



MY SUN-PRINTED ARCHIVE IS BLUE

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date: 07 October 2022

Signed by candidate

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ABSTRACT

I'm a white Afrikaner. I am spun from a villainous history - a vestige signifying coloniality. I have inherited a colonial archive that documents my ancestor's journey as a Rhenish missionary from Germany to Namibia in the year 1863. From a contemporary present that is framed by post-colonial and postcolonial discourse, colonial archives warrant *verwerking*/ alteration/ processing/ working and reworking. Framed by practice-led research, this study uncovers how I can *verwerk* my colonial archive through performance to incite transgression of preservation, to move beyond the ossification of colonial heirlooms (my archive) to reconcile with emerging post-colonial futures.

In my performance, I transform my colonial archive into tactile textile - linen. Linen, in its entirety as 'text embedded tapestries' symbolises narratives, history and the past, all woven together to form what constitutes the present. The word 'lineage' originates from the noun 'line'. The word 'line' in turn, etymologically stems from the term lino meaning linen - the flax seed fabric (Miller 2005: 239). A single thread can therefore signify themes of genealogy, heritage, identity and ancestry (van der Merwe 2022: 2). I am interested in modes of reworking and reimagining my colonial archive. I perform acts such as tainting, tearing, ripping, (re)stitching and untangling large tapestries of linen - embodying a scrutiny of my white colonial archive. In my performance research I demonstrate a 'grappling with' my colonial past from my contended post-colonial present. I 'taint', 'scratch' and make marks - as I attempt to insert new perspectives and self-reflective insight.

Incited by my performance research, I uncovered the notion of poisoning and the image of a moth as two potent concepts in relation to the notion of *verwerking*. In relation to the linen, a moth has the capacity to devour, consume and process material (established as a metaphor for my archival text). The moth is me, devouring and processing my colonial text. Secondly, I taint the white, bleached linen using cyano-type printing that results in mournful, sickly blue stains and blotches smeared across the once white tapestries - signifying alteration and transgression of preservation. It can be stated that I poison my colonial text. From the poison emerges remedy and an attempt to reconcile with the past. I unpack the notion of poison alongside Jacques Derrida's (1998) concept of *pharmakon* (poison as remedy).

These alterations and indiscretions to my colonial archive and its text offer emergence, allowing my ossified colonial archive to evolve beyond a preserved state. For me, my explication and performance research can ultimately become a new chapter in my family's archive that reflects on a past that is interwoven and entangled up within villainous history - that warrants acknowledgement and critical reflection.

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~~WZKA~~

aan al die nageslag
van die familie
Böhm

1. TEXT ASLEEP

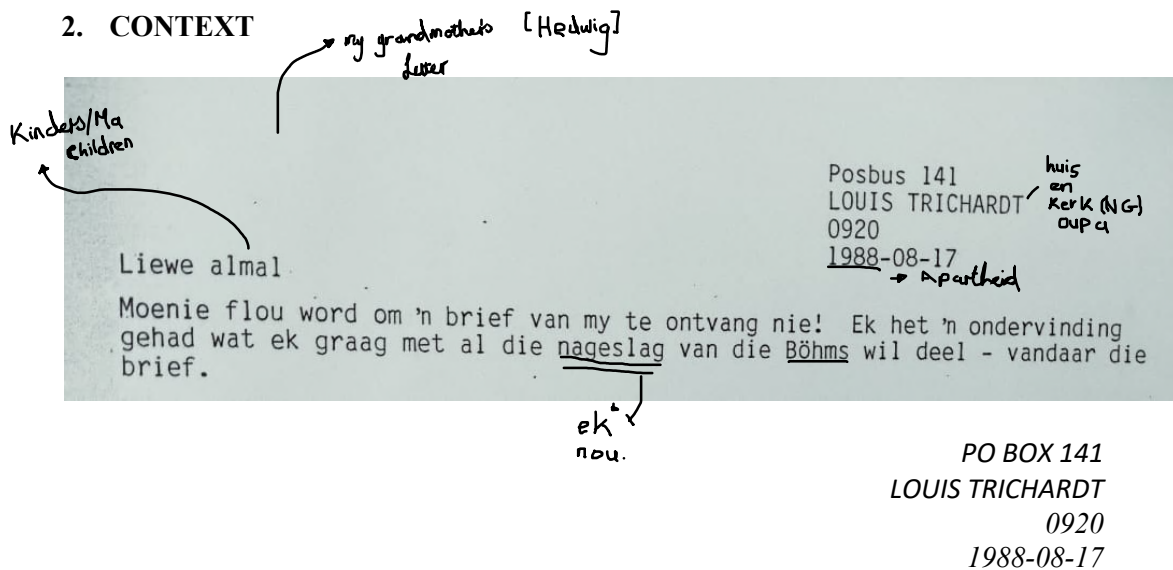
There lies neatly tucked away within my *stinkhout* cupboard, silently sleeping, a parchment of text collecting dust. I am white¹ Afrikaner², an offspring of European settlers. I have inherited a colonial archive. What am I to do with it? Should I lay it to rest to become food for moths?

It bothers me. I take
it out from where it lay
sleeping.
I begin to read it

¹ In South Africa, the term *white* refers to the ethnic group of people with ‘light skin’, defined by the apartheid (1948-1994) regime’s social categorisation of race. Apartheid (1948-1994) was informed by Enlightenment philosophies of humanity, in which being white skinned came to mean normality and universality. Furthermore, studies on eugenics ‘scientifically validated’ white superiority. Eugenics is the belief that one race is inferior to another based upon the science of anthropometry and craniometrics that focus on the classifications of humans according to ethnicity. Eugenics, a Western scientific method, saw the white race as superior to other races. In contemporary studies these pseudo ‘scientific belief systems’ have been disbanded for being biased, racist and xenophobic (Steyn 2004: 144-147). Whiteness identifies a field of study that pertains to identity and race. Whiteness studies often unpack issues regarding invisible structures and regimes of truth that produce and uphold white power, privilege and dominance, as well as modes of engagement with the social world that perpetuate privilege. It manifests in socio-political, cultural and economic structures and behaviour (West & Schmidt 2020: 9). In South Africa whiteness and white privilege are concepts discussed alongside colonialisation, apartheid and white Afrikaner identity politics. In 1988 Peggy McIntosh wrote an essay called *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, wherein she sets out the concept of White Privilege. Privilege is often described as an ‘invisible’ social, political, and economic ideology that grants opportunities in an unequal and unfair manner. The concept of White Privilege unpacks the inequalities present in racial politics that saw moments in history favouring whiteness over other races. The legacy of these extreme moments of racial classification in history (for example: colonialisation, slavery, apartheid, and segregation) caused generational economic and social chasms between white identities and those who suffered under prior racial laws such as black, coloured, and Asian identities. White privilege exposes social bias and ostracisation within public settings due to racial misconceptions brought forth by years of racist ideologies interwoven into the structure of society’s institutions. White privilege is both a legacy and the cause of racism. White privilege exists because of historic, enduring racism and biases (Collins, 2018: 11-14).

² In the book *The Afrikaners* (2003), Herman Giliomee unpacks the complex, ambivalent identity that constitutes the white Afrikaner, from European settler communities, to identifying as a culture belonging to Africa, the concept of a *Boer* and a specific relation to land, the development of the Afrikaans language, The *Groot Trek/* Great Trek (1836-1940) and the Voortrekkers, *Die slag van Bloed Rivier/Battle of blood River* (1838), the Boer Wars, political figures such as Piet Retief (1780-1838), Paul Kruger (1825-1904) and Andries Pretorius (1798-1853), the rise of Afrikaans Nationalism, the concept of the *Volksmoeder*, Calvinism, the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument (1949), apartheid (1948-1949), racism, oppression, resistance and rebellion, the *Grens-Oorlog/Border War* (1966- 1990), transformation, democracy, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), through to the contemporary arguably post-apartheid present. Throughout the trajectory of South African history the white Afrikaner is continuously shifting between and simultaneously embodying both the ‘roles’ of the colonised and the coloniser (Viljoen & van der Merwe 2004: 4).

2. CONTEXT



Dear All

Please do not faint upon receiving this letter! I have had an experience that I want to share with all the descendants of the Böhms family - thus the letter.

Figure 1: An excerpt from my grandmother's 1988 letter, addressed to her children and their offspring.

This study begins with a letter. The letter was written and posted by my grandmother, Hedwig Lombard, née Pretorius, (1934-2002), in 1988. The 1980s marked a particularly strenuous time period in South Africa's social and political history. During this era the country was placed under a state of emergency due to the political tension reaching violent peaks in the struggle towards a democratic state and the abolishment of apartheid (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007: 414). It is during this tumultuous time that Hedwig received a visit from a solicitor. Her cousin Herman Claassen had just passed away. The solicitor presented my grandmother with a suitcase and relayed that upon his death, Herman asked that it be gifted to her. In the 1988 letter, Hedwig recounted her encounter with the solicitor and the subsequent inheritance of the archival suitcase to her five children, of which my mother, Olga van der Merwe, née Lombard, is the eldest. The ancestral artefacts in the suitcase consisted out of an abundance of letters, a few photographs and two travel journals documenting and memorialising the colonial accounts of my ancestor, Johannes Böhm, as a German Rhenish missionary who travelled and settled in Namibia during the nineteenth century. As the country endeavoured to move beyond domineering white colonial history, my grandmother unexpectedly inherited a suitcase filled with nineteenth century documents, a small family archive - vestiges from a colonial past.

Hedwig writes:



...I have in my possession two travel journals of Böhm that date from 1863, detailing his journey to Africa and his initial settler years in Southwest up until 1875 and another journal of Schaible (1914, 1915).

Figure 2: Another excerpt from my grandmother's 1988 letter, addressed to her children and their offspring.

My settler forefather Johannes F. Böhm (1833-1918), was a German missionary, more specifically he formed part of Rhenish missionary expeditions during the age of violent European empire building schemes and white colonial domination. The term colonialism broadly refers to the development and “expansion from a central imperium” that creates colonies under their authority (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2000: 40). Imperialism is defined as the practice of building a global empire (Hart-Davis, 2007: 346). Imperialism “enforces power of one state over the territories of another”, often through military means, that leads to the exploitation of the colonised society (Abercrombie & Hill & Turner, 2004: 193), and is also related to the larger theoretical and attitudinal justification of the power that one country or nation has over another. “Imperialist domination includes political, economic, military, and cultural aspects” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2000: 40).

Ndovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omar, 2020: [sp]) unpacks colonisation as both an ‘event’ and as a ‘continuum’. I will firstly discuss colonialism as a historical event and will later refer to the impact and ‘lingering presence’ of colonialism, alongside concepts such as postcolonialism, post-colonialism and coloniality. As an event Ndovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omar, 2020: [sp]) defines the term colonialism as “people (colonists) coming, conquering, and dominating other people at a particular moment, and administering people colonially, until the colonised fight and push them back” (Omar, 2020: [sp]). Colonialism permits the coloniser to conquer its “perceived inferior counterpart and attempt to ‘civilise’ the local inhabitants of a territory by imposing familiar signs, values and beliefs of the coloniser on the local people” (Hall, 1985: 98). These beliefs further authorise notions of “cultural supremacy”, that are maintained by institutions and the “apparatus controlling various sectors of society” (Hall, 1985: 98-103).

