerically based in terms of percentages and statistics.

Categories, Avatars, Agents and Entanglements: Reflections on Method and Situatedness

The difficulty with gender and race politics is that they must necessarily be reductive about matters that are much more complex psychically – and aesthetically too.
Penny Siopis in conversation with Gerrit Olivier⁴⁶

At this point I would like to clarify the simultaneous employing and undoing of gender and racial categories in this thesis. By doing so I would like to distinguish between categories created in the discourse of power such as the government Report – constituted by crude definitions and quantitative methodologies and political identifications – and self-namings in the

⁴⁶ Olivier, Penny Siopis. *Time and Again*, pp. 66-67.

struggle against racism and sexism. To define race and gender in terms of statistical classification alone, is to deny the radical politicisation of these terms across a range of resistance and liberation movements. Feminism and anti-racism or postcolonial discourses use gender in multiple senses: In Joan Scott's sense it is a category for analysis but it is also composed of subjectively lived and political resisted experience.⁴⁷ To silence the agnostic and transformative significations of race and gender by ceding them only to the racist regime would be senseless. Yet the point I argue in Chapter 1 is to insist that apartheid categorisation is persisting under the guise of social science research. In the subsequent chapters I track the usage of gendered and racial terms in texts by critical curators and artists, and then in the vocabulary of my interviewees, registering precisely the ways in which these terms are being used by actors in the field.

In the introduction to his 2017 collection of essays, Ashraf Jamal clarifies his use of the category of 'South African art' with the following:

While informed by their place of birth, the work of these artists is not wholly framed thereby. Rather, after Jacques Derrida [...] this collection acknowledges the *necessity yet inadequacy of categorisation* [my emphasis]. For as Derrida notes, 'signifiers' are the constraints of 'our language'. Since they 'offer nothing better' they must be placed 'under erasure'. 'Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since the word is necessary, it remains legible' – for all declarations carry their estranging ghost.⁴⁸

In the matter of this chapter's title, I am trying to invoke, through an intertextual play on words, the legacy of postcolonial and epistemologically transformative scholarship, such as *The Empire Writes Back* edited in 1989 by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin that in turn plays on the 1980 *Star Wars* title, *The Empire Strikes Back*.⁴⁹ The title 'The Avatars Speak Back', is thus intended to operate paradoxically. As we have seen in the Report, avatars are conceptually non-speaking subjects; they are figures of representation. My theorisation of the agent in this thesis, on the other hand, rests on notions of Arendtian singularity, of 'whos' as opposed to 'whats', whos who speak from complex situations in personal histories and

⁴⁷ Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis'.

⁴⁸ Jamal, *In the World*, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds, *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989).

are situated in national and geopolitical spaces. Speaking from these situations and spaces, even when ‘speaking as a...’ does not, however, make one an avatar.

Hannah Arendt’s distinction between a ‘who’ and a ‘what’ was explored in depth in the previous chapter. The distinction Arendt makes is precisely the difference between a speaking subject whose words and actions are heard and recognised in the sphere of action (that is quite specific, the political arenas) and one who is not sensed or ‘sensible’ (in Rancière’s sense). Furthermore, the ‘who’, as a speaking subject, does not merely speak for the sake of speaking, but speaks into a sphere of (anticipated) recognition. This Arendt defines as constituting *the political* and it is hence the site of transformation, change and elective action. There is thus no slippage possible between avatars (whats) and agents (whos). They are two very different types of conceptual *representations* of people.

In Chapter 1 with my reading of the Report, I identify the use of these types of categories in the Report as problematic, yet then these terms like ‘black’ and ‘white’ and ‘man’ and ‘woman’ appear in various places across this thesis. I have pointed out earlier that I do not evoke these categories uncritically and here, after the discussion of the main findings from the conversations with participants and my coding thereof, I want to return to the question of what constitutes an *avatar* in the context of this thesis, as opposed to an *agent*.

My initial problematisation of these categories and my then later use of them, for specific reasons that I will touch on below, may seem paradoxical. How can we say that these categories are limiting and should no longer be imposed on people and then also use them to discuss people’s experiences? The problem and the paradox here initially boil down to the question of what it is to name a problem. We need to undo these categories and they are indeed undone in art practices, literature etc. In some cases, however, it remains necessary to conjure them for strategic purposes. While categories cannot contain people, analysing their use critically can give us a basis for understanding various grounds for discrimination that still exist today.

In an earlier draft of this thesis, I undertook to stop using categories similar to those constructed in the Report for the remainder of the thesis. I

was attempting to, at no point, reproduce in my writing the notion of a 'white man', a 'white woman', a 'black man' and a 'black woman'. I soon found this to be very difficult as indeed these terms were taken up in the second set of analyses I conducted on Khan and Enwezor's texts. When the interviews were conducted and as I transcribed them, it was also clear that participants – of all demographic backgrounds – were using these terms readily in their utterances, like 'black woman', 'women of colour', 'white man' and 'white woman'. At this point, realising that this is a practice in speaking about the self and the art world for my participants, I abandoned my resolve to not 'participate' in these terms, as it was clear that the people in this study had a particular, albeit, critical relationship to them.

These terms also have a specific history in South Africa as the root of the trauma, but also in the last two decades as the basis of redress. It is almost impossible to identify the persistent problems of race and gender without deploying these terms in some way. This is, of course, a much wider debate and I will not attempt to represent this larger discourse here, but I want to offer a few reflections on how this issue figured in my thesis. I need to highlight the difference between when these categories are used in a problematic way, such as in the Report, and when they are used in a politically strategic way, as Khan and Enwezor do and as the participants also demonstrate.

In the second conversation I had with Senzeni Marasela, she brought up the VANSAs/HSRC Report saying that it shows: 'how White males, right on top of the feeding chain, then there's a lot of gaps, then it's White females, then it's Black males and *right* at the bottom [smiles] it's Black females... I guess it mirrors how society functions. [...] and in business they, did a, also a survey which suggested that White women benefitted more from affirmative action than *any* other group.'⁵⁰ Following from this, I then asked her the following: 'I mean, how does it make you feel to see that report of VANSAs... and to get this sense of... Black women are right at the bottom? I mean do you [...] feel that is a fair... representation of... Black women? Because, I mean there are many Black women are very successful

⁵⁰ Quotations in this section are taken from Senzeni Marasela's second Interview from pp. 48-48 of the transcript.

careers and are doing wonderfully... in the contemporary [scene]’.⁵¹ Cutting me off, and rightly so, Marasela answered simply: ‘They’re in a minority. They’re in an *absolute* minority. But it actually, but it mirrors what is happening in other careers as well’.⁵²

What collides in our exchange here is the attempt to draw out Black women as excellent in the contemporary field, and that they are, therefore, not ‘at the bottom’ in terms of their achievements as artists, and the stark reality that there are just so very few Black women in the field to begin with. None of this can be said without a sense of ‘black woman’, but ‘black woman’ here is not an avatar as in the Report, but rather a politically activated subject. I have mentioned Spivak’s notion of strategic essentialism in the Introduction and that applies pertinently to the issues discussed here. In an interview in 1985 with Elizabeth Grosz, Spivak states the following:

I think we have to choose again strategically, not universal discourse but essentialist discourse. I think that since as a deconstructivist – see, I just took a label upon myself – I cannot in fact clean my hands and say I am specific. In fact I must say that I am an essentialist from time to time. There is, for example, a genitalist essentialism in anti-sexist work today. [...] I really think that, given all that I have said about strategic choices of essentialism and so on, the irreducible but impossible task is to preserve the discontinuities within the discourses of feminism, marxism and deconstruction.⁵³

By undoing categories, the aim is not to disappear difference and strategic essentialist tactics should be viewed in the context of their time and within the trajectories of redress and transformation. This thesis has sought to draw out the texture of these entanglements.

In naming this chapter ‘The Avatars Speak Back’ I do not intend to imply that avatars who simply speak are agents. Avatars and agents are not collapsible entities in this thesis. The avatar, as a representational construction, cannot *become* an agent because it is epistemologically frozen – to use Guaraldo’s image from the previous chapter. The concept of an avatar, as developed at the beginning of the thesis, is a fixed entity – we have ‘black women’, ‘black men’, ‘white women’ and ‘white men’ as

⁵¹ Senzeni Marasela Interview 2, p. 48.

⁵² Senzeni Marasela Interview 2, p. 49.

⁵³ Elizabeth Grosz, ‘Criticism, Feminism and the Institution. An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’, *Thesis Eleven*, 10-11.1 (1985), 175-187 (p. 183, 187).

avatars, because they are place-holders in the Report for larger heterogeneous groups and stand as a sequence of binaries. The avatars are set up as two sets of race/gender oppositions and these are quantifiably calculated as avatars of income, professionalisation, visibility, etc. The avatar is thus a fiction created in a quantitative sociological discourse. What I am naming an agent is constituted in and through narrative of the self. In his chapter in *Visual Century*, Andries Oliphant states the following of the nature of representation in 'science', which I believe is often lost sight of when quantitative data is involved:

After all, what scientists represent as knowledge of, say, the origins of the universe, is not the Big Bang itself, but theoretical models and mathematical simulations. Much of this is metaphorical given that scientific models are mathematical or other visual representations of physical phenomena or reality, and not the phenomena or reality themselves.⁵⁴

Interviews and their findings are, of course, also a particular type of representation – used here as texts in a method that leads to new theorisation – but I wanted to highlight the particularly constructed nature of quantitative research in this context in light of the fact that it is more readily accepted as 'fact' or 'hard evidence' and is, therefore, less likely to be subjected to analysis.

I have also hinted in the Introduction that I believe that the crux of exploring and constructing the non-avatarial lies in the Grounded Theory Method. The Grounded Theory Method allows me to collect the speech of my interviewees as a means of exploring how people understand their worlds and are acting in their own complex and varied situations and so doing to work towards the undoing of their avatarisation in the Report as the passive bearers or signifiers of statistical positions. The Constructivist Grounded Theory Method enables me to build up, through coding and interpretative analysis of the *words* and *actions* of subjects and agents in the art world, how they are negotiating the obstacles in a racist and sexist capitalist society while attempting creatively to transform their situations against quantitative

⁵⁴ Andries Oliphant, 'Imagined futures: Some New Trends in South African Art' in *Visual Century. South African Art in Context. Volume 4: 1990 – 2007*, ed. by Thembinkosi Goniwe, Mario Pissarra and Mandisi Majavu (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2011), pp.177-189 (p. 187).

statistics, which produce avatars. ‘Avatar’ is used to identify figures created in positivist statistical research methods as the passive bearers of statistical information. Grounded Theory is a qualitative research method by which to substantiate the entanglement of race and gender in the contemporary art world by speaking with people about their perceptions of their situations, their strategies, their experiences, their self- and situated understanding. ‘Entanglement’ is preferred in this thesis over ‘intersectional’, as it offers a much more beautifully (and tragically) messy image as Sarah Nuttall has argued in her book of that title as ‘a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with: it speaks of an intimacy gained even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or a set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness’.⁵⁵

In this research, I have recognised that it is not enough to counter a variety of singular accounts to quantitative, statistical avatar-making (these place-holders) – because we need to *learn* something from what people reveal about their worlds in the words and phrases they use. That is why I have used this particular qualitative methodology to undo the presumedness of Blackness, Whiteness, masculinity and femininity that are embedded in the avatar as a label. Through this method we ground understanding of race and gender in the analysis of speech (and action reported through speech).

This is one of the crucial aspects that GTM offers the researcher: its premise is the discovery or building of a conceptual theorisation grounded in the experience as it is articulated in the words people offer in accounting for and reflecting on their experience. In such a process and research model, those interviewed are agents in the sense that they are actors in the world and they give accounts of the world and their actions, in ways that are not, however, theorised or conceptualised. My work arises, as the researcher, not in reproducing words verbatim, but in systematically respecting the fold of language and subjectivity, language and the political, through close and repeated coding of the complexity even in what appears as informal dialogue in an interview. GTM assumes complexity in social experience and processes, and complexity in the language in which it is indirectly

⁵⁵ Nuttall, *Entanglement*, p. 1.

articulated. This is also why I am weary of the idea of ‘granting agency’, or ‘giving people a voice’ in this research. People always already have a voice, but we need qualitative methods that enable us to understand what is being said.

Whereas the avatars become place-holders for the unexamined appellations of ‘Blackness’, ‘Whiteness’, ‘masculinity’, and ‘femininity’, Grounded Theory enables me to engage with the actors in their situation and in the language by which they give accounts of what they have experienced and what they are doing. I want to stress, however, that there is a deeper level that emerges through the use of Grounded Theory. As mentioned before, it is not itself sufficient to counter the self-given account, the interview, to the statistics of the Report. That could easily regress into a mere mirror game. Grounded Theory (as a specific method) enables us to analyse the units and meaning in the language in which people speak of what they are doing and experiencing in order to ground theorisation of how race/gender works in the contemporary South African art world in the substantive actuality of social experience as it is spoken by the actor. Coding is followed by analytical distillation of denser codes until concepts emerge.

The avatar is a socio-economic category, and it is a reality into which individuals bump up in terms of the unfinished process of the transformation. As participants have spoken to me in the interviews, they have identified the places where, as South Africans of colour, they come up against negative interpellation (to borrow from Althusser), where they are hailed or collected under categories, not as subjects.⁵⁶ In their account of their experiences, participants reveal how they navigate the conundrum and they acknowledge that their experiences rub up against the ways the world categorises them and, therefore, receives, or fails to receive them. This is evident in, for example, Senzeni Marasela’s practice of performing the embodiment of a particular rural African womanhood as it negotiates the city that it is out of time, as she re-inhabits a woman of her mother’s generation and places it in the present. As she does so, this particular rural African womanhood clashes with the cosmopolitan, post-apartheid nodes

⁵⁶ Louis Althusser, ‘Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)’, in *Media Studies: KeyWorks. Second Edition*, ed. by Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 80-86 (pp. 84-85).

and spaces it encounters – the waiter at the restaurant, the guy behind the counter in the grocery store, the tourists at the park, the dismissive art collector at the art fair (as recounted before and as will be seen in the scenarios that conclude this chapter). The extent of this clash *makes* questions of gendered/raced subjectivity the very topic of her work and puts them at the heart of the very questions that she is posing through her practice.

As an artist engaged, at the time, in a continuous performance practice, she lived these negotiations every day. Her experiences lay bare the devastating and limiting effects of externally imposed categorisation, which is, as we have seen from her stories, always there and can be enacted by anybody, for example the guard at the gate who refuses her entry into an art space based on her appearance. Concepts of what can and cannot pass are so enacted and her art practice itself is where she is living it, making it visible and calling it to attention.

Participants also provided accounts of their strategies. They negotiate these categories in their starkest forms by saying no. They refuse the point at which they are being classified as ‘Black women’ in a token sense, because they wish to be present in a way determined by themselves through their practices – an Arendtian practice of speech. Through these reflections I am trying to tease out the difference between the point where race/gender has become a category and the point where that is being resisted and it becomes a textured social subjectivity, actively being negotiated. Through coding I have arrived at two key concepts: transforming and negotiating. In the light of this expansion of the meaning of the title of this chapter that oddly conjoins voiceless avatars with speaking agency, I can suggest that transforming captures the practices of transforming the categorical, political, legal, economic definition of a subject *by* race and gender while negotiation marks the active strategies of resistance and transformation. Negotiations can be transformative, just as transformation may involve negotiations.

The whole of the apartheid system enacted a massively differential and oppressive categorisation of persons and this avatarian imaginary persists as its dark legacy. For it to be undone, it cannot be wished away, because these terms are now, from within feminist and decolonising

movements, occupied by self-defining strategies which are both creative and/or resistant. Political subjectivities are strategic in this sense. The interrogation of feminism from the position of non-white subjects and people who are not part of the privileged middle class or heterosexual, has been to ‘speak as...’, thereby (re)claiming a position and speaking from it for strategic purposes. Through this section of this chapter I am attempting to sketch out a complex interplay that cuts across this thesis between the problematic nature of any kind of identity category and Spivak’s notion of strategic essentialism – that there are times in which you have to ‘speak as’ (which is often a tactical ‘speaking back to’ the oppressive regime or discourse) – as well as the much deeper sense of the need to elaborate difference. For instance, how can we talk about Zaneli Muholi’s practice without delving into lesbian and trans culture in relation to Blackness in South Africa? She is *speaking to* traditional African society’s inability to recognise homosexuality. It is a central feminist and decolonial issue that we are still at the stage when we have to negotiate categories, but we also wish to elaborate how in a given historical moment, and for the foreseeable future, self-determination, as a Black woman, as part of what you say or speak, is part of the act of *speaking back* to the complexity with this society. Part of that may be to refuse being labelled, for example saying no to tokenism, because of the nature of the fact that it is insulting to the complexity that these artists are trying to put forward. Participants are refusing the policing, the external categorisation, the negative interpellation, and they are elaborating difference, thereby extending the distribution of the sensible, not only in terms of who is visible but also what can be said.

The question of my situatedness in the research as explored in the Introduction is also contained in the methodology and what the method offers as opposed to what the Report’s effects are. The Constructivist Grounded Theory Method operates within a paradigm that acknowledges that research is never objective or neutral in any ‘real’ sense. This does, however, not mean that we should not work at recognising and overcoming our own biases and privileges in our research. Grounded Theory can become part of feminist epistemology in the sense that we understand that

there is no knowing in which the subject is not already incorporated.⁵⁷ As a result, one needs to have ethical as well as political reflexivity in conducting research.

Such reflexivity has played a major role in the way in which I went about the actual exchanges by which I solicited the interviews, and in speaking with participants, responding to people, etc. I tried to place a political and ethical sensitivity regarding the postapartheid situation and my position as a White person in relation to persons of colour at the centre of this process. The project itself a contribution to an understanding of the entanglement of race and gender, but it was also aimed at ensuring that gender was not made invisible in the enormous project of deracialising post-apartheid South Africa. As a feminist researcher, I am also a White woman from a specific community. The object of analysis, the art world, created a common territory through which to pose questions about how that world was being lived if gender was also included in the transformation processes.

This can, however, never be a matter of mere sensitivity or reflexivity, but clearly involves political ethical attention of the highest order as a situated and imbricated researcher. The point of using GTM is that it acknowledges the inevitable role of the researcher in the analysis of results while presenting the researcher with the monumental archive of multifarious individual life-worlds, stories, experiences, analyses and strategies that themselves play off against each other's situatedness in terms of race, gender, class, sexuality.

In certain ways, the processes of the interviews also bumped up against categories. Some invited participants did not agree to be interviewed and, therefore, did not form part of the study. Some cited time restraints as a barrier to participation, others were sceptical of the interrogatory ethos of an interview and with some communication simply dwindled over time. I am not blind to the fact that my Whiteness must have also been a deterring factor for persons of colour invited to this research, but such caution, given the legacies of epistemic violence in South Africa, is justified.

⁵⁷ There is a Chapter dedicated to Grounded theory in the Handbook of Feminist Research of 2012, alongside chapters on qualitative interviewing and situational analysis. See Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, ed., *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2012).

