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**OBLIQUE FIGURES:  
Representations of Islam  
in South African Media and Culture**

by

**Gabeba Baderoun**

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**Play,  
Or, Watching a Film about Muslim Boys**

I want to slow them down.

I am not looking  
for one face, or one  
human voice. I want  
to stand close  
to their sameness, listen  
for the turns  
in their words, learn  
what voluminous anguish  
they have pitted their certainty against.

Prayer is a ligament  
on which their skin hangs. Yet,  
strung tautly between two posts,  
every cord,  
despite itself,  
has a curve of play.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baderoon, Gabeba, *Feminist Studies* (2003 :639)

## ABSTRACT

In 1996 stories in South African newspapers about the group Pagad articulated a new vision of Islam. In this thesis I conduct a long reading of the ways in which Islam has been represented in South Africa to provide a context for analysing the Pagad stories. Drawing on Edward Said's Orientalism and later elaborations that emphasise gender, the thesis is attentive to the latent weight of fantasies of 'race' on non-fictional representations.

In the introduction I look at the use of the offensive word 'kaffir' in colonial South Africa and contend that, in the context of slavery and the displacement of indigenous people, the proliferating use of the term functioned to recast indigeneity as misplaced and unfit, facilitating settler claims to the land. Through the example of this deformation of a word originally drawn from Islam, I show how the meanings and experiences of Islam are transformed by specific circumstances and histories.

Islam arrived in South Africa when Dutch colonists brought slaves and servants to the Cape from 1658. The context of slavery and colonial settlement is crucial to the way Islam has been represented in South Africa. Muslim slaves were characterized as industrious, placid and picturesque. I contend in analyses of nineteenth century landscape paintings that the figure of the 'Malay' played a role in discursively securing a settler identity in the Cape Colony. This occurred through their 'oblique' positioning near the edge of the frame, where they appear to certify the boundaries of the settled space of the colony. I follow these readings of the picturesque vision of Islam by exploring instances of its underside - the discourse of oriental fanaticism.

In twentieth century texts, I examine the function that Muslims fulfilled as part of the 'fluid middle' of colouredness, the category used to stabilise the fiction of racial hierarchies in South Africa. I argue that whereas colouredness was seen in the dominant apartheid discourse to articulate 'lack', 'residue', and 'mixture', by contrast, 'Malays' were viewed as offering a plenitude of detail, history and purity. I argue that this benign view is related to the role outlined above.

Following Michel Foucault's theory of archive as a notion that mandates the totality of what might be said about a subject, I find different ways of speaking about Islam in overlooked and 'insignificant' places such as cookbooks, jokes and stories and, through them, explore interior and resistant meanings.

In the thesis I conduct detailed readings of three series of stories in the media: the 1886 cemetery uprisings in Cape Town, the Pagad coverage in 1996 and the events of 11 September 2001. I examine the visual patterns and the exclusions that emerge in these news stories. In chapter eight I explore works from theatre, conceptual art and poetry that re-imagine Islam in South Africa. In the analyses I show how art can use familiar elements in radically different ways and bring multiple possibilities into being, including simultaneities and disavowals. I consider the prospect that art might presage and drive complex new visions of Islam in South Africa.

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**For My Father and Mother,  
Abass Baderoon and Nasheba Jardine**

**For those in the documents,  
and those who have left no traces.**

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

'Africa was not a new world'(Coetzee 1988: 2). J. M. Coetzee's formulation of European settlers' view of the South African landscape ascribes its unsettling quality to a refusal to be blank and inscribable, therefore denying a settler fantasy of a new Eden. Instead, for the settlers, the landscape insistently conveyed history and anteriority, and thus evoked a sense of themselves as temporary, newcomers, passing (8). Yet, by the end of the nineteenth century, history textbooks in the South African colonial territories articulated a different vision of the land: that its history began in 1652 with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck, the Dutch commander of the provisioning outpost established at the Cape (Witz 2000: 324). This was a rhetorical declaration of settler belonging so profound that nothing existed before. How was it achieved? I argue that, along with the brute power of war, displacement and genocide, it was also realized through a discursive mechanism which named the details of the landscape and people who preceded European settlement as profoundly other, as lacking in fit and significance. This Adamic project of naming, I contend, is recounted in the nine pages in the Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles (1996) that delineate the meanings and usage of the most notorious word in South African history, known most pointedly from its license of violence towards Blacks during apartheid, but used and elaborated during the colonial period.<sup>2</sup> The word is 'kaffir'.

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<sup>1</sup> A general note: I use the Harvard method of referencing in the thesis, and page references in the text apply to the author and date just cited. Original spelling is retained in all quotations. Additionally, in the case of online articles, references in parenthesis within the text will substitute the word 'online' for page number, for example: (Samie 2003: online). With interviews, references in the text will be as follows: (Kozain 2000: interview). Full details are provided in the bibliography, which, for clarity, consists of three sections: (1) a section containing primary material for the chapters in which I analyse the media (2) a section listing interviews and (3) the largest is the general listing of secondary material. I have used underlining rather than italics for titles, and italics only in the quotations that appear at the beginning of each chapter or section. In the latter italicised quotation, book titles are not italicised.

<sup>2</sup> Because of the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, the sensitive matter of racial terminology still compels attention in South Africa. Which terms to use is a political choice. Racial categories that had been deployed to discriminate against people under Apartheid, such as 'coloured', 'Indian', 'Malay' and 'African', are used today with varying meanings and tones. The word 'coloured', for instance, has been retheorized and claimed for a nuanced and progressive use (see Erasmus 2001). In the thesis I use the term 'Black', with an upper case 'b', to refer to people previously classified as 'African', 'coloured', and 'Indian'. I reject the factuality of 'race' and see the term 'Black' as a resistant political identity claimed by people who were the subjects of oppression under apartheid. I use the term 'white' with a lower case 'w'.

'kaffir' noun and adjective. Offensive in all senses and combinations. Also with initial capital, and (formerly) cafar, caffer, caff(f)ir, caffre(e), cafre, kaffer, kaffre. [ad. Arabic kafir infidel. The form kaffer is influenced by Dutch (and subsequently Afrikaans).], The Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles 1996:342.

As the Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles (henceforth DSAE) conveys, 'kaffir' is a comprehensively abusive word used to denote Black people in South Africa, exemplary of the violent disavowal during apartheid of Black people's humanity.<sup>3</sup> Offensive to the extent of being unsayable today (in fact, its use constitutes a hate crime in South Africa),<sup>4</sup> entries in the DSAE show that even during the colonial period there was an awareness of resistance to the use of the term by people for whom it was used (1b and 2a: 342). The word is unpardonably painful and violent and I wish to give it neither currency nor recuperation here. However, because of the language from which it is derived (and, as I show below, from whose usage it has widely departed), the provenance of the word is relevant to this thesis.

The word 'kaffir' is derived from the Arabic word for non-believer or infidel, often rendered in English as 'kafir' (all transliterated words of Arabic origin in English are approximations, due to the non-congruence of English and Arabic script).<sup>5</sup> In Islam the root word of kafir means closed, denoting someone who has closed his or her heart from

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<sup>3</sup> Selected instances of the use of 'kaffir' in South Africa can be seen in the holdings of the Mayibuye Photographic Centre at the University of the Western Cape which contains a press photograph of a sign saying 'Any kaffir caught trespassing will be shot'. The kwaito singer Arthur Mafokate's "Kaffir", released in 1995, mocks white South Africans' use of derogatory names for blacks: 'Boss don't call me a kaffir. Can't you see that I'm trying?/Can't you see that I'm rushing around (busy)?/When I wash myself he calls me a kaffir/I don't come from the devil/Don't call me a kaffir/That lazy kaffir/You won't like it if I call you baboon'.

<sup>4</sup> The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000 declares the use of words such as 'kaffir', 'hotnot' and 'coolie' as hate speech. See BBC News, (2000) 'South Africa bans discrimination'.

<sup>5</sup> My name, Gabeba Baderoon, is an example of the varied ways Arabic words can be spelled in English. The name is spelled Habiba or Habeebah in other parts of South Africa (and other parts of the Muslim world, as people from North Africa, Indonesia and Europe have pointed out to me). The specificity of the Cape spelling is due to the appearance of the soft 'g' sound in Afrikaans, the language which developed as a slave Creole in the Cape, which impacted the pronunciation of Arabic spoken there. The soft 'g' comes from Khoisan languages. (My first name means 'Beloved' or 'Friend' and my surname means 'Full moon'.)

the truth constituted by Islam (Qibtiyah 2004: interview).<sup>6</sup> Derived from this root, the general meaning of 'kafir' is 'non-Muslim', who are seen to deny the truth of Islam.<sup>7</sup> With a Muslim presence dating from 1658 when the Dutch brought Muslims to the Cape as slaves and servants, it is reasonable to assume that Islam in South Africa delivered the word to the colonial lexicon.<sup>8</sup> However, the use of the word to describe people in South Africa predates the arrival of Muslims in the colonial territories. According to the DSAE, the first recorded use of 'kafir' applied to southern Africa (in the form 'caffre') appeared in Richard Hakluyt's The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, the first volume of which was published in 1589. G. Theal indicates that European settlers in South Africa adopted the word from its use by East African Muslims for 'infidels' in the southern part of Africa (quoted in DSAE: 347). Henry Lichtenstein writes in his Travels in Southern Africa, '[b]eing Mahommedans, they gave the general name of Cafer (Liar, Infidel) to all the inhabitants of the coasts of Southern Africa' (1812: 241).

What are the implications of the provenance of the word 'kaffir' in South Africa? One is that developments in the colonial period were essential to the terminology and ethos of apartheid South Africa. Secondly, that looking at Islam in South Africa is not an arcane or exotic topic, but can be detected at the heart of the colonial racial order. Thirdly, that before European settlement, southern Africa was part of a geography (and cosmology) created by the connecting tissue of the Indian Ocean. Before the word became associated with Dutch and British relations with Nguni polities in the Eastern Cape, the use of

<sup>6</sup> Alimatul Qibtiyah is an Indonesian Islamic scholar who provided an exegesis of the Islamic use of the word 'kaffir'.

<sup>7</sup> Examples of verses in the Qur'an that refer to kafir in the sense of 'Kufr (denier of the truth, ingrate)' are: 2:108. Or would ye question your messenger as Moses was questioned aforetime? He who chooseth disbelief instead of faith, verily he hath gone astray from a plain road.

3:52. But when Jesus became conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We will be Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah, and bear thou witness that we have surrendered (unto Him).

3:81. When Allah made (His) covenant with the prophets, (He said): Behold that which I have given you of the Scripture and knowledge. And afterward there will come unto you a messenger, confirming that which ye possess. Ye shall believe in him and ye shall help him. He said: Do ye agree, and will ye take up My burden (which I lay upon you) in this (matter)? They answered: We agree. He said: Then bear ye witness. I will be a witness with you.' Other examples can be found in following chapters and verses: 2:108, 3:52, 3:80, 3:167, 3:177, 5:41, 5:61, 9:12, 9:17, 9:23, 9:37, 9:74, 16:106, 49:7.

Quotations are courtesy of Alimatul Qibtiyah, personal communication, 2 August 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Abdulkader Tayob 1999: 23; Yusuf da Costa and Achmat Davids 1994: 3.

'kaffir' applied to southern Africa carried with it a history of relations with East Africa and the Indian Ocean, with Swahili- and Arabic-speaking traders, and Portuguese explorers.<sup>9</sup> These were the primary languages in the Indian Ocean trade in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. The history of the word 'kaffir' thus alludes to the broader pre-colonial traffic in goods, slaves, and ideas around the Indian Ocean of which the southern part of Africa was a component. Thomas Ingsoll states that there is archaeological evidence that Muslim merchants had an impact and presence in the interior of East Africa by the sixteenth century, and possibly in southern Africa from the eleventh century (2003: 363). The dimension of a relation with pre-colonial dynamics associated with Islam is significant to this thesis. One reason is that a proportion of the slaves brought to the Cape were captured in the slave trade in East Africa. The later career of the word 'kaffir' in the South African colonies is also illuminating. Demonstrating its divergence from an original Islamic meaning, in South Africa the word would also come to be applied to Muslims, as the name of slaves who performed the duties of policemen during the Dutch period (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 61). A second instance of Muslims as 'kaffirs' occurs with the appearance of 'the Malays of Cape Town'<sup>10</sup> in *The Kafirs Illustrated* (1849) by George French Angas.

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<sup>9</sup> I show here the meanings of the word 'kafir' in Swahili and Portuguese, two important languages in the Indian Ocean region. Two Swahili dictionaries, *Standard Swahili-English Dictionary* (1963 [1939]) and *The Swahili-English Dictionary* (1967) both identify the word as drawn from Islam. The *Standard Swahili-English Dictionary* contains the word 'kafiri' meaning 'unbeliever, non-Moslem'. *The Swahili-English Dictionary* includes *Kufuru*: 1. to offend, 2. to abandon a religion, turn apostate. 3. sacrilege, atheism. The dictionary also refers the reader to two other words: *makufuru* 'unbelief, atheism' and *ukafiri*: 'unbelief, infidelity, sacrilege, blasphemy'. In Portuguese the *Novo dicionario da lingua portuguesa* (1939) dictionary has two definitions of *cafre*. The first is an inhabitant of Cafraria, or the language of Cafraria, with the additional figurative meaning of 'an uncivilized man'. The *Dicionario da lingua portuguesa contemporanea de Academia das Ciencias de Lisboa*, (2001) defines the word *Cafraria* as 'the former designation of a large part of southern Africa, inhabited by non Muslim peoples, and that today corresponds to two regions of South Africa'. This dictionary offers three definitions of 'cafre' (1). (from the Arabic *kafir* infidel) That which belongs to Cafraria... (continues with definition of Cafraria given above. (2) The same Arabic derivation. A black person from the western coast of Africa, not Muslim, who used to live in the so-called Cafraria... (2) A barbarous, crude or ignorant person. (3) A greedy or miserly person. (3) Same derivation from Arabic. *Ling.* Language belonging to a group of southern Bantu languages, spoken in Cafaria. I conclude from these dictionaries that the difference between the use of the derivations of 'kafir' in Swahili and Portuguese is that in Portuguese the word included denigratory connotations of 'race', whereas the Swahili connotations referred to religious designation, as believer or non-believer. According to Mark Rosenberg, PhD, Swahili derivations of 'kafir' do include derogatory meanings, but these appear to be associated with 'ignorance', rather than 'race' (2004: personal communication).

<sup>10</sup> I explore the meaning of 'Malay' in relation to 'Muslim' later in this chapter.

While its starkly declamatory use during apartheid was as a noun, my attention here is with the use of 'kaffir' as an adjective. During the colonial period (particularly the nineteenth century, as indicated in citations in the DSAE) settler society used this modifier to name indigenous fruit, birds, trees, paths, food, tools, what they perceived to be the behaviour, mentality and sense of time of indigenous people - everything anterior to them.<sup>11</sup> Both Dutch and British settlers used the term with a range of connotations, not all necessarily derogatory according to the DSAE, though that sense hovered near every use of the word.<sup>12</sup> Crucially, whether or not the use of the word during the colonial era posed as a neutral designation, the adjective performed the function of disarticulating the naturalness of fit between those concepts and the place in which they occurred.

The nine pages of the DSAE listing the uses and elaboration of the word thus constitute an immense catalogue of the process of renaming and re-placing 'nativeness' into 'otherness'. The use of the word 'kaffir' to name South African flora and fauna denotes 'indigenous' and 'wild' (DSAE 1996: 343). Tied to the increasingly common derogatory meanings of 'kaffir', indigeneity itself, rather than conveying a sense of belonging and anteriority, became a derogatory concept. With the landscape designated 'barren' and 'wild', it could also be deemed 'empty' (Witz 2000: 324). Gayatri Spivak asserts that this process of emptying the land that imperialism assumes as its territory, and remaking it into an object for the imperialist gaze, is central to the imperialist project. She argues that:

the notion of textuality should be related to the notion of the worlding of a world on a supposedly unscribed territory. When I say this, I am thinking basically about the imperialist project which had to assume that the earth that it territorialised was in fact previously unscribed. So then a world, on a simple level of cartography inscribed what was presumed to be unscribed. Now this worlding actually is also a texting, textualising, a making into art, making into an object to be understood (quoted in Mutman, 1994: 35).

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<sup>11</sup> Examples include 'kaffir almanac', kaffir appointment', 'kaffirboom' [tree], 'kaffirbread', 'kaffir buck', 'kaffir cabbage', 'kaffir cat', 'kaffir cherry', 'kaffir coffee', 'kaffircorn', 'kaffir plum', 'kaffir fever', 'kaffir finch', 'kaffir fowl', 'kaffir hoe', 'kaffir honeysuckle', 'kaffir horse', 'kaffir hut', 'kaffir manna', 'kaffir mushroom', 'kaffir path' and 'kaffir pot'.

<sup>12</sup> The title of R. Godlonton's A narrative of the irruption of the kaffir hordes, into the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope 1834-1835 (1835) shows the fear that inhered in the term during the nineteenth century.

Spivak shows here that the imperialist project required the world to be remade as empty or 'previously uninscribed' in order that it could be 'inscribed' by European occupation. She contends that such remaking is crucially linked to writing and art which inscribe the land with new meanings. Art rendered the occupied territory into an object that could be understood, and therefore naturalized imperialism's assertion of ownership over what it proclaimed to be an 'uninscribed' land. The notion that events that occurred 'previously' had no meaning or were 'uninscribed', I argue, occurred discursively in South Africa through the operation of the word 'kaffir'.

Witz points out how thoroughly the word colluded with other elements of the imperial project to deny humanity to Blacks. In school textbooks the local inhabitants were not even designated as human. Van Riebeeck was called 'the first human' to live in South Africa (Witz 2000: 324). This confirms the extent of the imperial 'reinscription' of South Africa. The Oxford Universal Dictionary (1944) shows the similar impact of colonialism on the meaning of the word 'native'. In 1535 'native' meant 'one born in a place; or, legally, one whose parents have their domicile in a place'. In 1603 after the consolidation of European exploration and settlement, 'native' meant 'one of the original or indigenous inhabitants of a country; now esp. one belonging to a non-European or uncivilized race' (added emphasis). Denigratory connotations in this vein can be seen in the use of the word 'native' under Apartheid.<sup>13</sup> In Australia in 1861, 'native' meant 'a white person born in the country.'

In the course of the colonial period the use of 'kaffir' as an adjective proliferated into a multitude of terms, so much so that 'the word became strongly associated with South Africa' itself (DSAE 1996:347). The meanings and uses of the word 'kaffir' listed in the DSAE have no prevalence outside of southern Africa (Pechey 2004: 14). If one tracks the divisions that the usage calls into existence, there are three main outcomes, each intimately linked with one another. Firstly, there is an ontological function. Settlers appear to name as 'kaffir' what must remain separate from them, clearing a space for a

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<sup>13</sup> See J. Sharp and E. Boonzaaier South African Keywords: Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts (1988), and S. Dubow, Ethnic Euphemisms and Racial Echoes (1994). In addition, I discuss J. M. Coetzee's formulation of the 'idleness' of the 'native' in Chapter Three.

selfhood that is defined against the other. As Edward Said argues in *Orientalism*, the creation of Otherness is a formula for the creation of the self (1978: 60).<sup>14</sup> The alternative appears to be that indigeneity threatens to consume them, suggested by an insidious sense of time, such as a 'kaffir appointment', for which one need not be punctual, or becoming a 'kaffirboetie' [little brother] by feeling a contaminating sympathy for the despised group, or 'to go to the kaffirs', which means to deteriorate.

Secondly, 'kaffir' also functions to remake the landscape. In colonial South Africa this denigratory modifier metastasises into a vast naming that forces newness on a world that was not new. The landscape was named in a way that enabled it to be claimed. 'Kaffir' labelled as unnatural the relationship between indigenous people and their rightful claim to the land. Instead, this was portrayed as a distorted, corrupt and unfitting connection. Such a vision enabled the settlers to proclaim their own more fitting relationship with the land. Paul Carter theorizes this use of naming to erase prior meanings and create the space for new, imperial ones as 'the theatricalization of the ground – its transformation into the tabula rasa of space which, by virtue of its emptiness, licenses the colonist's usurpation of it' (1996: 24). Blanketed by the adjective 'kaffir', the South African landscape was 'saturated with meaning' and turned into a 'stage' for the events in which Europeans would be the centre and indigenous people would be acted upon (Said 1978: 84).

The third, and crucial, function of 'kaffir' was that it also signalled a boundary of time. The extraordinary fecundity of the word is tempered in the colonial setting into a formula for the creation of a beginning. If 'kaffir' marks corrupt indigenous meanings, then the settler relationship with the land institutes a new beginning. By marking the landscape, 'kaffir' actually marks a new beginning of history with settler arrival. At first the word looks mainly like a spatial gesture but, I argue, it is also a temporal one. Symbolically 'kaffir' thus announces not only a claim to land, but to a beginning.

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<sup>14</sup> I discuss Orientalism, its critics and later elaborations in Chapter One.

### Beginnings in South Africa

This is a 'beginning' in the sense theorized by Edward Said (1976). For Said, beginnings are made, not discovered, whether of texts, academic disciplines or 'certain moments in the life of the mind and of general consciousness' (2001: 165). The concepts explored in his book Beginnings (1976) had their origin in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and, therefore, his conception of points of initiation is infused with both possibility and tension. Said writes that such points are:

dogged by anxiety, a beginning also constitutes the site of profound reflection on anteriority, a slippery yet deliberately stabilized site where the authority of silenced Origins is registered, scrutinized, pondered, dismantled, de-defined, recovered, projected, and refined in various ways for purposes of self-legitimation (Hussein 2002: 55).

As an 'intellectual enactment', a beginning can be analysed: how their elements fit together, what is placed before them, and what goes into the natural trajectory afterward (Hussein 2002: 55). It is in this mode as a symbolic beginning that I have explored the elaboration of the word 'kaffir' in South Africa.

I started this thesis on representations of Islam in South Africa with this construction of a beginning in the colonial era through the word 'kaffir' to suggest the necessity of looking differently at the familiar for the ways in which Islam is present in South Africa. 'Kaffir' indicates encounters with Islam during a long history, remade in the context of South Africa into a word almost unrecognisable from its original, religious use. This is an indication of the particularity of South Africa's history and its forming and deforming impact on culture.

*'Political time is short. Cultural time is ... glacial'*

*- Stuart Hall quoted in Frankenberg and Mani (1993: 354).*

This thesis examines themes in the distinctive representation of Islam in South Africa from the nineteenth century to the present in the context of powerful contemporary

discourses about Islam that circulate in globalized media.<sup>15</sup> Islam is practised by a small minority of South Africans, less than two percent of the population (Pillay 2003: 294). This minority has been represented in highly specific ways in the media and culture. Patterns of representations about Islam that developed in South Africa have been crucially impacted by the system of slavery. In the Western Cape, where the Dutch first settled, Islam has traditionally been seen as placid and picturesque (Du Plessis, *Dedication*, 1945: unpaginated; *DSAE* 1996: 141). This vision developed a powerful explanatory force and was manifested and elaborated in genres such as travel writing, paintings and the press. Both visual and verbal elements from that era remain present today in traditions that render Muslims either picturesque or dangerous. My aim in this thesis is to unsettle the conventional South African vision of Islam by tracing its history and shifts.

This thesis argues that the long timetable of colonialism is relevant to understanding contemporary images of Islam in South Africa. I draw on important writing about representations of Islam in South Africa, notably by Shamil Jeppie, who analyzed the politically driven 'reinvention' of Islam in Cape Town along racial lines in the middle of the twentieth century. A view of Islam established during the period of empire eventually evolved into the lexicon of apartheid, and lingers in post-apartheid South Africa. Pumla Dineo Gqola's work on Rayda Jacobs novels *The Slave Book* (2001) and her doctoral dissertation on images of slavery in South African culture (2004) are important recent works on representations of Muslims in South Africa.

I explore the way a vision of Islam came to make sense and how it was sustained. I argue that there is a specifically South African vision of Islam that arose and developed during the colonial period and has been sustained into the post-apartheid era. In examining what

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<sup>15</sup> The South African media scholar Larry Strelitz discusses globalized media as follows: 'globalization can be described as having the following features: the worldwide interconnection between societies, cultures, institutions, and individuals; the compression of time and space; and the loss of national sovereignty[ ... ] [I]t is not difficult to appreciate the centrality of the media to these processes, especially when you look at technological developments such as digitalization and satellite transmission' (2001: online).

I term a South African Orientalism,<sup>16</sup> I trace through various archives how this colonial view of Islam later entered the apartheid lexicon, and its continuing implications for the post-apartheid period.

In August 1996, a striking series of news-stories about the Cape Town-based group People against Gangsterism and Drugs, known by the acronym Pagad, appeared in the South African press. The visual and verbal patterns in these news-stories struck me as a new development in the type of representations of Islam in South Africa. Elements of the Pagad stories were told in a vocabulary circulated in international media, but applied and naturalised in a local context in South Africa. These elements manifested a convergence of South African and international Orientalisms. In order to show specifically why the Pagad stories were told in an anachronistic way in a South African context, I go beyond what is considered the normal methodology of media studies, which typically includes conceptions of the role of media, studies of reception and analyses of media texts. In Chapter Two on method I describe my approach to exploring the intersection of international and South African representations of Islam.

### Islam in South Africa

In addressing the history of representations of Islam I also examine the history of Islam in South Africa in this study. I draw on the work of historians of Islam in South Africa such as Shamil Jeppie, Achmat Davids, Yusuf da Costa and Abdulkader Tayob, and also on historians of slavery in the Cape such as Nigel Worden, Robert Shell, John Mason and Andrew Bank.

Abdulkader Tayob points out that in discussions about Muslims, religion is frequently assumed to supersede the influence of class, language, ethnicity and history, as though Muslims are exempted from the impact of such factors by the force of religion. By erasing attention to specificity and variation among Muslims, 'a public image of the Muslim community is constructed' (Tayob 2002: 20). In fact, Islam is experienced

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<sup>16</sup> The term may be seen as analogous to the French and British Orientalisms Lisa Lowe investigates in Critical terrains: French and British orientalisms (1991). Similarly, Holly Edwards writes on 'Orientalism in America' in Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures, Orientalism in America, 1870-1930 (2000).

differently by different communities in South Africa, and therefore to speak about one Muslim community suppresses important distinctions. For instance, the experience of Islam in South Africa is powerfully modified by the history of 'race' in the country.<sup>17</sup> As Tayob points out, 'Muslims in the various racial categories of apartheid South Africa experience Islam in very different ways' (*ibid.*).

Taking Tayob's distinctions into account, since I focus in the thesis on images of Islam in the Cape, I do not claim a representativity to these findings for the whole of South Africa. In fact, one of my methodological and theoretical aims is to attend to specificity and its lessons, as I elaborate in Chapter One. The danger of over-generalization from the Cape has been the subject of recent discussion. In his analysis of the celebrations of three hundred years of Islam in South Africa in April 1994, Jeppie notes that 'Cape Town and South Africa were conflated' (2001: 81). Similarly, in a critique of the project of Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael in constituting a new kind of study of South African culture in *Senses of Culture* (2000), Sean Jacobs observes the problematic phenomenon that Nuttall and Michael 'over-generalize from Cape Town' (2002: online). I take care to avoid the error of unreflectively extrapolating from the specificity of Islam and its representation in the Cape. On the other hand, I find a comparable danger in regarding Cape as exceptional, which has often led to the neglect of its place in considerations of broader South African phenomena, as I argue in Chapter Three; and thus in the thesis I avoid the inclination both toward Cape exceptionalism as well as overgeneralization.

Islam arrived in South Africa in the context of colonialism and slavery. In 1652 the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC) established a refuelling station at the Cape, an initiative at first focussed solely on provisioning ships engaged in the Dutch trade to the East (Worden 1994: 9). Importantly, the Cape also marked a crucial point on the slave route from East Africa to the Americas (Da Costa and Davids 1994: 3). The Cape settlement was distinguished from those in the New World by the fact that it was part of a commercial empire rather than one aimed at colonial

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<sup>17</sup> I place the word 'race' in quotation marks to indicate the constructedness of the concept and to disavow its claims to truth.

expansion. However, the reach of activities at the Cape by the Dutch soon did expand, and encroached on the land of the Khoi and San, the indigenous people of the Cape. In the context of resistance by the latter to the expansion of the Dutch settlement the Mardykckers of Amboya in the East Indies were the first Muslims brought to the Cape territory in 1658 to act as soldiers in the context of Khoi-san resistance (Tayob 1999: 22). Because the VOC forbade the enslavement of indigenous people, it was as slaves secured in the Indian Ocean slave trade that the majority of Muslims arrived in the Cape (Worden 1985: 7).

Though the slaves brought by the Dutch to the Cape would come to be termed 'Malays', suggesting a geographical origin in South East Asia, historians show that slaves came from other parts of Africa as well as Asia (Shell 1994: xxv). Slaves were captured in West Africa, East Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, India and South East Asia (Bradlow and Cairns 1978: 81- 104; Botha 1928: 8). Initially, the VOC also acquired slaves from the Dutch West India Company, which was deeply involved in the slave trade to the Americas (Worden 1985: 8). However, it was from the Indian Ocean region that most Cape slaves came. The Dutch exploited nodes in an existing slave trade established by the Portuguese in Asia (*ibid.*). Yusuf da Costa and Achmat Davids also note that African Muslims played a role in securing slaves in East Africa for the Arab and European slave trades. (1994: 3). The Cape was marked by the presence of slaves owned by the VOC as well as those who were privately owned by free burghers. In addition, there was a small number of Free Blacks in the Cape, who were either manumitted slaves or people who had arrived as free servants from Batavia, the Dutch headquarters in Asia (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 64). Included in the group of Muslims brought to the Cape were a small number of leaders sent into exile from South East Asia where their resistant activities proved a hindrance to Dutch trade and colonial expansion. Among these leaders was Sheikh Yusuf, who arrived in the Cape in 1694. As Tayob points out, it is this date that was chosen by the organizers of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Islam in South Africa, ignoring the earlier presence of the Mardykckers (1999: 23). Exiled leaders such as Sheikh Yusuf were isolated in far off areas outside of Cape Town to reduce the risk of influence among slaves, though, according to oral tradition among Muslims, they

remained a beacon for runaway slaves and 'the memory of these political exiles and prominent personalities became an important part of Muslim religious consciousness and practices' (ibid.).

Slaves constituted a significant proportion of the total population of the Cape, and the system of slavery substantially influenced Cape society (Worden 1985: 4). It is also crucial to the way Muslims have been represented in South Africa, both historically and in the present. The name given to Muslims under colonialism is 'Malay', and even today, their descendants are often called (and some name themselves) 'Cape Malays'. Melayu was a lingua franca in the Indian Ocean region and among slaves in the Cape. I discuss the relation of these terms 'Malay' and 'Muslim' later in the Introduction. Perceptions of slavery in the Cape have played a significant part in the historical meanings attached to Islam. The violence practised in slave society in the Cape has been wrongly portrayed as 'mild' in comparison with New World slavery (Keegan 1996: 16). In fact, due to the high number of male slaves relative to male colonists, the exercise of power by owners over slaves was often extremely violent (Worden 1985: 4). The extent of such brutality is evident in research by John Mason into the records of the Protector of Slaves in the early nineteenth century (2003).

Gender is important in considering the range of representations of slaves, since domestic labour was the primary role carried out by slaves in the 1820s and 1830s (Mason 2003). Shell (1995) argues that the presence of slave women in the settler household significantly shifted relations in the direction of paternalism due to their positions as wet-nurses, though Bank (1996) counters that the number of women who performed this role is small and that paternalism was not successful in ameliorating relations between slaves and owners. At one point, due to the gender imbalance among settlers, slave women and Free Black women were a source of marriage partners for settlers, and the Slave Lodge, which housed Company-owned slaves, effectively acted as 'Cape Town's main brothel' (Keegan 1996:20). In this context, perceptions of sexuality in South Africa have deeply affected by slavery. The system of slavery and serfdom in South Africa have generated fulsome discourses about black bodies, whether Khoi, San or slave (Gqola 2001: 48).

The Muslim community at the Cape developed its character and practices under varied conditions, including eventual tacit tolerance by the Dutch, though public practice of Islam under the Dutch was severely punishable under the Batavian code that governed the Cape (Ingsoll 2003: 375). The Muslim community developed institutions such as schools, first established in 1793 (Tayob 1999: 28), mosques - the first, the Awwal mosque, in 1798 (24), and written texts, the first, using Arabic script, in 1856 (28). A decisive change came with the assumption of control over the Cape colony by the British, due to the invasion of the Netherlands by Napoleon in 1795, and again in 1806 (Botha 1928 [1969]: 5).

It was under the British that slavery in the Cape was abolished in 1834. In the post-1834 period Vivian Bickford-Smith shows in Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town (1995) that factors such as economic hardship after the end of slavery, the impact of white exclusion, and laws such as the Liquor Act combined to undercut the development of a unified Black identity in Cape Town, and instead encouraged separate 'Malay', Coloured and African identities. In the period after slavery, Jeppie notes the use of religion, particularly its visible aspects, in dominant discourses that constituted a sense of immutable differences among Black Capetonians. 'The Muslim-as-Malay came to be constructed against the Christian-as-coloured in official and dominant discourses in the nineteenth century' (2001: 83). Jeppie points out that this ideological project overrode extensive indications of a broader set of interactions. To create a sense of ontological differences between Blacks, 'all the evidence of creolization, ethnic interaction, cultural exchange between the slaves, and newly -forged identities in the setting of the slave society of urban Cape Town was rejected' (84).

This discussion of the history of Islam in the Cape, particularly its development in the nineteenth century, signals the crucial place of representation. Though at times during the colonial period, slaves constituted the majority of the population of the Cape (Worden 1985: 3), today Muslims constitute a small minority in South Africa (Tayob 2002: 20). There is a history of ambiguous visibility assigned to Muslims in South Africa. By this I

mean that relative to the size of the Muslim population, at various times they have been significantly visible, as I detail in Chapter Three. Muslims have historically attained visibility through a circumscribed set of tropes. Portrayed consistently in settings such as wedding, funerals and feasts, Muslims were staged in colonial paintings, writings and news articles to various degrees as 'quiet, kind, slow-speaking, fatalistic and passive' (Jeppie 1988: 3). This conception of Muslims as exotic and entertaining contrasts radically with contemporary conceptions of Islam as militant and dangerous, and is a theme I discuss in Chapter Three.

In this thesis I perform a long reading of the image of Muslims in the Cape. The thesis considers representations of Islam in the nineteenth century for two reasons: this was the period when the 'Malays of Cape Town' were constituted as an area of study and significant writings in this tradition were produced (Jeppie 1988: 8). I look in the nineteenth century at a period of the 'invention' of 'Malays', during which significant themes in images of Islam were produced (*ibid.*). Secondly, the Capetonian newspapers, the Cape Argus and Cape Times, from which I draw texts analysed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, were started in 1857 and 1876 respectively. The archives of these newspapers provide an important set of representations from the mid nineteenth century to the present. I continue my investigation of representations of Islam into the twentieth century.

In South African studies of Islam, the historian Shamil Jeppie's work is innovative for its supple notion of identities and of the scope of texts it considers, including travel writing, biography and fiction. In his analysis of the work of I. D. du Plessis, the Afrikaans linguist and folklorist, Jeppie shows that these projects used the Muslim body as the basis for a racial theory that extrapolated from body to mind to 'race'. In his book The Cape Malays (1945) Du Plessis placed the 'Malay' body and mind on display. Du Plessis proclaimed an 'expertise' on the 'Malay' that translated directly into power. He is cited on the subject of 'Malays' in numerous entries in the DSAE, established the Malay Choir Board, advocated the establishment of a Department of Malay Studies at the University of Cape Town and is cited in a number of works dealing with the 'Cape Malays'. He

wrote the foreword to Hilda Gerber's Traditional Cookery of the Cape Malays (1954), and Betsie Rood's book Maleier Kookkuns [Malay Cooking] (1977) is dedicated to him. In 1952 he was appointed as the Commissioner of Coloured Affairs by the apartheid government.

Through his book The Cape Malays Du Plessis' construction of the 'Malay' attained broad circulation. It became a standard work in libraries and a popular text for tourists. As in the picturesque paintings of the nineteenth century, both Du Plessis' book and his project to secure a group area for 'Malays' were a means of staging the 'Malays' by placing them 'on exhibition' (Jeppie 2001: 89). In the context of the racial politics of the mid-twentieth century Du Plessis' various projects portrayed 'Malays' through the currency of 'a specific ethnic entity' (*ibid.*). Du Plessis invoked the presence of selected 'Malay' names, titles, appendages, honorifics and foreign words as authenticating marks in his texts. For example, in the preface to The Cape Malays Du Plessis cites 'Sheikh E. Hendricks of the Assavia Mosque [for] kindly check[ing] the Arabic words for me' (1945: unpaginated). Far from simply purveying a harmless romanticism, Du Plessis' work disrupted the furthering of a broader Black identity and helped to 'fragment the development of autonomous political movements among the coloureds' (Jeppie 2001: 88).

### Colouredness and Islam

Having discussed the historical development of representations of Muslims, I turn now to the relation of Muslims to 'colouredness' in South Africa. The collection of essays Coloured by Place, Shaped by History (2001), edited by Zimitri Erasmus, provided an important platform for the theorization of 'coloured' identity in the history of South Africa. In the following discussion I draw on Thiven Reddy's subtle essay in the book, 'The Politics of Naming: the Constitution of Coloured Subjects in South Africa' which analyses 'colouredness' as the fluid middle of the racial hierarchy in South Africa, that reveals the permeability of the edges, whiteness and blackness.

Rejecting a clear distinction between colonial and apartheid conceptions of 'race', Reddy focuses on the significance of the 'problematic' category of colouredness (65). Reddy argues that South Africa's hierarchical system of racial categorization, with white and Black at its furthest extremes, was paradoxically both subverted and confirmed by the indeterminate category 'coloured'. In contrast to the purported stability of blackness and whiteness, this category represented the "impure", "mixed", "the borderline", "the unclassifiable" [and] "the doubtful" (68). In order for the categories at the extremes, white and Black, to acquire 'an unquestioned and taken-for-granted status', the centre had to keep the extremes apart (*ibid.*). To Reddy, colouredness was therefore both 'the extreme Other of dominant racial discourse in South Africa, and also ... its very ambivalent core' (*ibid.*). In this formulation, colouredness fulfilled the function of standing for the stresses, contradictions and evasions produced by the impossibility of racial purity, and its very indeterminacy provided a despised but necessary flexibility that absorbed the strains of the system.

Reddy's essay points out the crucial holding function of Colouredness. However, the very fluidity and difficulty of the category of 'Coloured' created an inherent instability in the whole system. The idea that Colouredness played a crucial part in the structure that holds 'the fetishistic integrity of race' in place occurs also in Ashraf Jamal's recent writing on the art of the performance artist Tracey Rose (2000: online). As Jamal noted of colouredness in this context, '[t]he centre could never hold, the tidy polarities we set between black and white ... could never fix the flux' (*ibid.*). Delineating the dimensions of this 'problem', Jamal notes that, in Rose's work, colouredness 'figures as a glitch, a quirk, a protean and degenerate anomaly in South Africa's Manichean racial register ... [It] can be everything and nothing' (*ibid.*). Jamal's formulation, like Reddy's, alerts us that the instability of the outer edges requires something to hold the area between them – the centre - in place.

Both because it is central to the system of racial classification, and because it seems always about to collapse this system, 'Coloured' identity has been among the heaviest policed concepts during apartheid, and, significantly, during the colonial period (Reddy

2001: 65). It was under the British that the shifting but nonetheless carefully marked differences of colour in the Cape were given legal status that 'formalised' these differences into racial ones (Keegan 1996: 24). Having instituted the Population Registration Act Number 30 in 1950, the apartheid government struggled with the legal implications of the 'Coloured' category, particularly the potential it provided for reclassification. The apartheid government tightened the meanings of the term 'Coloured' in 1959. Accordingly, the 'Coloured' group was further divided into 'Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, Griqua, Indian, Chinese, "other Asiatic", and "Other Coloured"' (Reddy 2001: 75).

How did 'Malays' function as a part of the Coloured centre that helped to stabilize the meanings of Blackness and whiteness in Reddy's formulation? Colouredness was the focus of anxious vilification for the danger of racial impurity that 'coloured' bodies indexed, and was coded as 'residual, in-between or "lesser" ... "lacking", supplementary, excessive, inferior or simply non-existent' (Erasmus 2001: 15). While subject to the same intensity of surveillance as other 'coloureds', 'Malays' signalled in the official view a promise of purity (Jeppie 2001: 87; Du Plessis 1944: 3). Also, compared with the supposed 'lack' of colouredness, 'Malays' were associated with a plenitude of meaning (Erasmus 2001: 14). Carrying out a role established in the colonial period, 'Malays' were seen as benevolent and reassuring, while lacking differentiation, change and resistance. To the desiring, fetishising official discourse, 'Malays' functioned as benevolent fillers between settler identity and the African landscape. Jeppie points out the crucial function of this perception of an abundance of meaning in validating white identity: 'in a certain sense the very existence of Malay culture, which shared a language with the Afrikaans-speaking volk, added to the veracity of the Afrikaner nation' (2001: 86). Jeppie indicates here that the presence of 'Malays' validated and confirmed dominant identities, the classical formulation of Orientalism. In addition, the relation with 'Malay' subordinates helped to give substance and individuality to Afrikaans identity.

I now discuss an example of the place-giving and place-holding function that 'Malays' served as a highly visible part 'colouredness' in South Africa. In the 1970s a number of

books extolling 'Malay' cooking were published in South Africa – Betsie Roods's Maleier Kookkuns [Malay Cooking], Laurens van der Post's 'East Meets West' in African Food, and Renata Coetzee's The South African Culinary Tradition. I briefly discuss Coetzee's The South African Culinary Tradition here. To constitute a 'South African culinary tradition' (and therefore elucidating what counts as 'South African'), Coetzee's book places 'Malays' alongside and just after European influences on South African cooking – listed in turn as 'The Dutch element', 'The German contribution', 'A French flair', 'An Eastern aroma', 'Edible wild plants and their influence', 'Cape edible wild plants'.<sup>18</sup> In the course of the book, it becomes clear that it is Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans who have absorbed various influences, traces and flavours to become 'South African'. The book places the 'Malays' in a serene past and slavery is described benignly in terms of the 'skill' of the men as artisans and the 'exotic oriental dishes' cooked by the women (Coetzee 1977: 45). In this way Muslims themselves were characterized as a piquant flavour, as though they, like their food, gave a unique tincture to a broader South African history. The colourful visibility of 'Malays' in these books functioned to give white, especially Afrikaans-speaking South Africans a way to claim a past with a substantial and elaborated history.

Having outlined the reasons for examining representations of Islam from the colonial period in order to understand contemporary images, I conclude this introduction with a brief review of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter One outlines the theoretical framings of the thesis. In discussing images of Islam in South African media and culture, I am indebted to the legacy of Edward Said's Orientalism. The concept of Orientalism allowed me to conceive of the relation of concrete details to a supple system of representation. This method shows the way in which benign images serve as an index of the brutalising impact of imperialism. I also

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<sup>18</sup> This list of topics appears in the Contents of the book. The last two items 'Edible wild plants and their influence' and 'Cape edible wild plants' allow Coetzee to speak of indigenous contributions to South African cooking. As in the case of the 'Malays', the cause of the change shifts from people, for example, the Dutch or Germans, to 'aroma' in the case of the 'Malays' and 'plants' in the case of the Khoisan (Coetzee uses the term 'Hottentots'). So clear is the shift that 'Edible wild plants' are granted the status of 'their influence', equal to the 'French', displacing the role of the people who harvested the plants.

draw on later engagements with Said's work, which attend particularly to the dimension of gender, such as Meyda Yegenoglu (1998) and Mahmut Mutman (1994). Elizabeth Poole (2003) in the United Kingdom and Linda Steet (2002) in the United States provide recent instances of case studies of Orientalism in the media. My study varies from theirs in attending particularly to the nexus of the media with literary and artistic elements of representation. I also draw on history and art history in examining the visual elements of representation. I explore the notion of the archive for Orientalism and explain how the concept will be used in the thesis.

Chapter Two extends these remarks on important concepts into the area of methodology. I note that the thesis uses a number of methods to explore intersecting sites and levels of discourse. I consider the benefits and constraints of methods such as interviewing, and incorporating art, poetry and fiction into a study of the media.

In Chapters Three, Four and Five I explore the picturesque in relation to nineteenth century images of Islam and provide three instances in which I argue the picturesque operates in images of Islam by looking at paintings food and burials respectively. J. M. Coetzee (1988), David Bunn (1994 and 2002) and Jessica Dubow (2000) have studied the occurrence of the picturesque in South African colonial settings. They show this genre to be both artfully composed and inherently unstable. In his important reading of literary renditions of the South African landscape, Coetzee formulated three terms: English and 'Boer' settlers, and the 'natives'. I contend that there is another relevant term in the South African historical formulation. That term is slave, specifically 'Malay' slave. The 'Malay' frequently appears in picturesque views of the Cape, discursively filling the gap between the 'native' and the settler, and seems to offer settlers a resolution to their anxiety about belonging in the landscape. I outline the way in which Coetzee, Bunn and Dubow look outside the Cape for signs of the trouble that beset the South African picturesque. In contrast to them, I argue that nineteenth and twentieth century picturesque views of the Cape did not resolve the problem of the colonial picturesque. Instead, such apparently placid views hint at the insurrectionary, contradictory and violent history which they appear to defer or ease. In Chapter Five on burial I show the

connection between the picturesque in paintings and in the media by analysing media images of an uprising against the closing of the municipal cemeteries in Cape Town in 1886.

In Chapter Six I conduct a detailed reading of coverage in the Cape Times and Cape Argus from 5 to 12 August 1996 of the activities of a Cape Town-based group called Pagad (People against Gangsterism and Drugs). The group was distinguished from many similar vigilante groups operating in South Africa at the time by drawing on Islamic iconography in its public profile. The central image in these stories is the masked man. I argue that the force of this image is that the face is hidden and revealed at the same time. Framed by the mask, the gaze is trained on what it cannot see - what is subtracted from the gaze. Tracing the history of such images, I argue that an unacknowledged level of fantasy informs reporting on Islam. I relate the singular figure of the masked Muslim man to the perennial figure of the veiled Muslim woman. A second important theme is the relation of the crowd and singular man in these stories. I use this interplay to show how the Pagad images drew on international discourses about Islam. The interplay of the local and the global, the historical and the contemporary are significant to the analysis. I also refer to interviews conducted with journalists who covered those stories in 1996. After discussing the Pagad images, I look at the route the media took in portraying issues of religion and differences in the 'One City, Many Cultures' initiative in the Cape Times in 1999.

In Chapter Seven I perform an analysis of images of the events of 11 September 2001 in South African newspapers, attending to developments in an international media idiom about Islam. I focus on the visual and verbal images of the coverage and explore the patterns in representations of bodies and buildings. Noting the trajectory of images from 11 September to the war in Afghanistan in October 2004, I argue that an evolution occurred in representations of Muslim men and women through the visage of Osama bin Laden. In addition, I contemplate the idea of an 'othering' of religion. Lastly, I draw on the work of Susan Sontag in Regarding the Pain of Others (2003) and Judith Butler in Precarious Life (2004) in relating the images of vulnerability in the United States to the

war in Afghanistan and the use of Guantanamo Bay to imprison 'combatants' captured in that war.

I conclude from Chapters Six and Seven that a fundamental problem of representing Islam issues from extrapolating from specific instances into universal generalizations. Chapter Seven delineates how globalized media creates pockets of visibility and invisibility in which the conditions of being human are negotiated. In Chapter Eight I take these lessons to mean that consciously attending to detail, specificity and the local can be an ethical response to the challenges of representations in the context of war and globalised media, and return to a consideration of South African texts. I examine works by three South African writers and artists, 'At her feet', the play by Nadia Davids, the installation 'Colour Me' and the video 'Vapour' by conceptual artist Berni Searle, and the poem 'Brother, Who Will Bury Me?' by Rustom Kozain. I analyse the formal innovation of these works as well as the relation of the authors to the content of the pieces. While each work testifies to the necessity of a reflective and historically sensitive approach to material about Islam, they do not claim the authority to speak for it. In fact, embedded within each of the works is a subversion of claims to finality.

In the course of the thesis I track the kinds of visibility which frame Muslims in South Africa: from the oblique visibility of 'Malay' figures explored in Chapter Three, to the ambiguous visibility of food explored in Chapter Four to the disquieting visibility of burial in Chapter Five and the masked men and crowds of Pagad in Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven the height of unsettling invisibility occurs with 'sleepers', which contrasts with the elusive meanings associated with the highly visible face of Osama bin Laden. I end Chapter Seven by examining the creation by the United States of a 'non-space' in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where it simultaneously seeks to evade surveillance and also attempts to render its detainees completely visible, completely transparent, completely knowable. The generation through discourse and legal steps of a new kind of space, and new categories of the human which severs those beings from previous bonds recalls (though different in scale and level of intent) the operation of the word 'kaffir' in South Africa. The last chapter engages with a different relation to visibility, in artworks that

reconfigure and re-imagine images of Islam without seeking to resolve the questions they address. I conclude by reviewing the insights gained in the course of the thesis and move toward a new reading of Islam in contemporary media and culture.

University of Cape Town

## CHAPTER ONE

### THINKING ABOUT ISLAM, MEDIA AND CULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

*'It is through image and fantasy – those orders that figure transgressively on the borders of history and the unconscious – that Fanon most profoundly evokes the colonial condition.'*

-Homi Bhabha, *'Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche, and the Colonial Condition'* (1986: xiii).

*'[T]he best strategy for undermining ideology is a traversal of its phantasmic elements.'*  
-Timothy Morton, *The Poetics of Spice* (2000: 210).

In this chapter I outline concepts important to the analyses in the thesis.<sup>19</sup> I examine Orientalism, feminist readings of the concept, approaches to the media in South Africa, coverage of Islam in international and South African media, and recent studies examining Orientalism in the media.

It is possible today to contest the distinctive forms of racism known as Orientalism in representations of Islam because of the work of Edward Said. In his eponymously titled book published in 1978, Said's supple articulation of the construction of the entity known as the Orient, combined with his conviction that intellectual endeavour is embedded in the political realities of the world, issued in an analysis and methodology grounded in ethical engagement. Said's writings on representations of the Middle East in Covering Islam (1981) and numerous essays in the media since have extended this important work.

At an obvious level, Orientalism refers to a geographical distinction separating East from West. Yet, Orientalism is also a work of 'imaginative geography' (Said 1978: 71, added emphasis). Pointing to the entity that it has produced, that which is not the West, Orientalism produces an object for the Western gaze. Such production was elaborated in

<sup>19</sup> Though I do not discuss it further here, in addition to Orientalism, the earlier work Beginnings by Said (1976) is of significance to this project, as I demonstrated in the Introduction.

a supple and extended range of sites, including the administrative, political academic and artistic realms. Orientalism demonstrated how a body of authoritative texts enabled the assumption of power over what was named as the Orient. This orientation to the East legitimated the claim to knowledge and control that drove imperialism. In fact, '[t]he scope of Orientalism exactly matched the scope of empire' (Said 1978: 104). The role of art in elaborating and clarifying the Orient as an object that could be recognized, beheld and controlled has been further articulated by Gayatri Spivak, as I indicated in the Introduction. She calls the tying together of text and territory in the imperialist project a process of 'worlding', and argues it was central to the imperialist project (quoted in Mutman, 1994: 35).

Replicated in self-confirming representations in the artistic and popular realms, Orientalism is therefore a system for thinking about the East as an object. It allowed Europeans to conceive of Orientals as entities with predictable and unvarying characteristics (Said 1978: 16). This construction of the Orient licensed a style of speaking about the East, from which a vocabulary of extravagant generalities resulted. The discourse produces but also constrains what can be seen. While it channels and disciplines views that confirm the sameness of the Orient, Orientalism is 'productive, not unilaterally inhibiting' (14). The field produces the delight of discovery, of revelation, of connectedness, though always on the terms of the West. Indeed, far from being a discrete, regrettable <sup>dimension</sup> aberration, Said argued that the idea of the Orient as Other was central to the constitution of a Western subjectivity. Following Fanon, the psychic dimension was inescapably linked to the political. In fact, 'the idea of an Orient exists to define the European' (60). Crucially, this is not a purely additive or subtractive model, in which the presence of the West simply overwhelms a pitiful and lacking East. In fact, the mechanism of Orientalism produces the Western subject just as much it creates the Oriental. *That which it is not*

#### Words and Worlds: Responses to Orientalism

With its attention to the implication of academic disciplines in the validation of imperialism and its insistence on the political role of the critic, intellectuals found

Orientalism both 'peculiarly unnerving and enabling' (Hussein 2002: 227). It was hailed by critics of imperialism such as Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Partha Chatterjee (Hussein 2002: 228). Robert Young welcomed its exhortation that 'knowledge may be ... implicated even in its very formal or "objective" structures', and therefore that it made possible the generation of knowledge of a different kind (1994: 127). Bill Ashcroft and Pat Ahluwalia note that Said's formulation of the 'worldliness' or 'material contexts' of critical work caused a signal change in academic work, inaugurating and galvanizing the study of colonialism's role in culture (1999: 1). Orientalism has been followed by the entry of a generation of astute and agile thinkers based in the East into the circuits of scholarship, such as Meyda Yegenoglu, whose feminist reading of Orientalism appeared in 1998, Mahmut Mutman, who produced an innovative reading of the first Gulf War, published in 1992 and Abdurahman Hussein (2003), whose fine study of Said's oeuvre asserted that Beginnings rather than Orientalism is Said's most profound contribution to scholarship.

### **Creative Responses**

With Orientalism, Said also offered a way of re-imagining the world, giving to thinkers and artists a new vocabulary and scale of task. Just as '[e]mpire follows art'<sup>20</sup> Said noted with relish the energizing effects of works by Salman Rushdie for their 're-appropriation[s] of the historical experience of colonialism, revitalized and transformed into a new aesthetic of sharing and often transcendent re-formulation' (1978: 351). In the quarter century after Orientalism, creative writers have further extended the boundaries of its meanings. Toni Morrison cites 'an obvious debt to Edward Said' in writing her Playing in the Dark: Whiteness in the Literary Imagination in which she explored the way Black characters in white American literature act as 'metaphorical stand-ins' for the repressed realities of race in the United States (cited in Jaggi, 2003: online). The collection Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art (2003) edited by David Bailey and Gilane Tawadros documents creative work and critical thinking on veiling by Muslim and Arab women issuing from the deeply political reflections on art following

<sup>20</sup> William Blake quoted in Said, quoted in Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999: 85.

Orientalism. In South Africa Said's work has inspired works by the playwright Nadia Davids and the poet Rustom Kozain, both of whose work is discussed in Chapter Seven.

### Criticisms of Orientalism

However, the critiques of Orientalism have been as strong as the endorsements. Jessica Dubow (2000) finds Said does not sufficiently acknowledge the partial, fissured and uncertain aspects of the colonial gaze and overstates its desire as achievement. Laura Chrisman similarly criticizes Said for assuming 'the imperial metropolis [was] unified' (quoted in Burdett 2002: 176).<sup>21</sup> To the British historian John MacKenzie, Said produced too unitary and overarching a sense of the rejection and hatred of the East in Orientalism. Said's thesis of a 'continuous oriental discourse' is not empirically borne out, MacKenzie argues, indicating that images of the East shift over time and in different contexts in tandem with imperial developments (1995: 26). Such variation is evident, MacKenzie asserts, in theatre such as Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine', which reflects an emphatically admiring sense of Timur, the Mogul invader of India.<sup>22</sup> In addition, MacKenzie points out that Orientalism says very little about popular culture. If one takes these matters into account, Mackenzie argues, then what is called Orientalist art is much more varied, respectful and genuinely interactive than Said's thesis holds. While I disagree that it markedly changes the force of Said's argument about the relation of the arts to the social and political forces of the time, Mackenzie's point about popular culture is a useful supplement in the light of the range of texts analysed in this thesis.

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<sup>21</sup> For a sensitive reading of early South African texts written by Sol Plaatje, Olive Schreiner and Rider Haggard from a materialist perspective, see Laura Chrisman's Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism and Transnationalism (2003). Along with Chrisman, another significant recent work on South Africa and empire is Zine Magubane's Bringing the Empire Home: Race, Class and Gender in Britain and Colonial South Africa (2004).

<sup>22</sup> However, as Ania Loomba (1998b) has pointed out in her study of renaissance drama, such popular art of the imperialist era has to be seen in the context of the representational problems posed to imperialism by its different arenas. The perception of the inscribability of a 'blank' New World in the Americas, presented different possibilities of representation that the heavily inscribed, literate cultures of the East. This difference in imagery between the art set in the New World, in Africa and in the East is most notable in the gender dynamics – the New World was portrayed as naked and innocent, and the East as mysterious. Africa was interestingly ambiguous, either treated as North Africa and therefore Eastern, or as Africa as a special combination of the two features, as is found in the Conrad novella, Heart of Darkness.