Between 1881 and 1914 colonisation became a form of political prestige and for Africa it evidently led to a feverish “scramble” for land (Abercrombie & Hill & Turner, 2004: 193), with each European country eagerly and forcefully trying to ‘get their share of the riches’ the continent harboured, essentially becoming an object of desire for the Western gaze³ (Steiner & Tomas, 2005: 1476).

I know my Footnotes are too long and that there are too many of them
I don't know where the compulsivity too insert them come from.
I must always practice vigilance... I can't stop. Am I afraid that
I might come across as naïve?
I feel I must acknowledge everything all at once - always

For the purposes of this study, I will not relay and unpack colonisation and its entire history regarding the African and South African context. I do however acknowledge the complex and varied field of study that theorists and historians such as Hermann Giliomee (2007, 2003, 2021), Bernard K. Mbenga (2007, 2010, 2014), Achille Mbembe (2005, 2013, 2019), Sarah Nuttall (1998, 2000 2009), Nigel Worden (2008) and Saul Dubow (2012, 2021) to name a few, have documented, unpacked and scrutinised in theoretical attempts to unravel South Africa’s entangled past, and to understand the country’s complex social and political present and to imagine and speculate as to its future.

This study specifically focuses on my family’s colonial lineage and traces my missionary forefather’s historical settler accounts from Germany to Namibia, relaying and scrutinising the social and political contexts accordingly. Therefore, I now turn my attention to Germany and its colonial exploitations and presence in Namibia during the nineteenth century.

Germany’s colonisation of Southwest Africa (Namibia) occurred in several stages. On 24 April 1884 a German Merchant Adolf Lüderitz (1834 – 1886), bought, and proclaimed the bay *Angra Pequenda*, under the protection of Imperial Germany (Steinmetz & Hell, 2006: 147). The bay was later renamed Lüderitz, in honour of its ‘colonial founder’. In 1885 the Berlin Conference, organised by German statesmen Otto von Bismarck (1815- 1898) was held. The conference saw the gathering of various European imperial administrative figures that sought to discuss the wealth and political distribution of power over African territories. It was during this conference where Germany’s political governance over Southwest Africa (Namibia) was acknowledged and confirmed. In April 1885 the *Deutsche*

³ The study of otherness is unpacked by philosophers and theorists such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and Edward Said (1935-2003), amongst others who each apply the notion to a different field of study, from psychology and the notion of self-identification through to studies of Orientalism by Edward Said. Othering refers to a “centre-margin dichotomy”, particularly with regards to “the West’ and its Empires, “as centre and ‘the East’ or Africa, as being at the margins” (Min-ha, 1995: 215). The bias centre becomes the origin of all knowledge and establishes the “norm of societal constructions and the dominant worldview and value systems” (Hall, 1985: 98).

Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwest-Afrika (German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa)/ DKGSWA was founded. The organisation's intention was economic growth, forming monopolies and mineral trading enterprises (Steinmetz, 2007: 9). In May of the same year, "Imperial Commissary" Heinrich Göring, or Goering (1839 – 1913) (father of Nazi Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering), accompanied by two assistants, was dispatched to oversee the new protectorate (Steinmetz, 2007: 9). Alongside his appointment a new legal system was implemented, unjustly curating different laws based on race and culture, whereby those of European decent were treated more favourably (Steinmetz, 2007: 9). By 1903 the German colony of Southwest Africa (Namibia) had over 3000 settlers. Continuing into the twentieth century, Namibia (Southwest Africa) started to experience the brutality of domineering white colonial power with the gradual growth of military presence in the form of the *Schutztruppe*/ colonial army. In 1904, Germany attempted a mass extinction of the Ovaherero (Steinmetz & Hell, 2006: 147), "widely recognized as the first genocide of the twentieth century" (Steinmetz, 2007: 8). Germany had begun to curate land divisions enforcing more control over the country. Rumours of an imminent Ovaherero uprising began circulating at the end of 1903 (Steinmetz, 2007: 9), that subsequently lead to widespread German settler paranoia (Morgan, 2010: 4).

January 12, 1904, marks the initiation of the war. Lieutenant-General Lothar von Trotha was charged with the task of overseeing an offense against the Ovaherero revolt and resorted to grotesque tactics, announcing the need for *Vernichtungsbefehl* (extermination) of the Ovaherero (Morgan, 2010: 5). In the article to *To heal the wounds: Namibian Ovaherero's contests over coming to terms with the German colonial past* (2010: 4-5) Karie Morgan writes:

"Between 1904 and 1907 in what was then German South West Africa, 60 000 to 80 000 Ovaherero perished (approximately 80 percent of the Ovaherero population at that time) as a consequence of fighting with German *Schutztruppe* (colonial troops) (Drechsler 1980:214). Some Ovaherero died in direct combat with German troops, others starved and dehydrated after they fled into the Kalahari Desert to escape German troops, and still more perished from brutal conditions in German *Konzentrationslagern* (concentration camps). The camps were finally closed in early 1908. Many Ovaherero and historians argue that Herero society, as it existed prior to 1904 was destroyed through the events of this period, including the loss of Herero rights to land and cattle, in particular.

After WW I and WW II, Germany had given up all rights to govern over the Namibian territory; unfortunately, the then called Southwest Africa did not gain independence and was instead placed under the jurisdiction of the South African apartheid regime.

It was only in 1990 that Namibia celebrated its self-governance (Steinmetz, 2007: 8). In recent years the endearing legacy of Germany's colonial consequences in Namibia has garnered reflective discussion. Books such as *The Devil's Handwriting* (2007) by George Steinmetz, *Absolute Destruction* (2004) by Isabel V. Hull, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial*

Roots of Nazism (2010) by Casper W. Erichsen, to name a few, unpack and critically engage with Germany's colonial exploits.

I now turn my attention back to the specific colonial narrative and documented context of my archive.

I am aware, ^{the past -} or that relaying a colonial narrative from the perspective of the coloniser's journey from Europe to Africa can be problematic and goes against the nature of postcolonial and post-colonial practise. However, I consider myself to be South African - African, although my ancestral narrative starts in Europe ~~is not~~ - Europe is not the country I am writing from. I am writing "back" - towards? - Europe from Africa. From my present, my context, my African positionality I am "looking back" at Europe - scrutinising - critiquing - ~~it~~ Can this be considered postcolonial practise?

By the middle of the nineteenth century, although not officially a colony of Europe, Namibia had already begun to see significant political, economic and cultural change, as its residents (predominantly Ovaherero, Nama and Damara) saw the infiltration of "merchant capitalism" and an abundance of Christian missionary schemes (Walace, 2011: 1), specifically those planned and carried out by the German Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) (Steinmetz, 2007: 8). During the nineteenth-and-twentieth century, the *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft*/Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) was one of the largest protestant Christian societies in Germany. The RMS's ideologies stemmed from a mixture of pietism⁴, German reformation as well as English revivalist and evangelic movements⁵ that influenced their

⁴ In the article *Pietism: Past and Present* (1989:1-7) John M. Brenner explains the history of Pietism and defines it as a "movement on behalf of practical Christianity within the Protestant Lutheran Church of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries..." a reaction to what was perceived as dead orthodoxies and lack of piety in the Lutheran Church. The writing of Philip Spener, specifically, *Pia Desideria* emphasised ideas such as "faith must be put into action", "moral development" and encouraged sermons to be "aimed at the heart and directed toward the life of their hearers". Brenner continues to explain the contended aspect of the faith, specifically critiquing how the theology, in practice, can wrongfully emphasise "sanctification instead of justification" and how pietism fosters subjectivism.

⁵ The Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century was a sweeping movement that "emerged from within the Church of England" with the intention to revive "Biblical Christianity" (Mamache, 2019: 667). The movement

pastoral theologies and specifically their outlook on education (Aritonang, 2016: 70). Driven by puritan Christian duty⁶ these missionaries sought to bring, what they understood to be ‘civilised’ education as well as Christian ‘salvation’ to the then termed savage⁷ continents (Abercrombie & Hill & Turner 2004: 193). The society was amalgamated on 23 September 1828 in the German city Barmen (Aritonang, 2016: 69). The first ordained Rhenish missionaries were sent to Southern Africa toward the end of that same year. Two of their missionaries, Theobald von Wurmb ([sa]) and Johann Gottlieb Leipoldt (1839-1917), established the mission’s first post in Cederberg, South Africa in 1829, called Wuppertal. The RMS then continued to gradually set up residencies beyond the Cape colony border in Southwest Africa (Namibia), essentially establishing a “mission colony” (Steinmetz, 2007: 8).

As previously stated, my settler forefather Johannes F. Böhm (1833-1918) worked under the auspices of the RMS. He was ordained on 1 October 1863 at the Rhenish Missionary institute in Barmen and migrated via ship to Southwest Africa, as it was termed then (present day Namibia), only two days after he was invested. Johannes Böhm kept journals, cataloguing his travels to and in Africa. Böhm also habitually wrote down his prayers that chronicle his fears, doubts, desires and a humble gratitude for ‘successful’ outcomes. Before he departed from the harbour city Barmen he asked/ prayed for guidance:

I see colonial ideology and a scared man trying to find his life's purpose

Troue Heiland, voorsien vir my in die tyd waarin ek leef en nog sal leef. Regeer U in my en help my met U krag om die blye boodskap van uitnodiging na U Ryk te verkondig. Bring my tot rus in Uself. Onderneem U dit asseblief → Western savior complex?

Trusted Saviour provide me with guidance in this time in which I live and still will live. Govern in me and help me through Your power to proclaim the joyful invitation to your Kingdom. Grant me peace in You. Please, undertake it upon Yourself. Western belief hierarchy

He sailed with a small company of people, each on their own ‘mission’ towards the colonies, on a ship called *Emma*. On the ship, a RMS missionary and scholar of the Ovaherero language, Carl Hugo Hahn

ultimately led “to the Great Evangelical Awakening within society” and “signalled a new direction in the religious history” aiming to reform sinners who had “drifted by temptations and corruption” (Mamache, 2019: 667).

⁶ Puritanism was a spiritual movement based in the Christian religion with the Bible as the source text to guide their actions of reformation. Puritanism was opposed to the sacramental forms of the Catholic Church and is often described as a nonconformist, protestant movement. Puritanism places emphasis on communion with God and the devotion of one’s life to educational, missionary and parish work. Puritans believed in the sinful nature of humans and the divine grace of God. They also strongly believed in morality and humility to assist in worldly concerns and were therefore Calvinistic in their approach (Cosby 2015: 297-300).

⁷ The term *savage* is used in Eurocentric thinking as a binary opposite to the term *civilised*. The word *savage*, much like the word *exotic*, alludes to otherness and is constructed through further binary frames of fantasy and fear, desire and repulsion. Fuelled by Enlightenment philosophies, European bias and Western cultural practices. European viewpoints were, wrongfully, deemed rational, tamed, dignified and ‘proper’ in opposition to the ‘wild’ expressions of Eastern and African cultures (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000: 190-191).

(1818-1895) taught Böhm how to speak Herero and Dutch while they sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. On 17 December 1863 the ship reached the Cape coast.



Figure 3: A picture copy of a young Johannes Böhm (1833-1918) and a map outlining his voyage from Germany to Namibia.

In his journals, the missionary writes of the celebrations on board as they finally spotted land. He writes: *Uiteindelik, ja regtig, daar is dit onderkant die wit wolke. Later kon ons dit beter sien. Tafelberg met sy groot kop!* "At last, yes, there it was beneath the white clouds. Soon one could see it more clearly. The protruding Table Mountain". He prayed once again:

Ons het almal goed aangekom. Lof en dank aan U, Here my God en Verlosser. Help my, O Here, om U te dien met 'n getroue hart!