Given the enormous freight of this history that I am myself embedded in, how can I, as a White feminist art historian, talk with or of Black women artists? The more important question is, how can I not? By not researching and writing about artist women of colour, I would contribute to rendering their practices invisible. All artists need committed art historians who are grappling with their work to add to a sustained discourse of their practices. I proceed towards this kind of contribution against the risk of inevitable misunderstanding or misrecognition. During my second conversation with Joost Bosland, he pointed out that there is very little writing happening in the South African art world from any demographic.⁵⁸ In this light, the question of *who* is writing almost becomes a moot point. Given the lack of critical discursive support in the South African art field, which is also prominently revealed in this study, when art historians and writers do not write because of ‘what’ they are, it is counter-productive and it eventually impacts the field negatively.

I, therefore, agree with Penny Siopis when Gerrit Olivier asks her about how she deals with the dangers in representing ‘the other’ in her work. Siopis replies:

One can’t avoid the risk. The way you work might lessen the risk – but even that can be interpreted differently. I signify white, the colonial. You can’t extricate yourself from your social world and the conventions and values that are part of it. But you can’t turn away from that world either – at least I can’t. It’s part of me and part of my consciousness.⁵⁹

I, therefore, take on this risk, knowing that the alternative of doing research that only reflects my own identity, as for instance on art by White Afrikaans women – although it has a place – does not, at this stage, make the type of contribution to the transformation of the South African art world on the broader scale that I would like to make (although more stories of how Afrikaans people see themselves fitting into the postapartheid picture would certainly contribute to the discourse).

GTM as a methodology is, I am arguing, politically relevant to the situation in South Africa, because the interviewer is self-critically acknowledging that they have a role in the process of co-producing new knowledge. Grounded Theory interviews are distinct. Questions are open

⁵⁸ Joost Bosland, Interview 2, p. 23.

⁵⁹ Olivier, Penny Siopis. *Time and Again*, pp. 66-67.

invitations to speak creating a new oral archive determined by the speaker. At the same time GTM generates a reflexive, self-critical methodology that analyses language as the only access to the self-understanding – or lack of it – of the speaker in terms of their own experience and action.

Furthermore, on an ethical front, as a scholar I take responsibility, in an academically and politically self-critical manner, for the coding and the interpretation of the texts my interviewees and I created. The evaluation of the analysis, which is clearly but one person's discovery of certain codes in an archive unexhausted by this analysis, is to be tested by its usefulness and resonance, in addition to its rigour and its originality.⁶⁰

The difference between the avatar and the speaking subject might be located, therefore, as the difference between the quantitative sociology (that Strauss, Glaser and other symbolic interactionism sought to interrupt because it involves presuppositions and abstraction) and qualitative analysis which, in this case, acknowledges the mediation and creativity of language, and the speaking subject whose accounts are analysed – whereas in quantitative work they are used for impersonalising calculations. Embedded in the participants' speech are traces of how they are experiencing the art world. Thus where such terms as 'black woman' or 'white woman' occur they function as signifiers of political self-determination in the participants' accounting for their daily negotiations, acts and decisions. The ethics contained in Grounded Theory itself rests on the fact that we are grounding our theorisation of social processes in the demonstrable analysis of what people say and thus how they think about their own experiences.

Grounded Theory makes a specific contribution to the interview as a tool in art historical research. We ask artists what their work is about, what they aimed to achieve, where and how they grew up, how their careers are going and what they think about art, the art world, politics, etc. Assuming intentionality and total self-knowledge such artist statements are then treated as discovered fact – 'the artist said this, so that is how we should see it'. Interviews become units of knowledge. Such units are rarely analysed, because this type of interviewing does not recognise the complexity of language and that the words verbatim do not produce knowledge.

⁶⁰ See Charmaz's criteria for Grounded Theory studies centering on 'credibility', 'originality', 'resonance', and 'usefulness' in: Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, pp.182-183.

In this thesis I have also offered what might be termed a reparative, instead of a paranoid reading as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick identifies these opposing terms in contemporary intersectional cultural theory.⁶¹ In a paranoid reading, I would be reading for the oppressive forces of racial or gendered othering or treating the other as the other, etc. That is probably absolutely inevitable as this is the structure in which we function in postapartheid South Africa. Sedgwick argues that this only confirms the darkness of the world. Can we, she asks, extract anything from our racist and sexist and homophobic cultures and societies that make life liveable for those oppressed under these regimes? A reparative reading is a knowing, situated reading *for* what might constitute transformation as different from perpetually only paying homage to the terrible dangers of the possibility of categorising someone or highlighting difference. I have made clear how devastating the myth of race/gender is, but within a reparative reading feminism can extract ‘a different sort of material from the debased mines’, to echo Enwezor’s sentiments as relayed in the Introduction to this thesis.⁶² My title is an open question, paranoid about the continuing oppressiveness of race and gender, and a reparative one because it sought to be in dialogue with those who both bear its burdens and struggle in South Africa through its art world.

Scenarios

In this thesis, I have argued that we need to attend to gender as much as the more obvious issue in post-apartheid South Africa: race. By undertaking and coding interviews, I have been able to identify the specific ways in which gender and race interact and function as a doubled axis. In the context of recent feminist debates about race and gender as intersectional, my research has solicited the concept of the intertwining of race and gender, threads in a single fabric alongside class and sexuality. Tracing these entanglements reveals a variety of imbalances and differentials that are consistently in play in daily and professional life and work.

⁶¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, ‘Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or ‘You’re so Paranoid You Probably Think This Essay’s About You’ in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, ed. by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) pp. 123 – 151.

⁶² Enwezor, “‘Better Lives,’ Marginal Selves’, p. 18.

Within the interview ‘data’ there are some accounts which defy the coding that identifies units of meaning while creating ‘stories’ in which the teller allows us to see more clearly the complex entanglement of gender and race. I am naming these stories as scenarios because they are often vivid accounts of occurrences in specific spaces and settings. I treat them as stories in an Arendtian sense because they involve both the storyteller in an encounter and the telling to me as a moment of potential recognition of the implications of a story. This was recognition in the full political sense Arendt implies is lacking.

I want to frame this use of the ‘story’ as a theoretical device by referring to two articles by post-colonial feminist critic, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In one text Spivak opens the article with what appears to be two, casual anecdotes; in the other she uses a story found in an historical archive.⁶³ In the first article, an investigation into the creation of an international feminist curriculum, Spivak tells two stories that serve as allegories of the relationship between formal knowledge and informal understanding of lived experience. One story is about the intellectual and cultural alienation through an uncritical embrace of a Western theoretical model of knowledge by a Sudanese PhD student, a model which assumes the mutilation of women as a socially effective function. Spivak states that, ‘Structural Functionalism [within which the Sudanese student framed her study] takes a “disinterested” stance on society as functioning structure. Its implicit interest is to applaud a system—in this case sexual—because it functions’.⁶⁴ Noting that the clitoridectomy is particularly invasive in the Sudan, Spivak finds it ‘difficult to credit that this young Sudanese woman had taken such an approach to clitoridectomy’.⁶⁵ Following this story, Spivak acknowledges her own alienation, in this case where gender and class intertwine on her part, and where gender and sexuality meet capitalism and imperialism. This is her scenario:

To begin with, an obstinate childhood memory.

I am walking alone in my grandfather’s estate on the Bihar-Bengal border one winter afternoon in 1949. Two ancient washerwomen are washing clothes in the river, beating the

⁶³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘French Feminism in an International Frame’, *Yale French Studies*, 62 (1981), 154–184; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘The Rani of Sirmur: An essay in reading the archives’, *History and Theory* 24.3 (1983), 247–272.

⁶⁴ Spivak, ‘French Feminism in an International Frame’, p. 154.

⁶⁵ Spivak, ‘French Feminism in an International Frame’, p. 154.

clothes on the stones. One accuses the other of poaching on her part of the river. I can still hear the cracked derisive voice of the one accused: “You fool! Is this your river? The river belongs to the Company!” – the East India Company, from whom India passed to England by the Act for the Better Government of India (1858); England had transferred its charge to an Indian Governor-General in 1947. India would become an independent republic in 1950. For these withered women, the land as soil and water to be used rather than a map to be learned still belonged, as it did one hundred and nineteen years before that date, to the East India Company.

I was precocious enough to know that the remark was incorrect. It has taken me thirty-one years and the experience of confronting a nearly inarticulate question to apprehend that their facts were wrong but the fact was right. The Company does still own the land.⁶⁶

In the second article, also particularly important for post-colonial feminist thinking, ‘The Rani of Sirmur’, Spivak analyses historical documents that contain the indirect traces of one Indian woman’s defiance of imperialising political machinations. In turn, she draws out of this small episode the separate threads of gender, race and class but only to ensure that we return to the dense intertwining of these three dimensions in both the event and the document (letters from East India Company officials as they negotiate a power grab in Sirmur using the Raja’s widow as their pawn). Through the story of the Rani of Sirmur, Spivak shows how analytically we may draw out each single thread of race or class or gender. Yet, historically and practically they constitute a single, interwoven, fabric and are made visible in that complex interweaving by means of a telling narrative.

Another reference point for my use of the scenario is derived from the concept offered in the writings of feminist art historian Griselda Pollock.⁶⁷ In the debates about how women – as subjects – represent their difference, she drew upon Freud’s concept of the mystic writing pad and the image of ancient stellae or monuments such as the Rosetta Stone, in which we find ‘impressions’ or inscriptions which appear to constitute a language but whose alphabet and grammar is unknown to modern readers. The impress of meaning is present while the signs appear meaningless. From this

⁶⁶ Spivak, ‘French Feminism in an International Frame’, pp. 155–156.

⁶⁷ Griselda Pollock, ‘Inscriptions in the feminine’, in *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art In, Of and From the Feminine*, ed. by M. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996), pp. 67–88.

she derives the argument, that in a patriarchal and colonial culture, the other is not silent, but the inscriptions, in her case, from the position of gendered otherness and femininity, remain illegible, both to the dominant culture, and partially to the inscribers themselves. For they too, like the colonised intellectuals of Spivak's stories, cannot recognise themselves in the images provided by the culture. Nonetheless, the study of what women say or have said, paint or have painted, write or have written carries the 'inscriptions in, of and from the feminine'. These are not expression or representation. Neither is directly available because intelligibility and audibility require, as Arendt argues, the conditions of speech and recognition provided by the polis. I want to use these two methodological and theoretical models from post-colonial feminist theory to suggest that, in addition to the coding of my oral archive for patterns of statements and insinuations upon certain kinds of *wrongs* endured or encountered, the 'story' that creates a scenario gives us additional access to the experiencing of race/gender *wrongs* in the political space of audibility and legibility (and their lack).

At this point, having gone through all of my interviews and all the richness that they contain to produce the key codes and categories that shape this argument, I now come back to a few stories from the conversations. This is the way through the political aesthetic of words and the participants' accounts, analysed in this GTM model, to counter the economic, quantitative, abstractive categorisation of race and gender. Participants' accounts and stories reveal that these are complex and irreducible. In the relay between my use of Rancièrian politics of aesthetics and of Arendtian politics of speech and recognition, I wish to conclude with several scenarios from my oral archive. Below I provide a brief introduction about whom the artist is and what needs to be taken into account as context for these narrated scenarios. I am not presenting the brute transcription of these stories. I am synthesising these as a different kind of coding, i.e. of what I hear *within* these scenes. In each story there is a scene of an event, an encounter in social space where a social 'drama' is played out. It is impossible to pull out any one thread of race and gender without taking apart the dynamic of their entanglement. I present some key phrases in quotation marks as the actual words of the speaker, so that they can come to have their anecdotal force.

The first such scenario is from the interview with the artist, Lerato Shadi. She is a performance artist based in Berlin and her ‘practice explores problematic assumptions projected onto the Black female body and how performance, video and installation can create a space to engage with those preconceived notions, making the body both visible and invisible’.⁶⁸ When, in her second interview, I asked Lerato Shadi what has changed in the South African art world, she said that she believes that she will no longer be the only Black person attending a gallery opening. It is in this context that she then narrated an experience of her going to a gallery opening when she was a student. She noticed that she ‘was the only Black person’ at the exhibition opening who was ‘not holding a tray’, i.e. there to serve the guests.⁶⁹ While she attempted to look at the work on show, she became ‘*really* uncomfortable’, because she noticed that ‘people were noticing that [she was] there and not holding a tray’. At one point, a ‘White lady made a point to strike up a conversation with [her] and then proceeded to say: “You speak English so *well*”.’ After that, Lerato Shadi felt she was just done with that space; it was too much. While she now believes that she would not be the only Black person (not holding a tray) at a gallery opening in South Africa, she remembers this as a ‘very stark, and somehow bad experience’. She also noted how ‘class issues come into play as well at gallery openings’. She ended this story by saying that ‘it’s in South Africa and it’s everywhere’, mentioning that she went to an opening in Berlin (in 2016) and she was ‘was *literally* the only Black person at the opening. That was also quite *exhausting*’. This story gives an account of the experience of a Black artist-woman who had an experience of attending an exhibition in a ‘white’ art world as the only Black person and felt herself stared at and patronised in that situation.

The second story emerged in the interview with the artist Thenjiwe Nkosi. Thenjiwe Nkosi works across various media, but has a painting practice in which she explores structures and power. She also has a performance practice that she shares, in some cases, with her creative

⁶⁸ ‘Lerato Shadi CV document’, Lerato Shadi (2019)

<http://www.leratoshadi.art/files/LShadi_DocCV.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2019].

⁶⁹ In discussing this story from Lerato Shadi’s second interview, I am quoting passages from pp. 18-19 from that interview transcript. Because it would be cumbersome to do so in this telling, I do not cite these pages specifically in every instance. This is also the practice with other stories from interviews that I relate below.

partner, Pamela Pathismo Sunstrum. Speaking of herself and a colleague, Thenjiwe Nkosi told me that they get ‘a lot of encouragement’ to make art with regard to their identities – being women of Colour – and to talk about their backgrounds and personal experiences. They have been told that they will sell more if they talk about that, because ‘that’s what the market, feels is [...] edgy and relevant right now’.⁷⁰ Considering the Black artist-women from South Africa who are well known internationally, Thenjiwe Nkosi concludes that they are ‘all talking about identity in a quite a specific way’. She points out that this is in the context of a market in which the buyers are mostly White and male and European, which is particularly evident from art fairs. She believes that this particular type of identity work is ‘what they (this male international art world) are ready to hear’ – that is what they can understand. She finds this ‘irritating and frustrating’.

In that context, while ‘African Art right now is in vogue’, ‘there’s an idea of what African art looks like’. If you do not do what is expected in terms of identity-based art, they mistake your work for that of a White man. Thenjiwe Nkosi has received this type of comment on more than one occasion: ‘this is your work? [...] I thought you were a man, and I thought you were a White man’. She believes ‘that says something about what they think *I would* [...] be interested in’, ‘or I’m qualified to do’. She feels like ‘unless [she is] making things that are in sort of vogue’, or ‘in alignment with how people perceive *me*’, she receives such comments that highlight these expectations. She stressed this point by saying, ‘why can’t I be talking just about architecture? Why can’t people be just interested in me talking about architecture, or about power, or about history? [...] why do I have to be talking about being African in a very specific way? Or why do I have to be talking about issues that are *timely* in South Africa?’ She ends this story with a particularly telling passage: ‘you know sometimes I feel like White male artists can just talk about whatever the hell they feel like talking about. You know, like quantum physics [...] I have to fit into some kind of... trend or something’. She also says that there is sometimes works that she would like to make about her identity and ‘experience in the world’, but then she

⁷⁰ Quotations used in this story are taken from Thenjiwe Nkosi’s first interview, from pp. 14-16 of the transcript.

often does not make them, because she does not want to pigeonhole herself, and does not want to become ‘associated with that kind of work’.

I would like to end this chapter with a couple of stories from the interviews with the artist, Senzeni Marasela. Senzeni Marasela is a mixed media and performance artist, who has been engaged the last number of years in what she refers to as a lived performance. In this performance, she wears a red dress that is traditionally worn by newly married women, in especially rural contexts, to signify them as such. Senzeni Marasela is particularly interested in this performance of tracing the sites of trauma in the generations of women in her family. She thus performs the persona of ‘Theodora Hlongwane’ – her mother’s name – in urban and art world sites. The situations that are recounted here are, therefore, more specifically correlated to this performance identity and the figure she represents as she then moves through non-art spaces in costume, thus effectively bringing out assumptions that might be muted in specific art arenas where she is known as a performance artist.

To start I want to mention briefly two scenarios that Senzeni Marasela provided in our conversations that speak to her treatment in this performance by people in general and then I will relate the art world-specific narratives below. Marasela tells how she was waiting for a friend in a restaurant in Sandton. She arrived and took a seat. An employee came up to her and asked her who she was looking for. She replied: ‘But, isn’t this a restaurant? Do I need to be looking for someone?’⁷¹ Even after this conversation, no one at the restaurant came to serve her even though she was putting her hands up for service. Her friend arrived and was outraged at the situation. The manager came to apologise, saying that they thought she [Marasela] was waiting for someone. This scenario speaks to the degree to which, as a Black, rural woman in an upper-class area like Sandton, she was viewed as ‘being out of place’. This perception persisted even after she spoke with one of the staff. Such a woman could not be imagined as a patron in such a social space.

Another similar story that Senzeni Marasela recounts is a scene where she was in Woolworths (a high-end grocery store in South Africa) in

⁷¹ Quotations used in this story are taken from Senzeni Marasela’s first interview, from p. 6 of the transcript.

Hyde Park (an upper-class area) with her daughter who was hungry and wanted cranberries. Struggling to find cranberries, she asked a man behind a counter to help her. He responded by asking her if she knew what cranberries are. He then asked her if her 'missus' sent her to buy them.⁷²

The final two stories are recounted experiences of Senzeni Marasela's encounters with the art world while enacting her lived performance. (By this I mean that as part of the persona, Senzeni Marasela regularly makes the journey from her home in Soweto in costume to the centre of the city). The first is a situation that happened at the VIP function of the Joburg Art Fair. Senzeni Marasela was there, in her red dress, trying to speak with an art collector. She says: 'He just like sized me up and down and just walked off. Didn't say anything! [...] even though I was like standing there so politely [...] and talking to him, he just wandered off'.⁷³ Senzeni Marasela stresses that no one can get into the VIP function without an invitation; the collector should have assumed that, being there, she is 'someone in the art world', who had 'similar interests' to him. She found this to be an unsettling incident: 'there is just something quite frightening when, you're trying to have a conversation with someone and they just walk away. They look at you and they think... I don't know, maybe I look desperate, or maybe they think I'm gonna ask for money, or ask for a job'. After this she says she then 'just ended up sitting alone and drinking wonderful wine the rest of the evening'.

The final story tells of an incident that happened with a security guard in the up-and-coming, trendy arts district of Maboneng in Johannesburg. She says, 'here in Joburg, I understand that my look is very rural and unpolished. You know, because I've had a lot of problems with security guards as well'.⁷⁴ Trying to get into the Arts on Main building, which is arguably the heart of the art scene in this district, Senzeni Marasela recounts: 'The security guard wouldn't let me in the Arts on Main building [...] and then he told me that, someone must come pick me up. And if I go in there and I steal something he'll be in trouble. So, I was *furious* and I asked for the manager; he didn't come'. Senzeni Marasela believes that the

⁷² This story can be found in Marasela's first interview, on pp. 6-7 of the transcript.