The theorists James Clifford (1988) and Robert Young (1990) questioned the theoretical coherence of Orientalism in its application of Foucault and Gramsci. Young also contests the insistence of an unvarying tone to Orientalist writing and art. To Young, Said's 'refusal of a theory, his restless and sometimes contradictory shiftings of ground' are evidence of 'an inner dissension' within Orientalism itself which, since Said disavows it, 're-emerges in his own writings' (130). Like critics Linda Steet (2000) and Meyda Yegenoglu (1998), Young also points to a tension between representation and referent in Orientalism. To Young, Said's claim that Orientalists 'create not only knowledge but the very reality they appear to describe' is a contradiction, since Said appears simultaneously to be claiming that there is no such thing as an actual Orient that matches its representations, yet also that Orientalists misrepresent the Orient (Said quoted in Young: 129).

Yegenoglu confirms the force of Said's insights in Orientalism, but acknowledges the problem of an 'epistemological dualism' of representation and referentiality (10). As a way of resolving this, she proposes '[r]ather than simply giving up the referentiality of the Orient, I suggest that it be seen as an embodiment of a certain discursive production' (10). Thus Yegenoglu notes the artifice of the entity named Orient, which nonetheless has a materiality precipitated by the discursive actions of Orientalism. I observe this effect in the discussion on Pagad in Chapter Six in which the group deploys some of the same rhetorical instruments as the media in its construction of a recognizably 'Islamic' identity. In the next section I discuss the notion of archive in the context of Orientalism.

### **Archives Of The Visible/Archives Of Silence<sup>23</sup>**

*'I suspect the human species – the unique species – is about to be extinguished, but the Library will endure: illuminated, solitary, infinite, perfectly motionless, equipped with precious volumes, useless, incorruptible, secret.'*

*- Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Library of Babel' (1964: 58).*

<sup>23</sup> The term 'archive of silence' is from Dawne Curry (2003) in her review of Deep hiStories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa edited by Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley.

*'The archive does not have the weight of tradition, and it does not constitute the library of libraries, outside time and place – it reveals the rules of practice ... its threshold of existence is established by the discontinuity that separates us from what we can no longer say.'*

- Michel Foucault quoted in Stoler (2002: 94).

*'The whole is always the untrue.'*

- Theodor Adorno, quoted in Hussein (2002: 233).

The idea of archive crucially informs this thesis. It is present in the methods, range of texts and philosophy of my study.<sup>24</sup> The notion of archive is used in the sense of the texts and objects that constitute a coherent body of knowledge, but also, following Michel Foucault, of a range of texts configured by the fantasy of totality, and which thus regulates the bounds of knowledge (Stoler 1998: 94). In such repositories of authoritative texts I track the dynamics that render Islam visible in South Africa. I examine official archives, but also parallel ones, and the hidden significance of documents in the archives. I seek in the material studied in this thesis 'the invisible, the radical, the forgotten, the sublime, the possible, the elusive, the rejected, the real and the everyday .. and also .. the yet-to-exist'<sup>25</sup>

From Said, I draw the insight that Orientalism derives its authority from an archive of concepts and texts about the Orient. Showing how the arts and the academy were crucially implicated in constructing the Orient as a site ripe for European control, Said's analysis revealed 'the canon's symbolic power and its availability as a screen for power' (Hussein 232). In Orientalism Said says of the source of the authority of Europeans' conceptions of the East that:

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<sup>24</sup> South African literary and artistic engagements with the notion of archive include J. M. Coetzee's Dusklands (1982), specifically 'The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee' which parodies the settler narratives that constitute a significant body of historical texts on the colonial era in South Africa; Kay Hassan's 'Non-European Libraries', a work that utilizes found photographic negatives and library forms, recalls the obsessive documentation of 'race' in apartheid South Africa. 'Non-Europeans Libraries' formed part of an exhibition of the work of four South African artists that engaged with the legacy of the colonial archive, titled 'Body and the Archive' (2003). The title of the exhibition was drawn from Alan Sekula's eponymous essay; the novel Ejilande [Islands] (2004) by Dan Sleight, a researcher in the National Archives in Cape Town, which is set in the years immediately after the establishment of the Dutch settlement in the Cape. The novel contains the maxim 'There is not history other than the analysis and interpretation of documents, a search for survivors in endless space' (quoted in Aitken 2004: 22).

<sup>25</sup> This quotation on the notion of archive is from the Swedish architectural journal MAMA, cited in 'Revision – Mama on the reconstruction of history', pamphlet, Swedish Museum of Architecture, 2004.

[i]n a sense Orientalism was a library or archive of information commonly and, on some of its aspects, unanimously held. What bound the archive together were a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective. These ideas explained the behavior of Orientals; they supplied Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed Europeans to deal with and even see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics.' (Said quoted in Joseph 2004:16).

Said relates here the erasure of difference under the label of 'regular characteristics' which licensed Europeans' ability to act upon the Orient. His innovation in Orientalism was to contest repositories of authoritative texts and beliefs which had hitherto been unquestioned and for which he was not regarded as the envisaged audience (Hussein 2002: 7). He returned the gaze of the discourse, analysing it from the perspective of an 'Oriental' (Said quoted in Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 54). Said's 'uninvited interventions' in an established discourse which by definition sought to exclude him from its constitution are a prototype for reading archives in South Africa, structured as they are on exclusion of content and access (68). The opening of the thesis is modelled on this approach to archive – to read familiar texts from an unexpected perspective.

### **The Notion of Archive**

Archives tell the official story of the past. In the dispersed mass of its documents and the minute observances of its rules, the archive both contains and disperses evidence of 'the mundane brutalities of conquest and dispossession' (Hall 2002: 336). The relation between the concrete and the symbolic is central to the notion of an official repository of documents. Archives deal in authority and visibility, conferring validation on their contents and enacting an erasure against what they exclude. Because they claim completeness, the actual configuration of an archive reveals the 'configurations of power' that it serves (Hamilton, Harris and Reid 2002: 9). Thus an archive's holdings are marked crucially by what is not there. The archive therefore exists in a number of registers: what is there, what it excludes, what its sense of mass symbolizes.<sup>26</sup> Posing as an impersonal collection of data, an archive is in fact informed by a fantasy of completeness, the notion

<sup>26</sup> Achille Mbembe points out that this weight and substance is an architectural effect, as much as it is a textual one. The building, entryway and filing systems – the concrete configurations of power – aid in creating a sense of the monumental mass of archive. See Achille Mbembe 'The Power of the Archive and its Limits' in Refiguring the Archive, 2002: 19-26.

cf. Old Goal

of its holdings as 'the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern' (Richards 1993: 11). In this aspect, the archival imperative is toward more and more material, haunted by what is missing. However, archives' mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion also require that some material be deliberately kept out.

In the collection Refiguring the Archive (2002), which addressed the legacy of colonial and apartheid archives in South Africa, the literary scholar Bheki Peterson traces the absences in official archives as material effects of policies of exclusion. The archive takes its current form because of what has been 'ignored or criminalized ... banned and destroyed' (31). Official archives have been configured to exclude the documents that attest to Black lives. Peterson notes the effects of lack of representation in such repositories of authority and validation. If they are not included, 'it is as though [people] do not exist' (32). Thus archives in South Africa have been used to construct a past which sharply delimits the presence of Blacks. In addition to excluding material, the colonial and apartheid archives were characterized by severe inequities of access. Black people were severely restricted from entering the archives as part of the colonial and apartheid project to deny their role in history.

Because it encodes the past, Peterson argues that it is imperative to remake the archive. Listing documents that are not in the archive, Peterson contemplates where they may be found. These other archives, Peterson suggests, are 'stored in the stubborn memories of people, in suitcases and plastic bags under beds, in wardrobes and in ceilings' (31).<sup>27</sup> Peterson's exhortation to attend to such erasures is a call I endorse. My work in this thesis makes use of little-used and alternative archives, for instance, those accessed through interviews. However, I also write in Chapter Three of a different response by the less powerful to the imperatives of archive, of evasion of the surveillance symbolized by official and dominant actors, of strategies to elude the imperative toward cataloguing and classifying represented by the archive. I write about ways that people have found to

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<sup>27</sup> Dr Cassim D'Arcy's call to Muslims to preserve old documents such as photographs, postcards and identity documents reflects the same concern (2002: 19).

'exist' and have history in ways outside of the conventional sense of archive, in an analogy to the 'memories', 'plastic bags' and 'ceilings' alluded to by Peterson. Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graham Reid speak of a different problem of reconfiguring the archive. They caution that '[w]hat has been left out cannot simply be put back in' (2002: 12) and point out that alternative archives in which excluded material is stored are as much constructed and affected by pressures of exclusion as official ones.

How do I use archive in the thesis? Ann Stoler cautions against reading archives only against the grain and instead calls for a study precisely of their 'granularity' (2002: 92). By this she means attending to the patterns, emphases, omissions, errors and fabrications in the archives. I do this in a detailed reading in Chapter Three of visual repositories on Islam in the South African National Library and the catalogue of the Museum Africa in Johannesburg. I look also at what is lacking from such archives, and, by investigating meanings that lie beyond the surface, conduct an 'archaeology of absences' (Hall 1992: 3). I therefore point to the existence of alternative archives of Islam in South Africa generated through forms of self-organization such as mosques that developed parallel and in opposition to official colonial institutions. Evidence of self-representation can be read in document form (ajami),<sup>28</sup> in more evanescent occurrences such as jokes, visiting and burial rituals, which I access through interviews, and in practices surrounding food, which I explore in interviews as well as by analyzing recipe books. I offer these not as the 'true story' of Islam but to show what lies beyond the view of Islam as picturesque and exotic. In Chapter Seven I argue the fantasized archive that desires to render the world transparent is suggested by the policy of the Bush administration of the United States in its conception of the prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

### On the Borders of History and the Unconscious

In this section I address the matter of representing 'race' in the media. I start by showing that notions of 'race' linger from the colonial era, and then explore relevant theories of the media. I provide a reading of the way Islam has been represented in the international

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<sup>28</sup> Ajami are 'Arabic-Afrikaans' texts, or texts in the Afrikaans language written in Arabic script. They were produced in the Cape by literate slaves and their descendants since the eighteenth century, many for religious instruction, called 'koples' books. These ajami texts are mostly still in private hands, the belongings of descendants of the authors. See Haron (2001) on this topic. .

media and conclude the chapter with a history of images of Islam in the South African media.

Christopher Lane asserts that 'fantasies organizing the meaning of racial and ethnic identities' are reflected in the discourses that structure the reporting of 'race' in the media (1998: 1). In the analyses in this thesis I uncover the fantasies that underlie representations of Islam in South African media. Fantasies of 'race' mark the place where the unconscious encounters history (Bhabha 1986: xiii). Racism is governed by a sexual economy in which the inferior being is the holder of a secret, but also an excess. Bhabha indicates that even in the most visible signs of difference, meaning wavers. The colonized subject seems always to be receding, and therefore the visibility and stability of their meaning has to be constantly produced. As Fanon theorized in 'The Fact of Blackness', already, Blackness seems both to withdraw from the gaze of the colonizer, and withhold something from it:

The white man had the anguished feeling that I was escaping from him and that I was taking something with me. He went through my pockets. He thrust probes into the least circumvolution of my brain. Everywhere he found only the obvious. So it was obvious that I had a secret (Fanon 1986 [1952]: 128).

With Fanon and Bhabha, I track the meanings that attend sights of intense scrutiny in the colonial situation as the nature of visibility shifts in the course of the chapters. By focussing on the 'obvious' and its unstable meanings, I follow a trail of secrets: what does woman want? (Freud cited in Bhabha 1986: xi) 'What do Arabs want?' (Steet 2000: 154). 'What does the colonized want?' (Slavoj Zizek cited in Mutman 1994: 21). '[W]hat is the real agenda behind Pagad?' (Pillay 2003: 292). 'What does Osama bin Laden want?' (Johnson 2001: 9). What does Islam want?

I now address the role of the veil in generating this sense of the withdrawal and secrecy of the object. Yegenoglu's reading of Orientalism emphasizes gender and fantasy. She follows both Fanon and Said in insisting on the role of desire in the processes that regulate the relation of coloniser and colonized, saying that '[t]he unconscious fantasies, dreams, and desires of the Western subject structures his relation to the Oriental other'

(11). However, Yegenoglu finds that Said underplays gender. What Said calls 'latent' Orientalism is, for Yegenoglu, the site where gender is articulated in the fantasies that organize colonial relations (1998: 2). The fantasy of the Orient is predicated on sexual difference. Thus, to consider gender's role in Orientalism means not only to attend to the difference signification of men and women, but to show how the veiled woman of the East signals not only allure and exoticism, but also signifies the Orient itself as feminine, 'always veiled, seductive, and dangerous' (11). Because a gendered Orient is thus not only differentiated into men and women but is itself a feminized space, Yegenoglu consequently reads the visibility, or unveiling, of the Orient as crucial. She writes:

the colonial feminist discourse to unveil Muslim women in the name of liberation was linked not only to the discourse of Enlightenment but also to the scopic regime of modernity which is characterised by a desire to master, control, and reshape the body of the subjects by making them visible. Since the veil prevents the colonial gaze from attaining such a visibility and hence mastery, its lifting becomes essential. I argue that the desire to unveil women should not be seen simply as an uncovering of the bodies, but as a re-inscription, for the discourse of unveiling is no less incorporated in the existential or embodied being of Oriental women than the discourse of veiling (12).

The imperative to 're-inscribe' or rewrite the Muslim woman's body into the script of visibility means that, for Yegenoglu, the veil becomes a psychic apparatus of subtraction and withdrawal, intolerable to the 'scopic regime' which governs the Orient. This formulation of gender and unveiling will be salient to the discussion in Chapter Three. Significantly, this reading implicates Western feminism in the same structures of domination that undergird masculinist imperialism.

### **Covering And Uncovering Masks: Looking East In The Media**

The media in the twenty-first century encompasses a multi-layered entity. It operates at the material terrain, being an industry that deals in information, yet, importantly, its relation to society goes beyond the production and distribution of information.

Particularly because it is part of the domain of international capital, the media has a heightened political significance in the era of globalization. Globalization is defined by the interpenetration of social, cultural, economic and political strata by transnational flows of information, capital and power (Strelitz 2001: online). This is manifested in the

permeability and weakening of the nation, the acceleration of time and compression of space. In this the media plays a central role. In fact, globalization is not possible without the international penetration of the media (*ibid.*). Because of this transnational presence and the ubiquity of its outlets, the media also has a vast and intimate impact in the arena of culture. In its elaboration throughout society in the forms that have come to articulate contemporary life, it has also become a mechanism through which to know the self.

Larry Strelitz' (2001) study on how audiences modify the impact of the media produces a South African instance which recasts assumptions of an homogenizing influence of international media articulated in the 'media imperialist' theories of Douglas Kellner and Herbert Schiller, to whom Strelitz refers. This is confirmed by Nezar AlSayyad and Manuel Castells in their study of Islam in Europe. AlSayyad and Castells assert that '[d]espite our preoccupation with globalization as a discourse, the world continues to demonstrate a movement toward cultural differentiation and not homogenization' (2002: 6). While Hall concurs that audiences exercise the ability to read resistantly, he concludes that this is contained by the hegemonic meanings of social elites (Poole 2002: 52). Moreover, production and distribution contexts affects the content of news. News is constrained by production processes, practices of selection and writing news, organizational mores, and the demands of a capitalist system. As a result, it tends to be 'limited, conservative and consensual' (Poole 2002: 23).

Journalism transforms the material of contemporary experience into the products of the media. It creates narratives of a specific kind. As the media theorist Stuart Hall puts it, '[a] "raw" historical event cannot, in that form, be transmitted by, say, a television newscast. ... [T]he event must become a "story" before it can become a communicative event' (1981: 41). In producing stories through which we apprehend the news, the role of journalism extends beyond providing information to allow us to understand the world in particular ways. By disseminating news in a complex and powerful circuit of production and readership, the media creates communities out of audiences. The media theorist John Hartley concludes that, '[a]s the sense-making practice of modernity, journalism is the most important textual system in the world' (1996: 32).

Hall points out that editors and journalists usually take a functional view of the choices and emphases in their reports. They call on news values, in other words, those stories which are newsworthy, to explain their choice of chapters and angles in the news. However, such professional, neutral understandings of what is news are, in fact, ideological. 'Behind the apparently formal dimension of its news values lie the ideological themes of the society in which the newspaper operates' (Hall 1981: 234). Journalism always generates particular, situated ways of understanding the world, and these are never without ideological value. In the tropes of the news one can read the ideological impulses at work in journalism.

An increasing reliance on advertising means that the imperative to attract audiences often means a focus on the most eye-catching or obvious stories and angles. One can, however, view the predictable appearance of such stories in a different way. Beneath the frequency of stories of transgression or disaster in the news (like sex and corruption scandals, natural disasters, the decline of stock markets), one may detect a 'deep structure' to news stories -- the stability or precariousness of the social order. This imperative generates the most visible news stories, and, one may argue, creates an investment in the renewal of order and sense of community. In this way, the media 'translates the legitimation of the social order into faces, expressions, subjects, settings and legends' (Hall 1981: 234).

### Islam and the Media

Islam has entered the gaze of Western media, and therefore its public consciousness, in moments of crisis. In his study of US media representations about the 1991 Gulf War Mahmut Mutman shows that little attention was paid to Islam until the oil crisis of 1973 (1994: 6). With the rise in oil prices in 1974, Islam emerged abruptly and fully into presence in the US media and 'Muslims suddenly became the news' (6). The vertiginous shift from obscurity to constant presence occurred in a context of perceived threat, and the resulting plenitude of images encouraged a sense of knowing Islam. However, this sense was based on an extremely constricted portrayal. Olfat Hassan Agha notes the

Iranian revolution in 1979 as another crisis that generated intensive attention around Islam in the West (2002: 222). Similarly, Poole (2002) notes the heightened visibility in Britain around crises about the Satanic Verses, featuring tropes such as the enraged Muslim crowd. In South Africa, the interplay between invisibility and crisis is evident too, as I show a detailed discussion of representations in Capetonian newspapers in Chapter Six.

There is a lingering effect of the absence of genuine engagement with the complexities of Islam in its varied contexts. It is only in crisis that Islam is fully realized. In the absence of genuine knowledge, Muslims often become explicable through stereotypes - Muslim women through the veil, Muslim men through militancy. This elaborated portrayal relies on familiar tropes. When Islam emerges through such mechanisms, it does so fully and compellingly, drawing on the power of oppositional thinking. Repeatedly, when the crisis is over, Islam goes back to obscurity, setting the cycle in motion again. In South Africa, this is also a familiar pattern, as I elucidate below.

#### A History of Images of Islam in Newspapers in Cape Town<sup>29</sup>

Historically, representations of Islam in the media in South Africa differ from that in the United States described by Edward Said in Covering Islam, in which Islam has an image of 'terrifying militancy and violence' (168). In South Africa, as I indicated in the Introduction, Islam has been portrayed as placid and picturesque.

In this section I examine patterns of representation of Muslims in the Cape Argus, first published in 1857 and the Cape Times, which first appeared in 1876. The South African National Library holds the entire archives of the two newspapers. These media organs are the largest English language newspapers in Cape Town, and both have a significant Muslim readership. While other aspects of the South African media landscape, such as Afrikaans as well as specifically Muslim media deserve attention, the extensive archives

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<sup>29</sup>I do not perform a detailed review of the contemporary media situation here, since my focus is on thematic developments in representations of Islam. For such a review, see Sean Jacobs, *Media and Policy Debates in Post-apartheid South Africa*, unpublished PhD thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2004. The South African Human Rights Commission enquiry into racism in the media produced significant debates. See Barney Pitso (2000) and Keyan Tomaselli (2000).

of the Cape Argus and Cape Times are useful for my analysis. Their continuous record of local media representations from the mid-nineteenth century provides a valuable research resource. They remain the most important English daily newspapers in Cape Town today. Research into representations of Muslims in these newspapers' archives provides an illuminating basis from which to read later portrayals.

The first of the significant English newspapers was the Cape Argus, which was started in 1857. Until Cecil John Rhodes bought a controlling interest in 1881, the Cape Argus was run by the liberal parliamentarian Solomon Saul (Shaw 1975: xiii). The first issue of the Cape Times appeared on the morning of 27 March 1876 (its early title was The Cape Times and Daily Advertiser). Founded and edited by the former pastor Frederick York St Leger, it is the oldest daily newspaper in South Africa (the Cape Argus appeared three times a week). In political tone the Cape Times attempted a delicate balance between a conciliatory attitude toward British imperialism and concern at its abuses in southern Africa. The paper would come to play an important role in mediating a white English political identity in the Cape that negotiated imperialism and Afrikaans allegiances, as I discuss in Chapter Five on the burial protests of 1886 (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 194). The tone of the Cape Argus was the more progressive of the two newspapers, and was accused by the Cape Times of a 'canting negrophilism' in its attitude toward Blacks (15). In South Africa's alternative press: voices of protest and resistance, 1880-1960 Les Switzer documents the vigorous perspectives produced at this time by Africans, initially in the early nineteenth century in media organs instituted by missions but eventually written and edited by Africans and, from the 1880s, in separate and independent publications (1997: 1).

I now examine representations of Islam in the Cape media in the mid-twentieth century, the period best represented in the catalogues and clippings of the South African National Library. Scanning four decades of coverage in these two newspapers from 1940 to 1980, I found that during this time, they showed a strikingly consistent, and narrowly circumscribed, image of Muslims. Almost all coverage falls into only six categories:

1. Pilgrimage.

2. Special Occasions: Ramadan, Eid, weddings.
3. Mosques Scandals (election of Imams, controversies about the amplification of sound, and in the apartheid era, the threat of forced removals of mosques).
4. The fate of the 'Malay Quarter', an area settled by former slaves.
5. The 'Malay' identity of Muslims, often portrayed as endangered by change.
6. Ratiep or khalifa – displays of 'mystical' powers to tolerate pain.

Within these parameters, South African Muslims during this period were portrayed as largely 'peaceful' and 'law-abiding'. They appear in these accounts to be respectable though, with prominently reported Malay Choirs and ratiep or khalifa (demonstrations of imperviousness to pain), also quaint. The mystical or occult powers attributed to the latter activities gave them an exotic but entertaining air.

Very occasionally, another view would emerge. Reports showed 'the usually placid Moslems of the Peninsula', as the Cape Argus put it on 24 July 1965, would sometimes go 'insane' or 'vicious'. An 1898 obituary in the Cape Argus for Abdol Burns spoke admiringly of his leadership of the Muslim community (and his partly Scottish heritage). 'His speeches contained more solid sense than those of many persons better placed in life.' However, a negative note was struck by memories of his involvement in a 1886 protest by Muslims against the closure of their cemeteries in the city environs. The Cape Argus described the uprising in a later article in 1950 as 'probably the only occasion in the history of Cape Town when the Malays rose in revolt.' The language in which this story is told is familiar from other genres which tell of the inflamed passions of Orientals: 'His one mistake was in leading the Moslem riots when Cape Town started to find that it might have to deal with Oriental fanaticism in the mass.' Another chapter reported that 'Police arrived while the child was being buried. By this time the law-abiding Malays had become fanatics'.<sup>30</sup> A report from November 1970 takes up this language, referring in a headline to 'Fanatical Moslem Mahdists'.

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<sup>30</sup> I provide a detailed analysis of newspaper reports of this 1886 story in Chapter Four.

Traces of the polarity between ordinariness and respectability on the one hand, and fanaticism and decay on the other, can be traced in other articles through the years. The limitations of the discourses that encapsulate Muslim life is evident even, it seems, to the authors of these articles. On 31 August 1960 the Cape Argus reported: 'at yesterday's City Council meeting, the Malay Quarter was described as a festering sore, complete with opium dens and brothels. In reality, the place is dull and suburban.'

During the apartheid era, there was an evolution in this vocabulary for talking about Muslims in the media. Aside from the familiar stories, almost timeless in their repetition, of conflicts around Mosque succession, there now also appeared stories such as 'Sheikh angrily denies Security Police connection' (22 April 1975, Cape Argus). Notably, an article articulating a rare sense of a connection with international news involving Muslims, appeared in the Cape Herald of 4 November 1972. The article reports that 'Cape Town's major Moslem organisations reacted strongly this week after word was spread that they were being used by Arab terrorists in a plan to kidnap Israeli diplomats' children.' Quoting a response from the Muslim organizations, the chapter continued: 'We strongly refute any connections with any of the overseas Arab terrorists.' Despite the long history of portrayals as generally harmless, this article and others referring to 'Moslem fanaticism' suggests that the equanimity of Muslims is perceived as tenuous. Interestingly, in this case, the source of the disturbance is seen to be a conspiracy or infiltration by 'overseas Arab terrorists'. Thus, the judgement of placidity is seen here to be dependent on whether Muslims are perceived to be associated with an international Muslim community, portrayed here through the discourse of terrorism.

### **Conclusion: Not Knowing Everything about Islam**

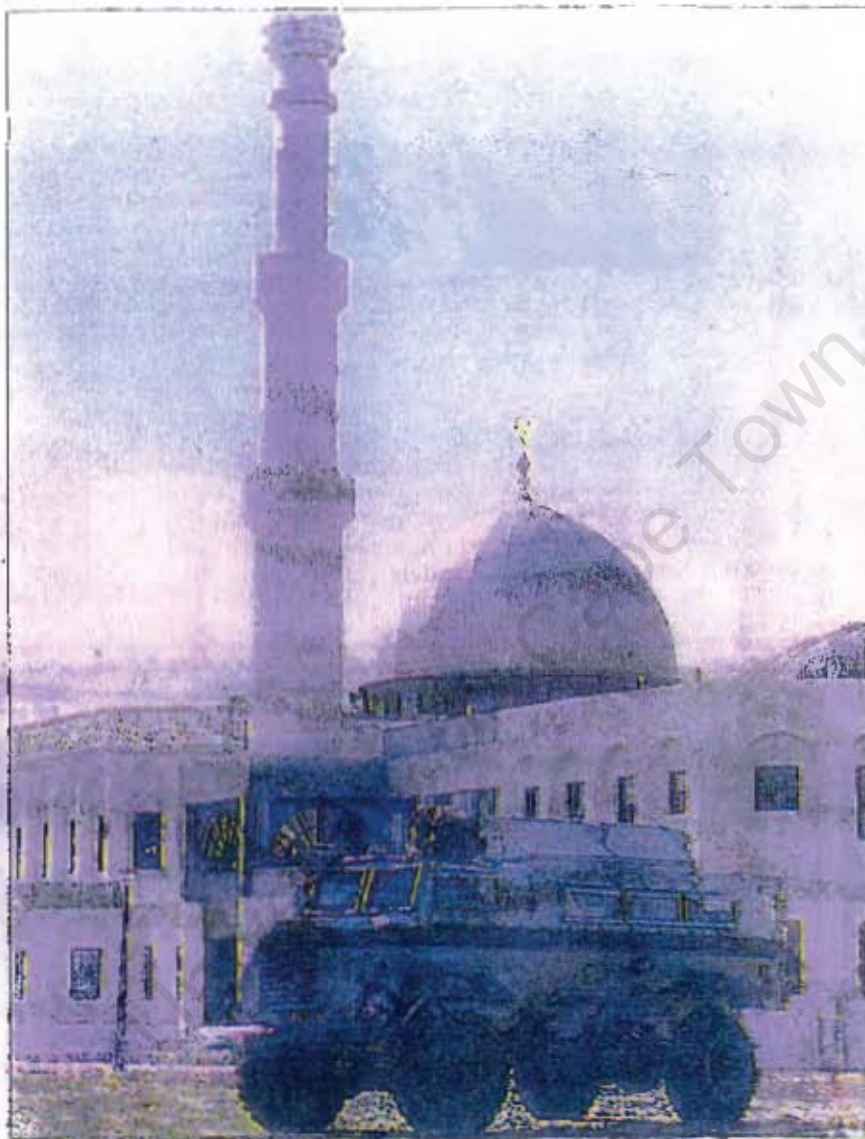
In this chapter I have provided an account of important concepts for discussions in the rest of the thesis, particularly Edward Said's analysis of Orientalism. I also discussed theories of the media and provided a critical reading of images of Islam in South Africa. Orientalism offers a way to tease out the complexities of race in South Africa by enabling one to undercut exoticism and think of Islam locally. It also allows one to distinguish between a criticism aimed at 'correcting' negative views to a criticism interested in the

way perspectives are normalized and harnessed into the workings of power. Seen in this way, in the unequal and interacting contexts of the world, discourses speak through subjectivities. They live in us and through us, and therefore their details require an acute attention. Said showed in Orientalism that authoritative sources of knowledge could be seen in a radically new way. Hence, in this study I focus in succeeding chapters on the media and art to determine how Islam in South Africa was envisioned. At the end of the thesis in Chapter Eight, I discuss representations which do not claim already to know everything about Islam.

In the next chapter I explore the significance of the notion of archive for the thesis, and outline my approach to methodology in the thesis.

University of Cape Town





**ON GUARD:** A Public Order Policing (formerly Internal Stability Division) Casspir waits in position outside the Gatesville Mosque, from which members of People Against Gangsterism and Drugs tracked down and killed Rashaad Staggle. **PICTURE: BENNY GOOL**

Figure 1.  
Gool, B. 1996. On Guard. Photograph. Cape Times (6 August): 3.





**GUARDED MOSQUE:** A policeman keeps watch over the Gatesville mosque.

Picture: OBEID ZILWA, The Argus

**Figure 2.**

Zilwa, O. 1996: **Guarded Mosque.** Photograph. The Argus (9 August): 5. 43



## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGIES: SILENCES, SECRETS, FRAGMENTS

*'[W]hat is important in a work is what it does not say. This is not the same as ... "what it refuses to say," although that would in itself be interesting: a method might be built on it, with the task of measuring silences, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. But rather this, what the work cannot say is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is carried out, in a sort of journey to silence.'*

*- Pierre Macherey quoted in Spivak 1988: 286.*

#### Marking the steps to knowledge

Edward Said argues that for knowledge to collude with power and acquire dominance, it must 'eras[e] the steps by which it was produced' (1997:166). I proceed here to reflect on the disciplinary and methodological range in the thesis to show which concepts and research I draw on in the discussions produced in its ten chapters.

This thesis undertakes a study of representations of Islam in South Africa. In it, I conduct a study of images in the media that, in addition to analyses of newspaper articles, also draws on literary and cultural theory, interviews and analyses of media and popular culture texts. The thesis claims as its scope 'Islam in South Africa', though its primary media and visual texts are largely Capetonian. The reason for what might otherwise be seen as over-reach beyond the empirical basis of the study is that the specificity of Islam in the Cape does not amount to exceptionalism.<sup>31</sup> While the study draws on Capetonian texts, it is located in a broader South African polity and history.

In my analysis of media images of Islam, I focus on selected coverage across one hundred and fifteen years drawn from the newspapers the Cape Times and the Cape Argus, specifically the 1886 'burial riots' in Chapter Five, the 'Pagad' stories in 1996 in Chapter Six, and the coverage of the events of 11 September 2001 in Chapter Seven. I demonstrate the innovation of these news-stories by contrasting them with earlier patterns of representations in the archives of the two newspapers. I use in my analyses a

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<sup>31</sup> I address the issue of Cape exceptionalism in the discussion of food in Chapter Four.

syncretistic approach to reading the media. I combine textual analysis of coverage in the newspapers with insights from interviews with journalists, a longitudinal study of Islam in the media and a consideration of the connection between art and media. In analysing the newspapers, I deliberately sought to create a different experience of reading newspapers. I describe in Chapters Six and Seven methods in which the eye lingers on the visual patterns of the pages, flickers between them, recalling, connecting and composing meanings.

Islam has been represented in South Africa in an imaginative realm structured by dominant systems of meaning. I argue that one of the mechanisms of such systems is the occulting of the specific into the general, where prescriptive generalities are derived from the 'hyberbolic occultation' of individual instances (Jacques Derrida quoted in Spivak 1988: 293). Which specific instances are, of course, of crucial importance. As I indicated in the Introduction, for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslim people were portrayed in a minor discourse in the South African media as placid, law-abiding and industrious, and characterized by colourful clothing and rituals.<sup>32</sup> This recurring, picturesque view of Muslims was accompanied by a disavowal of the brutalities of slavery (Jeppie 2001: 89). An occasional variation on the picturesque view occurred on when Muslims were portrayed as demonstrating irrational behaviour. On such occasions, a broader visibility was briefly attained, for instance, in the 1886 'burial riots', the 'skollie problem' [gangster problem] in 1944 and the Pagad story in 1996.<sup>33</sup> This general pattern of docility and volatility constituted the way in which Islam has come to be signified in South African media.

Media portrayals make sense within a broader set of social meanings. I show how media images of Islam as either quaint or dangerous resonated with or countered images in other contexts, including art and literature. To situate my analysis of Pagad, I therefore examine texts from a broad range of sources across one hundred and fifty years of

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<sup>32</sup> Examples include I. D. du Plessis, dedication, *Tales of the Malay Quarter* (1945), unpaginated, and entries in the *Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles* under 'Cape Malay', that refer to them as 'law-abiding'.

<sup>33</sup> I discuss the first and third instance in this thesis, and the 'skollie' problem was discussed by Azeem Badroodien in 'Raceing Poverty and Crime in South Africa' (2004).

envisioning Islam, surveying travel writings, cookbooks, folktales and paintings to show how a local understanding of Islam has been generated in South Africa. These texts constitute interstitial forms that hover between fiction and fact and generate a kind of knowledge that fills in the spaces between more authoritative sources (Hall 2000: 10).

### Deconstructive and Narrativizing Strategies

In a deconstructive engagement with visual artefacts produced by colonialism, '[t]he Western gaze would be met and shattered' (Michel Leiris quoted in Steet 2000: 6). However, there are also approaches in which the orientation is not to react to dominant forces but to generate an interior universe in which binaries are evaded altogether. In her study of the archives of the British East India Company the literary scholar Betty Joseph considered the challenge of deconstructing the history generated by colonialism when colonialism 'produced the very categories and ideas that constitute the "facts" of history' (2004: 17). Joseph concluded that to address the complexities of erasure and emphasis in the colonial record in India, she required 'a narrativizing strategy' to supplement her deconstructive one (Tejaswini Niranjana quoted in Joseph 2004: 17). In this view literature constitutes an alternative colonial archive that can generate a set of meanings different to the dominant view. It suggests a strategy that goes beyond returning the gaze through which the East is rendered into an object.

Desiree Lewis provides an illustration of such an approach in a southern African context through her analysis of the 'imagined worlds' in the writings of Bessie Head (2000: 254). Head's work broke through the constrictions of racism imposed by apartheid, but also resisted counter-expectations of political, gendered, and racial allegiances. Instead, Head's writings generated previously unimagined, unsettling and unbounded new subjectivities (255). I follow these models by attending to insights from creative works in this thesis, and by including in my range of texts not only academic writings and media analyses but also paintings, poetry, fiction, theatre and conceptual art to determine how a local understanding of Islam has been, and continues to be constructed. In Chapter Eight I show how new imaginative works both take account of and exceed previous South African conventions of portraying Islam.

Why consider artistic conventions in a study of media representations of Islam? As Said notes in Orientalism, the arts have been crucial to building an Orientalist view of Islam. Linda Steet confirms the interchangeability between factual and artistic representations of the East in Veils and Daggers: A Century of National Geographic's Representation of the Arab World (2000). Steet shows in her study that views of the Middle East are so heavily structured by convention that the photographs of Algerian women that National Geographic reproduced as ethnographic 'fact' were created in the same studios and, in some cases, were the same staged photographs reproduced as pornographic postcards analysed by Malek Alloula in The Colonial Harem (1986) (Steet 2000: 42). The transferability of ethnographic and pornographic photographs in this example demonstrates the fantasies that inform conventions for non-fictional or documentary representations of the East. Therefore, I argue that a consideration of the arts is crucial to this thesis and attend to the relation of Orientalist tropes in artistic and fictional representations of the East in the South African media.

South Africa culture has generated instances in which the interplay between artistic and non-fictional representations of Islam in the media and other genres is overt. Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool write about the work of the South African documentary photographer, Leon Levson, whose photographs of the Malay Quarter drew on and extended the visual archive about Islam. Levson's interest in the work of Irma Stern and other painters shows the intersections and mutual influence of art and documentary photography. Minkley and Rassool write that:

Levson's interest and fascination with art intensified. His studio premises housed art exhibitions of contemporary South African, English and European artists which included Edward Wolfe, Irma Stern, Dorothy Kay, Pierneef, and this "passion" fueled an on-going tension and self-reflected debate around the status, meaning, and content of his photography in relation to art. (1999: online)

On the occasion of his self-exhibition, Monoprints in November 1945, Levson articulated the perspective that:

photographic portraiture is in its nature documentary and, as such, it must faithfully record life in all its realism. But in order that a portrait may make a

wider appeal than to those immediately interested in the subject, it must have a decorative value (quoted in Minkley and Rassool 1999: online).

What Levson refers to as the 'decorative value' of his own work as an instrument to secure a 'wider appeal' indicates the role of composition and craft, and the fact that documentary photography consciously presents its content in a way that 'appeals' or invites a certain response. In other words, it 're-presents' its subjects (Spivak 1988: 275). Such constructions that permeate the non-fictional and documentary genres that purport to convey reality directly suggest that works that consciously reflect on these processes are of value in understanding the former. Art can show elements that may not otherwise be evident.

The journalist and memoirist Zubeida Jaffer asserts that art generates a space for new kinds of media representations of Islam in South Africa (2003: interview). To Jaffer, developments in art and literature presage and drive developments in other parts of culture. Where does one look for art? An insight from a feminist scholar suggests that the answer is not always in conventional sites. In 1996, while the Pagad story was being prominently reported, newspaper images of the Gatesville Masjied near Cape Town [see Figures 1 and 2, p. 41-42] became an icon of conflict in the South African media.<sup>34</sup> However, Soraya Abdulatief gives another way of reading of the mosque. She points out that the view in these news photographs was always from outside, and in an interview provided an alternative vision of its significance by describing the experience of entering the Masjied (Abdulatief 2000: interview). Abdulatief recounts the sight one meets: the serene blue dome, the exquisite detail on the ceiling of the mosque, the ornate mouldings of the stone pillars created by local artisans; then she noted that similar mouldings can be found in mosques even in the poor areas of Cape Town and also in the homes of many Muslim people. Far from being decorative additions aimed at an outside gaze, such details have a very different internal meaning.<sup>35</sup> They create a spiritual space within the

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<sup>34</sup> The *Argus*, 7 August, 3 and the *Cape Times*, 7 August, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Attention to the 'remaking' of the 'Malay Quarter', particularly in the early to mid-twentieth century, focussed intensely on the visible and picturesque aspects of the buildings, as can be seen in newspaper articles on Muslims between 1940 and 1980, a period I reviewed in the Introduction. Abdulatief's point

buildings they adorn, where 'your spirit is actually nourished', she testifies. To Abdulatief, the attention paid to the beauty of mosques even in poorer Muslim communities 'signals an expression of ... the depth and complexity that exists within the people.' Abdulatief's observations demonstrate the illuminating effects of shifting from expected or dominant perspectives. She also points out that art can be found in unconventional sites such as the inside of a mosque which is more beautiful than it needs to be, or a home. I take the lesson of this insight and attend to the interior meanings of practices that are familiar from their representation as exotic curiosities, such as food. In addition, the last chapter of the thesis looks at new images of Islam in the arts in South Africa and contemplates what future directions there may be for such representations.

In examining the discourses through which Islam has become visible in South Africa, I analyse a series of tableaux that recur constantly in images of Islam, for instance, weddings and funerals, as demonstrations of 'the staging of the world in representation' (Spivak 1988: 279). As I indicated above, Islam has been 'staged' in South African media and artistic representations as picturesque, safe and domesticated. I introduce the notion of the picturesque in South Africa here and extend my discussion in Chapter Three. David Bunn's (2002) discussion of the frontispiece in Francois Le Vaillant's Travels into the interior parts of Africa, by the way of the Cape of Good Hope (1790) shows that the convention in painting known as the picturesque mandated a staging of the landscape and its inhabitants. To Bunn, the 'theatricality' of the picturesque landscape in a colonial setting served to create a space for European presence in Africa (2002: 129). In this mode the African landscape was rendered into a 'terrain ... displayed as though already ordered to European conventions of taste' (*ibid.*). Through detailed analyses in Chapters Three to Five of nineteenth century paintings, cookbooks and newspaper articles, I argue that the positioning of Muslims as placid and law-abiding, in contrast to 'natives', who were seen dangerous and threatening, functioned rhetorically to secure European selfhood in the colonial landscape.

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here is different – that these apparently decorative enhancements have an interior and deeply spiritual meaning.

Some of the most compelling studies of representations of Islam in South Africa have been conducted by the historian Shamil Jeppie. In this thesis I draw extensively on Jeppie's work, as can be seen in the Introduction, and also go beyond the scope of his recent writing. Jeppie's essay 'Reclassifications: Coloured, Malay, Muslim' does not focus on the sets of meanings that circulate in the Muslim community itself, nor, as he phrases it, 'the "internal" or "interior" voices and process through which the Muslims imagined and constructed their own sense of community' (2001: 94). I attend to this dimension as part of the thesis.

One instance is the coding of the landscape. Not usually visible in representations of the Cape is the way Muslims have made the landscape their own, most concretely through burials sites, but less visibly through the patterns of visiting dating back to the era of slavery. During the Dutch period the visible practice of Islam was forbidden and thus rituals were practised out of the sight of and between the activities of the dominant society. Because Friday prayers could not be observed slaves travelled between farms on Thursday nights to hold prayers (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 77). This pattern of visiting continues today in prayer nights held on Thursdays in Cape Town. In the thesis I access such 'interior' views through jokes, memories and stories secured in interviews.<sup>36</sup> In addition, poetry by Rustum Kozain speaks of this hidden landscape, as I show in the last chapter of the thesis.

### Feminist Methods

The role of emotion in academic research has recently been the subject of extensive discussion in feminist and radical scholarship.<sup>37</sup> As Inga Clendinnen has pointed out, universities have traditionally insisted on the removal of signs of emotion in academic writing in order to create an impression of objectivity (2003: online). However, to remove

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<sup>36</sup> Below I discuss further the choice of interviews as a method in the light of the admonition to ensure the 'heterogeneity' of the subaltern voice theorized by Spivak (1988), and also considering feminist methodologies.

<sup>37</sup> See Uma Narayan *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third-World Feminisms* (1997); M. Fine *Disruptive Voices: The Possibilities of Feminist Research* (1995); M. Fonow and J. Cook *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship on Lived Research* (1991).

evidence of emotion simply suppresses evidence that research always involves personal as well as other dimensions of experience, channelled by the professional practices of the discipline. As Said points out, 'such unscientific nuisances as feelings, habits, conventions, associations, and values are an intrinsic part of any interpretation. (1997: 164). In considering such influences in my work, as well as the politics of conducting research on oppressed groups in South Africa, I draw on the work of researchers Leila Davids (2003), and Juliet Perumal and Daisy Pillay (2002) in their recent reflections on being Black academics who research Black women in South Africa.

The psychologist Leila Davids (2003) conducted narrative interviews among Muslim women in Cape Town about their views on wearing the scarf. In writing about her research Davids acknowledges that the fact that she herself is a Muslim woman living in Cape Town does not necessarily mean that the relations between her and the women she interviews are more egalitarian. Reflecting on her insights on her behaviour and orientation toward the women she interviewed, Davids said she found herself falling into a habit of respectfulness towards an older interviewee, such as 'calling her aunty', that she did not manifest with younger women (2003: 36). While taking care to create as democratic a set of exchanges as she can, and choosing the avenue of narrative research with its multiplicity and layered meanings, Davids nonetheless found that being associated with a university and having control over the outcome means that the balance of the power to represent remains with the researcher.

In their self-reflexive writing on their research into the life of a rural potter named Bina Gumede in Kwazulu-Natal Juliet Perumal and Daisy Pillay underscore the role of 'the subjective, emotional, and biographical variables that shape the researcher and the researched' (2001: 94). Like Davids, they choose to work with narrative interviewing methods because they believe that the stories she tells of her life are best able to convey the depth and complexity of the 'inner world' of Bina Gumede (*ibid.*). Simultaneously, they reflect that the very quality of narratives that makes them valuable for approaching complex views – their polyvocality – means that they cannot be treated as though they were a transparent window on their subject's life. To obey the injunction by Gayatri

Spivak that 'one must ... insist that the colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous', Perumal and Pillay bear in mind that such narratives are themselves subject to power relations (1988: 284). Thus, Gumedé's relation to her family, gender and community, her own sense of power and survival, and the researcher's interpretations add additional layers to their deliberations. In addition, their own desires and motivations as academic writers also impact the research process. Perumal and Pillay thus regard their research as producing two different texts: an 'empirical text', which they circulate, and a 'liminal text', which consists of the 'silent' material that is edited out in the course of selection and unconscious repression (*ibid.*) Perumal and Pillay note soberly that though their intention is to convey the resilience of Gumedé's approach to life, nonetheless their research runs the risk, in seeking to highlight 'subjugated voices', of repeating the formula through which underprivileged women are exploited as sources of data (98). In seeking to understand the role of institutional and disciplinary conventions in academia in sustaining unequal power relations, Perumal and Pillay conclude not by being paralysed by the scale and complexity of the challenge, but by seeking to transform intellectual practices to 'open new frames for intellectual and political theory and change' (*ibid.*). I note these insights in reviewing my own methods of research.

The title 'Archives of the Visible/Archives of Silence' in Chapter 1 implies that the thesis will reveal the 'invisible' and the 'silent'. These suggestions run the danger outlined in Spivak's classic essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' of the seduction for the intellectual of reifying the 'oppressed', and discovering and delivering their 'voices', in the process of which intellectuals render themselves 'transparent' (1988: 275). This is both a denial of the role that intellectuals and the academy play in constituting and validating dominant forms of power, and valorizes the 'concrete experience' of a self-sufficient and indivisible subject. I take care in the thesis to avoid these dangers by not claiming to offer the voices of 'self-knowing, politically canny sub-alterns' (*ibid.*), nor by telling the 'truth' that might overturn the 'lies' of Orientalism. Instead, I demonstrate the violent mechanisms of the archive by showing what it excludes and suppresses. My interest is in constituting an expanded archive that draws on alternative sources and new methods, bringing different voices into perspectives on Islam. I also seek different meanings in

existing texts. In other words, I seek to shift the grounds of visibility for Islam in South Africa.

By attending to jokes, stories, and memories elicited in interviews I constitute other archives of material, not to provide a corrective, but to give access to little-known views which otherwise would not register in the visible archive on Islam in South Africa. The interviews cited in this study show Muslims as makers rather than simply as objects of meaning. Their meanings demonstrate an interior dialogue, and have a level of irony, self-awareness, humour, variance, and even disavowal that conveys a heterogeneity of identity. I look at the interviews as instances of representation, not in the sense that the interviews 'stand for' the truth, but that these jokes and stories 're-present' or re-tell the event, using conventions different to dominant codes (Spivak 1988: 275). . By including these views, I unsettle the stability of the vision of Islam constituted in the colonial period in the Cape which went on to infuse the Union of South Africa and apartheid itself. In the post-apartheid era I trace developments in representations of Islam in the arts, which themselves engage and unsettle the archive of received images.

Imperialism had a narrative strategy embedded in its erasures and classificatory impetus, a narrative that placed the colonists at the centre of the occupied landscape and displaced the 'natives', rendering them as Other. In this thesis I use interviews not to seek to reconstitute the scattered traces of subjectivity of the Other but to show how the 'palimpsestic narrative of imperialism' became normative (Spivak 1988: 281). Observing the perspective in Adorno's statement quoted in Chapter 1, I subvert dominant discourses' claims to universality by seeking the unexpected, the partial, the fragmented, the evanescent, the joke, the transient, the fictional and the unimportant.<sup>38</sup> In the minor South African discourse on Islam I attend to hidden dimensions and subtle shifts. To counter the 'occultation' that transforms the specific into an ahistorical generality, I investigate the history of the discourse by looking at its 'invention' in the nineteenth

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<sup>38</sup> In 'Can the Sub-altern Speak?' Spivak quotes Foucault on the perception of certain sources as unimportant. 'To make visible the unseen can also mean a change of level, addressing oneself to a layer of material which had hitherto had no pertinence for history and which had not been recognized as having any moral, aesthetic or historical value.' (Michel Foucault quoted in Spivak 1988: 285).

century, and tracing the trajectory of some of the tropes still used today in describing Islam. In the last chapter I look at varied representations of Islam in contemporary art in works that themselves engage with these pasts. As a method of undercutting the will to systematize, I focus on specificity, the history behind discourse, and fix my regard on the small, the edge, the oblique, and the fringe.

In reviewing my own position as a researcher who conducted interviews as one of my methods I draw on the approaches of Linda Steet (2000) and Gayatri Spivak (1988). Steet identifies herself as Arab-American, following the model she describes Edward Said offered of 'a methodological self-consciousness that submits to critical scrutiny' (2000: 15). However, she says that the factor of her background, which includes fluency in Arabic and fourteen years of living in the Middle East, is neither insignificant nor decisive (14). Her experience is one source among many, all of which are subject to analysis. One insight that emerges from her background is '[w]hen I put my visual memories of the Arab world against National Geographics' images, there is dissonance' (*ibid.*). As a Muslim South African woman studying images of Islam in South Africa I was similarly able to use knowledge derived from this experience to be able to assess representations and their absences.

Speaking about her use of Indian texts in theorizing the politics of intellectual practice in 'Can the subaltern speak?' Spivak alludes to the:

accident of birth and education [that] has provided me with a sense of the historical canvas, a hold on some of the languages that are useful tools for a bricoleur, especially when armed with the Marxist scepticism of concrete experience as the final arbiter and a critique of disciplinary formations (1988: 281).

In this reflection Spivak acknowledges that as a woman born and educated in India she has a specific level of access to the nuances of Indian languages and examples. She frames this 'accidental' access in the codes of Marxism. I observe these codes, and also go beyond Spivak's formulation. Unlike the example she discusses in 'Can the subaltern speak?' for this thesis I generated primary texts in the form of interviews. To elicit the views in these encounters, I conducted twenty-eight interviews on food, nineteen on

images of Islam with academics and Cape Town-based journalists from local as well as national newspapers, television and community radio. I specifically chose to interview journalists whose articles I analyse in Chapter Six, as well as others who worked on the Pagad stories. I also interviewed the three artists whose work I discuss in Chapter Eight. People who had published work on the subjects I discussed with them shared views in the interviews that were not in published documents, and supplemented or sometimes exceeded the latter (as I demonstrate in the story of the 'Hertzoggie' in Chapter Four on food). On the other hand, I do not make an appeal to 'concrete experience' reflected in these interviews, but instead view them as other ways of talking about familiar tropes (Spivak 1988 275). Spivak exhorts academics to observe 'the necessity for de-fetishizing the concrete' (276). I regard these perspectives as narratives with their own partiality.

My level of access was due partly to the status that comes from being associated with the University of Cape Town. Yet, such an association was not always an advantage. In the context of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, parallel systems administering education and marriage had developed in the Muslim community, and there is a resulting suspicion of official bodies. Some people I spoke with regarded official institutions as means of obtaining information from vulnerable people in the interests of Orientalism, with few benefits returning to the Muslim community.<sup>39</sup> In seeking to arrange interviews, my being an academic associated with the University of Cape Town was therefore ambivalently viewed, though the names of some individuals associated with the institution, such as Abdulkader Tayob,<sup>40</sup> ameliorated this hesitance. In such cases I had to call on other forms of access and means of legitimating my study. Gender played a role in such forms of entry. Being a woman with contacts facilitated by my family (my mother is well-known within the Muslim community through her work as a doctor in the state hospital system) meant that I was privy to jokes, stories and confidences, and trusted

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<sup>39</sup> Yusuf da Costa wrote 'when any history of [the Muslim community in the Cape] has been written (by writers such as I. D. du Plessis), it has been done to support the racial policies of the colonial governments in power rather than as an attempt to give these people their rightful place in the events of this country. And the silence has been intensified by a subtle campaign of historical distortion as the views of the white writers have become part of the school history textbooks': Introduction, *Pages from Cape Muslim History*, 1994, x). [I. D. du Plessis taught at the University of Cape Town in the early to mid-twentieth century.]

<sup>40</sup> The much respected Professor of Religious Studies and director of the Centre for Contemporary Islam at the University of Cape Town.

with access to sights not necessarily available to others. Therefore my reflection on the meaning of being Muslim in this context means going beyond feminist self-reflexivity and egalitarianism to acknowledge that I had special kinds of access due to family, the observation of respect for hierarchies of age and status, and trust based on being Muslim. On the other hand, I firmly distance myself from the notion that only Muslims can treat Muslim subjects with depth and complexity.

### The Politics of the Text

In the thesis I take care not to render 'the West' or the 'colonist' into simplistic entities, considering different Orientalisms, shifts over time, and the fissures in the colonial experience. I describe the dominant United States discourse of Islam and its shifts, and show how it encountered a well-developed South African Orientalism, to show how systematic thinking of two kinds encountered each other. I explore the contradictions, changes, fissures and inherent instabilities that lie within them.

The thesis also does not attempt, as a means of contesting racist depictions of Muslims, to recover an essence or, in Homi Bhabha's term, a 'sovereign identity' for Islam.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, this danger is headed off by Said's conception of Orientalism. Mahmut Mutman observes that 'Orientalism should not be understood as "a structure of a lies or myths", which, once the truth about them were told, would simply go away' (1994: 24). Instead, this thesis views being Muslim as an identity which always multiply intersects with other categories of existence within a particular context.

In a political climate in the West formed around a crisis about Islam, the temptation exists to approach representations of Islam in the hope of correcting or explaining them. Yet, the dynamics of both correction and explication seem to me to be symptoms of, rather than solutions to, the problem of representation and politics. Correction through careful analysis of the problems of existing texts and the substitution of more appropriate ones, is an unsustainable aim for, as Linda Steet notes, '[r]epresentations do not cancel one another out like a math equation' (2000: 10). Similarly, to attempt to abolish the

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<sup>41</sup> Homi Bhabha, Keynote Address, The Black Body Conference, DePaul University, Chicago, USA, 23 April 2004.

impenetrability of Islam through an elucidation of representations means yielding to the same desire for explicability of the 'inscrutable' that underlies the repetitive and reductive kinds of representations that abound in the mainstream. To attempt to fill in the missing information, or correct misconceptions is similar to the idea of revealing the secrets behind the veil that is part of the Orientalist fantasy itself. Such well-intentioned attempts to explain Islam, particularly its relation to violence, repeat, inevitably, the very formula of linking Islam to impenetrability, or violence. They embody, in other words, the very anxiety that they are trying to alleviate.

In the light of this, it should be redundant to point out that it is not my intention to provide a sympathetic view of the people represented in the newspaper texts analyzed in the succeeding chapters. In fact, I show in Chapter Six that both the group discussed (Pagad) and media representations about them mutually and symbiotically use regressive discourses about Islam. My approach to Islam is not to reify identity and culture, but to find repetitions, openings and contradictions in patterns of representations. I am attentive to history, showing that perceptions of Islam vary over time and also intersect with other factors such as economic and political shifts. Rather than calling for positive portrayals, I demonstrate in this thesis that Orientalist discourses inhibit sufficiently complex representations of Islam. The problem is not a negative set of portrayals of Pagad, but a simplistic set of portrayals of Islam.

While disavowing the impulse to clarify and explain, I concede that there is a politics to this thesis: that discourse is a crucial register of social and political change and thus to analyze discourses means to enable a critical practice of reading and writing and, consequently, to challenge received ways of understanding the world. It is therefore on the terrain of representation that this thesis operates. I aim in examining texts from the media and other arenas of culture to examine closely the mechanisms of representation that bring into existence a specific form of mediated Islam in South Africa, and the ways in which some people who identify themselves as Muslim use these mechanisms. The last chapter of the thesis looks at a different engagement with such images – in contemporary South African art that re-envisions Islam in South Africa.



GEORGE FRISCH, ALBANY, N.Y.

J. NEEDHAM LITHO

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CAPE TOWN FROM THE CAMPS BAY ROAD





Figure 4.  
Angas, G. F. Wynberg. *The Kafirs Illustrated*. 1849: unpaginated.