We have all arrived safely. Thank God, my Lord and Saviour. Help me, dear God, to serve You with a faithful heart.

It is important to note that both accounts of my forefather's prayers depict the domineering Western Christian theology of the nineteenth century colonial period. My forefather blindly believed in his mission and saw it as his Christian duty to bring 'salvation' to the 'colonies' (Abercrombie & Hill & Turner 2004: 193), neglectfully not showcasing an awareness of the implications of domineering Eurocentric viewpoints and the intrinsic violence of enforcing such viewpoints onto others, ultimately inflicting the erasure of cultural traditions.

For me, it is difficult to scrutinise his prayers. He writes with so much conviction and belief in his mission. He is not driven by malcontent. He is driven by a will to do good. It is tragic. Did his life have no meaning because it was lived and framed by colonisation? Am I undoing, erasing a man's entire existence? I do not want to come across as validating colonial missions, nor do I deny their destructive implications. I do however, feel uneasy - as though I am placing my forefather in the court of historic judgment and sentencing him to be hanged. Is this man deserving of such a punishment? I do not know him completely. I can only ~~describe and guess at his character through the glimpses~~ judge the glimpses of his nature revealed through his own writing.

'ons'

...hoe vrolik klop die hart! Land! Na 70 dae weer land! Die land van ons nuwe tuiste die land van ons arbeid in die Evangelie! Die wonderlike roeping waarna ons uitgesien het!

...how joyfully the heart beats! Land! After 70 days land again! The land of our new home, the land of our labour in the Gospel! The wonderful calling that we have been looking forward to...

Throughout his journals there are various examples of imperial justifications for problematic actions, intrinsic racist ideologies and an unawareness of the entitlement to 'claim land' (Abercrombie & Hill & Turner, 2004: 193). This is specifically evident in Böhm's use and repetition of the words and phrases such as *ons*/ "our", *ons nuwe tuiste*/ "our new home", *die land van ons arbeid*/ "the land of our labour".

Am I allowed to separate the individual from the political? Can two things simultaneously be true? Can the individual be good and the politics be wrong? Does one equate the other? When I discuss historical context, it is easy to distinguish right from wrong. Why is it, when history becomes personal and intimate, I suddenly to criticize the past? I feel ambivalent, torn and perplexed. I feel sick - nauseous while writing. I feel a need to pray for forgiveness, as though my ancestors are watching me. My mother, my sister, my aunts, my uncle, my grandparents - why do I feel I am betraying them?

Upon his arrival, Böhm departed for Stellenbosch to recuperate from his journey for a few days, after which he reboarded the *Emma* at Cape Town harbour. He finally reached Walvis Bay on Saturday 9 January 1864. The ship's arrival was supposed to have been announced with three gun salutes; one cannon failed, and only two shots were heard. On his arrival in Southwest Africa (Namibia) Böhm formulated the following prayer:

Ons het almal goed aangekom. Lof en dank aan U, Here my God en Verlosser. Help my, O Here, om U te dien met 'n getroue hart./

We have all arrived safely and well. For that I thank and praise You, Lord, my God and Saviour. Help me, O Lord, to serve You with a faithful heart.

Two years after his migration to Africa, he was reunited with his fiancé Maria Catharina Böhm (née Hahl, 1836-1899), whom he married in a small church in Walvis Bay. Together, Maria and Johannes had seven children - one of which, namely Catharina Emilie Hedwig Böhm (1872-1968), is my family's ancestor.

The name Hedwig has been passed down from one generation to the next. Hedwig is my grandmother's name. She also named one of her own daughters, my aunt, Hedwig. ~~My~~ ~~mother~~ ~~also~~ ~~named~~ ~~my~~ ~~sister~~ Hedwig.

I know the name intimately. The name is still alive.



Figure 4: Picture copies of Maria Catharina Böhm (1836-1899), and her three daughters Caroline (1876-1933) Emma (1870-1927), and Hedwig (1872-1968).

I feel guilty-Guilty for inserting their pictures, specifically the photos of the children. I am subjecting them to a public platform of critique.

Southwest Africa (Namibia) became Böhm's and his family's home for the next forty-three years. The family occupied various missionary posts and during their time in Southwest Africa (Namibia) they travelled and worked in and between Salem, Ameib, Otjimbingwe and Walvis Bay.



Figure 5: A map depicting Böhm's travels in Southwest Africa (Namibia) and the church in Otjimbingwe.

... was. Op Otjimbingwe was hulle in 1880 vasgekeer tydens een van die Herero/Nama oorloë en is hulle byna deur die Swartboois vermoor. Daarna is hulle ...

Who ?
Bias -
or
surname

/ In Otjimbingwe, 1880, they were trapped during one of the Herero and Nama wars and were almost murdered by the Swartboois⁸.

Figure 6: Excerpt from Hedwig's 1988 letter.

I'm scared I might stumble upon some horrific deed... I do not yet know what to do with this information - I continue reading.

In my grandmother's 1980s letter, she continues to describe Böhm's life in Namibia, briefly mentioning an encounter with a civil war. Southwest Africa (Namibia) during this time had been experiencing numerous political disputes between the Ovaherero, Nama and Damara. The conflicts predominately centred around land claims with the Nama, led by Hendrik Witbooi (1830-1905) in 1884, 'trekking' across Damaraland in search of new settlements. Tensions became more severe when the Nama arrived at Hoornkrans, a territory controlled by the Ovaherero and their leader Samuel Maharero (1856-1923). Maharero had by then already signed a proclamation of protection with the newly appointed German administration. Henrik Witbooi was not perturbed by the treaty and proceeded with his plans and vision to expand Nama territory. This subsequently led to several civil wars between the Nama and the

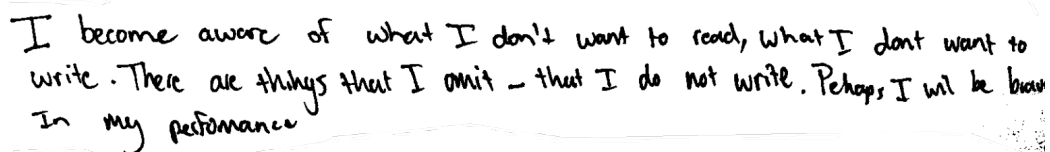
As I'm reading the archive and the missionaries accounts, I become lost in the past... snow... see... sand... churches... sermons, prayers, osewa-wheels, letters, building... building... building churches, arrows, war, fighting, negotiations, Germany, Germany, soldiers, chains, sand, scorching sun, dried up crops, birth weddings, Nazi, school, learning, Nama, Dutch, letters and letters. socks, winter, malaria, death, graves, fire, loss more sermons, praying always praying

⁸ My grandmother uses the term "Swartbooi" to refer to the Nama. This was a common surname amongst the Nama. A few of their leaders and captains had the surname Swartbooi (Silverster, 2003: 117, 154-156).

Ovaherero, as well as smaller Damara settlements. The German colonial administration intervened in the conflict, fearing that their political influence over the country might weaken. Religion and state became interdependent in Southwest Africa (Namibia) (Steinmetz, 2007: 8) with the RMS as an essential political tool. The Rhenish missionaries partook in the Ovaherero, Nama and Damara wars acting as intermediates and attempted to negotiate settlements and peace treaties:

The mission played a central role in the 1863 “war of liberation” ...The immediate result of this uprising was seven years of continuous warfare between the two groups, until the missionaries brokered a peace treaty in 1870 (Steinmetz, 2007: 8).

Böhm’s journals do contain accounts of negotiations between the Ovaherero and the Nama, however he predominantly built churches and schools, taught Dutch, gave sermons and occasionally administered medicine. He also journeyed through ‘Namaland extensively, documenting and writing detailed reports of his travels⁹ that he sent back to Germany and which were then published in *Petermanns Geographische Mittheilungen* (1878) and *Mission Atlas* (1837). Notably in 1855 he began meteorological surveys which were published in the periodical *Mittheilungen von Forschergreisenden und Gelenthsen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten* (1888).



I become aware of what I don't want to read, what I don't want to write. There are things that I omit - that I do not write. Perhaps, I will be better in my performance

When their children reached the ages of about eight, they were sent off to school. The boys were sent back to Germany whilst the girls were sent to the *Rhenish Institute* in Stellenbosch. The letters in my family archive are predominantly documentations of the correspondence between Catharina (the mother) and her children, specifically her daughter Catharina Emilie Hedwig. My grandmother describes the letters as being written in ...ou, en byna onleesbare Duitse handskrif /”old, and almost unreadable German handwriting”. She also states that Catharina Böhm’s letters demonstrate a mother’s attempt at giving advice to her children from afar.

⁹ Travel writing became a popular form of Western literature from the beginning of the fifteenth century. Postcolonial theorist Edward Said (58-59) describes these types of writers and their travel literature as “a sort of fluent mythology ...depicting a multiple of stereotypes in which the legendary lands were more idealised than real” (Castro 2016: 152). Through postcolonial discourse travel writing is defined as writing that demonstrates a somewhat generic fascination with that which is considered ‘unknown’ and ‘different’, often evoking a romanticised image of destinations inhabited by “exotic beings”, “extravagant landscapes”, “unusual cultures” and focuses on a Western individual’s ‘extraordinary journeys’ in the colonies (Castro 2016: 152).

13 January 1899

Dearest Hedwig

I am very ill, I don't know how it all will end... I truly think that the end is near... I kiss you goodbye...

Your loving Mommy

On the 9th of February 1899, Maria Catharina Böhm, aged sixty three, passed away. Böhm writes:

9 Febr 1899

Vanoggend vroeg, 5 minute voor drie het die Here my lieve vrou sag en vreedzaam na om ogeroep... 'Salig is die wat van nou af in die Heer sterf. Ja sê die Gees, hulle rus van hulle arbeid, want hulle werke volg hulle na' (Openbaring 14:13).

Werk
geloof

Early this morning, 5 minutes before three, the Lord gently called my loving wife to Him. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them (Revelations 14:13).

VERTALING VAN 'N BERIG UIT DIE "DSWA ZEITUNG" GEDATEER 11 MEI 1907.

Uit Swakopmund:

times
change

Die oudste Blanke inwoner aan ons kus, sendeling Böhm, wat die afgelope 43 jaar ononderbroke in Suidwes-Afrika gewerk het, het met die stoomskip "Prinzessin" na Duitsland vertrek. Sendeling Böhm wat tans 73 jaar oud is, het op die 8e Oktober 1863 op die seilskip "Emma" uit Bremerhawe gevaar en op die 9e Januarie 1864 in Walvisbaai aangekom. Hy was eers op Salem en Ameib gestasioneer waarna hy na die sendingstasie Walvisbaai verhuis het. Daar het hy vir 26 jaar gewerk en vandaar het hy ook Swakopmund in die beginjare bedien. In 1905 het Böhm sy amp neergelê en dit aan sy skoonseun, sendeling Schaible oorhandig. Hyself het in Rooibank, naby Walvisbaai, gaan woon totdat hy besluit het om sy ou Heimat te besoek om sy kinders wat in Duitsland woon weer te kan sien. Hy is nog nie seker of hy in Duitsland sal aanbly en of hy weer na Suidwes-Afrika sal terugkeer nie. Hierdie goeiehartige en vriendelike, hardwerkende en steeds hulpvaardige man word langs hierdie weg 'n voorspoedige reis toegewens.