⁷³ Quotations used in this story are taken from Marasela's first interview, from pp. 6-8 of the transcript.

⁷⁴ Quotations used in this story are taken from Marasela's second interview, from pp. 4-8 of the transcript

security guards are given a profile of what a potential thief looks like, and that she, in her rural dress, fitted the imagined type. She says: 'I stood there for 15 minutes screaming at him, but he wouldn't let me in [...] he became quite threatening, and told me to stand outside and if I go in, I'm going to be in shit. But the management never answered, you know, they didn't come, even though I wrote emails, no response whatsoever for me [...] I was very upset'.

Senzeni Marasela says how Maboneng is 'heavily guarded' because White middle-class people frequent the district. She believes that 'for a long time there was a lot of guilt [...] amongst White middle-class people in this country, about the city centre. A lot of them didn't go there'. There was no reason for that society to go to (inner city) Johannesburg. Now there is Maboneng, but it is still an island to which you can get while avoiding and not having to deal with the unsavoury aspects of the inner city like 'the prostitution', 'the squalor, and the potential threats'. Maboneng has '*heavy* security, cameras everywhere' and it is 'very expensive' to the extent that 'it's not an ordinary person who can be in Maboneng'. The people who come to Maboneng are 'a particular type of a person, who has *a lot of* money' and 'is there to buy either art or some expensive bag or some expensive item of clothing'. In this context, Senzeni Marasela says, 'then someone like *me* who walks in Arts on Main, probably looks like I don't have money [...] So I'm there to *steal* something [...] I guess part of doing this [the performance] is preparing for offense [...] But then some of it... It gets ridiculous'.

To add more insult to injury, the building management chose not to engage with Senzeni Marasela when she reported the incident. She says: 'you get taken back by certain experiences, you know, like this one, I... I'm still so *upset*, and I'm even more upset that they did *nothing*. They didn't respond to my emails, you know... try and say, "no, this is what happened, we try and rectify the mistake"'. At this point, she was intending to go back to find the manager herself, saying that she 'just had no peace'.

Senzeni Marasela's situation is complex in an almost opposite way from Thenjiwe Nkosi's. Thenjiwe Nkosi highlights external expectations about what art she should be making: about her identity as a Black woman. Senzeni Marasela's art practice is specifically about being a Black South

African woman but she intervenes in social space that does not expect such a woman as an artist. As she negotiates the art world as a middle-class artist in her performance, she solicits – and these are the stories she tells – responses that not only speak to historical exclusion and difference but reveals their presence in the current contradictions within the art world's spaces. Senzeni Marasela *is* making art in a way that is expected, but it becomes illegible, because her performance is read literally. All the prejudices against a classed/raced woman play out.

Thenjiwe Nkosi and Senzeni Marasela's stories reveal the double bind of expectations for Black African artist-women. These stories show how these recounted experiences of race, class and gender are intertwined. They are encountered not only as 'Black', or as 'woman' or as 'poor'. They come out of these accounts as enmeshed lived experiences where these elements are there, but inextricably entangled, while each instance shows up in stark clarity how that occurs and thus creates specific moments of agonistic conflict in the daily practice of making art and being an artist in South Africa.

CONCLUSION

In April of 2013 I attended a lecture by the late Stephen Welz, the late founder and owner of Stephen Welz & Co., which is one of the big auction houses in South Africa. His lecture was about art as an investment and he was talking about what sells well. The examples he gave were very much along the lines of Jacobus Pierneef, Gregoire Boonzaaier, Maggie Laubser and Irma Stern. It struck me that he mentioned only a few contemporary pieces. At this point, which was before I embarked on my PhD studies, I was becoming interested in contemporary South African art practices that specifically deal with issues around gender and race. In the question and answer session, I asked Stephen Welz what happens when an artist is really interrogating issues of race and gender in their work? Does it sell well? He answered with something amounting to: *No*, it does not sell well; people don't want to put that on the wall!

Welz's answer to my question is now slightly modified, especially by what Thenjiwe Nkosi has revealed about work investigating one's own gendered and racial identity being 'in fashion', on the contemporary market at least. Welz was, after all, talking about the auction circuit and art as an investment, i.e. a financial investment that will yield returns over time. I want to use this encounter to narrate the journey – into an expanded sense of art history – of a one-time design student, turned journalism student who ended up teaching in communication science and pursuing visual culture studies. Starting my studies at Leeds, I initially set up my study, thinking there would be two major dimensions to the thesis. The first dimension I envisaged is the structural/professional dimension, exploring questions such as: 'What it is like to be an artist in South Africa?' or 'How do artists find their way in the South African art world in terms of the interplay of gender with race, and race with gender?' The second dimension would concern the ways in which artistic practices themselves are working to bring about change across these two axes and their intersection.

In the end the issues raised by my investigation into the first dimension became theoretically and methodologically more complex than I

had first expected and so the complementary exploration of race and gender in artistic practices will await a further research project. By deciding both politically and methodologically to do in depth interviews with participants in the art world of South Africa using the Grounded Theory Method, I uncovered both issues at play in the struggle for the transformation of the South African art world. This led me to a coding exercise of two articles that enabled a study of the institutional (Khan's article) and the representational (Enwezor's article). The analysis of these texts, which were also events with massive repercussions, necessitated engagement with critical and theoretical literature concerning the politics of aesthetics (Rancière) and the politics of speech (Arendt) which enabled a theoretical elaboration arising from the interview process and the coding process, which is in keeping with Grounded Theory where the 'data' and the concepts that emerge from its analysis are then placed in dialogue with existing theoretical frames. The central chapters of the thesis, therefore, constitute the major theoretical moves in my research. They are, however, the product of my analysis of the primary research with participants through the lens of exploring institutional and representational 'politics'. The substantive coding of the larger body of the interviews was then undertaken with these theories of democracy in mind to test out the evidence for and relevance of these two theories of democratisation. As a result of this engagement, I am proposing a productive relationship for art historical research between 'discovering', by the systematic use of a qualitative method and the critical engagement with socio-political theory.

My initial sense of the two dimensions that would comprise this study – the institutional conditions of production and the creative interventions through artistic practice – could be said to divide the field in a traditional art historical modelling of art and context. From the initial findings using GTM, I have been brought to a more subtle understanding of what constitutes transformative practices, which includes a broadened sense of *practice*.

Some examples of this are evident, particularly in the layered elements in the scenarios provided at the end of the previous chapter. Thenjiwe Nkosi and Senzeni Marasela, however, are opposed positions. Senzeni Marasela's practice poses the question of excavating the affective

and embodied dimensions of South African, and African women's, gendered life and experience as it is brought to the fore in terms of an artistic practice through performance. Thenjiwe Nkosi challenges being bound to the frame of identity in terms of what themes or topics she wants to be free to explore. Both find themselves encountering predetermining expectations, differently, but both relating to specific constructions of race and gender across the representational and the institutional.

I aim in the next stage of my research to explore this particular tension, which will necessitate different kinds of methodologies. Conditions of artistic practice and artistic practices themselves call for investigation through a variety of social, historical, feminist and post-colonial frames.

My coded reading of the texts of Sharlene Khan and Okwui Enwezor and the resulting theorisation became more significant in this thesis than I could have anticipated. It does not, however, mean that artistic practices per se are less important. My view of what constitutes transformative practices has changed by the formal attention to the material that emerged from the interviews, including the impact of these two 'textual events' on the consciousness of the artists and writer with whom I talked. As we see with practices such as *strategic refusal* and *strategic inclusion*, such practices are not on the whole separate from the ways in which the artists themselves define their artistic practice. Within the concept of transformative practice, I have discovered that if participants are being expected to make work of a certain kind, or if they are not recognised for making work of a certain kind, then their practices of resisting these obstacles form a part of their artistic practice. These are two sides of the same coin.

The interviews, however, also contain the artists' rumination on their artistic practices. This is the case in, for example, Penny Siopis' interviews, as well as in those of Senzeni Marasela, Thenjiwe Nkosi, Leora Farber, Sue Williamson, Sharlene Khan and Lerato Shadi. There is thus a richness to the interviews that need to be explored further as there is a great deal more material to be drawn from this archive in very specific ways. I intend to keep working on this because there are other directions to explore and hence other readings with their own incitements to theoretical elaboration. An investigation into artistic practices would require a different set of terms.

While I found it necessary, therefore, to establish this model and procedure and to highlight its discoveries in terms of the conditions of practices, this has produced very rich material that I coded in GTM fashion, but my archive contains equally important material about the specific forms of artistic practice.

I am considering that a possible theoretical direction to develop this material would take up the Latourian model of agents and actants in which the relations between subjects of action and non-subjective elements collectively constitute a field of effective action and change. This has been used in contemporary art history and museum studies to integrate the conventional notion of agents with institutional and social conditions and structures.¹

My entry points for this thesis were initially feminist and post-colonial art histories that would enable me to frame the question of democratisation in South Africa by giving space and meaning to the role of imaginative, transformative, artistic activity. The role of the imaginative aesthetic *work* of artistic practice in transforming minds cannot be understated. I am perhaps restating Albie Sachs's arguments that democracy will need artists to *imagine* a future on behalf of South African society. On the other hand, and in terms of the art world, I argue that we need also to identify the practices themselves that might cause transformation. In one sense it is as much a transformation that a Black artist-woman could be dealing with quantum physics as it is to have an artistic practice, like Zanele Muholi's, which is saying: 'we are here!'

My question to Stephen Welz asked whether there is any economic value in critical practice. If there is no economic, and therefore no cultural value in critical practices and critical thought, the prospect of democratisation is stymied. My exchange with Welz suggests that if the situation is left to be determined by a purely economic system, based on what the art buyers endorse as an economically valued system alone, the creative, imaginative and transformative elements – the aesthetics of politics – are thwarted and we are left with a *police order* in the art world.

Just as I was about to write this conclusion, *The Guardian* shared an article on their website about a recent report that indicates that only 2% of

¹ Van Maanen, *How to Study Art Worlds*, pp. 83-103.

global auction spending goes towards work by women.² This is a stark figure about the systematic devaluation of the work of women in the global art economy. My question to Stephen Welz looms again. What is this correlation between what we see, what people are allowed to say, what gets validated and who gets validated to say it? In this thesis, by looking from the South African government's research by questionnaire and statistical analysis to my qualitative method engaging with participants in the South African art world, I have amassed a rich archive from which I present a preliminary report here. I have proposed a theorisation of this material in terms of the concepts of 'the distribution of the sensible' and the 'role of speech and recognition' in terms of two different theories that link the aesthetic and political. In a sense, I am arguing that conclusions without a specific form of recognition of women, Black and White, cannot have any transformative effect.

The report by *In Other Words* and *Artnet News* (cited in *The Guardian*) provides the following statement:

More troubling, there have been few advances made—even as museums signal publicly that they are embracing alternative histories and working to expand the canon. The number of works by women acquired did not increase over time. *In fact, it peaked a decade ago.* These findings challenge one of the most compelling narratives to have emerged within the art world in recent years: *that of progressive change, with once-marginalized artists being granted more equitable representation within art institutions.* Our research shows that, at least when it comes to gender parity, *this story is a myth.* “These numbers are a little heart-wrenching,” artist Mickalene Thomas says. “But they are also awakening. This is not about who you are as an artist—there is a system that you aren’t a part of. It’s still a boys’ game.”³ [Italics are my emphasis]

Feminist and post-colonial arguments have named capitalist patriarchy and colonialism as deeply embedded social-economic, psychic and imaginative structures. Mere denunciation and cosmetic attempts to correct these imbalances rarely work because these are systemic problems.

² ‘Only 2% of global art auction spending is on work by women, study finds’, *The Guardian* (19 September 2019)

<<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/sep/19/female-art-women-underrepresented-museums-auctions-study>> [accessed 19 September 2019].

³ ‘Museums Say They Are Paying More Attention to Female Artists. They Are Not’, *Art Agency, Partners* (19 September 2019) <<https://www.artagencypartners.com/women-study-museums/>> [accessed 22 September 2019].

My thesis is a contribution to understanding the failure of the democratisation of the South African art world. It now meets a report in 2019 that shows how profoundly structural gendering in the masculine still is in the value of art. When gender is compounded by race we find the statistics in the Corrigan & Co. Report of 2019: *The Top 50 Artists & the Top 20 Curators Who Validated Them*.⁴ Of the top 20 curators on the African continent, 55% are women.⁵ These women are, furthermore, all women of Colour except for one.⁶ While these appear to be positive figures, when it comes to artists, an entirely different picture emerges. Of the top 50 artists from the African continent who were validated by these top curators, only 22% are women. This is not a small difference.

The statistics presented by the Corrigan & Co. report, as well as the report from *The Guardian*'s article are absolutely stunning and indicate that a lot of work still needs to be done, also in terms of research. What are, for instance, the positions of the curator-women in the Corrigan & Co. report? Do they enjoy permanent or stable positions, or are they precariously employed between a variety of projects and roles? The Corrigan & Co. report points to the need to further develop the (South) African case, but the report by *In Other Words* and *Artnet News* also show that there is an international case for the study of gender and race in the art world. *The Guardian* also cites a major study headed by Chad Topaz of museums in the US that shows 'that collections from 18 major institutions were both 85% white and 87% male'.⁷ My study has provided insight into the effects of the fact that critical practices by women are not recognised, or at the most, pigeon-holed. The authors of *The Guardian* end their article with the following statement by former chief curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Helen Molesworth: 'The art world is simply not the liberal, progressive bastion that it imagines itself to be and you can't solve a problem you can't own'.⁸ This is the deep paradox contained within the art world: that it professes a progressive position

⁴ Corrigan & Co., 2019 *Contemporary African Art Ecology. The Top 50 Artists & the Top 20 Curators Who Validated Them* (Cape Town: Corrigan & Co., 2019).

⁵ Corrigan & Co., *The Top 50 Artists & the Top 20 Curators*, p. 25.

⁶ Corrigan & Co., *The Top 50 Artists & the Top 20 Curators*, pp. 15-22.

⁷ 'Only 2% of global art auction spending is on work by women, study finds'.

⁸ 'Only 2% of global art auction spending is on work by women, study finds'.

towards difference, but that an artist's race/gender counts against them in profound ways.

In the light of these once again stark and depressing statistics about the failure of the liberalising and inclusivity of the art world in the age of intensified neoliberal financialisation of the art market, the tools and methods of art historical analysis of the contemporary need to be refined and sharpened. Substantial material of the experiences of and analyses by the creative agents: artists, curators, critical dealers and writers need to be solicited and analysed in ways that combine democratisation of research methods and the interpretation of the research material with expanded critical tools and theoretical models. I hope to have made a contribution to both.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTION GUIDE FOR ROUND 1 OF INTERVIEWS

- What are you currently working on? / What projects are you engaged with at the moment?
- In your view, what has your 'project' been?
- What are you trying to achieve through your work? Where would you like to see the work going? / What are you moving towards?
- What do you do on a daily basis? / What does your regular activities include?
- What is the process around your work?
- What needs to come together for your work to happen? / What does the infrastructure around your work?
- What are some of the material practicalities of your work?
- What makes your work possible? (People? Things?)
- What hinders your work? / What are some of the difficulties you face?
- What are the main factors that you need to negotiate? / What do you feel is happening around you?
- Is there a specific exhibition/ project that you found particularly pertinent / supportive of your work?

APPENDIX B: QUESTION GUIDE FOR ROUND 2 OF INTERVIEWS¹

(Subjective experience: what cannot be represented by the report)

What does it feel like to be an artist in SA right now?

How does the SA art world work? (*Playing the game* – what does that mean?)

What is your (subjective) experience of moving through it? (gaining entry / operating / education)

Not having made it yet: What would constitute making it?

Not seizing opportunity, When it doesn't feel right

Theme: different sets of expectations around work / what people can / should make

What are the artistic languages available to you?

What freedom would you want to have?

(Do you feel constrained to image-making / to engaging with SA's history? Indebted?)

One of the biggest themes that came out = lack of (critical) engagement with work: Why?

What would you like people to engage with in your work?

(Is there such a thing as transformation fatigue?)

Purpose of these Qs is to open / see what the discourse is around transformation. To get into and maybe push some of the ideas concerned

What does transformation mean to you? / What would transformation be in your view?

What does it mean in your practice / **the art world?** / How do you work at it in your work?

What kind of space do you have to do your work?

What would the potential of transformation be? What can it do? / What would true transformation be?

Is transformation happening? In what way?

(Is transformation possible?)

What has happened / what has been transformed? / **What has transformation been?**

¹ Please note that the guide for this second round of the interviews includes themes and topics that came up during the first round of interviews.

What has changed in the SA art world? / What has not changed?

What needs to happen? What could it be/do?

How is transformation brought about? / How does transformation come about?

Experiencing something about your work catching on - seeing the impact of your work? / what are some of the transformative effects of your work that you have perceived / witnessed / picked up on?

(What is the role of demographics on transformation?

What are the racialising structures and what interrupts them?)

What are the transformative practices out there? / Who is doing prominent work in this area?

How does identitarian/ identity work figure in transformation?

What is the role / potential of aesthetic transformation? What does art contribute to transformation? / Should art contribute to transformation?

How does gender figure in transformation? How does gender come into the picture? What is it's role / place in the transformation agenda?

What do you believe is SA contributing to the debate on transformation internationally? For the rest of the world?