## CHAPTER THREE

### OBLIQUE FIGURES: REPRESENTATIONS OF MUSLIMS IN THE MAKING OF A SOUTH AFRICAN LANDSCAPE

*Then one Saturday morning everything changes. He is in the city on business; he is walking in St George's Street when his eyes fall on a slim figure ahead of him in the crowd. It is Soraya, unmistakably, flanked by two children, two boys. They are carrying parcels; they have been shopping.*

*He hesitates, then follows at a distance. They disappear into Captain Dorego's Fish Inn. The boys have Soraya's lustrous hair and dark eyes. They can only be her sons.*

*He walks on, turns back, passes Captain Dorego's a second time. The three are seated at a table in the window. For an instant, through the glass, Soraya's eyes meet his.*

*He has always been a man of the city, at home amid the flux of bodies where eros stalks and glances flash like arrows. But this glance between himself and Soraya he regrets at once.*

*- J. M. Coetzee, Disgrace (1999: 6).*

In this chapter I show how a specific visual discourse developed around 'Malays' in the colonial period, and became sedimented in portrayals of the Cape landscape. I analyse instances of visual representation in the nineteenth century in which the colonial relation to Cape landscape appears to be resolved by the deployment of the figure of the 'Malay'. Examples in the twentieth century analyzed in the chapter include paintings by Irma Stern and two verbal texts, the foreword to a work of popular anthropology and the novel Disgrace, that strongly evoke the relation of Muslims to the landscape evident in the nineteenth century and demonstrate its continued presence in the mid and late twentieth centuries.<sup>42</sup> The subject of this chapter, therefore, is not only how Islam is represented in selected paintings but how Islam is present in the making of a South African landscape. In the light of this 'image-repertoire'<sup>43</sup> the arrival of the Pagad story in August 1996 presented a steep challenge to representations of Islam in the South African media, a topic I discuss in Chapter Six.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the phenomenon of 'feminized' men in another British colony, see Mrinalini Sinha, Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century (1995).

<sup>43</sup> Coetzee uses the term in a discussion of the novels of Sarah Gertrude Millin (1988: 138).

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The kind of visibility allocated to Muslims in South Africa is infused with traumatic knowledge - they have an uncanny connectedness to the unacknowledged bodies of slaves. This latent weight colours the South African notion of Islam, and gives rise to an intense ambivalence around the topic. As a result, Muslim people are either elaborately coded as law-abiding, colourful, and harmless, or as an alien threat.

In this section I discuss representations of 'Malays' in the Cape during the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> I undertook a series of surveys of images of Muslims from nineteenth and twentieth century South African texts, including the visual archives in the South African National Library, where an extensive collection of images can be found under the category 'Cape Malay' (but none under Cape Muslim). Among such images are numerous paintings and studies of the Malay quarter, for instance, by Fred Page, Irma Stern, Gregoire Boonzaier, Constance Stuart Larrabee. I followed this with an examination of the seven-volume Kennedy Catalogues of the Africana Museum, the most comprehensive compilation of nineteenth century South African prints and paintings.<sup>45</sup> I also examined A. Gordon-Brown's Pictorial Africana: A survey of old South African paintings, drawings and prints to the end of the nineteenth century with a biographic dictionary of one thousand artists. Lastly, George F. Angas' The Kafirs Illustrated (1849) provided some of the best-known images of 'Malays', cited in later publications such as ID du Plessis's The Cape Malays (1944). Later in the chapter, I analyse the work of Angas as exemplary of a certain type of image of 'Malays'. Angas has also been discussed extensively in Sandra Klopper's article on his representations of Zulu costumes. I continue this examination of images of Islam into the twentieth century by looking at the work of I. D. du Plessis and Irma Stern.

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<sup>44</sup> A set of twenty-five cigarette cards issued in 1927 by Ogden under the title 'Picturesque People of Empire' creates an array of images of settlers and indigenous people in the British colonial territories. The description of Sikhs, as 'essentially fighting men' and 'the finest soldiers in the East', 'loyal' to the British, reveals the extent to which their relationship with empire rendered people explicable and visible.<sup>44</sup> The card about Malays conveys the shifts which enabled them to be incorporated into the picturesque discourse. As part of the Malay sultanates that had been incorporated into the empire, on 'the coasts of the Straits Settlements and of the Malay States'. The card's text in shows a prior perception of notoriety has been superseded by placidity. 'The Malays ... are a seafaring folk who were formerly notorious pirates, and are now peaceful fishermen'.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Godby, personal communication, June 2003.

### The Promise of the Picturesque

As I indicated in the Introduction, in his influential analysis of the role of landscape in South African English literature and art J. M. Coetzee observes that 'Africa was not a new world' (1988: 2). And therefore, that Africa was not a rediscovered Eden in which colonists could write a new beginning. Instead, the African landscape was riven with a stubbornly anterior indigenous presence. Such prior indigenous meanings meant that Africa rendered colonists in South Africa belated arrivals. As a consequence, Coetzee notes, they are peculiarly 'unsettled settlers' (4). White writing and art therefore reflects the desire to reorient the landscape in order to find a responsive place in it. Such writing seeks both to structure the landscape, and to create 'a language to fit Africa' (7). Coetzee argues that this quest for 'a dialogue with Africa' is the centripetal desire around which art and writing about landscape revolves during the nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century (ibid.). The form through which settlers find a way of speaking of and to Africa that will solve the anxiety of belatedness is the picturesque.

What does the picturesque look like, and what does it do? A picturesque landscape is composed in planes that recede from the foreground, to a middle plane to a 'luminous distance' (Coetzee 1988: 39). Usually a shadow falls on the foreground, yet also throws it into relief (ibid.). W. J. T. Mitchell reads the unconscious emotional tone built into the evident artifice of this structure:

The standard picturesque landscape is especially pleasing ... because it typically places the observer in a protected, shaded spot ... with screens on either side to dart behind or to entice curiosity, and an opening to provide deep access at the center.

... the frame is always there as the guarantee that it is only a picture, only picturesque, and the observer is safe in another place – outside the frame, behind the binoculars, the camera, or the eyeball, in the dark refuge of the skull (1996: 16).

Mitchell's formulation shows that even in the metropole, the picturesque landscape is a genre attended by anxiety. The perspective constructs the landscape as a visual correlate

of the 'dark refuge' that is sought in the mind. I will discuss further the anxieties of the picturesque below.

As theorists of landscape point out, painting does not place a gloss of artifice on something which was originally true. Instead, the landscape seen in a picturesque vista was already a representation. Nature itself has been shaped and made. W. J. T. Mitchell points out that '[l]andscape painting is best understood, then, not as the uniquely central medium that gives us access to ways of seeing landscape, but as a representation of something that is already a representation in its own right' (1996: 14). Looking at the landscape of Cape Town, the trees, rocks and certainly the buildings testify constantly to the presence of slaves and the Khoisan as forming influences. In undertaking an 'archaeology of silences' in Cape Town, Martin Hall showed that architecture in the Cape was shaped and changed by the fear of arson by runaway slaves (2000: 198).

In the mechanism of allaying anxiety through artful placement of elements, there is as much significance in the picturesque in what is placed to the side to allay its founding apprehension as what is in the centre. Moreover, what is excluded from the picturesque is as significant as what is included. Indeed, the picturesque encodes in its very form that which it excludes. Part of the appeal of the picturesque lies in the 'refuge' its interceding layers offers. Its planes smooth and promise to resolve the unease of social conflict, and craft a poised perspective from which to gaze upon a tranquil view. In this, it is well-suited to the colonial setting.

The psychological resolution promised by the picturesque is crucial in the colonies, where there is a need to 'locate the colonial self in its new context' (Bunn 1996: 140, added emphasis). The picturesque is a mode of viewing the landscape that solves, or at least, promises a solution to the problem of the belated settlers finding a secure or settled place. Indeed, Dubow notes '[t]he centrality and ubiquity of the picturesque within a colonial aesthetic' (2000: 98).

The picturesque colonial landscape 'helps to naturalize the settler subject' (Bunn 1996: 138). How does the picturesque allay the anxieties of this self? The desiring colonial gaze requires that the landscape be 'emptied of rival human presences' (132). Yet, this very emptiness indexes what is not there; therefore, the empty space and the silence of Africa must be filled (Coetzee 1988: 177). It is the problems and anxieties of the picturesque which is of most interest in South Africa. Dubow asserts that in the colonies the picturesque 'comes to be restated as a question and a problem' (2000: 98). In the project to construct the landscape as empty and domesticated the figure of the 'Malay' proved a useful discursive tool. I probe the places where the seams of this view unravel.

Because their interest in the problems of the picturesque directs their gaze elsewhere, Coetzee, Bunn and Dubow do not consider the specific imagery of 'Malay' slaves in traveller's journals, letters and reports, nor the vast visual archive containing images of 'Malays'. This is my focus in this chapter. I am interested not only in the anxieties of and failure to achieve the picturesque, but the mechanisms and implications of its apparent success in Cape Town.

### The Problem of the Picturesque

The picturesque faces the problem of labour. As Raymond Williams notes, 'a working country is hardly ever a landscape' (quoted in Mitchell 1996: 15). Labour is central in the representation of landscape in South Africa (Coetzee 1988: 3). Coetzee's discussion of the representation of 'native labour' in White Writing is suggestive. There is an ambivalence around the sight of Black labour in colonial writings and art which stems from the belief in the necessity of work and the scandal of idleness and yet, unsettling implications result from this view. As Coetzee points out, 'if the work of hands on a particular path of earth, digging, ploughing, planting, building, is what inscribes it as the property of its occupiers by right, then the hands of black serfs doing the work had better not be seen.' (5). I argue below that a particular vision of the 'Malay' - featuring an over-determined passivity and compliance - helps to secure a subjecthood for the colonists that resolves the question of place and labour.

In the light of these anxieties around visible labour carried out by Blacks, the compliant figures identifiable as 'Malay' in nineteenth-century landscapes of the Cape are striking in another way. They are labouring figures. As water-carriers, fruit-sellers, fishermen, washerwomen, the figures demonstrate their labour in visible ways. In fact, it is by their labour that they are confirmed as 'Malay'. These figures contrast with the 'natives' whom Coetzee in his landmark study 'Idleness in South Africa' identified as marked in colonial discourses by an absence of labour (1988: 28). Secondly, these labouring 'Malay' figures also contrast with the leisured figures of the colonists (reference). Despite their labour, the 'Malay' figures, particularly in the Angas pieces, as I show below, do not manifest the ambivalence about the visibility of Black labour to which Coetzee refers. The colour, festivities and sociality of the 'Malays' in colonial writings and paintings signal keenly desired meanings to watching settlers, but it is the collusive, guilt-free visage of the 'Malay' which is most appealing. 'Considering that these Malays were once all slaves, it is not to be wondered at that they enjoy their freedom, and have resolved to banish from their faces all trace of anxious servility.' (Life at the Cape a Hundred Years ago by a Lady 1963: 2C, emphasis added). Therefore, Malays appear to resolve the hesitance about showing labour by embodying submissiveness and compliance with settler desires.

#### The Oblique and the Centre: Placing Muslims in the Landscape

*As a boy I often used to go with my father to the forests near the wash-houses of Plattekli: There we used to draw trees. One day, while I was intently drawing a pine tree – I was alone at the time – two old Malay washerwomen happened to pass. They stopped, and started speaking to me. Their concern was not my drawing, which they didn't even notice, but that I should be alone in the forests so late in the afternoon. Shortly before, a climber had been killed on Table Mountain, and no doubt inspired by a genuine fear of the great forces of nature, they exacted a promise from me that I would return home and not venture onto the mountain slopes alone, at least not so late in the afternoon.*  
- C. A. Luckhoff, Foreword, *The Malay Quarter and Its People* (1953: unpaginated).

From my survey I concluded that there are two types of landscapes in which Muslims typically feature in nineteenth-century artistic representations: these are of the city of Cape Town and the 'Malay Quarter'. Since the Malay Quarter may be regarded as an

obvious association, I focus on the Capetonian panoramas. What is striking about these views of the city is that they almost always feature a figure standing to the side, near the edge of the frame, engaged in one of the identifiable pursuits described above. In these paintings and prints, Muslims become visible in a peculiarly structured way — placed to the side near the edge of the frame, evidently showing signs of labour - they are oblique figures. By this I mean that while apparently marginal to the central focus, it is not possible to gaze at centre without the presence of this figures. Set to the side, the figures of 'Malays' appear to organize and mark the picturesque landscape and therefore mediate the centre, as I show below in analyses of selected paintings. This type of figure is such a regular feature of the nineteenth cityscape that it is as though the city is not complete without it.

#### Knowable figures: Detail and Plenitude

In White Writing Coetzee argues that the impact of the taxonomic impetus at the height of empire meant a tone of surveillance entered the language of those writing about the indigenous inhabitants of the colonies.<sup>46</sup> To the classificatory gaze, 'the Hottentot, on closer inspection, turns out to yield an extremely impoverished set of differences to inscribe in the table of categories' (Coetzee 1988: 23). Significantly, Coetzee reports that the ethnographer Gustav Fritsch, after travelling in the South African territories in the 1860s, remarked that 'it would not be possible to use Boer life as material for stories because in Boer life nothing ever happens' (24). What material would fill the vacuum 'left by Hottentot and Boer inactivity' (32)?

In the Cape, the 'Malays' would provide a plenitude of content. A feast of detail - clothes, activity, smell, texture of hair, skin, sound of voices - was available for presentation.

There is a clear tradition of typology in images of 'Malays'. Caricatures and cartoons kept in the South African National Library show the imperative toward classification.

These drawings try to create a 'typology' of 'Malays' — attempting to explain different

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<sup>46</sup> Coetzee's allusion to Foucault is clear in this point. 'The science of Man is itself a discipline, one of what Foucault calls the disciplines of surveillance; among its tasks are the tracking down and investigating of obscure societies in all quarters of the globe, the photographing and recording and deciphering of their activities' (1988: 34).

'types' of 'Malays'. Muslims are shown in anthropological detail - their clothing enjoys a particular degree of attention, for instance, the pointed or 'toering' hat of the men, the long and often lush dresses of women, and the occupations of both sexes - fishermen, fruitsellers, tailors, washerwomen. The caricatures seem to answer the question, what are they? what do they do? As a result, the figure of the man with the toering hat and that of the matronly, well-dressed woman with an elaborate hairstyle are identifiable as 'Malay'. This heightened sense of visibility and access created by the number of visual images of 'Malays' hides the fact that these figures were also frequently suspected of eluding sight, as the Slave Code of 1754 suggests by its policing of visibility. The code stipulated that slaves could be arrested 'if they did not carry lanterns in the evening - an attempt to prevent plotting in dark corners' (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 63).

#### Illustrations from the Nineteenth Century: George French Angus

I now proceed to an analysis of images from Angus's The Kafirs Illustrated. As Sandra Klopper (1989) indicated in her article 'George French Angus: (Re)presentation of the Zulu in The Kafirs Illustrated (1849)', Angus produced a series of detailed and highly romanticised images in southern Africa, both landscapes and figure studies. The presence of colonists is repressed but they are implied in the perspective which beholds the landscape (Klopper 1989: 69).

Angus' paintings of figures are richly detailed in terms of costume, expression and pose of the body, and generally underplay background or context. It is noteworthy that the verisimilitude of his paintings has been assumed to convey accurate information about the people painted. Angus' paintings have been viewed as an authoritative source of information about clothing, for instance. However, Klopper contests this assumption in the case of Angus' paintings of Zulu subjects. She draws on comparative sources to show that the highly detailed, realistic perspective generated in the Angus paintings is governed by rules of composition and construction to a far larger degree than is generally acknowledged. Klopper points out that in the process of transferring the watercolours into lithographs 'attempts were made to increase the picturesque quality of Angus'

images through the addition of exotic details' (1989: 71). Furthermore, The Kafirs Illustrated was part of a market for illustrated books that brought the 'exotica' of far-off lands to the metropole (Landau 2002: 4).

There is very little discussion of Angus's paintings of the Malays, though he devotes extensive attention to them both in the written texts and in the paintings. The Kafirs Illustrated contains a number of studies of 'Malays' and also panoramic landscapes of Cape Town in which the human figures are identifiable as 'Malay'. I. D. du Plessis reproduced a number of these well-known lithographs in The Cape Malays, including two paintings of 'Malay' boys. It is these to which I now turn. Du Plessis described these children as 'quaint miniatures of their elders' and therefore it is of interest to look in detail at the paintings. The handwritten inscription by Angus on the first says 'Malay Creole Boy', and the caption by Du Plessis adds: 'According to Angus this boy had a Creole strain. The one on the right is pure Malay.' As I indicated in the discussion of Du Plessis's works in the Introduction, the notion of 'pure Malayness' was of heightened importance to the construction of a racialized Malay identity in the mid-twentieth century. Here, however, I wish to attend to the way in which Angus presents the human figure termed Malay.

#### 'Malay Creole Boy'

The painting centres the gaze on the body, offering an exotic presentation of warm brown skin and highly detailed costume, including a turban for one boy, and both a turban and a toering hat for the second boy. The clothing is shown as finely crafted with colourful accents on an Eastern motif. The 'Malay Creole Boy' wears long white, loose-fitting sleeves and pants with a waistcoat and vivid scarf. The appearance on his right shoulder of a basket in which might be carried fruit or fish recalls the typical sight of such baskets in representations of adults. The 'Malay Creole boy' is set in a non-realistic background, much reduced in perspective, that includes columned buildings.

### 'Malay boy of Cape Town'

The exoticism of the boy's face is emphasized, with obviously Eastern features such as large, almond-shaped eyes. His red cheeks highlight the warm brown tone of his skin. He wears a bright scarf over his waistcoat. Significantly, neither of these boys wears shoes. This is both an indication of the poverty generally of the former slave population and a visual reference to the laws that prohibited slaves from wearing footwear (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 73). This was an attempt to police the porous boundary between the appearance of slave owners and slaves, since in the context of Cape Town colour could not be used as a distinguishing sign. As in the first picture, the background is similarly reduced in perspective. Interestingly, this time it is not an urban environments but a rural one, suggesting the range of settings in which the 'Malays' were found. Angas' studies of 'Malay' adults replicate this fulsome rendition of the pose, clothing and expression of the figure in a way that conveys an impression of full access and openness.

### Landscapes

I go on now to discuss landscapes by Josephus Jones and Angas. Studying the role of maps in establishing a sense of European dominance over colonial landscapes, the geographer J. B. Harley theorized that, as rhetorical instruments, maps 'redescribe the world' to reflect European desires (2001: 35). Harley asserts that by focusing the gaze on a certain view of the world, maps rendered other sights invisible. In the light of this, he argued for the importance of studying 'cartographic silence[s]' (104), or those aspects that are left out of maps. To read a map therefore becomes 'a search for silences' (45). Harley's analysis directs us to ask what maps emphasize, but also what they underplay and exclude. I will take Harley's description of a town plan or bird's eye view as 'a legible emblem ... of community' as a starting point to read panoramic landscapes of Cape Town in the nineteenth century (48).

While artistic studies of the 'Bo-kaap' and Malay Quarter constitute a minor genre in itself, it is not here that I argue that the meaning of the figure of the 'Malay' is truly negotiated. Instead, it is in paintings of the city and its environs that appear initially to

have little to say directly on the subject that I argue such negotiation takes place. My discussion in the next section includes an analysis of three panoramic scenes of Cape Town, the first a six-panelled panorama of the city itself by Josephus Jones and the following two, paintings of scenes set just above or outside the city by George French Angas. A formal and thematic concern present in all three paintings is the concept of the boundary. I attend to the characteristic positioning of the figure identifiable by his clothing as 'Malay', usually placed on the edge of such paintings. The figure plays a role as a positioning device which frames the content at the centre of the painting. It is the role of such bodies in domesticating the landscape and framing it into a settled space, that I wish to discuss further

### Josephus Jones

In Pictorial Africana: A Survey of Old South African Paintings to the end of the nineteenth century with a biographical dictionary of one thousand artists (1975) Alfred Gordon-Brown describes his discovery in 1973 at Sotheby's in London of a large panorama of Cape Town which he describes 'the most historically important Africana picture I had ever seen' (251)). Dated at 1806, the watercolour is 3.8 metres long and was painted on six panels painted by Josephus Jones (1768-1811). The panorama, which Gordon-Brown confirms is a full three hundred and sixty degree view, was made from drawings taken from the roof of an official building near the corner of Adderley and Strand Streets.

The painting participates in the conventions of the picturesque in its clear delineation of different planes of perspective. The foreground and background are separated by a line of buildings exactly midway through the canvas. In the flat, clear ground in the foreground small, scattered figures appear, dwarfed by the scale of the city and the mountain just behind. The foreground is marked by three straight rows of trees leading the eye to the streets and the regular outlines of the buildings, with their scalloped facades, balconies and columns. Behind the dividing line of buildings, the features of the landscape become less regular. The trees which in the clear space in the foreground and

in front of the houses were arranged in orderly lines, as they start to ascend the rising ground behind the line of houses start to bunch and cluster.

The view then rises further into the heavy immensity of Table Mountain itself, rearing above the houses, its shadowed gorges the only shadows in the otherwise emphatically visible landscape. With its curved sides, the mountain's flat table seems only a deceptive echo of the regularity of the streets and houses. The parts of the panorama reproduced in Pictorial Africana (in colour, approximately one quarter of the full painting, and two further sections in black and white) are remarkable in many ways. Certainly, its interest for the architectural history of Cape Town is clear (254). For my purposes, however, what is striking in this attempt to grasp the whole of Cape Town through one view is that the only human figures are the two types I have referred to above: the leisured figures of two colonists, their ease indicated by a casually held parasol, and the figures of Malay slaves, in characteristic labouring poses carrying baskets on their shoulders.

'Camp's Bay' (see Figure 3, p. 58)

I move from Jones to works by Angas in The Kafirs Illustrated (1949). I discuss next a panoramic view titled 'Cape Town from Camp's Bay'. As a whole the painting gives a global view of the entire settlement from a privileged perspective. The gaze of the painting is directed down the hill towards the city. In the background behind Table Bay are distant mountains. The city lodges in the curve of the Bay itself. The many ships in the harbour indicate a peaceful and a commercially successful traffic with the rest of the world. The layout of the town is exceedingly linear. The streets form a stable grid, evident even at the distance from Camps Bay. Within the curve of the bay and the round hills leading to Camp's Bay, the city is portrayed as regular, structured and ordered, yet without a sense of rigidity. The white buildings are varied in shape and height. One structure is steep enough to suggest a lighthouse. To the right, on a shadowed part of the road, are smaller houses, suggesting a spatial division in the city.

Moving away from the city up the hill we approach the place from which the perspective of the painting issues. In this part of the painting there is a greater focus on the natural

environment – its low plants and textured rock. The rounded hills that rise above the city and the abundant and colourful vegetation suggests a bountiful, ordered and secure colonial environment, verdant yet harmoniously structured. Overall, the painting conveys a sense of a generous nature cossetting the city, providing shelter, water and shade, and rendered pleasing by the arrangement of flowers, trees, clouds and rocks. Groves of trees appear both on the hills to the left and around the rocks to the right. In the foreground on the left of the painting appear some stone steps as well as an exaggeratedly fine wall, decorated with columns, a moulded top and a gatepost. Amid the shrubbery and rocks the startlingly regular wall recalls the straight lines of the town.

At this distance from town, the wall may mark the bounds of a property, perhaps a farm. Significantly, leaning against the wall in its shadows, appear the only figures in the painting. The two men are small enough so that their facial features are indistinct, yet, by their clothing, such as the pointed toering hat, and their labour, indicated by the baskets set down next to the wall, they are identifiable as Malay. In their position near the edge of the painting, they are in the characteristic position of Malay figures in the paintings I have identified thus far. The human figures on the left it near the boundary of the wall also mark the edge of the painting, and therefore the boundary of the panoramic environs and the prospect of the painting. In one sense, these two figures therefore signal the settledness of the colony. The wall is suggestive of a metaphorical boundary, hinting not only at what is kept in, but also what is kept out. In its orderly lines juxtaposed with the curve of the hill, the wall seems set against nature. It conveys a sense not only of boundedness but also of impediment. The resting figures also mark this ambiguous point.

While giving it a sense of balance and structure, the painting is interesting for the consistent series of opposites it includes. Its composition creates a play of the near and the distant, the bounded and open, the domesticated and the wild, light and shadow, including the shadows of the mountains. This play between what is contained and controlled, and what lies beyond, introduces a note which exceeds the overworked harmony of the town and its setting. While the prospect issues from the round hills above Camps Bay, the distant mountains beyond Table Bay speak of the space stretching

beyond the bounds of the colony, and similarly imply the vistas that stretch behind the painter. Where the two human figures sit in the shade, the wall alludes simultaneously to the point of balance between outside and inside, but also implies that space which lies beyond the boundary.

The unsettling sense that what lies beyond its bounds (and therefore beyond the painting itself) exceeds the balance of the settlement, reverberates in the play of shadow and light. The 'luminous distance' of the picturesque vista is at the same time a vast, uncontrolled space, beyond the reach of the ordered outlines of the town and its proximity to the sea and by extension to communication with Europe. Beyond the circle of the bay lies another territory, another space, out of the bounds of the colony. The shadows and the scale of the distant mountains unbalance the perspective of order and harmony of the city. If we revisit the play of light and shade, we see that there is an increasing depth of shadow in the painting, from that of the wall, trees and hills, and in the distance, the deep shadows of the mountains. Furthermore, unseen clouds above the larger, unbound territory cast their shadows on the landscape within the painting. This produces an alternative perspective, since the clouds reach also over the unknown space. The careful strategies of balance and containment are exceeded by the impinging presence of the space beyond the boundary and of the city, signalled by the two human figures by the wall and its shadow.

'Wynberg'( see Figure 4, p. 59)

The second of the Angas paintings I wish to examine in this series is titled 'Wynberg', in the 1840s an outlying but prosperous section of the colony. Unlike the Camp's Bay setting, the perspective in 'Wynberg' is not elevated, but on the same plane as the houses. Two human figures are entering the space of the painting, one in a wagon and one walking, along a winding road which leads from the frame among the vegetation and past the grand houses of this town into the middle plane of the painting. As in the previous painting, the figures are dwarfed by the landscape. The mountains and the sky take up more than half of the total area of the canvas, presenting a contrast of distance and scale with the area in the foreground. The tranquil, verdant landscape is set against the remote

vista of the mountains in the distance. In the area of the painting through which the two human figures are passing, the landscape is both verdant and has small patches of brown. A pine to the left is missing most of its fronds. However, the colourful proteas to the right counterbalance this suggestion of barrenness amid the greenery. The houses themselves are ornate and multi-storied with features such as belfries, gables and fenced areas. At the further end of paintings, human figures are standing in a group.

It is the figures who are moving into the frame that attract one's attention. Their activity as labouring figures and the toering hats immediately mark these figures as Malay. The figure who is walking just behind the horse-drawn wagon is carrying a stick on which fish are suspended. These human figures play the role once again of symbolising not only the boundary, but the area beyond the boundary from which they have come. Entering the settled area which forms the lower half of the painting, their bodies, because of their movement and visible labour, speak a different language than the prosperous look of the houses and the stillness of the other bodies. They speak like the dry tree on the left of another life, less bounteous, less settled. The nineteenth-century studies above are pleasing in their artful composition yet, as the analyses show, suggestive precisely of what they exclude.

#### Illustrations from the Twentieth Century: Irma Stern

In the last part of this section, I examine twentieth century works by Irma Stern and J. M. Coetzee. The modernist painter Irma Stern produced striking and lushly colourful works set in South Africa, Zanzibar, the Congo and Portugal that emphasized the ritual aspects of people's behaviour. Stern's oeuvre of 'Malay' paintings is among the best-known South African images of Muslims in the twentieth century. While her work may be placed in the tradition of South African Orientalism, which focused on the Malay Quarter, Stern's paintings reward close viewing. I analyse her 'Malay Picking Grapes' and 'Malay wedding' below.

### 'Malay Picking Grapes'

In contrast to the images of placid labourers in idyllic settings, the grape-picker in Stern's painting is rendered in a highly individualized manner. Even with their familiar themes, Stern's paintings are formally suggestive. The weight and individuality of this man overturns the slight, formulaic figures of 'Malay' labourers in the paintings I have analysed above. His outstretched hand demonstrating his produce appears to be in answer to a command to show what he has picked. He has a stiff expression and his eyes glance to the side, as though his compliance is mixed with less submissive emotions. Unsettlingly, the direction of his hand in this pose suggests that it may be the viewer who has issued the command. The rich yellow background infuses the skin of the grape-picker with warmth and richness, which is undercut by his expression. The sunlight is contrasted by the shadow on his right. His hat and clothing are the same colour, perhaps they are a uniform. They are similar but duller than the yellow of the sunlight. The abundance of the grapes in his right hand echoes the sense of comfort suggested by the sun, yet neither appears to be his. There is a distinction between the man from the plenitude of the setting.

### 'Malay Wedding'

In 'Malay Wedding' the stylised arrangement of women at a bridal table highlights the ritual meanings of dress, food and décor at Muslim weddings. The colourful and bounteous display of fruit, scarves and dresses is countered by the arrangement of the tables and bodies in formal planes, with the bride and two bridesmaid in a separate tier above the guests, and the latter divided into left and right by the length of a table. This ceremonial composition is in counterpoint to the individuality of faces, and the directions of their gazes. No-one's line of sight encounters another's. The expressions on the faces of the guests also appear intent and aloof rather than festive. One woman's face is obscured behind another's. The guests crowd the bottom of the painting, clustered like the fruit and flowers, yet there is an interplay between the group and the singularity of each woman, confirmed by the varied colours of their dresses and scarves. The bride is at the apex of a line of sight leading from blue vase at the bottom to the bowl of fruit along the table up the painting. Horizontally, the bride and the bridesmaid are distinguished by

their special head coverings and the restrained colours of their dresses. With bridesmaids on either side of the bride, the top section of the painting is balanced yet not symmetrical. One bridesmaid faces the bride and the other's face is tilted toward the centre, though her eyes are directed downward. Below, the guests continue the suggestion of multiple levels of interest within the formality of the tableau. Through the differences of gaze and pose between the bridal retinue and the guests, the painting suggests both energy and stillness, profusion and restraint.

Stern's paintings are attentive to clothing, pose and setting and the interplay between these elements. She produces memorably complex variations on the traditional themes of the picturesque 'Malay'.

In anticipation of returning to the quotation from Disgrace which opened this chapter, I consider here the twentieth-century verbal text - C. A. Luckhoff's foreword to The Malay Quarter and its People quoted above - which features a placement of the Malay in the landscape familiar from paintings. Luckhoff recounts the memory, while he was young, of two 'Malay' washerwomen chancing on him on Table Mountain:

Their concern was ... that I should be alone in the forests so late in the afternoon. Shortly before, a climber had been killed on Table Mountain, and no doubt inspired by a genuine fear of the great forces of nature, they exacted a promise from me that I would return home and not venture onto the mountain slopes alone (1953: unpaginated).

The actions and, significantly, the concerned attitude of the two 'Malay' washer-women abate the dangers of the 'great forces of nature'. The excerpt is a verbal equivalent of the paintings in which 'Malay' figures secure the landscape. Though theirs is a concrete act, in Luckhoff's memory, the aura of Malays extends beyond the immediate. 'It is difficult to say now why I got to like the Malays so much. These attachments grow gradually, and one does not always know why, or for what reason. Perhaps it was their serenity and their special form of kindness'.

The illustrations in another Du Plessis text, Tales from the Malay Quarter, provide a different kind of visual illustration of Islam, emphasizing the exotic and erotic aspects of

the Orientalist myth by showing harem-panted, bare-breasted maidens. In this way the Du Plessis images echo the salacious aspects of Orientalist postcards rather than other representations of 'Malays' in South Africa. This aspect of the image of the Malay recalls the time during slavery when white colonists had access to the bodies of slave women (Hendricks 2001: 37). The reference to the sexually appealing and available Muslim woman also occurs in the novel Disgrace (1999). I consider the novel here because of its allusion to the picturesque, as I show below.

### J. M. Coetzee

The novel Disgrace (1999) has attained acclaim, including Coetzee's second Booker Prize, as well as intense opprobrium, for instance, being invoked in the submission by the African National Congress to the South African Human Rights Commission's enquiry in the racism in the media (Attwell 2002: 332). Furthermore, the novel has been the subject of extensive critical discussion, including as the subject of a special issue of the journal Interventions (2002) and numerous essays in Kunapipi (2001-2002).<sup>47</sup> However, it is not primarily with the issues discussed in these fora that I wish to engage here. I wish instead to speak about content, form and beginnings in Disgrace.

Graham Pechey contends that even with those Coetzee novels that are 'realistically and topically located ... we are made ... to see obliquely and prismatically' (2002: 375). How does one read Disgrace obliquely and prismatically? I take Pechey's point to mean attending to the heightened sense of pattern and history in the novel. Formally, the novel recalls the discourses of colonialism as, for example, 'The narrative of Jacobus Coetzee' in Dusklands (1982) recalled settler narratives. In Coetzee's writings there has been a pattern of parodying the discourses of genres embedded in the history of the country. Disgrace, like many of his works, manifests a deep awareness of the history of representation in South Africa in both its form and content.

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<sup>47</sup> The special issue on 'South Africa Post-Apartheid' in Kunapipi (XXIV:1&2, 2002) contains essays on Disgrace by Lucy Valerie Graham, Meg Samuelson and Gillian Gane.

The novel tells the story of the fall into disgrace of a University professor named David Lurie after his affair with a student (one of their encounters is disturbingly close to rape) is made public and he is reprimanded by the University. In the disciplinary procedures of the University, the novel draws attention, in the words of the character Farodia Rassool, to the context of 'the long history of exploitation' (quoted in Attwell 2002: 335). We understand this to mean the history of sexual exploitation of Black women by white men in South Africa under colonialism and apartheid. After refusing to cooperate with the decision of the disciplinary committee, Lurie leaves Cape Town to join his daughter Lucy in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. The second part of the novel tells of Lucy's rape by three men on her farm. The awareness of the historical significance of such content is reflected in Coetzee's critical writings, including *White Writing* (1988), referred to in discussions above. For instance, in an essay cited by David Attwell, Coetzee describes the rape of a white woman as 'the ne plus ultra of colonial horror-fantasies' (quoted in Attwell 2002: 336).

Much attention has understandably focussed on the rape of Lucy, and the unequal relationship (which may amount to rape) between Lurie and Melanie, his student and their implications, both in the novel and for questions of representations of Blackness in South Africa. The novel alerts us, however, to the fact that 'the strangeness' starts in Cape Town. Attending to form alerts us to the doublings and circlings in the novel, the 'worm' and the 'snake' totem, and the '[n]ot rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core' of Melani and the rape of Lucy (Coetzee 1999: 25). The beginning of the novel, far from being simply the prelude to its real substance, prefigures the unwinding 'strangeness' that follows.<sup>48</sup>

Walking through the city, Lurie is at ease, 'at home amid the flux of bodies where eros stalks and glances flash like arrows' (Coetzee 1999: 6). In the novel a visual economy keeps the city in place and holds bodies in relation to each other. Lurie makes sense of the landscape through the bodies of women. The first woman we see through his eyes is

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<sup>48</sup> The movement traced in the novel from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape has also been the subject of poetry and journal writing during the colonial era, for instance, by Thomas Pringle, which has been discussed by critics including Bunn (1996), Dubow (2000) and Coetzee (1988) himself.

the 'honey-brown body' and 'long black hair and dark, liquid eyes' of Soraya, the prostitute Lurie visits each Thursday (1999: 1). (Later, we learn that looking at his daughter's body helps Lurie to make sense of his relation to the land.)

In Lurie's gaze Coetzee stages the picturesque. In the essay 'Race in Disgrace' David Attwell notes that few markers of 'race' appear in the novel. However, among those that are given, '[i]n the novel's very first paragraph we are told unmistakably that the prostitute, Soraya, is coloured' (2002: 337). In fact, we are told additionally that Soraya is Muslim, a facet upon which Attwell does not comment (Coetzee 1999: 3). The detail is crucial, for Soraya appears in the familiar language of the 'exotic'. 'She was on their books under "exotic"' (7). Lurie describes Soraya's skin as 'honey-brown' and her hair 'lustrous' (6). He elaborates that '[h]er temperament is in fact rather quiet, quite and docile' (1) and that he finds her 'compliant, pliant' (5). Through these signifiers, and her role as a prostitute recalling the use of the Slave Lodge as a brothel for white colonists, Soraya may be seen as a deliberate literary summoning of the placid and picturesque 'Malay' figure. To the extent that Soraya does invoke such antecedents, evident in the paintings discussed above, the system held in place through the obliquely placed picturesque figure in Disgrace is fragile.

As I have outlined, Lurie is used to gazing at women's bodies and, through them, apprehending the landscape. Through the body of Soraya, Lurie grasps the city, which is rendered explicable, 'contented', 'lull[ing]' (Coetzee 1999: 8)<sup>49</sup>. But in one moment - when Lurie exchanges a glance with Soraya outside their usual transaction as prostitute and client - 'everything changes'. While Lurie has seen Soraya some minutes before, it is the exchange of glances, what Lurie calls 'the accident in St George's Street', after which everything changes. At the single moment when Soraya finds him looking at her, and looks back, the careful edifice of Lurie's grasp on Cape Town collapses. The body that holds the explicable landscape in place returns the gaze, and the threat deferred by the picturesque erupts. The moment inaugurates the disruptions of the rest of the novel.

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<sup>49</sup> Similarly, at the end of the novel, upon gazing at the body of his daughter, Lurie attains an insight into the nature of his relation with the country.

Read in this way, Disgrace offers an instance of the type of representation of Muslims in Cape Town to which I have alluded above - the familiar but unstable strategy of using a Muslim figure, in what I have argued is an oblique position - as a way of holding in place a self.

In this analysis of Disgrace I have argued that the novel contains a self-reflexive and deliberate use of tropes familiar from the appearance of a marginal Muslim figure in nineteenth-century landscape paintings and writing. I argue that this aspect of Disgrace indicates the continuing currency of images of Islam that have circulated since the colonial period, and therefore the resonance of such images in South African art and media today.

What is the logic that governs this vision of the Muslim figure?

What do the Muslim figures in these representations do? 'Malays' appear to play a crucial role in paintings of the nineteenth century colonial city. 'Malay' figures appear near the edge of the frame; they can be seen to frame the landscape and in so doing signal the bounds of the knowable landscape. They are placed on the edges of the landscape, and therefore they declare its boundaries, say where it starts and they frame its edge. By marking and certifying the edge of the picture, they secure the bounds of the tamed view. They render the content of the painting visible and domesticated. They perform the picturesque by framing where the bounded scape starts and ends, because beyond them lies something which cannot be included in the space of the colony, cannot safely be included in the settled vista that lies before the eye. They are picturesque figures in the sense that they secure the bounded territory over which authority is claimed.

What lies beyond the figure of the Muslim? The paintings seek to elicit the discursive collusion of the 'Malays' by over-determining their meaning as disarming, reassuring, visually appealing. The slaves and later the 'Malay' labouring figures are discursively recruited to secure the landscape, just as free Muslim Mardijkers were deployed as soldiers to secure the first Dutch settlement in 1658. As picturesquely portrayed figures of labour, 'Malays' are a contrast to the leisured colonial settler figures. The suggestion

of leisure is a way for the colonists to assert their control over the landscape. This portrayal suppresses the violence of the founding and the establishment of the colony, runaway slaves who melt into the landscape, resisting or rebellious labourers, insurrectionary groups and communities outside of the official settler economy. Nonetheless, in the very over-determined vision of labour in the landscape of Cape Town, these repressed meanings remain a ghostly negative.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined above the way the figure of the 'Malay' helps to secure rhetorically the Cape landscape in paintings and writings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In analyses of paintings and in travel writings from the nineteenth century, I have argued that the picturesque constitutes a way of solving the problems presented by the 'belated arrival' of Europeans in southern Africa and that the figure of the 'Malay' constitutes an important element in the organisation of a settled landscape.

However, as I indicated in my discussion of Coetzee's work, the strategy is unstable and the threat of irruption or collapse hovers over the picturesque surface. This instability is also to be found in other representations of South African Muslims, for instance, surrounding the themes of food and burial.

I go on now to examine another area in which Islam attained a strong but circumscribed visibility in South Africa – representations of food. In the next chapter I examine representations of Muslim food from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and argue that the patterns established then have a lingering force in images of Islam today. In Chapter Five, I discuss representations of Muslim burials.



Figure 5.  
Williams, F. Hertzogics. The Cape Malay Cookbook. 1988: 93



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 'A NEVER-ENDING SERIES OF PICTURES':

### REPRESENTATIONS OF MUSLIM FOOD IN CAPE TOWN

*'Ideology is externalised in food'*

- Timothy Morton, *The Poetics of Spices: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* (2000: 11).

Having discussed how picturesque 'Malay' figures were characteristically positioned near the boundaries of paintings in the nineteenth century Cape, I turn now to representations of Muslim food. In this chapter I examine the role of images of food in generating a South African vision of Islam. For hundreds of years the theme of food has served as a significant way of making Muslims visible in South Africa and the colonial territories. Notable examples can be found in nineteenth century travel accounts such as the letters of Lady Duff Gordon (first published in 1864 and again in 1921), and recipe books such as Hildagonda Duckitt's *Where is it?* (1891).

#### Ambiguous Visibility

Muslim food has an ambiguous visibility in Cape Town. For much of the twentieth century, when Islam did appear in the media, it was within narrowly circumscribed themes.<sup>50</sup> Newspaper images of food in a colourful array at Eid or weddings served as a synecdoche for Muslim lives.<sup>51</sup> The connection between Islam and food is maintained into the twentieth century, and in effect represents Muslim presence in the Cape. I. D. du Plessis's foreword to *Traditional Cookery of the Cape Malays* (1954), the recipe book by Hilda Gerber proclaims that '[n]o aspect of Cape Malay life has been more closely interwoven with life at the Cape than Cape Malay cookery'. My interest here is how representations of Muslim food participate in a larger picturesque discourse but can also encode other, resistant, meanings. In the chapter I examine representations of Muslim

<sup>50</sup> I outlined my archival research on newspaper images of Islam from 1940 to 1980 in Chapter One.

<sup>51</sup> For an instance of media articles on food, see B. Gool, *Cape Argus*, 15 March 1938, cited in I. D. du Plessis, *The Cape Malays: History, Religion, Traditions, Folk Tales, The Malay Quarter*, Cape Town, A. A. Balkema, 1972, 89.

food in sites that have not been widely investigated – cookbooks, illustrations and people’s self-representations in interviews - in order to give detail to the conventions through which Islam became visible and explicable in South Africa. While seeming to conform to expectations of exoticism, colourful images of food also signal other, dissonant meanings, as I argue below. The creation of new foods that fuse African, Asian and European customs also indicate a space of assertion and ownership in practices that elude the control of the dominant. I demonstrate below that, instead of being exotic, Muslim food, with its use of local ingredients blended with other elements, is one of the ways in which Islam became indigenous in South Africa.

Food is an important element of the South African picturesque visual regime about Islam, which focuses on costume, ritual and festivities, and became consolidated during the nineteenth century. The connection of food and burial with Muslims is reflected in the writings of this period. The German naturalist Henry Lichtenstein, who travelled through the country in the early nineteenth century, elucidated the cooking practices in the Cape at the time, which he said copied Batavian practices, including kerrie [curry], atjar and sambal (cited in Gerber 1954: 10). Hildagonda Duckitt’s description of the market in Cape Town entrenches the connection between food and ‘Malays’. While the scene is already colourful, Duckitt asserts that ‘the subject is still better for sketching when the stall is presided over by Malays in their bright-coloured dresses’. (1902: 65). Indeed, she goes on to proclaim:

How many subjects an artist would find to paint in our markets! You will see an old Malay with one of the broad hats like a little thatched roof on his head, and wearing the Malay pattens instead of boots, with perhaps a turkey under each arm, or with a bamboo over his shoulder, from which hangs a basket at each end, one filled with geese and the other with apricots, and so on, a never-ending series of pictures; the Malay gala dresses are always of beautiful colours (Hildagonda Duckitt, Hilda’s Diary of a Housewife, 1902, 65).

Duckitt’s strongly picturesque construction of ‘Malays’ highlights their colourful food and exotic clothing which form ‘a never-ending series of pictures’. Having published her well-received ‘Where is it’ of recipes in 1891, Duckitt’s description in her Diary of a Housewife at the beginning of the twentieth century participated in the idiom which had been entrenched in the course of the nineteenth century.

George French Angas' The Kafirs Illustrated (1849) (alluded to in the section above on oblique figures in paintings of the Cape) is exemplary of the texts in which the Malay was rendered in picturesque visual and verbal language. The written text that accompanied his paintings of 'Malays', 'On the Malays of Cape Town', contains further illuminating references. In this piece Angas focuses on two aspects of 'Malay' life: burials and marriage. I will return to the matter of burials in Chapter Five, and here examine his description of a 'marriage-feast' to which he had been invited.

The house which was small, was crowded to excess; in an inner room, beneath an illuminated mirror, decorated with artificial flowers, sat the bride, surrounded by about thirty young girls as bridemaids [sic]; they were all dressed in white, with satin handkerchiefs crossed over their shoulders, and their luxuriant black hair plastered with more than ordinary care in the Malay style with cocoa-nut oil and gum, and fastened behind with a gold bodkin. The bridemaids occupied the seats on each side of the bride, round a table groaning beneath the weight of sweetmeats, fruits and millet-cakes; lofty columns of oranges, placed one on the top of another, looked as though they would fall down the instant the table was touched; and pots of preserved ginger and nutmegs were handed about. Drinking tea and coffee, and feasting, went on till about eleven o'clock at night, varied by occasional singing (Angas 1849:10).

Angas's description highlights the themes of plenitude in the 'table groaning beneath the weight' of food, spices - 'pots of preserved ginger and nutmeg', and the sociality of 'feasting' and 'singing'. Seen through this view, Muslims present themselves as spectacle. Both the 'bridemaids' and the food are described in similar detail and perceptions of lushness. Contained by the prism of the picturesque, the 'Malays' in this tableau are not heard to speak, nor do they respond to the world outside their circle. While colourful, hospitable, and entertaining, they are entirely solipsistic.

Two recent works of art suggest that the food described here can encode different meanings, that one can see food as other than festive and diverting. Rayda Jacobs's The Slave Book (1998) depicted the lives of slaves in the Cape.<sup>52</sup> In the novel the place

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<sup>52</sup> The novel, with its compelling attempt to find an indigenous language for its story of the brutal system of slavery at the Cape, is a substantial achievement. The erasures of slave life, both in the official record but also in the interiority of slaves and slave-holders have generated some of the most important writing of the twentieth century. Toni Morrison's novel Beloved is exemplary. Morrison invented a new form of writing

where food is made is also the site of a brittle, dangerous intimacy between slave-owners and slaves, where any encounter may turn suddenly perilous. Yet precisely because it is the location of everyday exchanges, the kitchen is also the space of overheard information, of a supply of food, of secret knowledge (such as healing potions) among slaves – the site of small resistances encoded into tastes, sound, touch, glances and smells. Here slaves learned not only how to survive but gathered a small store of subjectivity and resistance. Rachel, a slave who has been on Zoetewater farm for twenty-two years, comforts the newly arrived Somiela: ‘in the kitchen you hear many things’ (1998: 30). The kitchen is where the slaves on the farm attain presence, stare silently back at the slave-owner or reclaim time by carrying out their orders at a pace that infuriates their masters. The slave Somiela cooks the way she is accustomed to, and speaks back to the masters through the codes of taste and smell that the latter eventually come to desire. On page, Andries, the owner of the farm and its slaves, speaks to his wife Marieta about arrangements for supper:

I told [Somiela] to make some of that food for tonight that she made the other day.”

“Someila can’t cook.”

“She can. She’s the one who made the – what’s it called again?” he asked Somiela directly.

“Cabbage bredie, Seur,” Rachel spoke up for Somiela, sensing Marieta’s hostility’.

“Well, whatever it is, we won’t have it,” Marieta said with finality. “Not for guests. Rachel will cook what I tell her to cook, and we’ll serve what we usually serve – roast meat and potatoes and carrots (Jacobs 1988: 65).

### Porous Boundaries?

Though Marieta discerns ‘with finality’ a clear distinction between ‘what we usually serve’ and ‘whatever it is’ that Somiela makes, outside of the novel eventually such boundaries between slave and masters would become porous (Shell 1994: 415). Both

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in order to tell the story of a slave named Sethe who murders her child to prevent her from becoming a slave. Morrison resists the temptation to make Sethe, the infanticidal mother, a heroic figure, and Beloved, the spirit of the murdered child, is neither forgiving nor redemptive. In its realist frame and sympathetic characters, The Slave Book does not remake the craft of writing to tell of South African slaves’ lives. In form and tone Morrison’s novel is more ambitious and gruelling in writing a space in which erasure and the lingering interior effects of slavery are made tangible. For a discussion of the complex dynamics of The Slave Book, including its representations of ‘race’, see Pumla Dineo Gqola (2001) ‘Slaves don’t have opinions’: Inscriptions of Slave Bodies and the Denial of Agency in Rayda Jacobs’s The Slave Book’.

'Malay' and Dutch, later Afrikaans, cooking would come to manifest the intertwined reality of the slave kitchen (Abrahams 2002: interview). Mason cites Lichtenstein's approving reference to the 'hotly spiced dishes of the Cape' (2003: 108).<sup>53</sup> Because of the suppression of memories of slavery and the lingering effects of apartheid, the various food cultures in Cape Town remain largely insulated from one another, and therefore the fact of such similarities and the reasons for them are unexplored. After she moved to Cape Town, the writer Nirmala Nair, noted, "I came to realise there is a completely different way of approaching food and culture between the various communities that inhabited the city. Each one had no clue of what the other one does' (Nair 2002: interview).

The legacy of slavery can be seen today in the similar dishes within the two traditions with different names, such as the cinnamon-spiced milk drink known in Muslim cooking as 'boeber' and as 'melkkos' in the Afrikaans tradition (Abrahams notes the connection, 1995: 46). The primary difference between these versions is the greater number of ingredients and the longer process of preparation in the former, and its emphasis on layered and contrapuntal flavours; for example, cinnamon, rose water and cardamom, and textures, such as vermicelli and sago to thicken the milk, resulting in a significantly more complex dish. A further phenomenon indicating connections between the two food traditions is the use of the same names for different dishes, for example, the plaited sugar-glazed sweet in Afrikaans cooking known as the 'koeksister', and the 'koesister' (without the second 'k') in Muslim cooking. In contrast to the koeksister, the koesister is oval-shaped, spiced with aniseed, cloves and orange peel, made with potatoes and flour, and dipped in syrup and coconut.

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<sup>53</sup> In *The Poetics of Spices: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* (2000), Timothy Morton explores spice as a poetics or 'literary code'. He traces conceptions of spice from the time Europeans first heard of spices through the stories of those who returned from the Crusades. The 'fantasy substance' of spice permeated poetic language, giving a language to Romanticism. Morton notes that 'the spice trade was crucial to the development of capitalism in Europe', and contests Arjun Appadurai's discussion of spice from a sociological perspective as a luxury, one pole in a binary of which 'necessity' is the other (14). Morton argues that the luxury of spice indexes capital, an association with which Berni Searle's installation 'Colour Me' engages, as I discuss in Chapter Five.

The fact of such similarities is not in itself a new insight, nor particularly surprising. However, what is notable is the distinctive meanings that such dishes hold in the Muslim community. Instead of being perceived there as reactive to a prior Dutch or Afrikaans culture, they are regarded as specifically 'Cape Malay' foods, and are named as such in the recipe books by Faldiela Williams (1988: 84), Zainab Lagardien (1995: 80) and Cass Abrahams (1995: 69).<sup>54</sup> More significantly, these dishes have specific meanings within the Muslim community, associated with special functions in the Muslim calendar. For instance, Faldiela Williams proclaims that 'Sunday mornings wouldn't be the same without koesisters' (1988: 84). Boeber marks an even more sensitive time. 'When the peak [of the fast] is reached on the 15<sup>th</sup> day a large pot of boeber (similar to melkkos) is made and sent out to the neighbours to celebrate' (Abrahams 1995: 46). Perhaps the most compelling evidence for the common origin of foods that appear to be distinct is the language, Afrikaans (Shell 1994: 415). As research by Achmat Davids showed, the earliest Afrikaans texts (including a love poem in 1874) were written in Arabic script, compelling evidence that Afrikaans originated as the language of the kitchen.<sup>55</sup>

However, the relations of power should not be subsumed into a reified vision of mutual influence in the slave galley. Indeed, the language spoken by the descendants of slaves was derogatorily termed 'kitchen Afrikaans', as Laurens van der Post revealingly recalls (1977: 128). The highly elaborated and separate set of understandings about the same food renders more complex the notion of 'intimacies' manifested in food and language.<sup>56</sup>

Though excluded, the connotations suppressed by the picturesque remain unsettlingly close to the surface of food. An instance of this occurs in The Slave Book. When, after the scene related above, Marieta whips Somiela in unprovoked fury, Somiela contemplates her response in the language of the kitchen:

Tasting the saltiness of her own blood, she promised herself that she would make this monstrous woman pay. The first opportunity she had she would pee in her coffee, poison her food ... (Jacobs 1998: 68-69).

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<sup>54</sup> The recipe in Williams (1988) refers to 'koesisters', while in Abrahams (1995) and Lagardien (1995) the term used is 'koeksisters'.

<sup>55</sup> See, among others Achmat Davids (1987; 1989; 1990; 1994).

<sup>56</sup> The term 'intimacies' is derived from Robert Shell's studies on Cape slavery, and is invoked by Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael in their edited collection Senses of Culture, 2000. I discuss Nuttall and Michael's construction below.

The image of the skilled and compliant servant shares space with her double – the slave woman who exercises the dangerous power of the kitchen to ‘gool’ or conjure by adding insidious, undetectable ingredients to food, to form magic potions or, worse, poison (Van der Post 1977: 146).<sup>57</sup> This fear, deriving from the proximity of slaves, and later, of their descendants, circulated in the Cape long after the end of slavery. Lady Duff Gordon refers to the myth in her letters:

[H]e compelled me to drink herb tea, compounded by a Malay doctor for my cough. I declined at first, and the poor old man looked hurt, gravely assured me that it was not true that Malays always poisoned Christians, and drank some himself. Thereupon I was obliged, of course, to drink up the rest; it certainly did me good, and I have drunk it since with good effect; it is intensely bitter and rather sticky. The white servants and the Dutch landlady where I lodge shake their head ominously, and hope it mayn’t poison me a year hence. ‘Them nasty Malays can make it work months after you take it’ (1921: 37).

In his book First Catch Your Eland (1977) Van der Post tells an innocuous version of this ability to heal that turns into a confession of a ‘conviction’ about the hidden powers of the ‘Malays’:

In my young days we also believed that the Malays could cure, with their own herbs and spices, diseases that our own doctors could not. The superstitious among us thought that the Malays were great magicians. There was a widespread conviction that they could ‘gool’ – their word for the performance of magic deeds (146).

Van der Post’s memory links spices to magic and secret powers in a fantasy that signals the power of the kitchen.

### Unequal Intimacies

Despite its appealing surface, in the Cape making food was incontrovertibly linked to slavery. Cooking and other domestic work was the most common reason for keeping slaves; in the 1820s and 1830s two thirds of the approximately six thousand slaves in the Cape performed domestic work (Mason 2003: 108). Skill in cooking added a marked

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<sup>57</sup> For a related topic, see David Bunn (1996) ‘The Brown Serpent of the Rock: Bushman Arrow Toxins in the Dutch and British Imaginations’, in Brenda Cooper and Andrew Steyn, eds. *Transgressing Boundaries*, for a discussion of circulating meanings of poison in the nineteenth century.

increase in value in the price of a slave. Leipoldt confirms in his book on Cape cooking that 'slaves who had knowledge of this kind of cookery commanded a far higher price than other domestic chattels' (1976: 18). He cites an advertisement for the sale of five slaves after the death of their owner: 'Malani, a good cook, exceptionally skilled and not wasteful in the kitchen', and an account of a slave auction where 'there was spirited competition for Emerentia, who is an acknowledged artist of the pot' (*ibid.*). Thus not only the food, but the figure of the highly skilled 'Coloured woman' cook, carries echoes of the history of slavery (examples of such women occur in the text and illustrations of most books that deal with Muslim food in South Africa before the 1980s). Furthermore, the dishes themselves and the rituals that accompany them carry traces of this history. The familiar meeting called a 'merrang' that continues to be held among Muslims today arose out of the periods when slaves met while their masters were at church (Abrahams 1995: 69). A joke about "'affal wat vleis geword it' ['offal that became meat'] refers to the fact that slaves made their own food from the parts of the animal which the master discarded (Abrahams 2002: interview).