The following picture is an excerpt from an article in the "DSWA Zeitung", that reports Böhm's departure from Southwest Africa and his return back to Germany in 1907: "The oldest white resident of our coast, missionary Böhm,..has departed for Germany on the steamship *Prinzessin*... He is not certain whether he will stay in Germany or if he will return to Southwest Africa..."

He did not.

Böhm never returned to Namibia and passed away in Germany on 15 May 1918. But it was too late, Böhm had already entangled his bloodline with the African continent. Some of his children remained in South Africa, of which Catharina Emilie Hedwig was one. She also married, had children of her own and they too had children. One of her grandchildren was my grandmother, Hedwig.

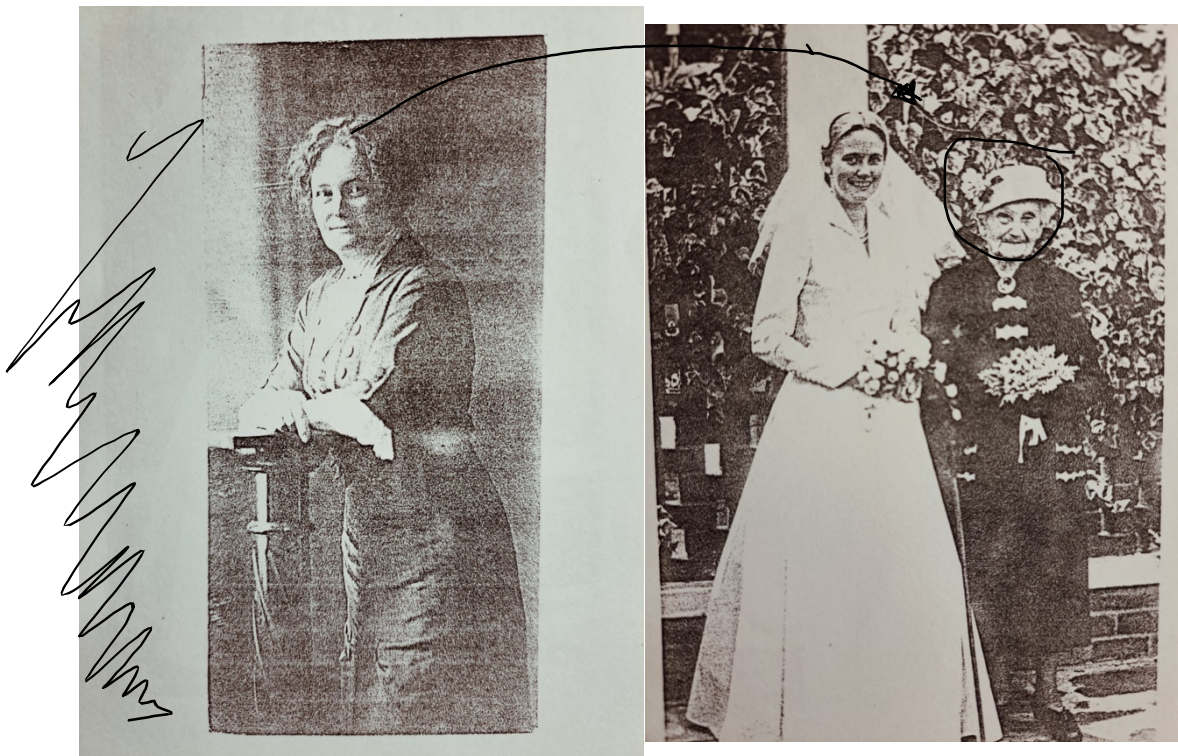


Figure 10: (Left) A photo of Catharina Emilie Hedwig in 1913. (Right) Hedwig Lombard (my grandmother) and her grandmother Catharina Emilie Hedwig.

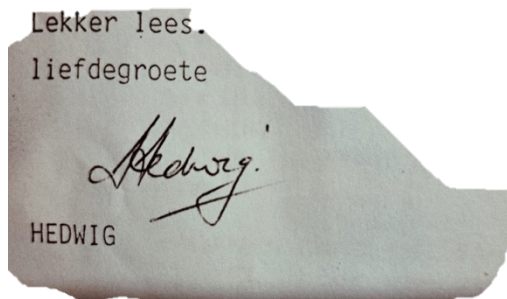
In 1987 my grandmother Hedwig, spurred on by the family artefacts inherited from Herman Claassen, undertook an extended tour through Southwest Africa (Namibia), trekking in the footsteps of the missionary Böhm.



SLOF
EOL
SLOF
as EOL
efstuk

Figure 11: Hedwig Lombard (my grandmother) in Namibia 1987, at the grave of missionary wife Maria Chatharina Böhm, her great grandmother.

My grandmother's letter ends:



3. INHERITING TEXT

A handwritten note in black ink on a light-colored background. The text reads "These things are not buried, they are preserved" in a cursive, slightly slanted script. The words are connected, and there are some ink blots and a small mark above the 'e' in "preserved".

My grandmother's archive - the letters, the journals and the photographs, have been neatly kept in cupboards, stored away - preserved by the offspring of the Böhm family. These artefacts and the memories they contain have always been hailed as sacred heirlooms.

In her article *Theories from the archive from Across the disciplines*, Manoff draws from various scholars to define the term archive "as a repository and collection of artefacts" or a "extant historical record" (Manoff, 2004: 10).

Jacques Derrida's *Archive fever: A Freudian impression/ Mal d'Archive: une impression freudienne*¹⁰ (1996) describes archives as sites for knowledge production, however, whomever has control over the archive, has autonomy over what is deemed worthy to preserve, "archives were originally, and still are, primarily tools for governing and policing" (Ernst 2002: 7). This may result in archives that were curated within a specific time, framed by a specific social and political context. Archives are persistent in their fight against time and decay. They seem to possess the capacity to travel through and with time. Preservation can be dangerous, when an archive carries within its 'knowledge production' and historicisation, outdated ideologies, unacknowledged wrong doings and the omission of multiple viewpoints narrating experiences. It can be stated that "archives are not neutral or innocent" (Manoff, 2004: 15).

In recent years the social and political debate in South Africa has shifted from arguments regarding the enduring legacy of the post-apartheid movement to critical discussions regarding the awareness of colonial history, coloniality, decolonialisation, postcolonial and post-colonial¹¹ theory (Greffrath 2016:

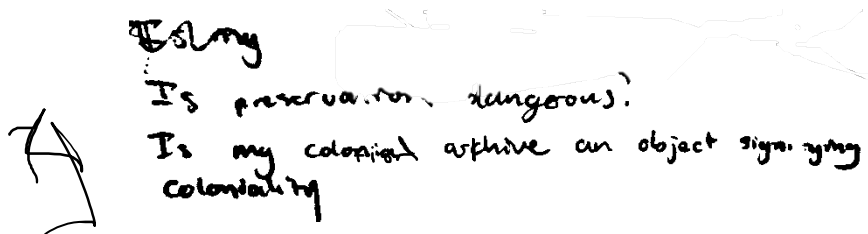
¹⁰ Jacques Derrida first presented *Archive Fever* (1994) in London at the Freud Museum. The lecture formed part of the international colloquium on the theme 'Memory: The questions of archives'.

¹¹ The difference between the terms post-colonial and postcolonialism: post-colonialism locates specific moments in the trajectory of history that constitutes a society or country moving beyond of colonialism. Postcolonialism deals with the after-effects and legacy of colonialisation and its socio-political impact on cultures, societies and identities that have been subjected to some form of colonialism (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 167). Bhabra (2014: 115) explains that postcolonialism "emerged as an intellectual movement", developed around the theories of amongst others, Edward Said (1978,1993), Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and Gayatri Spivak (1999, 1987, 2006) and Frantz Fanon (1961, 1952). Whilst postcolonialism addresses "issues of the material, of the socio-economic", it tends to focus on "the realm of the cultural". Postcolonialism focuses mainly on the nineteenth and twentieth

162). Stef Craps, in his the article *Learning to live with ghosts: Post-colonial Hauntings*, states that colonialism is not a matter of the past (Craps 2010: 468). The past seem to be haunting the present, contended postcolonialism and post-colonialism contemporary societies seems to be grappling with-struggling to move beyond the enduring, harmful legacies of colonialism. Coloniality¹² is concerned with the remnants of colonialism that perforate the contemporary landscape in various forms from the political to the social as well as in literature and other forms of knowledge production. As previously mentioned, Ndlovu-Gathsheni's (cited in Omaye 2020: [sp]) defines colonisation as an event - dated in terms of when it began and when it ended. However, colonialism had other implications as well, the effects of which outlast colonialism. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omaye 2020) explains it as follows:

It claims to be a civilizing project, as it hides its sinister motives. The project also creates institutions and structures of power that sustain colonizer-colonized relations of exploitation, domination, and repression. Even when you push back colonization as a physical process (the physical empire), colonialism as a power structure continues as a metaphysical process and as an epistemic project, because it invades the mental universe of a people, destabilizing them from what they used to know, into knowing what is brought in by colonialism, and it then commits "crimes" such as epistemicide (where you kill and displace pre-existing knowledges), linguicide (killing and displacing the languages of a people and imposing your own), culturecide (where you kill or replace the cultures of a people).

Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243) explains how coloniality is perpetuated through books, "criteria for academic performance, cultural patterns". Colonialism has a capacity to "linger" on and preserves harmful ideologies (Khumalo 2022:[sp]). An archive, as a space of knowledge production and historicification, possesses the potential to capsule problematic ideologies, preserve them and 'bring them' forth into futures- practising colonial perpetuation.



This 'shift' in perspective - a postcolonial perspective that includes the unearthing of lost narratives, the insertion of multiple viewpoints and (re)examination of colonial histories frame my contemporary

centuries, and largely refers to the relationships of the Middle East and South Asia to Europe and the West (Bhambra 2014: 115). It is important to note that postcolonialism and the subsequent studies of anti-colonialism and decolonisation are not definitive moments in time, but rather a continuous movement. Throughout history there are various key moments that constitute as post-colonial (Sawant 2011: 2). Although a continuous process, postcolonialism and post-colonialism is time and place specific. Each country, culture or even individuals, who have been subjected to colonialism, whether they be considered the coloniser or colonised, have their own specific relationship with decolonisation and postcolonialism. This study is specifically concerned with the term coloniality and will therefore not give an extensae framework of postcolonial and post-colonial theory.

¹² Coloniality is defined and theorized by scholars such as Anibal Quijano (2000, 2002, 2010), Sylvia Winter (2012), Walter Mignolo (2007), Ramón Grosfoguel (2007), Elizabeth Mittleton (2010), Roberto Hernández (2018), among others.

present (Ashcroft, Gareth & Tiffin 2007: 11, 12) and has caused me to reconsider what it means to inherit a colonial archive. "Postcolonial scholarship has demonstrated how the colonial archive was shaped by the aims of its creators and how interpretation of the archive always depends on the perspective of its interpreters" (Manoff, 2004: 17).

It can be stated that my colonial archive, as a preserved family heirloom, becomes a vestige - a symbol for a violent bygone era. I am a white Afrikaner, my historically privileged identity, culture and my colonial lineage can be viewed as colonial remnants emanating coloniality into a present that demands critical discussion and self-reflectivity of colonial histories.

In my grandmother's letter, she clearly states:

al die nageslag van die Böhms



/all the offspring of the Böhms.