APPENDIX C

~ CODE TREE ~

Key to Abbreviations

Participants:

SM1	Senzeni Marasela Interview 1	SM2	Senzeni Marasela Interview 2
AM1	Amita Makan Interview 1	AM2	Amita Makan Interview 2
BM1	Bettina Malcomess Interview 1	BM2	Bettina Malcomess Interview 2
US1	Usha Seejarim Interview 1	US2	Usha Seejarim Interview 2
TN1	Thenjiwe Nkosi Interview 1	TN2	Thenjiwe Nkosi Interview 2
JBr1	Jean Brundrit Interview 1	JBr2	Jean Brundrit Interview 2
MP1	Mario Pissarra Interview 1	MP2	Mario Pissarra Interview 2
JBo1	Joost Bosland Interview 1	JBo2	Joost Bosland Interview 2
SW1	Sue Williamson Interview 1	SW2	Sue Williamson Interview 2
LS1	Lerato Shadi Interview 1	LS2	Lerato Shadi Interview 2
BN1	Blessing Ngobeni Interview 1	BN2	Blessing Ngobeni Interview 2
LF1	Leora Farber Interview 1	LF2	Leora Farber Interview 2
BB1	Bongi Bengu Interview 1	BB2	Bongi Bengu Interview 2
SK1	Sharlene Khan Interview 1	SK2	Sharlene Khan Interview 2
PS1	Penny Siopis Interview 1	PS2:1	Penny Siopis Interview 2 Part 1
		PS2:2	Penny Siopis Interview 2 Part 2

Institutions / entities:

DAC	Department of Arts and Culture (South African government ministry)	NAC	National Arts Council
WAM	Wits Art Museum	VANSA	Visual Art Network South Africa
ASAI	Africa South Art Initiative	JAG	Johannesburg Art Gallery
UJ	University of Johannesburg	WITS	University of the Witwatersrand

NEGOTIATING

EXPECTATIONS

- SM1 (Expectations to produce work in a certain way by the West)
- SM1 (Expectations of African art, does not want to be pigeon-holed and labelled)
- BM1 (Expectation to represent South Africa, does not want to be representing anyone or anything)
- TN1 (Being encouraged to produce work that aligns with one's racial/gendered identity, or being made a figure of representation, also becomes something that must be avoided)
- TN1 (Expectation to produce work that represents your identity, White male artists can talk about whatever they like)
- TN1 (Expectations of a conservative market, limited funding)
- MP1 (Expectations about African art, fear of neo-primitivism, Garth Erasmus)
- MP1 (Expectations about African art, translating work for the international audience)
- MP1 (Expectations about African art, fear of neo-primitivism, Helen Sebidi, Jackson Hlungwani)
- MP1 (Expectation, fear of neo-primitivism, challenges post-*Magiciens de la Terre*)
- JBo1 (Expectations about African art, international perception of what African art should be, effects of Pigozzi collection)
- JBo1 (Expectations around African art, that it is good value for money)
- JBo1 (Expectations about African art, countering expectations, Okwui Enwezor, staying away from the term 'African')
- LS1 (Getting comments that as a Black woman, must rather produce work in the public space, because it is a more radical space than the gallery, but she finds taking ownership of the white cube gallery space as a Black woman as a radical act)
- BN1 (Expectations around African art, artists want to be respected in their own right, not wanting to be categorised)
- LF1 (Expected to make more politically relevant work, devaluation and non-acceptance of feminist practice, negative response)
- LF1 (Pressure to reflect the post-colonial)
- BB1 (Expectation to produce a certain type of work as a Black woman artist, taking creative freedom to tackle any issue. Also 'Creative Freedom')
- SK1 (Expected to represent Indianness. Writing in response to something that upset her.)
- SK1 (Expected to do PhD about 'Africa')
- US2 (Resisting expectations. Opting for mature way that is not quick)
- US2 (If work sells, expectation to keep producing work, 'promise' made to the collector/investor)
- JBo2 (Artists who respond to outside pressures in their work, it is coming from the wrong place)
- JBo2 (Expectation for work to match artist's 'politics', especially problematic in art schools, relations with a power dynamic)
- JBo2 (Expectations where there is a power dynamics are problematic. Zeitz MOCAA)

- JBo2 (Black artists being questioned about showing in white spaces, not bringing the work to their communities. White artists are not asked this question)
- JBo2 (Expectations from international curators about art from South Africa)
- JBo2 (Countering expectations. Banning the A-word (Africa))
- MP2 (The contemporary African art market as a marketable trend – to connect to the ‘African’ has become the norm)
- MP2 (Expectations about African art, have moved beyond that, notion of ‘authenticity’ has been critiqued)
- SW2 (‘Where is the African in your work?’ People expecting ‘zigzags and triangles’)
- SM2 (Expectations of African art. Showing a lot of African artists does not change the language (Enwezor))
- SM2 (Expectations/stereotypes of Black artists, being called ‘previously disadvantaged’, expected to represent the struggle, Black artists who make abstract art not accepted/understood)
- SM2 (Expectations of Black artists’ production, Black artists doing abstract work struggling/leaving the country)
- SM2 (Expectations about African art, presenting the village scene, idyllic and romantic, sense that Africa still needs to be discovered and occupied)
- SM2 (Still a massive market for ‘African Arts and Crafts’. People from abroad coming to Africa only as ‘tourists’)
- SM2 (Expectations about ‘African art’. European buyers wanting to buy art that represents Africa, difficult for artists to sway that market)
- LF2 (‘African artist’ is a problemised term, but still commonly used, ‘African art’ is a construction that has not been let go of)
- BM2 (Expectations about Africa, South Africa being a player in the international art world on the condition of being African, but has a fraught relationship with the rest of Africa)
- BM2 (Refusing to perform ‘South Africanness’ as expected – see ‘Strategic Refusal’)
- BM2 (Expectations coming through in questions relating to an assumed background, growing up in the ghetto/being European)
- BM2 (Few women gallerists, ‘doing it for daddy’ is still present, people repeating things, pressure on people to represent transformation – see ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)
- BB2 (Does not see self as a ‘South African artist’, but as an artist)
- BB2 (Getting comments, not making work expected from a woman who grew up overseas in exile, talking about African and rural women. Also ‘Representing Others’)
- BB2 (Sometimes expected to comment on South Africa, because you are from South Africa)
- TN2 (‘Africa is so hot right now’ – flavour of the year. Being consumed because of idea people have about Africa, becoming a curiosity)
- TN2 (Got advice from older artists/gallerists or seeing what type of work sells, work about women artists of Colour ‘race’, ‘gender’ and ‘family history’ – this gets consumed, ‘stereotypes of what we should be making’. Also ‘Playing the Game’)
- TN2 (What kind of work you make matters, different rules for different people, White male artist can get away with making whatever he

- wants and selling it, not so for other artists. Also 'Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement')
- TN2 (If you really want to make it, make work that speaks to political situation in your country, African and Asian Artists, being strategic with this in developing your career)
- TN2 (Being strategic, aligning with Afro-futurist movement, affords them visibility and mobility, can play the game in different ways, negotiate – see 'Playing the Game')
- TN2 (Finding ways of talking about identity, self and own experience, not as 'racial' or 'gendered' identity as world expects it, not flattening into categories)
- SK2 (Constant pressure in art field about what is relevant/trendy, lecturer encouraging her to make work about her Indian heritage, work exploring identity is necessary to destabilise ideas of what identity has been in South Africa)
- PS2:1 (Identity politics marks South African art practice immediately post-liberation, now artists are resisting those politics)
- PS2:1 (Expectation to produce identity work is the residual atmosphere of post-liberation (international) shows, many artists resist that and establish own interests)
- PS2:1 (European/American expectations of African art perpetuating stereotypes, artists now giving that less prominence and not responding to expectations, older expectations about being a woman artist, perceptions change)
- PS2:2 (Enwezor, 2nd Johannesburg Biennial taking visceral out of African art, wary of primitivism, not interested in work with material signification, more lens-based practices, no poetics, just politics)

MAKING WORK IN RESPONSE

- JBr1 (Making work with anger as a motivating force. Also 'Compelled to Make Work')
- TN1 (Wary of making work that is in response to racism/sexism, translating work for White audiences)
- LS1 (Starting out work with 'something that is really bothering me' – see 'Compelled to Make Work')
- SK1 (Making art as dealing with what is happening internally as a raced, gendered, classed artist)
- SK1 (Having to respond to race, many people speaking out did not start out wanting to engage with race)
- SK1 (Having to respond to things happening steals away from art-making)
- JBo2 (Wary of responding to all the agendas in the art world, you will become an effect of them)
- BM2 (Publication partly responding to xenophobia, felt important to put it in)
- BN2 (Pressure of current issues, like Marikana killing, wanting to be heard on that)
- SK2 (The burden of always having to take on Whiteness, but it has to be done. Still have to find ways to do what you like and love)

EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

- SM1 (Ignorance about who Black artists are, Dali Tambo project)
- SM1 (Rendering Black women artists invisible, a show being done with no Black women)
- SM1 (Leaving Black women out of show, also Indian and Coloured artists)
- SM1 (White people privileging White people, Cianfanelli in Soweto, Art bank)
- SM1 (Black artists being disrespected, public sculpture works with government money given to Marco Cianfanelli when many Black artists have had longer careers than him – see ‘Disrespect’)
- SM1 (Excluded due to thematic focus, ‘your work does not fit the theme’)
- MP1 (Limited in art world because of demographic profile)
- JBo1 (Using lack of skill as an excuse not to hire Black candidates, ‘the no-qualified-Black-people-excuse’)
- LS1 (Racism is structural, knowledge produced by Black people is devalued – see ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)
- LS1 (Most famous SA artist is still a White male, and second most famous a White female. Black artists are discounted as if they are not making work to the same/a better standard. Also ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)
- BB1 (Art world as being clique-y)
- BB1 (‘It is like Black women artists do not exist’ – means Black women artists are not being taken seriously)
- SK1 (Black artists being undermined/infantilised in writing by young White writers. Also ‘Disrespect’ and ‘Lack of Critical Engagement’)
- SK1 (Excluding artists of Colour from the art industry and discourse, refusing to accept an all White art world. Also ‘Strategic Refusal’)
- SK1 (Privileging of White women in the art world)
- SK1 (Not even well-known women of Colour are written about, processes of canonisation exclude them – see ‘Lack of Critical Engagement’)
- SK1 (Being punished/policed for speaking out)
- US2 (The art world as a secret world – closed off.)
- US2 (The playing field is not levelled. Black artists do not have the same resources as White artists to put up work)
- US2 (The financial playing field is not equal for artists of different races)
- US2 (White people still in privileged position. White men repeatedly getting public art commissions – result of lack of education for Black people in the past)
- JBo2 (Art world open to anyone who wants to join, but not so for artists, you have to be ‘good’ – merit)
- JBo2 (Art world as open to people’s influence in different ways, people think there is a system of gatekeeping that is much more nefarious than it actually is)
- JBo2 (The art world has rules, things that signify sophistication)
- JBo2 (Physical exclusion. Black artists finding it difficult to get a lease in Cape Town – gallery intervenes on their behalf)
- MP2 (Exclusion from discourse, who makes the list in publications and shows? Commercial imperatives)
- AM2 (Art world as a difficult world to enter)
- AM2 (Voice of South African Black women not represented enough)

- SM2 (Privileging White artists, William Kentridge retrospectives vs. David Koloane/San Nhlengethwa, Black artists' access to public institutions is problematic)
- SM2 (White artists still making a lot of public work, narrating the visual language)
- SM2 (Institutions, public funding not going to Black artists, side-lined, do not have a proper voice. Also 'Lack of Formal Support', 'Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement')
- SM2 (White organisers feeling 'Pressure to include Black artists', implying that Black artists must be grateful if they are included, as though including one or two Black artists is representing all Black artists – see 'Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement')
- SM2 (Being excluded for speaking out. Black artists are afraid of speaking out, aware of the position they occupy)
- SM2 (No space to speak in opposition of exclusionary practices in art world)
- SM2 ('Black women at the bottom' – mirrors how society functions. White women have benefitted more from affirmative action than any other group)
- SM2 (Black women artists with successful careers are an absolute minority. Hyper visibility, propelling careers of certain Black women, South African pavilion saying they cannot find Black women.)
- SM2 (With taxpayer money and in government space, there must be one of every kind of artist, not hiding behind an aesthetic – see 'Lack of Representativeness')
- BB2 (Art world as clique-y, there are the chosen ones)
- BB2 (Does not get many reviews, most of the time have to ask for a review, makes you feel like you are not being taken seriously – see 'Lack of Critical Engagement')
- SK2 (Visual arts field is an entity that works by capitalism, elitism and fake academicism, language and structuring is meant to keep people out)
- SK2 (Fluctuating trends, money and discourses in art world, has nothing to do with skill and talent, money is tied to who you know)
- SK2 (Sets of structuring structures in art world and art history, habitus is White and patriarchal, includes certain groups and not others. Also 'Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement')
- SK2 (Even though very active during their time, an artists can fall through the cracks if there is no writing about them, Black artists, especially, suffer from this – see 'Lack of Critical Engagement')

BEING USED/TOKENISED

- SM1 (The late invitation, being tokenised and pacified)
- TN1 (Being tokenised by being invited to things at the last minute, the late invitation)
- TN1 (Being aware of being instrumentalised/tokenised in academic institutions, galleries and museums)
- TN1 (Saying no to being used/tokenised in a situation, should start explaining why saying no – see 'Strategic Refusal')
- US2 (Wary of being tokenised in transformation process, getting asked if she got a commission because she is not White)

- MP2 (Being tokenised, being invited to Late Thursdays because of perception that the organisation can deliver Black artists for the event. Refusing to produce Black artist to perform in public. Also ‘Strategic refusal’)
- BM2 (Being co-opted in curation of show at National Gallery, having to defend territory) (tokenised)
- TN2 (Saying no to being instrumentalised and tokenised – see ‘Strategic Refusal’)
- SK2 (Emphasis is on critical-thinking individuals of Colour, Black collaborators have been used who will not contest the colonial system, stifles transformation – see ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)

REPRESENTATION

- SM1 (Grappling with representing women that are not like her)
- JBr1 (‘Out of Site’ exhibition, wary of representing the Black body/representing someone you are not)
- JBr1 (When representing someone you are not, doing that collaboratively, Haiku gender-based-violence health campaign, images belong to people who participate)
- JBr1 (Self-representation versus being represented is tricky to negotiate in SA, working collaboratively, Zanele Muholi)
- JBr1 (More comfortable representing Afrikaner people and men than a Xhosa person, for example. Different historical power relations)
- LS1 (Looking at how Black women self-represent in Masters paper, invisibility of Black women in prominent media, when represented it is according to stereotypes)
- SK1 (Perceived to be representing people from a different class, White critics saying she was othering people)
- PS1 (Speaking about South African situation in allegorical terms as a White person – reflecting on that)
- US2 (Identity and representation as complex in South Africa because of race)
- JBo2 (Shifting power dynamics. Middle-aged white, professor artist posing as young Black female artist to make himself more relevant. Also ‘Age/Generation’)¹
- JBr2 (Challenges of being represented as marginal group, project with Deaf lesbians. Having to be comfortable with what is seen in public)
- JBr2 (Not speaking for Black lesbians, middle-class secure home, but also not a White only agenda)
- JBr2 (Wanting others to also have a voice in work, working collaboratively to make that space)
- LF2 (Putting on exhibition of Black masculinities as a White woman, question will come up about subjectivity)
- LF2 (Fear of being misread, taking on ‘vernacular’ and ‘Whiteness’, certain things should not be taken on – also ‘Strategic refusal’)
- BB2 (Getting comments, not making work expected from a woman who grew up overseas in exile, talking about African and rural women – see ‘Expectations’)

¹ Upon reviewing the extracts from his interviews, Joost Bosland requested that ‘white’ as a racial term should not be capitalised in relation to his statements.

- TN2 (Talking about issues in self-reflexive mode, how do they effect you and what is your relationship to them?)
- PS2:2 (Readings of images change over time, what was seen as supporting the liberation struggle in apartheid years now have a different reading in the politics of representation)
- PS2:2 (Categories of things you cannot make, e.g. images of Black subjects, having to take sides, when images go into public circulation mean different things to different people and can be hurtful)
- PS2:2 (Work that present change to engage with issues of representation, people view work as real, but they are depictions, but at the same time they are aligned to the world)

AWARENESS OF RACE/GENDER ENTANGLEMENT

- AM1 (Having responsibilities as a woman, demands on time)
- LS1 (Racism is structural, knowledge produced by Black people is devalued. Also 'Exclusionary Practices')
- LS1 (Most famous SA artist is still a White male, and second most famous a White female. Black artists are discounted as if they are not making work to the same/a better standard – see 'Exclusionary Practices')
- LF1 (Adopting a feminist practice in the 1990s and the disillusionment with the response, judged for pursuing feminism when race was the more pressing issue)
- US2 (Art industry is male-dominated. Female energy is different to male energy of the art world)
- US2 (Challenges facing artists who are women and have children)
- JBr2 (Awareness of racial recognition and non-recognition)
- JBr2 (Issues around racism/sexism intangible. Has a feeling that people treating her differently with longer hair, looking like she can pass as straight)
- JBr2 (Limitations for women due to personal safety concerns)
- JBr2 (Not being part of someone's agenda and being okay with that)
- AM2 (Country is aware of need to change. Curators at museums becoming more gender and race sensitive. Also 'Lack of Representativeness')
- AM2 (Opportunity to explore identity as Indian South African woman post-apartheid in 'Trans Africa' exhibition)
- AM2 (Art world is still male-dominated)
- AM2 (Transformation of art world needs to happen in terms of both race and gender)
- AM2 (More residency opportunities needed for women. VANSAs newsletter as non-discriminatory, put in everything that is happening in the art world)
- SW2 (Gender has never been a thing in the South African art world. There is equal standing)
- SW2 (View that Black women are amongst the most successful in the art world)
- SW2 (There was a time when it was male-dominated. Feels that it is balanced at the moment)
- SM2 (Many Black women artists working without gallery representation, skin colour is no longer currency. Also 'Gallery/Commercial Dynamics')

- SM2 (White male privilege/angst does not get mentioned in terms of Kentridge's work. When you work as a Black artist, immediately you are identified as 'previously disadvantaged')
- SM2 (White organisers feeling 'Pressure to include Black artists', implying that Black artists must be grateful if they are included, as though including one or two Black artists is representing all Black artists. Also 'Exclusionary Practices')
- SM2 (Not enough Black who women stay in the industry making art full time. Societal pressures)
- SM2 (Institutions, public funding not going to Black artists, side-lined, do not have a proper voice – see 'Exclusionary Practices', also 'Lack of Formal Support')
- SM2 (A lot more Black artists that are commercially successful and have international recognition)
- SM2 (No childhood education in art in Black/African communities, it could change the language/how Africans receive art – see 'Need for Transformation of Art Education')
- LF2 (Aware of position as White woman and the history that contributed to that, working through one's own, personal history – see Working with History')
- LF2 (Art world over-accommodates, but also commodifies young Black artists)
- LF2 (Doing work that disrupts 'self' and 'other' relations, challenging and problematising those categories)
- LF2 (Not many people ask White people how they position themselves towards transformation)
- LF2 (That White people are in positions of power must change, but some also earned their positions)
- LF2 (Efforts to develop young, Black researchers, difficult in the interim, boils down to crude tactics and statistics)
- LF2 (Risk of one patriarchal order being replaced by another. Need for awareness of gender issues)
- LF2 (Basic/crude understanding of gender issues is out there, but gender discrimination can be subtle)
- LF2 (Race and gender are intertwined and are part and parcel of transformation, cannot be separated)
- BM2 (Appointments at university that re-install the status quo on a gender level as well as a racial level)
- BM2 (Whiteness of art world reflect historical and structural inequalities in SA, but also globally. Difficulties around assuming people have a root identity, have own differences not reducible to race and ethnicity. Own position of privilege being pointed out, need to do the work to recognise own position)
- BM2 (Zanele Muholi capturing something of SA queer identity, but it is being commodified elsewhere, identity work needs to understand your position)
- BM2 (Few women gallerists, 'doing it for daddy' is still present, people repeating things, pressure on people to represent transformation. Also 'Expectations')
- BM2 (Gender as more complicated than reducing it to women)
- BN2 (Bag Factory, people come and mix, talk and share, racial segregation has been removed between people, especially in the art world)