The meanings of proximity in common strands of cooking and language resonates with a debate in recent South African studies of culture. In their introduction for the collection *Senses of Culture* Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael (2000) raise the issue of 'intimacy' and the wider resonance of aspects of Cape history. Nuttall and Michael attempt to shape a new direction in South African debates about culture by distinguishing their project from the constraints within previous approaches caused by 'the over-determination of the political, the inflation of resistance and the fixation on race' (Nuttall and Michael 2000: 1). In support they cite instances such as publications of the Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit at the University of Natal for an 'largely instrumentalist' approach based on a 'moral economy', and the 'history from below' project of Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool which uses a model that Nuttall and Michael characterize as 'the surrogate voice'. To Nuttall and Michael, Minkley and Rassool's emphasis on evidence of resistance generated a 'romance of authenticity' and a bias against 'intervention or mediation' by intellectuals. Nuttall and Michael criticize the tendencies and emphases in such approaches for heightening a sense of South African

exceptionalism, because they underplay the continuities that characterize South African cultures, as they do all others.

In contrast, Nuttall and Michael cite a number of studies in a different mode: Tony Morphet's writing on architecture in Durban that shows connections with other African port cities (2000: 4); David Bunn's study of poison in which conceptions circulating between the Khoisan and Dutch and British settlers 'gesture toward the beginnings of an ambivalently shared knowledge of medicines and herbs' (8); and importantly, Robert Shell on the subtle and profound transactions between slaves and slave-owners, which are manifested in South African food, language, architecture and music (5-8).<sup>58</sup> Nuttall and Michael use such writings to envision South Africa studies of culture away from a preoccupation with 'closure' and 'borders'— tropes they say have over-determined South African intellectual and cultural production - to 'intimacies and connectivities'. What has been ignored in previous approaches, Nuttall and Michael claim is that:

Alongside the closure of South African imaginations there exist intimacies and connectivities, other ways of seeing. The recognition of such intimacies has tended to be end-stopped by invocations of segregation. Despite apartheid, a great many forms of continuity and intimacy managed, if not to flourish, then at least to exist and develop.

This complex and vigorous debate touches extremely sensitive territory in South African intellectual history. Rustum Kozain responds to the 'three tendencies' that Nuttall and Michael identify by positing that these concerns are not a feature solely of the post-apartheid era, and can be located within a materialist, rather than culturalist frame. This, he argues, was accomplished in the article 'Culture, politics and the black writer: a critical look at prevailing assumptions' by Kelwyn Sole in 1983. Sean Jacobs finds that Nuttall and Michael, in their re-envisioning of the study of culture, do not so much broaden the scope of enquiry as much as they 'hastily abandon class and race, domination and resistance' (2002: online). The specific method of doing so is to 'overgeneralize from the history of the Cape', a problem he identifies as characterizing 'most recent cultural studies texts from South Africa' (*ibid.*).

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<sup>58</sup> For a strenuous critique of Shell, see Andrew Bank (1995).

I delimit the focus of my response by engaging with two matters arising from Nuttall and Michael's position: Capetonian exceptionalism and intimacy. If 'intimacies' are to be used as a model for a broader South African approach to culture, I am curious about the nature of such intimacy and how it is discussed. I engage here with the language about proximity which Nuttall and Michael cite as exemplary.

Two criticisms have been made of the project Nuttall and Michael outline in their introduction: that their notion of 'creolisation' is insensitive to the specificities of South Africa, particularly the lingering economic effects of apartheid, and that they 'overgeneralize from Cape Town'. I discuss these next, and add a further question: what is the nature of 'intimacy' in Shell's work? While Nuttall and Michael cite works that engage with contexts other than Cape Town, such as Morphet on Durban and Bunn on the Cape colony more broadly, they pay particular attention to Shell, measured by the extent of quotations from his work, and the fact that the term Nuttall and Michael prefer for their new approach is 'intimacies and connectivities'. The 'intimacies' identified by Shell as sites of cultural remaking in the context of the propinquity of domestic slavery are manifested in two quotations cited by Nuttall and Michael:

[s]lave ancestors injected diversity and challenge into an oppressive settler culture, bending and finally changing it, creolising into a new culture. But it is toward this amalgam of human relationships, however difficult it may seem, that the historian must force readers to focus their thoughts. Another generation might find the trace elements, no matter how small, of a single domestic creole culture, within the otherwise starkly stratified and bifurcated slave society of early Africa (Shell quoted in Nuttall and Michael 2000: 5).

And further:

Slavery brought different people together, not across the sights of a gun, as on the frontier, but in the setting of a home. Each slave was exposed to each owner and each settler to each slave on a very intimate footing. There was, in fact, a common reciprocal legacy ... this legacy was the as yet unexamined Creole culture of South Africa, with its new cuisine, its new architecture, its new music, its melodious, forthright and poetic language, Afrikaans, first expressed in the Arabic script of the slaves' religion and written literature. (Shell quoted in Nuttall and Michael 2000: 8).

These passages are from Robert Shell's Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838 (1994). In these passages Shell states his case in firm language; that slaves 'injected' new elements of 'diversity and challenge' into dominant culture, eventually 'bending', 'changing' and 'creolising' it, leading to a new 'amalgam[ated]' culture. However, Andrew Bank criticizes Shell's Children of Bondage for a 'conspicuous silence' about the details of slave life' (Bank 1995: 184). By emphasizing certain characteristics of the slave era, such as the figure of the slave 'wet-nurse', according to Bank, Shell overstates the degree and the nature of intersection and particularly gives too much weight to the introjection of slaves into the value systems of the slave-owners. This causes Shell to neglect arguments that slaves found spaces outside of the paternalistic slave household in which to exercise a different kind of agency, including the practice of Islam (*ibid.*).

Such spaces, which excluded slave owners except as viewers of compelling and unsettling sights in the nineteenth century, enable a re-envisioning of familiar images of Islam. For instance, in this view *ratiep*, a ritual piercing of the skin by adepts who appeared to feel no pain, could be read as 'an active expression of control over the body through denial of physical pain' (*ibid.*) and 'a rejection of their owners' claims over their bodies' (John Mason quoted in Bank 1995: 184). Bank also points out that Shell himself tends to focus on Cape Town, and particularly on household slavery, underplaying family relations between slaves in urban and rural areas, as well as the eastern parts of the Cape colony (Bank 1995: 187). Thus the nature and weight of intimacy is crucial in considering using it as a model of the legacies of the proximities of slavery.

On the topic of intimacy, Kozain notes:

one still has to be cognisant of separation, of how segregation in fact structures 'intimacy'. 'Intimacy' is not a space away from and untouched by segregation; most importantly, 'intimacy' in South Africa still has to be understood within the context of the strong traces of apartheid economic and power relations. (2002: 201)

After Shell, Nuttall and Michael have an oddly unambitious approach to such 'intimacies'.<sup>59</sup> It is simply to 'recognize' them. Kozain criticizes the scope of such a project for its potential for erasing context and the impress of history on the phenomena. By drawing on Morphet's writing on architecture in the 1940s, Bunn's research into colonial perspectives and Shell's research into slavery to buttress their critique of the over-determining impact of apartheid in conceptions of the South African present, Nuttall and Michael imply the need to draw the contemporary eye further back into history. This is a persuasive point. The features of intimacy nonetheless cannot be seen as separate from the dynamics of apartheid, and those dynamics that apartheid revived or rechannelled from the periods of slavery and genocide in the colonial era. What Nair notes as 'complete unawareness' during the apartheid era, had also been structured by pre-apartheid history.

Indeed, a certain vision of 'amalgamation' seems to have already solved the problems of separation revealed in the post-apartheid era. If in some of the evident legacies of slavery - food and language - one can infer that divides have already been breached, that all the necessary 'amalgam[ation]' has already happened in the past, and all we have to do is 'focus [our] thoughts' on it, that too easily resolves the question of the nature of the intimacy, as Kozain points out. The inequities that continue despite such unequal intimacies may, in fact, be masked by them. Many have embraced this direction, as Abrahams points out. 'Cape Malay' food has become a 'comfort' to some Afrikaans-speaking people in an uncertain era. 'It reminds them where they come from' (Abrahams 2002: interview). Yet, in certain inflections, this sense of resolution and comfort redirects attention from 'the realities of post-apartheid South Africa', the point which Kozain and Jacobs make in their criticism.

If we are to attend to the manifestations of intimacy', then we cannot assume that the end of slavery left fully-formed the 'amalgam[ated]' culture which we simply have to uncover. Here I attend to what Shell terms 'trace elements' lying within 'a starkly

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<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the papers they cite as gesturing toward this approach appear less assertive, showing evidence of ambivalence amid the 'interweaving', 'blurring' and 'creolizing' hailed by Nuttall and Michael (2000: 8).

stratified and bifurcated slave society' (quoted in Nuttall and Michael 2000: 5). If we are not to treat the end of slavery as the 'end of history' (to the same extent that colonialism was regarded the beginning of history), the further career of such traces is therefore of interest. I argue, through one of these traces, that the manifestations of intimacy have insistently separate meanings.

### Spaces of the Dominated

I look here at those spaces and practices in which slaves and their descendants operate in ways that exceed or are outside the control of dominant cultures. For a resonant instance of such a practice, I return to the site of intimacy in The Slave Book. In a scene where Harman, a guest of Andries and Marieta, is eating supper with the family, one of the enduring tropes about Muslim food appears:

"This is good food," he said, his eyes watering slightly. "Is it a dish particular to the Cape? We have very plain food in the Karoo."

"It's maleier food," Marieta said. "Too many chillies in it" (Jacobs 1998: 76).

Marieta's 'plain' tastes are likely to see any addition of spices as 'too many'. However, the association of 'Malay' food with copious amounts of spice and slavery is a notion that is explored in a signature work by the conceptual artist Berni Searle, a second instance which I argue attests that within the visible surfaces of food, history is tangible.<sup>60</sup>

Searle's 1999 exhibition Colour Me engaged with the legacy of a colonial gaze that rests on exotic bodies. Colour Me is an installation of photographs of Searle's naked body covered in a plenitude of spices such as yellow turmeric, red chilli and black pepper. One allusion in the work is to the spice trade in which the Cape played a crucial role. The Cape was initially established as a provisioning station by the Dutch East India Company

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<sup>60</sup> For an analysis of Searle's work located in a broader discussion of the evolution of images of slavery in South Africa, see Gqola, 'Shackled Memories & Elusive Discourses? Slave Pasts and the Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Imagination in South Africa' (2004). For a sensitive analysis of Searle's installations set within a consideration of the position of Black women artists in South Africa avant garde art, see Lewis 'The Conceptual Art of Berni Searle' (2001).

in order to curb the loss of life sustained among ships' crews on the journey from Europe to Asia in pursuit of the spice trade. The requirements of labour at the 'halfway' station at the Cape led to the importation of slaves (Worden 1996: 6). Ships trafficking in slaves and spices from the East traded in tandem with each other and both called at Cape Town to replenish water and supplies but also to sell slaves and spices (*ibid.*).

In the *Colour Me* photographs the prone body of the artist appears to re-enact all the conventions of availability that slavery and colonialism had designated for bodies such as hers. She is naked and ornamented with the deep colours of spices. The covering of yellow, brown and red powders both hides and outlines her body. All of these tropes – accessible yet covered, veiled yet available – code her body in familiar ways. However, the artist enacts those positions so deliberately, she so evidently enacts the requirement to-be-looked-at, that the act of looking is itself made evident (Mulvey quoted in Lewis 2001). In this way, her body 'gazes back'.<sup>61</sup> Repeating the trope of abundant spices famously associated with Muslim cooking by C. Louis Leipoldt, the silent object of the gaze insistently renders observable the mechanism of visibility and its connection to the past. I will return to a more detailed reading of the formal and thematic originality of Searle's work in Chapter Eight.

The manner in which spice is used in Muslim cooking is a further practice that exceeds the control of dominant society in the Cape. The most famous description of the use of spices in Malay cooking is that of Leipoldt. After a discussion in which he speaks of the context of slavery in Cape cookery, Leipoldt goes on to discuss the features of contemporary cooking which have emerged from the legacy of slavery:

Malay cookery, whose outstanding characteristics are the free, almost heroic, use of spices and aromatic flavouring, the prolonged steady, but slow, application of moist heat to all meat dishes, and the skilful blending of many diverse

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<sup>61</sup> This photograph, Untitled, appeared on the back cover of the Cape Town Festival's 'Returning the Gaze' publication, with that logo printed across the photograph. Smith, *Returning the Gaze* (2001).

constituents into combination that still holds the essential goodness of each (Leipoldt 1976: 11, added emphasis).

In an interview the food historian and author Cass Abrahams recalls this quotation with even greater emphasis: '[spices] were readily available and [the slaves] added it to the food of the Dutch masters as Leipoldt, one of the [Afrikaans] writers, says, with absolute free abandon' (2002). Furthermore, when it comes to blending flavours, the 'Cape Malays are masters, absolute masters, at doing that'. In the light of Bank and Mason's points about the internal meanings of slave practices whose interpretations by a dominant, outside gaze have sedimented into a habitual picture of Islam, there is an alternative reading of this 'free' use of spice. As an analogy with the excessive meaning surrounding ratiép, one can read the 'free' use of spices by cooks who were 'masters' at the skill of combining flavours as a significant claim of control - mastery and freedom over a domain which fell beneath the surveillance of slave-owners.

In The Practice Of Everyday Life (1984) Michel de Certeau asserts that the powerless use the objects of consumption in ways that exceed and escape the desires of the dominant classes and gives an example from the colonization of the Americas. The powerless, he says, makes 'innumerable and infinite decimal transformations within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules' (1984: xiv). His description of the mechanisms of such subversion plays on the notion of invisibility. In contrast to the 'centralised, glamorous, and spectacular production' of the elites, consumption by the powerless can be:

devious, it is dispersed, but it insinuates itself everywhere, silently and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by dominant economic order. (1984: xii-xiii)

De Certeau claims there is an 'ambiguous' space in which objects used can be 'subverted' in ways which are not immediately apparent as resistance to dominant parts of society (ibid.). De Certeau points to the example of the Spanish conquest in the Americas:

De Certeau's perception of '[s]ubmissive[ness]' and 'consent' is, I argue, an indication of the same desire that undergirds notions of the docile Malay. The separate practices and meanings given to Muslim food operate within this paradigm of using instruments of domination for 'events and references foreign to the system'.

### Muslim Food: Prohibition or Bounty

Literary and artistic works such as Jacobs's and Searle's point to the stratified meanings that result from such subversive uses of the familiar. The Slave Book and the Colour Me exhibition suggest that the colourful presentation and rituals of food do not necessarily offer a way to evade memories of contradiction, violence and resistance. If one follows the model offered by Jacobs's and Searle's work to examine what tropes shape the perception of Muslim food and read them differently, what might we see in food? Below, I explore the possibility of a different way of speaking about Muslim food. If representations of food are a vehicle for seeing Islam through a limited frame, I investigate the nature of that frame, and what other ways there may be of reading Muslim food and its meanings.<sup>62</sup> In the following sections I review research on food, outline views on Muslim food in South Africa, examine the connection between food and Islam, discuss food and the Muslim community in Cape Town and conduct a detailed analysis of recipe books that feature Muslim food in South Africa. I combine these approaches with insights from twenty-eight interviews with food historians and cooks conducted between November 2000 and June 2002.

Food is a supple and complex human activity, characterized by both material and symbolic dimensions. In the disciplines of history, anthropology and sociology the subject has been studied for the insights it offers into social relations, notions of self, and matters of power.<sup>63</sup> There are few studies in anthropology which focus on Muslim food,

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<sup>62</sup> For recent reviews of 'Cape Malay' cookbooks in the popular media, see Odendal (1995), Roberts (1999) and Miller (2002).

<sup>63</sup> Anthropologists have fascinatingly explored the histories of foods like salt, sugar and chocolate (see Mintz, 1986) and explored food prohibitions, gender relations and the meaning of etiquette. Carole Counihan's 'Bread as World: Food Habits and Social Relations in Modernizing Sardinia' is an exemplary study of the details and implications of changes in a food culture. She uses evocative quotations from interviews to show the ambiguities of change (in Counihan and Van Esterik 1997). For a review of the ways food has made it possible to generate new views of the past see Super (2002). See also Goody

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At the level of orthodoxy, what is the relation between Muslim food and prohibition? I explore this question from a perspective that sees Muslim food as a dynamic construct which varies with time and place, obtaining its definition and meanings in the context of a particular community. In Islam a distinction is made between halaal (lawful) and haraam (unlawful) foods. However, to overemphasize prohibition does not do justice to the extensive Islamic art, literature and scholarship about food, which for centuries has been widely disseminated in Europe and other parts of the world (Goody 1982). In fact, there are relatively few food prohibitions in Islam. Islam has a varied doctrinal literature on food, as can be seen in the entry on Ghidha ['that which ensures the growth and good health of the body'] in the Encyclopedia of Islam, which deals extensively with the laws that govern food. I will not attempt to reproduce that here. The two sources of religious law, the Qur'an and the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet) convey a much fuller vision than prohibition. The Qur'an conveys the sense that food is one of the bounties provided to

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human beings by God: 'Allah is he who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down water from the sky and thereby brought forth fruits as provision for you' (Surah 14, Verse 32). The Hadith records the Prophet's exhortations to 'Eat together and do not eat separately, for the blessing is with the company' (Sahih Bukhari quoted in Goody 1982:206).

Among the haraam foods, Surah 2, Verse 168 of the Qur'an lists: 'these things only has He forbidden you: carrion, blood, and the flesh of swine.' Even the matter of prohibition is complex, as all laws are received within a context, and thus interpretations and thus practices vary. Exemptions are justified in times of famine, for instance. One way to resolve the problem of an association of Muslim food with prohibition is to distinguish between the terms 'Islamic' and 'Muslim'. The first refers to the practices of the religion based on its scriptures, and the second is an adjective to describe the inevitably varied practices and cultures of people who are adherents of the religion. The conflation of the terms leads to an erasure of difference between and within Muslim communities.

Shaped by these religious concepts of bounty, community and prohibition, Muslim food in Cape Town takes form in a wide array of dishes and practices. Instead of manifesting a single origin, the food identified in these interviews as Muslim demonstrates various histories and influences, among them African, Asian and European. In reality, 'Muslim' food in Cape Town is permeable. There is no purity or distinction from other local cuisines.<sup>64</sup> To talk about Muslim food in Cape Town means to go beyond the relation of food and Islam, and engage with the prevalence of the term "Cape Malay".

Cass Abrahams's perspective reframes Muslim food as prototypically South African food. She points out that the contents, methods and rituals of 'Cape Malay' food demonstrate its development under slavery. As a result, 'Cape Malay' food was among the earliest "fusion" food of South Africa:

the spices and fusions of Khoi-san and Dutch food gave rise to what is known as Cape Malay cuisine today. So you can think of the meat loaf coming from Holland and the spices added to that to make a bobotie. So there you have a

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<sup>64</sup> Shamil Jeppie, Interview conducted with Gabeba Baderoon, November 2001.

fusion, it's a very good example, and is incidentally the national dish of South Africa as well. So you have this very good example of fusions there. Or a Khoisan-slave fusion is waterblommetjie bredie, spices like allspice, peppercorns, cloves, garlic then the wild flowers, that is Khoisan added to the waterblommetjie, plus the meat stewed in a particularly Dutch way. So the method was Dutch, the spices were the slaves and the ingredients, 50% of them were Khoisan (Abrahams 2002: interview).

This view locates the food tradition firmly within the country's history, and helps to subvert atomized images of exotic Muslim food. Abrahams further contests the notion that the food is defined by religion. 'It isn't Muslim food, it is the food of South Africa, but the Muslims were the caretakers of the food' (2002: interview).

#### The Ayah in the Kitchen: Food, Knowledge and Hidden Meanings<sup>65</sup>

*Coconut and jam tarts – Herzoggies*

*Make as coconut tart recipe.*

*When tarts are cold, put ½ teaspoon of firm apricot jam to one side of each.*

*-Sonia Allison and Myrna Robins, South African Cape Malay Cooking (1997: 104).*

The last element in the conventional view of Muslim food in the Cape is a skill in blending flavours. Leipoldt notes that 'Malay' cooking is characterized by 'the skilful blending of many diverse constituents into a combination that still holds the essential goodness of each' (1976: 11). A old joke told in the Muslim community concerns the particular skill in making food associated with being Muslim. Of a woman whose cooking abilities were merely average, it was said that 'Sy't ma onlangs in die deen gekom [She's only recently come into the faith]' (Jardine 2002: interview).

With the following section on recipe books, I explore the connection of food, knowledge and hidden meanings. Cookbooks are an enormously popular contemporary genre. According to Struik Publishers, internationally over one billion food and wine books are sold each year. In this section I read selected South African cookbooks dating from the nineteenth century to the present as sources of images of Islam

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<sup>65</sup> This is a phrase ascribed to C. Louise Leipoldt by Laurens Van der Post (1977: 129)

One can read cookbooks to determine what they reveal about shifts in understandings of food, about relations of labour in the kitchen and the farm and about conceptions of cookbooks themselves. Arjun Appadurai's 'How to make a national cuisine: Cookbooks in contemporary India' (1988) situates cookbooks within a nexus of class, language and the contemporary history of India. He outlines the role of cookbooks written in English and directed largely at a middle-class, Anglophone audience in crafting a national cuisine in a postcolonial and postindustrial context. Appadurai places the 'interplay between regional inflection and national standardization' at the centre of a mechanism of middle-class formation. The exchange of recipes across barriers of language, caste and ethnicity becomes a site for the 'loosening' of old bounds and the creation of a cultural space for the urban middle-class (240). Below, I follow Appadurai's model of intensive attention to the form and social relations signalled by recipes, and, further, read the cookbooks for their representations of Islam in nineteenth and twentieth century South Africa.

Muslim food in South Africa is featured in some of the earliest collections of recipes published in the country, usually under the category of 'East Indian', 'Malay' and, later, 'Cape Malay' cooking. Such early cookbooks are an important source of South African images of Islam. Dating from traveller's tales from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, 'Malay' slaves were commonly associated with food in representations of the Cape. The earliest cookbook published in South Africa is A. G. Hewitt's 1889 publication Cape Cookery. Two years later, Hildagonda Duckitt's Hilda's "Where is it?" of recipes – containing, amongst other practical and tried recipes, many old Cape, Indian, and Malay dishes and preserves; also directions for polishing furniture, cleaning silk, etc., and a collection of home remedies in case of sickness' (1891, 1894 and reprinted 1966) became a best-selling tome of its day.<sup>66</sup> Both Hewitt's and Duckitt's books contained many "Malay" and "East Indian" recipes such as 'breedee' (stew) and 'blatjang' (chutney). I mark a shift in the approach to 'Malay' figures from cookbooks published in the nineteenth century and those in the twentieth century from the exterior to an interest in the interior. This can be seen in the change in setting and content, from images

<sup>66</sup> Published by Chapman and Hall in London, the book had reached nineteen editions and sold 24 000 copies by 1908 (Leipoldt 1976 20-21). Its reprinted version Hildagonda Duckitt's Book of Recipes published by AA Balkema in 1966 continues to sell well today.

of labour to festivities and weddings to an interest in the secrets of cooking, for instance, in Gerber (1954).

The next significant figure in the production of published knowledge about Muslim cooking is the poet, doctor and botanist C. Louis Leipoldt. He was an early collector of South African recipe manuscripts, and his Leipoldt's Cape Cookery, published in 1976 (though the manuscript was written in 1947), is a source of enduring tropes about Muslim cooking in South Africa. These include a notable skill in the use of spices and being famously protective of food secrets (11). Leipoldt's research into the evolving traditions of cooking in colonial and early twentieth-century South Africa and his collection of recipe manuscripts dating to the seventeenth century held in the South African National Library, are of great value for the scholarship of food in South Africa.

I found the most interesting features in these books were not the recipes themselves, but the introductions, prefaces, forewords and illustrations. For instance, I. D. du Plessis, the Afrikaans academic whose role in 're-inventing' the Malay as a racially separate group was analysed by Shamil Jeppie (1988), wrote the foreword to Gerber's book – one of the many instances in which Du Plessis exercised a position as 'expert' on the 'Malay'. In the foreword Du Plessis praises Gerber for the 'literal recording' of the recipes, which he says adds 'local colour' to her book (Gerber 1954). Du Plessis' interest in the 'literal recording' is part of his project of constituting the 'Malays' as a body of knowledge over which he presided. Du Plessis uses selected 'Malay' names as markers of authenticity and by extension, of his authority. Thus, in the foreword, he acknowledges '[t]he revision of some details by Sheikh A. Behardien, President of the Moselem Judicial Council' (*ibid.*). Betsie Rood's 'Maleier Kookkuns' (1977) reflects the success of Du Plessis' strategy in some quarters,<sup>67</sup> since the author dedicates her book to 'I. D. du Plessis and the Cape Malay community'. Gerber's own text is more interesting, and her

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<sup>67</sup> Jeppie records the extensive dissent among Muslims toward Du Plessis' Orientalist project. Even today, Du Plessis is regarded ambivalently rather than with outright rejection among some Muslims. He was cited without criticism in the recent play 'Salaam Stories', written by Ashraf Johaardien. Betsie Rood features in a revelation from Cass Abrahams – that Rood's informants left out crucial ingredients in recipes, rendering them useless. I read this as part of a broader record of subversion of the placid reputation of the Cape Muslims in the realm of food.

approach to the recipes themselves is especially notable. Not only does she record the names of the women who provided her with their recipes and the area in which they live, which has allowed descendants of these women to trace their contributions,<sup>68</sup> but she also includes more than one version of the same dish, indicating a sensitivity to the varied, shifting practices of such cooking. The illustrations in Gerber's cookbook, drawn by Katrine Harries, participate in the tradition of visual images of Islam established during the colonial era: unvaryingly amiable and exotic. Focussing on its visible aspects, seen as exotic and colourful, this approach neglects the food's complexity or shifts over time, and contradicts the approach taken in the written text.

Laurens van der Post's writing on Muslim food in a chapter titled 'East and West Meet at the Cape' for Time-Life Books' African Cooking (1970) and the 'Malays at the Cape' in First Catch Your Eland (1977) highlights the exotic. In both books he firmly emphasizes the Asian element of the 'Cape Malay' cuisine, and underplays its African and Creole aspects. He describes an Eid plate of 'brightly coloured cakes a la Javanese, arranged on trays covered with silver or gold tinsel' (1977: 130), claiming that 'on feast days, what is purely Malay in their cooking tends to assert itself' (132). Van der Post's writing is heavily indebted to previous authors, particularly Leipoldt and Gerber.<sup>69</sup> Of some interest is a circulating remark ascribed to Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, which has appeared in three South African cookbooks: Gerber's (1954: 23), Van der Post's (1977: 132), Betsie Rood (1977) and Cass Abrahams': 'It is not sufficient that the man should place good food before his guest; he is bound to do more. He should render the meal palatable by kind words and treatment; to soothe him after his journey and to make his heart glad while he partakes of refreshment'.

Published in 1977, Betsie Rood's Maleier Kookkuns [Malay Cooking] appeared in Afrikaans (the quotations below from this book are my translations). Rood's introduction, 'The Malay and his food', contains assertions about unvarying practices

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<sup>68</sup> Mrs Jorayda Salie pointed out in an interview I conducted with her in June 2002 that a relative of hers had provided a recipe to Gerber.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Van der Post's use of Leipoldt's anecdotes on and a heavily derivative version of 'Malay eating houses' (1977: 129), similar to Gerber (1954: 9).

typical of this vision of Muslim life. A recurring feature is the use of the third person, for instance, 'the Malay has a love of sweet, colourful drinks' (3), 'the woman remains submissive and obedient' (4) and '[t]he Malay seldom if ever has any knowledge of the nutritional value of food' (*ibid.*). In addition to this abstract and generalizing tone, another feature of Rood's introduction is its frequent references to Raffles (1977: 8 - 9). In First Catch Your Eland (1977) Van der Post respectfully cited Raffles, the British Lieutenant-Governor who established a trading post on the island of Singapore in 1819, and who is cited by Rood and Van der Post as an authority on perceptions of Asians in Singapore, similar to the position Du Plessis assumed in mediating the meaning of the 'Cape Malays'.

#### Cookbooks by Muslim Authors

The recipes in these books were gathered through research among cooks or, in the case of Leipoldt and Van der Post, from the experience of having 'Malay' servants and cooks.<sup>70</sup> As a result, a trope common to both Leipoldt's and Van der Post's writings is that of the preternaturally gifted woman in the kitchen. The recurring theme of the skilled but silent woman in the kitchen was radically revised by the arrival of cookbooks written by Muslim women.

The first book on Muslim food written by Muslim authors in South Africa was the best-selling Indian Delights by the Women's Cultural Group in Durban, chaired by Zuleikha Mayat (1961). Discussed by Betty Govinden in her doctoral dissertation on Indian women's writing in South Africa, Indian Delights is not solely a book of recipes. It also 'projects a fascinating dimension of cultural history' (Govinden 155). Govinden's reading notes the specific audience for the book, 'the Indian community itself', reflected in the form that Indian Delights takes, with recipes interspersed with 'numerous vignettes, nostalgic family anecdotes, convalescence remedies, giving the book a valuable intertextual and social character' (156).

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<sup>70</sup> Martin Versveld's thoughtful book Food for Thought: A Philosopher's Cookbook, 1991 [1983], also contains this familiar feature in a 'homage to Moitjie'.

The next book by a Muslim author, The Cape Malay Cookbook (1988) by Faldela Williams, took a different form, as I elaborate below. Williams' was followed by other popular cookbooks produced by Muslim authors Cass Abrahams (1995) and Zainab Lagardien (1995). This development is significant, because the books explore the way food traditions articulate history and culture. They also showed Muslims in positions other than servants or informants. The place of recipe books in Muslim cooking is an interesting one. They are perennial sellers for the publishers.<sup>71</sup> All three the 'Cape Malay' books were written by well-known caterers.

My interviews with different generations of Muslim cooks suggests that when The Cape Malay Cookbook was first published in 1988, its Muslim readers treated the book as though it was addressed to an outside audience.<sup>72</sup> Textual evidence supports this reading. For instance, the 'Introduction' makes references to the use of 'exotic' spices. The use of spices is in fact the most quotidian of acts in Muslim cooking, and to refer to spices as 'exotic' signals that one is addressing an outside audience. The 'Introduction' as a whole has a tone different to the writing in other sections of the book in which Williams' voice is overt, and unlike the Foreword, which is written by Yusuf da Costa, is not ascribed to another author and by implication is ascribed to her. The introduction attracts attention because it describes 'Malays' in the third person, as 'they', while in other sections, Williams identifies herself as a member of this community. The books present themselves as aimed at an outside audience through a level of explanation that is redundant to an inside one (and many Muslim cooks I interviewed complained that the levels of spice in recipes are woefully inadequate). Yet, they also include voices from within the Muslim community (such as Yusuf da Costa) who authenticate the book for that audience. Williams's strategy of including the names of cooks in recipe titles, such as 'Mymoena's Almond Tart' and 'Fawzia's Soetkoekies', suggests the author's role as a scribe of circulating communal knowledge (1993: 77).

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<sup>71</sup> Metz Publishers' first print of 25 000 copies of Cass Abrahams book was sold out, and a reprint of 20 000 books was ordered (interview conducted with Gabeba Baderoon, 14 June 2004).

<sup>72</sup> I discuss the interviews further below.

The next noteworthy publication in this genre, by Cass (Cashifa) Abrahams, does not use this strategy; none of the recipes uses the names of other cooks, and neither does it use Gerber's strategy of including more than one version of a single recipe. Instead, as the title suggests, Cass Abrahams Cooks Cape Malay relies on the persona of the skilled chef to establish its authority. Abrahams' book has a much more extensive introduction and foreword, and the discourse in these is interestingly balanced, once again directed to an outside audience, but attentive to terminology and history, especially of slavery. Suggesting her awareness that the genre of which her book is a part is addressed to an outside audience as much as a Muslim one, Abrahams too includes the Raffles quotation that appeared in Gerber and Van der Post (1995: 8). The address to an outside audience is evident in the use of the third person, for instance in the definition of the 'barakat':

Parcels of food or cake, the traditional barakat, are made up for guests to take home with them. The barakat still has a central role in the culture of the Cape Malays and to this day is considered a blessing (Abrahams 1995: 59, original emphasis).

Who is the audience for such works? Interviews with the publishers suggest that approximately twenty percent of the 'Cape Malay' books are purchased by tourists. I explore the responses of Muslim readers, who constitute a substantial section of the eighty percent of South African purchases, in the analysis of the interviews below.<sup>73</sup>

Abrahams, in contrast to Van der Post, argues that the location of the Cape is crucial to 'Cape Malay' cooking – indigenous Khoi and San people, who during the colonial period themselves experienced labour conditions similar to slavery (the Muslim population also expanded rapidly through a high rate of conversion to Islam by indigenous people and non-Muslim slaves), shared their knowledge of indigenous food resources. This combination of ingredients, histories and traditions makes "Cape Malay" cooking a "food from Africa".

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<sup>73</sup> The owner of the publishing house estimated that twenty percent of sales are to tourists, but that the majority of the customers are 'the local community' whom she described having an interesting buying pattern: they purchase more than one copy of the book – one for themselves and one as a gift (interview conducted with Gabeba Baderoon, 14 June 2004).

### Secrets and Food

There is always a secret about food. The familiar thought on tasting a failed dish - 'something is missing' - may point beyond recipes. Echoing this theme, recipe books are often accompanied by a tone of loss. Even in the first cookbook published in the country, A. G. Hewitt's Cape Cookery (1889), the author refers to 'really good old-fashioned recipes such as were almost traditional ... in former times' (19). This theme is also emphasized in Gerber and Rood who view Muslim cooks as holding the secrets of a distinctive food tradition that is in danger of disappearing.

The appearance of cookbooks marks a shift from informally (often orally) transmitted practices to the codification of selected recipes (and, of these, usually only one version) into a fixed form. On the other hand, published recipe books do not prevent people from building their own recipe collections and manuscripts for use in the home. Leipoldt points out that such manuscripts were a common feature in the Cape in the late nineteenth century (1976: 11). A strong relationship remains between the published works and circuits of oral and informal exchange. People continue to mark, add, modify, and combine recipes. In an interview one woman revealed that she had accrued a significant collection of recipes dating back to the early twentieth century (Davidson 2002: interview).

The authors of published cookbooks attain a degree of authority for having selected the recipes in their books. By creating a written record they are also seen to avert the loss of valuable knowledge. However, the authority of the writer - who selects and vouches for the recipes in the book - along with the authenticity of the recipes is a familiar requirement of cookbooks. There are various strategies to proclaim the authenticity of recipes. Since their subject was 'Malay' food, Rood and Gerber cited the names of Muslim informants to establish the validity of their recipes. In the case of the Muslim authors, their perceived relationship with the Muslim community is significant.<sup>74</sup> Renata Coetzee's The South African culinary tradition (1977) uses a circumscribed view of the

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<sup>74</sup> Mr Hashiem Salie stated that he appreciated Zainab Lagardien's book 'because she's an elderly person, she writes still of very olden types of recipes' (interview with Gabeba Baderoon, June 2002).

unchanging generalities: 'The Cape Malay people are friendly, caring and enjoy life to the full', and inaccuracy: he attributes the origins of the food to 'the Malaysians of Madagascar' (Allison and Robins 1997: 6). As I have shown above, the tradition of Muslim food in Cape Town has been a way of organizing resources, meaning and power in a history that includes slavery and apartheid. To remain within the pattern of treating the food tradition as an unchanging and exotic cuisine is to displace this history, as Bond's attribution demonstrates.

### The Hertzoggie and Other Food Secrets

I end this review of South African recipe books with the story of the Hertzoggie, habitually featured in colourful photographs of Muslim festivities such as Eid in South Africa (see Figure 5, p. 82). The Hertzoggie is a small, open tart made with two fillings: jam on one side and coconut on the other. Unbeknown to many outside the Muslim community, the cookie serves to recall another history of Muslim food elided from its exoticized incarnation in many cookbooks. Besides its slave past, Muslim food also has a subversive recent past. A story by Cass Abrahams shows the meanings and resistance encoded in food by the less powerful:

It goes back to when [Afrikaans general and later Prime Minister James Barry Munnik] Hertzog was running for power. He made two promises. Now, this is true, if you go back to that particular year.<sup>75</sup> ... He said that he would give the women a vote, en hy sal die slaves dieselfde as die wittes, he will make the Malays equal to the whites. Achmat [Davids, the late linguist and historian] reckoned the Malays became terribly excited about this and they put this little shortcrust pastry with apple jelly underneath and then had the egg white and coconut on top of it and baked it and called it a hertzoggie in honour of General Hertzog. However, when he came into power he fulfilled one promise, he gave the vote to the women, but he didn't make the slaves the same as the whites. So the Malays became very upset and they took that very same Hertzoggie and covered it with brown icing, you know this runny brown icing and pink icing and they call it a twee-gevreetjie ['hypocrite'] (Abrahams 2002: interview).

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<sup>75</sup> James Barry Munnik Hertzog, Prime Minister of South Africa from 1935-42 repeatedly brought the Hertzog Bills before parliament, and these were rebuffed twice before being passed in 1936. The bills entrenched separation into law, severely undermined the franchise of African voters and offered a deceptive enhancement of the Coloured franchise as part of its attempt to pass through the parliamentary process. In effect the bills laid the groundwork for apartheid (Worden 1994: 87).

The entry in Allison and Robins' book does not allude to this secret history, and not even the Muslim-authored cookbooks reveal the story. The Hertzoggie continues to be made today, a feature of the plates of biscuits that are served at tea, weddings and Eid, continuing to encode its lessons of betrayal and memory.

#### Steal with the eye: Secrets of Cooking

In interviews conducted between November 2000 and June 2002 I explored familiar themes surrounding representations of Muslim cooking in the Cape. While the stories shared in these exchanges resulted in a broad and interesting range of material, I focus here on jokes, patterns of images, and surprises as texts that allude to layered and significant meanings.<sup>76</sup> I did not envision interviews as a 'corrective' nor providing the 'true story' about Muslim food, but draw on them to include views not usually part of the wider public discourse that show how food signals connections, contradictions, inclusion and exclusion. Stories related here alerted me to traces of histories that are often overwritten or hidden in the visible surfaces of the dishes.

In an interview conducted in 2002 Abrahams pointed out that many recipes in the early 'Cape Malay' cookbooks are missing crucial ingredients:

If you look back at some of the old Cape Malay books, written by Betsy Roods [and Hilda Gerber], there is a recipe for potato pudding in one of those – that has 8 eggs and no milk in it, so it's like a potato omelette. They just left out the milk, they purposefully left out 3 or 4 ingredients (Abrahams 2002: interview).

This revelation indicates that when it comes to recipes rules of access are decided by those on the inside. Only an expert with a similar level of knowledge would know that the secret being shared was not what it seemed. While Muslim, Abrahams is not herself originally from the Cape, and found that while writing her book she encountered a noticeable secretiveness about recipes. 'I found I had to go and steal with my eyes; in a

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<sup>76</sup> In the interviews I used life-story interviews aimed at uncovering the place of food in their memories and their communities, what changes they have noted in beliefs and practices around food over their lifetimes, their views on the relation of food and tradition, spirituality and artistry, and recipes and recipe books. I aimed through these personal histories to trace larger social forces such as patriarchy, religion, region, historical shifts such as apartheid to post-apartheid, and the recent proliferation of international fast-food chains in South Africa. Questions addressed attitudes towards notions of self and the relation to family and tradition, gender, and creativity, explored in the context of the economic, political and cultural shifts in South Africa in the post-apartheid era.

lot of instances I would chat, and watch them surreptitiously' (Abrahams 2002: interview). Abrahams finds the reluctance to share recipes understandable. They are a valuable form of knowledge, so 'you want to have that, you have nothing else' (*ibid.*). However, some cooks learned recipes even from people who did not want to share them. Three people shared a metaphor for grasping information visually in contravention of what people wanted to share with them. Good cooks' affinity with flavours means that they have an ability to 'catch with the eye', as Rose Fick expressed it (2002: interview). Zainab Francis learned to make pizza bases when 'I saw with the eye in a pizza shop one night' (2002: interview). Abrahams said that while she was researching her second book, she had to 'steal with the eye' (2002: interview). These stories demonstrate the operation of 'the eye' by those who are themselves usually looked at, a hidden reversal. What looks like compliance or submissiveness is actually withdrawal or evasion of the classifying impulse.

I end with a reconsideration of abundance. Muslims in the Cape are often associated with a profusion of food. A joke told by Alan Jacobs, one of the people I interviewed, was that you could always recognize a Muslim family in the supermarket. 'They're the ones with six trolleys of groceries.' (2000: interview). Research by Sindre Bangstad in a small rural community outside Cape Town documented that Muslim families of a similar class to their non-Muslim neighbours spent more money on food, unwittingly creating the impression of being wealthier, as a result (2001).

However, what meanings do Muslims attach to a plenitude of food? Numerous interviewees explained that it is incumbent on a host who receives a visitor to invite that person to join the table, therefore families rarely prepare only enough food for themselves. As Lukman Davids expresses it, "in the Muslim culture, when you're eating and somebody walks in, you always invite him to come and eat (2002: interview). Shahida Dreyer, a caterer, adds a further level of meaning to this practice:

I don't know whether you call it traditional or, but it's just being human to ask someone to join you for supper or join you for your meal, whatever meal you're busy with. For that reason you always add just a little bit extra in (Dreyer 2002: interview).

Crucially, Dreyer reveals the dimension that sharing food makes one 'human', a new level of the meaning of abundance and sharing.

### Conclusion

In this section I examined representations of Muslim food in sites that have not been widely investigated – cookbooks, illustrations and people's self-representations in interviews - in order to give detail to the conventions through which Islam became visible and explicable in South Africa. While seeming to conform to expectations of exoticism, colourful images of food also signal other, dissonant meanings, as The Slave Book and the 'Colour Me' exhibition suggest. Analyses of both recipe books and insights from interviews show that instead of being exotic, Muslim food, with its use of local ingredients blended with other elements, is one of the ways in which Islam became indigenous in South Africa.

The chapter shows that one can trace in contemporary food practices as well as historical texts the way boundaries were permeated during the period of slavery. Because domestic work was at one point the most common reason for keeping slaves, food carries stratified meanings that developed in the unequal intimacies of the household. Thus the picturesque, through which Muslim food is customarily portrayed, with its emphasis on pleasing surfaces, can be read for meanings that lie beyond the visible. I showed that dishes that overlap in name or contents like boeber and koesisters suggest that slaves created out of dominant traditions a new language of food that also made an impact on the tastes of slave-owners. The creation of new foods that fuse African, Asian and European customs indicate a space of assertion and ownership in practices that elude the control of the dominant. The example of the 'hertzgoggie' shows that food can have hidden and deliberately subversive meanings that have currency outside of surveillance. Thus Muslim food has been read in this chapter as an archive of subaltern meanings.

The familiar associations of Muslim food with secrecy, hospitality and abundance attain different meaning in the interviews above. 'You know how jealously they guard their secrets' Abrahams notes, but she also points out that the insistence on retaining 'what you've got' indicates an understanding of knowledge as precious (2002: interview). Even within the 'picturesque' mode, food can encode a specific kind of resistance to power. Its meanings can circulate outside the knowledge and control of an outside gaze, allowing people to communicate in coded ways with an inside group, as the story of the 'hertzoggie' cookie demonstrates.

Having shown that interior meanings of Muslim food subvert the picturesque mode in which it is usually portrayed, I continue with a focus on themes within the picturesque, and move in the next chapter to representations of Muslim burials. I examine newspapers and traveller's accounts, and explore evidence of evolving discourses about Islam.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE UNDERSIDE OF THE PICTURESQUE: MEANINGS OF MUSLIM BURIAL

The sun was just setting, the ground planted with flowers that made the air fragrant, and palm and rosemary grew at the head of the graves. Little upright slabs marked every tomb, and rows of white pebbles were placed along the earth.... The funeral party came winding up the hill, and along the narrow paths among flowers, till they halted at a newly dug grave, not perpendicular, like ours, but hollowed out from the side of the pit. There was no coffin; the body, wrapped in white cloths, was borne upon a bier, covered with a canopy of rose-coloured cotton. Two men descended into the grave, and the corpse with great care was slipped gently down from the bier, hid from sight beneath the sheet held by four men, who thus concealed the grave, until the body is carefully laid in the niche or recess, and shut in with boards and stopped with grass ... As the clods of earth were shovelled in, a young Malay scattered bunches of lovely white flowers, roses and narcissus, into the grave at intervals, among the clods. When the grave was filled up, the head was marked by a small upright stone, and one bunch of flowers reserved to lay there, with a stone upon it to prevent its being blown away by the wind. The mourners were now picturesquely seated in groups around the grave, in the fading daylight; the priest in his robes, with his Arabic scroll, sitting at the top, and chanting in a loud voice ... The ceremony over, the group, with the empty bier, wound down the hill, amidst the beautiful mountain scenery, in the amber light of evening.

- George French Angas, *The Kafirs Illustrated* (1849: 9-10).

*That was the first time I came across the kramat, a humble, square, white building with a green dome that sits quietly on the crest of the hill as if it had always been there. Up to the left Lion's Head was silhouetted against a dazzling sun and far beneath us lay an immensity of blue sea. At the door beneath the moon and crescent were the words: 'The Dargan is for praying and glorifying Allah the almighty.'*

*Having walked through the little iron gate and removed my shoes, as requested in a hand-painted sign on the wall, I remember entering the building and encountering silence and a kind of peace I had not felt for days.*

*The light entering the shrine was softened by coloured glass and in the centre of the room was a tomb covered in bright satin cloth. There lay Sheikh Muhammed Hassan Ghabi Shah al Qadri, a man I never knew. What I did know was that somehow this was a building that could house my pain.*

*Perhaps it had something to do with the sense of detachment you feel up there. Something about height – about being released for a while from the goings-on of the mortal world below.*

*- Alex Dodd, 'Signal Hill's High Moral Ground' (1999: online)*

*In this whole history of Pagad in South Africa what stands out for me is not a media moment but a real event which has the colourings of a media event. ... It was a funeral. There was a procession just down my street. There were probably three thousand people. To me, growing up Muslim, it's not an oddity. But suddenly it brings to my attention that [to my neighbours] it's like a CNN report coming to life in some vague Arabic country. ... The event in front of my eyes was being coloured by what we are used to on CNN. I should have spoken to my neighbours then.*

*- Rustum Kozain (2000: interview).*

### *Buried Meanings, Unburied Bodies*

Since 1994 South Africa has been faced with death – death long unrecognised, death denied, unspeakable death - and its corollary, unburied bodies.<sup>77</sup> Partly this has been because of processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, before whose committees witnesses consistently asked for assistance in finding the bodies of their relatives who had been murdered by the apartheid regime and whose remains they had not been able to bury (Sanders 2003: 80). In one sense, the commission allowed South Africans to pose the question: where is the body? In May 2002 the remains of Sarah Baartman, whose body had been used to anchor notions of European racial superiority, were brought from the Museum of Man in Paris to be buried in Hankie in the Eastern

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<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of representations of the bodies of the dead in South Africa, see Yvette Abrahams (2000) and Pippa Skotnes (2002) on the 'Miscast' Exhibition. Pippa Skotnes's 'Miscast' exhibition opened in Cape Town in 1996 and engaged with the discourses surrounding representation of the Khoi and San in South African history. The art exhibition turned on the assumptions behind visibility and unburied bodies yet the exhibition itself initiated an intellectual controversy. Separately, see Yvette Christiaanse (2002), on the significance of the 'empty grave' of the founding father of Afrikaner identity, Piet Retief in the Voortrekker Monument. Also see David Bunn (2002) on burial practices among indigenous people and settlers during the colonial period in the Eastern Cape. For histories of death in South Africa, see Elizabeth van Heyningen (1989), G. Dennie (1997), and Benedict Garton (2003).

Cape,<sup>78</sup> one hundred and eighty seven years after her death. However, part of the reason South Africa faced death so visibly, I contend, is that the dominant way of determining the boundaries of the human under apartheid (much of which it had inherited from the colonial era) did not fully recognize Black people as human, and therefore did not recognize their deaths as deaths. Control over the meanings of death is an indication of who is regarded as human, as I elaborate below. In the post-apartheid era South Africans could both insist on the acknowledgement of the deaths that had been denied, and develop the means of reading what was previously not seen.<sup>79</sup>

I derive the question, 'whose deaths are deaths?', from the work of Judith Butler in her recent consideration of the representation of the war in Afghanistan.<sup>80</sup> And thus, in death, whose bodies are buried, whose are studied and displayed, and whose unaccounted for. In looking at the way representation creates regimes of inclusion and exclusion, Butler's recent consideration points to death as a crucial marker of the boundaries of the human. In this view, a death that is recognized as death encodes a border of the human. The deaths of those who are not regarded as human are themselves lacking in meaning, and therefore invisible. The question 'whose deaths are deaths?' allows us to understand whether those beings are counted as human, whether their deaths are registered as 'grievable', and therefore how their bodies are treated, whether they are buried, or displayed, or unmarked (Butler 2004). What happens to dead bodies, and the continuing meaning of death for the living is the concern of the rest of this chapter.

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<sup>78</sup> See Gail Smith (2002). Sarah Baartman is one of the most discussed figures in South African culture. Two documentaries have been made on Baartman: The Life and Times of Sarah Baartman (1998) and The Return (2002), both directed by Zola Maseko.

<sup>79</sup> Indicating how ways of visibility developed in the context of exploitation during colonialism, Martin Hall points out that 'slave owners did not "see" their chattels who worked and slept around them' (2000: 196).

<sup>80</sup> For a philosophical enquiry into this question including its anterior interest in the meaning of the vulnerable Other for the self, see Judith Butler's Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence (2004). Butler's notion of a reciprocal relation between self and other drawn from Emanuel Levinas is a significant theoretical basis for Chapter Seven in this thesis on the events of 11 September. For a consideration of mourning and melancholia in various contexts, the collection Loss: The Politics of Mourning edited by David Eng and David Kazanjian (2003) offers riveting essays, including three on South Africa. For literary conceptions of death, see Robert Pogue Harrison's The Dominion of the Dead (2003).

I deal with the way images of burial both cement and disturb the notion of a picturesque Islam that came to be established in paintings, travel writing and discourses about food during the colonial period in South Africa. I argue below that the placement of Islam in the picturesque occurs and fails through the sight of a Muslim burial. In a discussion of protests by Muslims around cemeteries that occurred in Cape Town in 1886 I show that the discourse of the picturesque and its underside, the repressed vision of 'Oriental fanaticism', fail because they are unable to accommodate a complexity of motivations beyond religion, as well as the possibility of a larger Black collectivity.

Thus far in the thesis, it is clear from analysis of paintings and written accounts from the Cape colony that the picturesque discourse has rendered the Muslim body visible. This is in contrast to notions of Islam elsewhere that perceive Islam as veiled and masked (Loomba 1998; Watson 1998; Mutman 1999). Burying is shrouding and, with its hidden rituals, may be read as contradicting the necessary visibility of the Muslim body. If, as I have argued above, there is a purposeful visibility to the Muslim figure, what are the meanings of Muslim burial in South Africa?

Let me start by considering the ways in which death has appeared in recent South African writing. The topic of death has been a frequent theme of literary works in the country both before and after 1994. I focus here on an immensely rich novel, Zoe Wicomb's *David's Story* (2000), which addresses the difficulty of delimiting individual stories in a country in which the past is so evident, whether overtly or as an 'actual absence' (193, added emphasis). At a time when memories are officially constructed, the novel probes how to narrate the fissures, contradictions and betrayals of the present, and also of the past. David, the Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier of the title, wrestles with the intimate and immediate presence of the dead.<sup>81</sup> To David, the dead are neither absent, nor invisible. The dead are an 'actual absence' who reveal themselves to him with a 'steady gaze' (192, added emphasis). Because the dead embed themselves in the living, the scale of one person's story is always larger than convention comfortably holds. The novel relates the

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<sup>81</sup> 'Umkhonto we Sizwe' means 'spear of the nation' and was the armed wing of the African National Congress.

labour involved in the task of telling David's story through a narrator who is opinionated, interventionist, exasperated and also seduced by her subject. The contentious relationship between David and the narrator is a result of his strenuous strategies to try to contain his burgeoning story. One reading of David's Story is that its subject is how to determine the boundaries of the human, since the living are traversed by the desires and intentions of the dead.

In the novel the living, too, are permeable to one another. Visions of love and betrayal move between human bodies, enter and 'take root within [them]' (Wicomb 2000: 180). Dulcie, a fellow guerilla and the woman whom David loves, is captured and brutally tortured. Every day she is brought close to death but not killed; 'instead they rely on her being driven to do it herself' (179). To survive, after her torturers leave, Dulcie envisions her own death, comes close to it but, outside her torturers' control, chooses to live. Even in this 'supernatural' act of will, the novel reminds us that human beings, both at their strongest and their most vulnerable, remain open to one another (180). Part of her vision comes to Dulcie from outside herself; 'she would hear a voice repeating the name of Chapman's Peak' (*ibid.*). While she and David never again speak, Dulcie's vision of death later manifests itself in the manner of his suicide.<sup>82</sup> David's Story, in this reading, tells of a reality in which all histories are potentially available simultaneously, because the living are a memorial for the dead. The novel articulates the problem of burial. The most moving death in the novel does not result in burial. Rituals of interment with their conventions of finality, the novel suggests, do not fit the reality in which the dead continue to communicate directly with the living. Instead, David's death enacts a dream in another body, one more in a series of connections across the permeable boundary of the human.

How does death speak in Muslim burial? Before engaging the historical and contemporary meanings of Muslim burial, I examine the compelling recent examination by David Bunn (2002) of meanings attendant to grave-sites during the colonial era in the

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<sup>82</sup> The human capacity to be open to one another in death and life is a subject I take up again in Chapter Seven.

eastern part of the Cape. Reading Xhosa, Zulu, Khoi and settler graves, Bunn traces the process through which the initially separate languages of memorial in settler and Nguni graves start to resonate with one another in the context of conflict and displacement during the colonial period. Through vertically-oriented, visible settler graves, Bunn confirms that '[g]raveyards were an important visual analogue of the idea of white settlement itself' (61).

On the other hand, Nguni graves had an entirely different relationship with visibility, relying less on visibility and were instead 'a domain of performative inscription, in sharp contrast to the writerly and specular habits of the settlers' (62). What was read by settlers as abandonment of the dead body, or a dispersed and disordered marking of the grave, was, in fact, a relation to burial that did not rely on 'visible monumentality' to signal the significance of the ritual (66). Instead, its meaning was inscribed in topography; the grave was 'literally, a matter of communal memory, rehearsed in oral poetry' (66). Bunn's reading here of the different languages of burial is useful for reading representations of the different languages of memorial in Muslim burial in the Cape colony.

Having examined recent artistic and critical engagements with death and burial, I now turn to a description of a Muslim funeral in the memoir Our Generation by the South African journalist Zubeida Jaffer (2003). Not everyone who potentially fell within its ambit participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's rituals of visibility. Among those who did not participate was the family of Imam Abdullah Haron, the revered Muslim leader and activist who was arrested on 28 May 1969 and, after one hundred and thirty three days in prison, murdered in detention on 27 September 1969 (Tayob 1999: 54; Jaffer 2003:69). Imam Haron, who presided at Al Jaamia Mosque in Stegman Road in Claremont, was progressive in his vision of Islam as well as in politics (Tayob 1999: 54). The reckless exercise of power by the state at the time is evident in its proforma explanation for the Imam's extensively bruised body at the time of his death: he 'had accidentally fallen down a flight of stairs' (*ibid.*). In Our Generation Zubeida describes the funeral:

We stood on the [Groote Schuur] hospital premises that bordered the Muslim cemetery. In the distance, I saw thousands upon thousands of men<sup>83</sup> winding their way behind a funeral bier bearing the Imam's body. ... They had walked about twenty kilometres from City Park stadium in Athlone where the funeral was held, to the cemetery in Salt River. By choosing to walk that distance, they had found the only legitimate way they could to voice their outrage. ...

At about 8:30p.m. that evening, I was splashing water over my feet before going to bed when I felt the house shaking. At first I thought it was a big truck passing by on Ottery Road. ... But then I heard my dad shouting that we had to get out of the house. I dashed barefoot through the front door and onto the pavement. The earth was shaking ... Like many others, [my father] believed that the earth shook that night because it had to receive the imam's body and that God was showing his anger at this great injustice. That was the last time I had seen so huge a crowd' (Jaffer 2003: 69).

Two matters are notable here. Firstly, that the rituals of a Muslim burial can articulate both religious and social meanings. This funeral is still remembered by many Muslims today, as Jaffer testifies, as a nexus of the two. Secondly, the distinction between the different types of descriptions of Muslim burials that open the chapter - Angas and Dodd on the one hand, and Kozain and Jaffer, on the other - lies in the way the crowd is perceived, whether as absent, as subsumed in the picturesque, or as the central, reverberating image of Muslim burial.<sup>84</sup> Jaffer's memoir reveals that by walking en masse the mourners both observe a religious ritual, and are aware that their massed bodies articulate their political resistance and 'outrage'.