The colonial archive and the colonial history it narrates therefore concerns me. How do I, offspring of colonial history, position myself in relation to postcolonial and post-colonial critical discussion?



I am torn between transgression and preservation.

How does a scrutiny of 'the self', my lineage and my heritage affect my colonial archive?

Preservation becomes dangerous, what that which is preserved is entangled with problematic, ^{acknowledged} ~~deduced~~



I want to confront the colonial legacy of the archive



My colonial archive warrants revisitation, an insertion of self-reflectivity, an acknowledgement of wrongful imperial practices and racist ideologies that are entangled within the narrative of that constitutes my past. The archive warrants *verwerking*. The word *verwerking* has an ambiguous meaning

in Afrikaans. Apart from the meaning pertaining to alteration and reimagining, the second interpretation, according to the *HAT: Verklarende Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, alludes to the process of healing (Odendal & Gouws, 2005: 1307) in the sense of “coming to terms with”. *Verwerking* can perhaps, for me, yield amelioration from a tormented colonial past. The archive presents us with a site at which to face the spectres that have come to haunt us (Demos, 2013 [sp]). “Archives lend themselves to ‘the recognition of past suffering and the creation of futures of hope’” (Rowlands, & de Jong, 2007: 13).

Archives are concerned with futures. In the article *Are Records Ever Actual?*, McKemmish, cited Brien Brothman writing “A record is never finished, never complete, the record is always in a process of becoming” (2016: 200). In *An archaeology of time* (1969, 1972) Michael, Foucault describes the archive as “the system of discursivity that establishes the possibility of what can be said” (cited in) Manoff 2004: 19). It can be stated that in somehow the archives possess capacity to transcend their documented last chapter. In ‘*Archives, Life Cycles, and Death Wishes*,’ Brien Brothman writes:

..one cannot reduce the making of records to an original context or singular creative moment
... nor do records simply reach a final state or condition. Rather, objects and processes are enmeshed in a dynamic of departure and return, emerging sameness and difference, repetition and recursion along with distancing and differentiation (2006: 260).

In *Archive Fever* (1995) Derrida states: “The unstable future according to the open archive produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens up the future” (1995: 68). By reworking and working with my colonial archive I ‘open up’ the potential for an emergent future. I transgress preservation and alter and transform what would have become a stifling object, ossified in an outdated state.

HOW ~~can~~ I “verwerk” my colonial archive — to
can
'open up' for emergent Futures?
towards
→ post-colonial?

I'm a memory capsule
4. I'M AN ARCHIVE
I'm the past
I'm the present
I'm becoming
~~Archive~~

To me the archive is not merely an external parchment of paper filled with documented text, narrating my family's past. My understanding and experience of my inherited archive goes beyond a rational reading of historic text. I know and experience the archive intimately - my very existence issued from it. I am the archive, a body - the paper - imprinted with colonial text. In the introduction to the book *The sentient archive: Bodies, performance and memory* (2018) editors Bissell, Linda Caruso Havilan refer to Michael Foucault (1965) and Jacques Derrida's (1995) theories pertaining to embodied knowledge, writing:

"Foucault's and Derrida's works theorise how the body is part parcel of the archive".. Foucault discussed how bodies are "imprinted by history". The body inscribable nature suggests a capacity to receive and store knowledge that, in turn can be read...the body becomes a site of legibility, and like the skin of Epimendes or tattooed flesh in various cultures, may hold magic or power in its deeper folds" (2018: 1).

The past is therefore intertwined into my very being, carved onto my skin and my body is a memory capsule - a storage room of history. Foucault cited in (Havilan, & Bissell, 2018: 3) describes how each body has the capacity to "store history" and how our genealogies are "completely attached" to our nervous systems and that every internal and behavioural system and sigh is maintained and manifested as a ... stigmata of past experiences".

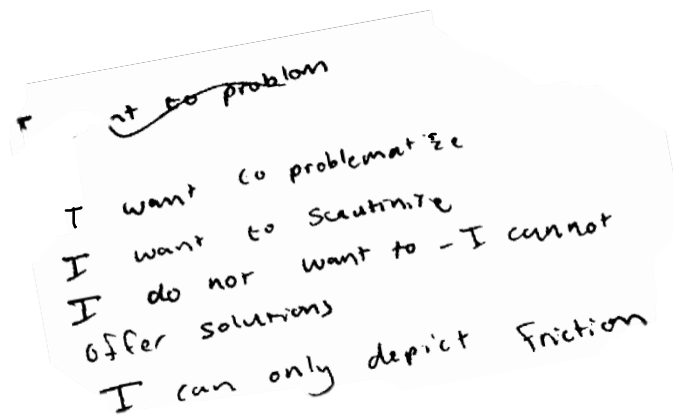
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IF I am the archive. I can use performance (my body)
to engage with tormented pasts that warrant
revisitation

Past
but
also
my present

“Knowledge can be both legible and embodied that is not only accessed through text, but also generated and understood through physical states and actions...This repositioning irrevocably changes both body and archive, because it presumes a sentient archive: a sensate structure infused with cognitive potential, inseparable from its archived contents” (Havilan, & Bissell, 2018: 2).

My body therefore has the capacity to not only store knowledge, but to generate new insights. “This writ-upon body also writes, it activates, engages, or disrupts and as a discourse in its own right, a force in itself that participates in constructing and conferring meaning in the world” (Foucault cited in (Havilan, & Bissell, 2018: 4). I want to *verwerk* my colonial archive through performance. In *At work in the archive* (2016) Ferdinand de Jong states that: “Artists use different strategies to rework the colonial archive, going beyond appropriation to reflect upon their own positionality” (2016:10). Performance also allows me to embody text. Hal Foster in, *An Archival Impulse* reiterates the idea that archival art “make[s] historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present” (2004: 4). De Jong also explains that, in the case of performing and the archive, one should be cognisant of not simply “restaging the past”, but should rather aim to confront “colonial legacy” by an “enactment of the archive that questions the conditions of possibility of its own making” (de Jong, 2016: 6).



it to problem
I want to problematize
I want to scrutinize
I do not want to - I cannot
offer solutions
I can only depict friction

There is multitude of potential for critical evaluation through performance as an archive. Performance curates a platform to “understand dynamic friction among reimagined pasts, constructed presents, and unknown futures” (Havilan, & Bissell, 2018: 10). Performance can, therefore, act as a ‘mediator’ between me and the archival text, offering a platform where the past and present can interact in ‘tension filled’ dialogue.

I
I want to arrive
at emergency

Furthermore, in his article *At work in the archive* (2016: 14), F. de Jong describes how artistic engagement with the colonial archives can offer acknowledgement of past afflictions, can transgress outdated modes of archiving resulting in proposals for reimagined and emerging futures.

“In these projects [performing the archive] the archive appears as an open-ended, future-oriented institution that has the potential to contribute to the creation of democratic forms of self-representation well beyond the grasp of the state...postcolonial artists explore colonial archives in order to produce an art of emancipation. Through the return, recuperation, and re-enactment of archives, they point to the potential of forgotten pasts and unanticipated futures lingering in the imperial archive” (2016: 14).

preservation's
towards a

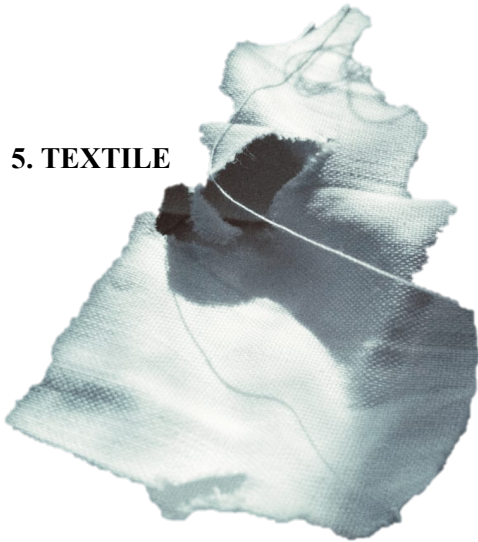
How can performing

How can I construct a performance ~~using my~~ depicting a process of "verwerking", transgressing preservation ~~and moving~~ towards emergence?

How to perform my colonial archive to create a process of "verwerking", transgressing preservation to move towards emergence

How can I *verwerk* my colonial archive through performance to incite transgression of preservation ultimately moving towards emergence?

5. TEXTILE



5.1 Linen

When I began engaging with my colonial archive as an impetus for a performance, I initially struggled to interact with what felt like ‘dead objects’ - the letters, journals and photos. I found myself intensely staring at the pictures, microscopically studying my ancestors’ faces, searching for traces of familiar features. I was passive, outside the archive and embodying the role of the observer, not quite knowing how to insert myself within the archive or excavate or resurrect the past from it, in order for me to engage with and scrutinise it. As part of the initial performance exercises, I suspended a large white linen cloth in an attempt to replicate the ‘photo-booth’ environment evident in the portrait photographs of my ancestors. I had created what can be described as a ‘linen installation’ for my performance space.

Do I
look
like
her?



Figure 11: Photos of my initial performance exercises (van der Merwe 2021).

Linen and cloth have the capacity to cover and uncover, it hides and reveals, it dresses and undresses, it is intimate and formal, modest and vulnerable. Folded away, it sleeps in cupboards waiting to become ceremonially wakened. Suspended on tables it supports the elbows of hands that ritualistically pray, as

it was taught to pray. It is employed to soothe, asked to bind the broken. It is ancient in its capacity for mummification, obediently preserving inherited valuables, the net that silently collects dust. Draped, it folds into curves that mimic waves creating vast oceans, evoking imagery of large sails, wind-blown - the mechanism through which conquest was perused.

I realised that I had transformed the flat, parchment surfaces of my colonial archive into tactile, emotive, draped pieces of linen. Textiles. Tapestries of text.