- BN2 (Black people not investing in art)
- BN2 (Identity work can support gender equality and people accepting themselves)
- BN2 (No matter what skin colour, everyone is a human being. The skin is just dust)
- BN2 (Enwezor curating Venice Biennial points to huge transformation)
- BB2 (More young, Black artists coming up and more women artists)
- BB2 (Identity work still important, because the nation is still growing)
- BB2 (Art school was a very male world, art world has more balance)
- TN2 (Awareness of self performing in largely White environment)
- TN2 (What kind of work you make matters, different rules for different people, White male artist can get away with making whatever he wants and selling it, not so for other artists – see ‘Expectations’)
- TN2 (Not taking job at UJ as Black woman candidate, people hiring were freaking out about it. Employed other Black woman candidate, but she is still only Black faculty member)
- TN2 (A lot of art space are dominated by White women, but it has not made the field more progressive, inclusive or feminist)
- SK2 (Sets of structuring structures in art world and art history, habitus is White and patriarchal, includes certain groups and not others – see ‘Exclusionary Practices’)
- SK2 (SA – UK differences, SA Black majority and there is hope for change, in UK that is not a given, people of Colour are very isolated)
- SK2 (Networks of women, women supporting one another, needing networks and family support to face life’s pressures)
- SK2 (Awareness of race/class. People of Colour do not have wealthy social networks, effects hiring, need to change, funding needs to come from government/private sector)
- SK2 (System of Whiteness needs to be broken, representation of people of Colour affects how things are run, many White people in power are not critical thinkers, perpetuating colonisation of art and aesthetics)
- SK2 (Emphasis is on critical-thinking individuals of Colour, Black collaborators have been used who will not contest the colonial system, stifles transformation)
- SK2 (Race issue takes prevalence, we do not speak about gender aspects of SA as well, Black women and Black queer women at bottom of every social rung. Cannot say that ‘there are no Black woman artists’ anymore)
- SK2 (Awareness of race/class. Capitalist nature of art field hampers change, more critically thinking people of Colour with money need to come in)
- SK2 (White women not speaking out against things that are offensive against them, show allegiance to Whiteness no matter what the cost, race as fracturing issue in feminist circles)
- SK2 (When Black women’s art practices are dismissed, not the art field who respond to that, but Black feminists in literary and theoretical fields, people writing who did not want to be writers, but tackling these issues)
- SK2 (Being fixed in essentialist ways for curating only work of women of Colour for project. Also ‘Strategic Inclusion’)

- SK2 (Race, gender, class are essentially intersectional, cannot separate them, White women in SA aligning themselves with White power even if it brutalises them)
- SK2 (Sexual and gender oppression intersecting with race, now that huge fight against race has occurred, post-apartheid has to bring out all the nuances of the continues fight)
- SK2 (Academia needs to be a safe space where people can make mistakes, get it wrong and learn the language and vocabulary to talk about race/gender/sexuality issues)
- SK2 (White women need to understand where Black South Africans are coming from, need to refuse patriarchy in whatever form it comes)
- SK2 (Sometimes we have to be a generation that takes a hit that what needs to happen for SA to transform, sometimes you race/gender counts for you and sometimes against you, need the maturity to understand that society needs to right these wrongs)
- SK2 (Huge disjuncture between rural, township background and the art field, Black artists dismissed/trivialised by White writers, do not take into account the cost of having an art career that has ripple effect through family, harsh, un-constructive critique)
- LS2 (Being asked to position self as Black female whether directly or indirectly, also in this study, people who have been othered are asked to deal with race, not the other side of the coin. Also 'Responses to the Interview')
- LS2 (Your embodiment of gender and race matters in a scientific context – also here as interviewer and interviewee – wary of the legacies of the academic context and White knowledge production. Also 'Responses to the Interview')
- LS2 (Cannot ignore historical context, colonialism came up with high art/craft distinction, cannot separate historical context)
- LS2 (Your race/gender matters, but it is not all that you are. White men not asked to deconstruct their work or explain themselves)
- LS2 (Art world that is devoid of White supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism could be a utopian place)
- LS2 (Awareness of ability/sexuality/class, how do we speak about these things in private, do we have relationships with people? Change needs to start with us)
- LS2 (Everybody must do their homework, Black people should not be asked to teach White people about race and gender, dismantling racism, sexism, patriarchy and capitalism benefits White people)
- LS2 (Race and gender are not separate issues in transformation, it is intersectional)
- PS2:1 (The burden of history, the question of the place of White people/the representation of whiteness, thinking about these issues impacts positively on art practice)
- PS2:1 (Difficult to communicate what she is doing, can seem like just being engaged with Eurocentric philosophy that does not mean anything here, difficult with visual image, it is colonised)
- PS2:1 (Impact of race/gender/sexuality on international success, these issues being addressed in international agenda)
- PS2:2 (SA hard place to live if you truly engage with questions of transformation, as a White person but also as a Black person, Black academics having the burden to transform)

- PS2:2 (Artists advancing the cause of transformation through their own practices, young, Black artists with socially engaged work, Zanele Muholi)
- PS2:2 (Problematic perception that Black women artists will get recognised no matter what they do)
- PS2:2 (Feminism being taken up strongly now in SA, part of transformation, not only colonial values being questioned also patriarchy)
- PS2:2 (Enwezor's 1997 Johannesburg Biennial made SA artists question who they are in relation to global context, what is particular about SA given its history, was also important in terms of thinking about race more broadly)
- PS2:2 (Visible change depends on the pocket you find yourself in. Barclay Atelier mostly White people, also Strauss auction, Zanele Muholi opening small percentage of certain kind of White people, depends on which pocket of the art world you are in)
- PS2:2 (Free State gallery, very little has changed, people are not resisting change, but do not seem to know how to implement it)
- PS2:2 (University of the Free State art history grooming young, Black woman to become a lecturer, paying for studies, guaranteeing an academic position)
- De-identified (Transformation happens at governmental/institutional level, but also on individual level. Needing to overcome our prejudices)

LACK OF REPRESENTATIVENESS

- SM1 (DAC as a non-functioning institution, poor representativeness of all kinds of South African artists – see 'Lack of Formal Support')
- US2 (Awareness of demographic makeup of shows and competitions)
- US2 (Nirox Sculpture Park predominantly White male, needs to make effort to include African artists. Very few female artists in sculpture that work that scale)
- US2 (The entire industry is not representative, representation is skewed towards White people)
- US2 (Change is happening. Collections and galleries are more conscious of representativeness)
- JBo2 (Galleries are not 'looking for' young, Black artists per say, young, Black artist who do come through the education systems have faced more challenges and are more talented)
- JBo2 (Black artists more secure in their position and role)
- JBo2 (Focus on young, Black artists is to compensate for the past, still a disadvantage to be Black in the art world in many cases. Checking gender biases, lower representation of women in gallery)
- JBo2 (Making sure workforce is representative. Continuous internal checking)
- JBo2 (Gender imbalances. Cannot have 'affirmative action artists' in the gallery, a pilot who is not up to scratch puts the whole plane at risk)
- JBo2 (Transformation is to reflect the context fairly. Who owns the space in which the debate is happening? Very small percentage of white audience is interested in the gallery's work – Also 'Issues with Audience Engagement')
- JBo2 (More Black people at Johannesburg gallery openings – city has different kind of population than Cape Town)

- JBo2 (Staff and students demographics in art schools at universities have not really changed)
- JBo2 (South African art world becoming more inclusive of the region – art from other Africa countries)
- JBo2 (Gender transformation. Women neglected in hiring for the sake of race. But there is an awareness – *Mail&Guardian* newspaper)
- MP2 (Black writers not coming through – see ‘Lack of Critical Engagement’)
- MP2 (Little bit of demographic change in institutions. Interest in young Black artists. White artists doing own commercial thing without major galleries)
- MP2 (Preference for young Black voices, because historically those voices were not there)
- MP2 (Demographics, being White can count against you, but also gender, age and level of qualification)
- MP2 (Non-racialism in practice. Gaining respect in working-relationship over time)
- MP2 (Awareness of gender imbalance in artist profiles features on ASAI website, cannot be driven by formulaic quotas)
- MP2 (Awareness of gender imbalance, historical reasons for the contemporary imbalance)
- MP2 (White women as part of affirmative action were privileged over White men)
- MP2 (It is like feminism never happened, no challenged to patriarchy. Need for multifaceted, nuanced approach with appointments)
- MP2 (Awareness of own demographic as a White man, challenges in appointments and collaborations)
- JBr2 (UCT student body is not transformed to represent the demographics of greater South Africa)
- JBr2 (Prioritising Black candidates. Redress started late, still generations of deficit to be made up)
- JBr2 (Not enough Black students coming into the school at Michaelis. Needs to be made a departmental priority)
- JBr2 (South Africa being a race-aware society, awareness of who is represented in work, effects of apartheid)
- JBr2 (Diverse demographics needed in lecturers as role models for students)
- JBr2 (Transformation that has happened, who galleries represent, more opportunities for young artists, some interesting curators)
- AM2 (Lack of representation of Black people and Black women in South African galleries. Slow pace of transformation)
- AM2 (Transformed art world would reflect South Africa as multicultural, multilingual and diverse)
- AM2 (Cannot ignore the Black voice anymore. When there are no Black artists in a show, there will be questions)
- AM2 (Changing demographics in big national competitions, galleries, having varied representation)
- AM2 (Country is aware of need to change. Curators at museums becoming more gender and race sensitive. See ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)
- SW2 (Challenges of trying to achieve demographic representativeness, trying to fit everyone in is a legacy of group shows after end of apartheid)

- SM2 (With taxpayer money and in government space, there must be one of every kind of artist, not hiding behind an aesthetic. Also 'Exclusionary Practices')
- LF2 (Transformed art world would be more representative of a diverse range of artists, people would be afforded the same opportunities and a right to be heard)
- BM2 (South African pavilion in Venice, check-box of artists, no curatorial concept, uncritical)
- BM2 (More representativeness needed on a structural level, gallery ownership, how we talk about selves, not repeating categorisations and expectations)
- BM2 (Awareness of need for diversity, different kinds of audiences, economic transformation)
- BM2 (More ethnic diversity at Wits, more diverse view of what practice is, mix of generations, sometimes isolation for White lecturers)
- BM2 (Student body in art schools still from mainly White, privileged background, but changing every year, becoming more diverse)
- BN2 (Bringing people together, working as collective, sharing ideas)
- BB2 (Transformation in art world means more equal representation. Still White-dominant, only one Black-owned gallery)
- BB2 (Transformation would mean more equal balance between male and female representation, more Black-owned galleries)
- BB2 (Working on both the transformation of numbers and ideas/thinking)
- BB2 (Art world still does not have Black professors, it is very rare)
- TN2 (Good make-up/line-up of Johannesburg Pavilion in Venice)
- TN2 (When she became aware of word 'transformation' meant diversity, including people of Colour, institutions only care about transformation as much as they have to)
- TN2 (Transformation is imposed through government policy. Need to be more representative, Black women need to be included)
- TN2 (More representation of people who are like you, can create safe, generative environment. Even if people are politicised, they do not share your experiences. Not just about representatives, but potential of those to create more access and equality)
- TN2 (Important to represent macrocosm, because art world/art departments are a microcosm of larger social interactions)
- LS2 (Pleased by diversity of audience during performance in Grahamstown, and that everybody could get something from it)
- LS2 (Statistics and demographics have their place, but people still do not listen to it. Affirmative action benefits White women more than it does Black men or women)
- PS2:2 (Needing more Black academics in institutions, transformation is not distinct from representation, visibility questions are critical, people's own interests are powerful, transformation needs to be constantly worked at)
- De-identified (Transformation policy to put Black female candidates first at [organisation] ignored)

DISRESPECT

- SM1 (Restaurant in Sandton not serving her while in rural dress as part of performance)
- SM1 (Art collector ignoring her when she wanted to talk to him at Joburg Art Fair VIP Function – in rural dress for performance)
- SM1 (Shop attendant insulting her while trying to buy cranberries at Woolworths in Hyde Park – in rural dress for performance)
- SM1 (Couple wanting to pay for her food in restaurant – in rural dress for performance)
- SM1 (Tourists at Zoo Lake taking her photograph, but asking the tour guide for permission and not het – in rural dress for performance)
- SM1 (Black artists being undermined, being represented and spoken on behalf of, White artists getting more retrospectives than Black artists)
- SM1 (Black artists being disrespected, public sculpture works with government money given to Marco Cianfanelli when many Black artists have had longer careers than him. Also ‘Exclusionary Practices’)
- US1 (Wanting to be taken seriously as an artist, art-making is not just something that is done on the side)
- SW1 (Government disrespecting artists, government mismanagement, dinner after Venice opening, minister’s friends taking up all the room in the restaurant, artists have to sit downstairs with general patrons. Also ‘Lack of Formal Support’)
- BN1 (Artists not just capital resources, contributing to building the nation)
- SK1 (Black artists being undermined/infantilised in writing by young White writers – see ‘Exclusionary Practices’. Also ‘Lack of Critical Engagement’)
- SK1 (Being patronised and infantilised by White women, being spoken for on behalf of)
- JBr2 (Art not being taken seriously as a career, no good examples of professional artists, artists in popular media shown as ‘loopy’, way in which art is shown in the media is not helpful)
- SM2 (People in Venice disregarding performance work – in rural dress)
- SM2 (Security guard in Maboneng refusing to let her into the building – in rural dress for performance)
- SM2 (People complimenting friend at restaurant in Rosebank on how nice she treats her maid – thinking she is her friend’s maid because of rural dress)
- BN2 (Buyers haggling over artworks, greed, being robbed)
- LS2 (Was once only Black person at gallery opening not there to serve guests, being patronised by White woman for ‘speaking English so well’, now more Black people at gallery openings)

LACK OF FORMAL SUPPORT

- SM1 (DAC late announcement of Venice artists)
- SM1 (DAC as a non-functioning institution, poor representativeness of all kinds of South African artists. Also ‘Lack of Representativeness’)
- SM1 (Backlash when taking on government, believes she will never be included for Venice)
- TN1 (Challenges in reach of funders, NAC does not want to take chances, does not reach many people, mismanagement)
- TN1 (Unstable funders, dysfunctional bodies)

TN1 (Effects of very little formal support, people struggle, having to hustle, effects the type of work people make)

TN1 (Effects of having very little formal support, makes people competitive instead of helping one another)

TN1 (Lack of proper residency management)

JBr1 (Some South African group shows happening only overseas, lack of funding locally)

MP1 (Not having formal institutional backing for *Third Text Africa* journal)

MP1 (Issues with funding, 'they can't line their ducks up', NAC losing forms)

MP1 (Issues with funding, mostly small grants, heavy admin requirements)

MP1 (Issues with funders, losing forms, cannot answer questions, frustrating)

MP1 (Losing faith in government, DAC – has given up trying)

MP1 (Issues with funders, DAC versus NAC, NAC has the right model, the structure is there)

SW1 (Museum staff not assisting adequately)

SW1 (Government inadequacies, DAC, inviting people to things late, no information, very late Venice call for proposals)

SW1 (Government inadequacies, central government, very small acquisition budgets for museums)

SW1 (Institutions expecting artists/their galleries to fund exhibitions, WAM)

SW1 (Institutions expecting artists/their galleries to fund exhibitions, National Gallery, Slave Lodge not wanting to pay for the broken frames of their own work, artists are not respected)

SW1 (Government disrespecting artists, government mismanagement, dinner after Venice opening, minister's friends taking up all the room in the restaurant, artists have to sit downstairs with general patrons – see 'Disrespect')

SW1 (VANSA needing to mobilise to get the state to do its job)

BN1 (Issues with funders, nepotism, people giving money to people they know)

BN1 (Government issues, people employed in leadership positions that are not trained in that field, art field needs people who understand art)

BN1 (Government not promoting artists' work enough with the power and influence they have)

BN1 (Consequences of speaking out against government, then you are the wrong person – becoming a pariah)

BB1 (Minister leaving the exhibition she was meant to open, government not knowing what art is about, art not being taken seriously)

BB1 (Government funding available, but people are not aware of it)

SK1 (Having to raise funds for work and exhibitions yourself – see 'Needing to Generate an Income')

US2 (Organisers charging participation fees for exhibitions, galleries getting 'kick backs')

US2 (Government not understanding the art world, it is an alien world to them)

US2 (Late Venice announcement, DAC always waking up at the eleventh hour)

US2 (Issues with funding, NAC gives a small amount once-off, not sustained)

US2 (Transformation is stifled by lack of support overall)

US2 (Government needs to be more involved, take more interest)

JBo2 (A lot of artists voicing political discontent)

MP2 (Gap in funding cycles, leaves ASAI without income, having to chase small funding)

JBr2 (Showing work out of country difficult financially if not on residency/ not represented by high level gallery)

AM2 (Not enough opportunities for artists, not enough galleries, funding and support)

AM2 (Getting support as artist in South Africa could be indicator of change and transformation)

SW2 (The Museums are not in a good way, not raising own funds, wanting government to pay for everything, Venice embarrassments)

SW2 (Venice blunders, badly planned, costing more money at the last minute)

SW2 (Public institutions having no authority)

SW2 (Loss of community arts projects, essential for young Black artist who do not have resources/qualifications to go to university)

SW2 (There never was any support, more now because there is a market, other countries like Switzerland having more facilities and funding for artists to make whatever they want)

SW2 (Issues with funding, very restricted in terms of amount and some do not fund production costs)

SW2 (Need for a better museum system, one you can be proud of not ashamed of)

SW2 (Artists needing to pay for installation costs, institutions not being forthcoming with support and assistance)

SW2 (Need for the Community Arts Project (CAP) to return)

SW2 (Need for more professionalism in the museums)

SW2 (Need for resurrection of Johannesburg Art Gallery, a closed space)

SW2 (Not enough spaces, everything is market orientated, no places where experimental work can be show, galleries not likely to show work that will not sell, need to keep the gallery going)

SW2 (No jobs for curators and critics, there is no money, more art historians needed, artists doing the writing work)

SW2 (State needs to realise that cultural tourism can bring in a lot of money if they support the arts, no third Johannes Biennale)

SM2 (Institutions, public funding not going to Black artists, side-lined, do not have a proper voice – see ‘Exclusionary Practices’, also ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)

SM2 (DAC as a dysfunctional department, promising, but not delivering, making people do a lot of paperwork)

SM2 (Education feeds the market, which is Western, contemporary art happens in America and Europe, need more contemporary museums and commercial galleries in Africa, curators have to leave to be legitimated. Also ‘Need for Transformation of Art Education’)

LF2 (South Africa has never had a strong governmental structure for the art, perhaps during apartheid, but it was obviously biased)

BM2 (Capital in South Africa is still very White, failure of structural change)

- BM2 (More state subsidies need to be put in place, as well as more funding options for younger generation representative of SA to start own things)
- TN2 (No real effort/consideration put into South African Pavilion in Venice)
- SK2 (Lack of formal support results in resilience and artists not being swayed by the market, people make what they like. Also 'Making Work Regardless')
- SK2 (Needing more spaces, like gallery or art centre, where people can try things and push their discourses)
- SK2 (Monetary/capitalist basis of art field has not changed, therefore need more public funds for the arts, but we do not have a government that is invested in the arts, so it falls on private sector and individuals)
- PS2:1 (SA institutions having no money, doing nothing, well-resources institutions from abroad come in and provide 'art aid')
- PS2:2 (Commercial galleries can make things happen, museums/institutions do not have the means, too many hoops to jump through, galleries are growing because they serve another function, they take up the role of museums. Also 'Gallery/Commercial Dynamics')
- PS2:2 (Galleries taking up the role of museums, facilitating buying and collecting of art to institutions locally and abroad, sometimes for collectors with collections verging on public collections. Also 'Gallery/Commercial Dynamics')
- PS2:2 (Galleries taking up the role of institutions, producing publications, adding to the discourse, comes down to staff who are scholarly/critical thinkers. Also 'Gallery/Commercial Dynamics')