How else might Muslim burial be seen? As indicated above, in his commentary 'On the Malays of Cape Town' in *The Kafirs Illustrated*, Angas renders the prayers and rituals of a Muslim funeral into the authenticating details of the picturesque. Other meanings, however, elude the picturesque. Many of the Muslim burial sites in Cape Town dating from the era of slavery (which ended eleven years before Angas's book was published) are also kramats - the graves of Muslim slaves, leaders and teachers. This is not unusual since burials of other Muslims often take place near the graves of prominent leaders (Murray 2001: online). The kramats circle the Cape in twenty different sites on the

<sup>83</sup> Aneez Salie (1994) quantifies this number as forty thousand.

<sup>84</sup> In anticipation to the analysis of the Pagad images in Chapter Six, it is notable that two features of the Pagad stories is the prominence of the singular figure of the masked Muslim man and the view of the massed crowd.

Peninsula and four just outside, and according to oral tradition in the Muslim community, form a protective 'circle of Islam' around the Cape (Jaffer 1996: 11). Today, these burial places, which are marked in various ways ranging from being draped with simple cloths to impressive buildings erected in the twentieth century, are incorporated as visible signs of culture into a renewed picturesque discourse in the service of tourism, flattening history into consumable signs.<sup>85</sup>

However, the kramats also have meanings that are less visible. They are places of particular religious significance in the Sufist-influenced Islam of the Cape and still structure the movement of people over the Cape landscape in patterns of visiting, prayer and ritual (Tayob 1999). People pay their respects at the kramats by praying there and at Easter, camp at the kramat of Sheikh Yusuf at Faure (called by Vincent Kolbe the 'St Peters of kramats' (quoted in Dodd 2001: online ). As Tayob points out, even today, Cape Muslims visit the kramat at Faure before going on pilgrimage to Mecca (Tayob 1999: 23). As David Bunn notes of Nguni graves during the colonization of the Eastern Cape, while the kramats are interpreted within a 'writerly and specular' mode that highlights their visibility, they actually mark the landscape in a very different way, as 'performative inscription' of the topography of the Cape (2002: 62). David Chidester terms this a 'sacred geography' (quoted in Ingsoll 2003: 375). Crucially, the kramats demonstrate that Muslim burials have also shaped the meaning of landscape itself. As Noeleen Murray points out, numerous panoramic views of colonial Cape Town were produced from the site of Tana Baru ('New Place') on Signal Hill, the oldest Muslim cemetery in South Africa, thereby helping to shape the very conception of landscape in the Cape.

<sup>85</sup> The publication Guide to the Kramats of the Western Cape, ed. Mansoor Jaffer (1996), has a congratulatory message from the chief executive of Captour, the Cape Town tourism agency. The kramats are also a consistent feature of tourist websites on Cape Town. Originally published in the Mail and Guardian on 12 February 1999, Alex Dodd's article on the Signal Hill kramat also appears on the Internet under the category 'travel'. The 'One City, Many Cultures' theme in the Cape Times in 1999 became the 'One City, Many Cultures Festival' in 2000 and then the 'Cape Town Heritage' in 2001, and the Cape Town Festival in 2002. The contemporary examples demonstrate a problem of subject. The 'One City, Many Cultures' project of the Cape Times launched in February 1999 is an instance. While the project has an origin in the desire to overcome division and lack of knowledge, the fluid, complex shifting realities of human beings and identities are difficult to convey in the contained form and space of a newspaper series, which resort to the visible and discrete signs of culture has the danger of turning people and cultures into discrete and identifiable entities. I return to the One City, Many Cultures project in Chapter Six.

The kramats have become an important way to articulate a resistant role for Islam during slavery and colonialism - as well as, more recently, to the apartheid state. As Kolbe notes, '[w]hen Imam Harun was killed in detention another religious activist from the Anglican church, Basil Wrangmore, went up to that shrine on the mountain to fast in protest at the imam's death' (quoted in Dodd 1999: online).<sup>86</sup> When, just days before the April 1994 elections, Muslims celebrated the Tri-centenary of the arrival of Sheikh Yusuf at the Cape, the date proclaimed as the start of Islam in the colony, the 'high point of the celebration was a mass encampment around Shaykh Yusuf's tomb' (Tayob 1999: 23). Therefore, as the most publicly visible Muslim gravesites, kramats write Muslim presence onto the South African landscape in more than one sense.<sup>87</sup> The intensity of conviction in their own local presence is revealed in an inside joke among Muslims conveyed during an interview: 'Muslims in Cape Town think the Ka'aba is in the shadow of Table Mountain' (Jardine 2000: interview). This self-deprecating joke juxtaposes the Cape, the site of slavery and exile, with the Ka'aba, the symbolic centre of faith around which Muslims circle during the compulsory pilgrimage to Mecca, a remarkable act of transformation and claim to presence.

Burial, as distinguished from death, is an act of both finite and continuing meaning. To insert a body into the ground is to make of that ground a new, ritualised place. In Muslim rites, the body is interred directly into the soil, separated from it only by a white sheet. The intimacy of this body in burial is also a body interred in history. The burial of the body also means to declare, conclusively, an arrival; it is the 'final kind of homecoming' (Kozain 2000: interview). Gravesites are a motor of social cohesion and organization, as well as a node of meaning.<sup>88</sup> During the era of Dutch at the Cape, the visible practice of

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<sup>86</sup> I talk more about Imam Harun in a discussion of Zubeida Jaffer's memoir *Our Generation* (2003) elsewhere in this chapter.

<sup>87</sup> Tayob points out that these religious symbols have also been given social and political meaning. The mass celebrations at the Tri-centenary anniversary in 1994 were 'a significant indication of how Shaykh Yusuf had been adopted as a symbol of Muslim presence in the country and Islamic resistance to colonialism and apartheid' (1999: 23).

<sup>88</sup> In his discussion of settler graves in the Eastern Cape, Bunn notes that 'at a second order of remove, moreover, this sense of presence may also come to be associated with the political role of the dead citizen living on in the memory of the public. For this reason, many historically important graves become reembellished and elevated into monuments associated with the maintenance of civil society.' The

Islam was punishable by death (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 77; Tayob 1999: 24). Before mosques, burials offered the continuing nodes of meaning that generated and sustained a local meaning to Muslim lives. Prayers for burial, the numbers of people required, the dressing of the body, are evanescent but powerful forms of organization.<sup>89</sup> The mobility of such organization as well as the strict policing of observance means that not all graves were marked. Muslim graves are found in both visible and unmarked sites, a fact which inscribes the city in an alternative geography.<sup>90</sup>

### Irruptions

Amuck a. and adv. Also amock, amok, 1663. [ad. Malay] A frenzied Malay. To run amuck, to run viciously, frenzied for blood. Wild, or wildly. The Oxford Universal Dictionary on Historical Principles (1944)

Burial features often in representations of Islam since it is one of the ways in which the rituals of Muslim life become visible. Despite the familiarity of descriptions by Angus and Lady Duff Gordon, this particular form of ritual has not fully been subsumed into the picturesque. In fact, the occasional unsettling images associated with Islam in the Cape coalesce around the body, whether associated with food, crowds or burial.

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generative social role of burial sites is clear, since '[g]raves usually address civil society in the future tense' (2002: 61).

<sup>89</sup> While the examples are separated by access to political power, symbolic capital and military support, Bunn's discussion of the role of churches in organizing a public sphere for the newly arrived English 1820 settlers in the Eastern Cape shows how religion can organize the evanescent dimensions of social life: 'churches were particularly important in the regulation of the rhythms of visiting and gathering that make up the spatiotemporal experience of community' (2002: 58).

<sup>90</sup> Some recent discussions of death in South Africa: the discovery in 2003 of the largest burial site from the colonial era at Prestwich Street in Cape Town, the place where slaves and other poor people had been interred, which had previously been 'off the map' alerts us to the different landscape inscribed by the burials of the marginal (Ciraj Rassool, personal communication, 7 October 2003). The figure regarded as the founder of Islam in South Africa, Sheikh Yusuf, was buried originally in Faure, outside of Cape Town, where he spent his years in the Cape, but in 1705 his remains were returned to Indonesia and buried in Macassar (Da Costa and Davids 1994: 146). In Pages from Cape Muslim History (1994), Yusuf da Costa and Achmat Davids dispute the relocation of the remains of Sheikh Yusuf, saying that this would result in his grave at Macassar in Faure being 'false' (146). However, the thesis cited in Da Costa and Davids asserts this of the removal of the remains and reburial in Macassar, Indonesia (after which Macassar in the Cape was named). Citing David Chidester, Thomas Ingsoll similarly confirms that Sheikh Yusuf's remains were reburied in Indonesia (2003: 375). While researching notions of landscape and environment among workers in nature reserves in Cape Town, Louise Green encountered the story of the Tuan of Antonie's Gat. Green describes the narrative she encountered during her research as follows: As for the legend, ... a religious figure, perhaps an Imam, but also a political leader lived in the Simonstown area. He was in some trouble with the state but was highly regarded by the farmers who gave him a white horse to ride around on. He lived in a cave in what is now Cape Point nature reserve but after his death continued to return and preside over religious ceremonies of the family' (personal communication, 2002).

By the middle of the nineteenth century the dominant view of the 'Malays' in the Cape was that they were law-abiding, placid, and an asset to the Cape community.<sup>91</sup> As I showed above, this view was confirmed and amplified in picturesque views of Muslims in paintings and travellers' journals. However, beneath the placid surface of these representations other meanings lingered.<sup>92</sup> Muslim food retained this ambiguous sense of danger, as was shown by the habitual connection between Muslim food and poison alluded to above. In the nineteenth century, 'Khalifa' or 'ratiep' rituals in which adepts pierced their skin without apparently suffering pain were a further example; on the one hand, they were seen as entertaining spectacles that attracted fascinated attention from non-Muslims and on the other, as an engraving reproduced in Cape Town: the Making of a City (1998) indicates, the ritual also encapsulated fears of Muslims as 'alien, fanatical and potentially dangerous' (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 126).

As I show below, in 1886, in the context of municipal politics associated with the theme of public health and sanitation, the underside subsumed in the picturesque view of the 'Malay' emerged. On 17 January 1886 the view of the usually docile 'Malays' was severely disrupted in what have been termed 'the cemetery riots' (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 210).<sup>93</sup> With these protests, a view of 'Malays' as dangerous, insurrectionary and threatening erupted.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the discourse of 'sanitation' came increasingly to shape Capetonian politics, impacting both Black and white identities. The Cape Times, the weekly newspaper, the Lantern and the Cape Argus provided the site of

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<sup>91</sup> Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith report that this more positive notion was associated with the 'sober Malay' (1998: 128). The idea of Malay placidity is reflected in a report about 'the usually placid Moslems of the Peninsula', in the Cape Argus on 24 July 1965.

<sup>92</sup> The relation between the two views of Islam is generally not seen as one of duplicity. In other words, there is rarely an accusation that Muslims pretend to be placid and are actually hostile (though the fear of poisoned food comes close to this). Instead, it is assumed that Muslims reveal upon sight whether they are in the picturesque or threatening mode. This is different to the sense of the picturesque described by Bunn in the Eastern Cape, where a placid-seeming surface, standing for Nguni people resisting colonial displacement, is actually 'deeply menac[ing]': '[i]mplicit in the poem is a warning that the superficially picturesque encircling landscape is a place of deep menace.' (Bunn 2002: 61).

<sup>93</sup> See also Achmat Davids (1985), Vivian Bickford-Smith (1985), Elizabeth van Heyningen (1989) and Noeleen Murray (2001).

active and often heated exchanges around the issue of public health and sanitation. Between 1875 and 1882 the impetus to reform the public health infrastructure of Cape Town became associated with 'Englishness' (Bickford-Smith 1995: 45). In fact, as Bickford-Smith points out, '[s]anitation rhetoric became inextricably bound with the rhetoric of British imperialism' (50). Reactions to this discourse coalesced in new identities, allegiances and divisions among whites and Blacks in the city. In the shifting power relations between English and Afrikaans-speaking whites, the sanitation issue was used to draw lines of identity. This included the perception of shared sympathies between 'Malays' and Afrikaners in a 'Dirty' allegiance which resisted sanitation reform. This led to numerous editorials and 'vitriolic' letters to the press about the problem that 'Malays' were seen to pose to public health (Bickford-Smith 1995: 194). The perception on the part of Muslim readers that they were being baldly attacked in the press is evident in a letter to the Lantern from Abdol Soubeyan, who complained that Muslims were stereotyped as a sanitary threat (*ibid.*).

Bickford-Smith recounts the following version of events leading to the cemetery uprising on 17 January 1886. I follow this account with an analysis of newspaper reports of the events on that day. The Cape Town municipality responded to the long-standing sanitation debate by deciding to close cemeteries located within the boundaries of the city. The proposal was heavily resisted by the Dutch Reformed Church and by Muslims. A Muslim delegation led by Abdol Burns met with the colonial secretary J. Tudhope in November 1885 and secured a delay of one year in implementing the closures while an alternative site was sought. This agreement, however, was superseded by the response of the municipal authorities who refused permission for the proposed alternative sites and closed the urban cemeteries on 15 January 1886. On 17 January 1886 this order was contravened by a crowd of about three thousand Muslims, prominent among them Abdol Burns, who conducted a burial in Tana Baru, the Muslim graveyard on Signal Hill, in defiance of the closure. This act and the response by the authorities are what are known as the 'cemetery riots'. I proceed below to analyze the representations of the events in the Cape Times and Cape Argus between November 1885 to May 1886, and show how newspaper reports struggle to tell the story of the events of 17 and 18 January 1886

within the discourse of 'Oriental fanaticism', which appeared to be the only alternative to that of the picturesque.

The newspaper archives at the South African National Library show the lingering impact of the protests decades after their occurrence. In an article that appeared in 1950 as part of a regular series on the Malay Quarter, Lawrence Green included a piece on Abdol Burns and the uprising. Written two years after the election of the National Party, the headline of the piece reflects the heightened attention to 'race' of the time; 'Abdol Burns had a Scottish Father' (Green 1950: page not recorded). The article referred to an obituary for Burns in the Cape Argus of June 1898 which spoke admiringly of his leadership of the Muslim community. 'His speeches contained more solid sense than those of many persons better placed in life.' However, a negative note was struck in the 1898 obituary by memories of Burns' involvement in the 1886 protest: 'His one mistake was in leading the Moslem riots when Cape Town was startled to find that it might have to deal with Oriental fanaticism in the mass.' From the vantage point of the 1950 article, Green described the uprising as 'probably the only occasion in the history of Cape Town when the Malays rose in revolt.' Green continues:

A Malay child had died, and the Malays were on the march to their traditional burial ground. There were so many of them that Darling Street was filled with the oncoming funeral procession. Police arrived while the child was being buried. By this time the law-abiding Malays had become fanatics. Stones were thrown from stoeps and windows, the police retreated and were pursued and besieged in the police station (Green 1950: page not recorded).

The continuity of the language in Green's article with that of the 1898 obituary is evident. Examining the 1886 articles themselves, however, delivers the lesson of how inadequate the discourse of 'Oriental fanaticism' proved to the events it was attempting to describe.

The articles in the Cape Times and the Cape Argus discussed below show that religion was vital to understanding the dispute, and, simultaneously, that an over-concentration on religion obscured other, equally significant issues. The colonial authorities presented the matter as an attempt to engage with an 'obstinate' Muslim community about issues

pertaining to public health and sanitation.<sup>94</sup> In its dealings with Muslim delegations, the colonial secretary channelled discussion toward religious dogma. However, as I outline below, the newspaper reports show that a larger set of issues were at work in the exchanges between leaders in the Muslim community and the colonial authorities, since not only Muslims participated in the crowds which gathered on 17 January 1886.

An article called the 'The Malay burying-ground' in the Cape Times of 14 November 1885 reported on a deputation by twenty 'Malays' to the Colonial Secretary, Mr J. Tudhope. They presented their objection to the order to bury their dead at the 'great necropolis', the newly declared burying municipal burying-ground. Prior to the meeting with the colonial secretary, Abdol Burns, the leader of the Muslim delegation, emphasized that their approaches to the authorities had occurred in a 'just and constitutional manner' (quoted in Bickford-Smith 1995: 195). The Muslim community was aware that in the heated public discussion since 1875 about the sanitation issue their position could be cast as unreasonable and obstinate.

The article conveys the careful negotiations between the Colonial authority and Abdol Burns, the spokesman for the twenty 'Malays' in the delegation. Burns noted that Muslims had to reconcile the different municipal regulations and colonial laws regarding cemeteries. The emphasis by the Muslim delegation on observance of sanitation laws reflects the sensitivity to this issue after the vaccinations controversy during the 1882 outbreak of smallpox. A substantial part of the discussion concerns what constitutes the Orthodox practice of Islam. Both sides refer to practices in other parts of the world. At one point, the Colonial Secretary asks:

I understand there is a religious objection to carry your dead in vehicles. Now, I want to understand that. Is it an article of the Mohamedan faith, or merely an article of faith and a practice of the Malays in this country?

Burns replies:

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<sup>94</sup> *The resonances of the sanitation discourses are discussed in Elizabeth van Heyningen (1989a).*

it is stated in the Koran, and is an article of faith among all Mohamedans, that we should not carry our dead in any other way, except on our shoulders. I hope it is not an impertinent question I put to you, but the English translation of the Koran generally sold is incorrect. And if I translate from the Arabic one, will you believe it when I show it to you, Mr Tudhope?

Tudhope in turn responds, 'Oh, I quite believe you. But what is the practice in the heart of a big city in Mohamedan countries take, for instance, Constantinople?' Burns counters the Colonial Secretary's appeal to precedent elsewhere by showing that the local Muslim community too has its connections to the wider Muslim world:

there is an old gentleman, a member of this delegation, who has been in different parts of Turkey, where he remained six months, and he will answer your question. In Soutari and other places in Turkey the burial is precisely the same as that adopted by the Malays here.

Later in the newspaper article the Colonial Secretary is shown to connect religion to 'obstinacy', 'persistence' and death. 'Mr Burns, do not for one moment suppose I'm underrating your religious feelings. We all have our own religious feelings as strongly as you have.' Having stated the British tolerance for their religious beliefs, the newspaper reports that the Colonial Secretary placed the responsibility for the delay with the Muslims; 'it was really their own persistence' in fending off 'what they deem to be the evil day', which had deferred a resolution.<sup>95</sup> The shift from second person to third person indicates that this is reported speech by the newspaper. Instead, claimed the Secretary, 'they obstinately and persistently insisted upon that particular piece of ground at or near Lion's Rump and would have no other. After all this controversy it was very remarkable that no deaths should have occurred'. This connection between untrammelled feelings fueled by religion and danger is a theme that would continue to mark the official response and the media reports.

The protests occurred on 17 and 18 January 1886, and I examine in more detail newspaper articles from 18 and 19 January dealing with the matters. On the Monday following the illicit burial on Sunday 17 January, the Cape Argus headline is 'Lawless

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<sup>95</sup> In addressing other religious disputes regarding Islam, P. E. de Roubaix requested the assistance of the Ottoman empire who sent a jurist, Abu Bakr Effendi, to Cape Town in 1862 (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bieford-Smith 1998: 188).

funeral proceedings'. The article traces the municipal procedures for approving new cemeteries, and reports that:

Yesterday, however, the discontent amongst the Malays culminated in proceedings of the most threatening character. The quiet hours of the Sunday were disturbed by a gigantic funeral demonstration on the part of the Malays and coloured people, and by an attack on the police of the most reprehensible and disgraceful character.

The article describes the 'disturb[ance]' which caused residents in central Cape Town to be 'attracted from their dinner tables'. From their front doors and windows they saw 'a host of Malays marching ten or a dozen abreast, extending across and down the road as far as the eye could reach. They could not possibly have numbered less than 3000.' The report focuses on the size of the crowd, describing it as a 'multitude' and as an 'extraordinary multitude in regular procession'. Further detailing the lines of sight in the story, the article states that '[w]hite people were wholly in the dark' and moreover that 'the police also professed to be quite in the dark'. On this and other occasions in the article, the perspective of the writer of the article, the white population and the police are aligned. The writer takes recourse to a 'friendly talk with a prominent Malay' to find out the purpose of the gathering. The article reports in indirect speech that the procession is aimed at burying a child - pausing to give the corroborating detail that the child's parents live in Woodstock - 'in direct defiance of the edict of the government no matter at what cost'. The tone in the article then picks up urgency:

As far as can be ascertained the row began by some white men who were with the police being hustled about. Those in their turn, sharing resentment by pushing one of the offenders back. One well-known tradesman was in danger of getting very severely injured, being surrounded and set upon by a number of Malays when the police got to him and dragged him back. This was sufficient as a signal to several enraged fanatics and some coloured people, who were evidently in the temper for a row. Men and women held stones in their hands and aimed them with all their force at the police, who were compelled to break-up and - after a slight resistance as the stones were coming quick and fast from hundreds of hands above the cemetery wall and stoops and houses - wisely beat a hasty retreat.

In accounting for what happened, the newspaper reports show interesting tensions and contradictions at the linguistic level. Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith note the violence that resulted from the protests. A policeman was stabbed and his jaw broken

(1998: 210). The explanation for the violence focuses on 'Malays', among whom 'several enraged fanatics' attack the police. Nonetheless, the presence of non-Muslims is only partially explained. They are described as 'some coloured people ... evidently in the temper for a row', and 'sympathisers' to the Malays. Before recounting the stoning of the police, the article describes the gathering as 'a gigantic funeral demonstration on the part of the Malays and coloured people'. The explanation of 'enraged fanaticism' does not account for the presence and participation of non-Muslims in the march and stonings.

The report in the Cape Times on 19 January takes such unexplained associations further and their presence precipitates a problem of representation. The beginning of the article conveys the continuing apprehension in the city about the significance of Sunday's events, and an anticipation of further disturbance. 'There was a kind of suppressed feeling of uneasiness generally prevailing, which seemed to indicate a coming storm.' In the uneasy atmosphere, the impact of rumour and speculation is acknowledged. 'All sorts of absurd rumours were flying over the town, reports of policemen found dead'.

The morning passed without anything happening, and there was nothing to lead to the belief that the Malays were gathering. In fact, as the morning wore on, the small groups of them that had collected at the street corners disappeared altogether. At the Malay cemetery itself, all was quiet, not a soul. At about three o'clock, masses of the Malay men the great majority of them being armed with formidable knopkerries came up from the direction of Waterkant street and joined those already assembled. At this time and up to within an hour or so from it, there could not have been far short of 3000 Malays and coloured people in front of the cemetery. The object of their assembling seemed unaccountable, but it was stated that they came thither to watch the burial of the 'old Irish lady'.

From this point in the article, the weight of mutual expectations encounter each other - from the white inhabitants and the police (refracted through the perspective of the writer of the article) that 'the Malays were gathering', and from the 'Malays' that the Roman Catholics were about to do what they were prohibited from doing. During the waiting, the actions of the crowd toward passing traffic and the police are described:

when the cars and other vehicles were allowed to pass either cheers or hoots were raised for the occupants according to the whim of the crowd. Mr Shaw [the police commissioner] rode up and down. No attempt was made to molest him, but the crowd in front of the horse sometimes impeded his progress for a few minutes. Mr Shaw behaved well under the greatest pressure, notwithstanding the

provocation, given he did not as 19 out of every 20 would have done, give the fellow the whip.

While trying to maintain the seriousness of the situation in the face of increasingly bathetic details, the bewilderment caused by the crowd's behaviour is manifested when the writer in the article lapses into the viewpoint of '19 out of 20' who would have 'give[n] the fellow the whip'. Returning to a more conventional matter, the article points out that 'in the meanwhile, several of the Cape Town citizen volunteers came up in plain clothes and mingled with the Malay people ready in case of necessity to assist the police.' However, further strain is placed on an ability to maintain the sense of seriousness about the situation when:

some police in uniform were ordered to keep the centre of the road clear of traffic. They attempted to do so, but being only three men, were unable to effectively carry out the order. In the course of pushing back the people, or rather, politely requesting them to go back they were addressed with the foulest of foul language and one of them at least was kicked on his shin. In this trying ordeal, the constables displayed the utmost good temper.

After all, nothing happens:

It being eventually discovered that no old Irish lady was to be buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery, the crowd began to disperse a little before five o'clock, and at about a quarter to six had disappeared altogether.

The article on 19 January was written in the light of expectations generated by the previous day's 'excitement', viewed as the manifestation of 'fanaticism'. Yet, in the newspaper article, the crowd refuses to obey its narrative of 'fanaticism', presenting a problem of representation. The narrative power of 'a gathering storm' and of a crowd 'no less than 3000 strong' is finally undercut within the article when the tone shifts from the 'excitement on Sunday' to 'a kick on the shin' and the 'foulest of foul language'. The actions of the crowd are at once excessive and absurd. Burial is here a site for the eruption of representation, and then its deconstruction.

#### What do the 'Malays' want?

To viewers of the protests, burial appeared to cause a collectivity to coalesce, its meanings apparently coherent and unified. As the opening quotations in this section

suggest, the central issue that arises from the sight of Muslim burial is not so much the sight of people silently carrying a coffin as it is the meanings associated with large numbers of people seen together at any one time. The picturesque view focuses on the single person or a manageable group, but once the number of people rises, anxiety follows. This concern about the dangerous possibilities of large numbers of Black people recalls uncertainties dating to the days of slavery, when insurrection was a 'paranoic fear' among slave-owners (Hall 2000: 24). In 1754 a slave code based on the Batavian model was instituted to curb the perceived dangers of the slave population, which at the time outnumbered the settlers (Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith 1998: 60). In an attempt to 'curb plots', the code stipulated the numbers of slaves that could be together, and those slaves found to be in town or on Table Mountain were required to carry 'passes' signed by their masters (63). Thus the massed cemetery protests called on an unsettling history.

The protests were all the more unsettling because they threatened to elude the label of religion and become an incipient point of convergence for Black Cape Town. However, it was not possible to articulate this fear in the discourse of the 'amuck Malay', so the language of the newspaper reports simply collapses into bathos. In the wake of the protests, the response of the colonial authority was to shift its recognition of Muslim leadership from the people who had led the cemetery deputations to religious leaders, thereby consolidating its attempt to cast the issue as solely a religious one. Yet, the contradiction that 'Coloureds' are reported to be part of the crowds remains, and the crowd eludes the resolution solely of religion.

### Conclusion

The disruptive effect of burial on the picturesque, and even on the language of Oriental fanaticism, recalls the quotation from Rustom Kozain at the start of this section on witnessing a crowd of three thousand people at a Pagad funeral. The sight of a large number of people engaged in this singular task silences, exceeds and seems to embody images of Islam.

In this chapter I have given a reading of Muslim burial sites, situated in a context of discussions of the meanings of other colonial gravesites and earlier discussions of Muslim burials. In doing so I have shown how the placement of Islam in the picturesque occurs and fails through the sight of a Muslim burial. I have given a reading of newspaper reports of the famous burial uprisings in 1886, which I have shown continued to resonate into the mid-century in newspaper representations of Islam. In the case of the 1886 protests, I have argued, the discourse of the picturesque and its underside, the vision of 'Oriental fanaticism', fail because they are unable to accommodate the complexity of motivations beyond religion, as well as the possibility of a larger Black collectivity. Structured by expectations of violence, the language of the newspaper articles subsides into bathos when the crowd does not fulfil them.

Rustum Kozain's memory of a Pagad march recalls the unsettling meanings associated with a large, purposeful crowd. Historically, in the media the alternative to the picturesque, encapsulated in images of food, was violence. I have shown in this chapter how images of burial can subvert the picturesque, both by revealing the underside of the discourse, and also by undercutting binary structures of placidity and fanaticism.

In the next chapter I consider the meanings of Pagad in relation to patterns of images discussed above. In the aftermath of the Pagad controversy, when the Cape Times sought another discourse with which to speak of religion and difference, it turned once again to food, during the 'One City, Many Cultures' series in 1999.<sup>96</sup> I proceed next to discuss newspaper representations of Pagad in August 1996.

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<sup>96</sup> For writing on Muslim food in South Africa, see Sindre Bangstad (2001) and Davids (1990). Also see my 'Everybody's mother was a good cook' (2001), in which I engaged with discussions about gender, generation and change in Muslim food.



# Night of bloody execution

WAR between alleged drug lords and drug vigilantes escalated last night when a leading underworld figure was executed in a Salt River street. Staff reporter ROGER FRIEDMAN reports.

ONE of the most notorious figures in the Western Cape underworld, Rashaad Staggie, was shot in the head, set alight, and then had secreted bullets pumped into him last night by militant-drug vigilantes as he lay twitching in a van.

He lay in the street — critically-wounded — for more than an hour before being driven away in a dark van, his blood flowing out of him, with fire extinguishers used.

Staggie — who with his brother Rabbid was a leader of the Hard Livings gang which has been active in the Cape Flats and Boland — took 25 minutes to die. Handguns were handily applied in his direction from across the street as members of the crowd layed for his blood. He appeared to be wearing a bullet-proof vest.

Members of the police stood by, apparently passively.

Early this morning, both the police and senior figures of the underworld predicted an all-out war between People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad) and vigilantes.

Police Superintendent John Steynberg said: "I don't think of the repercussions of this." He said the police were at times "physically restrained" by Pagad members from taking them to stop Staggie's slaying.

These members are no longer to be considered as of crime, but criminals themselves," he said.

After a house in London Road belonging to Staggie was fired on hundreds of times by fans of Pagad and their supporters, who had set in a convoy stretching kilometres down the street prayer at the Gatesville Mosque.

Last night's incident was the most recent in a series of attacks on alleged drug merchants over the past two weeks. Last Thursday night, Pagad fired a Hanover Park house, threatened the occupants with death and set a militant alight. Pagad members claimed they were fired on last night, been within the house.

At least 30 people were shot, among them a priest and photographer from The Burger and his military leader Ali Mula named Ali "Piran" Parez, who was rushed to a doctor after being hit by a pump-action shotgun into the house at 1000 hours.

Parez said he was the first person shot, wounded in the chest just above his bullet-proof jacket. After this an angry Staggie, who was evidently not in London Road during the house shooting, was also gunned at the crowd "kicking the rear of Lower Main and London Roads, demanding to know why the house had been shot.

Then he was recognised. "What's your name, what's your name?" the crowd insisted. "It's Staggie, we've got Staggie."



They surrounded the van and jostled with each other to pull Staggie from his driver's seat. At this point a man pulled out his firearm and shot Staggie in the side of the head. He slumped to his seat, then fell into the street.

He lay in the centre of Lower Main Road, face-down. Motorists, at the scene to hear those surrounded by the earlier shooting, tried to keep the crowd back. But Staggie was hit with a shotgun bullet, kicked and trampled on. Several rounds were fired into his inert body — then he was set alight with a petrol bomb.

Miraculously, he got up again — burbling — and managed to stumble a few metres down London Road. Several more rounds were fired into him before a fire-extinguisher was used to douse the flames. And then about 30 shots were fired at him.

The Muslim Judicial Council received an anonymous threat last week that mosques would be attacked.

Pagad considers itself to be in the throats of a jihad, a holy war. Leaders declare themselves and their followers more than willing to die for the cause. Their stated aim is to kill all drug merchants.

After returning to the Gatesville Mosque last night, Pagad members declared last night's operation a victory.

Awaken in Pretoria at midnight, Minister of Justice Mr Dullah Omar was informed of the mob-killing, but chose not to comment.



## MORE REPORTS AND PICTURES — PAGE TWO

PICTURES: BENNY GOOL

LAST MOMENTS: A bloodied and dying Mr Rashaad Staggie battles to rise to his feet after being set alight. Moments later bullets were pumped into his body and Staggie collapsed in the gutter.

VAIN BID: A member of Metro Rescue Services checks Mr Rashaad Staggie's condition after using a fire extinguisher to put out the flames that had engulfed the gang leader.

LAST STEPS: Rashaad Staggie had already been shot several times at point-blank range in the van when a petrol-bomb landed (right) on his seemingly lifeless body, prompting, at last, faltering steps.

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# Pagad plans huge rally on 'D-Day'

## Muslim leaders back campaign

MUSLIM LEADERS have expressed support for the anti-drugs and anti-gang crusade of the People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), but have not mentioned the killing of gang leader Roshan Slaggie in their views.

Slaggie was shot and set on fire, allegedly after a heated exchange with PAGAD members, including women, youths and a number of men brandishing firearms.

The anti-drug and gangsterism campaign, as well as the incident which resulted in the death of one of the Cape's most notorious drug merchants, was discussed at a meeting in the offices of the Muslim Judicial Council.

The group issued a statement which criticised the government, and particularly the police, for not effectively dealing with the growing drug industry in "our areas".

The statement went on to say: "With the full understanding of the historical, social and emotional state of the processes, the Muslim, African and Asians, who make up the bulk of the Shari'ah (Islamic law) does not condone that people take the law into their own hands."

According to a series of photographs published this week, Slaggie had his hands in the air to show he was unarmed when the first shot hit him in the neck. Photographs also show how Slaggie staggered to his feet and collapsed when he was set on fire after being repeatedly shot.

The standoff between the militant Pagad and Cape Town drug lords continues as plans are made for a mass anti-drug rally.

MOUSI MGSASHE  
Safford

MORE than 500 members of the militant anti-drug organisation Pagad met last night under tight security to adopt an agenda for a mass rally planned for tomorrow.

The meeting at the African Technical College in Wynberg came two days before D-Day—the start of People Against Gangsterism and Drugs' ultimatum to drug dealers to sign their names.

Although the media was prohibited from attending, a SATURDAY Argus reporter who had made prior arrangements for an interview with one of Pagad's leaders, was allowed in after strict security checks by armed and masked men.

The gathering follows a week of violence in which Cape Town gang leader Roshan Slaggie was killed by Pagad members, and a Pagad member was killed in an apparent revenge attack by the Hard Livings gang.

The objective of tomorrow's mass meeting is to mobilise support for Pagad's crusade against drugs.

The rally is to be held in Athlone, but the exact venue will only be announced close to the event.

One speaker described the planned rally as "crucial" in determining the organisation's "way forward in the drive to clean our society of drugs and all imperfections".

After some misunderstanding about the plans for the rally, the overwhelming majority at last night's gathering voted in favour of the proposed agenda.

After the vote, one speaker said Pagad believed in democracy. It



ON THE MARCH: Some of the Manenberg residents who marched yesterday in protest over ongoing wars between Pagad and the Hard Livings gang.

was important that the energies expended in the discussion around the agenda be used in the struggle to build a democratic society free of drugs, he said.

The media was severely criticised for allegedly misrepresenting Pagad's image and for claiming that the organisation was a fundamentalist vigilante group.

But one speaker said: "We should not be afraid to be called vigilante

or fundamentalist."

"A fundamentalist is someone who believes in Allah. I therefore regard myself as one."

He was loudly cheered.

The speaker said a vigilante was someone who sought to restore law, order, security and peace in a situation where those who had been entrusted with this task had failed miserably.

Pagad's spokesman Faruk Jaffer

later said the speaker was an unnecessarily representing the views of the organisation.

The organisation was a broad front for the community and Muslim organisations that were "sick and tired" of drugs, Mr Jaffer said.

A surprise guest at the meeting was an Afrikaner from Fynn who said he had been invited to attend. He was in full support of the organisation's programme because it had

the courage to take police action.

At the end of the meeting he was seen talking to a group of men about a "sovereign and independent republic of the indigenous peoples".

He was harshly rebuked by another man who wanted to know what he meant by "indigenous people", adding that "settlers could not claim to be indigenous in South Africa".

Mr Jaffer was ready for his planned interview with SATURDAY

Argus when he was taken from the meeting in a hurry with other leaders for security reasons.

The lynching of Roshan Slaggie sparked fears of an escalating war between the members of many Muslim organisations and rampant Cape Town gangs. Throughout the week police conducted raids on gang strongholds and increased their presence at possible flash-points.

Figure 7.  
Mgxashe, M. 1996. Pagad plans huge rally on 'D-Day'. Saturday Weekend Argus (10/11 August 1996): 3. [Doug Pithey, photographic credit]





Figure 8.  
Dwayisa, T. 1996. Shotgun Sentinel. Cape Times, (12 August): 2.







## CHAPTER SIX

### PAGAD AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE LOCAL

*Photography is worse than eloquence: it asserts that nothing is beyond penetration, nothing is beyond confusion, and nothing is veiled.*

- Paul Morand quoted in Alloula *The Colonial Harem* 1986: 37.

The first issue of the Cape Times appeared on the morning of 27 March 1876 and since then the paper has been published continuously for one hundred and twenty eight years. The coverage on 5 August 1996 was called 'the most dramatic front page in the long history of the paper' (Spencer-Smith quoted in Vongai 1996: 2). That page marked the emergence of the group People against Gangsterism and Drugs, or Pagad, into national and international prominence. I discuss the mechanisms of their presence in the media in this chapter, and show how images associated with Pagad of masking, violence and militancy interrupt the tradition of the picturesque through which Muslims have traditionally been visible in South Africa.

On Sunday 4 August 1996 after a march by supporters of Pagad to his house in London Road, Salt River (near central Cape Town), Rashaad Staggie, the alleged co-leader of the drug and criminal gang the Hard Livings was publicly and violently murdered. The consequences of this act, as well as other actions connected with Pagad, would come to dominate newspaper headlines in Cape Town for the rest of the 1990s. The images on the front page of the Cape Times on Monday 5 August 1986 (see Figure 6, p. 135), and newspaper articles about Pagad in succeeding weeks, struck me not only as a story about Pagad, but as a new idiom for representing Islam in South Africa. To explore this, I undertake an analysis of one week of coverage from 5 to 12 August 1996 in the two Cape Town newspapers, the Cape Times and the Cape Argus (supplemented by selected articles from the national and international media) and connect the images in these reports to an international media discourse on Islam.<sup>97</sup> In the course of the chapter I consider the

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<sup>97</sup> The Cape Times and Cape Argus (known in 1996 as The Argus), while both owned by Independent Newspapers, have distinct identities. The Cape Times is positioned as a quality paper, with its emphasis on

major patterns of visual and verbal images that characterized the Pagad news-stories. I show that the figure of the masked man became a primary marker of the stories and examine the history of images of masked Eastern men. Importantly, I supplement my analysis and historical research with insights from interviews with South African journalists from radio, television, community radio and the press, as well as academics, conducted between 2000 and 2003, many of whom had written on Pagad.

Next, I give an assessment of the significance of the events and review the academic literature on Pagad. In the mid- to late 1990s developments associated with Pagad changed the South African political and legal landscape, having signal importance for the media in Cape Town, and also reverberating nationally in the arenas of culture, religion and geopolitics. For the media, the case generated steep challenges, including reporting a story in which journalists faced hostility and physical danger. The Pagad stories also raised complex questions of representations of violence, the post-apartheid economic system and Islam. In addition, during the investigation and prosecution of the murder of Rashaad Staggie the prosecutor in the Western Cape, Frank Kahn, subpoenaed journalists under Section 205 of the Criminal Procedures Act in an attempt to secure access to their notes and photographs (Botes 1996: online). In the apartheid era Section 205 was used to coerce the media to reveal the identities of people at anti-apartheid marches (Fisher 1999: online), and after protests by the editor of the Cape Times, journalists' organizations and South Africa's Freedom of Expression Institute, the government modulated, though did not end, its use of Section 205, and withdrew some of its subpoenas (Botes 1996: online).

In the legal arena the events associated with Pagad precipitated the revision of the South African Anti-Terrorism Bill of 2002. The impact of 11 September 2001 is also evident in the form of this contested Bill, as I discuss in Chapter Seven (Bruce 2003: online). The international ramifications of Pagad's actions can be seen in the declaration by the United States State Department that the group was an 'emerging terrorist organization' (Pillay 2003: 292). In August 2004 Pagad was the subject of speculation about plans for acts of

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upper income readers indicated by the inclusion of Business Report. The Cape Argus, which has the higher circulation of the two, is more populist, often characterized by a 'sensationalistic' tone (Green 2000: 10).

international terrorism in South Africa, a theory that was rejected by the South African government (Sapa 2004: online). So it is for a number of reasons that Pagad compels attention. However, it is on the question of representation that my discussion below focuses.

The importance for the media of the events around Pagad can be judged by a number of indicators. The Cape Times sold out on 5 August and its sales increased markedly in the weeks that followed (Fisher 1999: online). According to the interviews I conducted with

journalists, attention to Islam in the local media expanded to unprecedented levels. Newsroom discussions and practices for journalists were dramatically affected by the Pagad events (Aranes 2003: interview). For his photographs of the murder of Rashaad Staggie, Cape Times news-photographer Benny Gool won the Fuji Press Award and, with Roger Friedman, received the 1997 South African Award for Courageous Journalism from the Ruth First Memorial Trust for the series of stories they reported on Pagad (Samie 2003: online).

However, Gool also received numerous death threats as a result of the photographs and was the subject of six subpoenas by the government between 1996 and 2003 in attempts to secure his negatives for use in the prosecutions for Staggie's death (Samie 2003: online).<sup>98</sup> In interviews, journalists confirm that these stories are among the most significant, and difficult, they have covered. The Cape Times also suffered severe criticisms of its coverage by its own readers, and a call for a boycott of the newspaper by Pagad (Van Zilla 2003: interview). As a result of such criticism, threats against its journalists, heightened tensions in the city, and the phenomenon of 'urban terror' in the late 1990s, in 1999 the Cape Times initiated the 'One City, Many Cultures' project, in which it attempted to craft a new way of talking about difference. I discuss this initiative after my analysis of the initial Pagad coverage.

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<sup>98</sup> Gool's professional career spans over twenty years as one of the ground-breaking Black photographers in Cape Town. His work includes an unprecedented documenting of seven years in the life of Nelson Mandela. However, it tends to be dominated by the prominence of the Staggie photographs (Samie 2003: online). In an interview Gool said after the photographs 'my life has never been the same' (Gondwe 2001: online). One additional indication of the impact of the Pagad story on journalism itself is that Francois Nel (1998), author of a South African textbook for journalists, discussed the subject of the ethics of photojournalism by using the Cape Times' coverage of the murder of Rashaad Staggie.

The Pagad issue has been the subject of extensive debate in the disciplines of Criminology, Military Intelligence and Security Studies, Religious Studies, and History.<sup>99</sup> Studies of crime, gangs and vigilantism were spurred by the rise, methods and initial popular support for Pagad, having been stimulated by the widening evidence of vigilantism in South Africa such as the growth of Mapogo a Mathamaga, a group in Alexandria near Johannesburg that at one point claimed fifty thousand members.<sup>100</sup> The dynamics, politics and evolution of Pagad are compelling topics that I do not address extensively here.<sup>101</sup> The subject of the representation of Pagad, and the impact of the group's visibility on images of Islam, has received less widespread attention. Of interest to my discussion are papers by Suren Pillay on representations of Pagad's association with Islam, Shamil Jeppie on the images of Islam which Pagad itself used in its rhetoric and actions, and Alex Dodd on gender. I integrate their insights into the analysis of the newspaper articles below.

In his essay 'Experts, Terrorist, Gangsters: Problematizing Public Discourse on a Post-apartheid Showdown' (2003) Suren Pillay demonstrates that the Pagad stories were constrained by established, and limited, South African discourses on gangs and Islam. I focus on the latter. Reviewing the coverage of Pagad in selected newspapers as well as academic writings in Criminology and Political Science, Pillay finds that many of these characterize Pagad 'as representative of a homogeneous Islam and as the local incarnation of a global "Islamic threat"' (283). This perception of homogeneity masked

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<sup>99</sup> See, among others, Anneli Botha (2001) *The Prime Suspects? The metamorphosis of Pagad*; Farid Esack (1996) *PAGAD and Islamic radicalism: taking on the state?*; and Abdulkader Tayob (1996) *Jihad against drugs in Cape Town : a discourse-centred analysis*.

<sup>100</sup> The sensitivity about using the term vigilante is indicated by the strenuous and at times violent objection to the designation by Pagad members and supporters. I use the word because I locate the developments around Rashaad Staggie's death and other actions associated with Pagad to the increased resort to vigilantism by a number of groups in South Africa. On this phenomenon see B. Dixon and L. Johns (2001) *Gangs, Pagad and the State: Vigilantism and Revenge Violence in the Western Cape*; and Lars Buur and Stephen Jensen (2003) 'Vigilantism and the Policing of Everyday Life in South Africa.

<sup>101</sup> Sindre Bangstad's review of academic studies of Pagad found that there are two types of studies of the group: one strand assesses their ethos to be derived from machismo and gun consciousness, and the second judges their orientation to be derived from Islamism (2002: 10).

the fact that the group was highly distinctive in relation to Islam in South Africa. Jeppie (1998) and Moosa (1996) both note the lack of consensus about Pagad within the country's Muslim community. Moreover, the organization itself is extremely heterogeneous, with its elements often in tension and shifting in influence internally. Pillay notes the way changing entities within Pagad articulated signs associated with Islam, asserting that:

[t]he organization is made up of a diverse range of competing elements. Among these elements are contested meanings of Islam, its role in a plural society, party-political legitimacy, a normative disdain for drug abuse and gangsterism, and elements of gung-ho machismo. It is also one narrative within a wider range of Islamic narratives, which are being constructed using global and local symbols, which produce specific and hybridised Muslim identities. ... It presents us with an assemblage of tensions which are intensely internal and local, while at the same time being external and global (2003: 304).

Pillay's analysis connects the internal ethos and the 'competing elements' of the group to the way they used Islamic icons in their rhetoric. This amounted to a performance of Islam constructed out of diverse signs and used in often contradictory ways.

Unlike the resistance movements of the 1980s, Pagad produced relatively few material artifacts such as handouts, posters and pamphlets (Jeppie 1998: online). Aside from its meetings and mass marches by its supporters, Pagad's communicative repertoire occurred almost exclusively at the level of image and rhetoric in the media. Jeppie argued that the group benefited particularly from access to the audience of the Muslim community radio station, Radio 786 (*ibid.*). He terms the complex performance of Islam that Pagad delivered a 'bricolage' of Islamic iconography (Jeppie 2000: interview). This bricolage was constituted of Afghan caps, checked red or black Arafat scarves and headbands marked by calligraphy - items drawn from 'the distant and disparate worlds of Middle Eastern conflicts' (Jeppie quoted in Pillay 2003: 300).

Pagad used such 'fragments from the global' not only to create local meanings for its actions, but also to convey a sense of solidarity with a global community of Islam (Pillay 2003: 300). Out of a combination of Islamic symbols, Pagad constructed a highly specific local identity, which was in turn was given meaning in the context of the group's

actions. To Jeppie, Pagad's rhetoric was itself reductive. In its bricolage of Islamic images '[t]he complex tribal, civil, and political contradictions of Afghanistan, Palestine, south Lebanon, and Iran are reduced to a single issue' (quoted in Pillay 2003: 300). The relation of the international to the local was therefore central to the construction of Pagad's image, and in the process, a distinctively new, local vision of Islam arose in the South African media. The challenge of understanding this performance, and discerning between Muslims, Islam and Pagad fell to a South African media schooled in a tradition of constricted reporting on Islam (Pillay 2003: 291).

The relation of Pagad and the media was one of intense and often hostile interaction. In some ways, the group itself was a creature of the media, partly because it learned the advantages of playing to the stereotypes that drew the most attention. On the other hand, Jeppie notes that the media both consciously and unconsciously colluded with Pagad's strategy by giving extensive coverage to some of the group's actions (others were overlooked, as I show using Dodd's article below). Media attention to Pagad, which drove up sales, was at times marked by 'sensationalist language' that conveyed 'a more extreme picture that the reality prevailing on the ground' (Jeppie 1998: online). This was combined with an inadequate analysis of its 'pastiche' of Islamic symbols (Pillay 2003: 300). In the use of symbols that were synecdoches of complex experiences one may conclude that Pagad and the media spoke the same grammar of Islam.<sup>102</sup>

The Pagad story occurred at a time during which newspapers were attempting to adjust to the post-apartheid political situation and reconfiguring newsroom practices that had catered largely to a white audience, while simultaneously meeting intensified market pressures. During apartheid and to some extent since, media ownership, audience profiles and the political sympathies of the press in South Africa were shaped by apartheid and highly racialized, as a result. Les Switzer notes that:

<sup>102</sup> The term 'grammar of motives' is used by Stuart Hall to explain how the media decontextualizes situations, isolating them from historical or institutional contexts and ascribing all motivations to an individual level. In this situation, Hall says, isolated signifiers are given immense importance, and 'an individual becomes an explanation' and 'the motor force of history' ('The Determinations of News Photographs 1981: 237).

[t]he established white press has been owned and controlled by whites, aimed at or intended for whites, concerned almost exclusively with the political, economic and social life of the white population, and consumed mainly by whites for most of [its] two-hundred year history (1997: 2).

When the transition from apartheid occurred, the media had to undergo its own transformation away from this history. During the transition, the new political order was sympathetic to international investment in the previously insulated South African media market. This entry of global capital into South African media, including ownership of local media companies and titles, inserted the country into the dynamics of globalized media with its emphasis on the market (Webster, 2002: 120). The impact of such market pressures substantially impacted the pace of transformation in the South African media, contradictorily giving the impression of changing modes of operation established during apartheid but also reinforcing the tendency towards conservative practices because of the imperative to draw a high income audience and a subsequent reduction in the amount of money spent on gathering news. As a senior journalist at a Cape Town newspaper I interviewed phrased it:

[i]n 1995 a foreign Irish national buys out Independent Newspapers. It was a deal ... welcomed from very high levels. ... It was not good for the newspaper ... The bottom dollar is the most important thing. Everybody got huge management titles [but] resources were taken away from the newsroom. ... When newsrooms are run as businesses and the bottom line ... you have a problem. So you get cheap staff, you cut corners, you don't spend working a day or two on a story. You simply go to a press conference, you ask a question, you don't do background research, you type up a four hundred-word story. Your four hundred-word story gets slashed to two hundred and fifty words because, as I said, in order to meet that bottom line you need to get ads (Anonymous 2003: interview).

Therefore, at exactly the time that the South African media encountered complex stories, the very structures through which the stories were told were placed under pressure. Despite this, Benny Gool notes the constriction of having to address an affluent audience in order to attract advertisers. Like other social configurations in South Africa, economic status is also shaped by 'race'. In Cape Town, this is confirmed by geographical distinctions. The divisions of the Group Areas Act, which forced separate 'races' to live in separate areas, continue to be manifested in the post-apartheid era. 'Most of the newspapers cater for the A/B income group in Camps Bay, Bishops Court and maybe the

more affluent coloured areas but certainly not for the black people' (Gool quoted in Gondwe 2001: online).

White editors and sub-editors and Black editors and journalists had different worldviews and experiences, and these jostled for attention in the newspapers. Gool testifies to the experience of being a Black journalist working in these circumstances.

I don't think there's enough emphasis on the lives of the majority of people that live here, the lives of people of colour in Cape Town. ... [Y]ou can imagine my frustration working at a news desk that revolves around the lives of white people. You could go out into the Cape Flats and cover a story that affects people's lives, a story that you believe needs to be told. But to get it into the paper was a constant battle (quoted in Gondwe 2001: online).

I examine the way the Cape Times came to address itself to a Black audience during and in the aftermath of the Pagad stories.

In addition, the entry into a globalized media market had an impact not only on content and newsroom structures, but the culture of news. Stories circulated from international media carry a cultural idiom along with the stories. Therefore, at the time of the Pagad stories the South African media was adapting to a new political order, reconfiguring its practices to reflect a broader audience, facing intensified market and the 'juniorization' of the newsroom due to a reduction in resources. Because of these factors as well as a history of inadequate attention to Islam, it became easier for an international idiom on Islam to take hold in the Pagad stories. Below, I examine the way the South African media reported Pagad's complex allusions to Islam.

### The Cape Times

I turn now to a detailed reading of the Cape Times coverage. On Monday 5 August the entire front page of the Cape Times, aside from one advertisement, was devoted to the murder under the headline 'Night of bloody execution' (see Figure 6, p. 135). The page is dominated by four sequential photographs of the last moments of the life of Rashaad Staggie taken by Benny Gool. The photographs are explicit in detail and create a sense of shock at the visibility of the murder. They show Staggie shot multiple times, set on fire

by a fire-bomb, and his body jumped upon by angry members of the crowd. The lines of perspective and foreshortening within the photographs (as well as a further series on page two), indicate that the photographs were taken with a combination of wide-angle and mid-range lenses that required Gool to be within close distance of the events. Gool described moving into the line of fire to take 'the picture of him in flames with his eyes looking straight at me' (Gondwe, 2001). Given their documentation of gunfire from many directions, the photographs testify to a notable focus and presence of mind in pressured circumstances, and are a highly creditable achievement by the photographer.

The article written by Roger Friedman supplements the sequence of photographs with a minute-by-minute account of the rapidly unfolding events that culminated in the murder. Friedman reports an eyewitness account of the gunfire exchanged between the crowd and people inside the house in London Road, written in the past perfect and the past tense. During this gun-battle Rashaad Staggie arrived in his car. When he was recognized:

'[members of the crowd] surrounded the van and jostled with each other to pull Staggie from his driver's seat. At this point a man pulled out his firearm and shot Staggie in the side of the head. He slumped in his seat, then fell in to the street'.

The violence recounted here confirms the content of the photographs, but also provides a sense of voice in addition to visual perspective. Friedman's account locates the view he gives of the actions of Staggie and the crowd in immediate proximity. He also documents that this violence took place in view of the police, the emergency services and the media, a fact that would be revisited in investigations of the murder. The article also provides a context by observing that the events of that Sunday night were preceded by two weeks of increasing visibility by Pagad. In the following days Friedman's reports would provide additional contextualizing material, including discussions of problems in the criminal justice system and perceptions of the police as ineffective and corrupt. Across the week of coverage reviewed here Gool and Friedman provided compelling and layered perspectives on the story.

Page two of the Cape Times on 5 August continues the coverage of the Pagad story on the bottom half of the page and features a further series of sequential photographs. The

numbered sequence includes three photographs of Rashaad Staggie, one sitting in his car holding up his hands as though indicating he is unarmed, the second a moment later when he has been shot and blood is streaming from his ear, the third is a view of Staggie lying in the street with someone jumping on his body, and the fourth is of a group of men crouching behind a car. Significantly, many of their faces are hidden by the chequered scarves known in Cape Town as Arafat or Makka doeke.<sup>103</sup> Photographs of men with their faces covered in this way would become indispensable to the telling of the Pagad stories in succeeding days. The photographs on this page intensify the sense acquired in the front page of the chaos of the nights' events, including the extended death of Staggie, estimated by Friedman to have taken twenty-five minutes, and the license of extremity shown by members of the crowd in the treatment of Staggie's body. An accompanying article by Lindiz van Zilla with a headline 'Hushed silence broken by cries of why, why' shows the complexity of the presence of criminal gangs in poor neighbourhoods. He points out that reaction among the crowd to the killing was extremely mixed and later that several Salt River residents expressed sadness at Staggie's killing. 'Rashaad was a good man', one elderly woman pronounced. 'He helped anyone who came to him'.

The extent of the coverage in The Argus on the same day, composed of several articles and photographs about the murder, confirms the scale of importance of the events. The top half of page three of The Argus included four photographs under the headline 'Staggie died as he lived'. The largest, in the centre of the page, appears with the explanatory caption 'Drug War: Police surround a mortally wounded Rashaad Staggie after he was shot and petrol-bombed in a street in Salt River last night'. To the left of this is a picture of two women, with the caption, 'Distraught: A policemen tries to calm hysterical relatives'. To the right are two photographs: one of a man with the caption 'Breaking point: An angry man, believed to be a relative of Rashaad, at the scene of the attack'. Just above is a fourth photograph, with the caption: 'Masked: One of the anti-drug vigilantes conceals a firearm under his jacket' (full references for these articles are found in the Primary Materials section of the Bibliography). This was the first appearance of the figure of a masked man in The Argus' reports on the Pagad story. In

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<sup>103</sup> 'Mecca scarves', since these are often brought back as gifts by pilgrims returning from Mecca.

the coverage of this story in the days following, this figure would move from the margins to the centre of most photographs in the newspaper.

In the course of the week I review here, Roger Friedman's reports in the Cape Times presented an increasingly complex and nuanced series of articles. However, on Tuesday 6 August the front page of the newspaper conveyed a tone of panic, fear and intensifying threat. The article above the fold, written by Friedman, has the headline 'Pagad Leader warns of suicide bombs'. The piece conveys a sense of the escalating rhetoric surrounding the story, reporting that the Pagad military leader Mr Ali 'Phantom' Parker had given notice that 'the city should brace itself for a new phenomenon of suicide bombers'. This warning was unprecedented in Cape Town's history and was a shocking assertion. The article also states that 'the city is bracing itself for a "holy war" between Pagad and gangsters. The underworld has threatened to destroy mosques and Muslim small businesses. Some schools have closed in case they are targeted by the gangsters.' This acceleration of mutual threats between Pagad and the gangs along with reports that personnel were being flown in from other provinces in response to a request by the police for military support indicates the tension and scale of the story.