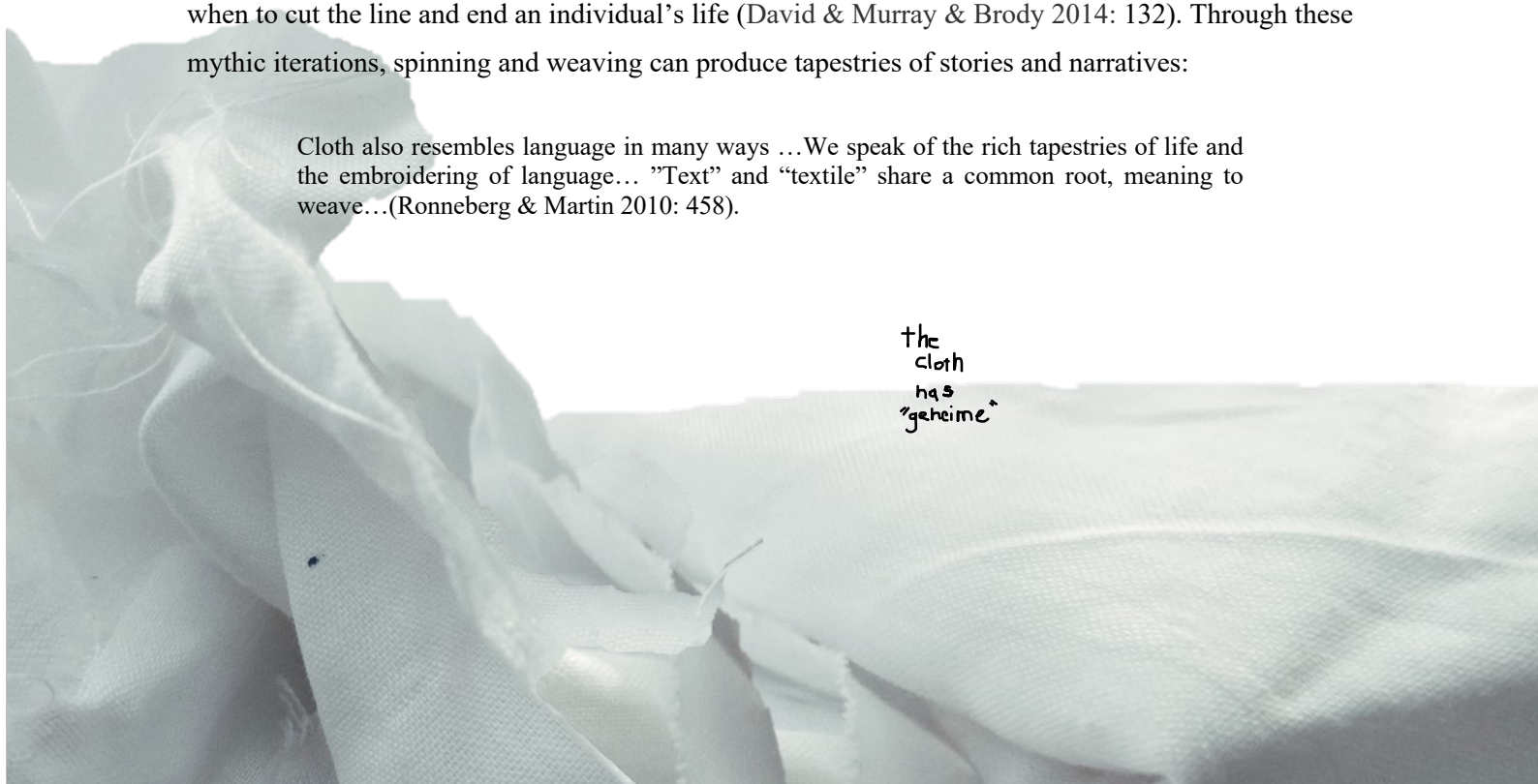
Linen is woven from fibres of the flax plant (*linum usitatissimum*) and then bleached to produce its bright white colour. It is documented as one of the oldest forms of woven fabrics and has different historical significance in various countries and cultures (Prendergast 2004:19). It is often a fabric or garment associated with spirituality and religion. It is a textile frequently referred to in the Bible, notably one of its interpretations relates to the themes of 'atonement' and 'penitence' for sins, specifically located in *Leviticus 16* and the accounts of *The Day of Atonement* (Yul Kim 2013: 67). Furthermore, as a literary symbol, linen is often associated with women, femininity and "domestic" activities such as washing, spinning, sewing, stitching and embroidery and is in relation with objects such as the bed, the cupboard, the window and the table (Bakola 2016: 115).

torn → something needs to be mended

I cannot escape the association thread and spinning have with representations of fate and destiny. Notably, the Norse myth of the Norns spin the narrative of life and control the lines of destiny (Ronneberg & Martin 2010: 458). Another variation of the Norns are the Greek Fates, also spinners of destiny, Klotho who spins the thread of life, Lachesis who measures it and Atropos who chooses when to cut the line and end an individual's life (David & Murray & Brody 2014: 132). Through these mythic iterations, spinning and weaving can produce tapestries of stories and narratives:

Cloth also resembles language in many ways ... We speak of the rich tapestries of life and the embroidering of language... "Text" and "textile" share a common root, meaning to weave...(Ronneberg & Martin 2010: 458).

the cloth has "geheim"



Cloth can therefore also represent sheets of white paper embedded with text and can potentially become representations of letters, objects of written 'text'. Letters, as previously mentioned, are important documents from my archive and might become the impetus for 'text' and produce dialogue for a performance. Performance can be considered, interpreted and 'read' as 'text'¹³. Theatre academic Robert Leach writes: "'Text' in this sense is a word for anything which is 'inscribed': an 'inscription' being a way of ordering or packaging pieces of experience..." (2008: 18). Lynn Miller, a performance scholar in communication, writes:

A text is something created, something made, *textures* are found in woven fabrics, texts are words, ideas, woven together. A family, a performance—whether of a personal narrative, a poem, a dance, a cultural ritual, or of our own bodies— all are texts that we can study, that we *do* study (1998: 53)

PAPER
ARCHIVE
TEXT

Linen is crafted from delicately interwoven thread, stitched in rhythmic patterns to form large tapestries of fabric linen, in its entirety as 'text embedded tapestries' symbolise narratives, history and the past all weaved together to form what constitutes the present. In the *Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images*¹⁴ (Ronneberg & Martin 2010: 460), sewing is described as "the tedium of assembly line piecework". It is interesting to note that the term 'lineage' derives from the noun 'line', that in turn, etymologically stems from the term *lino* meaning linen - the flax seed fabric (Miller 2005: 239). A single thread can therefore signify themes of genealogy, heritage, identity and ancestry – my medium of assembly that intertwined to form my present. *The book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images* (2010) further explains how "at its source, sewing links us back perhaps to the fanciful idea of the "body" itself as "garment" ..." (Ronnberg & Martin 2010: 790).

Linen can therefore be used as an extended metaphor for text, genealogy, narratives as well as a body- all aspects that correlate with archival performance theories that unpack the body as an archival text.

¹³ There is a plethora of scholarly output that investigates performance as 'text' and 'text' as performance. Scholars, academics and philosophers such as Roland Barthes (1915-1980), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), Hazard Adams (1926), Elinor Fuchs (1933), and W. B. Worthen (1955), through either semiotic, structuralist or linguistic frameworks unpack, analyse and define the idea of 'text'. Notably in the book *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann discusses and defines key phenomena and 'new' performance forms witnessed in contemporary theatre that moves beyond "dramatic text".

¹⁴ *The Book of Symbols : Reflections on Archetypal Images* (Ronnberg & Martin 2010) is a collection of short essays unpacking and investigating 'imagery' as carriers of meaning and holders of interpretive data. The book and its essays are predominantly informed by 'Jungian archetypes', but are also framed by knowledge produced by visual culture studies, anthropology, sociology and literature.

Single thread
Connecting
me to
the past



I was searching
for a way
to represent
the 'characters'
in my
archive?
Clothing.



Böhm

Figure 12: Photos of my performance explorations (van der Merwe 2021).

As I was initially working and reworking with linen and thread, I quickly became aware that these materials possess not only delicate, soothing qualities, but that they also have the capacity to ensnare, entangle, trap, choke, smother and cocoon. Linen can be nightmarish - an overwhelming web of historic narratives. Whilst exploring and 'playing with' thread, I became entangled in it.



Figure 13: Photo stills from a performance exercise. I became tangled in the strands of thread (van der Merwe 2021).

This 'grappling with' thread can be likened to my 'grappling with' my archival text. I am reminded of Jacques Derrida's term "*mal d'archive*" that describes 'this' feverish relation to the archive:

It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive, right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it archives itself. (1995: 91).

I continue reading
writing, working with
reworking the archive
text.

5.2 Erfstuk

Linen is in and of itself often considered a family heirloom. The word *erfstuk* in Afrikaans has a double meaning. In the *HAT: Verklarende handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse taal* edited by F. F. Odendal & R. H. Gouws, the word *erf* is defined as: *uit 'n nalatingskap verkry* (acquired through inheritance) and the term *erfstuk* is defined as: *stuk wat van geslag op geslag oorgeërf is* (2005: 221) (piece inherited from one generation to another). Furthermore, the word *stuk* refers to *materiaal, linne* (2005: 1135) (material, linen), it also refers to the action of stitching: *om aanmekaar te stik* (*stik* is a homophone of *stuk*) (Odendal & Gouws [ed], 2005: 1135), the term *stuk* also describes a piece of theatre, in Afrikaans a play is called a *toneelstuk* (Odendal & Gouws [ed], 2005: 1135). I specifically wanted to draw a comparison between the linen fabric and inheritance (a performance quote):

Ek het al van tevore die ingespinde sinne wat aan my lappe kleef afgewas - skoon, wit en rein. Ek het die wit-wit lakens opgehang en uitgespan vir oordeel voor die hemelson, daar in die agtertuin het hulle gehang - geeste gereed vir na-dood en oorgang, maar mettertyd het my kleinkind-hande hulle ontvang. Ek het hulle neergelê gesoen met yster en stoom rein wit en skoon. Versigtig, netjies is die wit lakens toegevou en ritmies gepak in hulle stinkhout graf - die linnekas - my erfstuk.

I have already washed away the interwoven text that clings to my tapestries - pure, white and clean. I suspended and hung the white, white cloth for judgment in front of the heavenly sun, there in the back garden they hung, spirits ready for after-death and crossing over, but time passed them into my grandchild hands. I laid them to rest kissed them with iron and steam, pure, white and clean. Attentively, neatly I folded the white sheets and rhythmically stacked them in their stinkwood grave - the linen cupboard - my inheritance.

Paper
sails.



Figure 13: Photo stills from a performance exercise. I became tangled in the strands of thread (van der Merwe 2021).

Throughout the performance, I used linen as a metaphor for the pages of my archive. I discovered ways in which to explore performance actions and interactions with the cloth: folding and unfolding, draping and stringing up the material as I was rediscovering and retelling fragments of Johannes Böhm's documented settler accounts. I was suspending pieces of cloth almost as though I was turning the pages of his journals. I also uncovered how the white sheets are able to transmit different interpretations continuously along with different progressions in the performance narrative. The hoisted cloth potently evokes images of the wind-blown sails of an eighteenth-century sailing ship in pursuit of imperial 'conquest'. The linen was also used to signify vast oceans of water, as well as represent land with the textile's fortuitously formed crinkles and crevasses mimicking rivers and mountains and canyons. The textile also represented Namibia's expansive dry desert. At other moments during the performance, I used the textile as a wedding veil, a blanket to swaddle an infant and a cloth mournfully used to cover the dead. I attempted to embed the linen with meaning relating to my colonial family archive and the historical accounts described by Johannes Böhm.

In the performance *Erfstuk* (2021), the narrative was centred on a young woman who opened up her family stinkwood cupboard, took out the heirlooms of linen and discovered the historic narratives of her family's colonial past intertwined with the fabric. The space I created was simultaneously mundane - domestic as though the audience was witnessing a young woman performing household chores like washing, ironing and hanging laundry whilst recollecting her ancestors' settler history.

In *Erfstuk* (2021), I also performed actions such as needlework and ironing. To me, these tasks are associated preservation - seeking to clean, mend and 'make neat' or 'tidying'. These acts of preservation are in relation to one aspect of my ambivalent attitude toward my archive, namely a strong sense of obligation to 'take care of' my inherited valuables and family heirlooms. Although these actions are predominantly related to ideas of mending and conserving, in the performance I also used the domestic objects like the needle and thread as well as an iron, to signify colonial violence. While I recollected the missionary's voyage from Germany to Africa, I performed the action of ironing a large white sheet. The sheet became a metaphor for the ocean; the iron suddenly resembled a sailing ship and the action of ironing or flattening the crinkles became forceful. My hands were controlling, domineering and curating the sheet's landscape, bending the tapestry to my will - paralleling Western conquest and imperial pursuit.

See
en
skip



Brief



die
dood



Figure 13: Photo stills from *Erfstuk* (2021).