LACK OF SUPPORT: ADMINISTRATIVE/ LOGISTICAL

- US1 (Having to schedule art-making time, otherwise administration takes over)
- US1 (Ideally would have a team of people working with her that love doing administration)
- TN1 (Lots of administrative work, has admin assistant only two days a week)
- JBr1 (Research requiring a lot of administration, time-consuming, not having administrative support)
- JBr1 (Strategy of teaming up with colleagues for administrative support/ sharing the burden)
- MP1 (Experiences work as schizophrenic, very heavy administrative load, no administrator)
- JBo1 (Lack of logistical support, inadequate service providers: shipping)
- JBo1 (Lack of logistical support, inadequate service providers: framers, shipping)
- JBo2 (Lack of logistical support, crating, shipping and packing are forever an issue)
- MP2 (Funders not giving much of the budget for administration, results in not having administrative support)
- SM2 (Doing own administration, funding work out of own pocket – see 'Making Work Regardless')

LACK OF COMPENSATION

- SM1 (Questions why artists are the poorest in a multi billion rand business)
- SM1 (Being given 'opportunity' without being paid, overseas travel, saying no to that. Also 'Strategic Refusal')
- US1 (Commissions, costs are not recognised like with other professionals, being expected to work for free, collectors haggling with gallerists for discount)
- US1 (No resale rights for artists when work is successful later on)
- LS1 (Not getting paid, expected to work for free, expected to work for inspiration/influence, people thinking artists are privileged)
- US2 (Not paid for workshop for children by key figure in the art world)
- US2 (Artists regularly asked to donate work for charity auctions. Expected to work for 'exposure' and 'opportunity')
- SM2 (Exposure as payment – no longer responds to that, refusing to be exploited. Also 'Strategic refusal')
- SM2 (Being expected to travel and be away from home for very little, wants to be paid for time, refusing to be exploited. Also 'Strategic refusal')
- LS2 (Artists are told to eat/live off exposure/compensation, idea of starving artist is pervasive, no other professionals are required to do their work for exposure in this way)

LACK OF CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

- SM1 (Absence of dialogue, artist not regularly coming together to resolve work, helping other artists. Also 'Making Space/Making Visible')
- BM1 (Need for self-criticality in art world, too much self-congratulation, small art world)
- BM1 (Complacency in SA, a bigger structural problem that overwhelms cultural politics)
- BM1 (Refusing to take positions sometimes, needs not to be complacent)
- BM1 (Lack of criticality, audience of peers)
- TN1 (No critical engagement with painting work)
- JBr1 ('Out of Site', no serious review of the show, art critical writing is scarce in SA, straddling something in the art world that is both economic and academic)
- MP1 (People in power in art world not taking a critical position, funnelling artists to big institutions, catering to the environment, not merit of the work)
- MP1 (Academics write in paces that no one reads, no responses to posts, or offensive responses)
- MP1 (Not getting response on writing that they spent a lot of time on, not doing flashy articles, long-term work)
- MP1 (ASAI not being profiled by major publications, even after existing for 10 years)
- MP1 (No reaction to 'Luggage is Still Labelled' article, even though it was critical/contentious)
- MP1 (No real discussion of work)
- SK1 (Black artists being undermined/infantilised in writing by young White writers – see 'Exclusionary Practices'. Also 'Disrespect')
- SK1 (Writing about prominent artists is not happening. Having to produce own catalogues and commission people to write about your work. New types of engagement emerging)

SK1 (Revolutionary exhibitions are happening, but there is no money for catalogues)

SK1 (Not even well-known women of Colour are written about, processes of canonisation exclude them. Also 'Exclusionary Practices')

US2 (Industry does not support critical writing, writers do not get paid for doing it, very few publication avenues)

US2 (Being an art critic is a lonely position, making unpopular statements takes courage)

US2 (Critical writing is not an attractive career, very few opportunities to publish)

US2 (More difficult for an established artist to get critical feedback, because people tend to be flattering)

JBo2 (Very little happening in terms of writing, easy for writers to get noticed)

JBo2 (Very little critical writing on art from any demographic)

MP2 (Writing goes out, but very few people engage with it/not getting invited into the spaces of the art world)

MP2 (Art history students go on to lecture, because employment is more likely. Not many people get taken up in the sector. But there is an art press and people do write about things)

MP2 (Problems around exhibitions without publications – nobody is going to create the record for you)

MP2 (Needing to create own engagement around work – organising panel discussions)

MP2 (Black writers not coming through. Also 'Lack of Representativeness')

MP2 (Social media figures climbing, but does not translate into engagement. Having to link up with other platforms. Also 'Role of Social Media')

MP2 (Deep engagement is about growing respect and growing relationship)

JBr2 (Beyond the foremost art publication, there is no real critical engagement with art in South Africa. Reviews in newspapers are often a mere statement of what the exhibition was about)

JBr2 (Not much interest in art in broader South African society. Whose responsibility is it? Huge collective task to try and shift that)

JBr2 (Not much critical writing is happening. Period.)

AM2 (Only big names get reviewed, artists with established galleries. Initiatives to get writers to engage with emerging artists' work)

AM2 (Need for more critical feedback, need for forums for discussion of work with peers/academics)

AM2 (Needing mentors and feedback for the individual artist to progress. Link between lack of critical engagement and transformation)

SW2 (*ArtThrob* doing only a few reviews, newspapers rarely review anything, although a few do)

SW2 (Hard to make a living as a an art critic, it does not pay much and there is not much space to publish)

SW2 (Difficult to review fellow South Africans' work. Man telling her she ruined his wife's life with a bad review. Concerned about criticising people and the resulting fall-out)

SW2 (More art historians needed, artists doing the writing work)

SW2 (Very difficult for people leaving university to get critique on their work)

- SM2 (No art critics in South Africa, only commentators and writers, audience is problematic, not sophisticated visually. Also 'Issues with Audience Engagement')
- SM2 (Receiving reviews, but they are quite moderate, not something she can respond to)
- LF2 (Issues with academic writers, they are critical, but they are not critics. Write about work to support a type of reading)
- LF2 (Lack of critical engagement is due to lack of exposure and isolation for so long)
- LF2 (South African academics are much more critical and direct than their international counterparts, making lack of critical engagement paradoxical)
- BM2 (Hard to get feedback, rushing to make things, more critical culture can develop, less self-congratulation)
- BM2 (Not going to each other's shows enough, no critical discussion, more peer self-congratulation)
- BM2 (Issues with publications, *Art South Africa* not paying writers for two years)
- BM2 (Need for more critical writing by diverse groups of people and publications started by this generation)
- BN2 (Receiving comments rather than criticism, gets asked 'tiny' questions)
- BB2 (Does not get many reviews, most of the time have to ask for a review, makes you feel like you are not being taken seriously – also 'Exclusionary Practices')
- BB2 (Issues of dialogue, misunderstanding and misconceptions, 'Innovative Women' show)
- TN2 (Art writers writing about their friends or to fill a quota. No real critical writing means the conversation stops, no life after the show. There are lots of academic or critically thinking people, but they are not engaging)
- SK2 (No active engagement in the art field, have not begun to concretise art discourse in South Africa, art history conferences are banal, good writers but platforms do not work out)
- SK2 (Lack of platforms/platforms that are there have been colonised, still in the hands of a White minority)
- SK2 (Popular magazines feature artists, but they are not critical, no framing of SA art in larger discourse locally and internationally, difficult to find writings, even more difficult to find consolidated writing)
- SK2 (Even though very active during their time, an artists can fall through the cracks if there is no writing about them, Black artists, especially, suffer from this. Also 'Exclusionary Practices')
- LS2 (Getting feedback is important for feeling that you are noticed, that what you do has validity outside of your own space of creation)
- LS2 (There is critical feedback, but it could be more)
- LS2 (Needing to acknowledge different spaces and that each have their own legitimacy, community arts talk has same legitimacy as this interview)
- PS2:1 (Art world lives by sound bites, difficult to talk about work on a deep level)
- PS2:1 (Paradox, South Africa very stimulating for artists, but no corresponding talk back/feedback)
- PS2:1 (South African art becoming more like international art, but it is not supported enough by a discourse that is located in this place)

- PS2:1 (No concerted development of writing about what is actually happening in the country, institutions also to blame no art critical writing courses now, but in previous years)
- PS2:1 (Most engagement is limited to an extended sound bite, which can be used to communicate to a larger audience, but there is no other spaces for deep critical engagement)
- PS2:1 (Art writing sometimes lag behind the art itself because of the nature of scholarly writing, must look at different mode of writing, e.g. the artist interview)
- PS2:2 (Discussions of work that happens in the space between academic and public, important space in discourse in SA)
- PS2:2 (Needing to create space for deep engagement, it gets limited to extended sound bites, the cultural voice is commodified)
- PS2:2 (Culture of the extended sound bite means lots of things just get flung out there, no sustained enquiry)

ISSUES WITH AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

- US1 (A lot can be done to make galleries more inviting, person greeting at the door, telling about work, nature of work could be more accessible to different communities)
- BB1 (Audience that does not have an art background. Thinking of curating for people who do not have an art background.)
- US2 (Art for art's sake is a Western construct imposed in colonialist way. In other parts of the world function of art is different. South Africa does not have a gallery- and museum-going culture, art world needs to work within existing culture – it is not about converting the unconverted)
- US2 (How to grow an audience in a non-patronising way)
- US2 (People do not know they can enter galleries, and when they do, they do not feel comfortable there)
- US2 (Lack of art appreciation comes from lack of art education in schools, historically and in the present day. Also 'Need for Transformation of Art Education')
- JBo2 (Audience small, mostly white, but very small percentage of white audience is interested in the gallery's work)
- SW2 (Need for a more informed public)
- SW2 (People feeling intimidated about having to have an opinion)
- SM2 (Lack of art education. Visual language is not properly developed, could change the language. Very little collecting in Africa, that disadvantages the audience. Also 'Need for Transformation of Art Education')
- SM2 (No art critics in South Africa, only commentators and writers, audience is problematic, not sophisticated visually – see 'Lack of Critical Engagement')
- BM2 (Work that transforms the way we see – who is that speaking to? Is it necessary to speak to a big audience?)
- BN2 (People who did not understand art in the past are getting more involved)

NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION OF ART EDUCATION

- BB1 (Wants to be more involved in teaching, youth are disillusioned)
- SK1 (Background coming from Durban where curriculum was very transformed, then coming to Wits, not understanding what was going on, questioning White education system)
- US2 (Lack of art appreciation comes from lack of art education in schools, historically and in the present day – see ‘Issues with Audience Engagement’)
- MP2 (Universities have not changed how they work. No non-academic spaces to participate in discussion, university is a closed system)
- MP2 (Sceptic about Fine Art as a discipline, art/craft split, devalues certain work. Shift to workshops that give artists access to technology and to produce whatever they want)
- MP2 (Needing an international art history. Academics need to consider what is needed in the curriculum. Bureaucratic challenges in changing the curriculum)
- JBr2 (Art not taught in schools, maths and science is pushed, need for education on the visual)
- JBr2 (Call for having a more Africa-centred curriculum, many great photographers on continent, so this is possible)
- SW2 (Art needs to be part of the general syllabus, students to learn that it is not rarefied and closed off)
- SM2 (Artists run a business, it needs to be fully integrated in how they are trained. No conversation about money – see ‘Not Learning about Business Side of Art in Training’)
- SM2 (No childhood education in art in Black/African communities, it could change the language/how Africans receive art. Also ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)
- SM2 (Lack of art education. Visual language is not properly developed, could change the language. Very little collecting in Africa, that disadvantages the audience – see ‘Issues with Audience Engagement’)
- SM2 (Education feeds the market, which is Western., contemporary art happens in America and Europe, need more contemporary museums and commercial galleries in Africa, curators have to leave to be legitimated – see ‘Lack of Formal Support’)
- BB2 (Art still not very much understood in our culture, a lot that still needs to be done in terms of education)
- SK2 (Rhodes Must Fall/Fees Must Fall. Student unrest, remarkable, something has changed and it is not over, ‘lines in the sand were drawn’)
- SK2 (Teaches art history as an artist not as an art historian, respond to students, teaches perspectives that are relevant to her as an artist)
- SK2 (Academics have the power to decide what they teach, should take responsibility for how they are perpetuating the system, laziness, hard to do primary research for teaching)
- LS2 (Fees Must Fall/Rhodes Must Fall very indicative of transformation that needs to happen)
- PS2:1 (Student protests, questions about why so much power has been given to colonising influence)
- PS2:2 (Fatigue comes out of frustration of not being able to transform quickly enough or adequately, bureaucratic challenging in changing curricula)

- PS2:2 (Difficulties with institutional change, easier for artists to make a change, hard for academics to change courses quickly)
- PS2:2 (Lag when trying to introduce new course, difficult in institution because there are rules and consensus is required)
- PS2:2 (Needing curriculum changes and having to ask what intellectual enquiry at university actually is, having to challenge inherited categories)
- PS2:2 (Losing impetus for close reading, not economical, influence of internet, students not reading/not using libraries, this happening simultaneous with transformation of race/gender, a larger destabilising moment)
- PS2:2 (Most urgent change needed is in the academic institutions, they effect the art world)

NEEDING TO GENERATE AN INCOME

- SM1 ('Get a job', but also make your work and produce prolifically. Teaches art in high school)
- US1 (Need to supplement income, most artists teach/do commercial work and this then often takes over in the end)
- US1 (Pressure to generate an income hinders work)
- TN1 (Making painting for self to work through ideas, but also financial decision because they can be sold)
- TN1 (Effect of need to have a side job, it can take over)
- JBr1 (Appreciates position as academic, does not need to live off work, can experiment more. Also 'Working at a University')
- JBo1 (Gallery needs enough people to buy art/share vision)
- JBo1 (Collectors get access to whole lifestyle/world, cannot judge it)
- SW1 (Needing big funding for work, camera crews, etc.)
- SW1 (Needing to find funding for work, monograph book project)
- LS1 (Cannot think of making work if money is a problem, myth of the starving artist is a myth)
- LS1 (Needing to get resources together to realise a work)
- LF1 (Needing money to make work)
- BB1 (Needing sponsorship to make work. Having to do all the marketing and finances yourself, as well as the creating)
- SK1 (Having to raise funds for work and exhibitions yourself. Also 'Lack of Formal Support')
- SK1 (Incurring debt to travel to stay up to date with international developments, staying relevant. The effects of not having enough money)

NEEDING TIME AND SPACE

- AM1 (Lack of time, not having enough time in day to do everything)
- BM1 (Juggling too many things at the same time, art world desires productivity, fatigue)
- BM1 (Constraints of space and time)
- BM1 (Flexibility can mean taking on too much, being stretched too thin between projects)
- US1 (Having studio, scale of work bigger, opens up opportunities)
- US1 (Being in the zone, working well)
- US1 (Needing time to immerse self in work)
- US1 (Ideally would work like a company, people who have different roles)

- TN1 (Wanting the space to just do her work)
- TN1 (Honouring own ideas, really giving things time)
- TN1 (Residencies, having space and time to think)
- JBr1 (Residency in Loughborough, good experience, evening crits, working well with other artists there professionally and will continue to do so)
- JBr1 (Headspace taken up by administration and teaching, but sabbaticals are a luxury, can just focus on work – see ‘Working at a University’)
- JBr1 (Organising academic life, semester-ising teaching with colleague, lighter load can focus more on art-making – see ‘Working at a University’)
- JBr1 (Not so much lack of time as lack of focus, competing aspects, work and administration)
- MP1 (Taking on too much work, ‘born to suffer’, afraid if they do not do it, nothing will come of it)
- LS1 (Needing to reflect/step away after intense periods of working)
- BN1 (Between two studios, other studio too small for work)
- BN1 (Time management – lack of time kills opportunity to create, demands of other people, friends who want to hang out in his space)
- BN1 (Demands of other people who he is helping to develop their work)
- LF1 (Experimenting takes time, needing time – see ‘Playing/Experimenting’)
- LF1 (Needing headspace and time to work uninterrupted)
- BB1 (Needing a bigger space)
- SK1 (Needing consolidated time to work, constantly being short on time)
- SK1 (Not having studio space is problematic, things cannot progress/get resolves, because you cannot have them in front of you)
- PS1 (Making space for work to happen. Space of imagination)
- TN2 (Standard for self about what a ‘real artist’ does, feels like she is not serious enough, needing proper time and space – see ‘Not Having ‘Made It’ Yet’)

NOT LEARNING ABOUT THE BUSINESS SIDE OF ART IN TRAINING

- SM1 (Business side of art not discussed in training, focus on being agents of change)
- US1 (Needing to understanding the art world, business side)
- US1 (Not receiving training on the business side of things)
- SM2 (Artists run a business, it needs to be fully integrated in how they are trained. No conversation about money. Also ‘Need for Transformation of Art Education’)

GALLERY/COMMERCIAL DYNAMICS

- SM1 (Artists giving power away to galleries, cannot approach a gallery directly)
- BM1 (Constraints of the market, determines the look of the work/what can be shown)
- US1 (Working with gallery can be positive or negative, a negotiated relationship)
- US1 (Stevenson, prefers not to be approached)
- US1 (Goodman, does not mind being approached, but artists sometimes unprofessional in their approach)
- JBr1 (Commercial versus academic, not a lot of places to show work in academic sense)

JBr1 (Bad aspects to commercial, but also other aspects)

MP1 (Galleries are businesses, they are about selling work, big part of what the art world is about)

MP1 (Galleries expecting artists to produce according to formulas)

MP1 (Being uncomfortable with/avoiding business side of art world)

MP1 (Artists who are in the game, producing with the galleries for fair according to a trademark, younger artists getting pushed before they are ready. Also 'Playing the Game')

JBo1 (Support offered by the gallery, serving artists)

JBo1 (Misconceptions about galleries, galleries twisting artists' practices to make them profitable, misconception that gallery is making a lot of money)

JBo1 (Misconceptions about galleries, lack of understanding of what they do)

JBo1 (Misconceptions about galleries, *the party in the sky*)

JBo1 (Misconceptions about gallery, role of artist in own success)

JBo1 (Misconceptions about galleries, galleries cannot make an artist's career)

JBo1 (Misconceptions about gallery, seen as being hard to approach)

JBo1 (Stevenson has a good chance of surviving now that it has breached the ten year mark)

JBo1 (Gallery getting to do things institutions would usually do, not having pressure to be representative)

BN1 (Not making work with selling in mind, if you are faithful to the practice the money will come)

LF1 (Being known for what you do, difficult to make a radical change)

BB1 (Getting space in gallery is difficult, lots of artists, it is very competitive, once in gallery want to control what you do, needing more galleries)

SK1 (Not making work that sells, based on feminist epistemologies and methodologies – see 'Challenging the Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World')

SK1 (Not making work that sells, therefore does not have a gallery)

SK1 (Dependency on the commercial system, how to function outside of that)

PS1 (Gallery very supportive, intellectually engaged, sensitive and accommodating)

US2 (If you make work that sells you are in. Art world pretends to care about artists, but they do not. Shocked at how gallerists treat artists.)