The article, using terms such as 'fundamentalist', 'holy war' and 'suicide bombers' in an atmosphere of severe tension, suggests that an international media idiom about Islam starts to embed itself into the coverage of the story. I discuss this below through the image of the masked man. While the article includes detail and discussion, the headline (written by a sub-editor, rather than Friedman) undermines the overall impact of such variety. The journalist and former deputy editor of the Cape Times Yazeed Fakier cites this headline as the moment at which the Cape media, as he puts it, 'lost control of the story' (2000: interview). To Fakier, the headline symbolizes the sacrifice of context to sensationalism. Relations between Pagad and the media deteriorated badly, as

Friedman's article on Wednesday 7 August indicates. He reports Pagad's warning to the media to stop describing the organization as 'vigilantes', 'extremists' and 'fundamentalists', 'on pain of death'. Pagad indicated their awareness of the

reverberating connotations of such terminology, but couched their objections in a dangerous and self-defeating way.

A further development in the way Islam, rather than Pagad, is being implicated in these stories occurs on page three of the Cape Times on 6 August. A photograph offers the highly symbolic sight of a Casper [armoured police vehicle] parked outside the Gatesville Mosque, the site of many Pagad meetings (see Figures 1 and 2, pp. 42-43). Historically, Caspers were used by the apartheid state in visibly policing Black areas during periods of heightened resistance and became signs of the oppressive state operating against anti-apartheid forces. The Cape Times reported on 8 August that the Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi had ordered the deployment of army units to protect mosques. However, in the context of the recently ended apartheid era, the sight of heavily armoured police vehicles outside the mosque recalled unsettling associations of the weight of the state being brought to bear.

On Monday 12 August, a week after the first articles on Rashaad Staggie's murder, the Cape Times reported a mass meeting held on Sunday at Vygieskraal Stadium, attended by an estimated ten thousand people. The photograph used to illustrate the mass meeting offers arguably the exemplary image of the masked man (see Figure 8, p. 137). It appeared on page three under the heading 'Shotgun Sentinel', and the caption 'On guard: a member of Pagad his face masked and a shot gun at the ready stands guard during the Pagad rally at Vygieskraal Stadium yesterday afternoon'. The composition and structure of this photograph compel attention. The photograph, by Thembinkosi Dwayisa, was taken with a telephoto lens and its subject is the figure of a man in medium shot holding a shotgūn and wearing a red Arafat scarf and a ski mask that completely obscure his face. He is strongly foregrounded in sharp focus while a crowd of people in the background are barely in focus. Revealingly, in the article by Alex Dodd alluded to above, Fatima Zahra, a female member of Pagad, claims that '[at] the Vygieskraal mass meeting, for example, there were more women than men there without a doubt.' (1996: 66). The absence of an active female presence in images of Pagad is discussed further below.

The conflict and competition for media attention between the gangs and Pagad is a frequent topic of the news-photographs in this period. In the Cape Times on the same page the 'Shotgun Sentinel' is an image of a gang member smoking a dagga (marijuana) pipe in public, demonstrating defiance of Pagad's injunction to stop trading, dealing and taking drugs by D-Day (the previous Sunday). There appears to be an overt awareness on the part of both gang members and Pagad of the value of the visibility of their acts in the media.

### Review of the Cape Times Coverage

In the course of 5 to 12 August 1996 the Cape Times' coverage of the Pagad story demonstrates a notable effort to grapple with a complex story in which the media itself became a part of the content because of increasing levels of hostility and personal danger faced by journalists. The Cape Times coverage showed a grasp of South African politics, the incorporation of diverse perspectives and angles drawing on interviews with national political leaders, the views of academics studying gangsterism and vigilantism, as well as a broad array of eyewitnesses accounts. The sustained approach by the journalist Roger Friedman lent consistency and depth to the coverage of the Cape Times. Friedman provided not only comprehensive coverage but also opinion and comment on the context surrounding the events. In his comment on page two of Cape Times on Friday 9 August 1996 under the headline 'Government must shoulder the blame for the bloody drug violence', Friedman provides an assessment of the context of ongoing crime, frustrated prosecutions and allegations of corruption. He tracks the promises and commitment on the part of the regional and national governments, and also the failure to meet these promises and presents the context in which the public lynching of Rashaad Staggie occurred. Headlines the Cape Times are detailed and attention-catching while not necessarily sensationalistic. They include quotations, and draw on experts' comments and reflections by journalists themselves

The tone in The Argus is considerably different. It is an afternoon newspaper and therefore its coverage follows that of the morning daily, the Cape Times.<sup>104</sup> The headline in The Argus on Monday 5 August 1986 is 'vigilante war'. The terminology in the article itself draws on a heightened tone not evident in the Cape Times coverage. Terms such as 'full-scale war', 'militant Muslim lynching', 'slaying' and 'gangsters threatened to burn down mosques' and 'heavily armed Muslim anti-drug extremists' convey a significantly pressured tone. The newspaper's own idiom echoes the swelling rhetoric of threats and retribution exchanged by gangs and Pagad members.

On 7 August The Argus reports the alleged connection of Pagad to international Muslim terrorists, following allegations reported by Agence France Presse (AFP). AFP quoted a senior government source on the existence of 'secret cells' or 'foreign training' for Muslim militants in the Western Cape and in Durban. 'Libya' is alleged to be the main funder of the training. In her article 'The spy report that got it all wrong' in the Mail and Guardian on 30 August 1996 Ann Eveleth investigated the source quoted by AFP and demonstrated it to be an extremely flawed discussion document drawn up by the South African police. Eveleth conveyed anti-apartheid activist Maulana Farid Esack's scrupulous analysis and comprehensive rebuttal of the flawed premise and conclusions of the document. Esack lists the report's stereotypes, lack of basic research and confusion about the distinction between international Islamic movements and South African Islam.

The document, which was disavowed by the African National Congress, appears to reflect apartheid-era conceptions lingering in the Intelligence services. Aspects of the rightwing view of Islam held by some within the provincial government is indicated in the uninflected assertions by Hernus Kriel, the National Party Premier of the Western Cape, of the 'fundamentalist threat' posed by Pagad (Jeenah 1996: 18). The complex political situation of South Africa at the time was thus a factor in the hysteria around Islamic terrorism in the wake of the Pagad story. A further element raised by Jeppie is the involvement of a 'Third force', consisting of disgruntled right-wing members of the

<sup>104</sup> The Argus appears five times a week on Monday to Friday and in 1996 also had one weekend edition which covered both Saturday and Sunday. Currently, the renamed Cape Argus produces two separate editions on the weekend, the Saturday Argus and Sunday Argus.

Security forces, who were alleged to have played a role in the Pagad developments.

Jeppie reports that the Minister of Justice Dullah Omar had evidence of the involvement of a Third force in Pagad (1998: online).

### Ebrahim Moosa

One of the most reflective articles published in The Argus was the series of articles on the Pagad phenomena written by Professor Ebrahim Moosa, at that time the director of the Centre for Contemporary Islam at University of Cape Town. In an article titled 'Islam against the world, flawed radicalism will hurt the Muslim faith' Moosa refers to the ambivalence felt by people about the activities of Pagad. Moosa points out the danger for a well-meaning public initiative of a militaristic ethos combined with anti-state elements. The target of Pagad's intentions seemed to change from addressing gangsterism and criminality in the face of law enforcement failures to questioning the legitimacy of the Mandela government. Moosa also points to the varied perceptions of Pagad within the Muslim community, including fear of intimidation among people scared into silence or quiescence. Moosa concludes by noting the regrettable abuse of religious rhetoric for the purposes of spectacle and demagoguery. Significantly, even such thoughtful pieces were accompanied by an image of a masked man. In The Star on 12 November 1996, the same article published as 'Groups Like Pagad Hurt Islam' too was accompanied by an image of a masked man. The image of the masked man became indispensable to the telling of the Pagad story. Other images of religion that countered notions of division and conflict during this period were provided by an article such as 'City mourns victims of US attacks' in the Cape Argus on 13 September (5), which was accompanied by a photograph in which Ebrahim Rassool, the Muslim leader of the provincial African National Congress, is shown engaged in conversation with Rabbi David Hoffman. Such images consciously demonstrate local efforts at cohesion and recuperation.

The photograph on page three of The Argus on 12 August exemplifies the problem of attaching a simplistic and anachronistic visual vocabulary to images of Islam in South Africa (see Figure 7, p. 136). The caption to this photograph reads 'On the march. Manenberg residents marched yesterday in protest over ongoing wars between Pagad and

the Hard Living gang'. An examination of the photograph shows that most people in this protest march against violence, who appear in the background to this photograph, are not wearing coverings on their heads nor masking their faces. However, the photograph has been taken with a telephoto lens, and the two women who are in focus in the foreground are wearing scarves. The woman on the left is wearing an Arafat scarf, indicating the extent to which this was used as a quotidian part of people's lives. The woman to her right is wearing an ordinary scarf in order to obscure her face.

### The Mask and the Veil

The media did to an extent reflect a range of views. However, there was a further order of meaning operating through symbol that superseded discussions on the visible level. The recurring image of masked men in the Pagad news-stories is one such symbol, and makes the issue of veiling relevant to this discussion. *Letting us see what it's about*

Below I address the image of the veiled woman in Islam that developed during colonialism and outline the relationship between veiled women and masked men in contemporary representations. The image of a veiled woman is so familiar as an icon of Islam that its meanings operate at a level of almost intuitive explanatory force. There is a longstanding and prolific relation in the Western imagination between veiling and Islam. According to Helen Watson, this image is one of the most common methods in the West of portraying the problem of Islam (1994: 153). Yet she points to an important ambivalence in the image: it signaled both oppression and exoticism (*ibid.*). There is in fact, an obsessive 'association between the veil and the Western man's sexual fantasies' (Mutman 1994: 13, emphasis in original). In the imperial imagination from the 16th century, Eastern women were represented in colonial literature and art as mysterious and knowing, yet, importantly, also convertible and assimilable. The projected availability and vulnerability of Eastern women sustained a strong Orientalist fantasy: the desire of the European colonizer to enlighten the Islamic world, and to deliver its women from oppression. In British colonial imagery about India, the notion of a libidinous Eastern woman justified the 'need to govern her (and by implication also the Indian man)' (Loomba 1989: 26).

Part of the appeal of Orient was that it 'remains incomprehensible' (Kabbani 1986: 122). Here is the exemplary myth of the Orient: the 'inscrutability' of the East. To the bearer of the imperial Western gaze, whatever was revealed about the East, stands paradoxically as a sign of mystery. The exemplary exposed-yet-mysterious object is the veil, and through it, the veiled woman. The veiled woman is subjected to intense fascination and scrutiny.<sup>105</sup> The imperial gaze obsessively studies the veil as the scene of its potential failure - an object that refuses to be looked at (Yegenoglu 1998: 39).

If the women of the East are alluring but vulnerable, to whom are they vulnerable? The answer has conventionally been: the man of the East. However, Mahmut Mutman (1994) found in his analysis of masks and sexual ambiguity in Western coverage of the Gulf War in 1991 that there was an evolution of the figure of the Eastern man. The force of the image of the masked man appeared in these images to be shifting toward an ambiguous position for Eastern men in the sexual and political economy. Mutman reflects that

'[d]uring the [Gulf War], the media kept asking one question every night in the news, in every single TV program: "what is in Saddam's mind?" We are of course reminded of the question which Freud articulated: what does woman want?' (1994: 21).

In this repeated formulation, Saddam Hussein is placed in the position of the 'native' or woman who is both lacking but also excessive, withholding a secret. Mutman argued that through portrayals of an ambiguous sexuality, men like Saddam Hussein came to occupy the fetishized role classically held by women, which both affirms and unsettles the Western subject.<sup>106</sup> It is in this light that we can read the compelling images of the

<sup>105</sup> Providing a South African perspective, Leila Davids (2003) researched the views of Muslim women in Cape Town on wearing a scarf. As numerous studies of actual practices of veiling in Muslim (and non-Muslim) societies confirm, Davids' findings showed varied beliefs and practices among the women she interviewed. In the creative arena Nadia Davids' play 'At her feet', consisting of a series of monologues by Muslim women and set in Cape Town, addresses the prolific association between Islam and head-covering. The character Sara says 'the world has gone a bit veil crazy. Behind the veil. At the drop of a veil. To veil or not to veil. ... I wonder if I don't wear it just because I don't like what it says. Or maybe it's because I don't want you looking at me like you look at them'. The play is discussed in Chapter Eight.

<sup>106</sup> This seems to be confirmed by the portrayal, during the war in Afghanistan in 2001, of the face in close-up of Osama bin Laden. As with Saddam Hussein, the question was asked: What does Osama bin Laden want? The answer was unsettling: '[the] chilling conclusion was ... nothing the West had to offer,' (Johnson 2001: 9). This absence of reciprocity breaks the contract by which the Orientalist object confirms the Western subject. This topic is discussed in the next chapter.

masked men of Pagad. The Pagad story intersected with the international discourse at a time when it was evolving to place more significance in images of men of the East.

The shifting meanings of gender are also relevant to the Pagad story. Three months after the sudden ascendance of Pagad to public attention, the writer Alex Dodd (1996) deliberated on the gendered dynamics of media representations of the group. Dodd's analysis of this complex matter becomes a reflection on journalistic practice. She reviewed coverage of Pagad, noting that:

[w]hen the pictures hit the papers they're, more often than not, images of men. Men with scarves. Men with guns. Men talking. Men shaking their fists and holding their banners. The position of women is glaringly absent from the reports and images of PAGAD (Dodd 1996: 64).

The absence of women from such images catches Dodd's attention, though women were part of the organization's founding, membership and activities. The compelling indication of men's visual appeal is evident in the repetition of 'Men with scarves. Men with guns. Men talking. Men shaking their fists'. The short sentences with the finality of fullstops after every two and three words also suggest the solipsism of such images. The men appear unconnected to other elements, self-generated, lacking reciprocity, unanchored to context or moderation.

This analysis leads Dodd to explore the relation of women to Pagad. Dodd reflects that it is her own orientation as a female writer for a women's magazine that alerts her to the absences in the reports. She acknowledges that Muslim women are conscious of the image that dominant sectors of South African society have of them, as 'voiceless and oppressed' (65-66). Dodd distances herself from such a stereotypical view by using a sardonic tone, and she is careful in her account of her interviews to show that the women do not convey a singular message. In fact, their views are not only varied, but in some senses in tension with one another. Significantly for this discussion, the veil becomes historicized in the women's telling of their relation to and use of it. The women whom Dodd interviews assert that 'many of the movement's women who are veiled are not veiled normally, but "because of the gangsters. They veil themselves because of the fear

of exposure” (66). Dodd asks the women why media reports never refer to the women in the movement and why such complexity is not shown. They reply this is “the fault of the journalists who never show them” (66). This criticism that journalist emphasized certain elements of the Pagad story and ‘never show[ed]’ others leads me to the next section, in which I draw on the views of journalists who covered the Pagad stories.

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Next I turn to the insights of journalists on these stories garnered in interviews conducted between 2000 and 2003. The reporters I interviewed agreed that before the Pagad story Islam registered very little in the media. Lindiz van Zilla, who wrote on the Pagad story for the Cape Times, reflected that before the events of August 1996 ‘in mainstream media Islam certainly never received anywhere near the attention’. Mahmood Sanglay, the editor of Muslim Views, a Cape Town newspaper addressed to a Muslim audience, noted one reason for the presence of Islam in the media before Pagad occurred in stories about Muslims’ contribution to the struggle against apartheid. Sanglay observed that there were ‘watershed moments when Muslims and Muslim names [such as prominent activists Ahmad Kathrada, Ebrahim Rassool, and Imam Haron] became visible.’ However, Van Zilla points out that often they were seen as ‘activists first, and maybe Muslim later.’

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In this context the Pagad stories were a watershed. ‘In the last 10 years, Pagad has been the biggest story on Islam’ (Van Zilla 2003: interview). The scale of the story for journalists was notable in their accounts. Joseph Aranes, now an editor at the Cape Times, at the time reported centrally on the Pagad story. He confirms that ‘as a journalist, it was probably the most exciting time of my life’ (Aranes 2003: interview). For the newspapers, the story guaranteed huge sales. Van Zilla notes that ‘when those pictures appeared that Monday morning, sales shot through the roof’ (interview: 2003). Aranes confirms that ‘that edition sold out for the next couple of numbers. It was good for newspaper sales’ (interview: 2003).

Aranes also recalls the danger of reporting the story. ‘It was probably the time I was most scared, and I’ve been in dangerous situations in my ... life. A lot of my coverage ... was not popular. I was caught in the crossfire, literally.’ Sanglay himself received

threats to his life. Van Zilla confirms that 'it could take one sentence to set off something. It could cause a massive reaction. The police, the gangs, Pagad - there were attacks from all sides.' Van Zilla notes that these challenges were unprecedented. 'A lot of us had never encountered that before' (2003: interview).

In Sanglay's assessment the Pagad coverage in the media contained 'unfair representations of Muslims, unfair in that the mainstream media did not differentiate [among Muslims], or show the contradictions, dichotomy, polarities and ambivalence' in the Muslim community about Pagad. As a result, according to Sanglay, 'Muslims became tainted with the image that Islam represented violence'. The main reason for this, he contends, is 'because of a lack of understanding of the community.' Sanglay acknowledges that 'there are some militant and violent voices, but by far in the minority.' Furthermore, elements of the Muslim community contributed to the media 'frenzy' of attention to violence and sensation. 'Muslims need to concede that the conduct of Muslim themselves ... contributed to that misperception' (2003: interview).

Reviewing the coverage of the Pagad stories, Van Zilla concedes 'there is some merit to the criticism [of the media]'. He concurs that 'there was not a distinction made between Islam and Pagad.' He explains that 'that was difficult, because they were almost exclusively Muslim. ... The rhetoric that went out, with one or two exceptions, was from Muslim or Islamic scholars. ... It was very difficult to distinguish, if you take it at face value.' In addition to the requirement to attend to such distinctions, for Van Zilla, reporting on the story 'you were treading a fine line. There were threats. In that environment, it was very difficult to write any stories. Half the time the police didn't know' (2003: interview).

Van Zilla noted that complexity battled with newsworthiness in the Pagad stories. 'The thing is, something has to be newsworthy. It is one of our basic principles. I think complexity only came out much later. Maybe if it had been spotted earlier, one could have gone to ordinary Muslim people and asked them [their views].' However, instead of such perspectives, Van Zilla says, 'a lot of time the media got caught up in it [the story].

It was happening all the time all over the place. It was so big, so fast. The sales went through the roof.' Assessing the trajectory of the Pagad stories from 2003, Van Zilla reflects that 'there were moments when the media overplayed the story. Maybe the story called for introspection. [But] what are you supposed to do? Ali and Toefy [Pagad leaders] almost appeared larger-than-life figures due to the media effect. They had fiery rhetoric. You can't turn a blind eye. You can't ignore the story' (Van Zilla 2003: interview).

On the question of the complexity of media reporting of the stories, Aranes concludes 'given the nature of the newspaper, I don't think we probably did not on a day-to-day [basis give sufficient complexity]. We're not going to find out the definitive piece on the complexities of what was being played out, especially in the encompassing the Muslim community. ... I don't think we did justice to anyone. Over a long time it was an attempt to take the readership along [to show] why and how that developed. ... How successful we were is for people like yourself to judge' (Aranes 2003: interview).

The relation between Pagad and the media was famously contentious, even hostile. Van Zilla notes that 'at one stage, there was a boycott against the Cape Times. I think it was a Pagad call saying the Cape Times was biased against Pagad and the Muslim community. Aranes confirms that this announcement of a boycott. 'At the time Moegsien Williams was the editor. [As a Muslim,] it was expected for him to be much more [understanding of Pagad].' Yet, behind this well-known contentiousness, the journalists reveal another dimension. Aranes pointed out the complexity behind such apparent hostility. 'They [Pagad] bought the newspaper themselves. Whenever there's trouble, they will call for meetings. When they weren't happy, they came to us. When I needed something, I went to them. They were playing the media, getting maximum exposure' (2003: interview).

The results of the Pagad story from the perspective of the journalists was that they 'left an indelible mark' (Sanglay 2003: interview). Aranes notes that 'a lot of debates - morality, ethics, sensationalism, the outcome, the long-term effect on people and sensitivities of people in the field - these are not really debates that we have in the newsroom. We have

them one-on-one, but not necessarily as a collective. With the Pagad issue, we were forced to sit down and have these discussions. We became a lot more aware of the realities. In the letters pages there was a lot of feedback. It forced people and communities to discuss and come to some sort of insight on issues (2003: interview). Sanglay notes that relations among media organizations have improved since. There is more interaction between the major media companies and independent and alternative media such as Muslim Views. A senior journalist at a Cape Town newspaper observes another consequence of the stories. While before, Muslims were generally treated as 'cultural curiosities' in the newspapers, since the heightened profile of Islam with the Pagad stories, 'there has been a recognition that there is a Muslim section [of the population] that can be asked for comment on Iraq and Afghanistan. I honestly believe that if the Pagad story had not happened, nobody, not The Argus, not the Cape Times would have bothered to think, hey we've got a big Muslim population' (Anonymous 2003: interview).

As I showed above, the iconic figure in the representation of the stories about Pagad from 5 to 12 August 1996 was the image of a masked man. Partly, this was due to Pagad's contradictory attempts to widen its support base. It drew on Islamic iconography and discourse, such as prayers and the familiar Makka or Arafat scarves, while simultaneously proclaiming its appeal to people other than Muslims. Pagad's other explanation for using these scarves as masks was that it needed to hide the identity of its members after a Pagad member named Faizel Ryklief was murdered, allegedly after gang members identified him from media reports. There were parallel orders of signification for both Pagad and the media in the sight of the mask, one operating at a functional level, such as the Ryklief explanation, and another operating at the level of myth. The mask was the point where the two levels intersected. The compulsion of the mask is shown in the articles that deal with unmasking or revelation of secrets, for example, 'Pagad unmasked – Aslam Toefy', which appeared in the Saturday Weekend Argus of 16/17 November 1996 (24). The article reveals the identity of the then leader of Pagad who had agreed to an exclusive interview with the newspaper 'to try to break down misconceptions about the organisation' (24). This can also be seen in articles such as

'Murdered Pagad Leader was informer' by Marianne Merten in the Mail and Guardian on 23 July 1999. Pagad, with its public image of hiddenness combined with its attraction to media coverage, appears to invite a series of revelations.

An analysis of the problems in the media portrayals of Pagad therefore has to consider a complex set of related matters. Firstly, the contradictory grounds for perceiving Pagad as a Muslim organization and the varied views on Pagad among Muslims, conveyed in letters to the editors, articles by Muslim academics, and in interviews and articles by staff journalists. Beyond such delineation, a different level of signification occurred that obscured these indications of variety and debate, enabled by the use of iconography of Islam by the Pagad. Pagad invoked international symbols which they themselves drew from the international media.

Individual efforts at context were evident, as Evelyth, Van Zilla, Merten, Aranes and Friedman show, in articles that articulated an historically informed analysis showing longstanding non-vigilante anti-crime initiatives within Black communities, the use of drugs and gangs as political instruments by the apartheid regime in the 1980s, and complex responses within Muslim communities about Pagad. However, the perception that Pagad represented Islam was determined not solely by individual articles but the combination of articles, and the cultural idiom surrounding Islam in the local and international media. An example of the resulting knitting together of associations into a pattern of representations can be seen in an article by Ashley Smith on the front page of The Argus on 7 August 1996, titled 'Mass action on gangs' (see Figure 9, p. 138). The story occupies almost the entire top half of the front page above the fold. To the left of the page is a photograph of a masked man at a rally called by Pagad. The man is shown reading a Qur'an and next to him lies a shotgun. The caption reads 'Armed with a Prayer: A Pagad member reads the Qur'an while a shotgun lies within grabbing distance during the protest against gangsterism'. The visual connection of the masked man, the gun and the Qur'an inevitably implicated Islam, as well as Pagad.

The masked Pagad figure came to serve discursive needs for both the media and the group itself. In these stories, the act of 'covering' and 'uncovering' the mask proved particularly compelling. Through the use of the mask as explanation, we were reading an already covered story. Therefore, in the midst of such complex representational politics, references in newspaper articles to 'holy war', 'suicide bombs', 'militant', 'extremist', 'jihad', 'death threats', and 'vigilante group' in potent combination with images of masked men created a set of associations not only with Pagad, but with Islam. At an order of representation beyond individual articles, the anonymous masked men of Pagad provided an opportunity for image to become explanation, an instance of the 'grammar of motives' to which I alluded above, in which a ready-made, decontextualized visual and verbal vocabulary funnels complexity into an immediately graspable explanation.

Crucially, the dominant, US-based international idiom on Islam was itself undergoing an evolution after the Gulf War in 1991. As I argued in Chapter One, historically, there has been a lack of media attention to Islam except on very restricted grounds of pilgrimage, Eid or weddings. The Pagad stories, I argue, were the site of the 'indigenisation'<sup>107</sup> of the international discourse on Islam or the moment when the multiplicity of meanings surrounding the event were channeled into a local meaning. This contradictory and shifting performance of a notion of global Islam made local, signalled in inconsistent and often contradictory ways, was interpreted as an assertive, uncontested declaration of membership of a global allegiance.

### One City Many cultures

After the controversy of the Pagad coverage, as well as the issues that those stories raised about tensions in Cape Town, the Cape Times launched its 'One City Many Cultures' initiative on 1 February 1999. The project took the form of a weekly theme in the newspaper dealing with matters of identity and culture. It devoted a double page of the newspaper each week to exploring aspects like birth and weddings through the lens of the 'many cultures' of the city. Examples included the subjects of birth and death, and

<sup>107</sup> The term is Arjun Appadurai's and Pillay quotes it to mean the moment when 'the text's polysemy is funneled into a "negotiated" reading' (2003:288).

articles, written by well-known writers such as Marianne Thamm, Mike Nicol and Rayda Jacobs, attempted to move away from crisis and to discuss culture in an indigenous vocabulary. The feature on birth on 1 February 1999 is introduced as: 'Writer Marianne Thamm takes us on a journey through the cultural and religious beliefs of women as they prepare for birth. Join her as she finds out how new life is welcomed' (13). This view of cultures aligned for introduction to one another is at once utopian and static. 'Ordinary' people are interviewed in the section at the side called 'Street talk' which complements the feature length articles in the centre of the page. On page 14 the panorama of cultures is made concrete in a rendition of accounts of pregnancy in the three different languages of the province: Xhosa, Afrikaans and English.

The newspaper theme attained a substantial profile, including an endorsement from President Mandela (Fisher 1999: online). It was undoubtedly the case that the 'One City, Many Cultures' project gave visibility and a sensitive attention to aspects of city life which had not been addressed before. In an interview the novelist and filmmaker Rayda Jacobs asserted that she had 'put the Hare Krishnas on the map in Cape Town' (2003: interview). Mahmood Sanglay called the 'One City' initiative 'an important and admirable attempt'. Joseph Aranes observed that '[a]t that time, the city was quite divided, almost at war with itself. It was an initiative of the Cape Times. The idea was to bring the city back together. In as far as what the newspaper like the Cape Times can achieve it was probably an important aspect of getting their target audience ... to the city.'

However, the conception of the initiative was one based on an encounter between a panoply of distinctive cultures brought together in a public space. The approach taken in the initiative assumes that visibility is a sufficient and uninflected virtue. Because of the value given in the One City, Many Cultures project to what is observable, such explorations tended to focus on the visible aspects of those cultures, and in some ways the coverage resembles the picturesque approach through which Muslim food, dress and customs had become familiar in the past, as though difference were being staged for an ultimately dispassionate gaze. The approach also does not engage with the question of

positioning and whose gaze is at the centre of the cultures aligned for introduction to one another.

Lastly, the initiative presents a conceptual problem: if multiplicity is reserved for a special spread in the newspaper, it is contained there and not necessarily manifested throughout the newspaper. Aranes confirms that '[in] the newspaper, [the marketing aspect] never reached the other end of the newspaper [the newsroom].' Mohamed Shaikh at Die Burger also contemplated the relation between marketing and outreach in the project. 'Sometimes I wonder [if it was] social responsibility or a marketing exercise'.

Aranes articulated a concern about the reach of the initiative beyond a privileged minority to a broad audience. 'That whole media and marketing campaign was a shortcoming. The broader Cape Town community was largely uninformed. The actual events attracted largely the same people. In a city of three million people, only ten thousand attended. It became an arty-farty, elitist artists-around-the-city thing.'

To Suren Pillay the problem of the 'One City Many Cultures' initiative lay in its conception of culture (1999: online). To Pillay, there was something disturbingly familiar in the view of culture as separate, static and given. 'Has culture become a synonym for race and/or religion?' Instead of being a well-intentioned invitation to encounter one another's distinctive practices and behaviours, Pillay asserts that such occasions generate and solidify differences. The occasion to present our differences underplays the way we are always many things at once, as well as constantly changing. Pillay therefore found the One City, Many Cultures project a regressive and regrettable one, that evaded the real problems of spatial division in the city, and 'normalise[d]' what were, in effect, 'racialised differences' that recalled apartheid. For an Anonymous journalist the problems of the initiative were more severe. 'It was a plaster [band-aid]. Look at the little Xhosa performance group, look at the jazz bands for the coloureds and then you get a brass band military sound thing to appease the whities.' To Anonymous, the parade of differences were not only arbitrary and insulting, but they obscured the ongoing inequalities and racism of the city. 'The point remains that black people predominantly live in the townships, coloured people predominantly live in Woodstock

and the Cape Flats and white people predominantly live in Tamboerskloof. And darling, we don't come stand in the Parade to listen to kwaito'<sup>108</sup> (2003: interview).

### Conclusion

Discourses live through us. Just as we have the power to tell stories, stories also tell us. In order to change problematic discourses, we can reflect on what words we use, what assumptions characterize our worldview, what constraints shape our perspectives. The constraints of discourse are evident in reviewing the impact of the Pagad stories for representations of Islam in South Africa.

The challenge for the media of the events surrounding Pagad was to tell a story that was specific enough. The association between Islam and militancy in the powerful international media idiom is powerful enough to require countering through consistent efforts to provide context and local detail. This was combined with Pagad's own inconsistent rhetoric. While denying that it was solely a Muslim group, Pagad conveyed contradictory signals about Islam, for instance, by holding its meetings in a mosque and using prayers and religious rhetoric in its communications. Pagad also deployed icons associated with Islam to project a sense of potency. In contrast to the image I have previously discussed of 'Malay' men as placid, law-abiding and domesticated, the images of Muslim masculinity associated with Pagad are entirely different. Pagad projected machismo through combative rhetoric and a deliberate flaunting of weapons. Such machismo resulted from the dynamics of Pagad's competition with gangs for media space in which both use performances of reckless masculinity through transgressions of the law such as flaunting weapons, or smoking marijuana.

The media encountered a defining test about Islam in the Pagad stories. Encountering a group that presented itself in contradictory ways as Muslim, combined with hostile conditions for journalists, deadly urban violence, and the power of a regressive

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<sup>108</sup> Kwaito is a highly innovative South African, township/urban, post-apartheid Black dance musical genre (and the culture it inspires) that draws on and fuses influences from indigenous musical genres, South African "bubblegum", house and R&B to varied ends, sharing some characteristics but also diverging from South African hip-hop.

international media idiom in which complexity is reduced to one feature, the problem with the media's stories about Pagad was not negativity about the group, but that, in many cases, it did not sufficiently distinguish between the group and Islam. Nor did they convey the fact that the Muslim community in South Africa is not monolithic. In the chapter the views of journalists themselves convey necessary insights about the impact of juniorization, commercial pressures and globalization on the practices of journalism.

In the Pagad story the politics and economics of the international media clashed with well-established local stereotypes. The authority of the international idiom was aided by the inadequacy of the home-grown South African idiom about Islam which was limited to the what one journalist called 'the cultural curiosity approach' (Anonymous 2003: interview). Moreover, this intersection between international and local coincided with an evolution in the representation of men in the East in the international media, where men had started to become increasingly important to fantasies of the East. The Pagad stories 'indigenized' an international vocabulary about Islam and changed the way such stories would be told in South Africa.

In the next chapter I move to a story in which the international idiom about Islam encountered a story of global scale – the events of 11 September 2001.

Figure 10.

Shell-shocked: all that remains of the twin-towered World Trade Centre in New York, 2001. Uncredited photograph. Saturday Weekend Argus (15/16 September): 22.

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summaries as Lawrence  
arger the former Secretary  
:"There is only one way to  
th people like this: You  
kill some of them even if  
e not immediately involved  
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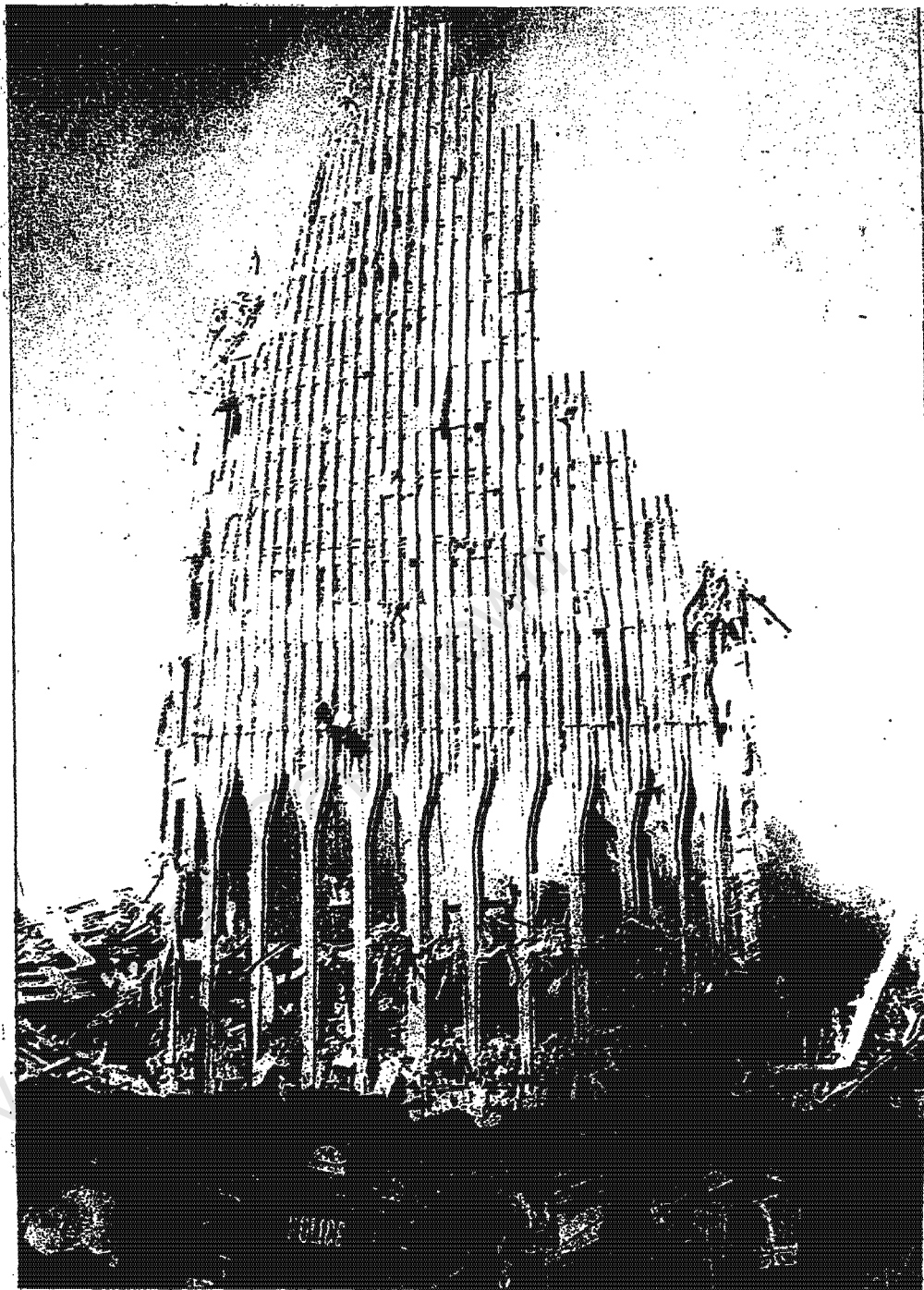
is is gut patriotism, the sort  
otism that propelled the  
US flags at Wal-Mart  
on Wednesday to \$8 000, 14  
the number on the same

day last year. This patriotism  
says America must respond, and  
if more American blood must be  
spilt to achieve that end, then so  
be it. If New York City has  
requested 6 000 bodybags, the  
Pentagon cannot be reluctant to  
make ready some of its own.

Bill Clinton responded to the  
last terrorist attack against the  
US - the bombings of two of its  
embassies in Africa in 1998 - with  
cruise missile salvos against  
Aghanistan and Sudan. But they  
achieved nothing. If Osama bin  
Laden indeed proves to be the  
mastermind behind the carnage  
in New York and Washington,  
missiles will not be enough.

This time it will not require a  
Desert Shield or Desert Storm,  
and half a million men. If the US  
decides to wipe out Osama bin  
Laden his cells and training  
camps, it will take far fewer. But  
Cruise missiles surely cannot do  
the job. It may well take the close  
support Apache helicopters that  
the Pentagon refused to risk in  
Kosovo. It will certainly take men  
on the ground, some of whom will  
doubtless be killed.

Even this strategy will not  
eradicate the terrorist threat.  
America will have responded to  
an act of war with an act of war of  
its own - which prompts yet  
another act of war, perhaps with  
weapons even deadlier than  
kerosene-packed civilian jetliners.



SHELL SHOCKED: all that remains of the twin-towered World Trade Centre in New York

## state ban on assassinations lifted

committee. "This is a different type  
war. They are going to assassi-  
nate our people and blow up our  
buildings unless we eradicate  
them first."

Representative Bob Barr had  
urged President Clinton to repeal  
the ban after the 1998 attacks on the  
two American embassies in Kenya  
and Tanzania.

Saudi exile Osama bin Laden  
was believed to be behind those  
attacks, and he survived the retali-  
atory cruise missile strikes ordered  
by Clinton.

Barr said US policy should not  
tie the hands of the CIA by forbid-  
ding targeted assassinations.  
Rather, the authority to carry out

such killings means the master-  
minds "can be eliminated in cases  
where it is simply impossible to cap-  
ture them by ordinary means",  
Barr said.

Because the assassination ban is  
an executive order, not a law, it can  
be repealed by the president. Clin-  
ton refused, however, choosing to  
maintain the more nuanced US pol-  
icy on terrorism. It allows the use of  
military force against recognised  
threats, including terrorists. And  
whenever possible, the US policy  
seeks to "bring terrorists to justice  
for their crimes," rather than kill  
them on the spot.

Prior to Tuesday's attacks, the  
Bush administration had placed

more hardliners in key posts in the  
Defence Department. And after the  
deadly assaults on the World Trade  
Centre and the Pentagon, they are  
talking about an entirely new  
approach to combating terrorism.

"It's a different ballgame now,"  
deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wol-  
fowitz said on Thursday. From the  
start, President Bush also spoke of  
"hunting down" those who are  
behind the terror campaign.

On Thursday, Barr called for the  
House and Senate to declare war on  
terrorists. If adopted, the resolution  
would give the president full  
authority to attack, and even occu-  
py countries that sponsored terror-  
ism.

Separately, Barr also sent the  
president a letter urging him to  
repeal the ban on targeted assassi-  
nations.

Administration officials have  
not said just what they might do to  
retaliate against this week's terror-  
ism. And the issue of government-  
sponsored assassinations remains a  
sensitive one.

Just a few weeks ago, State  
Department officials were critical of  
Israeli efforts to assassinate Pales-  
tinian officials who were suspected  
of perpetrating car bombings.

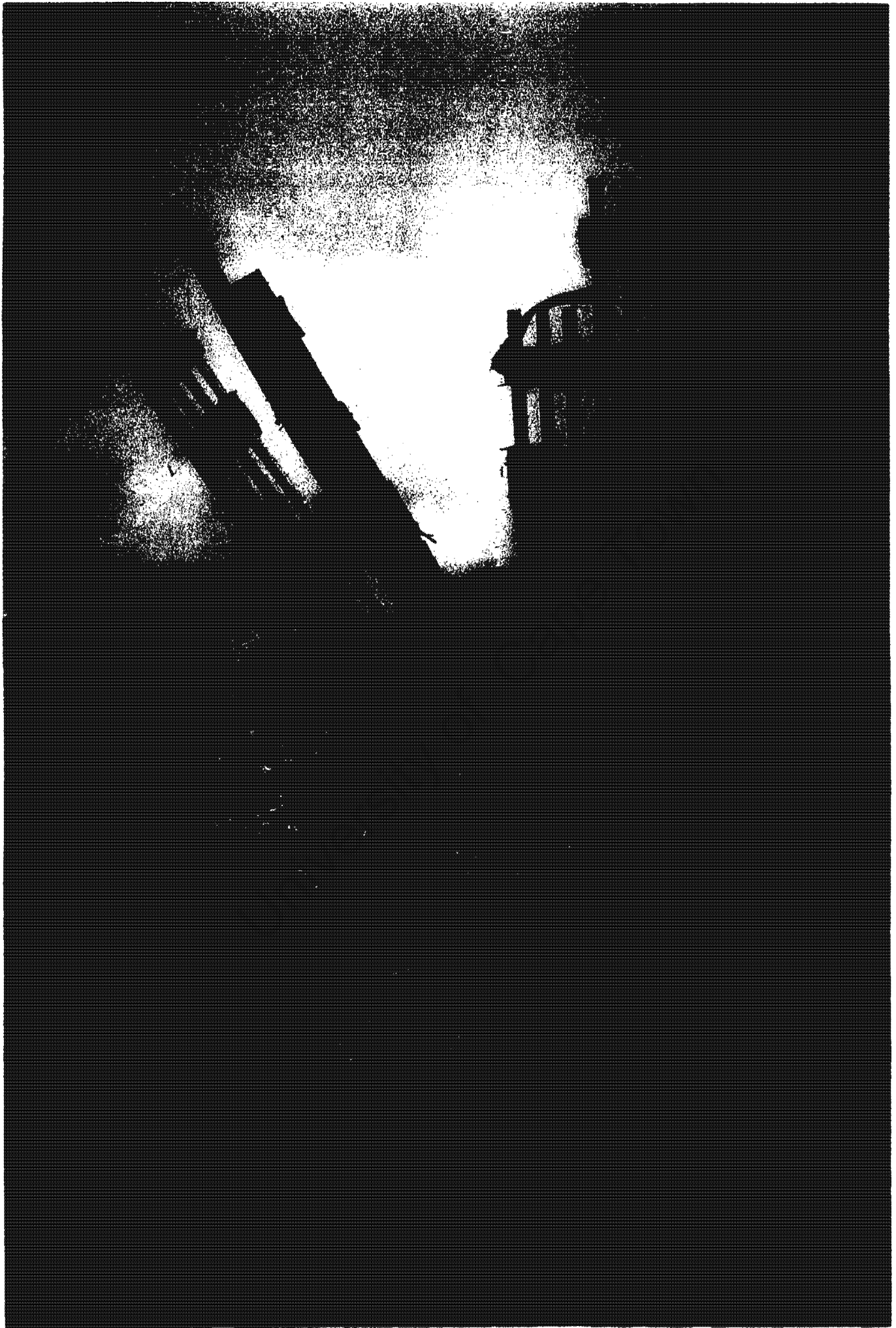
Experts in international law  
were divided on whether the United  
States should undertake an effort to  
kill bin Laden or whoever is respon-

sible for Tuesday's tragedies. Some  
said such a move would be justifi-  
able as retaliation for an act of war. Oth-  
ers said it would violate the prin-  
ciples of international law, and even  
the rules of war.

"The idea of targeting people  
assassination is legally not perm-  
issible under international law," said  
M Cherif Bassiouni, an internati-  
onal law expert at DePaul Universi-  
ty in Chicago and the former chair-  
man of the United Nations commis-  
sion that investigated the war  
crimes in Yugoslavia.

"I think it is a wise policy to  
have the intelligence agencies be  
judge, jury and executioner all  
wrapped into one."

University of Cape Town



**Figure 11.**  
**McCurry, Steve. 2001. New York September 11 by Magnum Photographers:**  
**16.**



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### FROM PENETRATED SPACE TO NON-SPACE:

### MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF ISLAM AFTER 11 SEPTEMBER 2001<sup>109</sup>

*'A photograph is a secret about a secret. The more it tells you, the less you know.'*  
- Diane Arbus, quoted in McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (1995: 122).

*'Nazism turned the whole of Europe into a veritable colony.'*  
- Franz Fanon, quoted in Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2004: 8).

*'Is the United States now a part of the rest of the world?'*  
- Donald Antrim, *First Reactions* (2001: online).

In Chapter Six I argued that South African newspaper coverage of the group Pagad over the course of a week from 5 to 12 August 1996 was linked by one compelling visual image, that of the masked man of the East. I traced the philosophical history and continuing power of that image and argued that, though it was based on an international Orientalist tradition at odds with more than a century and a half of a specifically South African Orientalism, the image of the masked man has become sedimented in the South African cultural imagination and has permanently impacted contemporary representations of Islam here.

While the news-stories about Pagad examined in Chapter Six are separated by time, setting and scale from the media stories about the events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent war in Afghanistan, I argue that both sets of news-stories illustrate a notable turn in the evolution of a media idiom about Islam. Much of this chapter focuses its gaze outside of South Africa as a way, firstly, of engaging with the pull of the global on the local and, secondly, because my criticism of problematic representations about Islam concerns the unreflective application of a universalising perspective on the religion. This

<sup>109</sup> On 11 September 2001 2 973 people died in the course of the hijacking and crashing of four aircraft, into buildings in New York city, Washington D. C. and Pennsylvania, killing all the 266 people on board the four aircraft and a further 2 707 people in the buildings. The visibility of those deaths, generated through thousands of words and images, invite a human connection, the literal meaning of sympathy, with those who died. I offer this unreservedly. My discussion in the course of the thesis concerns the meanings of visible and invisible sights of mourning. The hypervisibility of the events of 11 September also creates a sense of their human connectedness with other, less visible events and people.

chapter therefore outlines the problematic systematized thinking that undergirds certain representations of Islam in the coverage of 11 September and its aftermath.<sup>110</sup> This critique may be seen to mandate a return to the specificity of the complex visions of Islam presented in contemporary South African art, theatre and poetry in Chapter Eight. The chapter also contributes to the body of writing originating in Africa about the West.

At 8:46AM (United States Eastern Standard Time) on Tuesday 11 September 2001, a hijacked plane, American Airlines Flight 11, crashed into the 93<sup>rd</sup> floor of the north side of the 110-storey One World Trade Centre, the North Tower of the complex. The plane, loaded with sufficient fuel for a cross-continental flight, ignited on impact and caused a catastrophic fire in the building. Twenty-four hour news channels immediately focussed their cameras on the sight and broadcast live footage of the North Tower burning from the impact of Flight 11. At 9:06AM, a second plane, United Airlines Flight 175, flew directly into the South Tower. The news channels captured this incident live. The sight of the second plane flying inexorably into its target would be endlessly 'played and replayed', and would provide the basic visual vocabulary for the events of that day (Updike 2001: online). Within two hours, another sight, described by John Updike as a 'transforming event' (ibid.) would be added to the visual language of that day: 'the 'endlessly recycled ... image of the collapsing towers' (Rose 2003: online).

Investigation would reveal that a total of four planes had been hijacked on that day and, in addition to the two crashed into the two towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City, at 9:45AM a third plane, American Airlines Flight 77, crashed into the southwest side of the Pentagon building in Washington D. C., and at 10:37AM United Airlines Flight 93 crashed into a field near the town of Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Two thousand nine hundred and seventy three people died in these four events.<sup>111</sup> The discussion below attempts to place those deaths, many of them inerasably visible, in the context of the visible and the invisible explored in this thesis.

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<sup>110</sup> Because of the extensive use of newspaper articles in this chapter, I list article titles in the footnotes in addition to the bibliography.

<sup>111</sup> The number has recently been verified; initial estimates were as high as ten thousand. The figure of 2 973 people killed was cited in the film *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), directed by Michael Moore.

In this chapter I examine coverage of these events in the Cape Times and the Cape Argus for the period 11-18 September 2001, and also draw on other South African and international publications from the same period.<sup>112</sup> In the analysis I explore the meanings of patterns of visual and verbal imagery for the evolving discourse of Orientalism, considering such texts as the recurring image of the second plane crashing into the South Tower of the World Trade Centre complex, the inversion of the characteristics of bodies and buildings, and the face of Osama Bin Laden. On the basis of a close reading, I argue that the complex political, discursive and legal challenges posed by the events of 11 September 2001 compounded the unresolved problem of representing Islam. They also generated a problem of discussing religion, resulting in what I term an othering of religion. Tracking images from 11 September 2001 to the war in Afghanistan in October 2001, and specifically examining the figure of Osama bin Laden, I argue an evolution occurs in images of Muslim men and women. I contend that these patterns manifest a new type of discourse about Islam. Extrapolating from this analysis, I examine the rhetoric of members of the administration of United States President George W. Bush leading to the war in Iraq on 19 March 2003, tracking the attempted creation through language of a new category of human being and the creation of a 'non-space', which I argue can be traced to the vision of Islam signalled by the shifts noted above.

#### Pain: Regarded and Unregarded

In this section I make some observations on method. These include remarks on photography, texts, selection, different kinds of reading, and the ways in which newspapers convey crises. The topic of the play of the visible and the invisible is particularly significant in the extensive array of texts on the events of 11 September. In these texts deaths come close to being made visible.<sup>113</sup> In the chapter I therefore face the

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<sup>112</sup> Between Chapter Six and this chapter, the newspaper The Argus had changed its name to Cape Argus. I have retained the names as used at the time of the articles in the respective chapters. A note on the date convention used on the weekend edition is also necessary: there are two separate weekend editions, the Saturday Argus and the Sunday Argus, though each carries the date for the full weekend, for example, Saturday Argus of 15/16 September 2001 and Sunday Argus of 15/16 September 2001.

<sup>113</sup> Jacqueline Rose reports that '[i]n the days following September 11, the same news networks which endlessly recycled the image of the collapsing towers, pulled the footage of bodies falling to the ground. This was out of respect for the dead, but as one American film professor suggested, it also stems from the western attitude that bodies must not be seen to die' (2003: online).

ethical challenge of discussing pain, death and spectacle. I attempt to meet it by examining the way in which codes of visibility highlight and obscure power, how official meanings exist with other, resisting ones, and how to read media texts subtly in a complex, intertwined world. Through the analysis I come to ask whose absence we do not see.

The images I study appeared in range of media. While newspapers suffer an obvious disadvantage of time compared to live television, radio and the internet, in news of severe crisis, the concrete form of a daily newspaper offers an object one can grasp, crowd around and tear off. Despite being limited to the information available at deadline, the material record a newspaper gives of an event supersedes its transience. The method I use here, to review coverage of a story and its corollaries in multiple sources across several days from a distance of years, aims at a different way of looking at newspapers. I explore ways of reading in which the usual experience of reading newspapers is interrupted and exceeded.

In the collection of the British Library at Collingwood most newspapers are stored on microfilm (nineteenth century newspapers, discussed in the previous chapter, are retained in their original form and bound in large leather folders). Here I gathered and photocopied the front and inside pages of the coverage of the events of 11 September in the two newspapers discussed. Of the week's coverage I selected approximately sixty pages. Each photocopy is in size A3, and in order to view in full the material gathered laid next to one another, it took the floor of a medium-sized room to accommodate all the copies.

To grasp the articles fully, one had to walk among and on the pages. This distinctive, physical method of 'regarding' the news generates an 'intensity' of engagement. The gaze lingers, and also travels across and between the images. Both through concentration and the play of the gaze, new ways of reading result. This 'regard' enables a focus on features less evident to immediate consumption, such as changing patterns of verbal and visual images, absences, subtext and shifting emphases. This produced a mode of

reading that interrupted the sequential reading that typically results from paging through a newspaper, or from reading newspapers one day after another. This way of reading produced the insight that of a pattern of suggestive inversion in the qualities of buildings and bodies in the coverage, with buildings appearing fragile and people's bodies appeared sculptural and almost monumental. I discuss the implications of this below.

With photographs, the claim is made that meanings are transparent, and that, unlike words or music or painting, they communicate directly. In fact, photographs generate a disorderly array of meanings and it is the role of words to discipline the meaning of a photograph. Pierre Bourdieu proclaims that 'photos are nothing without words', but it may be truer that pictures are too many things without words (1996: 20). In the case of the news-photograph, it is the role of the caption to stabilise its unruly meanings. Sontag observes that 'all photographs wait to be explained or falsified by the captions' (2003a: 5). However, to funnel meanings into the single voice of the caption is a constraint which the image constantly resists. Because the photograph is the record of one instant, there hovers within every photograph the ghost of other instants just before and just after which feed the instability of that single moment. The photograph appears to shimmer and leak, and thus the relation of the image to the word is never settled. I return to this resistance of the image in discussing the face of Osama bin Laden later in the chapter.

### The Media and Crisis

*'The problem is not that people remember through photographs, but that they remember only the photographs.'*

- Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003a: 89).

Before discussing the content of the coverage, in the following section I note the way the media conveys news of a crisis, and discuss how in this instance local perspectives engaged with the international content and scale of the story. I go on to examine the structures through which the coverage reached South African audiences.

In the normal operation of the media the dominant discourses of a society provide a more or less unconscious baseline according to which events reported in the news, whether

they contravene or affirm the discourses, are measured. In contrast, the reporting of catastrophic events constitutes momentary openings in cohesive, dominant discourses. Following such an event, official power structures attempt to knit together a skein of recuperative meanings and renewed order. The emphases, exclusions and silences of recuperation can illuminate the modes of the social order. The first media accounts of such catastrophes, falling in-between the disruptive event and its recuperation, in themselves can provide evidence of those openings, disjunctures and slippages. The disruptive nature of the event can disturb the structure of news reporting, and thus both the faltering content of news about crises as well as lapses in the form of such news, can powerfully testify to the scale and urgency of the dislocation.<sup>114</sup>

However, there is a corollary to this. As theorists of the media such as Stuart Hall (1981) and Noam Chomsky (2003) point out, despite their professional ethos, the cultural expectations and the legal frameworks that mandate their independence, the media are nonetheless embedded within the power structures and values of their societies. This is of particular relevance in analysing the coverage of a news-story about crisis and war, such as the events of 11 September and the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Indeed, Chomsky noted that media coverage in the United States of the events of 11 September reflected the 'internalization of values' of the dominant order (2003: 28). The Guardian reported on 27 May that The New York Times had acknowledged the uncritical way it had reported certain information emitting from the Bush administration (Younge 2004: online). The partiality of perspectives in the media must therefore be a part of any study into representation.

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<sup>114</sup> The use in this thesis of newspapers as primary texts, and in some cases, as secondary ones as well, is a reflection of the expanded realm of information that newspapers now provide to researchers. Especially those publications that provide free access to their archives on the internet, such as the Mail and Guardian (South Africa), The Guardian (United Kingdom) and The New Yorker (United States), are resources of the first order. The agility of the media, including newspapers, in responding to fast-unfolding material is significant, as are their selection and combination of primary material such as photographs and transcripts of interviews, with commentary and reflective articles by academics as well as journalists. Access to this range of material, and especially to archives, has significantly aided the labour involved in researching the media. In the course of writing this thesis, I have found newspaper archives to be invaluable in the range of texts I have been able to draw on in my study - in hardcopy, on microfilm and on the internet.

### The Embodiment of the United States

Many commentators have asserted that the hijackings and destruction on 11 September constituted a moment when 'the world changed' (Cape Times, 12 September). In the view of Edward Said, the events of that day 'ushered in a new world' (2001: 14). How these events in the United States attained local meaning in various parts of the world deserves attention. As Chomsky pointed out, one of the ways in which the events attained local meaning was how familiar, not new, it seemed to people in other parts of the world. Chomsky observed that this was '[a]n atrocity, but unless you're in Europe or the United States ... it's nothing new. This is a historic event, not because of the scale or the nature of the atrocity, but because of who the victims are' (2002: 13).