Figure 14: Photo stills *Erfstuk* (2021).

During one part of the performance, I was sewing and weaving thread into a piece of cloth. The cloth could be viewed as a suggestion of the African landscape, the needle and thread representing uprooting, migration and reestablishment. The sharp edge of the needle pricking through the material reinforced notions of forceful invasion of a country. The rhythm of stitching the thread in to the cloth developed into a pattern and ultimately became part of the cloth itself. To me, the stitched thread speaks to the formation the white Afrikaner, specifically an identity that was born from European uprootedness, migration and colonial contact. In *Erfstuk* (2021) I stated: *Vasgesteek en neergepen was die sendeling. verplaas en verplant vanuit 'n ander land en met 'n skerp naald en garing vasgnael in die Afrika landskap/* The missionary was pinned and stitched, uprooted from another land and attached to the African landscape with a sharp needle and thread.

There is something powerful
with acting out the political
with - an iron, needle and thread
I previously asked can two things
be true at once? The missionary
lived and existed both in
mundanotry and the political.
In my archid Nothing
not even a thread can
escape politics

~~Na Erfstuk~~

The performance *Erfstuk* (2021) opened with me asleep at the foot of a spinning wheel that hauntingly spun by itself. The spinning wheel¹⁵ is a mechanism that can construct textile. The image of a spinning wheel is notoriously associated with fairy tales, often representing “the patient stitch by stitch process that leads to redemption, repair[ing] the rent fabric of the soul or mend[ing] the bewitched situation” (Ronneberg & Martin 2010: 460). Spinning and weaving can produce tapestries of stories and narratives aligning with the mode in which I am engaging with the colonial archive, namely through theatre. During the performance the spinning wheel at certain points seemed to resemble a ships wheel and helm and at other times an *ossewa* [ox wagon] wheel. The spinning wheel as a signifier of time and fate, reminded the onlooker of what has already occurred, of the present and of questions pertaining to how the future might unfold. The spinning wheel is the ‘open archive’, the evolving archive - spinning towards emergence.

The first spoken line of the performance was:

Sjuut..., die lappe slaap. Moet nie hulle steur of wakker maak, dit het lank geneem om hulle te sus/

Shush..., the cloths are sleeping. Do not disturb or awaken them, it took a long time to appease them.

However, I did and do disturb and awaken my colonial past - I am engaging with my colonial archive, grappling with my familial history. *Erfstuk* (2021) was a performance that demonstrated the act of ‘opening up the archive’, reading and uncovering the narrative of the past, ‘I took out the inherited linen from the linen cupboard’.

¹⁵ I am aware that the image of a spinning wheel with a body of a woman next to it evokes connotations with fairy-tales. At one point I did consider the potential for this study to construct a performance that uses fairy-tale imagery and archetypal modes of storytelling as an allegory for my aporetic, entangled relationship with my colonial archive. The word allegory originates from the Greek word *allegoria* that refers to “a veiled figurative language”. In contemporary discourses the term allegory is understood as an extended metaphor that is often used to critique systems of power and engage with human nature. Allegories often make use of personification to represent complex ideas or to simplify the abstract, the spiritual or mysterious (Dupriez 1991: 21). I do believe that my performance does lend itself to be analysed as a political allegory, however such an analysis falls outside the scope of this study.

My performance needed 'something' - some form of transgression. Something in contrast to the linen and its 'clean', *gebleikte*/bleached surfaces.

How can I insert my viewpoint?
How does my touch effect the linen?
How can I depict transgression?
-> I need more "Verwerking"

6. TAINING TEXT

Kos vir die motte.

6.1 A prayer:

During the process of scrutinising my colonial archive, religion and Christianity emerged as central themes. My family archive is rife with references to religion, and it is the impetus behind my ancestor's expedition from Germany to Namibia as a Rhenish missionary. As previously mentioned, in his travel journals, the missionary Johannes Böhm, habitually wrote down his prayers.

In my research I encountered the following passage from the Bible, in Matthew 6:19-21:

Moenie vir julle skatte op aarde bymekaarmaak waar mot en roes dit verniel en waar diewe inbreek en dit steel nie. Maak vir julle skatte in die hemel bymekaar, waar mot en roes dit nie verniet en waar diewe nie inbreek en dit steel nie (Matteus 6:19-21).

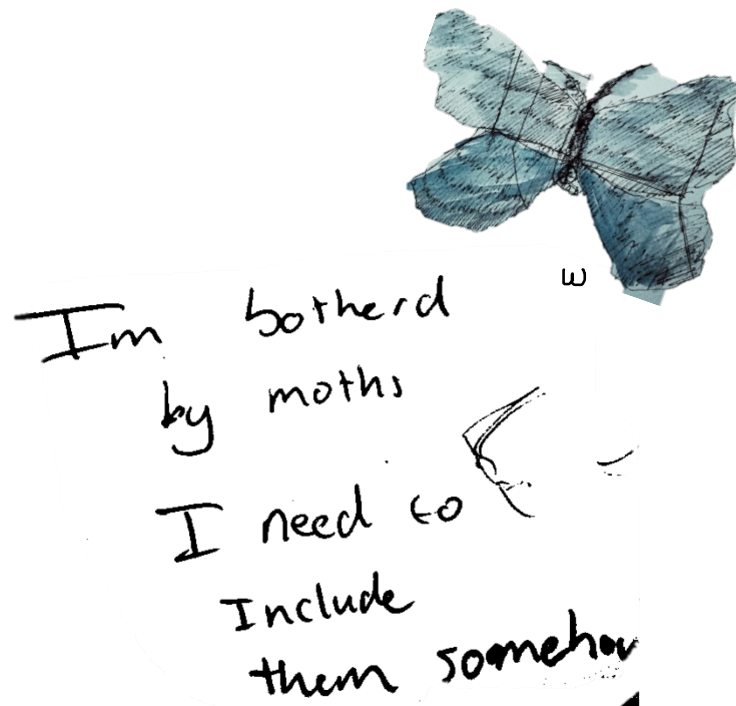
/Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.

This passage can be interpreted as a warning against futile exercises of garnering treasure - earthly possessions, because our earthly belongings will ultimately decay and rot, in contrast to the soul that surpasses life on earth and in death resides in heaven. In my view, the images could be related to colonial themes. Firstly the term treasure could be related to imperial reaping of the riches of colonised territories, referring to the Biblical verse that warns against greed. The image of the thief could also relate to notions of colonisers' claiming of land. Post-colonialism unpacks the aftermath of colonial invasion that has led to unfathomable loss, death and decay.

The moth and rust are notably excluded from heaven in this passage, as though they are not heavenly entities and in contrast to divinity represent destruction, deterioration and decay. In *The Book of Symbols, Reflections on Archetypal Images*, moths are described as “the shadow of butterflies”; moths showcase fragility and transience, moths also have a “self-consuming attraction to light”, “the mass twilight fluttering of moths is darkly associated with the energies of compulsive devouring” (Ronnberg [ed], 2010: 234). The description of a moth as a creature that consumes and devours is also evident in other Biblical verses such as Job 13:28: “...While I am decaying like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten...” and Isaiah 50:9: “...Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; The moth will eat

them...". In both citations the moth is positioned in contrast to and in opposition with cloth and allude to the theme of decay. A moth possesses the capacity to devour and consume garments - to ruin cloth and in turn to process them into something else - a cocoon - an image signifying emergence.

In my view I could draw a parallel between the moth that processes cloth and me as the contemporary post-colonial white Afrikaner, having to process (*verwerk*) my colonial history.



I poison cloth
 6.2 Poison
 I poison text
 I poison archive
 I poison body
 I poison self

During my efforts to somehow rework (*verwerk*) cloth, I became interested in a form photo printing called cyanotype printing, also known as sun printing or the blueprint process as a form of photo reproduction. By taking a photo negative and laying it on top of any surface (treated with the cyano compound) out in the sun, will result in an imprinted reproduction of images in various shades of cyan-blue. The cyanotype process, was first introduced by scientist, astronomer and botanist John Herschel (1792 – 1871) who was trying to find a simple and cost effective means of reproducing notes. Cyanotype printing became a popular form of reproduction to make blue prints for architectural and engineering purposes and also was employed by botanists to examine plant species.

The act of printing onto linen demonstrates a gesture of transgression, through tainting and staining the white with mournfully blue ink. In contrast to this connotation with staining or besmirching, cyanotype printing also speaks back to the original portrait photographs of my archive and the capturing a likeness for preservation and documentation. Cyanotype printing as a scientific tool, can also be associated with ideas of investigation, placing my ancestors under the microscopic lens. Cyanotype printing and blue prints can furthermore be considered alongside the idea of mapping, tracing and uncovering - motives that coincide with genealogy and the mapping of a lineage. For the purposes of the performance, I was embedding my archival text onto the surface texture of the linen. The term 'sun print' evokes colonial imagery of 'sun burnt' European settlers in Africa - imagining the contrast between cold German nineteenth century countryside and the arid landscape of Namibia.

When I started printing the images of my ancestors onto the linen, the prints failed. I had accidentally burnt the images, overexposing them to the sun. The result of these images were misshapen and unclear blue stains, resulting the linen to appear sickly with blue cancerous blotches. This false start lead to the realisation that striving for a perfect replica was counterproductive to an attempt to reproduce or replicate my ancestors' likenesses and that the distortions of the original images emphasised transformation and reimagining - apt strategies for experimentation in a study constituted in post-colonial practice. The passing of time and concurrent erasure, fading and distortions; the presence of mortality was evident in the faded blue prints of my ancestors and other images from my archive.



Figure 14: A blue print/ cyanotype print of my archival map onto the linen.

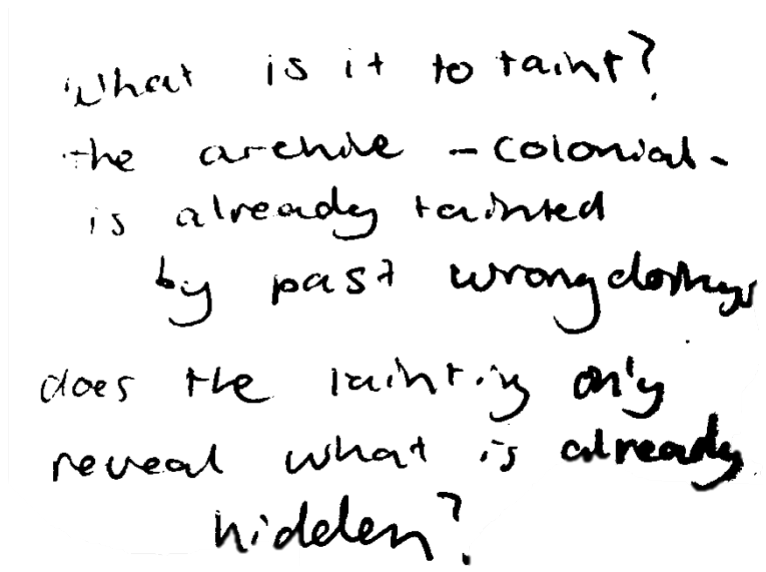
It is interesting to note that the origin of the term *cyanide* (the poisonous compound) is the Greek term *kyanos*, meaning dark blue (Guennic, 2015: 2). Cyano printing and cyanide share a common etymological denominator. I cannot help but make an association between the blue stains created by the cyano printing and the concept of poisoning.