US2 (Art fair system commodifies art works for high-end buyers and is devoid of the artist)

JBo2 (Artists anticipating what galleries would want from an early stage)

JBo2 (Artists second-guessing what will sell, gallery can sell anything. Having a sustainable practice, ambitious work vs. that which pays for the groceries. The latter needs the former)

JBo2 (Performance practices supplemented by commodifiable practices)

MP2 (Need for people to understand more than the commercial side of the art world, needing to study and question the whole field, understanding how it fits together)

MP2 (Auction houses have not changed. Still playing into connoisseur idea. Important in establishing value and creating an international market)

SW2 (Galleries are the most powerful players on the scene)

- SW2 (Only a percentage of what you make sells, the rest comes back to you and it has to be paid for)
- SW2 (Provocative/challenging work does not sell well – people rather want something attractive on their walls)
- SW2 (Conservative collectors, buying safe, not following own tastes and expanding. Very few collectors in the country, a lot of work goes overseas)
- SM2 (Biggest challenge is to work independently as artist without gallery representation. Not being known, because she has no gallery representation)
- SM2 (Many Black women artists working without gallery representation, skin colour is no longer currency. See ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)
- SM2 (Artists cannot approach galleries to represent them. Gallery wants to pick.)
- SM2 (Being an artist without a gallery, buyers do not trust your work, idea that gallery work has been vetted by the owner, gives it value. Hard to position yourself as a contemporary artist without a contemporary gallery)
- SM2 (Galleries are profit-making businesses, know the sensibility of their clients, sell work that fits market they are already serving, have a say in how work looks, artists have to make sacrifices if they want to work with them)
- SM2 (Artists being taken up by galleries before they have had a chance to develop/have own ideas, difficult to sustain)
- SM2 (Artists judge their ‘time’ by commercial success, what gallery they have representing them. Big museum show could also signal it – see ‘Not Having ‘Made It’ Yet)
- LF2 (Operating without a gallery, some artists choose that, but big breaks seem to come with gallery representation)
- LF2 (Lack of space, more spaces now than in past, but it is people taking matters into their own hands. Need more and different kinds of galleries)
- LF2 (Need for more galleries with different models, so people can find a place where they are comfortable)
- BM2 (Big galleries monopolise the identity of what South Africa is internationally, artists working outside gallery system and manage to travel and take part through other networks)
- BB2 (Needing more galleries so that artists can be represented)
- BB2 (Gallery space is still hard to get)
- TN2 (Needing access to raise money, Roelof van Wyk, Johannesburg Pavilion, Venice)
- SK2 (It is about your contacts and who has the money, access to platforms and opportunities structure your career, who writes about your work? Who teaches it? – see ‘Playing the Game’)
- SK2 (Young graduates taken up by galleries instead of experimenting making work that gallery wants, can be fatal later on)
- SK2 (Pressures from private galleries about the work they want to see, art field is very conservative and it hurts the scene)
- SK2 (The gallery supports primarily by selling work and giving visibility, do not contribute to discourse)

- PS2:2 (Galleries are good with instability and quick to change because they have to survive economically, economic imperative can be positive, money gives people access regardless of race, 'Black middle class', urban culture)
- PS2:2 (Commercial galleries can make things happen, museums/institutions do not have the means, too many hoops to jump through, galleries are growing because they serve another function, they take up the role of museums – see 'Lack of Formal Support')
- PS2:2 (Galleries taking up the role of museums, facilitating buying and collecting of art to institutions locally and abroad, sometimes for collectors with collections verging on public collections – see 'Lack of Formal Support')
- PS2:2 (Galleries taking up the role of institutions, producing publications, adding to the discourse, comes down to staff who are scholarly/critical thinkers – see 'Lack of Formal Support')
- PS2:2 (Galleries offering support that does not get them immediate financial gain, administrative support, articles, etc., they commit and they are not like commercial galleries elsewhere in the world)
- PS2:2 (Gallery offers a community of like-minded people to support you, artists who do not have galleries or collectives are on their own)
- De-identified (Making work outside of gallery, wary of influence of gallery)

PLAYING THE GAME

- US1 ('Playing the game', not having business acumen, understanding business side of art world)
- US1 (Figuring out how the art world works – learning how to be a player)
- US1 (The answer is understanding how to play the game)
- US1 (Talks about playing the game, but 'disrupting the working of the art market' at the same time. It's not to just join the system, it's knowing the system to beat the system)
- US1 (Making work that will last, that is attractive to a collector vs. fragile work)
- MP1 (Artists who are in the game, producing with the galleries for fair according to a trademark, younger artists getting pushed before they are ready – see 'Gallery/Commercial Dynamics')
- US2 (Not understanding the game well enough to play it)
- JBo2 (Only good to play the game if it means being pragmatic, otherwise can get lost in it)
- MP2 (Not wanting to have to go where the money is)
- SW2 (Need to be professional and get yourself out there, but must not compromise what your work is, make work to suit the market)
- LF2 (Getting yourself out there, getting noticed, being seen by the big galleries)
- LF2 (The changing game. It took a long time for a career to get established in past versus instant recognition now)
- LF2 (Back-biting, bitchiness and politics have not changed)
- BM2 (The game is part of bigger, global game, can play it with integrity and by your own rules)
- BN2 (Playing the game means knowing your story and facing it, if you do what you like it is easy to get into the game)
- BB2 (You do not have to play the game, you have the freedom to choose)

- TN2 (Got advice from older artists/gallerists or seeing what type of work sells, work about women artists of Colour 'race', 'gender' and 'family history' – this gets consumed, 'stereotypes of what we should be making' – see 'Expectations')
- TN2 (Being strategic, aligning with Afro-futurist movement, affords them visibility and mobility, can play the game in different ways, negotiate. Also 'Expectations')
- SK2 (It is about your contacts and who has the money, access to platforms and opportunities structure your career, who writes about your work? Who teaches it? Also 'Commercial/Gallery Dynamics')
- SK2 (Refusing to participate in Visual Century because mostly White writers, cannot participate without being complicit, financial and professional costs of saying no, refusing to play the game for the sake of money – see 'Strategic Refusal')

NOT HAVING 'MADE IT' YET

- SM1 ('My time' is still to come)
- BM1 (Unsure to call herself an artist)
- US2 (Trend of work has not caught on, it is not in demand)
- MP2 (Artists ASAI features are not taken up in the mainstream/ commercially)
- AM2 (Sees self as not in the art world – an outsider)
- SM2 (Artists judge their 'time' by commercial success/what gallery they have representing them. Big museum show could also signal it. Also 'Gallery/Commercial Dynamics')
- LF2 (Something is yet to come, big work is big achievement, but cannot leave it at that)
- BM2 (Does not think of self as artist – because of background in academia – but Joburg Pavilion people did)
- BB2 (Not feeling that she has 'made it' yet, work still growing, if you feel you have arrived, it stops being exciting)
- TN2 (Standard for self about what a 'real artist' does, feels like she is not serious enough, needing proper time and space. Also 'Needing time and space')
- De-identified (Feels she has not made her real work yet)

GENERATION

- JBr1 (Not being a sexy young artist)
- MP1 (In early new democracy, young, Black artists coming through, older generation left behind)
- JBo1 (Hard for older, unsuccessful artists to see younger artists going to the next level)
- LF1 (More platforms/opportunities for young artists, young artists being privileged because of transformation)
- LF1 (Easier to promote young Black artists, than older White artists)
- US2 (Young artists have more opportunities than older artists had. More access to education, universities more representative)
- MP2 (Different qualification expectations for new generation, older generation did not need them and now they are required)
- JBo2 (Shifting power dynamics. Middle-aged white, professor artist posing as young Black female artist to make himself more relevant – see 'The Politics of Representation')

- JBr2 (Has been in art for long, has had different experiences. Not a sexy, young artist, does not attract support from galleries)
- LF2 (Young, Black students becoming superstars, impact on own career as a teacher/artist)
- BN2 (Opportunities bringing new, young artists into the art world, back then there were not these opportunities, but the sanctions got loosened)

TRANSFORMING

SAYING NO/STRATEGIC REFUSAL

- SM1 (Receiving late invitation to Venice from DAC and declined it)
- SM1 (Refusing to apply for opportunities)
- SM1 Being given 'opportunity' without being paid, overseas travel, saying no to that – see 'Lack of Compensation')
- US1 (Saying no to media attention after having made work for Mandela's funeral, 'it just didn't feel right')
- TN1 (Considering withdrawing from project if other creators' voices cannot also be included)
- TN1 (Saying no to being used/tokenised in a situation, should start explaining why saying no. Also 'Exclusionary Practices')
- LF1 (Stepping back, wary of going back to art-making, reception and meaningfulness to whom?)
- SK1 (Excluding artists of Colour from the art industry and discourse, refusing to accept an all White art world – see 'Exclusionary Practices')
- US2 (Refusing to compromise integrity and behave in an arrogant way that will be respected by the art world)
- JBo2 (Saying no to charity auctions – opportunistic appropriation)
- JBo2 (Saying no to art fairs, artists' requests for exhibitions, corporate branding deals, renting out the gallery as a venue, selling work if will end up on the market quickly again – people buying to sell for quick profit)
- JBo2 (Saying no when people want to buy work just for investment's sake)
- JBo2 (Saying no to CVs coming in and auction houses wanting work to sell)
- JBo2 (Saying no to anything that uses 'exposure for the artist' as argument. Restaurants wanting to hang work for sale)
- JBo2 (Saying no to requests for discounts)
- JBo2 (Saying no to exhibitions who expect the gallery to bankroll everything)
- JBo2 (Committed to the contemporary conversation, not compromising on the level of this conversation. Could sell more art if the gallery changed the standards by which it will sell art)
- JBo2 (Artists saying no to participation in Venice, not wanting to be co-opted in South African celebratory politics)
- JBo2 (In some situations white people not speaking, 'moral silence')
- MP2 (Ambivalence to the 'art as investment' paradigm)
- MP2 (Not making use of opportunities that are overly commercial with little intellectual engagement – Late Thursdays)
- MP2 (Being tokenised, being invited to Late Thursdays because of perception that the organisation can deliver Black artists for the event.)

- Refusing to produce Black artist to perform in public See
'Exclusionary Practices')
- JBr2 (Saying no to shows/events with very little clout)
- JBr2 (Not willing to work with people where non-delivery is an issue)
- JBr2 (Saying no when makeup/context of show is not good, or if panel discussion is not well-formulated)
- SW2 (Saying no to participating for publicity, 'lucky to be included')
- SW2 (Refusing to be mistreated by overseas museums, Tracy Rose)
- SW2 (Not liking curator's concept for group show, artists asked him to change it)
- SM2 (Refusing to write proposals to be in shows, puts artist in a compromising position)
- SM2 (Turning down invitation to Venice as a 'second round' artist, invitation was to placate her after she made an issue of them not selecting any Black women)
- SM2 (People/institutions not willing to work with. Will not do anything and everything for money, needs strict control over career. Also 'Setting Own Terms')
- SM2 (Exposure as payment – no longer responds to that, refusing to be exploited – see 'Lack of Compensation')
- SM2 (Being expected to travel and be away from home for very little. Wants to be paid for time. Refusing to be exploited – see 'Lack of Compensation')
- LF2 (Fear of being misread, taking on 'vernacular' and 'Whiteness', certain things should not be taken on – see 'Representing Others')
- LF2 (Not taking things on if they will not be worth it in the long term)
- LF2 (Saying no when not feeling comfortable ethically)
- BM2 (Refusing to perform 'South Africanness' as expected – also 'Expectations')
- BM2 (Older White artists need to hold back a bit, do not need more visibility)
- BM2 (People should not just take 'opportunities' to the detriment of structural change, should say no or try to reshape the project)
- BM2 (Refusing labelling and opportunism)
- BM2 (Being in a position to say no is also being embedded in a position of power)
- BM2 (Refusing to be seen as an African artist, not applying for things, of being part of show and spaces. Not just 'holding back', but also distancing oneself)
- BM2 (Reusing commodification, Centre for Historical Reenactments)
- BN2 (Turning things down when does not have full vision/energy for it, 'you can't take on everything', getting piled up with a lot of stuff)
- BB2 (Saying no if going to be misrepresented)
- TN2 (Resisting project that was not clear, having a conversation and reshaping the project – also 'Setting the Terms')
- TN2 (Saying no to being instrumentalised and tokenised)
- TN2 (Saying no when organisation is unethical, makeup of group is weird, or just a bad feeling)
- TN2 (Instance of Black academics/thinkers/artists refusing to be part of a conference. Resisting being part of project means that project loses credibility, helps to create change)
- TN2 (It is about being proactive and resisting)

- SK2 (Speaking out against the White field everything closes off for you, Khwezi Gule refusing to speak at Cape Town art fair because very few other Black speakers)
- SK2 (Refusing to participate in *Visual Century* book project because mostly White writers, cannot participate without being complicit, financial and professional costs of saying no, refusing to play the game for the sake of money. Also 'Playing the Game')
- PS2:2 (Saying no when situation is dubious and could be exploitative, also when people just want to put her name to it)
- PS2:2 (Saying no to auctions, people just want any work to sell, she does not want just anything to go out there)
- PS2:2 (In apartheid years said no to state representative exhibitions, part of artists who signed a pledge not to participate in state events)
- De-identified (Important to say no to things sometimes, too many White voices, stepping back)
- De-identified (Refusing to be only woman of Colour on project, bringing on people, tripling the amount of women of Colour involved – see 'Strategic Inclusion')

STRATEGIC INCLUSION

- JBo1 (Bringing in young artists, coming up with project focused on engaging young artists, engaging with young artists outside gallery's comfort zone. See 'Making Space/Making Visible')
- BN1 (Sharing, giving one another opportunities)
- JBo2 (Levelling the playing field. Giving more financial support to artists who need it on the basis of transformation)
- JBo2 (Making network available to artists as gallery)
- JBr2 (Wanting others to have a voice in work as well, working collaboratively to make that space – see 'Representation')
- JBr2 (Interventions for student retention, mentoring, counselling)
- BN2 (Doing workshops together as friends/artists, sharing ideas and talking, no censorship/judging. Also 'Informal Support')
- BN2 (Making work with friends, no individual works on one piece, some are big artists, some are young. Also 'Informal Support')
- TN2 (Working together as Black woman artists in art world that is very competitive, promote each other and share what they have, 'radical sharing' – see 'Challenging traditional norms and forms of the art world')
- SK2 (Being fixed in essentialist ways for curating only work of women of Colour for project – see 'Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement')
- De-identified (Refusing to be only woman of Colour on project bring on people, tripling the amount of women of Colour involved. Also 'Strategic Refusal')

SETTING THE TERMS

- SM1 (Setting standards for self, how to enter spaces and negotiate them)
- SM1 (Will work with gallery only on own terms, artists give a lot of power away)
- US1 (Taking back power, many decisions beyond the power of the artist, not using the right to have a say, artist can direct where work goes)
- US1 (Artists need to recognise the power that they have)

- SM2 (People/institutions not willing to work with. Will not do anything and everything for money, needs strict control over career – see ‘Strategic Refusal’)
- BM2 (Young generation of artists, not cynical, but self-critical, want things to change, making own work, finding own way)
- BN2 (Needing to present identity in own way, wanting people to receive the message)
- TN2 (Resisting project that was not clear, having a conversation and reshaping the project – see ‘Strategic Refusal’)

INFORMAL SUPPORT

- SM1 (Supportive partner)
- AM1 (Informal support from family/friends/teachers)
- BM1 (Conversations with other people supports work)
- US1 (Husband is supportive, understands that what she does is valuable to her)
- TN1 (Partner supports her work)
- TN1 (Partner gives her honest feedback on her work)
- TN1 (It is important to create your own community, sharing things with people whose ideas and opinions you trust)
- JBr1 (Colleagues give her input on her work)
- JBr1 (Working with mentors)
- LS1 (Support from family, grandfather paying for university education, family supporting and accepting her choices, even if they did not understand it)
- LS1 (Support from other artists)
- LS1 (Supportive partner)
- LF1 (Mentors, people with whom a relationship has been established)
- BB1 (Business connection friend in Johannesburg that helps to think about selling work)
- BB1 (Support from lecturers at art school, giving you the right contacts)
- SK1 (Supportive partner, network of Black women friends, support from family)
- SK1 (Supportive partner, helping with writing by editing)
- SK1 (Supportive partner, managing household when working flat out)
- SK1 (Support from parents/family, father driving around paintings, paintings drying in the house)
- SK1 (Supportive high school art teacher – convincing mother to let her study art, supporting parents, cousins)
- SK1 (Random acts of kindness. Supportive lecturer, aunts, various people)
- SK1 (Support from other women, lecturers, academic women)
- US2 (Supportive husband doing a lot in terms of childcare. Needing a support system)
- JBo2 (Finding intellectual allies)
- AM2 (Husband supporting move into art career)
- AM2 (Supportive lecturers, Pretoria as a nurturing environment)
- AM2 (Curator providing insights that shaped her thinking about her work)
- AM2 (Support through media coverage, feedback from lecturers, curators)
- SW2 (Artists supporting one another, sense of comradeship under South African artists)
- BN2 (Doing workshops together as friends/artists, sharing ideas and talking, no censorship/judging – see ‘Strategic Inclusion’)

- BN2 (Making work with friends, no individual works on one piece, some are big artists, some are young – see ‘Strategic Inclusion’. Also ‘Challenging the Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World’)
- BN2 (Receiving encouragement from people, meeting Samuel L. Jackson, son building him up)
- SK2 (Students being supported by family and partners when putting up final show. Amos Letsoalo getting help from Fieke Ainslie in Johannesburg)
- SK2 (Ubuntu, South African people are very caring, help out in multitude of ways)

CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL NORMS AND FORMS OF THE ART WORLD

- BM1 (Creating visual book that can circulate into the spaces where the research comes from)
- BM1 (Weary of making art for peers, looking for other forms than the exhibition)
- US1 (‘Sometimes a Madam, Sometimes an Eve’ idea for work, making a duplicate sculpture of reclining nudes and donating to models who are domestic workers)
- US1 (Preferring public art, outside of gallery space, wider audience, not the art audience, devoid of criticisms of the art world)
- US1 (Domestic workers receiving work that is valued high – ‘disrupting the workings of the art market’)
- US1 (Playing the game in a subversive way, subverting the art world)
- TN1 (Collaborative film-making, how to share ownership and bring in voices of those involved/community)
- TN1 (Idea of Art being really radical, intangible/cannot be sold, looks nothing like art)
- JBr1 (Making a book that will go with work on the wall for ‘At Sea’ project)
- JBr1 (Wondering about artwork that goes into gallery, ‘Dyke Career Calendar’ went out into world as a calendar, ‘Terminal’ project, artworks on street posts, taken for hardboard and used by homeless people)
- JBr1 (Making ‘publicly sited’ work, shown on billboards and street poles)
- MP1 (ASAI challenging the traditional validation system for artists through how they do profiles on their website)
- LS1 (Performance work showing a Black woman artist working)
- LS1 (Reclaiming White gallery space as a Black woman as a radical act. Also ‘Making Space/Making Visible’)
- BN1 (Claiming space. Outspoken Black artist as a role model for younger people.)
- BN1 (Using other artists’ work in his work, ‘privately collaborating’, layering their work in, invisible to naked eye)
- BN1 (Using other artists’ work in his work, ‘privately collaborating’, wanting to push them forward, heaviness of ideas)
- BN1 (Collaging art magazines, collaborating with those stories)
- BB1 (Showcasing the work of Black women artists, making Black women artists visible)
- SK1 (Challenging the art world after being silenced. Finding own voice)