In the case of South Africa, part of the answer lies in the structures of the media through which the coverage of the events of 11 September reached South African audiences. In an important sense, our notion of locality is shaped these days by our experience of media. On that day, the small number of television sources of information who deal in international news, CNN, the BBC and Sky News, demonstrated to South Africans the compelling idiom of a globalized mediascape. With the rise of these 24-hour international news organizations based in the United States and Britain, a powerful though unarticulated geography is at work in world news. The logic by which this geography works is through disembodiment and de-emphasis of location. From a symbolic centre, a gaze is aimed with disembodied equanimity at the rest of the globe. Watching the news, an imagined global viewer is situated, at least symbolically, in this unarticulated place.

With the events of 11 September, the seamless abstraction of this centre unraveled. The centre became materialized through the unsettling of conventions on television. In the television coverage of the events of that day, the voices of the newsreaders stammered, hesitated, and even became silent. The Cape Times reported that 'News anchors stumble[d] over words to describe [the] immensity of drama as it unfolds on screen' (13 September, 9). The reactions to the shock and scale of events both illustrated the distance between the margins and that centre, and give an eerie sense of familiarity, as though 'the

United States [was] now a part of the rest of the world' (Antrim 2001: online). On that day, in addition to the disruption of form, the content of the news illuminated the matter of location, and situated the United States among places from which it had been considered categorically different. 'Kabul, Sarajevo, east Mostar, Grozny, 16 acres of lower Manhattan after September 11 2001, the refugee camp in Jenin' (Sontag 2003b: 5).

In Chapter Six, I argued that particularity of location and perspective has become increasingly important in the era of globalized media, and in the case of 11 September 2001, South African media organs engaged with the nexus of the local and the global to show how the country's setting mediated the meaning of these events. The Cape Times and Cape Argus relied heavily on internationally-sourced media coverage on 11 September, drawing articles from international press agencies, including Agence-France Presse, Reuters and Associated Press, as well as articles reprinted from The Independent, The Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post and The New York Times. Yet, even within the range of international material there was an important range of perspectives. It is significant that among its international sources, the South African media tapped not only those from the United States, but also non-American sources such as The Independent, whose reporter Robert Fisk's interview with Osama bin Laden appeared in the Sunday Argus of 15/16 September 2001.

The significance of voices from outside the United States media and political establishment (though generally still a North American and Western European sample), allows one to discern the emphases and aporia in the dominant responses within the United States and among its allies. (I elucidate this point further in the discussion below about recuperation and dissent.) On television, South African news channels screened non-stop material from CNN, Fox News and the BBC. However, as the story developed into the war in Afghanistan, sections of the South African media took significant steps to attempt to convey the larger story through local perspectives. San Reddy of the subscription-based television channel e-tv said in an interview that 'it was easy to use wallpaper [but] CNN became tainted early in the war and we decided we couldn't draw solely on Western news sources' (Reddy 2003: interview). E-tv sent South African

correspondents to New York, and during the war in Afghanistan, also to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The weekly national newspaper the Mail and Guardian as well as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) also sent correspondents overseas at this time. These reporters sourced stories not only about the war, but also reflected on the economics of international journalism (Brummer 2001: online).

Therefore, direct importation of international sources was combined with attempts of varying substance and effectiveness to interpret the local meaning of the story. Such inflections ranged from an obvious level, for instance, of accounts of South Africans who died in the planes or collapsed buildings ('Top SA-born executive on jet that hit Trade Centre', Cape Argus, 13 September, 3), to the carefully modulated response of the South African government to the events ('Mbeki, world leaders condemn attacks', Cape Argus, 12 September 2001, 5). It was also notable that the South African perspectives shown in the media included attempts to quote not only elite sources, such as the government and established analysts such as Clem Sunter, but also consulted local Muslim leaders as well as making an attempt to convey the perspectives of ordinary Capetonians through phone-in polls, surveys and interviews. Letters to the newspapers and phone-in polls revealed a widely varying range of perspectives, with the majority conveying sympathy with the United States but insisting on neutrality in the 'war on terrorism' (Otter and Ndlakavu 2001: online). South Africans located in the United States at the time provided critical insights about the range of reactions within that country. For instance, columns by the South African journalist and academic, Sean Jacobs, examining ambivalent responses to racial profiling among African-Americans following 11 September added significantly to the complexity of the discussions in the South African media (2001: online). Jacobs showed that in the aftermath of 11 September the practice of racial profiling attained a new acceptance even among minorities in the US. An African-American man acknowledged his ambivalence: 'It sickens me that I feel that way, but it's the real world' (quoted in Jacobs and Blatt 2001: online).

### Coverage of 11 September 2001 in the Cape Argus and the Cape Times

I return now to an analysis of the coverage of the events of 11 September 2001 in the Capetonian dailies, the morning paper, the Cape Times and the afternoon daily, the Cape Argus. The scale and urgency of the story can be measured by the way they reported the events. On 12 September 2001 the entire front page of the Cape Times was covered by a photograph of the two burning World Trade Centre towers, with the headline 'Moment the world changed' in ten centimetre-high type across the top quarter of the page. No advertisements appeared on this page. The photograph on the cover of the Cape Argus of the same day, taking more than half of the page, shows the aftermath of the collapse of the buildings. The headline in upper case letters above the photograph shows the evolution of the discourse about the events: 'US ON WAR ALERT'. As with the Cape Times, the front page of the Cape Argus carried no advertisements.

On 12 September, the first day of reporting on the news, both the Cape Times and the Cape Argus carried articles conveying the urgency and extent of the crisis. A sense of the shock, poignancy and grave danger of the events is conveyed in a series of detailed articles and photographs. In addition to the picture of the burning Twin Towers on the front page of the Cape Times on 12 September, on its inside pages the Cape Times reported that 'Triple strikes leaves America reeling' (3). Page six carried details such as the number of deaths in the hijacked aircraft. The Cape Argus reported the widening implications including the estimated 'death toll will go into the "thousands"' (3). The disruption to the financial system is reflected on page eight of the Cape Times: 'World markets slump in panic in wake of attacks'.

### The United Gaze

In tandem with these articles on the extent of the crisis appear immediate efforts at reassurance and cohesion. The Cape Times reported on the speech by George W. Bush hours after the collapse of the twin towers at Barksdale Air Force Base in the state of Louisiana in which he asserted 'Our military at home and around the world is on high alert status and we have taken the necessary security to continue the functioning of your government' (Reuters 2001: 5). The speech was 'hastily arranged', and was the first of

two occasions on which President Bush would address the media on that day. The US president asserted a tone of 'defiance' when he declared 'We are being tested as a nation, we will show the world we can pass the test' (Cornwell 2001: 14). On Wednesday 12 September, President Bush 'invited senior lawmakers to the White House for a display of unity'.<sup>115</sup> Another such recuperative step involved the uncovering of the planning and execution of the hijackings, transforming them from inexplicable events into 'attacks', 'plans' and 'conspiracies'.<sup>116</sup>

A recuperative discourse was also manifested on the international front. On 13 September the Cape Argus reported 'Europe shoulder to shoulder with US' (Karacs, 2). Maps and diagrams started to appear, their clarity an attempt to banish the opacity and confusion symbolized by the smoke and collapsed buildings in New York City and Washington D. C.<sup>117</sup> In numerous declarations, Osama Bin Laden was identified as the 'prime suspect' and 'US Enemy No. 1'.<sup>118</sup> However, despite the attempts described above, the extraordinary fragility of the moment was inescapably present.

Further attempts at recuperation appeared in rapid succession, drawing on the languages of investigation, war and retribution, in some cases in tension with one another. In the press conference he held in Louisiana only a few hours after the attacks President Bush started to articulate the distinctive discourse that would ultimately frame the United States' response. He proclaimed that 'Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faithless coward. Freedom will be defended'.<sup>119</sup> Framing the events as the acts of a cowardly, irreligious enemy irrationally opposed to the value of freedom espoused by America, Bush established the grounds on which to banish notions of confusion, weakness and impotence. After arriving back at the White House President Bush addressed a nationwide audience in the United States, as well as a global one. Importantly, during this speech, Bush defined the events of that day as 'acts of war'.

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<sup>115</sup> SAPA-AP, 'Attacks are acts of war', Cape Times, 12 September, 2.

<sup>116</sup> SAPA-AP, 'Attacks were carefully orchestrated, says FBI', Cape Argus, 12 September, 6 and 'FBI document reveals hijackers' planning, methods', Sunday Argus, 15/16 September, 2.

<sup>117</sup> SAPA-AP, 'How terrorist attack hit New York's financial district', Cape Argus, 13 September, 4.

<sup>118</sup> Reuters, Saturday Argus, 15-16 September 2001, 3.

<sup>119</sup> Reuters, 'Bush reassures Americans after "cowardly" attacks', Cape Times, 12 September, 5.

Talk of war rapidly gained momentum and substance and soon sedimented into the definitive response from the Bush administration. The discourse of war activated discussions to invoke the collective defence clause, Article Five of the Washington Treaty with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Drawing from this speech, already on 12 September the Cape Argus carried the note of war in its headline: 'US ON WAR ALERT'. The choice of the language of war to couch an assertion of resilience and strength, specifically an open-ended 'war on terrorism' conducted by military means through a coalition with other nations, was met with ambivalence and even rejection by others in the global community. The attention attracted by the language of war is indicated by the use of quotation marks around the word in the Saturday Argus headline 'Washington's newly declared "war" on terrorism'.<sup>120</sup>

The US President continued his speech on 20 September with a further metaphor: 'This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil. But good will prevail.'<sup>121</sup> The additional layer of Manichean imagery, of good and evil, with us or against us, deepened ambivalence in other countries, evident in the caption to the map of the Middle East that appears on page three of the Saturday Argus of 15-16 September: 'New Rules: the United States seems intent on forcing the world to choose sides in its anti-terror campaign' (3). The hesitance felt by allies of the United States is conveyed in a statement by Vladimir Putin that 'Russia opposed any indiscriminate retaliation for the US terror attacks and called instead for careful action based on proof'.<sup>122</sup> In a letter in the online publication, ANC Today, President Thabo Mbeki negotiated the complex discursive terrain by terming the events of 11 September 'acts of terrorism' which he characterized as 'deeply offensive to African culture and tradition', yet concluded by calling the acts 'crimes' of 'wilful mass murder' using language that suggested the discourse of the prosecution, evidence and the courts.<sup>123</sup> Echoing this sense, President Mbeki's spokesperson Bheki

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<sup>120</sup> 'US recruits for war on terror', Saturday Argus, 15/16 September, 3.

<sup>121</sup> 'Attacks are acts of war', Cape Times, 12 September, 2.

<sup>122</sup> 'Russia opposes hasty retribution as Iran warns US against "stupidity" of attacking', Sunday Argus, 15/16 September, 2. Once again, the resistant responses to the US attempt to coordinate an international response is indicated in these responses.

<sup>123</sup> John Matisonn and Estelle Randall, 'Attacks a crime – Mbeki', Sunday Argus, 15/16 September, 4.

Khumalo is reported to have 'expressed the hope the Americans will be able to bring the perpetrators to book'.<sup>124</sup>

In contrast to the increasingly unified view from the United States government, public response within the country was sufficiently varied to result in a broadening of discussions in the media there. Noam Chomsky's short book 9-11 became a best-seller, attracting people who wished to probe the context for the events. Chomsky reported that as 'a reflection of public concerns' the commercial media broadened the range of panellists and discussants to include radical commentators, which 'never happened before (2003: 97). There were also different emphases within the Bush administration, notable for instance in a report on 12 September 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell suggested a measured pace to his government's reaction, saying that the United States would take 'a comprehensive response', including steps taken 'diplomatically'. Secretary Powell indicated the United States was 'far from selecting any particular targets for retaliation. We have to build a case first'.<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, the sub-heading 'America pledges vengeance' to an article in the Cape Times of 12 September, seemed to encapsulate the tone of President Bush's warning that 'we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them' (2). The impression of the gathering momentum of military force is conveyed in the report that 'the United States forges ahead in building a global anti-terrorism coalition'.<sup>126</sup>

#### 'Who are we?'

Beside differences of tone within its government, a further kind of deliberation within the United States was reported on in the media. The range included reflective and even critical voices among the American public and intelligentsia.

Now for the first time the US has really felt or experienced what so many other countries have experienced so many times, during war. And it's producing a kind of identity crisis, almost. People are wondering: 'Who are we? Who are these

<sup>124</sup> Saturday Argus, 15/16 September, 3.

<sup>125</sup> 'Attacks are acts of war', Cape Times, 12 September, 2.

<sup>126</sup> 'US recruits for war on terror', Saturday Argus, 15/16 September, 3.

people doing this to us? Who hates us, and what are we doing that warrants this? (Alex Boraine quoted in Morris 2001: 18).

Such increasingly self-reflective questions connecting the actions of 11 September to the role of the United States in the world were appropriated and redirected by the administration of George W. Bush into a characterization as an attack on 'the free world':

Americans are asking "Why do they hate us?" They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other (Bush 2001: online).

Susan Sontag detects in George Bush's speeches a ratcheting litany, "'civilization" or "liberty" or "humanity" or "the free world"', revealing a rhetorical strategy by which the particular is overlaid on the entire world that would designate itself free (2001: online). This redirection of the expansive questioning generated by the hijackings into a set of bald polarities became the grounds for an eventually unassailable call for war and a narrowing space for alternative views in the United States. Amid the tight choreography of official efforts at reassurance, contrary voices were interpreted as unsettling the task of reconfiguring the meaning of the events.

To reflect on motivation, context and history was seen as dangerous. Noam Chomsky confirmed that, at that time, to undertake such a broader view meant 'you're immediately denounced as an apologist for Osama bin Laden' (2003: 29). In this way, dissonant voices in the United States drew vilification and official censure. The boundaries of the dominant discourse were illuminated by the response to Susan Sontag's short article on the events of 11 September, published in *The New Yorker* of 24 September 2001. Her piece appeared among a collection of 'First Reactions' written by prominent writers such as Amitav Ghosh, John Updike and Jonathan Franzen. The other commentators noted the required and often strained language of reassurance and unity among politicians speaking of the events in the media. John Updike wrote:

[o]n television, the experts spoke freely of making war, of unanimity, but there were clearly things they felt they could not say on the air. One frequent guest, a veteran diplomat, said, 'People like me who are going on television are maybe

filling a necessary role—we're the voices of authority telling people it will be all right. But the fact is, we don't know that it will be all right' (Updike 2001: online).

In her article Sontag rejected the proforma, ahistorical and circular reassurances purveyed by political leaders and analysts in the media in the aftermath of 11 September as 'outright deceptions' (2001: online). The strategy to describe the hijackers as 'cowardly' and simply imbued with irrational hatred, she observed, was a way of refusing history (*ibid.*). To reject the possibility of motivations or reasons made it impossible to see their actions as 'an attack on the world's self-proclaimed superpower, undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions'. Sontag further noted that, in the light of the range at which the US military had become used to conducting war, 'if the word "cowardly" is to be used, it might be more aptly applied to those who kill from beyond the range of retaliation, high in the sky viewing suffering and war' (*ibid.*).

In response to this article, the seventy-year old Sontag was made the target of a pronounced level of hostility. She described receiving 'responses that, in a lifetime of taking public positions, I've never experienced' (Sontag, transcript of a seminar at the Open Society Institute). They ranged from complaints that her article should have been censored, to her being labeled a traitor, calls that she be deported and stripped of her US citizenship to death threats. Sontag's experience outlined the boundaries of discussion as the inverse of the discourse of recuperation: a 'climate of opinion in which debate is equated with dissent, dissent with dissidence, dissidence with subversion, subversion with treason' (*ibid.*). The reaction was so heated because hers was a fundamental critique of the official view that channelled public discourse away from history and toward a conception of an irrational enemy that could only be countered with force.

Having discussed the framework of the media and the nuanced context in which media representations were received, my discussion in the following section concerns significant patterns that emerge in the reporting of the events of 11 September 2001. I analyse the meanings given to human bodies and the relation between bodies and nation, and connect the way in which the rhetoric and symbolism of bodies in the news coverage immediately after September 11 relate to longer-term discursive and political unfoldings.

## The Moment Of Impact

*'On television, a plane flew through the south tower of the World Trade Center. How many times did I watch that?'*

*-Donald Antrim, 'First Reactions' (2001: online).*

One of the most obvious visual patterns established on September the 11<sup>th</sup> in media coverage was the repeated showing of the inexorable approach and crash of the second plane, Flight 175, into the South Tower of the World Trade Centre buildings. On television, the moment of impact would be screened over and over again during the hours and days immediately following the event. Partly this selection is due to the fact that only one filmed image exists of the moment of impact of the first plane, Flight 11, hitting the North Tower, seen in the documentary 9/11,<sup>127</sup> while the full range of US and international media were covering the crash in the North Tower when the second plane crashed into the South Tower and therefore had live footage of the latter event. As a result, this image became the exemplary one of that day. In the words of Rupert Cornwell of The Independent, 'what happened to those two gleaming silver towers was the true symbol of the day' (Cornwell 2001: 14). The image was shown so frequently that in one of the formal innovations of the film Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004), the director Michael Moore declined to show the image at all and chose to use a black screen with the sound of the plane approaching and crashing into the building on the soundtrack. In the newspapers a number of photographs on the day show the North Tower already in flames and the second plane about to hit the South Tower (for example, page three of the Cape Times on 12 September). Only when the second plane crashed into the other building, did recognition dawn that this was a deliberate act, not an accident.

What is the meaning of the repeated screening of this image? One may read into the image an account of the self taken by surprise, of penetration so unimaginable that what is viewed again and again is precisely the impossibility of the event, the scale of the

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<sup>127</sup> This is in the film 9/11 by the French filmmakers Jules and Gedeon Naudet. Jules Naudet captured the only known footage of the impact of the first plane, and was filming inside Tower 1 of the World Trade Centre when Tower Two collapsed. (<http://www.frenchculture.org/tv/programs/naudet911.html>).

surprise, the audacity, the unpredictability combined with the shattering evidence of its calculation, its constructedness. The scale of the violation of the self is seen as an indication of the monstrosity of the other.

The sight of the crash of the planes was meant to be seen, it was constructed to be a 'visual spectacle', to be viewed over and over again (Franzen 2001: online). What may one read into its meanings, and the meaning of revisiting it? Viewers in the West had become used, Sontag says, to images of suffering elsewhere, and photographs of war have confirmed the distance between the Western viewer and the location of suffering. One of the unsettling effects of the events of 11 September was the collapsing of the difference which had always distinguished the United States from places where buildings shatter and bodies die visibly, subject to unpredictable, indiscriminate violence. Therefore, one important set of meanings can thus be understood as the breakdown of this distancing effect. In the aftermath of 11 September, 'the scorched wreckage at the Pentagon is reminiscent of Kabul' (Franzen 2001: online).

In the aftermath of 11 September, the distinctiveness of the United States was overtly reclaimed and policed both in official utterances and in the media. The uniqueness of the transgression and its suffering were emphasized, and similarity disavowed. During coverage of the war in Afghanistan, CNN chair Walter Isaacson issued a directive that all reports on the deaths of civilians in Afghanistan resulting from US bombing were to be concluded with a reminder about the deaths of Americans on 11 September, 'in the context of a terrorist attack that caused enormous suffering in the United States' (Kurtz 2001: online). The subversive possibility that civilian deaths in both countries were tragedies of equal dimension was curtailed, and the pre-eminence of American deaths was reclaimed.

### Penetrated Space

I now move to the treatment of buildings and bodies in the coverage. In addition to the moment of impact, the newspapers revisited again and again images of destroyed buildings, most frequently of the twin towers (though these were not the only structures

destroyed in the seven-building World Trade Centre complex). The photographs of the remains of the twin towers are in stark contrast to the conventional image of skyscrapers and the crisp, closely packed grid of Manhattan Island, its city skyline characterized by right angles and straight lines of buildings in close proximity.

The self-consciously pure lines of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre embodied the notion of 'vertical aspiration' articulated by modernist skyscrapers (Yi-Fu Tuan quoted in Creedon 1989: online). In 1989 the writer Jeremiah Creedon described the experience of gazing at the towers:

A few miles away the twin towers of the World Trade Center were materializing through the grey light before dawn. As I stared, their tops began to shimmer with a blue-pink iridescence, lit by a new sun that for the rest of the city had yet to rise. The beauty of these towers struck me. They lorded with an ethereal purity over the grime and tensions of the jumbled cityscape below (1989: online).

Notable in this description is the ambiguous relation of the buildings to the 'jumbled cityscape below'. Along with their height and striking dual design, aesthetic impact was part of their significance. Their size meant they were 'lit by a new sun that for the rest of the city had yet to rise'. The way the restrained verticality of the towers' design drew the eye led to criticism of their 'self-conscious elegance'. In light of this sense of separateness how did they become characteristic of the Manhattan skyline, and symbolic of the United States? The twin towers became 'the symbols and centers of American power and modernity' because their distinctiveness stood for the global financial dominion of the United States (Updike 2001: online). The World Trade Centre towers were therefore both a visual and financial nexus. With their monumental stature and symbolism, the contrast of their reduction in the aftermath of destruction into the most basic remnants was intended to strike at the system that the towers symbolized.<sup>128</sup>

Regarding photographs of the atrocities carried out by General Franco during the Spanish Civil War, Sontag observes: 'A bomb has torn open the side of a house. To be sure, a

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<sup>128</sup> Besides the two towers, other structures such as Building 7 and Building 6, which housed the US Customs House, were also destroyed (Guy Gugliotta, 'Fire exposes towers' Achilles heel', *Cape Argus*, 12 September, 14). These buildings, and even the Pentagon, did not attain the symbolic importance of the destruction of the towers.

cityscape is not made of flesh. Still, sheared-off buildings are almost as eloquent as body parts' (Sontag 2003b: 4). This is confirmed in images of the aftermath of 11 September, where the remnants of the two towers articulate a striking sense of fragility.<sup>129</sup> They seem torn open and reduced to the vulnerability of bones or skeletons. Yet, contemplating a delicate filigree of steel structures - all that remains of the South Tower<sup>130</sup> - even this metaphor of flesh and bone seems too heavy for these fragments. In their lightness, the remains seem not so much organic as resembling a fragile latticework barely more tangible than the surrounding emptiness.<sup>131</sup> The sights are disjunctive, as though of a category other than building, yet some of them are eerily beautiful. As Sontag noted, to verbalize that association was to transgress a taboo. 'To acknowledge the beauty of photographs of the World Trade Center ruins in the months following the attack seemed frivolous, sacrilegious.' (2003a: 76).

Textures not usually associated with buildings were highlighted in unexpected combinations.<sup>132</sup> In a photograph smoke and dust billow between buildings as people run from the collapsed buildings.<sup>133</sup> The usually crisply modern Manhattan skyline with its angled collection of skyscrapers crowded together on the southern portion of the island has, in a photograph on page eighteen of the Cape Argus on 13 September, the

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<sup>129</sup> Exemplary photographs appear on the front page of the Cape Argus on 12 September 2001, and the Saturday Argus, 15/16 September 2001, 22.

<sup>130</sup> The caption to this photograph on page twenty-two of the Sunday Argus on 15/16 September, reads: 'All that remains of the World Trade Centre in New York'.

<sup>131</sup> In discussions about plans for restoring the site of the World Trade Centre the avant-garde architects Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio stated that the absence inherent in the site of the destroyed buildings should be retained. '[L]et's not build something that would mend the skyline, it is more powerful to leave it void. We believe it would be tragic to erase the erasure' (Glancey 2003: online).

<sup>132</sup> The poor quality of the black and white copies of these images, it may be argued, enhances the impression of fragility. This is due, as noted above, to the fact that contemporary newspapers in the archives of the South African National Library and the British Library are stored on microfilm, resulting in a marked reduction in the quality of reproductions of both verbal and photographic texts. News photographs are, of course, themselves reproductions. I attempt to counterbalance the potential bias resulting from poor copies by including better quality reproductions of similar photographs. An artistic support for my reading of the fragility of the buildings is given by a painting by Jean Holabird that appears in the Times Literary Supplement of 20 June 2003. The work is titled "Murray and Greenwich 10/03/01" and is a rendering of the remains of the World Trade Centre buildings (Figure: reproduced on page of this thesis). It evokes the sense of the fragmentary remnants of a building seen in the two newspaper images.

<sup>133</sup> Cape Argus, 14 September 2001, front page. The caption reads: 'Run for your life: since the horrifying events in New York and Washington on Tuesday almost every hour has yielded astonishing new pictures of the terror attacks and the aftermath. This one shows New Yorkers fleeing down Broadway pursued by a cloud of dust and smoke from the collapsing World Trade Centre twin towers.'

unexpected characteristics of dust, opacity, and softness. Many photographs focus on this compelling interplay of concrete and smoke, whether in long shots taken from helicopters or more intimately from the ground or other buildings. In Fahrenheit 9/11 Michael Moore focussed on the reactions of people to the sight of the burning buildings. He lingered on shots of paper fluttering slowly to the ground, creating evocative images of disruption and absence without showing the buildings themselves.

Conveyed in these photographs is the sense of the building as vulnerable, almost body-like, and the striking connotation that that body has been broken open and entered. In the association between the Twin Towers and the United States' financial dominance, the fragmentary remains suggest a vertiginous scale of transgression. The specific relation of the collapse of the buildings to the nation is confirmed in speech by George Bush to a joint sitting of the Houses of Congress on 20 September 2001 nine days after the planes first crashed into the buildings: 'Terror unanswered can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments' (Bush 2001: online). That the remains of the buildings convey a sense of the personal violation of the body of the state is suggested further into the speech: 'I will not forget the wound to our country and those who inflicted it.' I will return to this observation later in my discussion of rhetoric leading to the war in Iraq.

### Faces and Bodies as Symbols

In contrast to the textured vulnerability of buildings in the newspaper images, the news photographs of faces and bodies of mourners in the United States during this time attained an almost structural scale and symbolism. Such faces appeared in extreme close-up, creating a monumental effect. An example appears on page three of the Sunday Argus of 13 September 2001, which has a large photograph of a woman's face, itself magnified into intimate detail. The face is presented sculpturally - with the texture of shadows and the tear on her cheek highlighting the shape of the nose and the eye. Though the close-up focuses attention on this one person, the effect is not to see her as an individual but instead as representative. Because of close cropping, one cannot see her hair, clothing, or other distinguishing characteristics. Even her weeping, identified in the caption as being

caused by her inability to find a missing relative, is presented visually in a generalized way, reaching beyond individual loss to stand for the whole tragedy.<sup>134</sup> On the front page of the Saturday Argus of 15/16 September, a large photograph shows a white hand holding a black hand; between them is clasped a small United States flag. Through such treatment, using extreme close-ups and symbolic gestures, parts of the body attain to the monumental. In this way, bodies and buildings seem to have been inverted, exchanging qualities and meanings.

The abstract treatment given to the face of the woman above is in sharp contrast to the way in which the people who died on that day are shown. A conscious attempt was made to individualize them through the use of photographs and short biographies. On the front page of the Cape Argus on 15 September a collection of such photographs, from personal or family albums showing them in casual or smiling expressions, appeared. On the same page, a photograph of one of the suspected hijackers, Mohammed Atta, appears. Though it is also an individual photograph of his face, this one is different to the collection above. It is a photograph from an identity document, showing a serious, unsmiling face, decidedly not casual. It is a face inscribed within a legal framework, a 'suspected' face. Below, I contrast this 'suspected' face with the face of the 'prime suspect', Osama bin Laden.

### The Taboo Bodies

The portrayal of the bodies of those who died in the buildings and planes was an especially strong taboo after 11 September (Rose 2003: online). While there are evocative photographs of people who are jumping from the buildings, including those who are holding hands and jumping together, their bodies once deceased are not shown, and there are no pictures of the impact of those bodies and none of the bodies on the ground (*ibid.*). Sontag points out that while the Western media is oriented towards attention to violence in an often sensationalist manner, there is extreme discretion in dealing with violence enacted on First World people (Sontag, 2003a, 72). In contrast, violence acted on people

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<sup>134</sup> The caption reads: 'Breakdown, a woman cannot control her emotions after a fruitless search at a New York hospital for a missing relative'.

in the Third World is often revealed in great detail. 'The more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying' (*ibid.*). The handling of this category of bodies raises the political meaning of discretion and tact. There was a deliberate abstention from showing dead bodies at the towers. 'Staying within the bounds of good taste was the primary reason given for not showing any of the horrific pictures of the dead taken at the site of the World Trade Centre in the immediate aftermath of the attack on September 11, 2001' (Sontag 2003a: 68-69). The reasons for the taboo may therefore be traced to the history of images of suffering and the distinctive treatment of dead and violated bodies from the West.

Even in the treatment of these bodies there are illuminating differences. The passengers of Flight 93, who were reported to have fought to regain control of the plane, seemed to testify to the possibility of resistance and redemption.<sup>135</sup> However, the bodies jumping from the burning Twin Towers, signalled only the scale of the horror and loss. These are bodies that are not held in a grid of biography and fellowship, but bodies profoundly vulnerable and out of place. Images of vulnerable and injured bodies appear in the Cape Argus on 12 September on page three, which carried photographs of women with bloodied faces being carried from the building and on 16 September the Sunday Argus showed people who had emerged from the buildings covered in industrial dust. These do not approximate the images of 'grievously injured bodies ... from Asia or Africa' but they approach the 'interdiction' on showing graphic suffering of Western bodies (Sontag, 2003a, 72). The unspoken bounds on representing such suffering would have been fundamentally transgressed by the sight of the dead at the World Trade Centre. The proscription on the sight of bodies jumping from the buildings and on the streets below by the bounds of respect, propriety and 'good taste' may therefore be seen to secure the uniqueness and exemption of the United States (*ibid.*). Sontag points out that the absences of images of the American dead 'obscur[es] a host of concerns and anxieties about public order and public morale that cannot be named' (68-69). What cannot be

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<sup>135</sup> SAPA-AP, 'Heroes who decided "to do something" about hijacked planed praised for saving other lives', Cape Times, 14 September 2001, 1.

named is the way in which death in these images resembles death elsewhere, and the human meanings of both.

### The Political Meaning Of Respect

The question of which deaths to represent publicly is not solely or even most significantly about respect, sensitivity or taste. In fact, the choice of which deaths to show is a political matter. In the war in Iraq since March 2003, the official policy of the United States not to count the number of Iraqi civilian deaths has made it less likely that such deaths are represented in the United States media. The British newspaper, The Guardian addressed the effects of underplaying the human costs of war by making it a policy to show Iraqi casualties, and created an archive of biographies of the dead.<sup>136</sup> There is also an official policy not to show photographs of coffins of deceased soldiers from the United States. The official explanation from the United States administration of President Bush is that this is due to respect for the feelings of families. However, the policy of 'respect' exercises an effective determinant over which deaths are revealed and which are not in the course of the Iraq war as well as 11 September 2001. The documentary Fahrenheit, 9/11 showed civilian as well as military deaths and wounded in both the Iraq war and 11 September, as part of its critique and resistance against the policies of the Bush administration and the US media. In the Cape Argus photographs of South Africans were shown accompanying the report of their views in an article titled 'Capetonians favour neutrality in American's war against terrorism' (20 September: 3). The individuality of the faces portrayed confirmed the insistence on a sympathetic yet distinctive national response in the article.

### The Singular but Elusive Face

Among the most compelling photographs which appear as part of the story of 11 September and the war in Afghanistan are those of the face of Osama Bin Laden. A photograph of bin Laden appeared immediately after the events of 11 September in the Cape Argus on 12 September 2001 (5) with the caption, 'No. 1 suspect: Osama Bin

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<sup>136</sup> 'One hundred lives' The Guardian, 16 May 2003  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,956952,00.html>, accessed 8/7/04

Laden'. Bin Laden's face can be read as part of a long history of representations of men of the East who are seen as a threat, referred to in Chapter Six. However, the face of Osama bin Laden is different from this trajectory. Bin Laden is described as '[t]all, gaunt, charismatic, elusive' (Updike 2001: online), also as 'quiet' and unimpressive.<sup>137</sup> The film Fahrenheit 9/11 shows footage of Osama Bin Laden, lying on his side, leaning his face on his elbow. Such footage, along with the limited number of photographs, seem to aggregate around the theme of stillness and calm. Photographs of Bin Laden are rare and in the coverage a small number of photographs and limited camera footage of Bin Laden circulated among numerous world media organs, for instance, the photograph that appears in the Cape Times on 14 September on page seven is the same as that on the cover of Time magazine on October 1, 2001 (credited Associated Press). Similarly, the photograph in the Cape Argus of 12 September appears also in the Saturday Argus on 15/16 September.<sup>138</sup>

The photograph in the Cape Times on 14 September is a shot from the waist up, and shows details of the white turban and the white clothing of Bin Laden. His beard is full and comes down to below his neck. His gaze is directed away from the camera, looking to the left. The expression on his face conveys a sense of stillness. In the photograph on page five of the Cape Argus on 12 September, Bin Laden is shown with his gaze directed at the camera. Yet in none of the representations is a sense of accessibility conveyed.

This face, which has been expressly accused of the planning and execution of the attacks of 11 September 2001, resists attachment to meanings of horror and murder, and demonstrates the way photographs always exceed the meanings attached to them. The offence of its calmness is everywhere. The insistent, unsettling multiplicity of photographs of Bin Laden are indicated in articles that refer to his 'mystique'.<sup>139</sup> In contrast to the explicable face of Saddam Hussein for instance, or the Ayatollah

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<sup>137</sup> The latter quotation is a description of his impression upon meeting Osama Bin Laden in the 1980s by Prince Bandar, the Saudi Ambassador to the United States in an interview with Larry King on CNN, cited in the film Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004).

<sup>138</sup> Saturday Argus, 15/16 September 2001, 3. The caption reads: 'World's most wanted: Rumours are rife that Osama Bin Laden is on the move'.

<sup>139</sup> 'Bin Laden builds world network on the mystique of the brave warrior', Saturday Argus, 15/16 September 2001, 3.

Khomeini, the expression on the face of Bin Laden is neither stern nor threatening. It seems to convey stillness. Most significantly, the face does not signal reciprocity. It always conveys a sense of containedness. In filmed footage Bin Laden's gestures appear slow and careful, confirming the sense of calmness conveyed by photographs of this face. There is nothing hurried nor accessible about this face.

Moreover, the face of Osama bin Laden has an unsettling refusal to be singular. It is almost average. Precisely its refusal to be exceptional complicates the ideological task of attaching meaning to his face. It is a face that appears quiet and unthreatening, yet, because it refuses to have one meaning, it is also unsettling. The varied meanings of the face of Osama bin Laden have come to stand for the bewilderment and impossibility of Islam itself.<sup>140</sup> Bin Laden is a terrifying face of Islam, because his face refuses reciprocity. The confirmation at the material and philosophical level in the familiar Freudian formulation: '[w]hat does Osama bin Laden Want? ... absolutely nothing that the West has to offer' (Johnson 2001: 11, my emphasis).. Bin Laden's refusal of reciprocity is a refusal of the condition of the Western subject.

After this analysis of the face of the 'prime suspect' to take further a discussion of the meaning of the face, I turn to Judith Butler. Butler (2003) analyses coverage of the war in Afghanistan by developing a theory of the face of the other, and its relation to the self. Her analysis enables me to move from the analysis of buildings, bodies and the face of Osama bin Laden to the problem of history and Islam.

### The Face and the I

What is the face? What does it do? Judith Butler cites the philosopher Emanuel Levinas who locates the face in the moment when the self gazes upon the vulnerability of the other, and finds in response to that sight the possibility of the self.<sup>141</sup> At the encounter between the self and the vulnerable other, one may equally disavow the other but instead

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<sup>140</sup> 'What is this Islam thing?' The illuminating question verbalizing the usually unarticulated bewilderment about Islam was posed by a South African journalist to the historian Shamil Jeppie during the Pagad story.

<sup>141</sup> Judith Butler 'Precarious Life', Keynote address, International Association of Philosophy and Literature, May 2003, reproduced in the programme Writing Aesthetics (2003): 77. See also the book Precarious Life: Mourning (2004). The quotations in this section are from the programme essay.

recognizes in her 'the sense of human frailty'. For 'the face is that which one cannot kill', according to Levinas. Conveying 'the precariousness of life', the face 'serves as the condition of humanization itself'. The face is not necessarily a human face - it may be an aural or a visual event, whatever 'communicates the prohibition against murder'. In this psychic and ethical scenario Butler discerns that 'not every face is a face, and many things that are not faces nevertheless serve as the face'. Who is the face? Who is not? Butler extrapolates from this Levinasian vision to an analysis of the media coverage of the war in Afghanistan to ask what sights count as the condition of humanization. Which lives constitute 'the face', and, therefore, which deaths are visible and 'grievable'? She concludes that there is an uneven measure of the worth of the deaths of Afghan and American civilians.<sup>142</sup>

To observe that the other does 'not constitute a norm for human-ness, but ... nevertheless produces a frame within which the human is negotiated' is to locate the moment in which the basis of reciprocity between self and other, and therefore the possibility of becoming human, is severed. To declare the self unbound is to cut the lines that connect the self to the other. It is the unmooring of the self from the other, that relation which prevents a dispersal of all boundaries within which the self is contained - psychic, social, legal and moral.

Under the declaration of an open-ended war, President Bush has accrued to himself as commander in chief the right to redefine the rights of the state and its agents established over hundreds of years and through national and international negotiation. The extent and consequences of this self-declared right to redefinition is itself subject to secrecy. The self-declared open-ended power to evade established terms and categories for people, actions, and places can be seen to assert the kind of severing described above. The designation of an association with Al Qaeda appears to license an unbounded right to determine the bounds of legitimate actions.

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<sup>142</sup> The visibility of death is a theme already visited in the chapter on Muslim burial sites, and is one I take up again in Chapter Five, when I look at the poem 'Brother Will Bury me?' by Rustom Kozain.

## Abu Ghraib and the trajectory of body

*'We are these photographs.'*  
-Susan Sontag, *'Regarding the Torture of Others'*,  
The New York Times Magazine, 23 May 2004.

In this section I discuss the photographs of Abu Ghraib as part of a trajectory of responses to what happened to the North American national body between 11<sup>th</sup> of September and May 2004. I argue that there is a direct connection between the rhetoric of the body that is set up in the aftermath of 11<sup>th</sup> September and the justification of torture in both Guantanamo Bay and Iraq. I examine the relation of the violation of the national body on 11 September - the levelling of buildings, but also a profoundly disturbing levelling of distance and power to the subsequent recuperative discourse and actions by the United States.

A sense of violation and threat is connected to a notion of the Muslim body as disguised and insidious. Not only his designation as 'prime suspect', but also the refusal of his face to signal an overt meaning connects Osama Bin Laden to the hijackers. As 'sleepers', they disguised themselves as ordinary students while planning the events of 11 September.<sup>143</sup> In the course of the investigations into the events of 11 September the term 'sleeper' became widely known, and was defined in a report in the Sunday Argus of 15/16 September, as someone who 'trie[s] very hard to blend in' and is 'a trained Islamic terrorist awaiting orders from their faceless masters'.<sup>144</sup> Jacqueline Rose articulates the importance of the interplay of the visible and the invisible on 11 September. 'One of the most disturbing things about September 11 was that the attack was so visible in the skies, the agents a multiplicity of proliferating invisible cells' (Rose 2004: online). This sense of a not-quite-human threat spawned the fear that ordinariness and the appearance of innocence could itself be a ruse. What is the effect of having so ambiguous an enemy? Butler's theory of precarious life gives us a way of thinking the relation between the self and the other:

<sup>143</sup> 'Fighting an invisible foe', Cape Argus, 18 September 2001, 10.

<sup>144</sup> Sunday Argus, 16 September 2001, 18.

If we consider the use of the face in the media in the last year and a half, we see that the face of the enemy is produced time and again as one that forecloses the apprehension of the precariousness of life. The figures that come to represent either the spoils of war or the targets of war are not quite human faces, but neither do they serve as the condition for humanization. They do not constitute a norm for human-ness, but they nevertheless produce a frame within which the human is negotiated. If the lives represented by the face of the enemy are not precarious lives, then they are not lives, and their deaths do not count as deaths. As a result, the differential by which the human and the inhuman are produced within the popular media becomes the means by which human lives are understood as more and less grievable (Butler 2003: 77).

Butler points out here that the use of the face of the other as the 'enemy' has produced a convention since 11 September 2001 of 'foreclos[ing]' the possibility of mutual humanness. The 'enemy' becomes read solely as 'spoils' or 'targets' of war, and is 'not quite human'. This becomes manifested in the carelessness with which 'enemy' deaths are regarded, which is an extension of carelessness about the value of their lives. The consequences for the self of this foreclosing of the humanness of the other is profound, Butler points out, since the condition of humanization is always mutual.

### Islam and The Fantasy of Archive

Here I call on Foucault's notion of archive as the totality of what can be said, or imagined, about a subject. What can be said, and thought, about Islam? The word 'crusade', initially used by President Bush to describe the 'war on terrorism', derives from the medieval era when Islam was Christianity's defining enemy. An example of a new genre of book illuminates this underlying discourse.<sup>145</sup> The expansive attention to Islam in the United States after 11 September 2001 has been manifested in a plethora of introductory books on Islam, 'most of them pleading the case for the prosecution', in the view of Tim Winters. In a review of the book Islam: a Guide for Jews and Christians by

<sup>145</sup> The quotation by George W. Bush is reported by Associated Press as follows: 'This is a new kind of -- a new kind of evil. And we understand. And the American people are beginning to understand. This [redacted] on terrorism is going to take a while' (Associated Press 2001: online). Words such as 'crusade' and 'terrorist' calibrate the significance of terminology in this story. The news agency Reuters decided not to use the term 'terrorist' in referring to the attacks on the World Trade Centre. The news agency explained its policy as follows: 'As part of a long-standing policy to avoid the use of emotive words, we do not use terms like 'terrorist' and 'freedom fighter' unless they are in a direct quote or are otherwise attributable to a third party. We do not characterize the subjects of news stories but instead report their actions, identity and background so that readers can make their own decisions based on the facts.' This decision is discussed in its website <http://about.reuters.com/aboutus/editorial/#7>, accessed 2 July 2004.

F. E. Peters, Winters finds in the book a view of Islam as 'limited, immobile and dangerous'. The evidence for this perspective derives from the fact that 'the focus of the book is overwhelmingly on the medieval Middle East'. To draw only on a limited corpus of texts issues inevitably in a constricted and static vision of Islam.

The consequences of a strategic erasure of recent history (identified and comprehensively critiqued twenty-six years ago in Edward Said's Orientalism) is also explored by Mahmood Mamdani in Good Muslim, Bad Muslim (2004). The thesis of the book is that the view of Islam depends on where you look. In the dominant discourse articulated by the Bush administration, 'Islamic terrorism' is designated as 'both description and explanation of the events of 9/11' (Mamdani 2004: 17-18).

The perspective that 'Islamic terrorists' are motivated by a level of religiosity deemed to be unique to 'Islam', and that they are anti-modern, irrational and ontologically violent is directly contradicted by the evidence that the Cold War policies of the United States played a foundational role in forming, training, funding and sustaining such groups in Africa and the Middle East. Mamdani notes a symantic shift:

After an unguarded reference to pursuing a "crusade," President Bush moved to distinguish between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims. ... the central message of such discourse: unless proved to be "good," every Muslim was presumed to be "bad." All Muslims were now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining in a war against 'bad Muslims' (15).

The elaboration of the initial global denunciation into the minutely more modulated 'good' and 'bad' Muslim dichotomy nonetheless constricts the space through which discussions of Islam can take place.

Why has it been possible to neglect history to this extent in discussing Islam?

In one sense, on 11 September 2001 religion was licensed to enter the public space yet in a fundamentally constricted way. It has become at once commonplace and complicated to speak about religion. The problem is that the opacity surrounding Islam clouds the term 'religion'. Islam has come to be seen as 'religion', with connotations of irrationality, anti-modernity and regressiveness. As the name for irrationality, 'religion'

appears to suit Islam perfectly. As a result, other forms of religion-based thinking elude the label.

Mahmood Mamdani points out the extent to which conservative religious thinking underpins politics United States. The 'language of self-righteousness' entered this realm well before 2001, manifested, for instance, in Ronald Reagan's description of the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire' (2004: 44). After 11 September, even in the context of the rousing tone that may be expected in an address by a country's political leader to shocked citizens in the aftermath of an attack, George W. Bush's speech on 20 September before the joint Houses of Congress reveals the permeable bounds between politics and religion in the United States under his administration:

I will not forget the wound to our country and those who inflicted it. I will not yield, I will not rest, I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people. The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them (Bush 2001: online).

The rousing tone in this speech, with its reliance on binary oppositions and the stretching of specifically United States questions, and his administration's interpretations of these, to cover the entire realm of 'freedom' is significant. Equally suggestive is the rhetoric or 'style' that President Bush uses to signal the range of his references to an evangelical Christian audience (Borger 2004: online). Borger points out that 'Mr Bush regularly uses phrases that strike chords with his fundamentalist audience' (*ibid.*). Driven by crisis, the return of religion into the contemporary creates a problem of history, legitimising the short-circuiting of specificity and tripping us into the eternal, through categories such as right and wrong, with us or against us, civilization and barbarity.<sup>146</sup> The construction of a view of Islam as the source of an irrational and impossible challenge was itself religious.

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<sup>146</sup> The speech by President Bush on 20 September is redolent with the tone of Manichean certainty: 'Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. ... The civilized world is rallying to America's side.'

## Non-Space

*'We should also be asking what fantasy we are being required to sustain.'*  
- Jacqueline Rose, *'We are all afraid, but of what, exactly?'* (2003: online).

This reading of Islam as irrevocably different, inexplicable, and posing an unprecedented challenge has motivated a particular set of rhetorical, legal and military responses by the United States and its allies after 11 September 2001. Because of the scale of the challenge of Islam it is assumed that it is not possible to engage with Islam through existing norms or through the discourse of the law, either within national boundaries or using international conventions for prosecuting a case against transgressors. In fact, the challenge is seen to be so immense that the usual norms are actually seen as an inadequate apparatus. Instead, one response has been to create a space where such a hindering apparatus does not apply, a space which is outside of the United States, not merely physically but also rhetorically and legally. In addition, even within the territory of United States, designated acts have been rhetorically and legally lifted outside its jurisdiction. In this section I track the lexus through which is constructed in Guantanamo Bay an entirely self-contained non-space, a nowhere parallel to the real world, but with extreme barriers to access between them.

The territory of Guantanamo Bay is physically on the island of Cuba but independent of it, and the United States has leased it from Cuba through a contested agreement since 1903 (Taylor 2004: online). In Guantanamo Bay a penal facility has been created that is governed neither by the United States, nor by international law such as the Geneva conventions, nor by Cuba (*ibid.*). This situation has produced a new category of space, what I term a 'non-space', where it is claimed that neither national nor international jurisdiction holds. Attempts by lawyers for the Guantanamo Bay prisoners to claim that space is governed, like other spaces, by laws of a national or international code, have been contested simultaneously in different sites by lawyers acting for the Bush administration who use language which is mutually contradictory (*ibid.*). When lawyers for the prisoners argued that Guantanamo Bay falls under the jurisdiction of international

laws such as the Geneva Conventions,<sup>147</sup> to which the United States is a core signatory, they were met by the assertion that the territory is a matter of national interest for the United States and that international convention has no claim over it (*ibid.*). When a claim of habeas corpus was launched on behalf of one of the 'enemy combatants' in the American courts, the lawyer for the government asserted that Guantanamo Bay was not an American space, so the American courts have no jurisdiction over it (*ibid.*).<sup>148</sup> The fact and intent of Guantanamo Bay is envisioned, like the 'war on terror', as lasting indefinitely (Rose 2003: online). Furthermore, the extremely limited access to Guantanamo Bay by lawyers, journalists and monitoring bodies is aimed at eluding surveillance.

A further elaboration has been the creation of a new category of person called an 'enemy combatant', who can be held indefinitely 'without charge, trial or access to lawyers' (Goldenberg and Dodd 2004: online). The status of 'enemy combatant' is designated by the US President in his legal capacity as commander in chief. The citizens of any country, including the United States, can be seized anywhere and held under this category, and would not be subject to the usual national and international protections and rights (Shankar 2004: online).<sup>149</sup> In addition, the president has declared that the prisoners

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<sup>147</sup> The four Geneva Conventions, 'a core principle of international law', were signed in 1949, in order to create the legal mechanism 'to formally criminalize the atrocities of the Nazis' (Noam Chomsky, 2003: 126). The Geneva Conventions have been reaffirmed by numerous other laws and treaties, both national and international, including in 1984 by the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which declared, 'No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture' (quoted in Sontag, 2004, online).

<sup>148</sup> The strategy to create this non-space is a contested one. After a court battle on behalf of some of the detainees in Guantanamo Bay, the Supreme Court of the United States found on 28 June 2004 that Guantanamo Bay was 'functionally' within the United States, which effectively granted the prisoners some rights of review by the United States federal courts (Agencies 2004: online).

<sup>149</sup> Guantanamo Bay is only the most well-known of a number of facilities internationally which hold persons seized after 11 September in an uncertain status. In addition to 'enemy combatants' and 'unlawful combatants', a new neologism indicates the existence of a further variation on the redefinition of the human, the 'ghost detainee'. One consequence of the latter status is that it is not possible to determine if such persons are dead or alive. A report in *The New York Times* on 18 June 2004 states: 'A Human Rights Watch report last week identified 13 "ghost detainees" taken into United States custody since Sept. 11, 2001. The author of the report, Reed Brody, said the 13 were either being held in undisclosed detention facilities, or the United States government had not acknowledged holding them. The detainees are all associated with Al Qaeda and include Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and Ramzi bin al-Shibh, whose interrogations were discussed at the Sept. 11 commission hearings this week. Mr. Brody's staff identified the 13 detainees by tracking their arrests, largely from news reports or interviews with their relatives, he

at Guantanamo Bay are 'unlawful combatants', which means that they are not regarded as ordinary soldiers and therefore have no recourse to the Third Geneva Convention, which requires that if the status of a prisoner is contested a decision must be given by a 'competent tribunal' (Lewis 2004: A25).

What implications do the creation of such a space have beyond Guantanamo Bay? Debates in the Mail and Guardian, South Africa's most prestigious weekly newspaper (Green 2002: 10), have considered the insidious appeal of the model offered by the United States for other governments. The South African political scientist Peter Vale analysed the way the United States, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 positioned itself as speaking for the whole world, extrapolating its interests across a global reach (Vale 2002: online). Similarly, Richard Calland warned of the increasingly divided views between elites and underclasses, showing that while exchanges and assumption of powers reminiscent of a 'new age of empire' occurred at the level of the elites, sympathies were increasingly shared among the world's underclasses (2002: online). In an article entitled 'We need a new anti-terror law, but not this one' David Bruce articulated concerns that the definitions of terrorism in the revised Anti-Terrorism bill presented by the South African government were disturbingly broad. The impetus of events in the United States had attached themselves to local events to appear to justify a tilt toward state rather than judicial, parliamentary or individual powers (Bruce 2003: online). This was a pattern that manifested itself in other parts of the world, and also within the United States.

An indication of the reach of the model established at Guantanamo Bay is that the president has exercised a right inside the territory of the United States to declare US citizens as 'enemy combatants', an action recently described in The New York Times as 'the most radical departure from law as we have known it' (Lewis 2004: A25). The revelation of torture at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, along with the leaking and later release of a memorandum drawn up by the United States Justice Department redefining the limits

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said. They were arrested in Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Morocco and other countries. ... "They are being held outside anybody's scrutiny. We have no idea in most cases whether these people are dead or alive" (Shanker 2004: online).

and culpability of using torture during the prosecution of the 'war on terror' indicates the expanding effects of Guantanamo Bay. In countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan prisoners seized, during the wars in those countries since 11 September are also being held in uncertain status, rendered untraceable and beyond scrutiny (Shankar 2004: online).

The Bush administration strategy at Guantanamo Bay is based on two conceptions of archive—one a vision of Islam drawn from a restricted archive (usually terminating in the Middle Ages) that deems Islam to be an inexplicable, ahistorical problem of unique scale requiring the suspension of normal methods and laws. The second is that Guantanamo has been created to generate a complete archive of knowledge about terrorist threats to the West. In statements about the purpose of holding prisoners under these conditions Donald Rumsfeld speaks of the men held there as the 'hardest of the hard' and Tony Blair referred in the House of Commons to 'the "immense importance" of the information gained from detainees (Hilton 2004: online). The intention of the creation of the non-space of Guantanamo Bay is to generate an archive through which everything can be known, that is, everything which is known by a group of prisoners. The methods of interrogation that fall within redefined limits of torture are aimed at the desire for complete transparency, of knowing everything, which is the fantasy of archive. The limits of torture have been redefined to facilitate the acquisition of information, and an 'indefinite' amount of time has been claimed for this purpose (Taylor 2004: online; Christian 2004: online). The 'unlawful combatant' can be fantasized as the archive made flesh. Everything that he knows can be made known. What they are planning, what they are hiding, why do they hate us – the expansive questioning referred to by Alex Boraine at the beginning of this chapter - has been refracted into a fantasy of revelation.

Reviewing the conception of information and classification during the British Empire in the nineteenth century, Thomas Richards argues in The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire (1993) that there was always a sense of fantasy attached to the archive of empire. In this vision of archive is an anxiety about what is missing, those things that have eluded it, that has been withheld and lied about by native informants.

The opposite – the ideal – is to know everything. If, during the imperial period, you knew about a place, you could grasp and rule that place, so there was always the impulse to know everything about the place, to fill in the gaps, the missing links, the blank spaces, the emptiness about a place (26). The fantasy of completeness, of total visibility, holds the promise of control. Control over information is control of power. The fantasy of completeness is evident in Guantanamo Bay.

I return here to the image of the map that manifests desire: to render the territory of the mind as fully explored, fully known, is the fantasy articulated in the access to the bodies of prisoners in Abu Ghraib. In Guantanamo Bay this notion of archive is aimed at knowing everything in the minds of the captives. Following the line of secrets and withholdings from Freud's 'what does woman want' through Fanon's 'what does the colonized want?' we arrive at the one that stands for Islam: what does Islam want? Hovering behind the original Freudian question is: who wants to know? In the case of the question 'what does Islam want?', the formulation of Islam as perennial mystery reflects on who is asking.