I'm searching for a
remedy to my colonial
archive.
↳ The sickness is its: ~~unacknowledged~~
Coloniality
The remedy is transgression - ~~text~~
Text against text

As previously established, in my performance research linen and textile can be seen as a metaphor for text. By 'tainting' the 'text' I am potentially performing Derrida's concept of *pharmakon*. In Jacques Derrida's essay *Plato's Pharmacy*¹⁶(1998), Derrida unpacks the concept of *pharmakon* and Plato's understanding of 'text' and its relation to truth. In his explanation he writes that *pharmakon* has "two

¹⁶ In his essay titled *Plato's Pharmacy* (1998) Jacques Derrida analyses and adds to the documented philosophical conversation of Plato's text *Phaedrus* who debate the production of knowledge, logos, meaning making, truth, written text, spoken word and didactics. Derrida's writing is framed by deconstructivism. I acknowledge the complexity of the term *pharmakon*, however as it pertains to this study I am merely focusing on how the notion of 'poison as remedy' relates to how I can transgress the preservation of my colonial archive.

possible meanings: “remedy and poison” (Rinella, 2007: 1), or posit poison as the remedy for a bewitched, catastrophic, tension filled situation. In this sense the term *pharmakon* relates to ancient Athens’s idea of *pharmakos* - a sacrificial ritual, a scapegoat - “a kind of societal catharsis, used to expiate and shut out the evil, out of the body and out of the city” (Kłos-Czerwińska, 2019: 37). *Pharmakon*, as explained by Derrida, also relates to linguistic studies that view text and the very act of producing/writing text as *pharmakon* (Kłos-Czerwińska, 2019: 38) - both a remedy and a poison, both destructive and recreational as both transgressive and memorialising; aptly aligning with my performance research that has concerned itself with text and the tension between transgression and preservation of my colonial archive.



What is it to taint?
the archive - colonial -
is already tainted
by past wrongdoings
does the tainting only
reveal what is already
hidden?

I reveal. I acknowledge. I poison. I remedy?

In my following research performance titled *Blou Psalm/Blue Psalm* (2022), I explored and inserted two new performance elements namely the image of a moth and the motif of tainting and ruining, specifically using cyano-blue prints to stain the once white linen material. Both performance elements are in relation with themes of degeneration. As previously mentioned, I was particularly influenced by the Biblical verse Matthew 6:19-21. The space in which the *Blou Psalm* (2022) was performed, was created using draped pieces of linen - mimicking and continuing the imagery of my cloth installation from *Erfstuk* (2021). Two suspended wooden beams, draped with shreds of white cloth, formed a cocooned-like-corner that, for me, subsequently also resembled torn robes of an angel, from where, on the floor, a large piece of material spilled out towards the audience. At the edge of the cloth spillage a broken sewing machine was placed. I began the performance with a prayer, positioned at the foot of the sewing machine. The sewing machine can be viewed as an object mirroring and in conversation with the spinning wheel in *Erfstuk* (2021).

My words relayed an encounter with a moth, describing how I caught the insect in my hands and folded it shut between my palms, ultimately alluding to killing the lepidopteran.

...en saam in gebed en die gefluister van 'n psalm bring ek jou tot rus in my linker handpalm. /

“...together in prayer whispering a psalm, I bring you to rest in the palm of my left hand”.

It was my intention that my performance monologue parallel and mimic the prayers of my missionary forefather. However, where his prayers relate to the uncertainty of his future and his intention and mission in the colonies, my prayers were concerned with the past and asked for redemption. The performance space of *Blou Psalm* (2022) could be viewed as confessional in tone, a space where I acknowledged colonial iniquities. In *Blou Psalm* (2022) I stated: *Ek bid 'n giftige gebed* “I am praying a poisonous prayer”, attempting to capture the ambivalence and tension between pure intent and villainy that is simultaneously present in my colonial archive. Similarly to the set of *Erfstuk* (2021), all the linen was *skoon wit en rein* “clean white and pure” when the performance of *Blou Psalm* (2022) began. However, unlike *Erfstuk* (2021), as the performance progressed, I gradually revealed the stains that I had created on the cloth. Similar to the narrative in the previous performance, *Erfstuk* (2022), *Blou Psalm* (2022), located a young woman opening the linen cupboard, unfolding and refolding her inherited linen. *Blou Psalm* (2022) however, moved beyond merely discovering the family heirlooms, demonstrating acts of disobedience and transgression through tainting the once white cloth. In the performance, as I slowly revealed the blue stained sheets, I state: *Kyk kyk wat doen my aanraking* “See what my touch does.”

My scrutiny of the past was tainting my well preserved and conserved archive. I was inserting my viewpoint that is attempting to reconcile with the villainous narratives embedded and entangled up in my ancestral history.

My
hands
taint
Blou
gif.



Bid
My
hands
pray.



My
hands
mend.



Figure 15: Photo stills from my performance *Blou Psalm* (2022).

I am the archive
I cannot separate myself, my body from it
The more I work with the archive
the more I feel apart of it.

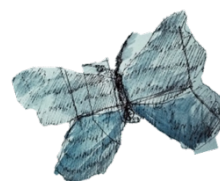
IF I poison the archive,

Am I poisoning myself?

Am I ~~committing~~ committing suicide?

I know this is and feels very dark
but I suddenly doubt my study -
no, I am working, not towards
death but towards life. I'm
working towards "emergence"
continuation, reimagining.

But, I do feel in terms of whiteness
that in order for these types of critical
studies to occur there is an element
of self-harm - It is not easy.



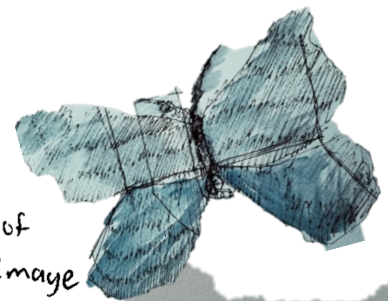
7. (performance title? something to do with linen)

— Moths
I don't know +

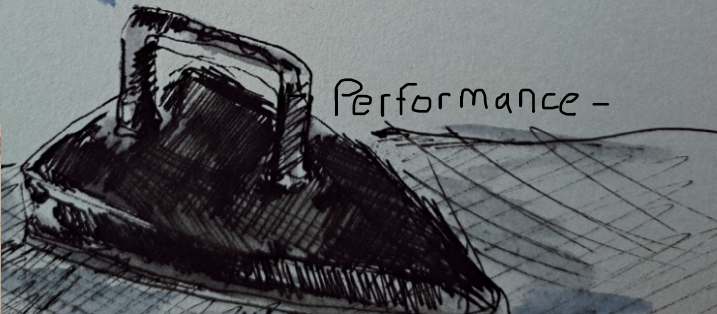
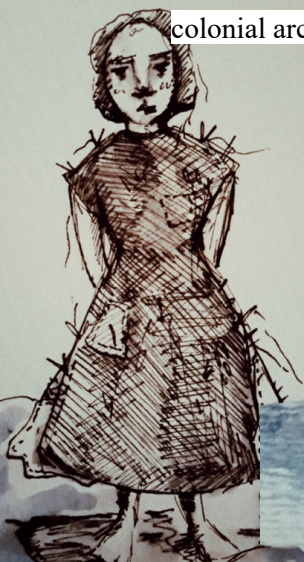
Informed by my previous performance projects *Erfstuk* (2021) and *Blou Psalm* (2022), emerged my final performance titled *Ek praat van gif en motte* ("I speak of poison and moths"), that combines the two narratives and enhances some of the emerging ideas and symbolic imagery unearthed during the research process. In both my previous performances I used linen as a tactile representation of my colonial heritage. In *Erfstuk* (2021) I relayed my forefather's missionary expedition from Germany to Namibia. In *Blou Psalm* (2022) I inserted 'my voice' into my colonial family archive and tainted the linen cloth with cyanotype blueprints exploring how my 'touch', my scrutiny of the past, affects the documentation and memorialisation of my history. I also discovered the image of a moth with its devouring nature, ability to eat cloth – potentially in contrast to linen (archival text) and representing processing (*verwerking*) of my colonial text.

— Performance
and I merge
text Merge

For my final performance I present both performance narratives in one play. The performance opens with a stage filled with meticulously placed white cloth (some draped, suspended and hanging, others piled on the floor, some folded, some unfolded and others pushed midway through a sewing machine). Alongside the linen, the space will include several spinning wheels that will continuously weave, spin and sew throughout the duration of the performance. The entire performance consists of a monologue divided into three narratives: firstly, the narrative of a young woman uncovering her family heirlooms - her inherited linen cloth. Secondly, through unearthing the cloth she discovers the 'text' that is embedded within the inherited material - relaying and recounting her forefather's journey from Germany to Namibia. Whilst uncovering the tapestry of her past, she ruins her heirlooms, tainting the cloth with blue stains. The once white set will slowly transform, revealing cancerous-like blue blemishes. Thirdly, as the performance progresses, the spinning mechanisms will weave a large linen cocoon that will ultimately envelop the young woman. The performance will end with the emergence of a monstrous blue moth whose wings will fill the entirety of the stage. I perform acts of transgression such as tainting, tearing, ripping, (re)stitching and untangling large tapestries of linen - embodying a scrutiny of my white colonial past. I am performing the processing (*verwerking*) of my colonial archive.



The merging of
text and image



Performance -



8. TO THOSE, WHO ARE AS YET TO INHERIT SLEEPING TEXT

I began this study with a colonial archive asleep in a *stinkhout* cupboard. My present is framed by with post-colonial and postcolonial discussion. My colonial archive warranted revision - warranted *verwerking*. I took out the archive and worked through its text. I've come to know text. Text as written in black ink on parchments, saved in ring-bound files, text as narratives, inescapably biased documentations of occurrences. I've come to understand that text can be dangerous. I've come to know text as 'imprint'. Text as writing. Text can be found written on bodies. I've come to experience my own body as text. I've experienced my body as a vessel containing all manner of filing cabinets that 'store
TEXT up' the past and keep creating new files documenting present experience. Text can poison. Text can be used violently - wrongfully. Text should be revisited. Yet, text can turn against itself - write against itself. There is remedy in transgression. Poison effects and affects. Poison like a contagion spreads, its taints and stains making new marks, creating beautiful blemishing that signifies an act of transgression. Text can be self-reflective.

I have discovered linen as tapestries of text - objects to work with and signify my colonial archive as a performance object. Through my performance I am processing (*verwerk*) and reworking my colonial archive. I have stained the white tapestries of linen offering an act of transgression against the well preserved family heirlooms. My performances demonstrates a 'grappling with my colonial lineage. I'm a moth consuming inherited linen (inherited colonial archives, inherited colonial text) trying to *verwerk* the past and move towards the possibility of emergent futures. I've come to understand that an archive should find preservation within a continuum of documented self-reflective text and transgressive actions as time progresses.

After my masters research is completed, I intend to lay my reworked, tainted and moth-eaten colonial archive to rest, putting it back in the *stinkhout* cupboard. If an offspring should stumble upon it. I address the following letter to you:

12 Dulwich Road
Rondebosch
0077
Kaapstad
2022-09-08

Aan al die nageslag van die familie Böhm.

Maak nuwe mede. skeur bladsye.
Plak hulle weer aan mekaar, skeur hulle
weer. skryf oor jouself. skryf teen jouself
skryf. krap dood. skryf weer. skryf. Hou
aan skryf.

Lekker lees
liefdegroete

Signed by candidate

Petronella. H. van der Merwe

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