- SK1 (Not making work that sells, based on feminist epistemologies and methodologies. Also 'Gallery/Commercial Dynamics')
- US2 (Playing the game in a subversive way, subverting the art world)
- JBo2 (Titling work in one's mother tongue)
- MP2 (Questioning the disproportionate value given to Venice as an institution. Old model of external validation in Europe/US)
- JBr2 (Making work that would move beyond the gallery space into the world. 'A Dyke Career Calendar')
- JBr2 (The transformative potential of photography/social media, everyone now has access to a camera on their phone. Also 'Role of Social Media')
- SM2 (Keeping on working as an independent artist, making things happen on her own. Also 'Making Work Regardless')
- BM2 (Question who art is made for, making book instead of show, can circulate to another kind of audience, more can be done to build new audiences)
- BN2 (Putting Africa in the centre of the art world, 'art started here')
- BN2 (International exchanges/opportunities create intersections of different ideas from different people, can bring peace and unity)
- BN2 (Making work with friends, no individual works on one piece, some art big artists, some are young – see 'Strategic Inclusion')
- BN2 (Making work as Black artists, succeeding in art world, makes other people believe that can do it too)
- TN2 (Making work that challenges sole authorship of Boarder Farm film project)
- TN2 (Working together as Black woman artists in art world that is very competitive, promote each other and share what they have, 'radical sharing'. Also 'Strategic Inclusion')
- LS2 (Viewing performance work as sellable)
- LS2 (White cube gallery space, Black people made to feel they do not belong in White spaces, suburbs versus ghettos, working in that space is subverting this)
- PS2:2 (Nicholas Hlobo using Xhosa titles for work, people struggle with it, but it makes them think about it)
- PS2:2 (Using Xhosa (Nicholas Hlobo) and Sotho (Lerato Shadi) titles for work, not only cultural affirmation, but also resisting possession of their practices, resisting commodification)
- PS2:2 (Young Black artists working with galleries and finding this part of the art world freer than the institutions, able to go out and do things in broader art world, being agents of change)
- PS2:2 (Contributing to change by being a practising artist in an academic institution, working through complexity of being a SA artist via an art practice, availability to students)
- PS2:2 (Being a practising artist in an academic institution, showing students that they can have self-doubt, but also be critically ambitious, showing some indication of success with this)
- PS2:2 (Serving as an example for young woman artists that it is possible to have a sustained critical practices over many decades)
- PS2:2 (Being a practicing artist at an academic institution that prioritises critical practice, not just ticking boxes)

WALKING/BEING IN SPACE

- SM1 (Walking in neighbourhood everyday in performance as Theodora)
- SM1 (Walking the streets as source for creating more work)
- AM1 (Walking as a ritual in making work)
- BN1 (Walking the city)

MAKING SPACE/MAKING VISIBLE

- SM1 (Absence of dialogue, artist not regularly coming together to resolve work, helping other artists – see ‘Lack of Critical Engagement’)
- BM1 (Creating an affective space, having a spatially conscious practice)
- BM1 (Open up affective space where something can be experienced, not told)
- BM1 (Making interventions in the exhibition space)
- TN1 (Imagining a better, inclusive world and making room for it in art, creating new spaces for a new type of imagining. Also ‘Imagination/ Creative Freedom’)
- JBr1 (Making space for other people in projects)
- MP1 (Wanting to re-write international art history – see ‘Working with History’)
- MP1 (Re-writing art history, recognising colonialism, value people for what they are doing – see ‘Working with History’)
- MP1 (Facilitating space to speak for artists)
- JBo1 (Bringing in young artists, coming up with project focused on engaging young artists, engaging with young artists outside gallery’s comfort zone Also ‘Strategic Inclusion’)
- JBo1 (Holding space for artists to participate on highest level of the global art world)
- SW1 (Making space for viewer’s own sense-making)
- SW1 (Making the inaudible audible, making the unseen seen through artwork)
- SW1 (Allowing for subjects’ reasons for doing things, Eugene de Kock)
- LS1 (Reclaiming White gallery space as a Black woman as a radical act – see ‘Challenging Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World’)
- BN1 (Art opening up a space for the viewer)
- BN1 (Making space for viewer to make own interpretation)
- BN1 (Mentoring, helping people to develop what they have)
- LF1 (Making space for viewers own reading of work, connections through shared histories)
- SK1 (Making visible what is not seen, the resilience of poor people)
- SK1 (Keeping the space open for the viewer’s own reading)
- SK1 (Mentoring students to raise up a good generation of writers)
- PS1 (Creating an affective space through video work)
- PS1 (Mentoring, sharing space of doubt with students. Also ‘Playing/ Experimenting’)
- MP2 (Making spaces for discussion, drawing people in)
- JBr2 (Organising financial support for Black, woman photographer in third year, mentoring students)
- JBr2 (Making lesbian identity visible through work)
- JBr2 (Making visible, making lesbian relationships normal through work)
- BM2 (Keleketla! Library as work that opens up a new social/cultural space, occupied by whole other set of ideas/people)
- BN2 (Mentoring, becoming a role model, encouraging the youth to grow)

- BN2 (Encouraging younger artists)
- BB2 (Making visible, role of artists to make people see things in a slightly different way, to create dialogue)
- TN2 (Artist as purveyor of voices of others)
- TN2 (Getting involved with projects that will be beneficial to other/young artists who do not have access)
- TN2 (People making own spaces of transformation where they can)
- LS2 (Making labour visible through performance)

WORKING THROUGH, REPETITION, ACCUMULATION

- SM1 (Walking the same route everyday, building up story)
- SM1 (Needing to acquire more dresses for performance, enlarging the experience)
- AM1 (Walking as routine)
- AM1 (Sitting and stitching for long periods of time, shoulder injury)
- AM1 (Embroidery as a way of processing her mother's illness)
- AM1 (Inheriting her mother's saris, metaphor for Indian identity, exploring history of particular saris)
- BM1 (*Not No Place* book project, walking the same route, revisiting sites)
- BM1 (Accumulating a lot of material, a lot of reading, looking, hard work)
- BM1 (A lot of accumulated objects, storage is a problem)
- SW1 (Accumulating material for work)
- LS1 (Accumulating material for work, reading a lot, holding an idea inside for a long time, wall of ideas in studio)
- LF1 (Re-doing work, getting clearer on what is wanted)
- SK1 (Working through. Hatching ideas over a long period of time. Trying things out, doing)
- PS1 (Collecting still found footage from flea markets in Greece)
- AM2 (Working through. Art as cathartic process, therapeutic)
- AM2 (Working through. Entry into art world related to mother's illness.)
- SM2 (Collecting red dresses for the performance, wants 150 dresses)

WORKING WITH HISTORY

- SM1 (Theodora/mother, women coming to Joburg. Responding to narratives of women in family)
- AM1 (Bringing past into present, acknowledging history, Miriam Makeba)
- TN1 (Working with structures, edifices of things, structures of history)
- MP1 (Wanting to re-write international art history. Also 'Challenging the Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World')
- MP1 (Re-writing art history, recognising colonialism, value people for what they are doing. Also 'Challenging the Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World')
- SW1 (Work comprising series of conversations with veteran women activists from Mandela generation and their granddaughters)
- LS1 (Iniva performance, had history of London in mind, human zoos, Sarah Baartman)
- LS1 (The process of writing one's own history as a Black person, how Black history has been erased, Whiteness has amnesia when it comes to Black history – her performance work)
- LF1 (Looking at coloniser-colonised relationship)
- LF1 (Colonial legacies, can you shed things that have been ingrained in you? Position of White people)

- SK1 (Lacemaking as medium, working with family history, creating inter-generational narratives)
- PS1 (Family history, father in Greece, Greek civil war)
- AM2 (Intertwining South African history and personal history, using the past as a beacon to express hope)
- AM2 (Needing to remember where we have come from. First of the generation to experience this degree of freedom)
- AM2 (Making the connection to Black women in South Africa, what their experiences would have been, Brenda Fassie)
- AM2 (Challenges and misconceptions of working with struggle icons)
- AM2 (Curator making link between the freedom women figures in work strived for and her own personal freedom)
- AM2 (Needing to remember what individuals sacrificed for us to be free. Using South African archive as starting point and inspiration for works)
- AM2 (Working with national emblem, protea, not patriotic, ancient flower that is going extinct, using late mother's saris to collage)
- SW2 (Strong tradition of history of social art that looks at social issues in the country)
- SM2 (Overwhelming, intriguing, interesting, huge archive, difficult not to respond to it)
- LF2 (Aware of position as White woman and the history that contributed to that, working through one's own, personal history. Also 'Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement')
- LF2 (Hauntedness of the past, some things are still striking)
- LF2 (Encouraging personal experience and personal history to be expressed in teaching)
- BM2 (Trying to make sense of things for self, work needed on minor histories without packaging them)
- BM2 (The obsession with apartheid is a problematic self-expectation)
- BN2 (History will always be there, need to find a proper way to represent it, not getting stuck in one thing, also have to think about today, need to appreciate whatever moment we get to talk to each other)
- BB2 (Working with history can be healing, but we need to move forward, we cannot be stuck)
- TN2 (Anxiety about history/truths being lost of people who lived in exile, father. Our history needs nuancing, right now it is packaged)

MAKING WORK REGARDLESS

- SM1 (No funding, no gallery, keeps on producing)
- US1 ('Forgiveness' work and bureaucratic issues, but making work regardless)
- TN1 (There is so little support that it is miraculous that anyone manages to stay in the scene, stifles creativity)
- JBr1 (Activist work not supported by university, pressure to produce recognisable research outputs, does activist work in any way. Also 'Working at a University')
- SW1 (Making work despite, very little government support, very small market, no rich gallerists)
- SM2 (Doing own administration, funding work out of own pocket. Also 'Lack of Administrative Support')

- SM2 (Having a profile takes a lot of work, have to be visible, not having a gallery, relying on social media. Also 'Role of Social Media')
- SM2 (Keeping on working as an independent artist, making things happen on her own – see 'Challenging the Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World')
- SK2 (Lack of formal support results in resilience and artists not being swayed by the market, people make what they like – see 'Lack of Formal Support')
- SK2 (People are doing things without a lot of money, it takes talent, skill and wisdom, which SA has in abundance)
- De-identified (Making work regardless of having gallery representation)

COMPELLED TO MAKE WORK

- AM1 (Deriving joy from work, having inner drive)
- AM1 (If not making work, feels like something is missing)
- AM1 (Immense sense of fulfilment and joy from work, own passion supports her work)
- US1 (Getting physically ill when not making work)
- US1 (Inner drive, being in the zone, commitment to chosen role)
- US1 (Being a zealous maker, getting excited)
- TN1 (Supporting own practice in various ways, trusting herself)
- JBr1 (Drive to make art sometimes comes from a technical interest)
- JBr1 (Compulsion to make work, interest in exploring technical things – see 'Playing/Experimenting')
- JBr1 (Making work with anger as a motivating force – see 'Making Work in Response')
- LS1 (Starting out work with 'something that is really bothering me'. Also 'Making Work in Response')
- BN1 (Inner drive, soul is sold to art, does not want to do anything else)
- BN1 (Loving art, might be able to make a change)
- BN1 (Self motivation, values art-making highly)
- LF1 (Art-making comes more natural than writing – not a writer, but an artist who writes)
- BB1 (Getting healed through making work, feeling sick if not making work, emotionally unwell)
- SK1 (Anger as driving force to disrupt normative social scripting)
- US2 (Inner drive, being in the zone in the studio)
- AM2 (Missing embroidery after getting tendonitis)
- AM2 (Loving work, fun and challenging, work gives fulfilment, sadness when work is done)

CREATIVE FREEDOM/IMAGINATION

- AM1 (Work is unique, gives freedom, nothing to compare it to)
- AM1 (Creative freedom, nothing to compare with)
- BM1 (Intuitive/associative processes, proposing forms, generating form)
- US1 (Seeing many wonderful possibilities, being an eternal optimist)
- TN1 (Imagining a better, inclusive world and making room for it in art, creating new spaces for a new type of imagining – see 'Making Space/Making Visible')
- JBo1 (Buyers looking for access to imagination, being part of the journey of imagination)

- BN1 (Doing what he likes in art, making from the heart, having to educate himself, universe leading)
- BN1 (Free space in the mind, work creates itself)
- BN1 (Keeping the mind dancing)
- BN1 (Respecting the creative mind of the artist, 'Visionary Dancer')
- BB1 (Expectation to produce a certain type of work as a Black woman artist, taking creative freedom to tackle any issue – see 'Expectations')
- BB1 (Artists transform because of imagination)
- PS1 (Working with chance. Never knowing what is going to happen. Setting the conditions for something to happen)
- PS1 (Breaking the mould, rebellion)
- MP2 (Value work that has deep level of engagement with one's position in time and place, but cannot prescribe an aesthetic or themes)
- JBr2 (Feels free to do things. Has worked in many visual languages. Being artist employed as an academic gives freedom to try things out)
- AM2 (Medium of thread and embroidery as liberating and unrestricted)
- SW2 (Freedom to work across disciplines. Technology has also created more freedom)
- SW2 (Artists should make work about what interests them the most)
- SM2 (Not needing to feed a gallery, work is unrestricted and open)
- LF2 (Bound by expectations that she set up herself being an academic and artist, expectations by institution, difficult to break out of those, perhaps under an alias)
- LF2 (Feels free to use whatever medium conveys the concept of the work best, does not have to be a master of a medium, that is an old way of thinking)
- BM2 (Cautious to take on anything, project must be able to grow and be flexible in its structure, able to respond to criticism in itself, not wanting to exhibit in commercial gallery)
- BN2 (By being an artist, can tell own story and in own way through visionary thinking)
- BN2 (Having a lot of freedom in work, 'I do what I like')
- BB2 (Transformation means having the freedom to express ourselves without censorship)
- TN2 (Venice film, very personal, making work just for self, dealing with questions important to her, not worried how it will fit into soothing else)
- SK2 (Refusing to care what people say about the work, makes work for herself and because she has something to say, making work for the time limits its longevity)
- SK2 (Have to understand context that people are working in, issues with access to internet/access to studio spaces are why South Africans are not more adventurous)

PLAYING/EXPERIMENTING

- US1 (Playing, then it comes together)
- TN1 (Playful in collaborative performance with Pamela Sunstrum, but serious narrative)
- TN1 (Playfulness, need to experiment)
- JBr1 (Wanting to try out possibilities of working in book-form, conceptualising it as an artwork)
- JBr1 (Working things out by doing)

- JBr1 (Compulsion to make work, interest in exploring technical things. Also 'Compelled to Make Work')
- LF1 (Experimenting takes time, needing time. Also 'Needing Time/Space')
- LF1 (Playing is easier when it is just you working on the art)
- BB1 (Not planning so rigidly, allowing work to transform as it develops)
- SK1 (Playing with identity)
- PS1 (Mentoring, sharing space of doubt with students – see 'Making Space/Making Visible')
- AM2 (Calls to participate in exhibitions are often the reason why an artwork exists. Opportunity to explore the self, play, learn and discover)

GENERAL CODES

HAVING A WORK ETHIC/WORKING CONSISTENTLY

- SM1 (Consistent routine every day)
- TN1 (Ideal day, working in a structured way, taking practice more seriously)
- TN1 (Being specific about how she works, taking practice much more seriously)
- SW1 (Structuring her workday)
- PS1 (Method of immersion, being in the material, long hours of immersion)

WORKING AT A UNIVERSITY

- BM1 (University both facilitates and hinders work, it is a good home, but too busy)
- JBr1 (Activist work not supported by university, pressure to produce recognisable research outputs, does activist work in any way – see 'Making Work Regardless')
- JBr1 (Appreciates position as academic, does not need to live off work, can experiment more – see 'Needing to Generate an Income')
- JBr1 (Headspace taken up by administration and teaching, but sabbaticals are a luxury, can just focus on work. Also 'Needing Time/Space')
- JBr1 (Organising academic life, semester-ising teaching with colleague, lighter load can focus more on art-making. Also 'Needing Time/Space')
- JBr1 (Support work, logistics, having a research fund/bond from which to buy what is needed)
- JBr1 (Academic work supports artistic work)
- MP1 (ASAI being based at UCT informally, collaborated on projects)
- MP1 (Negotiating universities, give and take relationship)
- MP1 (Could formalise and attach to university for financial reasons, but trying to stay independent)
- MP1 (Getting PhD to be able to apply for funding from institution. Needing PhD to give ASAI more capacity. Having to claim right to call yourself an art historian)
- LF1 (Academic responsibilities compounding, squeezing out time for art-making)
- LF1 (Time constraints with workload, wary of spending time on art-making that will not pay off in the end)
- LF1 (Art and research becomes conflated)

- LF1 (Working with university, work does not have to sell, alternative work is produced)
- LF1 (Difficult to sustain producing work)
- LF1 (Teaching and making art difficult, expected to take on more and more responsibility/work)
- LF1 (Pressure to produce research outputs versus artistic outputs)
- JBr2 (Salary covers needs, not needing to make money from art work. Access to research finding – contributes to art-making)
- JBr2 (Playing the academic game, pressure to show work outside of the country)
- LF2 (International recognition is more valued than local recognition)
- LF2 (Goals/markers of achievement that signal you carry weight in your academic field)
- BM2 (Can carve out own space, horizontal department, good place to think and be)

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- MP2 (Social media figures climbing, but does not translate into engagement. Having to link up with other platforms – see ‘Lack of Critical Engagement’)
- JBr2 (The transformative potential of photography/social media, everyone now has access to a camera on their phone – see ‘Challenging the Traditional Norms and Forms of the Art World’)
- SM2 (Having a profile takes a lot of work, have to be visible, not having a gallery, relying on social media – see ‘Making Work Regardless’)
- BN2 (Social media can facilitate engagement and bring artists closer to what they want)
- BB2 (Internet has changed things a lot, can use that to market yourself)

RESPONSES TO THE INTERVIEW

- AM1 (Interview creating opportunity to reflect on own work)
- BM1 (Questions were surprising, specificity)
- TN1 (Questions helped her to think about things in a different way)
- MP1 (Valued the opportunity to elaborate)
- LS1 (Difficult questions, too broad, finding it difficult to answer)
- LS1 (Broad questions, researcher’s own position, needs to contextualise questions about racism in own privilege)
- BB1 (Interview creating reflective space)
- PS1 (Human engagement versus sound bites, long conversations)
- JBo2 (Supportive of work, even if not knowing where it is going)
- MP2 (Cross-referencing of other interviews)
- AM2 (Taking a while to warm up)
- AM2 (Found the second interview’s questions difficult, not knowing all the official statistics, etc.)
- LF2 (Wary of speaking in generalisations)
- TN2 (Interview as safe space to articulate self)
- LS2 (Being asked to position self as Black female whether directly or indirectly, also in this study, people who have been othered are asked to deal with race, not the other side of the coin – see ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)
- LS2 (Your embodiment of gender and race matters in a scientific context – also here as interviewer and interviewee – wary of the legacies of the

academic context and White knowledge production – see ‘Awareness of Race/Gender Entanglement’)

PS2:1 (Domestic life is part of it, trying to have an embodied conversation over Skype, interview is not a clinical thing)

PS2:1 (Interviewing to find something out, not coming to get things confirmed)