In this chapter I have examined systematized views of Islam that are extrapolated without distinction, and analysed a set of expanding psychic fantasies at the heart of such systematized thinking. I draw from these analyses a lesson of attentiveness to history and the specificities of location. The framework of visibility and secrecy gives particular significance to representations of 11 September 2001 and its aftermath, including the invasion of Iraq. In the next chapter I act on this lesson about the consequences of generalization and return to the particular: notions of Islam in post-apartheid South African art and writing.

returning the gaze

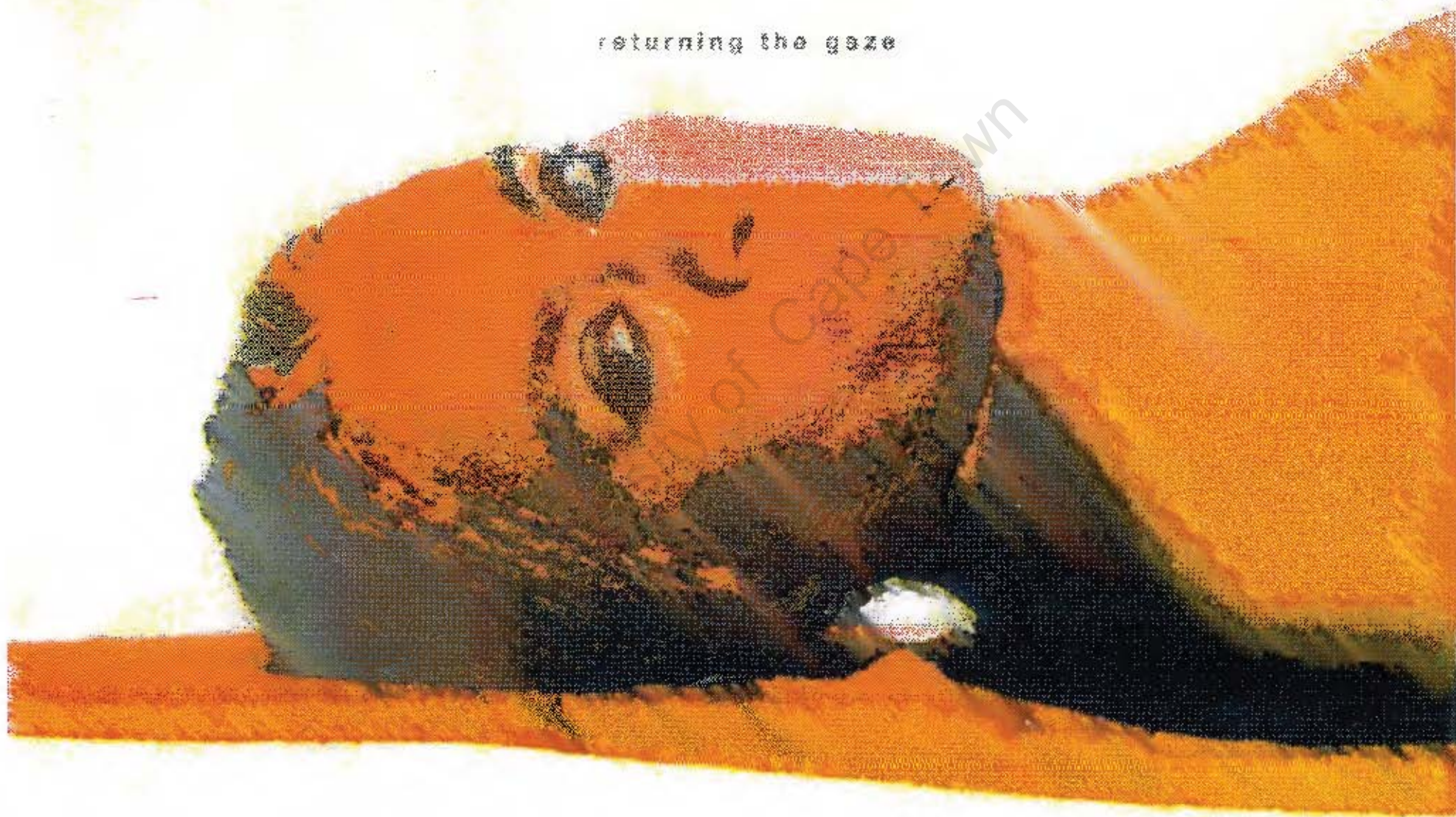


Figure 12.  
Berni Searle Untitled

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 'NORTH-NORTH-EAST':

### NEW FRAMINGS OF ISLAM IN SOUTH AFRICA<sup>150</sup>

*'[A]nd what we said about it became a part of what it is'.  
-Wallace Stephens, 'A postcard from the volcano (1965 [1954]: 159).*

*'We etch ourselves into ... culture, in complex palimpsests of knowledge and desire.'  
-Meena Alexander, 'Alphabets of Flesh' (1998: 152).*

In this chapter I discuss three recent South African works in theatre, art and poetry that engage with the tropes through which Islam has historically been visible in South Africa. In previous chapters these tropes have been set in a historical context and traced as they became established in paintings, food and burial. This was followed in the next two chapters on *Pagad* and *11 September* by an exploration of the themes of the masked man and the elusive face in media reporting on Islam. In this chapter I return to the specific and look at works which themselves, in form as well as content, demonstrate an acute reflexivity about the legacy of portrayals of Islam. The pieces discussed below are: the play *'At Her Feet'* written by Nadia Davids, first performed in October 2002, the photographic installation *Colour Me* (1999) and the video *Vapour* (2004) by conceptual artist Berni Searle, and the poem *'Brother, Who Will Bury Me?'* by Rustum Kozain. In these works there is an engagement with the local and the transnational, the present and the past, and the individual and the collective. While they address themes associated with Muslim life, their inventiveness of form disrupts any assumption that they explain or claim authority over their subject. The response in these works is not simply to rebut or seek to overturn prior patterns. Instead, they show the fractures and repressions of such images in works that manifest the variety and complexity of Muslim life.

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<sup>150</sup> The line 'trees bend north-north east in witness' appears in Rustum Kozain's poem *'Brother, Who Will Bury Me?'*, which is discussed later in this chapter. North-north-east is the direction toward Mecca that Muslims in the Cape face when they pray. The word for this orientation toward the sacred Kaa'ba in Mecca, built by the prophet Abraham, is Qibla. North-north-east is thus both an indication of the specific locality of Cape Town, and its link to the universal reach of Islam.

Before discussing the works themselves, I briefly review renditions of Islam in selected South African writing and music. Recent South African art has re-imagined the multiplicities of Muslim lives.<sup>151</sup> In new initiatives in literature and art one finds supple, resonant and transformative engagements with the legacies of history as well as the contemporary world. In 2002 the playwright Malika Ndlovu, along with Barbara Boswell and Rudayba Khan, compiled Voices of Nisaa [Voices of Women]. The collection complicates simplistic visions of Islam through interviews, poetry and visual art that articulate South African Muslim women's views on faith, marriage, oppression and art. Voices of Nisaa shows connections with women in other parts of the world, testifying to the difficulties women face in a patriarchal world. Tatamkhulu Afrika's novel The Innocents and poems such as 'Nothing's changed' and 'Our Street' have thickened the visions of Muslim life in Cape Town with candid renditions of apartheid-era politics, religious strife, and lyrical renditions of the ordinary sounds and the solace of faith in Cape Town. The memoir Our Generation (2003) by journalist Zubeida Jaffer, alluded to in Chapter Eight, writes into history the place of Muslims in the anti-apartheid struggle in a political and intensely personal frame, sharing the doubts as well as the resoluteness that attend her experience of faith. In popular music Adam Haupt's work on the hip-hop group Prophets of Da City conveys their conscious rendering of Islam as integrated into Black South African life (2001: 179). Contesting the sense of 'coloured' communities as homogeneous, the group's songs address 'the shame of slavery' and convey the relation of religion to class in 'Net a bietjie liefde' [Just a little love] (2001: 181).

### Separate Leisures

Apartheid took its microscopic policing of racial 'purity' through separateness into the arena of leisure, in addition to education, medical treatment, work, sexuality, marriage and cemeteries. The Separate Amenities Act 49 of 1953, the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 and the Publication and Entertainment Act 26 of 1963 sought to segregate by 'race' the activities of pleasure and relaxation (Haupt 2001: 179). These actions by the apartheid

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<sup>151</sup> Selected additional references include Tatamkhulu Afrika Bitter Eden (2002), Mad old man under the morning star (2001), The Angel and Other Poems (1999), Achmat Dangor Kafka's curse (2000) and Imraan Coovadia The Wedding (2002).

government were attempts to enforce its ideology of separateness in the cultural and personal spheres touched by leisure. Despite such legal and institutional imperatives toward separateness, the scholar Kelwyn Sole (1985) points out that much cultural work during apartheid continued to contest the notion that identity was solipsistic and mutually divided and, in fact, manifested the constant interactions that the state tried to police. The desire for purity and separateness in apartheid was a species of fiction, a vision of freezing identities in a tableau, as Zakes Mda indicates. 'Apartheid as a system was so absurd that it was possible to take a slice of real-life and put it on the stage ... and have a great piece of the theatre of the absurd' (quoted in Kornhaber 2004: 2). This absurdity often emerged in the divergence between the declarative certainties of racial distinctness and the realities of human interaction, as the discussion on 'colouredness' in the Introduction showed.

Even before apartheid, theatre had been used to pursue a vision of separateness. The scholar Keith Bain points out that until the 1950s, theatre replicating Western forms 'played a distinct role in preserving colonial life and served to heighten an affiliation with European roots' (2003: 147). Even today the legacy of apartheid continues to be manifested in the structures and conventions that deliver South African theatre. Screenwriter and scholar Bheki Peterson notes that Black theatre is marked by the same deformations that institutionalised racism has generated in the rest of South African society. 'African males predominate as performers, whites as "skilled technicians" who mostly direct, and African women are reduced to the periphery in both numbers and status' (quoted in Haupt 2001: 186). The theatre critic Mike van Graan notes that post-apartheid theatre faces persistent difficulties of funding, and arts structures struggle to administer what government support there is for theatre (2004: online). Both Bain and Van Graan testify consequently to the heavy influence of commercialisation theatre today. Tourism is shaping the plays that reach the theatres, as the playwright Ashraf Johaardien noted (2004: interview). As a result, the larger theatres increasingly offer works of entertainment aimed at tourists (Bain 2003: 152). At theatres, audience profiles indicate an 'ongoing ghettoisation' where [g]enerally, white audiences see plays by

white artists; black audiences watch plays featuring black actors, with little crossover' (Van Graan 2004: online).

However, there are signs of more promising developments. In post-apartheid theatre Van Graan finds that festivals are the most innovative fora for South African theatre by offering spaces where new works can be presented to audiences who might not attend them at a theatre. Furthermore, in terms of creativity, Zakes Mda sees post-apartheid theatre overcoming a form of aesthetic impoverishment. Mda states that '[t]he landscape of South Africa is strewn with the corpses of authors who were not able to survive liberation' since apartheid no longer provides the material for 'writers [who] never learnt to use their imagination' (quoted in Kornhaber 2004: 2). On the other hand, stringently honest recent works such as John Kani's 'Nothing but the truth' show that post-apartheid theatre can not only overcome expectations of ghettoised audiences but also address current South African realities in supple ways (Kornhaber 2004: 1).

In addition to such content, new theatrical works are redefining the form of theatre. Keith Bain argues that after the 'critical theatre' (148) of the apartheid years, the development of 'syncretic', hybrid, 'total' and 'hypertheatre' – eclectic pieces that 'surpass the framework of any theatrical forebear' – in post-apartheid South Africa makes it more appropriate to speak of 'performance' (146). This impetus toward formal innovation and new content has emerged out of the impact of the lingering racism in the arena of culture in South Africa. As Rajesh Gopie articulates:

[b]ecause I am told that I am Indian, because I am affirmed at each turn that I am Indian, because this determines the roles that I play – I will never be cast in *Death of a Salesman* for example the way they cast it at the moment in this country – me and others like me have decided to do our own thing, and *Out of Bounds* is a product of that.' (quoted in Snyman 2001).<sup>152</sup>

This 'own thing' includes some of the most interesting new works in South African performance. A new generation of Black South African theatre-writers such as Oscar Petersen ('suip'), Malika Ndlovu ('a coloured place') and Rajesh Gopie ('Out of Bounds') are building on the heritage of Black writing in theatre by incorporating

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<sup>152</sup> Wilhelm Snyman, 'Joy of being out of bounds', *Cape Times*, 2 February 2001, page not recorded, Baxter Theatre Archives.

complex views of 'race', gender and religion into their writings. Gopie describes his writing as faithful to the specificity of South Africa. 'This play is saying "I'm not pretending to be universal." I am merely telling a story that becomes universal by being very specific' (quoted in Snyman 2001). Nadia Davids' play 'At her feet', which deals with Muslim women in Cape Town, is in this tradition.

Before discussing 'At her feet' in detail, next I briefly examine previous representations of Islam in theatre in Cape Town. Research in the archives of the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town indicates there is a strong tradition of Black theatre in the Cape. While Muslim life registers on 'the periphery of the national consciousness', there is a substantial tradition in Cape Town of popular theatre dealing with the topic.<sup>153</sup> Gopie confirms 'the emergence of a strong so-called Coloured theatre-going audience and the emergence of strong so-called Coloured shows' (quoted in Snyman 2001). This kind of theatre includes non-professional community-based theatre groups offering their performances in schools and community halls. Occasionally such shows draw sufficient audiences to justify a move to more expensive and prestigious venues such as the Baxter, where they may have repeated runs. Examples include 'Diekie vannie bokaap', which played for two engagements in 1992 and 'Rosa' in 1996, both written by Zulfah Otto-Sallies and performed by the Bo-kaap theatre group. Nadia Davids' 'At her feet' thus participates in a varied tradition of portraying Islam in the theatre in Cape Town.

#### AT HER FEET: 'LOOKING AT ME LIKE YOU LOOK AT THEM'

'At her feet' is a one-woman play set in contemporary South Africa that features the interlocking monologues of six female characters. This form may appear to be a paradoxical mechanism through which to articulate the complexity and multiplicity of Muslim women's perspectives in South Africa, but Davids explained that she used the artifice of one woman playing six different characters precisely to show the shifting, intersecting nature of identity. 'I inscribed different characters on one body to show just

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<sup>153</sup> Len Ashton, 'Insight into the identity of a tenacious people', the Argus, date and page not recorded, Baxter Theatre Archives.

how multifaceted, hybrid, complex the lived experience of Muslim women's lives can be' (Davids 2004: interview). Davids uses music, poetry, monologues and costume to reveal and to revisit character. Through the characters of Azra (a young Jordanian woman who has been stoned to death), Sara (a university student and story teller), Ayesha (a politically active friend of Sara's), Tahira (Sara's conservative cousin), Aunty Kariema (a housewife whose eclectic tastes make her one of the funniest characters, but who also delivers the most poignant line of the play) and Azra's mother (who ends the play), 'At her feet' offers intimate, sometimes uncomfortable, perspectives which are left deliberately unresolved.

The play has been amply praised by critics and played to sold out audiences in South Africa (Lliteras 2003: 6). In 2004 'At her feet' garnered the pre-eminent theatre honours, the Fleur du Cap awards for Best Director and Best Actress (Van Graan 2004: online). The complexity of its form and dialogue have been particularly appreciated. The critic Susana Molins Lliteras praised the play for 'not fall[ing] into simple dichotomies between modern and traditional, liberated and suppressed' as well as the 'unrivalled depth' of its characters (*ibid.*). The theatre scholar Guy Berger notes that 'different positions jostle for place within, as well as between, each woman's discourse' in a 'gratifyingly complex' rendition of character (2003: online).

The play is discussed here because it evokes Islam through a varied and sophisticated panoply of voices. Davids explores the relations between race, politics and religion and the intertwining local and global tendrils of a South African Muslim identity. In the play familiar themes associated with Islam, such as veiling, cooking, burial, patriarchal men and suffering Muslim woman are taken in unexpected directions, as the analysis below shows. The play's charge lies in this use of the familiar to subvert expectations.

The connection of religion with other vectors of identity such as 'race' and gender is central to the approach of 'At her feet'. Davids found that the context of post-apartheid South Africa allowed her to posit such connections in her creative work. 'I reached a point where it was okay for me to deal with issues of gender. [Previously] the race

question had subsumed everything.' The ideology of apartheid had mapped 'race' onto religion, so that in the Cape terms like 'Malay' and 'Indian' recall the complexities of religious identities. Noting that the word 'Islam' is erroneously assumed to imply exceptionalism and erase the similarities and connections between Muslims and other communities, including its 'intensely patriarchal' character in the Cape, Davids states that 'the issues I deal with in the play are not endemic to the Muslim community alone' (2004: interview). Indeed, 'At her feet' illustrates that the fact that its characters are Muslim does not exempt them from contradiction or even complicity with racism.

In structure 'At her feet' engages with but does not aim simply to correct what it perceives as problematic portrayals of Islam. Davids says her work was stimulated by:

those images of enraged Pagad members, [and] the continuous process of identification merely because there is an outside signifier of inward commitment, like a fez or a scarf. We always got these veiled images, where the men and women were inscrutable, mysterious, and sometimes just sinister (2004: interview).

While drawn to the power of these 'veiled images' to define Islam, the play avoids the temptation to explain the motivations of Muslim men and women. 'At her feet' does not evade the difficulties of being a woman in often patriarchal Muslim communities by presenting an unreflective unity. In form, the piece refuses a single, linear narrative, and offers its scenes in textured and deliberately fractured ways, using poetry, layering, allusions, memories, and recurring images.

The characters are related to one another as mother and daughter, aunt and niece, cousins and friends. The rhythms of fasting, praying, Eid celebrations, cooking, work and shopping mark their speech. In their interlocking monologues, the women refer to one another and reflect on their own words. In a compelling approach to character the play invokes familiar types but gives them a chance to speak differently. The women in the play all reflect on the same topic - their response as Muslim women who hear about the 'honour killing' of a young Jordanian girl who had been discovered talking to a man who was not a member of her family.

The vision of Islam conveyed in 'At her feet' accommodates both the horror Sara feels on seeing the 'honour killing' in a television documentary, and an experience of Islam as part of resistance to power. Ayesha, the politically engaged character in the play (who shares the name of a wife of the Prophet, a warrior and leader in the earliest Islamic community) describes Islam in terms that combine spirituality, politics, subversive theories, poetry and music:

I take Islam very seriously ... Islam blended with some Black Consciousness, Biko, Baraka, Malcolm, some Feminist theory, big up to Spivak and Judith Butler, and of course my personal hero, Edward Said, with a little Lauren Hill in the mix.

Ayesha's perspective undercuts the expectation that exposure to the West and pleasure in its music will dilute observance to Islam. At the same time, Ayesha's view also demonstrates the complexity of 'the West'. She venerates the revolutionary and critical voices of Malcolm X and Edward Said in the United States, and Steve Biko in South Africa. The Indian theorist Gayatri Spivak joins Judith Butler in the feminist dimension of Ayesha's Islam. In the rest of the play we see other beliefs and attitudes that cluster around people's experience of the religion, including Sara's sense of connectedness with Muslim women in other parts of the world, Tahira's consumerism at Eid and Auntie Kariema's derogatory comments about Indian Muslims.

The play's formal structure creates an intersection between singularity and multiplicity through its use of poetry and monologues by characters who love, despise and talk about one another. 'At her feet' presents us with reversed perspectives that allow us to enter the silence of the characters. This is most evident in the monologue by Azra al Jamal, the young Jordanian woman who has been stoned to death by the male members of her family. 'At her feet' opens with Azra speaking after she has been killed. The title refers to the hadith (saying of the prophet), 'Paradise lies at the feet of the mother' which signals the value with which Islam regards women, and that men are seen to betray. The play ends with Azra's mother speaking with her dead daughter, reclaiming her from the actions of the men of her family.

Davids uses clothing both symbolically and critically in the drama. Azra opens the play wearing a hijab, with her body movements signalling the stoning that has just ended her life. After this dance of death, she takes off the burkha and speaks. 'My name is Azra al Jamal and I have just been killed.' From this striking opening, the play moves to the South African characters, who agonize over Azra's fate. Each character is signalled by specific clothing and music, from the tablah music of Azra, to the Erykah Badhu of Sara, the Black Star that plays when Ayesha appears, the James Ingram that announces Tahira, and Zayne Adam [a popular Muslim South African singer] of Auntie Kariema. The shifts in music and scarves allows the actress Quanita Adams to augment the gestures and accents through which she embodies the six women.

After Azra's lyrical introduction, the first South African character is Sara, the storyteller, whose opening words are a poem, 'The Scarf' (the term in South Africa wear for the head covering that Muslim women). 'It begins with geometry', Sara commences. The apparent promise to take the audience inside the veil through Sara's words is refracted through the language of poetry, which refuses to render transparent the topics it addresses. The play is framed by poetry, from the poetic hadith which gives the play its title, and the excerpt from 'Cape Town, Jerusalem' by Rustom Kozain to three other poems, 'The Scarf' and 'Eid Day', read by Sara, and 'Ms. Islam', read by Ayesha. The use of poetry draws attention to language which is not direct and factual, but lyrical, resonant and layered. Poetry unsettles a single meaning, whether in engaging with representations of Islam or imperatives within Islam. The excerpt from 'Cape Town, Jerusalem' alludes to the tendrils that connect the local and the international in Muslim lives, as well as the danger that lies in simplification and repression within Islam:

... as I turn from the stone's articulate act  
and seek the sentence long enough to house my tribe  
while knowing of neither's existence

The speaker in 'Cape Town, Jerusalem' contemplates the direct 'articulate[ness]' of a stone, and the concrete identity offered by his 'tribe', and concludes that he cannot embrace either. 'At her feet' traverses the spaces between these concepts, between the

hadith and Kozain's poem, and between the lyrical monologues that open and close the play.

By using poetry, the play signals the multiplicity of the issues it addresses. As a playwright, Davids is aware of the danger that 'if you write something about Muslim women, you are now that margin's voice' (2004: interview). The authority but also the limitation that such a position involves is something that she declines. Instead, Davids asserts, 'I don't see myself as a Muslim playwright, who has access to stories and who has the right to tell stories. I don't want to be a spokesperson' (2004: interview). The play unsettles a claim to reveal secrets by an 'authentic' insider. Sara's perspective on the veil therefore reflects on the perceptions and expectations of others:

[T]he world has gone a bit of veil crazy. Behind the veil. At the drop of a veil. To veil or not to veil. And I wonder sometimes why, with my love of fabric, and texture, colour and beauty, with my collection of scarves that I drape around my waist, or wrap like a bandana on my head, or loop through my belt holes, or throw around my shoulders I wonder if I don't wear it just because I don't like what it says. Or maybe it's because I don't want you looking at me like you look at them.

In this speech the beauty and pleasure of scarves is explored alongside the acknowledgement that as a Muslim woman, Sara is affected by the way she is seen in when she wears a scarf.

Tahira, to whom we are introduced by Ayesha in extremely negative terms, and who is potentially the least sympathetic character in the play, nonetheless presents a resonant account of being told, in the aftermath of 11 September, by her employer at the travel agency where she works that she cannot wear her scarf to work:

Basically, at the end of it he said I could either take off my scarf or go work somewhere else. ... You know, I have worn a scarf since I was sixteen. ... So, now I'm left, holding my scarf in one hand, and unemployment in the other. I think about going out into the world with my head uncovered. I think about being at work, about people not being scared to buy plane tickets from me.

The association between wearing a scarf and people being afraid of her at first strikes Tahira as funny, and she laughs out loud when her employers suggests it, but then she realizes that he is serious. Thus, the 'secrets' revealed by Sara and Tahira in these scenes

4) are about the way the perceptions of others affect Muslim women, rather than the essential truth about the reasons they wear 'the veil'.

It is the humorous character Auntie Kariema who delivers perhaps the most resonant line of the play, when, reflecting on her conversation with Sara, she regrets her 'harsh' response to Sara's horror about Azra's fate:

My mother died when I was ten. For five months she sat in a bed, wasting away slowly, while doctor did what he could. My father was in the background somewhere. ... And the day of her funeral was dark hey. ... I stayed in the kitchen, near the stove, where it was warm not really wanting to move or think. ... later, when she was wrapped in white sheet, pressed with camphor and rose petals, and lifted above the men's shoulders, ready to be taken to the koebus [cemetery], I don't know what made me think I could go with them. But I followed the men out the door, and tried to tagalong [sic], maybe make myself unnoticeable ... because you see, I needed to bury my mother. And one of the men, a stranger who walked close by the coffin, turned to me and said "what are you doing? You know you're not allowed, go back to the house." But you see, I kept walking, because I needed to bury my mother. I kept walking until my father, his face blurred with pain, picked me up and carried me to the stoep [veranda] by our house and left me with my aunties. I stood there crying, while the women went inside to make pies and tea and sandwiches with their grief. So this girl, this Arab girl. I suppose I can understand her ... I wanted to walk and she wanted to talk.

The scene above recounts a vision of a Muslim funeral through the eyes of a woman, reflecting on her memories of childhood. Auntie Kariema reveals that the rituals of closure offered by burying her mother are foreclosed for her because of her gender. The lingering pain of this absence is refracted for her, as for the other women, in the 'pies and tea and sandwiches' into which they channel their grief. (The reframing of Muslim burials is discussed further in the analysis of Rustum Kozain's poem 'Brother, who will bury me?' later in this chapter.) The unforgotten and unassuaged pain of not being able to be present at her mother's burial leads Auntie Kariema to the realization of a direct connection between her desires and that of the Jordanian girl: 'I wanted to walk and she wanted to talk'.

### Conclusion

Through the unpredictable depth of its characters 'At her feet' unsettles the entrenched images into which Muslim women have been fixed. The play enters the space of the symbolic and subverts the litany of repeated images about Islam. Just as her play unsettles the notion of a universal 'truth' about Muslim women, Davids herself does not claim to have the final word about these topics. Though a Muslim woman herself, she does not claim to write as a Muslim playwright, nor to speak with authority about all Muslim women. David chooses to distance herself from the temptation of a stable, immovable position which renders ambiguity and change impossible. In writing into view the multiplicity and contradictions of Muslim women's perspectives about themselves and events in the rest of the world, 'At her feet' has transformed the representation of Muslim women in South Africa.

I move now to consider Berni Searle's installations *Colour Me* and *Vapour*.

### COLOUR ME: STAGING THE SKIN

*'Skin ... is the most visible of fetishes ... and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies ... Skin, as a signifier of discrimination, must be produced or processed as visible.'*

- Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994: 78-79).

Berni Searle is a South African sculptor and conceptual artist based in Cape Town. In 1999 her installation *Colour Me* at the Mark Coetzee Fine Art Cabinet in Cape Town attracted widespread critical and popular attention. Since then Seale has become one of South Africa's best-known artists, winning national and international awards, and is one of the few South African artists who has attained a prominent international profile. Searle's work has been sensitively reviewed by leading art and literary critics such as Annie Coombes (2003), Pumla Gqola (2004) and Desiree Lewis (2001). In this discussion I analyse the meanings of two of Searle's works: the *Colour Me* installation in 1999 and the *Vapour* video installation in 2004, both of which alluded to tropes associated with Islam in South Africa.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Searle is not herself Muslim, though she has alluded in interviews about the *Colour Me* exhibition to interactions with her extended family which included a Muslim branch on which she drew in creating the artworks.

In the Colour Me installation, the naked body of Berni Searle recalls colonial images of naked African and Native American women. She participates bodily in the play of representation, encapsulating to-be-looked-at-ness (Laura Mulvey cited in Lewis 2001: 109). While prone, Searle's body appears stiff rather than alluring, insistently corporeal rather than ethereal. In this mode Searle's body indexes the layered meanings of spice and of skin, showing how artifice is present in our perception of the 'natural'. In the photographs there is a play between surface and covering, nakedness and excess. The spices in one sense obscure the body, in another, intensify attention to its outlines. Despite her nakedness, Searle's body is actually laden with meanings. With the spices she appears not adorned but almost stifled – they cover her mouth and eyes. She presents the act of looking by manifesting its impact on the skin, rendered naked and accessible. Yet this very availability is unsettling. The spectator feels the compulsion and pleasure of looking, of seeming to receive an answer to the question: what lies beneath the spices? Yet, within the mesmerizingly rich colours, the spectator remembers that the opportunity to look has been constructed. The installation enacts the desire to look, and also creates the sense of being caught in the act of looking. In Colour Me Searle's body does not so much physically return the gaze, as it asks, by staging the occasion of gazing, who is being looked at, and what the object being looked at is.

Searle's work uses elements that are familiar, domestic and apparently innocent, and inflects them in radically different ways. In Colour Me the skin of the artist is marked by spices, recalling the way all skins are marked by meaning. The work creates a new way of seeing spices in South Africa. As indicated in Chapter Four on food, C. Louis Leipoldt famously referred to 'Malay' women's use of spices with a 'free hand'. Through the seemingly innocuous sight of spice, Colour Me revises such familiar tropes about spices, and also through which Islam is rendered in South Africa. Conventionally limited to the domestic sphere, spices in Colour Me invite an excavation of meanings under their rich surface. Searle's work brings together different meanings of spices. The work, while marked by visibility, also goes beyond the visible by recalling the history of the spice trade. Substances such as sugar drove the plantation system of the West Indies and therefore the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Morton 2000: 172). Slaves from East Africa,

India and South-East Asia were transported in ships calling at the Cape on the same routes as the trade in commodities such as spice. Therefore, in the notions of 'exotic' spices and 'exotic' skin, lingers the memory of the brutal trades in human beings and commodities. In The Poetics of Spices: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic (2000) Timothy Morton argues that the luxury of spice has less to do with taste than the way 'it sensualises certain fantasies about the nature of money and capital' (2000: 36). In addition to luxury, spices also encode the other meanings that hover over money, such as slavery and exploitation. The sight of spices therefore indexes capital and its brutalities, associations which Colour Me deliberately recalls.

The sumptuous surfaces of spices also allude to language itself. Spices recall the sensuousness of language, the material weight of its significations - its marks on paper, its sounds, its textures - what Morton calls 'the opaque, ... grainy, irreducible aspect of the signifier' (2000: 234). The word spice has a generic quality and does not itself have the detailed meaning of individual spices like cinnamon or clove, yet paradoxically the world also calls on a 'potent concreteness' (Morton 2000:19). Simultaneously figuring the sensuous and the metaphorical, spice can be seen as 'a sign made flesh' (Morton 2000: 9). The colour and texture of the piece embody this sense, and also suggest how flesh has been given meaning by signs.

In each panel of the Colour Me exhibition, the body of the artist is covered in different spices - red, brown, yellow. The depth of colour in the photographs is immediately engaging. Some photographs document the whole body, and others, only parts. The works operate through the pose of the body, as well as colour, composition. In Colour Me the sensuous colours and textures of spices are crafted into a work of arresting visual power, that is simultaneously weighted with history.

Untitled, 1999 (See Figure 12, p. 204)

Colour digital print

This photograph, one of the most striking of the Colour Me series, consists of a close-up of Searle's face and torso covered in red pepper, her face turned to the camera to the

right. She is lying on her back and the photograph has been taken at eye-level from her right. While her neck is only slightly inclined, Searle's gaze is at a more acute angle and meets the camera directly. There is a play in the photograph between the individuality of Searle's presence, emphasized by her direct gaze, and the abstract and sculptural shapes of her body. This sculptural aspect appears in the frame in a series of curves and circles - the oval of the head, the soft line of the jaw, inverse arch of the neck, the curvature of the shoulder, the rise of the chest toward the frame, the neck and the back of the head resting on the ground, all covered by spices. There is an interaction between the curve of these shapes and the direct line of Searle's eyes.

Her mouth, hair, nose and torso are covered with powder. She appears silenced, her mouth blotted by the colour red. At the same time, the rich red of the powder contrasted with the neutral background is startlingly vivid. It gives energy to the otherwise still composition. The colour red conveys vigour and immediacy but also evokes blood and woundedness. Spices lie under Searle's head, as though forming a pool of blood. The curve of the shoulder, not entirely covered with spices, looks vulnerable and exposed. There is an intense and arresting ambiguity to the photograph arising from a simultaneous sense of vulnerability and potency to the subject. Searle's gaze in this work is not assertive, but quiet, observant, questioning. This work was selected for the 2001 'Returning the Gaze' project of the Cape Town Festival and, as a result, was circulated broadly in postcards and on billboards. The image exceeds the logo of the project. Indeed, Searle gazes back literally to the camera, her eyes the only part of her body not covered with spices. However, her body already presents the act of availability to the gaze.

#### Girl, 1999.

Colour digital print, plastic bottles, spices

In this work the body is arrayed for the gaze by being divided into three panels separating the head from the torso, and the torso from the legs. The small bottles of spices allude to the notion of spice as precious, and also its contemporary use in the kitchen, where spices are typically stored in small amounts. The bottles also recall the economics of spices, the

way they are a metaphor for money (Morton 2000: 14). The body in this piece enacts the imperative of a dissecting gaze. The gaze is simultaneously fascinated and held by the object, but also holds it in place. In the three panels Searle's body is covered in turn in red, brown and yellow, as though a product offered in different varieties. While the nakedness of the body in the work seems to offer untrammelled access, Girl performs a series of receding meanings. Searle's body encodes a lack of volition, yet her stillness also suggests absence and subtraction of the self. Yet the very withdrawal into an inaccessible space inside the body intensifies the action of the gaze, which, in effect, becomes part of the experience of the artwork. Ultimately, the gaze becomes the invisible object of the work. Girl becomes a series of stagings: it stages the act of looking, the to-be-looked-at-ness of the body, the always close meanings of capital, and the skin as a fetish which promises to resolve all these unstable meanings.

#### VAPOUR: UNDER THE VISIBLE

Searle's video and photographic exhibition titled Vapour (2004) at the Michael Stevenson Contemporary Gallery is both related to and moves away from her earlier work. The Vapour installation consists of a video accompanied by hand-printed photographic stills from the video. In the Vapour video we find the representation of the labour of cooking in huge pots, asserting a relationship between this work and the normal activities of making food.

Searle attests in an interview in the catalogue that she was inspired to create the piece upon reading an article in the Cape Argus about a charity project at Eid in which Muslim women made food for thousands of people. Searle says that she was fascinated by the scale of the endeavour conveyed through the sight of huge pots of food, as well as the 'monumental' intentions of the people for making food. The detail of the visual image of pots inspired Vapour. In the interview Searle resists abstraction and insists on the connection between the sight of the pots and the regular activities which her video recalls. However, she does not simply re-create such actions but selects and composes evocative elements in crafting the images.

The setting of Vapour is an area in the Cape Flats usually used for the purpose of such large-scale cooking. The area has many residents who are Muslim, yet Searle declines to assign too-literal meanings to the setting or action in the video. Its title Vapour also plays against an overly concrete identity. In the interview in the catalogue accompanying the installation Searle states:

it's not my intention to simply recreate this event with all its specifics, but rather to "enact" aspects of this practice, that extend beyond site. Since it was shot almost entirely in the dark, it could in fact be taking place anywhere. ... I like that ambiguity (2004: unpaginated).

The cycle of the day is signalled by sunset, and the waning light is contrasted with brisk fires beneath the pots. Part of the fascination of Vapour is its images of the artist moving through the landscape marked by the pots. In the video the body looks both active and vulnerable compared to the scale of the pots. The artist's foot is shown close to red coals. In a photograph titled 'In light of III' the abstract shapes created by close-ups of the fire are contrasted with the side of a leg and foot. When Searle lifts the lid of a pot, its weight requires her to use both hands. The artist is not alone in the video. Other bodies join hers in the dispersed choreography of movement and timing required by these pots. The video is highly sensuous – showing open fires, swelling steam, glinting pots, the fading light of sunset.

The photographic still titled 'Half-light', which also appears on the catalogue cover, shows Searle in the foreground to the right of the image, and behind her is an array of enormous metal pots, lit by open fires. Searle's body is in silhouette. The photograph has been taken with a slow shutter speed and, as a result, the sparks from fires are manifested in thin, spidery trails leading from the fire. These form criss-crossing patterns in the dark and red trails form between the pots and behind the silhouette of Searle's body .

The pots contain water and, as the fires grow hotter, give off steam. The vapour dissolves the boundary of inside and outside, echoing the transitions and transformations that abound in the video. Surfaces become obscured, wood becomes ash, sunset become

darkness. Plumes of steam contrast with the metallic texture of the pots. Above the hard edges of the lids, vapour coalesces before dissipating. Briefly, it obscures vision and even in close-up it is impossible to detect what is metal and what is steam. All the surfaces become vaporous.

The series of photographs titled 'Torch 1-8' plays on differences in shape and texture and elements on the site. Part of the interest of these images is the details of the pots - the sediment along their sides, the nails that bolt the heavy metal handles to the pot and the ashes that spill from the pile of wood. The legs that hold the bulging pots in place give an sense of stability yet their slenderness also suggests fragility. The last image in the video is an aerial view of the site as the fires are dying. Ash is strewn 'as if something catastrophic and devastating has occurred' (Searle quoted in Vapour catalogue 2004: unpaginated).

### Conclusion

In the two installations discussed above Searle reformulates familiar activities associated with Muslims, particularly Muslim women. The availability of the 'exotic' female body is unsettlingly rehearsed in Colour Me. Deliberately invoking the expectations created in earlier representations, the acute visual intelligence of Untitled and Girl creates a new vocabulary for spice in South Africa.

The scale, movement and pace in Vapour transmute the usually hidden work of cooking into art. Vapour overturns the anonymity of Muslim cooking and 'enacts' the drama of such undertakings, highlighting their artistry and choreography. Searle's work in this installation insists on a relation with the actions that inspired the piece, yet, with its carefully crafted elements, reaches a level that resonates beyond the literal. The complexity of both the generative and exhausting aspects of such undertakings is conveyed. The final shot is of the fires wearing out and the ash mounting. Yet, in its very sense of depletion and abandonment, the scene indexes the labour it has taken to reach this ending.

I move now to the last of the works considered in this chapter, 'Brother, who will bury me' by Rustum Kozain.

#### A HISTORY OF DEATH – 'BROTHER, WHO WILL BURY ME?'

Rustum Kozain is a poet, journalist and lecturer in English who lives in Cape Town. He was born and grew up in Paarl ['Pearl'], thirty kilometers outside of Cape Town, in the wine-producing and fruit-growing zone of the Western Cape. Kozain's poetry maps the landscape of the Cape, leaving and circling places of origin, never quite returning home.<sup>155</sup> His writing combines keen but disciplined emotion with a vivid attention to the gestures of language, the topography of the body, and the histories encoded in the natural world. Desiree Lewis has observed of his 'Cape Town, Jerusalem' that it demonstrates 'a new way of making connections between inner and outer worlds, and, in many ways, a refusal of the neat binary.'<sup>156</sup> In this sense, Kozain's poetry is an indication of a resonant maturity in South African writing.

The poem with which I end this chapter, titled 'Brother, who will bury me?', forms part of Kozain's first collection, This carting life. 'Brother, who will bury me?' speaks of Muslim burial with an intimacy that proclaims a new space in the South African landscape, yet also places it alongside other presences in a landscape layered by history. First published in 1997, the poem recalls the descriptions of Muslim burials by Angas and Duff Gordon alluded to above in its level of detail, but with their elements radically reconfigured and re-imagined. Extensive in length, at one hundred and fifty one lines, and expansive in its content – dealing with death and homecoming, a resting place for the spirit, the history of death in the town – the poem also has a rivetingly unpredictable

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<sup>155</sup> Leaving and returning are central themes in Kozain's poetry. See, for instance, 'Zafaran' in which the speaker says: 'In this city of my birth/I am a traveller in a strange land'; and 'Cape Town, Jerusalem' in which we hear 'Most of all, I walk/so I may reach home and try to know/myself'; see also 'Conversations with my father' and 'Leaving Chicago, South-bound by Greyhound Bus'.

<sup>156</sup> Desiree Lewis (2004) Review: It all Begins: Poems from Postliberation South Africa. Lewis' review includes sensitive reflections on the possibilities for new kinds of writing in the post-apartheid era. For a view of further debates about poetry in the post-apartheid era, see Kelwyn Sole, 'The Witness of Poetry', New Formations and John Higgins 'The Sole Measure of Poetry: a Response to Kelwyn Sole, Pretexis, 2002.

speaker. Envisioning his own burial, the speaker is anything but inert. Changeable, fallen, his coursing imaginings take him further than he plans. Even when 'dead', the speaker testifies to the disreputable and implacable desires of the body – whether they are evident through confession, in the forbidden tastes of ham and wine, or on his skin, a tattoo of a crescent and moon. I analyse the poem in detail below.

'Brother, who will bury me?' illuminates the theme of burial discussed in Chapter Five. In that chapter I alluded to the ways in which Muslim burial grounds helped to shape the landscape of the Cape during colonialism. 'Brother, Who will Bury me?' remakes this landscape through the idiom of Islam. The first part of the poem describes an orthodox Muslim burial of a very unorthodox subject. In the second half of the poem the speaker rewrites the scene of his own burial in a vision that is not tied to Islam. His contemplation of different endings redefines death and burial as the possibility of a transcendent relationship with other people. In burying himself, he speaks into being a vision of homecoming that is not exclusively Muslim but nonetheless arises from an intimate familiarity with its idiom.

The poem starts with the speaker standing alone on Paarl rock with his arms outstretched. The gesture offers the body in an embrace that may not be answered, just as we do not know the answer to the question in the title. As we learn more about the speaker, we find that the question in the title implies who will be my community, who will accept my flawed life who will welcome me home?

Through this contemplation of a burial, we are given concrete steps such as the washing of the body, rubbing it with camphor, and wrapping it in soft white cloth, the prayers of the men carrying the body. The speaker is profoundly attentive to the 'grace' of these rituals (l. 29). When his body is being carried to the cemetery by the men who have gathered at his parents' home, what looks like 'a stumble/Of obligation' is in fact the deliberate touching of the body, 'my bier exchanged often/So everyone may find grace' (ll. 28-29). Yet he is also a transgressor who fears being seen as a 'mock[er]' of his father's faith (l. 25).

Though initially simply a meditation or 'dream' (l. 5), the question 'Brother, who will bury me, and where?' (l. 13) tumbles the speaker into the world he has imagined. The question is not 'who would bury me', but 'who will bury me'. His contemplation has thus taken the speaker inside the future he had started to imagine. The question has become deeper than a 'dream', and the weight of this world pulls the speaker (and the reader) into its consequences.

The poem is itself structured by the rituals of Muslim burial. In death, the speaker revisits all the details of his life, as they have been recorded by the angels on his shoulders. Perched on his left shoulder, Israeel has noted all his sins, and on his right shoulder Ismaeel has written his good deeds. These two books, the accounting of his life, will determine whether he will enter paradise. Echoing them, the speaker faithfully revisits the details of his transgressions, the marks of which have been left on his body. As his memories take him beyond transgression and redemption, back to his childhood, he finds a place he can truly envision as a resting place.

The poem is long, yet its pace matches the 'the quick of Islamic death', from the abrupt 'one twist-draw-and-clasp' of death when the angel of death Maalik il Mout removes the speaker's soul (l. 7), to the 'rush[ed]' walk to the grave, its 'haste' causing his friends to 'fumble' his bier during the walk (l. 36). The hurried pace is echoed by the realization that 'soon too the earth will ingest me'. Once he is buried, however, the pace slows to 'moments', and the poem shifts to a different notion of time. The rhythm of remembrance is retained through successive meetings of mourners at the house of the dead. 'Seven days later, ... Forty nights later, one hundred nights later', numbers that can be counted in on the fingers and in multiples of the joints of the hand. Prayers linger at the grave with voices that chant together in Sufist rituals of repetition. The speaker invites us to 'consider then my slow journey that starts only now' (l. 84).

The sumptuous detail of memory is reflected in the speaker's affectionate recollections of the flaws of childhood friends who, on the way to the cemetery, drop his body and create

'[t]he disgrace of my corpse on tarmac', the full confession of transgressions, including 'scarred with a tattoo', the rueful imagining of his inelegant, 'unmechanical' slumping, the lascivious contemplation of the food served at the funeral - the requisite 'sugar-bean stew', itself practically a ritual at funerals - envisaging gravy 'thick and red as mud'. His interest in seeing the mourners eat, his instruction to '[c]atch some gravy in the funnel of your fingers/And think of me' (ll. 74-75) is sensuous, almost indecorous. Such lovingly detailed imaginings issue from absence. We realize that the plenitude of details is an indication of desire. The speaker contemplates his funeral as an act of homecoming.<sup>157</sup> The title refers to his brother, but we learn in the course of the poem, also to the many Muslim brothers who carry and accompany his body, who sing his body into its final homecoming.

#### 'Or No? No ...'

The poem is structured by the enactment of a Muslim burial, from the ceremony of washing, to the prayers at the interment, the food served after the burial and the gathering again of mourners after seven days and one hundred days. The weight of detail grounds 'Brother, who will bury me?' in substance and solemnity. Yet the poem also interrupts this sombre tone with the interjections of its wilful, inconstant speaker. With this interior shifting, we are reminded that the poem starts with the word 'If'. Moreover, the speaker muses '[m]aybe I'll dream' (l. 5). The conditional at the beginning of the poem, and again in line 32, colours the weight of detail. In addition, in the poem the question mark occurs seventeen times and is a further formal mechanism that spills the speaker into the unknown.

After the resonant description of Muslim ritual, the speaker's use of the word 'or' in line 109 suddenly signals another, equally possible universe of death. The poem is structured to play between the requirements of observance and ritual, and the wilful, imaginative speaker, who leaps into the details of one possibility, and then another. The word 'or' occurs three times, each time offering an entirely different, possible world. The poem

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<sup>157</sup> In an interview in 2000 Kozain said. 'I was in America, and I thought about not being at home. I thought what would be a form of homecoming. To me dying, and being buried, was the strongest form of homecoming.' While the poem was started in the United States, Kozain only completed it on returning to South Africa in 1996 (Kozain 2000: interview).

enacts, in effect, deliberate acts of imagining. The changeable speaker disavows unity and, in contemplating equally possible outcomes, calls them all into existence.

Poignantly, it is not evasion or escape which motivates the speaker's use of 'or'. In lines 23-25 he contemplates the reaction of the washer of his body upon seeing the evidence of a tattoo, forbidden because modification of the body implies that the perfection of God's creation has been transgressed. 'Will he fall silent, murmur prayers for my redemption/Or alert the others? Will they abandon my body ... Or forgive me' (ll. 23-25). The extremes of redemption or abandonment frame the speaker's nervous 'dream'.

The speaker is neither exotically outside nor wholly within the communities he contemplates, but instead reflects on the process of inclusion and 'the solace of knowing/One's alone' (ll. 137-38). In the second half of the poem, from the 'crawl-space' of the Muslim grave, where the body is separated from soil only by a sheet, the poem opens again to the world. Emerging from his contemplation of Muslim burial from the inside, the speaker shifts to a different vision in which he perceives in the landscape the possibility of allegiances with other, older deaths. He sees everyone who has once been here, and been 'evicted'. In the history of all the dead of the place, he feels a different kind of community - with those who are gone and yet are still there, whose presence is 'crouching still in rock/Like fossil waiting to spring into beginning'. Yet, the Muslim burial is not itself superseded. Though they walk away, the men at the graveside will return for 'several moments', days, months and even years apart. The speaker invites their prayers, during his 'slow, final journey' (l. 99). The invitation to pray lingers, as other ghosts do.

The notion of space in the poem is specific. The poem speaks of this Islam, with 'branches plucked from bluegum trees,/ lush with thin, long branches: our substitute/For olive'. An Islam located in a place where, to face Mecca, one must turn 'north-north-east'. In sympathy with the speaker's suffering after death, the 'trees bend north-north-east in witness./Close to God, they know my terror' (ll. 101-102). 'Brother, who will bury me?' moves from the openness of Paarl Rock beneath the width of the sky, and narrows with death to a 'bier' and then further narrows through the speaker's gaze from 'my

universe' to 'my berth', then 'a wedge-shaped niche' and, finally, 'a crawlspace'. Once we have reached this smallest space, the perspective of the poem widens again, as the mourners walk 'forty steps away' (l. 93). At this moment, the test by the angel Azrafeel, the 'first inquisitor' of the grave, begins. With the 'torture' of the angel's questioning, the speaker's pain is at first centred in his body and then his focus widens, to 'elsewhere, in other countries, other towns', to birds, moles, ants and geckos, until 'we are one' (l. 108).

In his poem Kozain calls not only upon a deeply felt familiarity with the complex detail of the ritual of burial within the Cape Muslim community, but also the fact that this community lives in a land which has a longer history than its own tortured one, including the history of other Black people who were 'removed' during the years of apartheid. The speaker invokes other sadnesses that have occurred on the same land and have not yet been spoken. The detailed recounting of a kind of homecoming is, in the end, the making of a new place - the remaking of the landscape which has been a Muslim place, and also as a landscape of one who has left the Muslim community.

A graveyard measures time. Yet, though they are not marked, the place contemplated by the speaker also testifies to other times, other lives. 'Decades ago this graveyard was a jumble/of shacks. Migrant workers, their wives and children all without passes, lived here, called it/Bongweni, favourite place'. Graveyards continue the divisions evident among the living. Or 'buried in some pauper's grave/in Paarl, where the unknown and the wretched lie'. The Muslim interment has an unerring linearity to its unfurling narrative. Such burial works through rituals of closure, through voices in prayer, through touch, through communality. It is a gendered space, and the poem observes the exclusion of the mother from the speaker's interment. However, she appears at the end, the conduit to the speaker's wordless choice - to be buried alone, to insert himself into his chosen home, '[t]his favourite place with its rows of graves'. Once he has left the unfolding of Muslim burial that has already been written, to the speaker time collapses and all times are simultaneously visible to him. The ellipse in 'Or no? No...' is eternally open. Nothing is settled or final.

Ultimately, it is an aloneness that is also a transcendent oneness in which the speaker finally finds rest. Remembering a fight with his brother, the speaker recollects running from his 'bigger, stronger' sibling (l. 128) to sit, alone, next to a river 'reek[ing] of

laundry and decay' (l.132). He reaches for a gesture from the landscape. In his grief and anger, 'he picks 'veldflowers' and arranges them '[I]n a bleached Coke can' and, in a wordless gesture, takes them home to his mother. He 'sobbed in frustration, unable/ to show her the solace in knowing/One's alone, even as that solace hurt more' (l. 138). In this moment of vulnerability and 'frustration', the speaker finds his solitary route to 'solace'. The poem ends again with the image of the lone figure of the speaker, returning to the vision of that childhood gesture, and decides how he wishes to be buried - on those hills, in the ground in which flowers grow to offer future solace.

In 'Brother, who will bury me?' Kozain delivers a rendition of a Muslim burial definitively different to the discourse of the picturesque. While ultimately the speaker disavows the 'dream' in which he is buried according to Muslim ritual and creates his own based on the 'the solace in knowing/One's alone', the authority of detail of the Muslim rituals in the first part of the poem play against the conditions of 'if' and 'maybe', and the parallel possibilities signalled by 'or'. Despite his movement away from them, the memory of the Muslim rituals exceed the speaker's disavowal. In this epic recounting of his own burial the poem brings together ambivalence, disavowal and, ultimately, simultaneity. It does not so much speak a burial in a Muslim idiom, as plant that idiom in the ground, where it joins other languages.

#### Conclusion to all three works

None of the artists and writers identifies themselves as a representative or spokesperson for the Muslim community and none sees their work in an instrumental way as correcting mistaken views on Islam. Instead, they each respond creatively to sets of meanings that they experience as powerful cultural meanings and patterns. Their works embody complexity. The texture and form of their poems, plays and installations vastly expand the possibilities for envisioning and thinking about Islam. They do not rely not on a view from outside, but also do not create a safe and homogeneous perspective from inside. Embedded in the contemporary, such complexities include fractures in their own projects. The works acknowledge complicity, and at the same time insist on realities that have not previously been acknowledged. By setting in motion new possibilities and new ways of

thinking, they generate a sense of complexity and variety and contradiction – the range of human expression.

By writing a new vision of Islam, Searle, Davids and Kozain write a new South Africa that unsettles the logics held in place by the confirming middle, which fleshed out and manifested the logic of apartheid through the monsters of transgression and miscegenation, or their twin, the exotic other.

These works are characterized by indirection, complexity and a lack of simple outcomes. In none of these works is a unifying vision sought, nor an authoritative resolution to questions. Unity is disavowed. The thesis, like the works explored in the final chapter, consciously turns away from the solace of a unifying vision, and instead seeks complexity, variety and depth, even contradiction, to overcome the weight of the singular vision visited upon representations of Islam.

## CONCLUSION

*'History is what hurts.'*

- *Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious (1981: 102).*

The Pagad images that appeared in the South African media in 1996 articulated a new vision of Islam. In this thesis I conducted a long reading of the ways in which Islam has been represented in South Africa in order to provide a context for analysing the 1996 images. Drawing on the conceptions of Edward Said in Orientalism and later readings that emphasize gender, the thesis has been attentive to the latent weight of fantasies of 'race' on non-fictional representations.

In the Introduction I argued that the significance of Islam in South Africa must be sought in unexpected places, and looked at the role of the word 'kaffir' in the context of slavery and the displacement of indigenous peoples in rhetorically recasting what was indigenous as misplaced and unfit. Through this example, I showed how the meanings and experiences of Islam are transformed by specific circumstances and history, in contrast to perceptions of Islam as uniform and unvarying. I also demonstrated how a view of Islam that developed in the colonial era evolved into the lexicon of apartheid, and lingers in post-apartheid South Africa.

I contended in analyses of the 'oblique' positioning in nineteenth century paintings of the figure of the 'Malay', characterized as industrious, placid and picturesque, that such images of Muslims played a role in discursively securing a settler identity in the Cape colony. I followed this by exploring instances of the underside of this picturesque aspect, the discourse of 'Oriental fanaticism'. In an analysis of articles written in 1886 on the cemetery uprisings in Cape Town I showed the inadequacy of this discourse in articulating the reality of a city with a large Black population at a time of shifting meanings of 'race'. Building on analyses of South African visual arts and writings by J.

M. Coetzee and others, I conducted a reading that moves South African images of Islam from the apparently settled vistas of the picturesque into more complex engagements with what they emphasize and what they exclude. I examined the function of Muslims as part of the 'fluid middle' of colouredness that was used to stabilize the fiction of racial hierarchies in South Africa.

This thesis engaged with the play between the visible and the invisible. It traced the meanings of different kinds of visibility – the oblique visibility of the 'Malay' figure in paintings, the ambiguous visibility of food, the disquieting visibility and the elusive meanings of the 'suspected' face, and the 'invisibility' of 'sleeper' cells, among others. The thesis also attended to features that seem to withdraw from the gaze – the mask and the veil – and read them in conjunction with the accessible and the compliant. It looked at those forms in which meanings seem transparent and fixed, such as maps, photographs and archives, and listened for their 'silences' and 'absences'. Through a genealogy of the appearance of the 'masked man' in South African media discourses about Islam, I showed how media stories on Pagad in 1996 indigenized an international discourse around terrorism, and permanently impacted South African representations of Islam.

In addressing familiar patterns of representation in the thesis I sought alternative views. Following Michel Foucault's theory of archive as a notion that mandates the totality of what might be said about a subject, I shifted levels and found significance in overlooked and 'insignificant' places such as cookbooks, jokes, and memories. By accessing such alternative archives, I also explored 'interior' and resistant meanings that reside within the familiar. In discussions of Muslim food I explored tropes of spices and secrets and demonstrated that plates of food and cookies that usually signify Muslim festivities in the picturesque tradition have other, unsuspected significance, for instance, the critical political meanings embedded in the 'Hertzoggie' biscuit.

In the thesis I showed that pockets of visibility and invisibility in the media are sites through which the condition of being human is defined. In Chapter Seven I investigated the ideological mechanisms that determine whose suffering and whose deaths register as

publicly visible and are therefore grievable, and consequently attended to what has been deemed unworthy of such a profile. Engaging with the immediacy of what is presented first to the gaze in instances offered by media coverage of the events of 11 September 2001 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, I also probed whose absence has been obscured. The thesis explored the example of post-apartheid South Africa and its official processes for registering and grieving previously unrecognised deaths in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The picturesque tradition in South Africa that had contained Islam for over three centuries competed in the 1996 news-stories on Pagad with a powerful international idiom about Islam that focused on militancy and secrecy. The news-stories I analysed manifested a struggle to articulate these two visions of Islam. Both through such analyses and in interviews with journalists reviewing subsequent coverage, I establish that the Pagad stories profoundly impacted representations of Islam in South Africa. In the last section of Chapter Six I reviewed the 'One City, Many Cultures' project, the Cape Times' attempt to speak an indigenous language of difference, a complex but ultimately flawed initiative. I concluded that the lesson to be drawn from the Pagad stories was the danger of the erasure of specificity. In seeking a local language in which to envision Islam I argued not for a recuperation of the picturesque, but for a radical revisiting of images of Islam, attentive to history.

I examined the South African coverage of the events of 11 September 2001 in Chapter Seven and analysed patterns in the images of vulnerability and penetration. In the aftermath of 11 September, I argue, an evolution occurred in representations about Islam in the United States. Mahmood Mamdani traced the shift from a blanket denunciation of Islam to the notion of a dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' Muslims. While appearing to modulate the unthinking rejection of Islam that obtained before, this new vision in fact defines 'good' as compliant with US interests, and compels Muslims to demonstrate this compliance continuously. In the chapter I analysed visual representations of the visage of Osama bin Laden, who exemplifies a new kind of Eastern face. While overtly associated with fanaticism and fundamentalism in official Western discourses, Bin Laden also

evokes unsettling notions of rationality, intellect and modernity. The chapter showed how the whole world was subsumed under a sense of American primacy, cast as 'with us or against us', and traced the creation of a 'non-space' in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where American actions could elude surveillance.

The notion of the self used in the thesis is one that is multiply interacting, shifting and reciprocal. In Chapter Seven I tracked the official construction of a discursive and legal 'non-space' in which, I have argued, a redefinition of what is permissible and possible for the self has been conducted. Following Judith Butler I have considered the meanings of this development for the production of an unmoored self, loosed from the ballast of the Other.

I returned to the local in Chapter Eight with an exploration of works from theatre, conceptual art and poetry that re-imagine Islam in South Africa. The pieces analysed here are reflective, resistant and critical. They demonstrate the continuing power of the older discourse emerging from the picturesque as well as a newer, internationally-inflected themes around militancy by engaging with imagistic pasts, but do not proclaim a singular, authoritative vision of Islam. I showed how art can use familiar elements in radically different ways and multiply the possibilities that can be imagined, including simultaneities and disavowals. I considered what the possibilities exist for driving new visions of Islam in South Africa through the arts.

The thesis has not looked at images of Islam in languages other than English nor in Muslim-owned media. Both of these areas would provide compelling insights into historical and contemporary representations of Islam in South Africa. While my research into artistic representations of Islam ranged nationally and the texts selected for analysis in the thesis are located in the broader history of South Africa, they are largely drawn from Cape Town. To examine memoirs, novels and poetry dealing with images of Islam in other parts of South Africa would add further texture to the picture I have begun to draw here.

I have argued in the thesis for the necessity of attending to specificity at a time when dominant discourses of Islam are characterized by generalities, Manichean views, exploitation, fear and war. 'the invisible, the radical, the forgotten, the sublime, the possible, the elusive, the rejected, the real and the everyday .. and also .. the yet-to-exist' In the thesis I have argued that it is necessary to assert and respect difference in order to live mutually in a contradictory and unequal world.

University of Cape Town

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